BASIC FUNCTIONAL HARMONY IN MAJOR KEYS

A family of "Diatomic" chords can be created by building a series of triads on the notes of any scale. The DIATOMIC chords in a MAJOR SCALE are as follows (using C major as the model):

In C major

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\text{Triads:} & \text{C} & \text{Dmi} & \text{Eni} & \text{IV} & \text{V} & \text{VI} & \text{Vii} & \text{B diminished} \\
\text{7ths:} & \text{major 7} & \text{minor 7} & \text{minor 7} & \text{major 7} & \text{Dominant 7} & \text{minor 7} & \text{half-diminished 7} \\
\end{array}
\]

The standard way that these chords function in a MAJOR KEY is:

- "ii" or "IV" set up "V"
- "V" or "Vii" resolve to "I" ("V7" works better than "V" if going to "I")
- Other chords in the key progress either by step (alphabetically) or by "circle of 5ths" motion

In the key of C major, for example:

- G7 (V7) resolves to C (I)
- B diminished (VII) resolves to C (I)
- Dmi (ii) sets up G or G7 (V)
- F (IV) sets up G or G7 (V)

The most common progressions are:

- ii - V7 - I or IV - V7 - I

BASIC FUNCTIONAL HARMONY IN MINOR KEYS

A family of "Diatomic" chords can be created by building a series of triads on the notes of any scale. The DIATOMIC chords in a MINOR SCALE are as follows (using C "harmonic minor" as the model):

In C minor (harmonic)

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\text{Triads:} & \text{Cmi} & \text{D dim} & \text{Eb} & \text{Fmi} & \text{G} & \text{Ab} & \text{B diminished} \\
\text{7ths:} & \text{minor 7} & \text{half-dim 7} & \text{major 7} & \text{minor 7} & \text{Dominant 7} & \text{major 7} & \text{fully-diminished 7} \\
\end{array}
\]

The standard way that these chords function in a MINOR KEY is:

- "ii" or "iv" set up "V"
- "V" or "Vii" resolve to "i" ("V7" works better than "V" if going to "i")
- Other chords in the key progress either by step (alphabetically) or by "circle of 5ths" motion

In the key of C minor (harmonic), for example:

- G7 (V7) resolves to Cmi (i)
- B diminished (VII) resolves to Cmi (i)
- D diminished (ii) sets up G or G7 (V)
- F (IV) sets up G or G7 (V)

The most common progressions are:

- ii - V7 - I or IV - V7 - I

Note: In harmonic minor, the "raised 7th" ("leading tone") is primarily used on "V" and "VII"—only rarely will it affect the "III" chord, which is usually left as a major triad.

So here is how the following chord types can function in MAJOR and MINOR (Harmonic):

- Minor triad: [in major keys: ii, iii, vi] or [in minor keys: i, iv]
- Diminished triad: [in major keys: vii] or [in minor keys: ii, vii]
- Augmented triad: [III in harmonic minor, but is not commonly used]
- "Minor 7" chord: [in major keys: ii7, iii7, vi7] or [in minor keys: i7, iv7]
- "Dominant 7" chord: [can only function as V7 in major and harmonic minor] or as "secondary dominant 7" chords

Note: "half-diminished 7th" chords are "Vii7" in major or "ii7" in minor.
"Fully-diminished 7ths" are "Vii7" in minor, but can be borrowed as "Vii7" in major or used as "secondary leading-tone chords" at the end of a progression.