Section 4.1

Introducing Triads

A triad is a three-note chord built of two third intervals stacked on top of each other. The three notes are called root, third and fifth from bottom to top. In the chord below, the two third intervals are C to E and E to G.

Major triads
A major triad has a major third on the bottom and a minor third on top. The chord that occurs on the first step of a major key is a major triad.

Minor triads
A minor triad has a minor third on the bottom and a major third on top. The chord that occurs on the first step of a minor key is a minor triad.

Diminished triads
A diminished triad is a stack of two minor thirds.

Augmented triads
An augmented triad is a stack of two major thirds.
Chapter 4: Triads and Seventh Chords

### Spelling minor triads
To spell a **minor triad**, start with a major triad, then **lower the 3rd using an accidental** to make a minor triad.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{F major} \\
\Downarrow \\
\text{F minor}
\end{array}
\]

### Spelling diminished triads
To spell a **diminished triad**, start with a major triad, then **lower the 3rd and 5th** to make a **diminished triad**. Another option is to start with a major triad, then **raise the root** to make a diminished triad.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{F major} \\
\Downarrow \quad \Downarrow \\
\text{F dim.}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{F major} \\
\Downarrow \\
\text{F\# dim.}
\end{array}
\]

### Spelling augmented triads
To spell an **augmented triad**, spell a major triad, then **raise the 5th** (only) to make an augmented triad.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{F major} \\
\Downarrow \\
\text{F aug.}
\end{array}
\]

### Root position
**Root position** means the **root** is the lowest note. When the **third** is the lowest note, the triad is in **first inversion**. When the **fifth** is the lowest note, the triad is in **second inversion**.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{root position} \\
\text{1st inversion} \\
\text{2nd inversion}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{root} \\
\text{third on bottom} \\
\text{fifth on bottom}
\end{array}
\]

### Voicing and inversion
**Chord voicing** refers to the ordering of the notes (root, third, fifth) above the lowest note. Changing the chord voicing does not change the inversion.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{2nd inversion} \\
\text{2nd inversion} \\
\text{2nd inversion}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{(OR) fifth on the bottom} \\
\text{(OR) fifth on the bottom} \\
\text{etc.}
\end{array}
\]