One of the most important sciences in music is that of choosing the right qualities for use on the right degrees of a key.

**Quality:** type of chord such as major, major 7th, minor, minor 6th, 7b9, etc. – these are different qualities.

**Degree:** refers to the different scale steps. Examples: Db is the b2 degree of C; F# is the #4th degree of C; Ab is the b6th degree of C, etc.

While to some extent, this is a very personal matter in the sense that everyone has their own musical taste, music is enough of a science so that the great majority of people who make an intense study of the chord substitutions and chord progressions come to similar conclusions about what the really beautiful sounds are. Therefore, the following information is an attempt to classify (in an easily useable manner) chord qualities according to their most favorable degrees, and with a little bit of trial and error, you will very likely find that our views on this subject are very similar.

First we will deal with **Dominant 7th** type of sounds because this is where the most confusion usually is. The most commonly used dominant sounds can be classified into 4 families as follows:

1) **Extended Dominants:**  
   (7), 7/6, 9, 13

2) **Suspended Dominants:**  
   7sus, (7/6sus ← more rare), 11 (9sus ←), 13sus

3) **Overtone Dominants (or #11):**  
   13#11, #11, 9b5, 7#11, 7b5, (7/6#11); also the 7, 7/6, 9, and 13 are fragments of this family.

These chords are the upper overtones (9, #11, 13) of Nature’s overtone series. Don’t worry about this if you don’t understand it – I’m not sure I do either. You will be able to use the chords even if you don’t understand the overtone series – you don’t need to know what makes a watch tick in order to tell time.

4) **Altered Dominants:**  
   Single altered 7th: 7+, 7b5, 7#9, 7b9,  
   Double altered 7th: 7#9+, 7b9+, 7b9b5, 7#9b5  
   9+, 13b9, 13b9#11  
   More rate: 13b9b5, 13#9, 11b9, 7#5b5

Here is a list of favorable matings of qualities (using dominant types) and degrees in major keys. Oh yes, just one more thing: this list is only concerned with sounds that can be successfully lingered upon, because just about any sound can be struck for a split second and possibly deceive one into thinking that it is favorable, when actually if the chord were prolonged, the need for a more desirable sound would hit the ear.
# Dominant Harmony in Major Keys

( ) = less commonly used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Most Common Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First (I)</td>
<td>Extendeds, suspendeds, altereds, (overtones) ← good ending chords on I</td>
<td>I7 is V of IV (secondary V7 principle). Also, I7 is a substitute for I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSecond (bII)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds, 7#9 (careful about root in soprano), 7#9b5</td>
<td>bII7 is bV of V7 (cross-cycle principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second (II)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, altereds, suspendeds</td>
<td>II7 is V of V (secondary V7 principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bThird (bIII)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds, (altereds)</td>
<td>bIII7 is bV if VI7 (cross-cycle principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third (III)</td>
<td>Altereds, Extendeds but 9 or 13th in soprano are questionable, suspendeds but likewise about 9 and 13; also 13b9 with 13 on top (likewise 13b9#11) are questionable</td>
<td>III7 is V of vi (secondary V7 principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth (IV)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds, some 7#9’s, 7#9b5’s</td>
<td>IV7 is a substitute for IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bFifth (bV)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds, 7#9 (careful about root on top), 7#9b5</td>
<td>bV7 is bV of I7 (cross-cycle principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth (V)</td>
<td>Extendeds, suspendeds, altereds, (overtones)</td>
<td>V7 is normal dominant harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSixth (bVI)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, altereds, (suspendeds)</td>
<td>bVI7 is bV of II7 (cross-cycle principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth (VI)</td>
<td>Altereds, extendeds (careful about 13 on top), likewise suspendeds; overtones (careful about 13b9 with 13th on top; likewise 13b9#11)</td>
<td>V17 is V of ii (secondary V7 principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSeventh (bVII)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds, (altereds)</td>
<td>bVII7 is bV of III7 (cross-cycle principle) also it is the companion dominant for iv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh (VII)</td>
<td>Altereds, extendeds with root or b7th on top – others more rarely, suspendeds with root, 11th, b7th on top – others more rarely. Careful about 13b9 with 13 on top, likewise 13b9#11</td>
<td>VII7 is V of iii (secondary V7 principle)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is a similar list for minor keys:

**Dominant Harmony in Minor Keys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Most Common Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First (I)</td>
<td>Altereds, 7th itself, suspendeds, (extendeds) (careful about 13♭9 with 13 on top. Likewise 13♭9♯11)</td>
<td>I7 is V of IV (secondary V7 principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♭Second (♭II)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds</td>
<td>♭II7 is ♭V of V7 (cross-cycle principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second (II)</td>
<td>Altereds, extendeds, suspendeds, overtones</td>
<td>II7 is V of V (secondary V7 principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third (III)</td>
<td>Extendeds, suspendeds, (altereds)</td>
<td>III7 is V if VI (secondary V7 principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♭Third (♭III)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds, 7#9 (careful about root on top), 7♯9♭5, 9+, (13♯9)</td>
<td>♭III7 is ♭V of VII7 (cross-cycle principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth (IV)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds, (altereds)</td>
<td>IV7 is V of VII (secondary V7 principle) Also, IV7 is a substitute for iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♭Fifth (♭V)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds</td>
<td>♭V7 is ♭V of I7 (cross-cycle principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth (V)</td>
<td>Altereds, extendeds (careful about 13 on top), likewise suspendeds</td>
<td>V7 is normal dominant harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth (VI)</td>
<td>Extendeds, suspendeds, overtones, 7#9, 7♯9♭5, 13♯9</td>
<td>♭VI7 is ♭V of II7 (cross-cycle principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♭Sixth (♭VI)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, suspendeds, altereds, (careful about 13’s on top)</td>
<td>♭VI7 is ♭V of III7 (cross-cycle principle) also, it is a substitute of ♭VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh (VII)</td>
<td>Extendeds, suspendeds, altereds, (overtones)</td>
<td>VII7 is V of III (secondary V7 principle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♭Seventh (♭VII)</td>
<td>Extendeds, overtones, (altereds), (suspendeds)</td>
<td>♭VII7 is ♭V of IV7 (cross-cycle principle) also, it is ♭VI7 of III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add 9’s (/9’s) can replace [dominant] 9th’s. Triads can replace [dominant] 7ths.

**Major Type Sounds**

In major keys, use any major type sound on: I, ♭II, ♭III, IV, ♭VI, ♭VII
In minor keys, use any major type sound on: (I), ♭II, (♭)III, (♭)VI, (♭)VII, ♭VII
These are the most common. In rare circumstances, you might wish to use major sounds on some other degrees.

Hopefully, this page can serve as a reference or guide when you are working out songs, either in chord melody or accompaniment style. Remember that trial and error and your ears are 2 (4?) of your best friends.
List of Favorable Matches of Qualities and Degrees

One of the most important sciences in music is that of choosing the right qualities for use on the right degrees of a key (Quality Type) chord, such as major, minor, diminished, augmented, etc. These are different qualities. Degree refers to the different scale steps. Examples: It is the 4th degree of C, F is the 5th degree of C, A is the 6th degree of C, etc. While to some extent this is a very personal matter, the science that everyone has their own musical taste much stronger a sense that the great majority of people who make an intimate study of chord substitution and chord progressions come to similar conclusions about what really beautiful sounds are. Therefore, the following information can be considered as the most favorable and with a little bit of trial and error, you will very likely find that our views on the subject are very similar.

First we will deal with Dominant 7th type progressions because this is where the most confusion usually is. The most commonly used dominant sounds can be classified into 9 families as follows:

**Extended Dominants:** (7), (16), (9), (13)  
**Suspended Dominants:** (13), (16), (9), (13)  
**Overtones:** (7), (11), (9), (13)  
**Altered Dominants:** (7), (11), (9), (13), (7), (9), (13), (11), (7)

These chords use the upper overtones (9, 11, 13) of a voice leading series, don't worry about this at the moment. If not sure if this is the case, you can use the charts even if you don't understand the overtone series, you don't need to know all this stuff to use them.

Here is the list of favorable matches of qualities (using dominant types) and degrees in major keys. Of course, there is more, but this list is only concerned with sounds that can be successfully played upon because just about any sound can be strung for a right sound.

### Dominant Harmony in Major Keys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Most Common Functions

1. **I:** I in XXI (Secondary I Principal)
2. **II:** II in XXI (Secondary I Principal)
3. **III:** III in XXIII (Cross Cycle Principle)
4. **IV:** IV in XXI (Secondary I Principal)
5. **V:** V in XXI (Secondary I Principal)

### Major Type Sounds

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- **VI:** VI in XXI (Secondary I Principal)
- **VII:** VII in XXI (Secondary I Principal)

**In Minor Keys:**

- **I:** I in XXI (Secondary I Principal)
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- **III:** III in XXIII (Cross Cycle Principle)
- **IV:** IV in XXI (Secondary I Principal)
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**In Augmented and Diminished Keys:**

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