



# Modal Interchange

## Borrowing chords from a parallel mode

Modal interchange means taking a chord that belongs to the parallel minor (or another parallel mode) and using it while you are still in a major key. The key centre stays the same — you just add new colour.

### Parallel major & minor (the two “families”)

Chords in the top row belong to C major. Chords in the bottom row belong to C minor. Modal interchange simply borrows from the bottom row while staying in C major.

|         |    |    |     |    |    |    |      |
|---------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|------|
| C major | C  | Dm | Em  | F  | G  | Am | B°   |
| C minor | Cm | D° | Eb  | Fm | Gm | Ab | Bb   |
|         | I  | ii | iii | IV | V  | vi | vii° |

### Most useful borrowed chords

| Chord | From    | Roman | Typical feeling              |
|-------|---------|-------|------------------------------|
| Fm    | C minor | iv    | Emotional, soft, “sad major” |
| Ab    | C minor | bVI   | Dreamy, cinematic lift       |
| Bb    | C minor | bVII  | Rock / blues strength        |
| Eb    | C minor | bIII  | Warm modal colour            |
| Gm    | C minor | v     | Melancholy dominant          |

## Four beginner-friendly progressions in C

1. I – bVII – IV – I   C – Bb – F – C
2. I – iv – I   C – Fm – C
3. I – bVI – bVII – I   C – Ab – Bb – C
4. I – bIII – IV – I   C – Eb – F – C

The number system still works — just add a flat (b) in front of the Roman numeral when the chord is borrowed.