

How to Read a Chord Chart

J. Weston Mize

Chord symbols tell us what chord to play,
but not HOW to play it.
The voicing is up to you!

A7 D7 A7

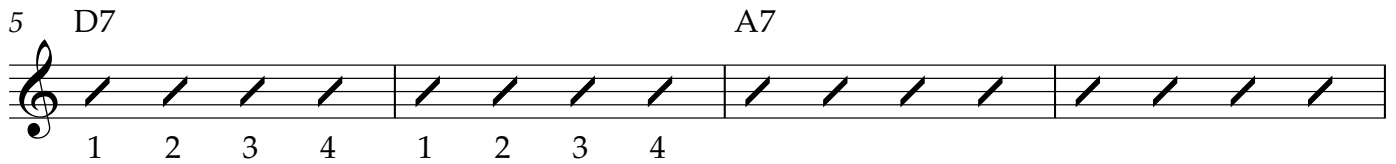


This Start Repeat tells us we are going to be repeating this music!

Voicing = which notes you play for a chord.
(There are many voicings for A7!)

Slashes show the beats in a measure.
The player (you!) gets to pick what rhythms to play.

A measure without a chord symbol above it means to keep playing the last chord symbol (A7) for this measure.



Counting helps you keep track of where you are in the music!



An End Repeat,
this means to repeat from the
Start Repeat!

Important Notes:

-Chord charts often involve some level of improvisation. The musician playing gets to make creative choices based on the information given and the style of the song.

-Lead sheets are like chord charts but also include a melody written on the staff.

-Learning to read chord charts and lead sheets is a great way to start getting involved in improvisational music like JAZZ!

-The chord chart above is the basic form for the 12-Bar Blues, a very common form of improvisational music.