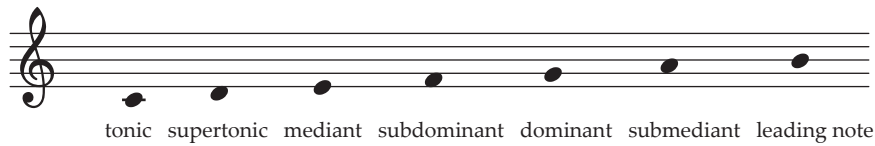


# Basic Major Scale Harmony/Tonality

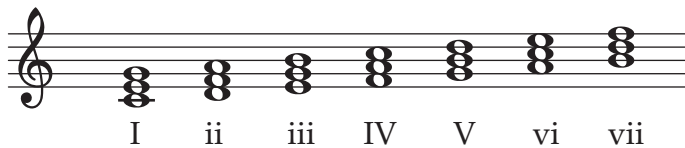
Strangely enough, when talking about individual pitches, we tend not to use numbers in music but names. These are as follows:

## i) Scale degrees of C Major



When referring to chords, names are used as well as roman numerals. Capitals are used for major chords, lower case for minor.\*

## ii) Triads of C Major



\*chord vii is actually a diminished rather than minor triad; we will come back to this later.

## Basic Principles

What is **harmony**?

- 1) The study of chords and their constitution. Which notes and how many of them can sound together to produce a **consonance or dissonance**?
- 2) The study of the way these chords should be used, one after the other, to accompany melodies, to establish a **tonality or key** at the beginning or end (often using **cadences**), and also to escape from a pre-established tonality and move to another (known as **modulation**).

Chords are always referred to according to their **root** note (i.e. chord I or the tonic chord/ chord ii or the supertonic chord etc.).

## Voice Leading

This is something that, if you continue composing, you will always be thinking about - even the well-established composers bang on about it all the time! It is perhaps the most important principle of harmony *and* counterpoint, in all music (tonal/atonal/non-tonal/modal etc.)

There are a few basic principles you always need to remember:

When connecting chords, it is always best if each of the voices or parts move as smoothly and as little as possible, without leaps if possible. If the two chords have a note in common these should, if possible, be held over in the same voice.

(I'm not sure if this is something you're familiar with, but in music theory it's normal practice to talk about voices in harmony, even if the music is written for keyboard, strings etc.) When learning harmony, we will normally work in four voices (soprano, alto, tenor and bass), just because this is the traditional and easiest way (in most cases) to learn all the main principles.

As you know, contrary rather than parallel motion (particularly between outer voices) is always recommended.