

CHORD TONES VS NON-CHORD TONES

Same key, same seven notes — but the chord playing underneath splits them into two groups with completely different emotional roles.

IN THE CHORD



✓ **IN THE CHORD**
HARMONY SUPPORTS THESE NOTES

SAME KEY DIFFERENT RELATION- SHIP

*C major chord
over C key*

OUTSIDE THE CHORD



✗ **OUTSIDE THE CHORD**
HARMONY DOESN'T CATCH THESE



THE KEY INSIGHT

The chord under the melody determines which notes feel **grounded** and which create **tension**. Change the chord, and the same melody note shifts from resolved to searching — or from tense to anchored.

ZONE 1

SWEET GROUNDED

Stable + In chord
Maximum harmonic comfort.
The note is home and the chord agrees.

ZONE 2

TENSE SUPPORTED

Unstable + In chord
Chord catches the note but it still wants to move. Forward energy.

ZONE 3

FLOATING MODERN

Stable + Outside chord
Calm in the key but the chord doesn't catch it. Airy and modern.

ZONE 4

BITTER EDGY

Unstable + Outside chord
Wants to move AND the chord doesn't help.
Maximum tension.