

AP Music Theory: Unit 4

From Simple Studies, <https://simplestudies.edublogs.org> & @simplestudiesinc on Instagram

Harmony and Voice Leading I: Chord Function, Cadence, and Phrase

Voice Leading

- Describes how individual parts move as a harmony from each chord to the next
- This movement between two voices can happen 4 ways (definitions are from CollegeBoard):
 - Contrary Motion: voices move in opposite directions
 - Oblique Motion: one voice remains stationary while the second moves up or down
 - Parallel Motion: voices move in the same direction and by the same melodic interval
 - Similar Motion: voices move in the same direction but not by the same melodic interval

The image displays four examples of voice leading between two voices (treble and bass clef) on a grand staff. Each example is labeled above it:

- contrary motion**: The treble voice moves down (half note) while the bass voice moves up (half note).
- oblique motion**: The treble voice remains stationary (half note) while the bass voice moves up (half note). A label "same note" is placed between the two staves.
- similar motion**: Both voices move up, but by different intervals. The treble voice moves up by a 3rd, and the bass voice moves up by a 6th.
- parallel motion**: Both voices move up by the same interval of a 2nd.

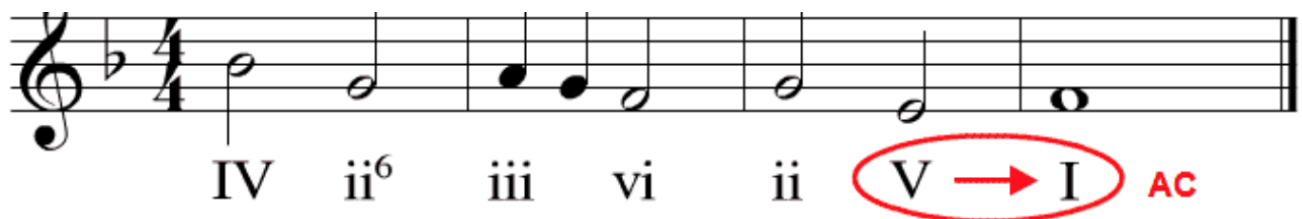
General Voice Leading Rules

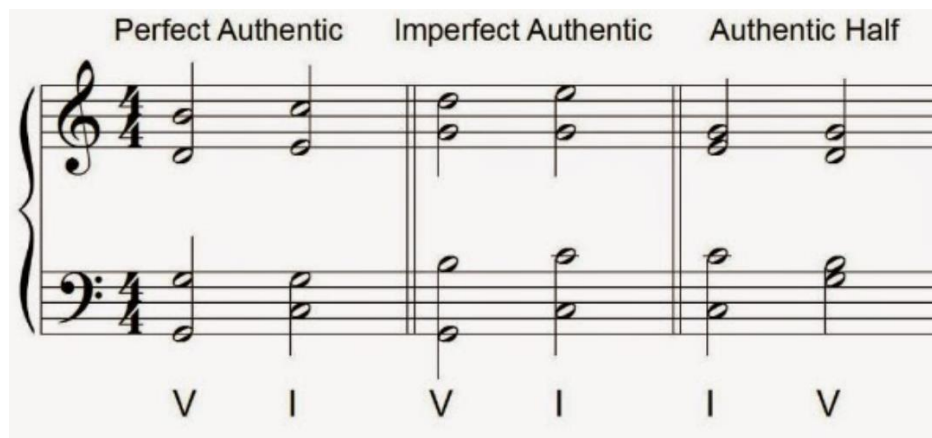
- Avoid excessive leaps; keep the voice leading moving mostly by step
- Common tones should, for the most part, stay within the same voice part
- Use SATB (soprano-alto-tenor-bass) to avoid confusion in your leading voice and to avoid voice crossing

- All voices should proceed with these intervals: major and minor second, perfect fourth, and perfect fifth
- Exclude melodic augmented and diminished intervals, as well as melodic intervals larger than a perfect fifth.
- Resolve leading tones (in soprano or bass)
- After a perfect octave or unison, move to an interval that is not another perfect octave or unison.
- After a perfect fifth, move to an interval that is not another perfect fifth.
- You can include dissonances in soprano or bass, only if they are part of an acceptable harmonic progression.
- An acceptable harmonic progression can be made up of tonic, supertonic, subdominant and dominant triads.

Cadences

- Conclude musical phrases
- A bass line helps imply the cadence at the end of each phrase
- Appropriate cadences
 - Perfect Authentic
 - the chords are in root position
 - tonic is the highest voice in the final chord
 - Known as the strongest type of cadence



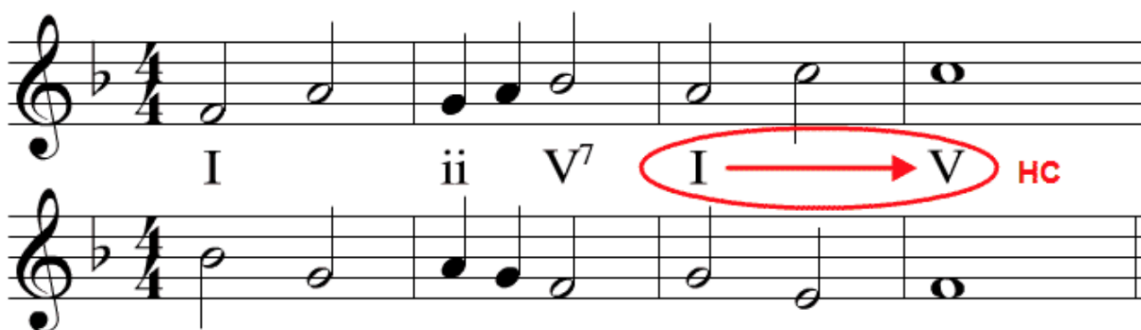


○ Imperfect Authentic

- There are three types of imperfect authentic cadences (IAC): Root Position, Inverted, and Leading Tone
- Root Position IAC: just like a perfect authentic cadence, but the tonic is not the highest voice
- Inverted IAC: just like a perfect authentic cadence, but one or both chords are inverted
- Leading Tone IAC: the V chord is replaced with a leading tone chord, but the cadence ends on a tonic chord

○ Half

- Any cadence that ends on a dominant (V) chord
- Considered a “weak” chord because it sounds incomplete/suspended



○ Plagal

- Cadence that goes from a subdominant (IV) chord to a tonic (I) chord

○ Deceptive

- Cadence that goes from a dominant (V) chord to any other chord that is not the tonic (I)
- Final cadence must be a perfect authentic cadence
- There are two categories of cadence types
 - Inconclusive: Half, Imperfect Authentic, and Deceptive Cadences
 - Conclusive: Perfect Authentic and Plagal Cadences

General Doubling Rules

- Whenever voice leading allows, double the root of a triad.
- Thirds and fifths can also be doubled in triads.
- Never double tendency tones. Tendency tones are leading-tone and chordal seventh.
- If the fifth is not in a root-position seventh chord, double the root.
- In 6/4 chords, always double the bass

Harmonic Progression

- Also known as chord progression
- Harmonic progression is the sequence of chords in a musical piece
- Can be represented by Roman numerals
- When inversions are used, it can also include Arabic numerals

Voice Leading with Seventh Chords

- Chordal sevenths should be approached by step. They can also be approached by ascending leap or descending leap of a third (although, the latter is rarely used).
- All chordal sevenths should resolve by descending step.
- The fifth in a root-position dominant seventh can be removed if it helps the voice leading. Make sure to double the root if the fifth is removed.
- Leading-tone seventh chords have two functions: substitute V or V7 chord OR be placed between tonic chords to prolong the tonic.