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chord¹  (kôrd)

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n.

1. *Music* A combination of three or more pitches sounded simultaneously.
2. Harmony, as of color.

v. **chord·ed, chord·ing, chords**

v.intr.

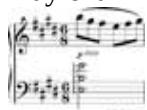
Music To play chords: *She chorded up and down the neck of the guitar.*

v.tr.

1. To play chords on: *chorded the piano.*
2. To produce by playing musical chords; harmonize: *chord a melody.*

[Alteration (influenced by *chord*, musical instrument string) of Middle English *cord*, from *accord*, agreement, from Old French *acorde*, from *acorder*, to agree; see [ACCORD](#).]

Usage Note: The words *chord* and *cord* are often confused—and with good reason, for they are really three words, not two. There are two words spelled *chord* (listed as separate entries with homograph numbers in this dictionary). The first comes from the word *accord* and refers to a harmonious combination of three or more musical notes. The second is an alteration of *cord*, taking its spelling from Greek *chorda*, "string, gut," by way of Latin. This is the mathematical chord—a line segment that joins two points on a curve. *Cord* itself means "a string or rope." It has many extensions, as in *an electrical cord* and *a cord of wood*. When referring to anatomical structures, it can be spelled in general usage either as *cord* or *chord* (again by influence of Greek and Latin). Strict medical usage requires *cord*, however. A doctor may examine a *spinal cord* or *vocal cords*, not *chords*.



(click for a larger image)

chord¹

E major chord in opening bar of Edvard Grieg's *Morgenstemning*

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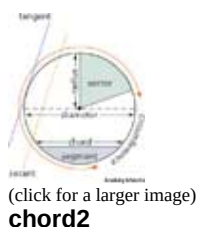
chord²  (kôrd)

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n.

1. A line segment that joins two points on a curve. See Usage Note at [chord](#)¹.
2. A straight line connecting the leading and trailing edges of an airfoil.
3. *Anatomy* Variant of [cord](#).
4. An emotional feeling or response: *Her words struck a sympathetic chord in her audience.*
5. *Archaic* The string of a musical instrument.

[Alteration of [CORD](#).]



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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

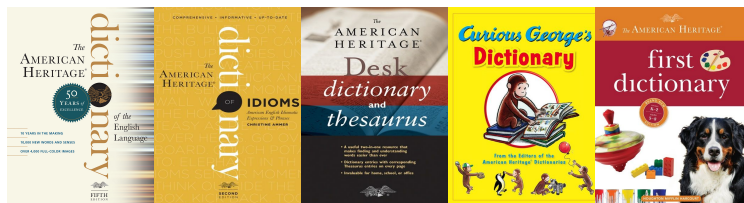
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[Semitic Roots](#)

The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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