

CONTEXT CHANGES EVERYTHING

The same melody note can feel completely different depending on which chord is playing underneath it

The note **RE** is always RE — but **what it feels like** is entirely determined by the chord underneath it. Watch what happens as we play the same RE over four different chords.



CHORD	CHORD TONES	RE IS...	ZONE	FEELS LIKE...
C major DO-MI-SO	DO MI SO	Non-chord tone	Zone 4 Bitter	Searching, unresolved — the chord gives no support
G7 SO-TI-RE-FA	SO TI RE FA	Chord tone (5th)	Zone 2 Tense	Leaning forward — supported but still pulling toward home
Dm RE-FA-LA	RE FA LA	Chord tone (root!)	Zone 2 Tense	Grounded in <i>this</i> chord — RE is the anchor, not the outsider
Am LA-DO-MI	LA DO MI	Non-chord tone	Zone 4 Bitter	Adds dark color — a 9th above the minor chord, floating and edgy

THE TAKEAWAY

Always think **chord + note together** — never the note alone.

RE is the same pitch in all four rows above. It is the chord context that decides whether RE resolves, supports, anchors, or floats. This is why skilled melody writers think in chord-note pairs at every structural moment — not just scale degrees in isolation.