

Chord Progressions

Music

The handful of chord progressions that carry most of popular music.

Written as numerals so they work in any key. Chords shown in C major.

Progression	In C	Heard in
I-V-vi-IV	C G Am F	Most modern pop
vi-IV-I-V	Am F C G	The same loop, started later
I-vi-IV-V	C Am F G	Fifties doo-wop
ii-V-I	Dm G7 C	Jazz, everywhere
I-IV-V	C F G	Blues, rock and roll, folk
I-VII-IV	C  F	Rock — borrowed from the minor
  VI-  VII	Cm A  E  B 	Minor-key anthems

I-V-vi-IV and vi-IV-I-V are the same four chords. Where you start decides whether it sounds bright or sad.