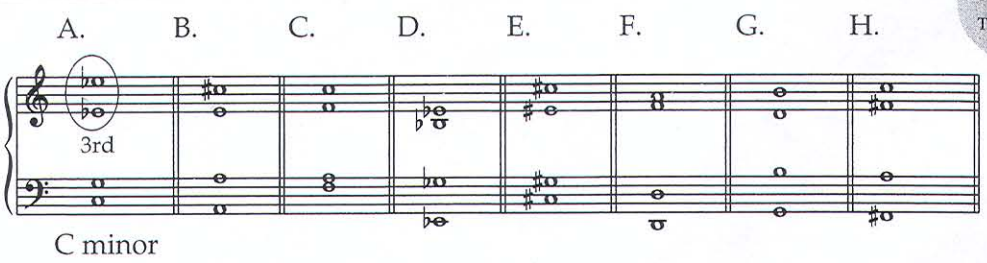
Composers can thicken the sound of triads by increasing the number of voices and **doubling** one or more members of the triad. Doubling one member increases the number of sounded notes from three to four. The most stable member of the triad, the root, is the note most often doubled, though we will often encounter doubled fifths and thirds. Example 5.4 illustrates root-position triads in a four-voice texture with one member doubled. Identify the triad type, circle doubled pitches, and label their chordal membership.

EXAMPLE 5.4 Root-Position Triads in Four-Voice Texture

DVD 1 CH 5 TRACK 2



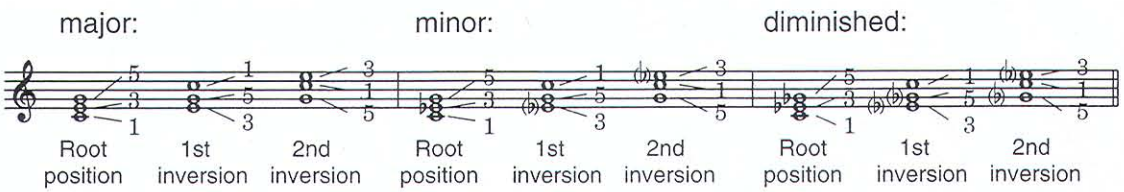
C minor

Triad Inversion

A triad is said to be **in root position** if the root is the lowest-sounding pitch, that is, if the root is in the bass. However, the root of a triad need not be the lowest-sounding note. Either the third or the fifth may instead appear in the bass. When the third or the fifth of a triad appears in the bass, the triad is said to be in **inversion**. When the third of the triad appears in the bass, the chord is in **first inversion**. When the fifth is in the bass, the triad is in **second inversion**. Thus, when triads are in first or second inversion, the root of the chord appears somewhere above the bass. Example 5.5 contains examples of major, minor, and diminished triads in root position, first inversion, and second inversion. It doesn't matter how the pitches above the bass are distributed; it is only the pitch in the bass that determines root position or inversion.

Root-position major and minor triads are stable by virtue of the perfect fifths (perfect consonances), while inverted triads are less stable because they are bound by sixths (imperfect consonances). This results in a desire to hear them move forward toward a cadence, where a root-position triad is usually found.

EXAMPLE 5.5 Triads and Their Inversions



In tonal music, the character and behavior of chords depends on the intervals formed among voices, especially between the bass and the voices above it. As we've seen, major and minor triads are consonant (relatively stable) because of the perfect fifth between their root and fifth, whereas diminished tri-