Introduction to Triads (3 note chords)

Tertiary Harmony=harmony based on the intervals of thirds. (standard modern day harmony)

For all practical purposes, there are only two types of thirds: Major and Minor. (Yes there are the hypothetical diminished and augmented thirds but these intervals would be enharmonically a Major 2nd in the case of a diminished third and a Perfect 4th in the case of an augmented 3rd.)

Major and Minor 3rds and their inversions which are Minor and Major 6ths respectively, are sometimes called the "imperfect consonances." Consonant=blends in a harmonious way. Major and Minor 2nds and their inversions, the Minor and Major 7ths are considered to be dissonant on their own. It is easy to wittness that by simply choosing appropriate notes on the guitar or piano and listen carefully. Compare them to the sound of 3rds or 6ths. Perfect consonances such as octave or 5ths have a very neutral quality. The Perfect 4th, although it is the inversion of the Perfect 5th, is considered to be dissonant.

Triads (3 note chords) are constructed by combining the Root, 3rd and 5th notes of any scale.

There are basically only 7 triad (general) spellings in music.

root--3rd--5th
A--C--E
B--D--F
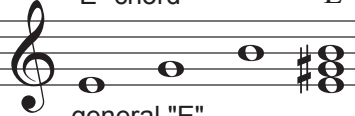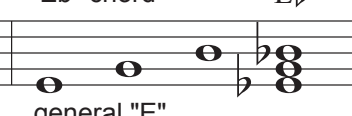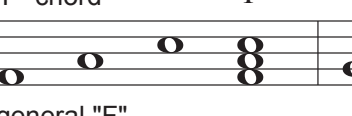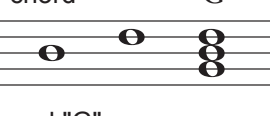**C**--E--G
D--F--A
E--G--B
F--A--C
G--B--D
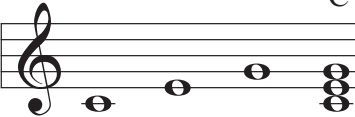
All chords having the note "A" as a root will also contain the notes "C" and "E" in some form. Similarly "B" chords will contain the notes "D" and "F" and so on.

Once you have established the general spelling the rest of the process is very easy.

To create a "MAJOR" chord (triad), you must combine the Root, 3rd and 5th notes of any Major scale. Now simply take the general spelling and apply the appropriate key signature.

eg: Bb Major chord=BDF (general spelling). The key signature contains two flats, those being Bb and Eb. The "specific spelling" of the Bb chord then is: Bb--D--F.

Below, the general spelling (in arpeggio form) is followed by the specific spelling (chord form).

to form the "C" chord — C — general "C" then apply the key signature of C

to form the "C#" chord — C# — general "C" then apply the key signature of C#

to form the "D" chord — D — general "D" then apply the key signature of D

to form the "Db" chord — Db — general "D" then apply the key signature of Db

to form the "E" chord — E — general "E" then apply the key signature of E

to form the "Eb" chord — Eb — general "E" then apply the key signature of Eb

to form the "F" chord — F — general "F" then apply the key signature of F

to form the "G" chord — G — general "G" then apply the key signature of G

Absolutely perfectly memorized key signatures will make this process relatively easy to follow.