

# Twelve Bar Blues

The most popular form of blues is the twelve-bar blues

As the name suggests, it is made up of twelve measures that will be repeated over and over  
A typical twelve bar blues will be made up of the I, the IV, and the V chords of any key  
One of the most common patterns is shown below (there are many others)

|   |    |    |        |    |   |    |          |
|---|----|----|--------|----|---|----|----------|
| 1 | I  | 2  | I (IV) | 3  | I | 4  | I        |
| 5 | IV | 6  | IV     | 7  | I | 8  | I        |
| 9 | V  | 10 | IV     | 11 | I | 12 | I (or V) |

Pick your key, and then by using the chart below find I, IV, and V chords



Muddy Waters



Buddy Guy



BB King



Albert King



Son House

| I<br>Key (Tonic) | IV<br>Subdominant | V<br>Dominant |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| A                | D                 | E             |
| B $\flat$        | E $\flat$         | F             |
| B                | E                 | F $\sharp$    |
| C                | F                 | G             |
| C $\sharp$       | F $\sharp$        | G $\sharp$    |
| D                | G                 | A             |
| E $\flat$        | A $\flat$         | B $\flat$     |
| E                | A                 | B             |
| F                | B $\flat$         | C             |
| F $\sharp$       | B                 | C $\sharp$    |
| G                | C                 | D             |
| A $\flat$        | D $\flat$         | E $\flat$     |



Elmore James



Howlin' Wolf



T-Bone Walker



Robert Johnson



John Lee Hooker

So, blues in the key of A would use the chords A, D, and E  
Seventh chords are often used because of their dissonant quality which gives a more "bluesy" sound or minor chords for some "troublin" blues  
So now, just pick out the right chords. sit back ... and play yourself some blues