

## Advanced Higher Music – Key signatures & chords

In higher literacy, you were required to recognise chords I, IV, V and VI.

In advanced higher, you are required to be able to identify chords **I, II, IV, V, and VI**, as well as write **4-part chords**, in different **inversions**.

In higher, you were taught to write out the notes of the scale of the key you're in, and then identify the notes of each chord from that.

In C major, that would look like this:

5th	G	A	B	C	D	E	F
3rd	E	F	G	A	B	C	D
root	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
CHORD	I	II (m)	III (m)	IV	V	VI (m)	VII

The workbook for Higher Music deals with **triads** – 3 note chords. Until now we have always dealt with triads in **root position**. This means the **root** is the lowest note (the letter-name of the triad)

C major,  
Root position

C major scale

Root position chords in C major (I ii IV V vi)

I  
C

ii  
Dm

IV  
F

V  
G

vi

## Key Signatures for Advanced Higher

Fill in the correct accidentals for each key signature.

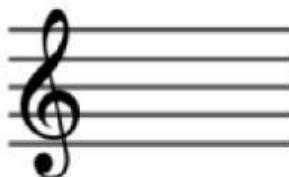
C Major & A Minor



G Major & E Minor



F Major & D Minor



Bb Major



D Major



Identify the key signatures in the following examples.

Key:

A musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are quarter notes and eighth notes, primarily on the A and C strings of a guitar.

Key:

A musical staff in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are quarter notes and eighth notes, primarily on the D and G strings of a guitar.

Key:

A musical staff in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are quarter notes and eighth notes, primarily on the A and C strings of a guitar.

# Inversions

An inversion is a chord in a different order! We have learned all our chords in **root position**, where the **root** of the chord is the lowest note.

In C major, the notes are **C (root), E (3rd), and G (5th)**

If the **3rd** of the chord is the lowest note, the chord is in **1st inversion**.

If the **5th** of the chord is the lowest note, the chord is in **2nd inversion**.

5th (2nd inv)	G	A	B	C	D	E	F
3rd (1st inv)	E	F	G	A	B	C	D
root	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
CHORD	I	II (m)	III (m)	IV	V	VI (m)	VII

**ROOT position**

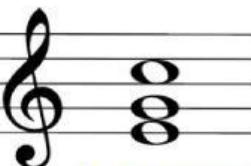
*Line-line-line  
(or space-space-space)*



C is the lowest note,  
making this a root  
position chord of C

**1<sup>st</sup> INVERSION**

*gap between  
top 2 notes*



E is the lowest note,  
making this a 1<sup>st</sup>  
inversion chord of C

**2<sup>nd</sup> INVERSION**

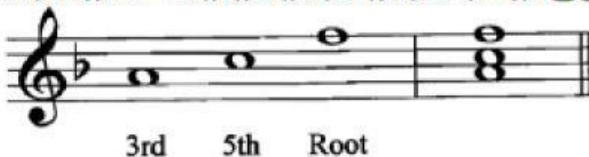
*gap between  
bottom 2 notes*



G is the lowest note,  
making this a 2<sup>nd</sup>  
inversion chord of C

In the **first inversion** of any triad the **3<sup>rd</sup>** will always be heard as the **LOWEST** note:

F major,  
First inversion



In the **second inversion** of any triad the **5<sup>th</sup>** will always be heard as the **LOWEST** note:

A minor,  
Second inversion



Any triad can be treated in this way. Here is a chart of some familiar triads showing the root position, 1<sup>st</sup> inversion and 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion of each:

C major

Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion  
1<sup>st</sup> in bass    3<sup>rd</sup> in bass    5<sup>th</sup> in bass

F major

Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion  
Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion

D minor

Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion  
Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion

G major

Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion  
1<sup>st</sup> in bass    3<sup>rd</sup> in bass    5<sup>th</sup> in bass

A minor

Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion  
Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion

E minor

Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion  
Root position    1<sup>st</sup> inversion    2<sup>nd</sup> inversion

### EXERCISE 1 Identifying positions of triads

Are these triads in root position, 1<sup>st</sup> inversion or 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion?

Write your answer in the box below each triad.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

(g)

(h)

### EXERCISE 2

Draw the requested notes on the stave below these triads:

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

Draw the 3rd

Draw the root

Draw the 3rd

Draw the 5th

Answers :-

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

- Name the following TONIC chords (i.e. chord I) and, for each, name the key and the inversion. (I, Ib, Ic)

If the lowest note is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the chord, it is a **ROOT** position chord.

*Root position chords do not need to be identified by a letter (I)*

If the lowest note is the 3rd of the chord, it is a **1<sup>ST</sup> INVERSION** chord.

*This is indicated by the letter b (i.e. chord I 1<sup>st</sup> inversion = Ib)*

If the lowest note is the 5th of the chord, it is a **2<sup>ND</sup> INVERSION** chord.

*This is indicated by the letter c (i.e. chord I 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion = Ic)*

## Major keys

Key \_\_\_\_\_

Key \_\_\_\_\_

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It shows two chords: a C major chord (root position) and an F major chord (1st inversion). The C major chord has notes C, E, G. The F major chord has notes F, A, C. The notes are shown with stems pointing upwards.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

Key \_\_\_\_\_

Key \_\_\_\_\_

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It shows two chords: a G major chord (root position) and a C major chord (1st inversion). The G major chord has notes G, B, D. The C major chord has notes C, E, G. The notes are shown with stems pointing upwards.

## Minor keys

Key \_\_\_\_\_

Key \_\_\_\_\_

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It shows two chords: an A major chord (root position) and a D major chord (1st inversion). The A major chord has notes A, C#, E. The D major chord has notes D, F#, A. The notes are shown with stems pointing upwards.

Key \_\_\_\_\_

A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B flat). It shows an A minor chord (root position) with notes A, C, E. The notes are shown with stems pointing upwards.

As well as the TONIC chord of the key, you need to be able to tell chords II, IV, V, VI in root position, 1<sup>st</sup> inversion and 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion. These can be in any of the keys that you need to know for Advanced Higher. These are:

The image shows five musical staves, each with a different key signature. The first staff has a treble clef and no sharps or flats, labeled 'C Major' and 'A Minor'. The second staff has a treble clef and one sharp, labeled 'G Major' and 'E Minor'. The third staff has a treble clef and one flat, labeled 'F Major' and 'D Minor'. The fourth staff has a treble clef and one flat, labeled 'Bb Major'. The fifth staff has a treble clef and two sharps, labeled 'D Major'.

In order to work out the chords for each key, write the scale out with correct accidentals as appropriate and label chords I, II, IV, V, VI

e.g. F major

F	G	A	Bb	C	D
I	II		IV	V	VI

Next, write in the notes of the chord above these notes:

2 <sup>ND</sup> inv	C	D	F	G	A
1 <sup>st</sup> inv	A	Bb	D	E	F
root	F	G	A	Bb	C
	I	II	IV	V	VI

**Remember, the inversion of a chord is dictated by which note is lowest!**

Work out your **key signature** first, then work out what **chord** is being created from all the notes, then look at the lowest note to work out the inversion!

If the lowest note is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the chord, it is a **ROOT** position chord.

*Root position chords do not need to be identified by a letter (I)*

If the lowest note is the 3rd of the chord, it is a **1<sup>ST</sup> INVERSION** chord.

*This is indicated by the letter b (i.e. chord I 1<sup>st</sup> inversion = Ib)*

If the lowest note is the 5th of the chord, it is a **2<sup>ND</sup> INVERSION** chord.

*This is indicated by the letter c (i.e. chord I 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion = Ic)*

## Exercise on chords and inversions

- Using the same method as on previous page, write out the scales for the following keys (including relevant accidentals) and complete the notes for chords I, II, IV, V, VI. Remember, in the minor keys, the 7<sup>th</sup> note is sharpened. This will affect chord V, as the 7<sup>th</sup> note of the scale appears in this chord.

### G major

2 <sup>ND</sup> inv						← c
1 <sup>ST</sup> inv						← b
root						← (a)
	I	II		IV	V	VI

### D major

2						← c
1						← b
R						← (a)
	I	II		IV	V	VI

### Bb major

2						← c
1						← b
R						← (a)
	I	II		IV	V	VI

- Now work out the following chords of these major keys:

Key \_\_\_\_\_ Key \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_ CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_ CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_ CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_ CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_ CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

Key \_\_\_\_\_ Key \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_ Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_ CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_ CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_ CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

Now work out the following chords of these **MINOR** keys:

**A minor**

What accidental is there for the raised 7<sup>th</sup> of the scale? \_\_\_\_\_

2 →  
1 →  
R →

							← c
							← b
							← (a)
I	II		IV	V	VI		

**D minor**

What accidental is there for the raised 7<sup>th</sup> of the scale? \_\_\_\_\_

2 →  
1 →  
R →

							← c
							← b
							← (a)
I	II		IV	V	VI		

**E minor**

What accidental is there for the raised 7<sup>th</sup> of the scale? \_\_\_\_\_

2 →  
1 →  
R →

							← c
							← b
							← (a)
I	II		IV	V	VI		

Key \_\_\_\_\_

Key \_\_\_\_\_



Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

Key \_\_\_\_\_

Key \_\_\_\_\_



Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

Lowest: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_

CHORD: \_\_\_\_\_