

If you play a scale, the notes in it will change, depending on which note you start with. The notes of the scale in the key of C are:

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

The notes in the scale of G are:

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

A chord is formed by playing two or more notes simultaneously. A MAJOR chord is composed of the first, third, and fifth notes of the scale. So, a C major chord is 1 – 3 – 5, or C – E – G. To simplify reading and writing chord names, we assume all chords are major chords unless told otherwise, so the CEG chord is called, “C”. If we add the seventh note of the scale to the major chord, we play 1 – 3 – 5 – 7, or C – E – G – B. This is a C major seventh chord, usually written Cmaj7 or CM7 (to save room). Over time, musicians decided they liked playing this chord with the seventh note flatted one fret: 1 – 3 – 5 – 7b, or C – E – G – Bb. We could call this “C flatted seventh,” but to simplify things, we just call it C seventh, and write it C7. All chord names involve a similar pattern! The most common chord types, with their patterns are:

(# = sharp, b = flat)

symbol:	name:	pattern:
maj	major	1-3-5
m	minor	1-3b-5
7 <sup>th</sup>	seventh	1-3-5-7b
9 <sup>th</sup>	ninth	1-3-5-7b-9
11 <sup>th</sup>	eleventh	1-3-5-7b-9-11
13 <sup>th</sup>	thirteenth	1-3-5-7b-9-13
+	augmented	1-3-5#
°	diminished	1-3b-5bb (flat 2 frets)
(No, I don't know why they use the degree sign.)		
maj6	major 6 <sup>th</sup>	1-3-5-6
min6	minor 6 <sup>th</sup>	1-3b-5-6
sus	sustained 4 <sup>th</sup>	1-3-4-5
M7 or maj7	major 7 <sup>th</sup>	1-3-5-7
m7 or min7	minor 7 <sup>th</sup>	1-3b-5-7b
7+5	7 <sup>th</sup> plus 5 <sup>th</sup>	1-3-5#-7b
7-5	7 <sup>th</sup> minus 5 <sup>th</sup>	1-3-5b-7b

Here's a handy scale slide-rule. Cut on the line, and just line up the 1 with the tonic note of the chord (the one it's named after).

If you know the notes of an unknown chord, and their scale positions, you can figure out what the chord is called, and vice-versa.

A	Bb	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab
1	*	2	*	3	4	*	5	*	6	*	7	1	*	2	*	3	4	*	5	*	6	*
												8	*	9	*	10	11	*	12	*	13	*

## Related chords

Certain chords go so well together that they seem to be related. Most songs are based on these groups. They are specific chords based on the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth notes of the scale:

Position:	relation:	Examples (vertical groups):			
1	Dominant	C	D	G	A
4	sub-Dominant	F	G	C	D
5	Seventh	G7	A7	D7	E7
6	Related minor	Am	Bm	Em	F#

A group of related chords, together with its scale, is called a *key*. Keys are named after the note the scale begins on: the key of A, the key of B $\flat$ , etc. Written music does not actually name the keys. They are indicated by the number and position of the sharps and flats in the scale. Jazz musicians habitually refer to the key of a piece by its *key signature*: “Three sharps, four flats.” (Except for C, which has none, and is just called, C.) Here's a table:

Number of sharps or flats:	Key: (European or Latin name)
0	C do (pronounced: doe)
1#	G sol (pronounced: so)
2#	D re (pronounced: ray)
3#	A la (pronounced: la)
4#	E mi (pronounced: me)
5# (7 $\flat$ ) can be written either way	B ti (pronounced: tea)
6# (6 $\flat$ ) can be written either way	F#
7# (5 $\flat$ ) can be written either way	C#
1 $\flat$	F fa (pronounced: fah)
2 $\flat$ s	B $\flat$
3 $\flat$ s	E $\flat$
4 $\flat$ s	A $\flat$
5 $\flat$ s (7#) can be written either way	C#
6 $\flat$ s (6#) can be written either way	F#
7 $\flat$ s (5#) can be written either way	B

The European or Latin scale is, Do - Re - Mi - Fa - Sol - La - Ti - Do. In classical guitar music, you'll see things like, Do#maj7+, and “Etude in Sol.”