

## What Notes to Choose Over What Chords

### Triads

Review: Chords are a combination of three notes: a root, and then two “skip”s.

Example: If your Root is the **1**, your other notes will be the **3** and the **5**.

In other words, triads are made by using *every other note*.



Let's sing the Triads in the key of C:

1 Chord = 1, 3, 5

2 Chord = 2, 4, 6

3 Chord = 3, 5, 7

4 Chord = 4, 6, 1

5 Chord = 5, 7, 2

6 Chord = 6, 1, 3

7 Chord = 7, 2, 4

The notes would be:

1 Chord = C, E, G

2 Chord = D, F, A

3 Chord = E, G, B

4 Chord = F, A, C

5 Chord = G, B, D

6 Chord = A, C, E

7 Chord = B, D, F

## What Notes to Choose Over What Chords

*When choosing what notes to sing, any note of the triad being played works great.*

Example: The band (or track) is playing: 1 chord, 5 chord, 1 chord. In the key of C, this means they are playing: C chord, G chord, C chord.

So, I'll choose to sing 1, 7, 1. In other words, I'll sing C, B, C.

Or, I'll choose to sing 3, 2, 3. In other words, I'll sing E, D, E.

Or, I'll choose to sing 5, 5, 5. In other words, I'll sing G, G, G.

**Homework: choose a backing track and choose some notes to sing over it (just sing "oh oh oh"). Email a voice memo to me [DreBinley@gmail.com](mailto:DreBinley@gmail.com) (along with this pdf, completed below).**

### **Passing Tones**

Most of the time, songs' melodies will contain notes found in the triads being played underneath them.

However, sometimes a song's melody will venture outside of these parameters. Often when this happens it's a passing tone.

Think of the melody "Do(e) **a** Deer, a Female Deer" - the word "a" is a passing tone. The chord being played at the beginning of this song is a 1 chord, but the melody contains a quick 2. It's a passing tone between the 1 and the 3.

"Happy Birthday" is another example. The opening line is "5, 5, 6, 5" sung over a 1 chord. The "6" can be seen as a "passing tone" that resolves back to the 5 note.

**Homework: What's an example of a song that uses a passing tone? Explain what numbers it uses, and what chord it's over.**

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## What Notes to Choose Over What Chords

### **Color Tones** *(more advanced)*

In music theory, you can keep stacking “skips” onto a chord to make it thicker (contain more notes). In addition to the root, third, and 5th, you can add on the 7th, 9th, etc.

Example: Norah Jones’ “Don’t Know Why” begins on the 7th note of the 1 chord. Specifically, the verse starts with a Bbmajor7 chord, and she sings an A.



**Homework:** What’s an example of a song that uses a color tone? Explain what numbers it uses, and what chord it’s over.

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\*\*\*\* *Email me this pdf, completed, along with a voice memo of you singing notes over a background track* \*\*\*\*