

Chord Symbol Notation & Identification

In general, the 3rd & 7th identify a chord's quality. (Start with these.)

In tonic chords (both Major and minor), the 6th can substitute for the 7th.

* note all #'s are in relation to the major scale.

Major Chords: (tonic function)

Maj⁷: 1, 3, 5, 7

Maj⁶: 1, 3, 5, 6

Maj⁹: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 (7th implied)

Maj¹³ chords do not exist. Use 6 instead of 13. 13 is only used with dominant chords.

Maj^{7(#11)}: 1, 3, 5, 7, #11

Maj^{9(#11)}: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, #11

Maj⁶: 1, 3, 5, 6, 9

Maj⁶⁽⁷⁾: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9

Maj^{9(#11)}: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, #11 (7th implied)

Minor Chords: (tonic function)

mi⁶: 1, b3, 5, 6

mi^(Maj7): 1, b3, 5, natural 7

mi⁶: 1, b3, 5, 6, 9

mi^(Maj9): 1, b3, 5, natural 7, 9 (natural 7 implied)

mi¹³ chords do not exist. Use 6 instead of 13.

Minor Chords: (usually functioning as ii chords)

mi⁷: 1, b3, 5, b7

mi⁹: 1, b3, 5, b7, 9 (b7 is implied)

mi¹¹: 1, b3, 5, b7, 9, 11 (b7 and 9 are implied)

mi^{7(b5)}: 1, b3, b5, b7

mi^{9(b5)}: 1, b3, b5, b7, 9 (b7 implied)

mi^{11(b5)}: 1, b3, b5, b7, 9, 11 (b7, 9 implied)



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Seventh Chords: (dominant function, usually)

7: 1, 3, 5, b7

9: 1, 3, 5, b7, 9 (b7 implied)

13: 1, 3, 5, b7, 9, 13 (No #11. b7, 9 implied)

Seventh Chords with alterations:

7(#11): 1, 3, 5, b7, #11

7(b5): 1, 3, b5, b7

7(#5): 1, 3, #5, b7

7(#5, b5): 1, 3, b5, #5, b7

7(b9): 1, 3, 5, b7, b9

7(#9): 1, 3, 5, b7, #9

13(b9): 1, 3, 5, b7, b9, 13 *note, the 13th does not imply a natural 9 here.

- Chords cannot have natural and altered 9's simultaneously.