

PART-WRITING GUIDELINES

1. Allow all tendency tones to resolve correctly.
 - The leading tone in a V or vii° chord resolves UP by step to the tonic pitch when going to I or vi.
 - The 7th of any chord (chordal seventh) resolves DOWN by step or HOLDS in the same voice until it can resolve down by step.
2. Do not create parallel octaves, fifths, or unisons. Parallel fourths must NOT occur between the bass and any other part (parallel fourths are acceptable with the upper parts, but should always be used sparingly).
3. If it is possible to keep a note, do so; if not, move each part by the smallest possible interval. Avoid leaping by large or difficult intervals—especially augmented intervals.
4. No more than an octave between SA and AT.
5. No voice-crossing or overlapping of voices
6. When there is a choice of which chord member to double, use the most stable tone present. Usually this is the root, followed by the fifth. Never double a tendency tone as this will force you to ignore guidelines 1 or 2. In second inversion chords always double the 5th of the chord, which is the bass note.
7. Never omit any note of a triad or seventh chord except the fifth—and only omit the fifth when you must do so in order to follow guideline 1.

These principles assume that you have written with the correct ranges and that all the chords actually contain the notes you say they do!

ODE TO THE PERFECT PART-WRITING EXERCISE

One who'd compose four equal voices
Already knows he has few choices;
If you can hold a note please do!
Or move it but a step or two.

Never jump outside your range
Or by an interval that strains;
I'm sure you all avoid as well
Octaves and fifths in parallel

I won't tell you which note to double,
But if its a seventh, you're in trouble!
That holds as well for the leading-tone
Which goes to 1 or 5 alone.

Watch spacing in and between staves
And don't let voices cross their paths.
And, at the risk of sounding like a whiner;
Please sharp that 7 when you're in minor!