

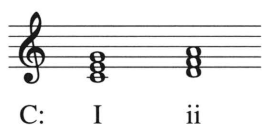
Chord Labelling

Two systems of chord labelling are used in this book. Each is explained fully in the chapters which follow, but this section may be useful for reference.

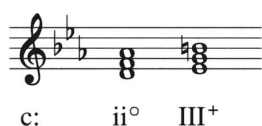
'Extended roman'

Of the various methods employed by musicians and teachers, 'extended roman' best identifies the **sound quality** of the chord (e.g. major) as well as its **function** within a key (e.g. chord V). In labelling correctly, the student will develop his awareness of the precise **sound** of each chord, even the difference between, for example, a **major**-sounding chord (IV) and a **minor**-sounding chord (iv).

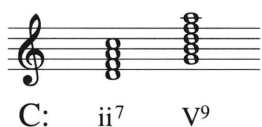
- A capital (upper-case) letter indicates a major key: C = C major.
- A small (lower-case) letter indicates a minor key: c = C minor.
- A large (upper-case) roman numeral indicates a major chord (consisting of a major 3rd and a perfect 5th).
- A small (lower-case) roman numeral indicates a minor chord (consisting of a minor 3rd and a perfect 5th).



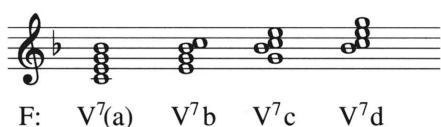
- The numeral itself (I, II, III, etc.) indicates the degree of the scale on which the chord is built.
- The symbol ° placed next to a numeral indicates a chord, usually minor, that includes a diminished 5th.
- The symbol + placed next to a numeral indicates a chord, usually major, that includes an augmented 5th.



- Figures such as ⁷ and ⁹ indicate the interval read upwards from the bass, or a chord that includes that interval.



- The letters a, b, c and d indicate, respectively, root position and first, second and third inversions. When a chord is in root position, it is usually indicated by the numeral alone, without the 'a'.



- A \sharp or \flat next to a roman numeral chromatically affects the root of the chord.

C: $\sharp iv^\circ$ c: $\flat II$ $\flat IIb$
Neapolitan 6th

- d^7 indicates a diminished 7th from the bass of the chord.

c: vii^{d7}

- Aug. 6 (It.) (Ger.) (Fr.) indicates an augmented 6th chord in one of three variants: Italian, German or French.

C: aug. 6 (It.) aug. 6 (Ger.) aug. 6 (Fr.)
 $\begin{matrix} 6\# \\ 3 \end{matrix}$ $\begin{matrix} 6\# \\ 5 \\ 3 \end{matrix}$ $\begin{matrix} 6\# \\ 4 \\ 3 \end{matrix}$

Figured bass

This is a system developed in the Baroque period[†] (c.1600–1750) and still used today by continuo players on, for example, a harpsichord, organ or archlute. The figures are a kind of musical shorthand and indicate the intervals from the bass note, and hence the chords to be played, or ‘realized’, in performance.

Thus a triad in root position may be labelled $\frac{5}{3}$, because the notes a 3rd and 5th above the bass note are to be played.

C: $\frac{5}{3}$

The figuring does not indicate the position or scoring of the notes, which are left to the player.

C: $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{5}{3}$ $\frac{5}{3}$

Since root position chords are so common, the figures $\frac{5}{3}$ were normally omitted in practice. In the cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ progression, however, the $\frac{5}{3}$ resolution is often indicated: $\frac{6}{4}-\frac{5}{3}$.

The following examples give the principal figures used, including inversions and dissonances. Bracketed figures were usually omitted.

[†] The musicologist, Hugo Riemann, identified the period 1600–1750 as the ‘thorough-bass period’.

Chord inversions

	root	1st inversion	2nd inversion
C:	(5) (3)	6 (3)	6 4

7th chords and inversions

	root	1st inversion	2nd inversion	3rd inversion
F:	7 (5) (3)	6 5 (3)	(6) 4 3	(6) 4 2

Accidentals

An accidental on its own applies to the third of the chord:

	#	=	c:	h	=
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An accidental next to a figure alters chromatically the quality of that interval:

	6#	=	c:	6h	=
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Suspension figurings

Indicate the movement of a part above the bass:

	9 - 8	7 - 6	4 - 3
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Figured bass will be used throughout this book, where appropriate. Keyboard players and lutenists are advised to become fluent readers of this system so that they are able to enjoy continuo work in Baroque music-making.