

1. TENDENCY TONE(S) NOT RESOLVED (or NOT APPROACHED) PROPERLY.

MISUNDERSTANDING THE TREATMENT OF TENDENCY TONES IS *PERHAPS* THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM IN STUDENT PART-WRITING! It is essential to learn **what** they are, **how to approach and resolve them**, and to **avoid doubling them** (see #2 below for more on doubling).

- **Tendency tones** are notes that have a tendency to resolve in a specific way.

- They include (1.1) **chord 7ths** (and 9ths, 11ths, 13ths), (1.2) **leading tones** (incl. temp. leading tones found in 2^{ary} dominants, many **accented dissonances** such as (1.3) **the “6” and “4”** of a $V \begin{smallmatrix} 6 & - & 5 \\ 4 & - & 3 \end{smallmatrix}$ progression and (1.4) **suspensions**, and many (1.5) **chromatically-altered notes**.

1.1a) **Chord 7ths** can only **resolve ONE** way: **they fall by step to a chord tone**. *However...*:

☞ This fall can be *delayed* by a suspension into the next chord ($V_7 - I^{\text{sus4-3}}$), or it can be *further delayed* if the next chord does not have the expected note of resolution ($V_7 - IV_6 - V_5^6 - I$), although this is less common (and is the only case within a phrase where V can go to IV!).

☞ They can also be *transferred* to another voice (also relatively rare, especially in chorale style).

☞ In some instrumental music, they *'implode,'* (i.e. the 7th is part of an arpeggio, although more typically, 7ths resolve properly even if they *are* part of an arpeggio). This is **not** part of chorale-style!

☞ You sometimes find a *rising resolution* of the 7th in the progression $I - V_3^4 - I_6$ with parallel tenths above the bass! (again, this is *Rare*)

☞ You usually find an *apparent* rising resolution of the 7th in the progression $\text{vii}^\circ 7 / V \begin{smallmatrix} 6 & - & 5 \\ 4 & - & 3 \end{smallmatrix}$ but *only in major keys*. In fact, the 7th of $\text{vii}^\circ 7 / V$ *does* resolve to its expected note, but not right away (you need to write out this progression to see what I mean). In minor keys all you get is a delayed resolution.

1.1b) Chord 7ths can be **approached** in THREE ways: (i) by *common tone*, (ii) by *step*, or (iii) by (usually small) *ascending leap* (this is least common), **but never by descending leap**.

☞ **The really neat (!) aspect of this guideline is that it generally applies to any NCT as well!** For example, the “6” and “4” of a $V \begin{smallmatrix} 6 & - & 5 \\ 4 & - & 3 \end{smallmatrix}$ progression *can only be approached in the same three ways*, and the same is even true of approaching **any note that may be difficult to locate for the singer** (such as chromatically-altered notes).

1.2) **Leading tones** (incl. temp. ones) have a tendency to resolve to the tonic (or temp. tonic), **if they are part of dominant harmony** (V or vii^o). The leading tone in a iii chord, however, is relatively stable (it's the fifth of the chord, forming a very stable interval), so it need not move to the tonic.

☞ If they are in *interior* voices (A. or T.), however, they may (and frequently do) become “frustrated” by resolving down to the fifth of the I chord (or of the temp. I chord).

- This applies to **V-I** or **V/x to X** progressions; it does **not** apply to **vii^o(7)-I** or **vii^o(7)/x to X** progressions, where the leading tone resolves according to tendency.

- It also does not usually apply to **V-vi** (D.C.) progressions, where the leading tone also usually moves according to tendency.

☞ Another common example of frustrated leading tones is in a series of 2ry V⁷ths (i.e. “Five Foot Two”), where the temp. $\hat{7}$ of each 2ry V⁷ frequently resolves to the 7th of the next 2ry V⁷. Try it!

1.3) **The “6” and “4”** of a $V \begin{smallmatrix} 6 & - & 5 \\ 4 & - & 3 \end{smallmatrix}$ progression tend, as their figures indicate, to resolve down by step.

1.4) **Suspensions** have a tendency to resolve down stepwise to a chord tone. Although the resolution can be decorated (see “Suspensions” handout for more), they always resolve this way!

☞ An upwards-resolving suspension is called a *retardation*, and is much less common.

1.5) **Chromatically-altered notes** *tend* to resolve stepwise in the direction of their accidental. This is discussed in more detail when specific types of chromaticism are studied (mixture, N₆, +6th, etc.).

2.1 **DON'T DOUBLE TENDENCY-TONES** (or, “Don't Double Leading-Tone,” “Don't Double Temp. Leading-Tone,” “Don't Double Chromatically-Altered Note,” or “Don't Double 7th,” etc.). Indicated by circling the two tendency tones in the same chord, and connecting them with an arrow.. Although this rule is familiar to most students, people often forget that it applies to 2^{ary} Vs as well.

The same restriction *usually* applies to chromatically-altered tones, although exceptions may be found in more chromatic music; these are discussed when we cover these topics in class.

2.2 **DOUBLING** (*part 2*). Different textbooks and teachers have different guidelines for doubling notes in a triad; some flexibility is therefore allowed. When doubling a note, consider the following:

☞ **As long as you make sure that you aren't doubling a forbidden (!) note** (see #2.1 above), **the main consideration is writing good** (interesting, attractive, idiomatic, etc.) **singing lines for each voice**.

☞ Once you understand this, THEN feel free to invoke other doubling guidelines (such as **try to double the bass**, and/or **use the following doubling preference orders**: (i) **root, then** (ii) **5th, then** (iii) **3rd in primary triads** (I, IV, V), and (i) **3rd, then** (ii) **root, then** (iii) **5th in secondary triads** (ii, iii, vi).

3. **HARMONIC RHYTHM PROBLEMS** ("HR"). One of the most basic HR guidelines is:

3.1 **DON'T REPEAT A CHORD** (or chords with the **same function**, like $\text{vii}^\circ - \text{V}$, or $\text{IV} - \text{ii}$) FROM WEAK TO STRONG BEATS. **Exception**: It is not unusual for some Bach chorales to *begin* with two statements of the same chord from the pick-up to the down-beat; there is often a change of bass (such as a leap of an octave or simply a change of position) in such cases.

☞ This rule explains the metric placement of cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ chords:

$$[\text{"i"}^{\frac{6}{4}} - \text{V}] \text{i} \text{ is really } = [\text{V}^{\frac{6}{4} - \frac{5}{3}}] \text{i}, \text{ so ...}$$

$\text{V}^{\frac{6}{4}}$ SHOULD NOT BE ON A WEAKER BEAT THAN $\text{V}^{\frac{5}{3}}$ [but $\text{V}^{\frac{6}{4}}$ on beat 2 in $\frac{3}{4}$ time ok if $\text{V}^{\frac{5}{3}}$ on beat 3]

Some other HR issues include the following:

3.2 **CADENCE ONTO A STRONG BEAT ONLY** (i.e. beats 1 or 3 in 4/4 time). Applies to ALL cadences.

3.3 **IF THE FIRST PHRASE BEGINS WITH A PICK-UP BEAT, USUALLY THE SECOND DOES AS WELL.**

3.4 **THE HARMONIC RHYTHM TENDS TO BE CONSISTENT.** In Bach chorale style, for example, the harmonic rhythm is typically *at least* 4 chords/bar in 4/4 time, but there are *often* chord changes on weak 8th-notes as well. Therefore, if you begin a harmonization with a HR of 4 chords/bar with occasional chords on weak 8th-notes as well, then you should aim to continue this in subsequent bars. Because of this, **if you are harmonizing a melody with occasional half-notes or tied quarters, always try to change harmonies under these notes**, OR, in the case of half-notes, at least **write activity beneath them** (such as a V with 4-3 on each beat, possibly with additional activity as well).

4. **CADENTIAL $\frac{6}{4}$ PROBLEMS.** Cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ chords are covered under #1 (appr. and res. of tendency tones), #2 (doubling tendency tones), and #3 (H.R.) above. However, I see cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ chords problems so often in student work that I thought I'd make a separate category for them! The main problem seems to be that many students do not realize that the "6" and "4" of a $\text{V}^{\frac{6}{4}} - \frac{5}{3}$ progression are NCTs. **THEY ARE!** Therefore, these two notes should not be doubled! They are also tendency tones, as explained earlier.

5. **SUSPENSION PROBLEMS.** This too is mostly covered by a previous topic (#1-approaching, resolving). Two *additional* things to remember:

☞ 5.1 The rhythmic values of the susp. and its resolution are usually **half the value of the H.R.**

☞ 5.2 **The note of resolution should not be present in any other voice**, except in a 9-8 suspension; the purpose of a Susp. is to delay the arrival of a chord note, so if one voice is *delaying* its arrival while another voice already *has* it, well, let's just say that it's not pretty. Don't 2^{bl} the suspension itself either!

6. **$\frac{6}{4}$ CHORD TYPE?** All $\frac{6}{4}$ chords need to be labeled by type, both in part-writing AND analysis. Students sometimes "plunk" $\frac{6}{4}$ chords in their part-writing with no justification, and this is **bad!**

WHY? $\frac{6}{4}$ chords are *inherently unstable*; there are only limited situations where they can be used (what are they? **Make sure you can define and explain each type!**). Similar restrictions apply to $\frac{4}{3}$ chords.

7. **HARMONIC PROGRESSION QUESTIONABLE.** This is indicated by a bracket or arrow underneath two chords and a question mark. If you are not sure *why* your progression is questionable, just check it against the Kostka and Payne chord-flow chart. An example would be V to IV.

8. **DIMINISHED TRIAD PROBLEMS.** 8.1 The ° triad has TWO tendency tones (root, fifth); therefore, the third is the best note to double (although the 5th is a possible second choice). **You cannot double the root!** 8.2 ALSO, the ° triad **should not be used in root position** (unstable). °7th in root pos. ok.

9. **OVERLAP; VOICE CROSSING.** What do these terms mean, and how do they differ? Indicated by encircling the notes in question. Are there circumstances under which they are *ever* allowed?

10. **SPACING.** The distance between the Soprano and Alto should not exceed an 8ve; ditto for Alto and Tenor. The Tenor and Bass are *usually* within an octave of each other, just like the other voices. However, these two voices sometimes exceed this distance, perhaps by as much as a 12th.

11. **HIDDEN 8VE, HIDDEN 5TH** (indicated as follows: H8, H5). AKA “**Direct 8ves and 5ths**” (D8 or D5). A related problem is CONSECUTIVE 8VES AND 5THS. *What do these terms mean?* By far, **forbidden parallels** (8ves, 5ths) are most common. Inserting a P.T. in one of the voices does not avoid the problem! (**Discussion:** How *can* the problem be avoided?) **Remember as well that all 4 voices moving in similar direction is usually a problem** (except in V7-I with falling bass and Re-Do in sop.)

12. **V₇ SHOULDN'T GO TO I₆ (WHY?); V - V₂⁴ - I₆** is much better. The “why” part of this comment does not mean I am racking my brains, trying to remember *why* V₇ shouldn't really go to I₆, it means I'd like *you* to figure out the problem with this progression. Can you? (If not, ask me.) Indicated by circling both chords and adding a question mark.

13. **WRITING A GOOD MELODIC LINE IN ALL PARTS** (*or, Why Rules are Sometimes Broken*). Writing a good melodic line in all parts is of paramount importance! This is especially true for the soprano (more on this in the next handout), but it is also important to write singable and somewhat attractive lines for all the remaining voices. **Avoid writing awkward lines!** THE MAIN REASON THAT COMPOSERS SOMETIMES BREAK SPACING RULES (OR DOUBLING RULES, OR VOICE-CROSSING RULES, ETC.) IS THAT DOING SO CAN CREATE A PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE LINE FOR ONE OR MORE OF THE PARTS; if you chose to break one of these rules, you'd better have just cause!

14. **MELODIC AUG 2ND, or TRITONE, etc.** Since the melodic line in **each** part is so important, awkward melodic intervals are avoided such as +2nd, T.T., etc. An exception is a °5th approached and left in a direction opposite to the skip (“Mi-Fa-Ti-Do”). **Larger leaps** in general can be awkward to sing, and are thus avoided. **Exception:** The bass often has more skips than the upper parts, although it too moves mainly by step. An 8ve skip is not unusual in the bass, esp. at cadences.

15. **USE MORE NCTs and/or FIGURATION.** Student harmonizations sometimes lack a single NCT of any kind (!), and frequently contain only a smattering of them (1-3), seemingly inserted as afterthoughts. Alternatively, some students insert a higher number of NCTs, but they make no musical sense when sung--again, they appear to be afterthoughts. **Bach chorales usually have some kind of eighth-note figuration in at least one of the voices on every quarter-note beat** (until, of course, the cadence). Bach obviously considered this an essential, and not merely decorative, ingredient in his music. Therefore, since our goal in harmonizing melodies or bass lines is to be as Bach-like as possible, **adding NCTs should be considered an essential aspect of assignments; you must demonstrate you know how to handle NCTs if you want to do well on assignments.**

☞ **HOW DO I KNOW WHICH NCTs TO USE?** The two most common types of NCTs are Ps (both unaccented and accented) and SUSPs; your best bet would be to try to write more of these. SUSPs are particularly beautiful, so use as many as possible, but they are a little trickier to handle than other NCTs. See my handout on suspensions for review. Ns are only slightly less common (LN more common than UN), Es and APPs are used relatively less frequently, while ANTs and RETs are relatively rare, and situation-specific; they are often used at cadence points, but not nearly as commonly-used elsewhere (although occasionally they are used as a compositional unifying motive). Occasional *arpeggiations* are fine, but more than that is more typical of instrumental style than chorale style.

☞ By the way, “Do-(Ti)-So” is an example of an *illegal* NCT (the NCT “Ti” is left by **leap** in the **same direction** as it was approached; the only NCTs in which leaps are permissible involve a change of direction before or after the NCT). Also, **AVOID LN FROM ROOT OF CHORD** (creates an unresolved 7th).

☞ **IF YOU WANT TO KEEP THINGS BOTH SIMPLE AND IDIOMATIC, GENERALLY APPROACH YOUR NCTs BY COMMON-TONE OR STEP, AND LEAVE THEM BY STEP.** And always sing the line you write!



☞ **MELODIC LINE PROBLEMS:** “MELODY STATIC” or “MELODY AIMLESS,” “AWKWARD,” etc. A good melody has its own sense of *logic, balance, rhythm, and forward motion*. This has been discussed in class, and your textbook provides some guidelines on this topic. Like NCTs, trying to write an interesting, attractive melody is challenging, but essential if you wish to write musically (and hence get a good mark). Perfect voice leading with a static melody and no NCTs *may* get you a 12/15 (80%) on a question, but no better. Check your melody by singing it, preferably fairly quickly. Does it have a nice shape? Does it feel “right”¹ when you sing it? Is the high-point reached only once? Is it boring or monotonous?




☞ **CONJUNCT VS. DISJUNCT MOTION:** It is typical in chorales to encounter mainly **conjunct motion**, with a judicious mix of disjunct motion mixed in to keep the lines interesting. Always bear in mind that all four parts are *sung* parts, and any melodic guidelines discussed must therefore apply to ALL voices, although the bass is often slightly more disjunct than the others.






☞ **TREATMENT OF LEAPS:** Avoid awkward leaps, or following a large leap by another move (step or leap) in the same direction. Generally speaking, any leap (large or small) tends to be followed by a **stepwise change of direction**, although there are many exceptions, especially involving smaller intervals like a third. Melodic motion which outlines a triad in any inversion is possible, but should not occur too often. Remember as well that all four parts are *sung* parts, and the melodic guidelines discussed must therefore apply to ANY voice, although the bass voice often has slightly more skips than the others.

☞ **TRY TO END THE SOPRANO ON $\hat{1}$.** Bach chorale melodies virtually *all* end on the tonic, although not every single phrase *within* the chorales does. “Try” means just that; melodies sound more finished when they end on the tonic, but if you have come up with a particularly beautiful melody that ends on $\hat{3}$, that may be fine too.

☞ **END PHRASES ON A STABLE CHORD.** Phrases can end on V, i (I), or, less commonly, VI (vi). They generally do not end with V7 or chord inversions (they are less stable, and a phrase ending is a point of rest, so is usually relatively stable).

☞ **TYPICAL (AND ATYPICAL) CHORALE RHYTHMS:** Sometimes, in an effort to avoid being boring, students write sudden flourishes into their melodies, such as fleeting little runs of 16th-notes (or even 32nd-notes!), or rapid and unexpected chord arpeggiations, or unusual rhythms, when most of the melody has been moving in steady quarters. These are all *atypical* of the chorale style; resist giving in to these excessive outbursts! **The most typical chorale rhythmic values are quarter-notes and eighth-notes, with dotted quarters and half-notes being relatively less common but not unusual.** Thus,  is extremely common and typical.  is used occasionally (but is not common), and typically seems to

have been used in conjunction with  in another voice (i.e.:  or ) , particularly at cadences.

 and  are not especially common, but are used occasionally.  is to be avoided in the chorale style, as are  and , or indeed *any* 16th-note run; they are virtually never used.

☞ **CLASS RULE:** Write short, connecting lines or arrows showing the *approach to* (if necessary) and/or *resolution of tendency tones*. *Tendency tones* include **chord 7ths** (and 9ths, 13ths), **leading tones** (incl. temporary ones found in secondary dominants), many accented dissonances (**suspensions, cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ chords, appoggiaturas**), and many chromatically-altered notes. If the resolution is *delayed*, use horizontal lines until the resolution occurs. Use a squiggly line for frustrated tendency tones.

¹ Feeling “right” is, course, a subjective matter. Since we are trying to write according to a historical/regional style (i.e. 18th-century European), one way to know how “right” something feels is to be familiar with the style as possible. Study as many Bach chorales as possible, and always sing what you study. When performing Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, etc., always analyse what you play, and be as observant as possible. Do they sometimes break “rules?” Why?