

2.7 SATB Part-writing 3: Root Position Triads

General guidelines for all part-writing

Prerequisites. Follow guidelines for voicing triads and avoid the fiendish five.

Roman numerals: Name the key and include roman numerals with inversion symbols below each chord.

Doubling: Doubling means giving more than one voice (S, A, T, B) the same note, even if it is a different octave.

Root, third, and fifth must all be included in the chord voicing (except #3 below).

1. Double the root
for root position triads.

OK NO! NO!

root 3rd! 5th!

root 3rd! 5th!

2. V-vi or V-VI: In the progression root position V to root position vi or VI, *double the 3rd in the vi/VI chord.*

NO! NO! YES

3rd! 3rd! 3rd!

LT! LT! LT!

C:V vi C:V vi C:V vi

LT is unresolved! parallel 5ths & 8ves!

3. The final tonic
may triple the root and omit the fifth.

root 3rd root

root root

C:V I

Avoid overlap. Overlap occurs when the lower voice of any pair of voices moves above the former position of the upper voice, or vice-versa.

NO! NO! OK

bass moves above tenor's former note tenor moves below former bass note OK: same note (here C-C) is acceptable

OK exception: In T and B *only*, 3rd moving to unison 1 step higher or vice-versa

Melodic intervals: Avoid **AUGMENTED** melodic intervals and avoid leaps of a 7th in one voice. Generally best to keep common tones or use small leaps.

NO! NO!

melodic aug. 2nd! 7th leap!

Diminished intervals are OK, especially if they then move by step in the opposite direction.

OK: Dim. 4th down then resolves up.

Leading tones: In V or vii°, the leading tone must move to the next chord in a certain way. This is called **resolving the LT**.
 Leading tones always resolve **up by step** in **soprano or bass**.
 Leading tones resolve **up by step** OR **down a third** in **alto or tenor**.
 The leading tone note doesn't have to resolve a particular way in III or iii chords.

LT! LT! LT! NO! LT NOT RESOLVED!

G major: OK, resolves by step in S OK, resolves by step OK, resolves down a 3rd in an inner voice (assuming bass/tenor below) NO! LT NOT RESOLVED!

Moving from Triad to Triad

The following 4-step process will work well for progressions involving root position and/or 1st inversion triads:

STEP ONE: Write in the bass notes. If the progression is given, the inversion symbols determine the bass.

STEP TWO: Voice the first chord, following the chord voicing guidelines.

STEP THREE: Resolve **leading tones**, then **doubled notes**, then **P5ths between any voices**, avoiding the fiendish five.

STEP FOUR: Write in the **remaining voices** (if any), holding common tones when possible and avoiding the fiendish five.

STEP 1 STEP 2 STEP 3a: LT STEP 3b: Doubled notes STEP 3c: P5s STEP FOUR

G: V I

done!