

1. There are three main types of augmented 6th chords, commonly known as Italian 6th, French 6th, and German 6th. Though each is named after a European nationality, theorists disagree on the precise origins and have struggled for centuries to define their roots, and fit them in to conventional harmonic theory.

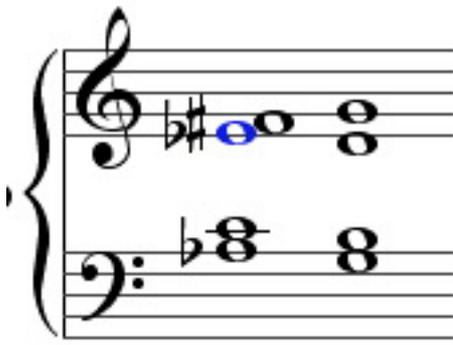


2. The Italian 6th is derived from IV6 with an altered 4th scale degree, #4: $b6-1-\#4$; Ab-C-F# in C major and C minor. This is the only augmented 6th chord comprising just three distinct notes; in four-part writing the tonic pitch is doubled.

The Italian 6th is enharmonically equivalent to an incomplete dominant 7th.



3. The French 6th is similar to the Italian, but with an additional tone, 2: $b6-1-2-\#4$; Ab-C-D-F# in C major and C minor. The notes of the French 6th chord are all contained within the same whole tone scale, lending a sonority common to French music in the 19th century (especially associated with Impressionist music).



4. The German 6th is also like the Italian, but with an added tone $b3:b6-1-b3-\#4;Ab-C-Eb-F\#$ in C major and C minor. In classical music, however, it appears in much the same places as the other variants, though perhaps less used because of contrapuntal difficulties. It appears frequently in the works of Beethoven. The German 6th chord contains the same notes as a dominant 7th chord (enharmonically), though it functions differently.