

# Guidelines for Voice-Leading

*(in the style of the common-practice period)*

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## *General Guidelines*

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1. Retain common tones between chords in the same voice.
  2. Move by step to the nearest chord tone, if possible.
  3. Move by consonant leaps, avoiding augmented or diminished intervals.
  4. Keep the range of each voice in mind, and do not cross voices above or below each other.
  5. Stay within an 8ve between upper voices. Wider intervals are fine between bass and tenor.
  6. Follow the figured bass indications for inversions.
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## *Guidelines for Doubling in 4 Parts (SATB)*

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1. Use four voices in each chord. The doubled note may be an 8ve or unison.
  2. Root position: double the **Bass**.
  3. First inversion: double the **Tonic, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> scale degree of the key**.
  4. Second inversion: double the **Bass**.
  5. Leading Tone diminished ( $\text{vii}^{\circ}$ ): double the **3<sup>rd</sup>, or the 5<sup>th</sup> if it is in the Soprano voice**.
  6. Do not double the Leading Tone of the key.
  7. To avoid parallelism, the root may be tripled and the 5<sup>th</sup> omitted.
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## *Guidelines for Part-Writing*

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1. A parallel P5 or P8 between two voices is not in the style in similar or contrary motion.
  2. On a dominant seventh, the 7<sup>th</sup> of the chord resolves down by step, and is not doubled.
  3. Inversions of dominant sevenths should be complete chords.
  4. Resolve the minor 7<sup>th</sup> of a any chord down by step.
  5. In minor keys, avoid an augmented 2<sup>nd</sup> leap between minor 6<sup>th</sup> and major 7<sup>th</sup> in any voice.
  6. When writing incomplete chords, omit the 5<sup>th</sup> (never omit the 3<sup>rd</sup>).
  7. In root position major triads, it is preferable not to double the third.
  8. In the soprano or bass part, the major 7<sup>th</sup> (leading tone) resolves up to the tonic.
  9. Raise the 7<sup>th</sup> in minor keys to form a major V chord or  $\text{vii}^{\circ}$  chord .
  10. Include Roman Numerals and figured bass below your realization.
  11. For independent parts, use a combination of contrary, oblique and similar motion.
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