

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>how to use this book</i> | 3 |
| REFERENCE CHARTS | |
| <i>notation guide</i> | 5 |
| <i>fretboard layout</i> | 6 |
| <i>interval notation: shorthand</i> | 7 |
| <i>interval notation: scale degrees</i> | 8 |
| <i>moveable shapes</i> | 9 |
| <i>string intervals charts</i> | 10 |
| <i>string intervals method</i> | 11 |
| <i>bottom-up & top-down views</i> | 13 |
| <i>interval shapes</i> | 14 |
| QUIZ | |
| <i>simple intervals</i> | 19 |
| <i>compound intervals</i> | 81 |

By definition, an interval is always determined with respect to the bottom note (lower pitch note). We refer to that here as the *bottom-up* view. In scale degree speak, this means that the bottom note takes on the role of scale degree 1 and the top note (higher pitch note) is the scale degree giving its name to the interval. Another important and very useful approach is the *top-down* view. In this approach, the notes of the interval and therefore the interval remain the same but the top note is now taking on the role of scale degree 1. The bottom note's scale degree then becomes the name of the interval's inversion!

The example shows a minor sixth interval. In the bottom-up view, the bottom note is scale degree 1 and the top note is scale degree $\flat 6$. In the top-down view, we swap the roles: the top note is scale degree 1 and the bottom note turns out to be scale degree 3. The string intervals method is applied to find the scale degrees.

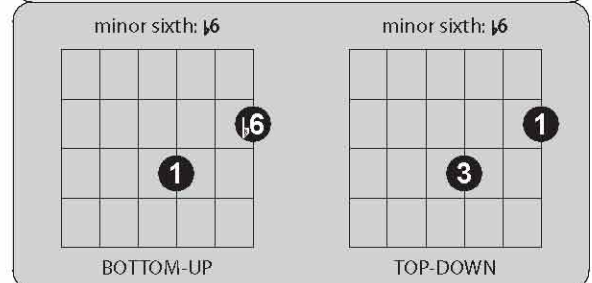
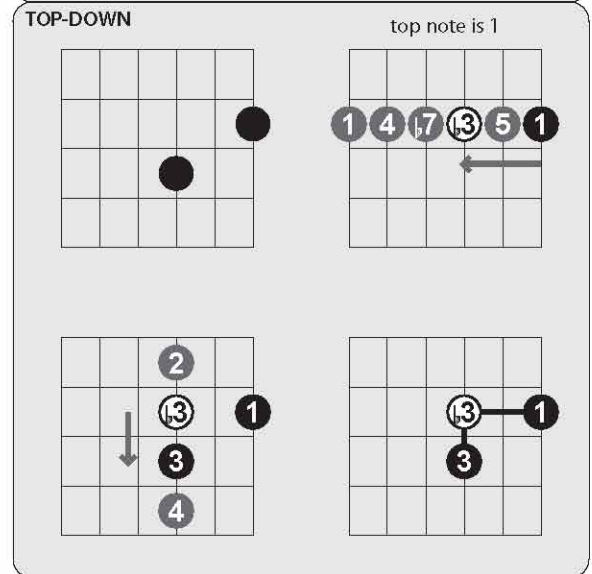
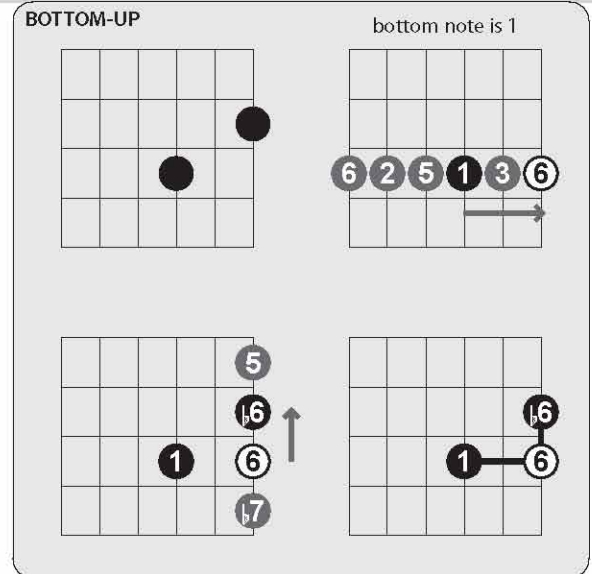
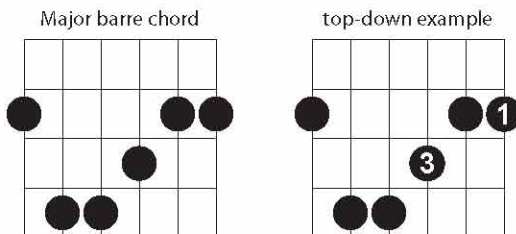
Notice how $\flat 6 + 3 = \text{octave}$. So the bottom-up view gives you the top-down view scale degrees "for free" (and vice versa). The corner notes are also complements of each other: $6 + \flat 3 = \text{octave}$.

Having both views in mind is particularly handy in the context of chords and their inversions. In this example, you probably frequently use the top-down view in a stock Major barre chord.



The top-down view is not an inversion of the bottom-up view. In an inversion, one of the notes of the interval is raised or dropped by an octave; that is not the case here, the notes stay where they are.

Bottom-up and top-down views are just different perspectives on the same interval.



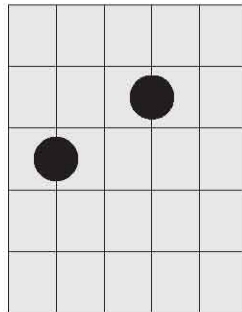
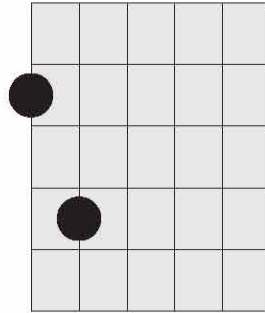
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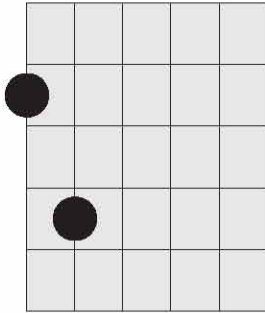
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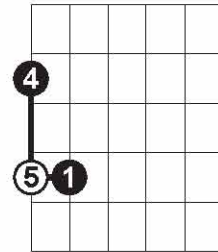
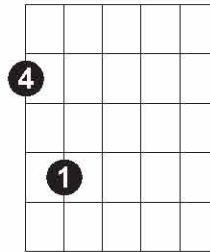
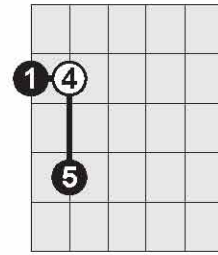
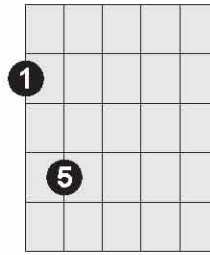


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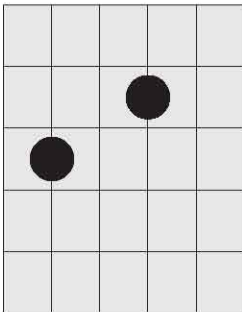
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PERFECT FIFTH



6



MAJOR SIXTH

