

2.10 SATB Part Writing 6: Seventh Chords

General Guidelines for Seventh Chords

Follow the voicing guidelines for triads, *except* you may *omit the 5th* (if so, *double the root*).

Resolving seventh chords:

- FIRST**, resolve the *seventh* of the chord *down by step*.
- SECOND**, resolve the *leading tone* (if present) *up by step*. In an *inner voice* (alto or tenor only), the LT *may* also resolve *down a third*.
- LAST**, resolve the remaining voices, following all stylistic guidelines.

Resolving V7 in Root Position

Root position V7 chords moving to I (or i) can be tricky since there are 2 tendency tones (7th and LT).

Solution 1: Make *one* of the chords *incomplete* (use an *extra root* instead of the fifth), **OR**

Solution 2: Put the *leading tone* in the *alto or tenor* and resolve it *down a third*.

Solution 1a:

LT in *soprano*,
Tonic chord *incomplete*

(complete) (incomplete)

C: V⁷ I

Solution 1b:

LT in *soprano*,
V7 chord *incomplete*

(i) (c)

C: V⁷ I

Solution 2a:

LT in *tenor*,
both chords *complete*

(c) (c)

C: V⁷ I

Solution 2b:

LT in *alto*,
both chords *complete*

(c) (c)

C: V⁷ I

Inverted V7 chords follow the general guidelines for seventh chords. If the *seventh* is in the *bass*, it must resolve down by step, creating a first-inversion I chord.

V7 to VI (or vi) will often *double the 3rd* in the *VI (or vi)* chord, just like triads (that is, V to VI or V to vi).

Circle-of-Fifths Sequences with Seventh Chords

When circle-of-fifths sequences occur with seventh chords, the *sevenths* resolve *down by step* as usual. For more examples, see *Tonal Harmony* by Kostka and Payne, 6th ed., p. 251.

Pattern 1: All root position chords;
complete chords *alternate* with *incomplete* chords.

(c) (i) (c) (i) (c) (i)

b: iv⁷ VII⁷ III^{M7} VI^{M7} ii⁷ V⁷ i

Pattern 2: All *complete* chords, second-inversion and root-position chords alternate.

b: iv³ VII⁷ III^{M3} VI^{M7} ii³ V⁷ i

Pattern 3: All *complete* chords, first-inversion and third-inversion chords alternate.

b: iv⁵ VII² III^{M5} VI^{M4} ii⁵ V² i⁶