

LABELING INVERSIONS

When a chord is inverted, the system used to show this with chord symbols is called *slash notation*. Take a C major chord. In root position it is spelled C-E-G (or C-G-E) from the bottom up. As long as a C is the lowest note, the chord is in root position.

↑ G E
| E G
| C C
either of these configurations represents a root position C major chord: C

If the notes are arranged so that E is on the bottom, the chord is in 1st inversion. This would be represented in a chord symbol as: C/E (described as “C over E”).

↑ C G
| G C
| C/E
| E E
either of these configurations represents a 1st inversion C major chord:

It follows the same for a 2nd inversion chord, which would have G on the bottom: C/G

↑ E C
| C E
| C/G
| G G
either of these configurations represents a 2nd inversion C major chord:

In Summary:

C = Root position C major triad
C/E = 1st inversion (C is the chord, E is the bottom note)
C/G = 2nd inversion (C is the chord, G is the bottom note)

Cm = Root position C minor triad
Cm/Eb = 1st inversion
Cm/G = 2nd inversion

For 7th chords:

G7 = Root position G7 chord
G7/B = 1st inversion G7 chord
G7/D = 2nd inversion G7 chord
G7/F = 3rd inversion G7 chord