

Triad Chords in Major Keys

Every major key builds the same seven chords — three major, three minor and one diminished, always in that order. Take a note of the scale, skip one, take the next, skip one, take the next: the **root**, the **third** and the **fifth**.

Inverting a chord does not change it — only which of the three notes sits at the bottom, so one chord can follow another without the hand leaping about.



Root
Root at the bottom



1st inv
Third at the bottom



2nd inv
Fifth at the bottom

KEY	I TONIC	II SUPERTONIC	III MEDIANT	IV SUBDOMINANT	V DOMINANT	VI SUBMEDIANT	VII° LEADING TONE
C major NO # OR ♭ · ROOT	C C E G	Dm D F A	Em E G B	F F A C	G G B D	Am A C E	B dim B D F
1ST INV	E G C	F A D	G B E	A C F	B D G	C E A	D F B
2ND INV	G C E	A D F	B E G	C F A	D G B	E A C	F B D
G major 1 # · ROOT	G G B D	Am A C E	Bm B D F#	C C E G	D D F# A	Em E G B	F# dim F# A C
1ST INV	B D G	C E A	D F# B	E G C	F# A D	G B E	A C F#
2ND INV	D G B	E A C	F# B D	G C E	A D F#	B E G	C F# A
D major 2 # · ROOT	D D F# A	Em E G B	F#m F# A C#	G G B D	A A C# E	Bm B D F#	C# dim C# E G
1ST INV	F# A D	G B E	A C# F#	B D G	C# E A	D F# B	E G C#
2ND INV	A D F#	B E G	C# F# A	D G B	E A C#	F# B D	G C# E
A major 3 # · ROOT	A A C# E	Bm B D F#	C#m C# E G#	D D F# A	E E G# B	F#m F# A C#	G# dim G# B D
1ST INV	C# E A	D F# B	E G# C#	F# A D	G# B E	A C# F#	B D G#
2ND INV	E A C#	F# B D	G# C# E	A D F#	B E G#	C# F# A	D G# B
E major 4 # · ROOT	E E G# B	F#m F# A C#	G#m G# B D#	A A C# E	B B D# F#	C#m C# E G#	D# dim D# F# A
1ST INV	G# B E	A C# F#	B D# G#	C# E A	D# F# B	E G# C#	F# A D#
2ND INV	B E G#	C# F# A	D# G# B	E A C#	F# B D#	G# C# E	A D# F#
B major 5 # · ROOT	B B D# F#	C#m C# E G#	D#m D# F# A#	E E G# B	F# F# A# C#	G#m G# B D#	A# dim A# C# E
1ST INV	D# F# B	E G# C#	F# A# D#	G# B E	A# C# F#	B D# G#	C# E A#
2ND INV	F# B D#	G# C# E	A# D# F#	B E G#	C# F# A#	D# G# B	E A# C#
F# major 6 # · ROOT	F# F# A# C#	G#m G# B D#	A#m A# C# E#	B B D# F#	C# C# E# G#	D#m D# F# A#	E# dim E# G# B
1ST INV	A# C# F#	B D# G#	C# E# A#	D# F# B	E# G# C#	F# A# D#	G# B E#
2ND INV	C# F# A#	D# G# B	E# A# C#	F# B D#	G# C# E#	A# D# F#	B E# G#
F major 1 ♭ · ROOT	F F A C	Gm G B♭ D	Am A C E	B♭ B♭ D F	C C E G	Dm D F A	E dim E G B♭
1ST INV	A C F	B♭ D G	C E A	D F B♭	E G C	F A D	G B♭ E
2ND INV	C F A	D G B♭	E A C	F B♭ D	G C E	A D F	B♭ E G
B♭ major 2 ♭ · ROOT	B♭ B♭ D F	Cm C E♭ G	Dm D F A	E♭ E♭ G B♭	F F A C	Gm G B♭ D	A dim A C E♭
1ST INV	D F B♭	E♭ G C	F A D	G B♭ E♭	A C F	B♭ D G	C E♭ A
2ND INV	F B♭ D	G C E♭	A D F	B♭ E♭ G	C F A	D G B♭	E♭ A C
E♭ major 3 ♭ · ROOT	E♭ E♭ G B♭	Fm F A♭ C	Gm G B♭ D	A♭ A♭ C E♭	B♭ B♭ D F	Cm C E♭ G	D dim D F A♭
1ST INV	G B♭ E♭	A♭ C F	B♭ D G	C E♭ A♭	D F B♭	E♭ G C	F A♭ D
2ND INV	B♭ E♭ G	C F A♭	D G B♭	E♭ A♭ C	F B♭ D	G C E♭	A♭ D F
A♭ major 4 ♭ · ROOT	A♭ A♭ C E♭	B♭m B♭ D♭ F	Cm C E♭ G	D♭ D♭ F A♭	E♭ E♭ G B♭	Fm F A♭ C	G dim G B♭ D♭
1ST INV	C E♭ A♭	D♭ F B♭	E♭ G C	F A♭ D♭	G B♭ E♭	A♭ C F	B♭ D♭ G
2ND INV	E♭ A♭ C	F B♭ D♭	G C E♭	A♭ D♭ F	B♭ E♭ G	C F A♭	D♭ G B♭
D♭ major 5 ♭ · ROOT	D♭ D♭ F A♭	E♭m E♭ G♭ B♭	Fm F A♭ C	G♭ G♭ B♭ D♭	A♭ A♭ C E♭	B♭m B♭ D♭ F	C dim C E♭ G♭
1ST INV	F A♭ D♭	G♭ B♭ E♭	A♭ C F	B♭ D♭ G♭	C E♭ A♭	D♭ F B♭	E♭ G♭ C
2ND INV	A♭ D♭ F	B♭ E♭ G♭	C F A♭	D♭ G♭ B♭	E♭ A♭ C	F B♭ D♭	G♭ C E♭

The shaded column is the relative minor

The chord on the **sixth degree** — **vi** — is the relative minor of the key. It shares the key signature and the same seven notes, but treats that sixth degree as home — C major and A minor are the same notes heard from two places.

Reading a group. The first line gives the chord names; the three beneath give root position, first and second inversion.

Roman numerals. Capitals are major, lower case minor, the small circle diminished — they work in any key.