

Chord Types

TRIADS

The following 4 *triad types* are commonly encountered in tonal music.¹

	Type	Quality symbol ²	Lead sheet chord symbol	Chord Spelling [†]
1.	Major	M	C	C, E, G
2.	Minor	m	Cm or C-	C, E \flat , G
3.	Augmented	A	C+ or C _{aug}	C, E, G \sharp
4.	Diminished	d	C $^{\circ}$ or C _{dim}	C, E \flat , G \flat

SEVENTH CHORDS

The following 5 *seventh chord types* are commonly encountered in tonal music.

	Type	Quality symbol ³	Lead sheet chord symbol [‡]	Chord Spelling
1.	Major-minor seventh ⁴	Mm	C ⁷	C, E, G, B \flat
2.	Major seventh	MM	C _{maj} ⁷	C, E, G, B
3.	Minor seventh	mm	C _m ⁷ , C _{min} ⁷ , C _{mi} ⁷ , or C ⁻⁷	C, E \flat , G, B \flat
4.	Half-diminished seventh	dm	C $^{\circ 7}$ or C _m ⁷⁽⁵⁾	C, E \flat , G \flat , B \flat
5.	Diminished seventh ⁵	dd	C $^{\circ 7}$ or C _{dim} ⁷	C, E \flat , G \flat , B \flat

† - List notation for the notes of a chord whose *root* is C.

‡ - The use of superscripts in the *chord suffix* optional.

Reading

Burstein and Straus 2020, Chapter 3, pp. 33-41

¹ The terms *chord type* and *chord quality* are often used interchangeably.

² ‘M’ stands for *major*, ‘m’ stands for *minor*, ‘A’ stands for *augmented*, and ‘d’ stands for *diminished*. The four tonal triad types (M, m, A & d) may be derived from *every-other-note combinations* of the major and minor scales. M & m triads are traditionally classified as *consonant*, whereas A & d triads are classified as *dissonant*.

³ The first symbol represents the triad type. The second symbol represents the seventh type. For example, ‘Mm’ represents a major triad with a minor seventh. In tonal music, the seventh of a seventh chord is often referred to as a *chordal dissonance*; i.e., this chord member is a *tendency tone* that must resolve downward by step.

⁴ The terms *major-minor seventh* and *dominant seventh* chord are often used interchangeably.

⁵ The terms *diminished seventh* and *fully-diminished seventh* chord are often used interchangeably.