

BestStudentViolins.com

Stringed Instruments and Accessories for Contemporary Musicians
VIOLINS: [Budget](#) • [Student](#) • [Step-Up & Professional](#)

Email: customerservice@beststudentviolins.com • Call: (806)589-8753

[Home](#) • [Catalog](#) • [Library](#) • [About Us](#)

10% OFF
FALL SALE -10% Off
 All items \$395 & up

• [Violin Lessons](#)
 • [Fiddle Lessons](#)
 • [Theory Lessons](#)



Featured Pages



[← Back to Free Handouts & pdf Files](#)

Figured Bass



Western music (European music) is also called "triadic music" because the harmonic structure is based on chords, usually three-note chords. Three-note chords (the root, third and fifth of any key) are called triads. Add a minor third and you have a 7th chord. There are also 9th, 11th and 13th chords, particularly in jazz, but when we study music theory we start with triads and seventh chords.

Three note chords (triads) can have two inversions; four note chords (seventh chords) can have three inversions:

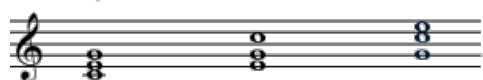
- If the the root of the chord is in the bass, you have a root position chord.
- If the third is the lowest note, you have a first inversion.
- If the fifth is in the bass, you have a second interstion.
- If the seventh is in the base, you have a third inversion.

Example (C Major - I chord):

- Root Position, C in the bass - from the bottom up: C, E, G (E & G may be switched, as long as the lowest note is C). Written: I
- First Inversion, the third of the chord, E, is in the bass - from the bottom up: E, G, C (G & C may be switched, as long as the lowest note is E). Written: I⁶
- Second Inversion, the fifth of the chord, G, is in the bass - from the bottom up: G, C, E (C & E may be switched, as long as the lowest note is G). Written: I⁴

The following represents the Root Position and First and Second Inversions of the I chord in C Major. These are labeled as: I, I⁶, and I⁴.

Three C major chords



Root Position

First Inversion

Second Inversion

Example (C Major - V⁷ or "dominant seventh" chord):

- Root Position, G in the bass - from the bottom up: G, B, D, F (B, D & F may be switched, as long as the lowest note is G). Written: V⁷
- First Inversion, the third of the chord, B, is in the bass - from the bottom up: B, D, F, G (G, D & F may be switched, as long as the lowest note is B). [Note that the major second, F-G, written on either site of the note stem, is characteristic of the dominant

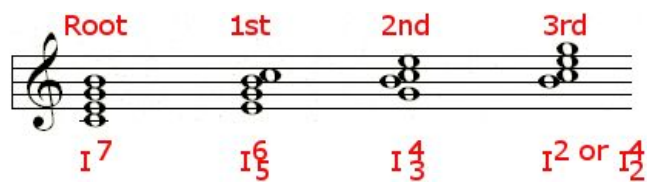
seventh chord in its inversions.] Written: V_5^6

- Second Inversion, the fifth of the chord, D, is in the bass - from the bottom up: D, F, G, B (F, G & B may be switched, as long as the lowest note is D). Written: V_3^4
- Third Inversion, the seventh of the chord, F, is in the bass - from the bottom up: F, G, B, D (G, B & D may be switched, as long as the lowest note is F). Written: V_2^4

Seventh chords have an additional third at the top of the triad:



The root position and the three inversions of the seventh chord are designated as follows:



INVERSIONS

Triads

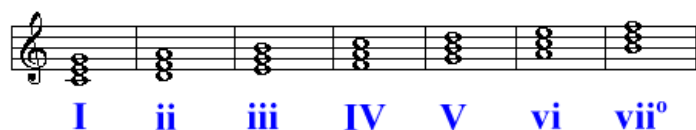
root position	1st Inversion	2nd Inversion
blank or	6 or	6
5	6	4
3	3	

7th Chords

root position	1st Inversion	2nd Inversion	3rd Inversion
7	6	4	4
	5	3	2

Chord Structures

Something like the following graphic is presented at the beginning of nearly every theory book. This represents the character of triads built on each step of the major scale. Note that I, IV and V (the Tonic, Subdominant and Dominant) are major (and upper case), and ii, iii, and vi are minor (lower case). A triad built on the leading tone of the scale is a diminished triad, or the top three notes of the Dominant seventh chord (V^7).



These are designated as follows:

- I - Tonic
- ii - Supertonic
- iii - Mediant
- IV - Subdominant
- V - Dominant
- vi - Submediant



Payment options:

- Order Online through **PaySimple**
- Order over the phone: (806) 589-8753

- Order with **PayPal** TO: cmsunday@alumni.rice.edu
- Order with **Dwolla** TO: 812-301-5704

Quick Links:

- [Search/Site Map](#)
- [Free Newsletter](#)
- [Company Email](#)



[Violins](#)



[Violas](#)



[Cellos](#)



[Basses](#)



[Bows](#)



[Cases](#)



[Guitars](#)



[Sheetmusic](#)



free
Handouts & pdf files