

FUNCTIONAL CHORD SYMBOLS

Functional chord symbols, written below chords, use Roman numerals to show the scale degree on which the triad is built. UPPER CASE is used for MAJOR triads and LOWER CASE is used for MINOR.

ROOT QUALITY CHORD SYMBOLS

Root quality symbols, written above chords, use upper case letters to show the root of the chord. An upper case letter (eg. G) indicates a major triad and an upper case letter followed by a lower case “m” indicates a minor triad.

Here are the Functional and Root Quality Chord symbols for the tonic, subdominant and dominant triads built on the MAJOR SCALE:

A musical staff in treble clef showing the tonic, subdominant, and dominant triads on the major scale. The notes are C, F, G, and C. Above the staff, the root quality symbols are C, F, G, and C. Below the staff, the functional symbols are I, IV, V, and I.

Here are the Functional and Root Quality Chord symbols for the tonic, subdominant and dominant triads built on the HARMONIC MINOR SCALE:

A musical staff in treble clef showing the tonic, subdominant, and dominant triads on the harmonic minor scale. The notes are C, Fm, G, and Cm. Above the staff, the root quality symbols are Cm, Fm, G, and Cm. Below the staff, the functional symbols are i, iv, V, and i.

Notice that:

The TONIC and SUBDOMINANT triads are MAJOR in MAJOR keys and MINOR in MINOR keys.
The DOMINANT triad is MAJOR in both MAJOR AND MINOR keys.

12. For each of the following triads, write the functional chord symbols below and root quality chord symbols above.

F major

A Minor

D major

C minor

B flat major