

Intervals & Chords

Scale	Frets	Steps	Names of the Intervals and common symbols
Do 1	0	0	Perfect First, P1, First, unison, 1
	1	½	Minor Second, m2, flat two, <i>b2</i> , -2
Re 2	2	1	Major Second, M2, two, 2
	3	1½	Minor Third, m3, flat three, <i>b3</i> , -3
Mi 3	4	2	Major Third, M3, three, 3
Fa 4	5	2½	Perfect Fourth, P4, fourth, four, 4
	6	3	Diminished Fifth, Augmented Fourth, dim 5, aug 4, flat five, <i>b5</i> , -5, sus 4, tritone
Sol 5	7	3½	Perfect Fifth, P5, fifth, five, 5
	8	4	Augmented Fifth, Minor Sixth, aug 5, sharp five, #5, m6, flat six, <i>b6</i> , +5, -6
La 6	9	4½	Major Sixth, M6, sixth, six, 6
	10	5	Minor Seventh, m7, flat seven, <i>b7</i> , -7
Ti 7	11	5½	Major Seventh, M7, Δ7
Do 8 (1)	12	6	Perfect Eighth, P8, octave, eighth, eight, 8
	13	6½	Minor Ninth, m9 (Octave above m2)
Re 9 (2)	14	7	Major Ninth, M9 (Octave above M2), ninth, 9

The distance from one note to another is called an **INTERVAL**.

Each interval has at least one name -- most have picked up nicknames along the way. The names of the intervals start with the **Perfect First** or the **"one"** interval. "One" means unison, or the difference between a note *and itself*. ("Zero" wasn't yet a mathematical concept in Europe when they made up this system.) Twelve half-tones later we get to the **Perfect Eight** or **"Octave."** In between are a lot of confusing names. Over the years, classical musicians tend to use the "proper" terms, while pop and jazz players have developed a shorthand for naming the intervals.

Don't let the jargon buffalo you.

Here is a chart listing the more common interval names you might see in print or hear at a session. Remember, **an interval is the distance between two notes.** The first note is, by default, **ONE**. The interval you are searching for is **X** many steps UP from your ONE.

Below the table is a chart of some common chords, each with its interval "formula" alongside. **In pop music, a chord always bears the name of its root note, followed with a word or two that indicates the harmony notes** – the intervals given here are the distance from that root for each harmony note in the chord.

common chord names

Major (M) (ma) (maj)
 Minor (m) (min) (-)
 Augmented (+) (aug)
 Flat Five (*b5*)
 Diminished (°) (dim)
 Suspended (sus4) (sus.)
 Sus 2
 Major sixth (sixth) (6) (M6)
 Minor sixth (m6)
 Seventh (dominant seventh) (7)
 Major seventh (M7) (Δ7)
 Minor seventh (m7) (-7)
 Augmented seventh (+7) (7+5)
 Diminished seventh (dim 7) (°7)
 Seventh flat five (7*b5*)
 Minor seven flat five (m7*b5*)
 Ninth (dominant ninth)(9)
 Major ninth (M9)
 Minor ninth (m9)
 Add nine (add9)
 Eleventh (11)
 Thirteenth (13)

intervals based on the chord's root

1 - 3 - 5
 1 - *b3* - 5
 1 - 3 - #5(*b6*)
 1 - 3 - *b5*
 1 - *b3* - *b5*
 1 - 4 - 5
 1 - 2 - 5
 1 - 3 - 5 - 6
 1 - *b3* - 5 - 6
 1 - 3 - 5 - *b7*
 1 - 3 - 5 - 7
 1 - *b3* - 5 - *b7*
 1 - 3 - #5(*b6*) - *b7*
 1 - *b3* - *b5* - 6 (*bb7*)
 1 - 3 - *b5* - *b7*
 1 - *b3* - *b5* - *b7*
 1 - 3 - 5 - *b7* - 9
 1 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9
 1 - *b3* - 5 - *b7* - 9
 1 - 3 - 5 - 9
 1 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9 - 11
 1 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9 - 11 - 13

MAJOR vs. MINOR CHORDS

The words "major" and "minor" follow some conventions when used in a chord name. Don't get confused..

It is assumed that the "default" 3rd is a major, and that the "default" seventh interval is minor.

So the word "minor" in a chord name means the **triad is minor** – we say nothing if the chord is major. The word "major" is reserved to indicate the 7th is major – without the word "major" the 7th interval is assumed to be minor.

So a **C7** means a

C major chord with a minor 7th added.

While a **CM7** means a

C major with a major 7th added.

But a **Cm7** means a

C minor chord with a minor 7th added

And the rare **Cm(M7)** would mean a

C minor chord with a major seventh.