

HARMONY RULES

WRITING CHORDS

- Double the root or 5th, NOT the 3rd except in a minor chord (not key).
Chord VI is the big exception, DO double the 3rd.
- Try to make the spacing of each chord as even as possible.
- No more than one octave between Alto & Tenor and Alto & Soprano.
- **Do not leave out the 3rd**
- The 5th may be left out and the root tripled
- Never double the leading note of the scale.
- It is occasionally possible to have Alto and Tenor on the same note.
- Keep the tenor part as high as possible.

WRITING CADENCES

- The leading note of a scale must rise to the tonic.
- When both chords use the same note keep it in the same part.
- Parts move to the nearest note possible.
- No part may move in parallel or consecutive 5ths or octaves.
- No part may overlap or cross another part.
- Contrary motion is desirable where possible.

PERFECT CADENCES

- The perfect cadence is chords V – I and has a very finished sound ideal for the end of piece or section of the music. Write down the available notes, in C Major the notes are GGBD and CCEG. Occasionally it may be necessary to double the 5th of chord I (CEGG) or even triple the tonic (CCCE), to keep to the basic rules.
- Always begin by writing in the bass notes.
- The leading note rises to the tonic.
- The note common to both chords remains in the same part.
- This leaves only one pair of notes which move by step.

PLAGAL CADENCES

- A Plagal cadence is chords IV – I and has a finished sound bring the music to a close. Write down the available notes.
- We work these exactly as for the perfect cadence except there is no leading note.
- * Write in the bass notes (the root of each chord).
- * Keep the note in common to both chords in the same part (this is the tonic of the key).
- * The other two parts should move as closely as possible, usually they can simply both move down a step.

IMPERFECT CADENCES

- The imperfect cadence always ends with chord V. It gives the feeling of a half-close in the music, like a comma. The most common imperfect cadence is I – V. This is written exactly like the Perfect cadence but backwards. Other common Imperfect cadences are II – V & IV – V.
- Watch the leading note carefully, it will fall from the tonic. Don't forget in a minor key to raise the leading note.
- In II – V try to make the soprano & bass move in contrary motion. Only use II – V in a major key.
- In VI – V don't forget to double the 3rd in chord VI and make two voices rise and two fall. One of the voices falling will be the tonic to leading note.
- In IV – V the bass will often rise and all the other 3 parts fall. This is to help avoid consecutive octaves between the two roots.

INTERRUPTED CADENCE

- The Interrupted cadence is chords V – VI and has a very unfinished sound, like a question mark in the music, leading it on to something more.
- Double the 3rd in chord VI.
- The bass will move up a step. The leading note must rise to the tonic. The other two parts will fall.

