

CHORD TONE VS NON-CHORD TONE

The second dimension of the Emotional Map — whether the melody note belongs to the chord underneath it

CHORD TONE IN THE CHORD

A note that **belongs to the currently playing chord** — specifically the root, 3rd, 5th, or 7th. The harmony catches and supports this note. It feels grounded within the chord, regardless of its key stability.

NON-CHORD TONE OUTSIDE THE CHORD

A note that **does NOT belong to the currently playing chord**. The harmony doesn't catch it — it floats above the triad. Depending on its key stability, this creates color, tension, or dissonance.

C MAJOR CHORD (DO · MI · SO) — WHICH NOTES ARE CHORD TONES?

NOTE	SOLMIZATION	IN C MAJOR CHORD?	ROLE IN CHORD	ZONE OVER C	FEELS LIKE
DO (C)	Home · Rank 1	✓ Chord Tone	Root (1st)	Zone 1 Sweet	Fully resolved, grounded
MI (E)	Sweet · Rank 3	✓ Chord Tone	Major 3rd	Zone 1 Sweet	Warm, melodically bright
SO (G)	Strong · Rank 2	✓ Chord Tone	Perfect 5th	Zone 1 Sweet	Confident, stable open
RE (D)	Open · Rank 5	✗ Non-Chord Tone	—	Zone 4 Bitter	Searching, unresolved
FA (F)	Tension · Rank 7	✗ Non-Chord Tone	—	Zone 4 Bitter	Maximum ache, needs resolution
LA (A)	Warm · Rank 4	✗ Non-Chord Tone	—	Zone 3 Float	Airy, added color (6th extension)
TI (B)	Leading · Rank 6	✗ Non-Chord Tone	—	Zone 4 Bitter	Major 7th color — edgy and active

HOW RE CHANGES ZONE DEPENDING ON THE CHORD

MELODY NOTE	CHORD PLAYING	CHORD TONES	RE IS...	ZONE	FEELS LIKE
RE	C major	DO · MI · SO	Non-chord tone	Zone 4 Bitter	Searching, unresolved tension
	G7 (SO-TI-RE-FA)	SO · TI · RE · FA	Chord tone (5th)	Zone 2 Tense	Supported but still pulling forward
	Dm (RE-FA-LA)	RE · FA · LA	Chord tone (root!)	Zone 2 Tense	Grounded in <i>that</i> chord — the anchor
	Am (LA-DO-MI)	LA · DO · MI	Non-chord tone	Zone 4 Bitter	Adds dark color above the minor chord

QUICK ZONE FINDER — TWO QUESTIONS, ONE ZONE

STABLE KEY DEGREE + CHORD TONE
ZONE 1
Sweet / Grounded — fully resolved

UNSTABLE KEY DEGREE + CHORD TONE
ZONE 2
Tense / Supported — forward motion

STABLE KEY DEGREE + NON-CHORD TONE
ZONE 3
Floating / Modern — airy color

UNSTABLE KEY DEGREE + NON-CHORD TONE
ZONE 4
Bitter / Edgy — maximum tension

The rule: Is it in the chord? Is it a stable scale degree? Answer both questions → find your zone. The same note can live in any zone depending on what chord is playing.