

1.4 Scale Degree Names

Scale Degree	Name	Meaning
1 st	Tonic	Tonal center – the final resolution tone.
2 nd	Supertonic	One step above the tonic.
3 rd	Mediant	Midway between tonic and dominant
4 th	Subdominant	The lower dominant – the fifth tone down from the tonic (also the 4 th tone up from the tonic).
5 th	Dominant	So called because its function is next in importance to the tonic.
6 th	Submediant	The lower median – halfway between tonic and lower dominant (subdominant). The 3 rd tone down from the tonic (also the 6 th tone up from the tonic).
7 th	Leading Tone	Strong affinity for and leads melodically to the tonic. Used when the 7 th tone appears a half step below the tonic.
7 th	Subtonic	Used only to designate the 7 th degree of the natural minor scale (a whole step below the tonic) or the descending form of the melodic minor scale.

A musical staff in treble clef showing the major scale. The notes are: C (1st), D (2nd), E (3rd), F (4th), G (5th), A (6th), B (7th), and C (8th = 1st). The 7th degree (B) is a half step below the tonic (C).

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th = 1st
 Tonic Supertonic Mediant Subdominant Dominant Submediant Leading Tone Tonic
 (half step below tonic)

A musical staff in treble clef showing the natural minor scale. The notes are: C (1st), D (2nd), E-flat (3rd), F (4th), G (5th), A-flat (6th), B-flat (7th), and C (8th = 1st). The 7th degree (B-flat) is a whole step below the tonic (C).

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th = 1st
 Tonic Supertonic Mediant Subdominant Dominant Submediant Subtonic Tonic
 (whole step below tonic)