

Spelling Triads in 4 Steps

Once you know how to spell triads on any root (see the "Major Triads" handout), you can spell any triad given the third or fifth using these 4 steps:

STEP 1. Count down 3 or 5 letter names to find the letter name of the root.

STEP 2. Build a major triad on the natural note.

STEP 3. Change the notes as needed to make the right quality of triad.

STEP 4. Transpose as needed using accidentals. Be sure to transpose all notes the same number of half steps!

Given the **THIRD**:

Ex 1: diminished step 1 2 3 4

Count down letters: C,B,A Build A major Make it dim. Since C needs to be C#, raise all notes 1 half step.

Ex 2: minor step 1 2 3 4

Count down letters: F,E,D Build D major Make it minor Since F# needs to be Fb, lower all notes 1 half step.

Given the **FIFTH**:

Ex 1: major step 1 2 3 4

Count down letters: E,D,C,B,A Build A major Already major! Since E needs to be E#, raise all notes 1 half step.

Ex 2: augmented step 1 2 3 4

Count down letters: B,A,G,F,E Build E major Make it augmented. Since B# needs to be B#, lower all notes 1 half step.