

# Chord Inversions

Uli Widmaier

Several systems are used to indicate chord inversions. We'll look at two.

Popular music uses the slash chord system. A slash chord symbol indicates which chord we're dealing with (the letter to the left of the slash) and which note is in the bass (the letter to the right of the slash).

Examples: C/E (C chord with an E in the bass)  
 Cm/G (Cm chord with a G in the bass)  
 C7/Bb (C7 chord with a Bb in the bass)

Note: Slash chords can also be used to put a note in the bass that is not part of the chord. For instance, C/F is a C chord with an F in the bass, the F not actually being part of the C chord.

Classical music and music theory use a system derived from an old practice called "figured bass." The system indicates which inversion is being used by showing some of the intervals above the bass note. Here is a list of common chords and their inversions, written as slash chords and in figured bass notation:

	<b>Root Position</b>	<b>1st Inversion</b>	<b>2nd Inversion</b>	
Slash Chords	C	C/E	C/G	
Figured Bass	C	C <sup>6</sup>	C <sub>4</sub> <sup>6</sup>	
Notes in Chord	C E G	E G C	G C E	

  

	<b>Root Position</b>	<b>1st Inversion</b>	<b>2nd Inversion</b>	<b>3rd Inversion</b>
Slash Chords	C7	C7/E	C7/G	C7/Bb
Figured Bass	C <sup>7</sup>	C <sub>5</sub> <sup>6</sup>	C <sub>3</sub> <sup>4</sup>	C <sup>2</sup>
Notes in Chord	C E G Bb	E G Bb C	G Bb C E	Bb C E G