

Chord Types

TRIADS

The four *triad types* are:¹

	Chord type	Quality symbol ²	Lead sheet 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 ^o or Cdim	C, E \flat , G \flat

SEVENTH CHORDS

The five common *seventh chord types* are:

	Chord type	Quality symbol ³	Lead-sheet symbol [†]	Chord spelling [‡]
1.	Major-minor seventh ⁴	Mm	C ⁷	C, E, G, B \flat
2.	Major seventh	MM	C ^{maj7}	C, E, G, B
3.	Minor seventh	mm	C ^{m7} or C ⁻⁷	C, E \flat , G, B \flat
4.	Half-diminished seventh	dm	C ^{ø7} or C ^{m7(b5)}	C, E \flat , G \flat , B \flat
5.	Diminished seventh ⁵	dd	C ^{o7} or C ^{dim7}	C, E \flat , G \flat , B $\flat\flat$

† - Lead-sheet symbol for the chord type built on root C.

‡ - List notation for the chord type build on root C.

List Notation

We define *list notation* to be a listing of notes in bottom-to-top *root position* order. As shown above, chord members are separated by a comma “,” and single space. For more information about lead-sheet symbols, see the MUSC 116 handout *Lead Sheet Chord Symbols*.

Reference

L. Poundie Burstein and Joseph N. Straus, “Ch. 3 Triads and Seventh Chords,” in *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2020), 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, symbol ‘Mm’ represents a major triad with a minor seventh.

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.