

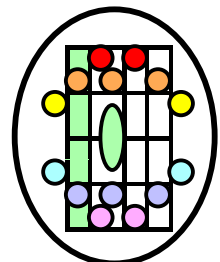
# Chord Prep With Exercises

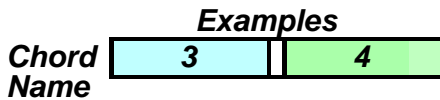
**PC-10**

## Introduction to Chords and Chord Symbols

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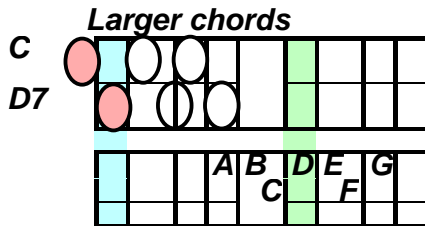
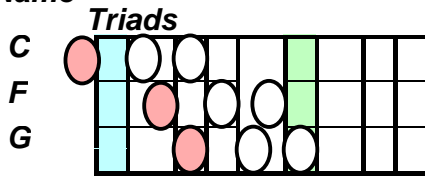
**From the Music  
Innovator's Workshop**



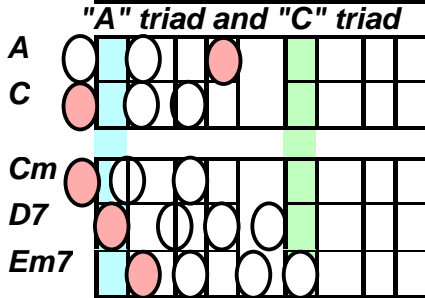


### What are chords and triads?

Chords are three or more notes sounded at the same time. In this unit you will learn mainly about three-note chords, called **TRIADS** (for their 3 notes), and will learn how to play them on the keyboard. The notes of chords (in root position) are spaced as thirds (skips). See the examples at the left: CEG, FAC, GBD. They use every second letter of the musical alphabet.



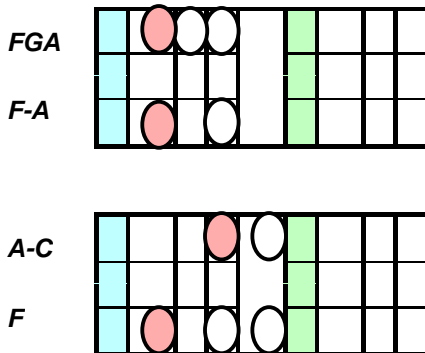
**About the Names/Symbols of Chords.** Chords have names/symbols so that we can identify them. (Chord "names" and their "symbols" are used interchangeably.) Chords have the same names as the keys on the keyboard -- from A thru G. A chord that is built up from an A is an "A" chord; one built up in 3rds from C is a "C" chord, and so on. The sound (or note) that the chord is built up from is called its "Root".



There are many kinds of chords. Some chords simply have the letter name as their whole name. For other chords, the letter name is just the start of the name, and other letters and numbers are added after the first letter to complete the name (Cm, or D7, or Em7). The full name is a code that lets you know exactly what keys to play to make the sound of the chord. This means that the name of the chord is more than just a name. The name code actually tells you how the chord is to be played!

Notice that on a key map, chord **ROOTS** are filled in with color to identify them.

A triad chord is built by stacking 2 intervals called thirds, with one interval musically higher than the other. An "interval" is the distance between two notes or sounds. A "third" is an interval made by notes three letter names apart (counting the first, middle, and last notes). Example: FGA - The interval of a third is F-A, and the root is F. The root is the note that the chord is built up from and gives the chord its letter name. When we stack two of these "third" intervals, one on top of the other, we get a 3-note chord.



The third note (C) of a 3-note F chord is an interval of a third above the second note (A). This note (C) is the third letter of the musical alphabet above the second note (A). Example: The first interval of the F chord is F-A. The second interval of the F chord, A-C, is stacked above the first interval, creating the F chord, which is made up of the interval F-A plus A-C, and the chord is spelled FAC.

The rules for identifying chords on this page apply only to chords in ROOT position (with the root in the lowest position of the chord). Once the notes of a chord are identified in this way, they can be played in any order without the chord losing its identity. Example: CEG, EGC, and GCE are all C triads.

### Two Kinds of Third - Major and Minor

On the keyboard, any two keys that play major thirds are separated by 3 other keys. Similarly, minor thirds are separated by 2 only keys. The resulting profound differences in sound lie at the heart of musical art.

These differences in sound can also be described in terms of traditional music notation. The notes of major thirds are 4 half-steps apart, and the notes of minor thirds are 3 half-steps apart. As defined on the keyboard, a half-step is the distance in sound between any two adjacent keys (ignoring color).

Because 2 half-steps equal 1 whole step, major and minor intervals can also be defined as follows. The notes of major thirds are 2 whole steps apart, and the notes of minor thirds are 1 1/2 steps apart. Observation: The distance between the sounds of a minor third is one half-step less than the distance between the sounds of a major third.

Simply stated, for a major third, there are 3 keys between the two keys that you play. For a minor third, there are only 2 keys between the two keys that you play. This is the only rule you need to know to be able to play and identify all major and minor thirds on the keyboard. When counting the keys between the two that you play, you count all keys regardless of color: you count white keys and black keys.

### Two Kinds of Chord - Major and Minor Modes

As noted on the previous page, we get a 3-note chord when we stack one "third" interval on top of another "third" interval. We build a major chord by stacking a minor third on top of a major third. And when we do the reverse, and stack a major third above a minor third, we get a minor chord. (Other ways of stacking thirds will be left for more advanced discussions later.)

Chord symbols identify and distinguish between major and minor chords. The symbol for a 3-note major chord is simply the letter name of the root. Examples: C, F#, Bb.

The symbol for a minor 3-note chord is also the letter name of the root, but this letter is followed by the letter "m". Examples: Cm, F#m, Bbm.

**Examples**

Name	3	4
------	---	---

**Major third**

C

**Minor third**

Cm

C Root  
1  
2  
3  
Major Third

Cm Root  
1  
2  
Minor Third

C

F#

Bb

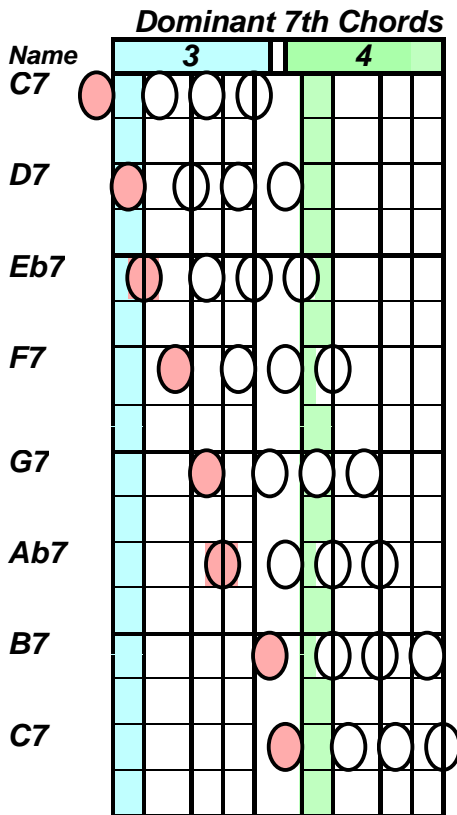
Cm

F#m

Bbm

### Another Kind of Chord - The Dominant 7th Chord

The major and minor chords that you learned about on the previous page are the most common chords that you will find in music. You might say that they are work horses of the chords. Other chords, more complicated but much less used, act as the spices to make the music more interesting. But you can get along very nicely without them until you develop your skills with the more common (and easier) chords.



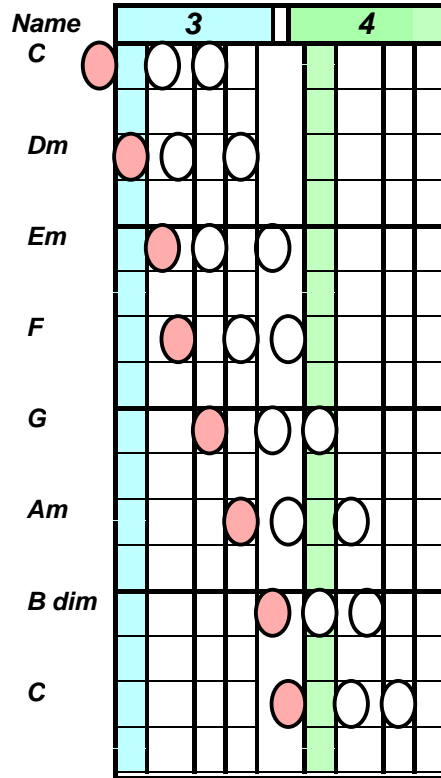
There is one other chord, though, that is so common and useful that you won't be able to get along without it. It's the dominant 7th chord. Here's what you need to know about it.

The dominant 7th chord is the 3-note major chord that you learned about on the previous page - with another minor 3rd interval stacked on top of it. One way to play it is to play the major chord, skip over 2 keys above the top note of the chord, and play the next key after that. Example: for a C major chord, CEG, skip the next 2 keys (G# and A) and play the next key, Bb. This gives you a chord spelled CEGBb. To summarize, you play a major chord adding the 3rd key above the top key (G) of the chord (Bb).

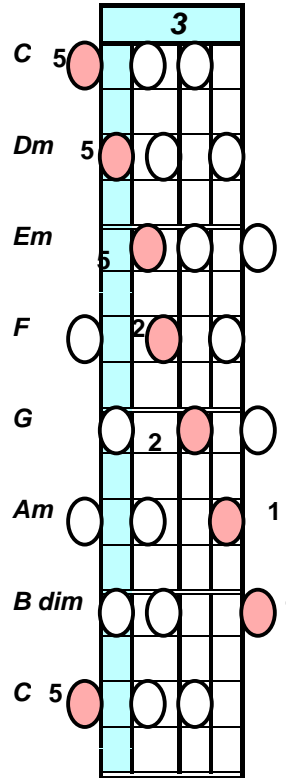
The symbol for the dominant 7th chord is the symbol for a major chord with the number 7 added to it, like this: C7 (or F7, or Bb7). Why is the extra note called a 7th? It is a 7th because it is 7 letter names above the root. Example: For a C7, you spell C-D-E-F-G-A-B. The B is 7 letters above the root (C). Why is the B flat? Because the key you play must be a minor 3rd (skip 2 keys) above the G.

Why is the chord called DOMINANT 7th? There is a technical explanation that you don't need to bother with right now. Just remember that it is DOMINANT because it is so very important to music.

**Chords in Root Position**



**Same Chords in the Blue Octave Group**



**Playing the Chords in Root Position or in the Blue Octave Group**

*The easiest way to learn how chords work is to study them in the root position -- with the root as the lowest note. All of the examples in this unit up to now have shown the chords in root position.*

*However, once you use the root position to determine which notes make up the chord, you can move the notes to anywhere on the keyboard without changing the name of the chord. A C chord is still a C chord no matter where you play its notes. When you play a chord with any of its keys other than the root as the lowest key, we say that the chord is inverted, or that it is an inversion.*

*It is important that you know that the order of the keys from bottom to top of the chord does not have anything to do with the name of the chord. You can play the keys in any order that you want.*

*The notes in the examples at the right are all confined to the blue octave to make them easier to play. They reduce the distance your hand has to move when going from one chord to another. Most of the left hand chords notated on key maps are shown in the blue octave for this reason.*

# Primary Chords, Key of C Major

**ABOUT PRIMARY CHORDS**

*The three PRIMARY chords in each key are the chords built with their roots on the 1st, 4th, and 5th notes of the key's scale. Taken together, these three chords include all eight notes of the scale to which they belong.*

**Brightly #/b: 0 Beats: 4**

The image displays four guitar fretboard diagrams for primary chords in the key of C major. Each diagram shows a 6-string fretboard with a light blue vertical bar highlighting the root note and its octave positions. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5.

- C Major:** Root on 1st, 4th, and 5th strings. Fingering: 5 (1st string), 3 (4th string), 1 (5th string).
- F Major:** Root on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd strings. Fingering: 5 (1st string), 2 (2nd string), 1 (3rd string).
- G Major:** Root on 3rd, 5th, and 6th strings. Fingering: 5 (3rd string), 2 (5th string), 1 (6th string).
- C5:** Root on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd strings. Fingering: 3 (1st string), 2 (2nd string), 1 (3rd string).

**Brightly #/b: 0 Beats: 4**

The score is presented on a grid with six measures. The right hand part is labeled "(Right Hand)". Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Pedals are shown as vertical bars on the left, and large red ovals indicate pedal points on the C and C7 strings.

Measure	2	3	4	5	6
C (Pedal)	5	3	1		
F		2			
G		2			
G7					
C					

# Primary Chords, Key of F Major

Brightly b: 1 Beats: 4



Brightly b: 1 Beats: 4

The diagram shows a guitar fretboard with six columns representing beats. The columns are color-coded: 2 (purple), 3 (cyan), 4 (green), 5 (yellow), and 6 (orange). The strings are labeled on the left as F, Bb, C, C7, and F. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Red circles represent notes to be played, and white circles represent notes to be held or released. A thick black vertical bar is placed between the 3rd and 4th columns.

String	Beat 2	Beat 3	Beat 4	Beat 5	Beat 6
F		5 (white), 2 (red)			
Bb		5 (white), 3 (white), 1 (red)			
C		3 (white), 3 (white)			
C7		3 (white), 3 (white)			
F	1 (red)				1 (red)

# Primary Chords, Key of G Major

Brightly #: 1 Beats: 4

The image displays four guitar fretboard diagrams for primary chords in the key of G major. Each diagram shows a 6-string fretboard with fingerings and a blue highlight for the primary triad. The G chord has a blue highlight on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th strings. The C chord has a blue highlight on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th strings. The D chord has a blue highlight on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th strings. The D7 chord has a blue highlight on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th strings. The D7 diagram also includes a red circle on the 1st string, 2nd fret.

Brightly #: 1 Beats: 4

The diagram illustrates a guitar exercise on a six-string fretboard. The strings are labeled G, C, D, D7, and G from top to bottom. The exercise is divided into six measures, each with a different background color: Measure 2 (blue), Measure 3 (cyan), Measure 4 (green), Measure 5 (yellow), and Measure 6 (orange). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 2 and 3. Chords are represented by colored ovals: pink for fretted notes and white for open strings. A thick black bar is present in measure 3 on the G string.

String	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4	Measure 5	Measure 6
G		2 (white), 2 (pink)			
C		2 (white), 2 (pink)			
D		2 (white), 2 (pink)			
D7		2 (white), 2 (pink)			
G		2 (white), 2 (pink)			

**Primary Chords, Key of D Major**

Brightly #: 2 Beats: 4

The image displays four guitar chord diagrams for the primary chords in the key of D major: D, G, A, and D7. Each diagram is a vertical representation of a guitar neck with six strings and five frets. A light blue vertical bar highlights the fret where the chord is positioned. A light blue box at the top of each diagram contains the number '3', indicating a three-finger barre. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 and colors: white circles for natural notes and red circles for barre notes. The D chord diagram has a blue highlight on fret 2. The G chord diagram has a blue highlight on fret 3. The A chord diagram has a blue highlight on fret 4. The D7 chord diagram has a blue highlight on fret 2. The diagrams are labeled 'D', 'G', 'A', and 'D7' on the left side.

Brightly #: 2 Beats: 4

The diagram illustrates a 4-beat exercise in D major, divided into five columns labeled 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The strings are labeled on the left as D, G, A, A7, and D from top to bottom. Column 2 (purple) shows a D chord. Column 3 (cyan) shows a G chord with a '3' indicating a triplet. Column 4 (green) shows an A chord. Column 5 (yellow) shows an A7 chord. Column 6 (orange) shows a D chord. Red circles indicate fretted notes, and white circles indicate open strings. A thick black vertical bar is between columns 3 and 4. Yellow vertical bars are on the left of each column, and a pink oval is at the bottom of column 6.

**Primary Chords, Key of D Minor**

Brightly b: 1 Beats: 4

The image displays four guitar fretboard diagrams, each representing a 3-beat exercise for a specific chord in the key of D minor. The exercises are as follows:

- Diagram 1 (Dm):** Shows a 3-beat exercise for the Dm chord. The first fret is highlighted in blue. Fingerings include the 5th finger on the 1st string (beat 1), and the 3rd finger on the 2nd string (beat 3). The chord is played on strings 1-4.
- Diagram 2 (Gm):** Shows a 3-beat exercise for the Gm chord. The first fret is highlighted in blue. Fingerings include the 5th finger on the 1st string (beat 1), and the 2nd finger on the 2nd string (beat 2). The chord is played on strings 2-5.
- Diagram 3 (A):** Shows a 3-beat exercise for the A chord. The first fret is highlighted in blue. Fingerings include the 5th finger on the 1st string (beat 1), and the 3rd finger on the 2nd string (beat 3). The chord is played on strings 2-5.
- Diagram 4 (Dm-Gm-A-A7-Dm):** Shows a 3-beat exercise for a chord sequence: Dm, Gm, A, A7, and Dm. The first fret is highlighted in blue. Fingerings include the 5th finger on the 1st string (beat 1), and the 3rd finger on the 2nd string (beat 3). The sequence is played on strings 1-4.

Brightly #: 1 Beats: 4

The diagram shows a 4-beat exercise on a guitar fretboard. The fretboard is divided into five vertical columns representing beats 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The strings are labeled on the left as Dm, Gm, A, A7, and Dm. Beat 2 is purple, beat 3 is cyan, beat 4 is green, beat 5 is yellow, and beat 6 is orange. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 2 and 3 next to red circles. White circles represent other notes. A thick black vertical bar is between beats 3 and 4. A red oval is on the 6th string in beat 2, and another red oval is on the 6th string in beat 6.

**Primary Chords, Key of A Minor**

Brightly #/b: 0 Beats: 4

The image displays four guitar fretboard diagrams, each representing a 3-beat exercise for a specific chord in the key of A minor. The exercises are as follows:

- Am:** The first diagram shows the Am chord. The first beat has a barre at the 5th fret with a '3' above it. The second beat has a barre at the 3rd fret with a '3' above it. The third beat has a barre at the 2nd fret with a '2' above it. The fretboard is shaded blue from the 5th fret down to the 2nd fret.
- Dm:** The second diagram shows the Dm chord. The first beat has a barre at the 5th fret with a '3' above it. The second beat has a barre at the 3rd fret with a '3' above it. The fretboard is shaded blue from the 5th fret down to the 3rd fret.
- E:** The third diagram shows the E chord. The first beat has a barre at the 5th fret with a '3' above it. The second beat has a barre at the 3rd fret with a '3' above it. The fretboard is shaded blue from the 5th fret down to the 3rd fret.
- Am, Dm, E, E7, Am:** The fourth diagram shows a sequence of chords. The first beat is Am (barre at 5th fret, '3' above). The second beat is Dm (barre at 5th fret, '5' above). The third beat is E (barre at 5th fret, '3' above). The fourth beat is E7 (barre at 5th fret, '5' above). The fifth beat is Am (barre at 5th fret, '3' above). The fretboard is shaded blue from the 5th fret down to the 3rd fret.



Brightly #/b: 0 Beats: 4

The chart displays a sequence of chords and voicings over six measures. The first measure (purple header) is Am, with a pedal point in the bass. The second measure (cyan header) is Dm, featuring a triplet of notes in the bass. The third measure (green header) is E, with a red accent on the second string. The fourth measure (yellow header) is E7, with a red accent on the second string. The fifth measure (orange header) is Am, with a red oval in the bass. The sixth measure (orange header) is Am, with a red oval in the bass. The chart includes various fingerings (white circles) and accents (red circles) for each chord.

# Primary Chords, Key of E Minor

Brightly #: 1 Beats: 4

The image displays four guitar fretboard diagrams, each representing a different chord in the key of E minor. Each diagram is a vertical grid of six strings and six frets. The fretboard is divided into two sections: a top section with a light blue background and a bottom section with a white background. The top section contains a triplet of three notes, and the bottom section contains a group of five notes. The notes are represented by circles, with some filled in red and others as white outlines. The diagrams are labeled as follows:

- Diagram 1 (Em):** The top section has notes on strings 1, 2, and 3 at frets 5, 6, and 7. The bottom section has notes on strings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 at frets 3, 3, 3, 3, and 3. The label "Em" is to the left.
- Diagram 2 (Am):** The top section has notes on strings 1, 2, and 3 at frets 5, 6, and 7. The bottom section has notes on strings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 at frets 3, 3, 3, 3, and 3. The label "Am" is to the left.
- Diagram 3 (B):** The top section has notes on strings 1, 2, and 3 at frets 5, 6, and 7. The bottom section has notes on strings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 at frets 3, 3, 3, 3, and 3. The label "B" is to the left.
- Diagram 4 (B7):** The top section has notes on strings 1, 2, and 3 at frets 5, 6, and 7. The bottom section has notes on strings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 at frets 3, 3, 3, 3, and 3. The label "B7" is to the left.

Brightly #: 1 Beats: 4

**Primary Chords, Key of Bb Major**

Brightly b: 2

The image displays four guitar fretboard diagrams for primary chords in the key of Bb Major. Each diagram shows a six-string fretboard with fingerings and string groupings indicated.

- Chord 1 (Bb):** Labeled *Bb* on the left. A cyan box at the top contains the number **3**. Fingerings: 5 (1st string), 2 (2nd string), 3 (3rd string), 3 (4th string), 2 (5th string), 5 (6th string). A red vertical bar highlights strings 1, 2, and 3.
- Chord 2 (Eb):** Labeled *Eb* on the left. A cyan box at the top contains the number **3**. Fingerings: 5 (1st string), 3 (2nd string), 3 (3rd string), 3 (4th string), 5 (5th string), 5 (6th string). A red vertical bar highlights strings 1, 2, and 3.
- Chord 3 (F):** Labeled *F* on the left. A cyan box at the top contains the number **3**. Fingerings: 5 (1st string), 2 (2nd string), 2 (3rd string), 2 (4th string), 2 (5th string), 2 (6th string). A red vertical bar highlights strings 1, 2, and 3.
- Chord 4 (Bb7):** Labeled *Bb* on the left. A cyan box at the top contains the number **3**. Fingerings: 3 (1st string), 3 (2nd string), 4 (3rd string), 2 (4th string), 4 (5th string), 4 (6th string). A red vertical bar highlights strings 1, 2, and 3.

Brightly #/b: 0 Beats: 4

The musical score is presented on six systems of staves. The top system is for the Bb instrument, with a '(Pedal)' label on the left. The second system is for Eb, the third for F, the fourth for F7, and the fifth for Bb. The sixth system is a bass line for Bb. The score is divided into six measures, each with a colored header: 2 (purple), 3 (cyan), 4 (green), 5 (yellow), and 6 (orange). The notation includes circles for notes, with some notes highlighted in red and others in white. A '3' indicates a triplet in the Bb system. The Eb, F, and F7 systems show various chord voicings. The Bb system at the bottom shows a bass line with a pedal point.

**Common Triad Chords: A, Bb, C, D – With 7ths**

The numbers show suggested LEFT HAND fingerings for the chord roots.

<b>A</b>				<b>Bb</b>				<b>C</b>				<b>D</b>			
		Major													
<b>A7</b>				<b>Bb7</b>				<b>C7</b>				<b>D7</b>			
		Dominant 7th													
<b>Am</b>				<b>Bbm</b>				<b>Cm</b>				<b>Dm</b>			
		Minor													
<b>Am7</b>				<b>Bbm7</b>				<b>Cm7</b>				<b>Dm7</b>			
		Minor 7th													
<b>A dim</b>				<b>Bb dim</b>				<b>C dim</b>				<b>D dim</b>			
		Diminished													
<b>Common Triad Chords: Eb, E, F, G – With 7ths</b>															
<b>Eb</b>				<b>E</b>				<b>F</b>				<b>G</b>			
		Major													
<b>Eb7</b>				<b>E7</b>				<b>F7</b>				<b>G7</b>			
		Dominant 7th													
<b>Ebm</b>				<b>Em</b>				<b>Fm</b>				<b>Gm</b>			
		Minor													
<b>Ebm7</b>				<b>Em7</b>				<b>Fm7</b>				<b>Gm7</b>			
		Minor 7th													
<b>Eb dim</b>				<b>E dim</b>				<b>F dim</b>				<b>G dim</b>			
		Diminished													