

Using Roman Numerals

When we talk about these chords and how they relate to them we DO number them, but we use Roman numerals instead of regular numbers.

"Why?" you ask. It's because we can denote chords major or minor by using upper case and lower case Roman numerals.

•Upper Case Numerals = Major Chord

•Lower Case Numerals = Minor Chord

If we number our 7 chords in a major key using Roman numerals it will look like this:

1. I

2.ii

3.iii

4.IV

5.V

6.vi

7.vii°

We have 3 major chords: I, IV, V

We have 3 minor chords: ii, iii, iv

We have 1 diminished chord: vii° (that funny little circle added is our sign for diminished).

The Roman numeral system comes in handy when communicating chord progressions. For example:

•I, iii, V

•I, IV, V

•I, vi, IV

It's all relative to the key of the song. If we take the three chord progressions above and translate them to the key of C we would end up with:

•C, Em, G

•C, F, G

•C, Am, F