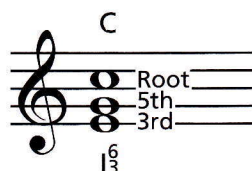


## Figured Bass

To indicate what inversion of a chord to use, numbers are added to the Roman numeral of that chord. This system originated during the BAROQUE PERIOD (1600–1750) and is called FIGURED BASS.

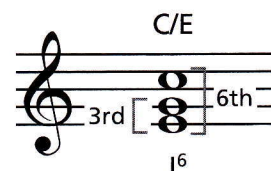
### 1st Inversion Triads (3rd is the lowest note)



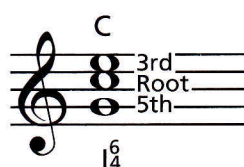
In the key of C, the 1st inversion of the I chord was originally written  $I \frac{6}{3}$ .

The numbers  $\frac{6}{3}$  indicate the intervals of the chord from the bass (lowest) note. The middle note G is up a 3rd from the bass note E, and the top note C is up a 6th. Over time, the bottom 3 was dropped and shortened to  $I^6$ .

Another way to indicate a 1st inversion C chord is by using the chord symbol C followed by the bass note, written C/E.



### 2nd Inversion Triads (5th is the lowest note)



In the key of C, the 2nd inversion of the I chord is written  $I^6_4$ . The middle note C is up a 4th from the bass note G, and the top note E is up a 6th.

Another way to indicate a 2nd inversion C chord is C/G.



### V7 Chords The V7 chord has four different positions.

	C7*	C7/E	C7/G	C7/B $\flat$
	Root Position	1st Inversion	2nd Inversion	3rd Inversion
Figured Bass:	$V^7_3$	$V^6_3$	$V^6_4$	$V^6_2$
Shortened to:	$V^7$	$V^6_5$	$V^4_3$	$V^4_2$

Letter name chord symbols (C/G) are usually written above the staff. Roman numeral chord symbols (V7) are usually written below the staff.

\*The C7 chord is the V7 chord in the key of F.

## Exercises

- Write the chord symbol above the staff and the Roman numeral below the staff, using figured bass where applicable, for each chord in the key of C.

a.

b.

# Figured Bass

**1** Match the figured bass with the correct inversion.

$I^6$  \_\_\_\_\_

$V^4_3$  \_\_\_\_\_

$I^6_4$  \_\_\_\_\_

$V^4_2$  \_\_\_\_\_

$V^6_5$  \_\_\_\_\_

a. Dominant 7th chord, 1st inversion

b. Dominant 7th chord, 2nd inversion

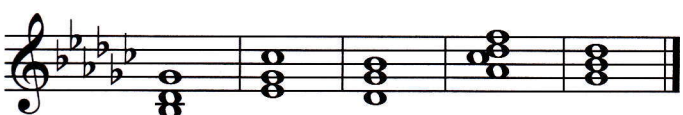
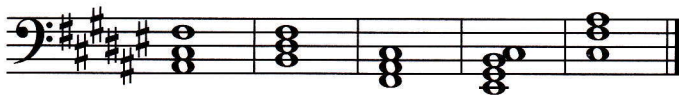
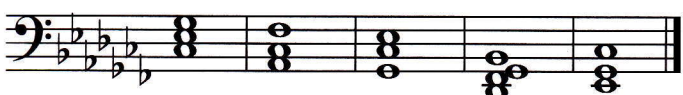
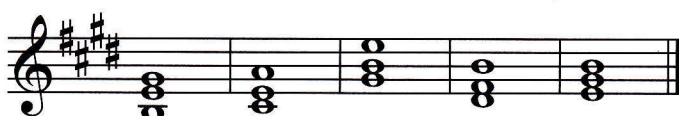
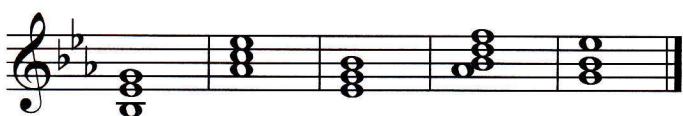
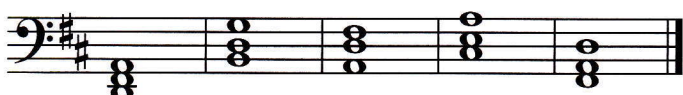
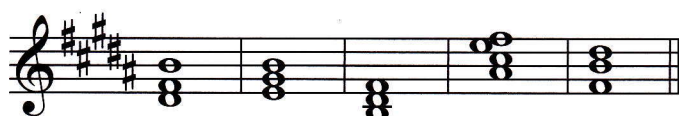
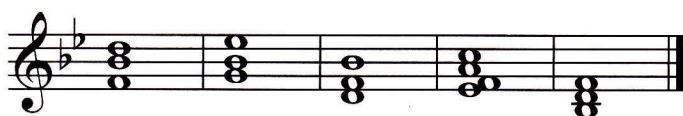
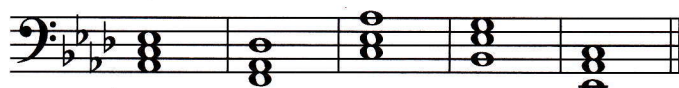
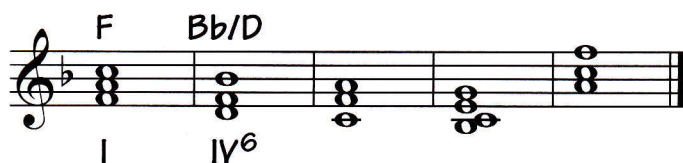
c. Triad, 1st inversion

d. Triad, 2nd inversion

e. Dominant 7th chord, 3rd inversion

7-35

**2** Write the chord symbol above the staff and the Roman numeral below the staff, using figured bass where applicable for each chord in the given keys.



5-65

100