Chromaticism refers to the use of functional pitches that are foreign to the key of a particular passage.

When chromatic ("altered") tomes are present—s underscores the result of contrapuntal voice movement—new chords are created. These chords are called altered chords.

The most common altered tone in tonal music is the secondary function.

Secondary function: a chord whose function belongs more closely to a key other than the main key of a passage (that "other key" is the tonicized chord).

Most common secondary chords:
- Secondary dominant \([\text{V}^7/X]\)
- Secondary leading –tone \((\text{vii}^{7}/X)\) (or half-dim. \(\text{vii}\))

Resolution of a secondary dominant:
1. Secondary dominants resolve just like regular dominants (to a momentarily tonicized, "virtual" \(\text{I}\) chord).
2. Often, a variation of a deceptive \(\text{V}^7\rightarrow\text{vi}\) (or \(\text{VI}\) in minor) progression is found: \(\text{V}^7\rightarrow\text{V}^7/\text{vi}\rightarrow\text{vi}\) (or \(\text{VI}\) if in a minor key).
3. \(\text{V}^7/\text{iii}\) is seldom used in major, but \(\text{V}^7/\text{III}\) is common in minor.

Voice-leading in resolution:
1. The leading-tone in the secondary dominant moves up to the root of the tonicized chord.
2. If the chord of resolution is a seventh chord (a common case) the leading-tone of the secondary dominant moves down by half step to become the 7th of the resolved-to chord.
3. Any tritones in the secondary dominant (like between the leading-tone and seventh) must be resolved (aug. 4th outwards to a 6th, dim. 5th inwards to a 3rd).

Detecting the presence of a secondary dominant:
1. Find any accidentals; secondary dominants are linked to chromaticism.
2. See if the chord affected by the accidental is a major or major-minor seventh chord; also look for secondary leading-tone chords: diminished (7th) or half-diminished 7th.
3. Look at the resolution of the altered chord and see if it resolved to a chord for which it could be a dominant or leading-tone chord.