

Musical knowledge 5: blues

Definitions and theory

I= Tonic	V= Dominant	IV= Subdominant	I
I	I	I	I
IV	IV	I	I
V	IV	I	I

1. **12 bar blues** = music based around this chord progression
2. **Tonic** = chord I
3. **Subdominant** = chord IV
4. **Dominant** = chord V
5. **Improvisation** = making it up on the spot
6. **Turnaround** = where you substitute chord V in bar 12
7. **Seventh chord** = when an extra note is added to a chord, 7 notes above the root, i.e. G7:



Chords and Roman numerals

1. Whatever key you are in, count that as '1' (i.e. in C major, 1 is C)
2. From there, count up to 4 and 5 to work out what chords are IV and V (in C, IV is F and V is G)

Instruments for blues

INSTRUMENTS

Strings: double bass or bass guitar often used to play the bass line. Guitar plays chords and melodies

Woodwind: saxophone sometimes used for melody

Brass: trumpet/trombone often used for melody

Percussion: drum kit

Voices: soprano/alto/tenor/bass – any kind of voice can sing blues

Keyboards: piano is often used to play chords, bass line and/or melody, but organ is sometimes used too