

# Voice-Leading Guidelines

soprano  
alto  
tenor  
Bass

stem up on soprano 1/2 tenor  
stem down for alto and bass

**I.** Four Parts - Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass.  
Written on the Grand Staff.

\* Range of each part :  
Soprano : C4 to G5  
Alto : G3 to D5  
Tenor : C3 to G4  
Bass : G2 to D4

Soprano Range  
Alto Range  
Tenor Range  
Bass Range

**II** "Vertical" Rules:

- ① Spacing ~ octave or less between Soprano and Alto, octave or less between alto and tenor.
- ② No voice-crossing. Alto can not be written higher than ~~the~~ soprano, etc.

① Spacing

good spacing  
good spacing  
too much space  
too much space

② voice-crossing



# More Voice-Leading Guidelines p. 2

③

Doubled Root  
Doubled 5th  
Doubled 3rd

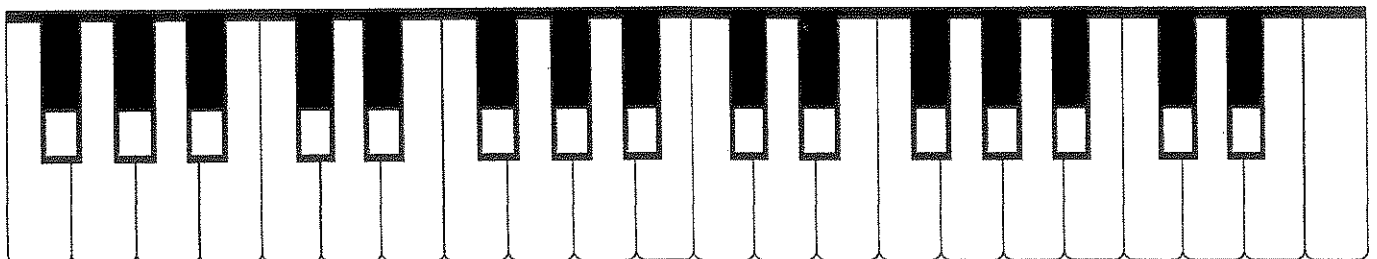
I I<sub>4</sub> ii<sub>6</sub>

④

parallel thirds (okay)  
parallel 6ths (okay)  
no parallel octaves!  
parallel 5ths, not good!  
contrary motion  
oblique motion

## II Vertical Rules continued

- ③ Standard Doublings:
- Default - double the root of the chord
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> choice - double the 5<sup>th</sup>. Do this in 4 chords.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> choice - double the third. Avoid this. It might be okay for Minor chords. (sometimes in a ii<sup>6</sup> chord, 3<sup>rd</sup> can be doubled)
- ④ Motion between voices, especially Bass and Soprano
- Similar Motion: Voices moving in the same direction
  - Parallel Motion: Voices move in the same direction, maintain the same interval.
  - Contrary Motion: Moving in different directions
  - Oblique Motion: One voice stays the same, another moves.



# More Voice - Leading Guidelines p. 3

⑤

Alto voice resolve down from "fa" to "mi"

⑤ 7<sup>th</sup>'s of chords must resolve down by step.

III

disjunct

conjunct

disjunct

## III Horizontal Guidelines:

- ① Go for contrary motion between Soprano & Bass.
- ② Conjunct motion: mostly by step  
Disjunct - mostly skipping, moving by larger intervals.
- ③ Soprano and Bass are more disjunct, Alto and Tenor are conjunct.
- ④ Always make leaps as small as possible.

