

The Supertonic Chord

- The ii chord belongs among the secondary chords ii, iii, and vi. (I, IV, V, and vii^o are the primary chords).
- In general, triads that share two notes also share function. ii shares 2 notes with IV. ii therefor contains a subdominant function (it precedes V). ii can appear in place of IV or right after IV especially when IV is followed by V. In fact, ii-V appears with greater frequency than IV-V. While ii, in replacing IV, strengthens the progression to V, ii-I creates a structurally weak progression. In this case, IV contains a common tone with I whereas ii does not have any common tones with I. It is the common tones that create strong progressions between chords.
- Doubling: For the ii chord, double the bass note. This rule holds true if the chord is in 1st inversion (double the 3rd which is the subdominant scale degree). The ii chord is most often found in 1st inversion.
- The ii chord, rather than IV, creates a stronger bond with V because of the common tone (the 2nd scale degree). The root of ii is also a 5th above that of the V so it relates to V in a dominant capacity.
- Quality: In major the chord is a minor triad. In minor it is a diminished triad. While it is possible to have a ii in minor with use of the melodic minor scale members that chord would most likely be analyzed as a vii^o6 with the raised 6th scale degree better analyzed as a passing tone to the leading tone.
- The ii^o6 is a dissonant chord and cannot therefor be considered a harmonic goal. It is dependent on a consonant chord. The dissonant intervals in this chord require resolution by stepwise progression.