

What makes a Chord?

Let's begin with a basic definition of a chord- In music speak, a chord is simply 3 or more notes played together.

I'm going to run down the notes used to form several commonly used chords, but first let's revisit the 'Nashville Number System' to reacquaint ourselves with the 'notes as numbers' mindset!

Key	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#
B	B	C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A#
C	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
D	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#
E	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#
F	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E
G	G	A	B	C	D	E	F#

In each example of these chords, I will give the formula (note numbers) and the actual notes used. All examples will be given for 'C' chords.

CHORD NAME	FORMULA	EXAMPLE (IN C)
Major	1 3 5	C E G
Minor	1 b3 5	C Eb G
Dominant 7th	1 3 5 b7	C E G Bb
Sus 2	1 2 5	C D G
Sus 4	1 4 5	C F G

As an example, when you play a C chord, by fretting the 3rd fret of the 1st string, you are playing a C on that string. The open strings are E (3rd), C (root), and the high G (5th), thus all notes are in a C major.