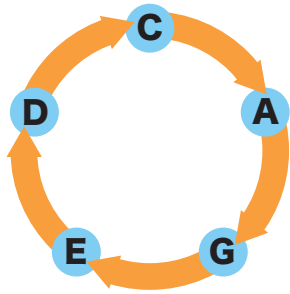


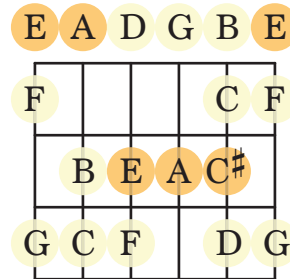
A SHAPE

In previous lessons we covered the D and C shapes of the CAGED system. In this lesson we'll be covering one of the most common shapes to use as a bar chord: the A Shape.

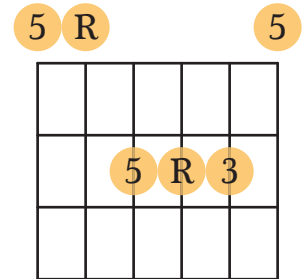


**You
are
here**

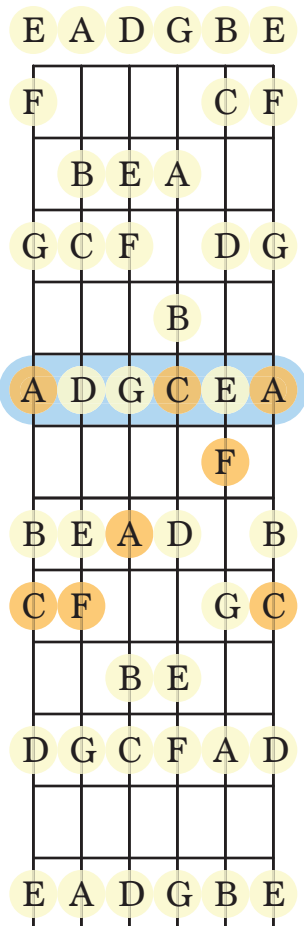
A chord



R 3 5



The open A Major chord is one of the most recognizable guitar chord shapes. Notice how the shape itself consists of 2 roots, 2 fifths, and one third. The A shape shares notes with the C shape and the G shape.



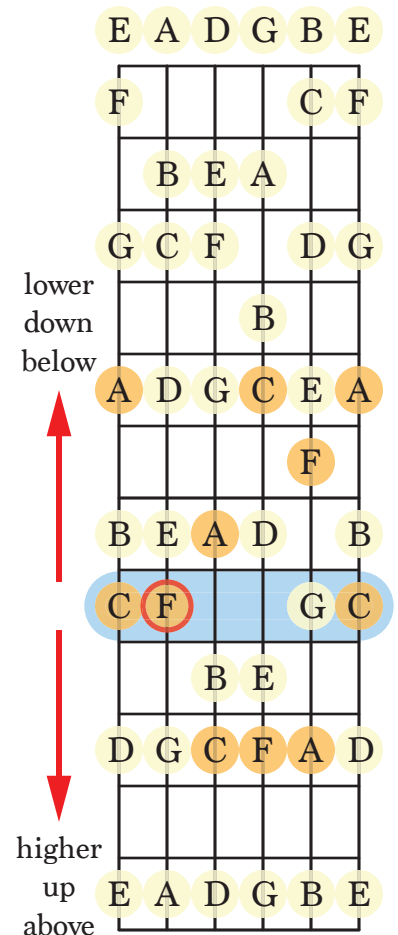
On the left side of the page, I've placed the blue capo on the 5th fret and fretted a C shape, resulting in an F major Chord.

Root: F
Third: A
Fifth: C

F A C

On the right side of the page, I've moved the capo up to the 8th fret and played an "A chord" shape. I'm still playing only F, A, and C. This is an "A Shaped F chord."

Notice the **red circled "F."** This is the shared root note between the C shape and the A shape. You could say that the A chord shape is mostly *above* the shared root (in pitch) and the C shape is mostly *below* the shared root.



A SHAPE

C shape

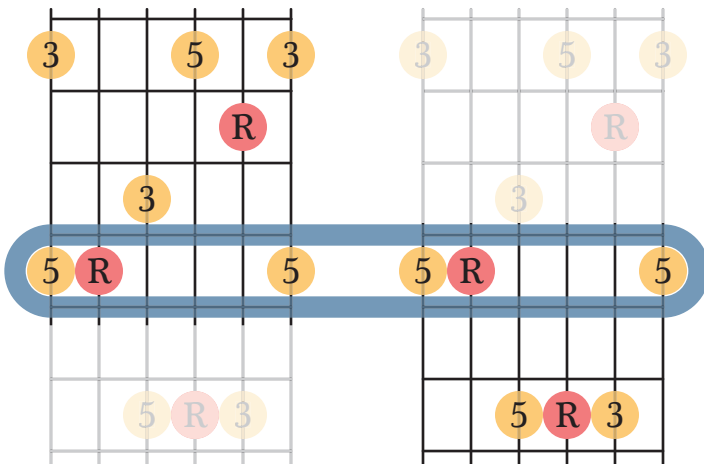
A shape

These two shapes always only connect in this way. Just like the previous lesson, these two shapes connected in this way will ALWAYS result in a map of roots, thirds and fifths in any area of the neck.

The blue circle shows the Share Zone for these two shapes. Unlike the D and C shapes, the C and A shapes share one fret, consisting of a root note and two fifths.

The diagrams below show a series of C and A shapes connected, creating a map of all possible triads in an area.

The D shape has been added to a few shapes so you can see how all three shapes connect.



Notice the share zone for the C and A shape in blue

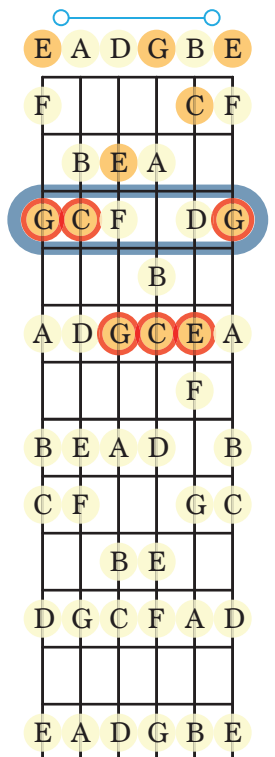
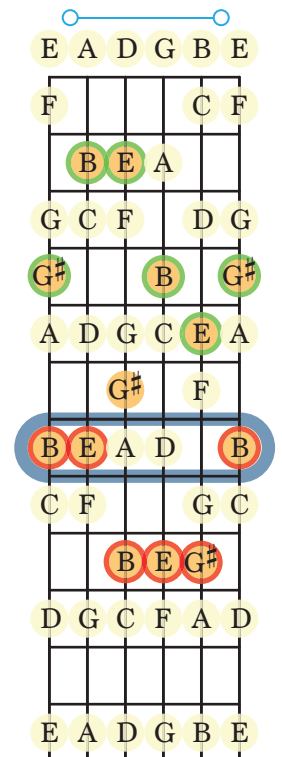
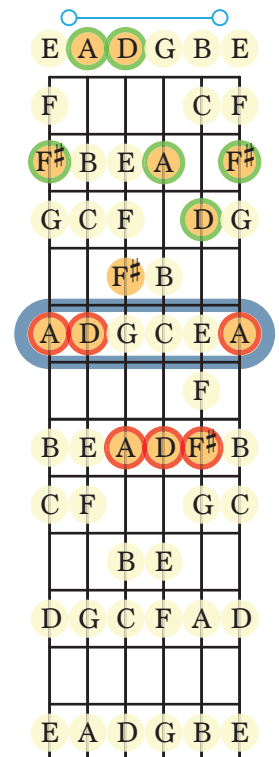
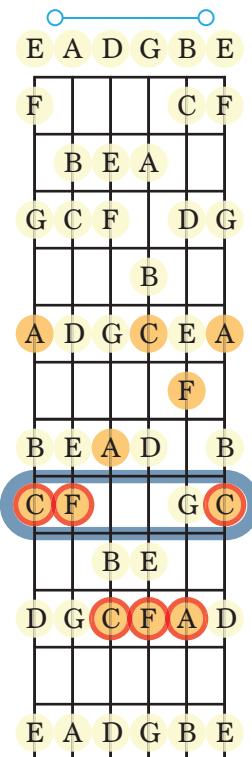
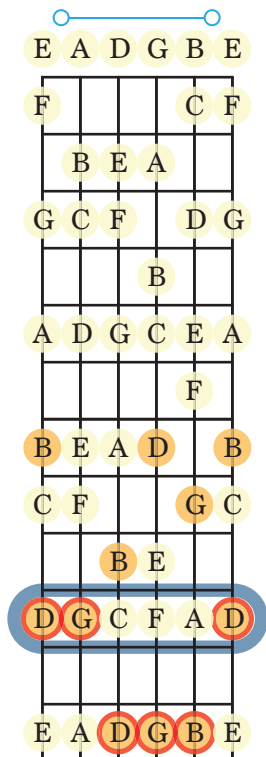
G Major Triad
A shape: red outline
C shape in orange

F Major Triad
A shape: red outline
C shape in orange

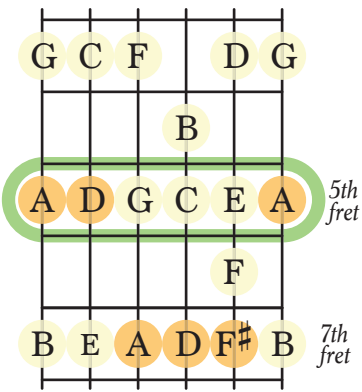
D Major Triad
A shape: red outline
D shape: green outline

E Major Triad
A shape: red outline
D shape: green outline

C Major Triad
A shape: red outline
C shape in orange



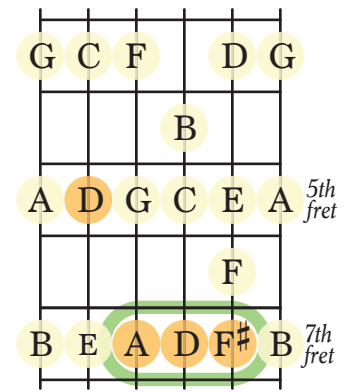
A SHAPE



This option lets you strum all strings but is difficult for most guitar players.

The A shape is one of the most common bar chords. The other most common is the E shape, which we will discuss later. The C and D shapes are awkward to play up the neck if you plan to fret more than 3 or four strings.

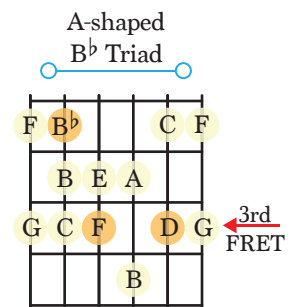
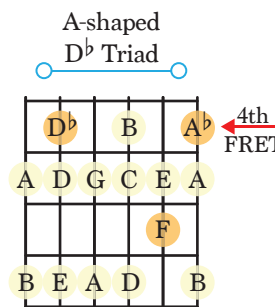
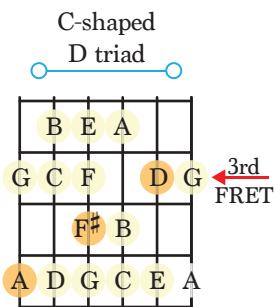
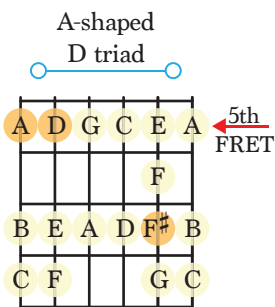
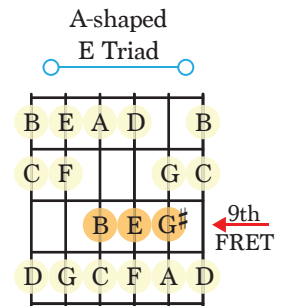
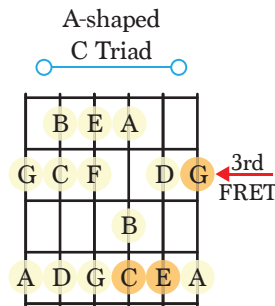
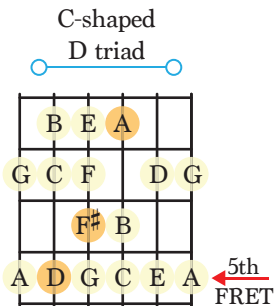
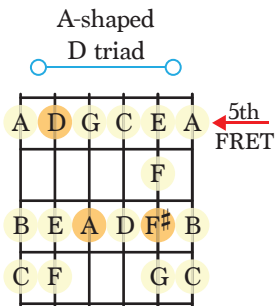
The A shape allows for easier bar chords. On the left, bar across all six strings (in green) with your index finger and fret the three notes on the 7th fret with your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th finger. The right side shows a different approach. Fret only the 5th fret with your index finger and bar the D, G, and B strings with your third finger.



This option is much easier to play, but forces you to avoid the low E string and mute the high E string.

The fingerings above are the most common ways to play A shaped chords, but there are a few more voicings. Try playing these other options below while filling out the homework!

HOMEWORK: Each shape below is labeled either “A shape” or “C shape.” For each triad, circle the missing notes to complete the shape.



Some of these triads may require fingerpicking to perform (not strumming)

HOMEWORK 1

Using the provided root note, create an A Shaped triad.

F Major Triad
R _ 3 _ 5 _
E A D G B E

C Major Triad
R _ 3 _ 5 _
E A D G B E

E Major Triad
R _ 3 _ 5 _
E A D G B E

B Major Triad
R _ 3 _ 5 _
E A D G B E

B^b Major Triad
R _ 3 _ 5 _
E A D G B E

D^b Major Triad
R _ 3 _ 5 _
E A D G B E

Once you've circled all the notes needed for the A shape, grab a pen with a different color and circle all the notes in the C shape where possible.

PRACTICE

For this practice exercise, use *only* A shapes to tab out a simple strum or arpeggio pattern for the following chords, then play your composition over the jam track for this lesson.

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|
| A | D | E | D |
| | | | |
| 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + | | | |

The goal is to compose a simple rhythm part. Strum, fingerpick, arpeggiate - whatever works for you! As long as you're using at least one root, third and fifth from each triad, you're doing it right

PRACTICE

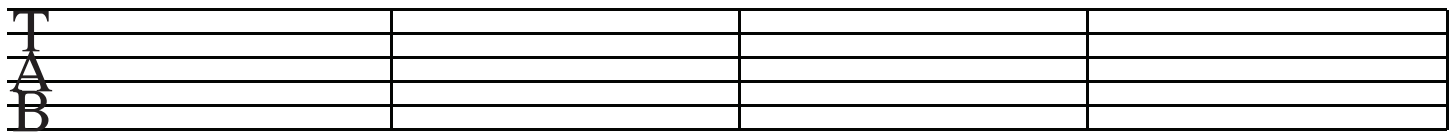
For this practice exercise, use a mix of A shape and C shape chords to tab out a simple strum or arpeggio pattern for the following chords, then play your composition over the jam track for this lesson.

A

D

E

D



1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

