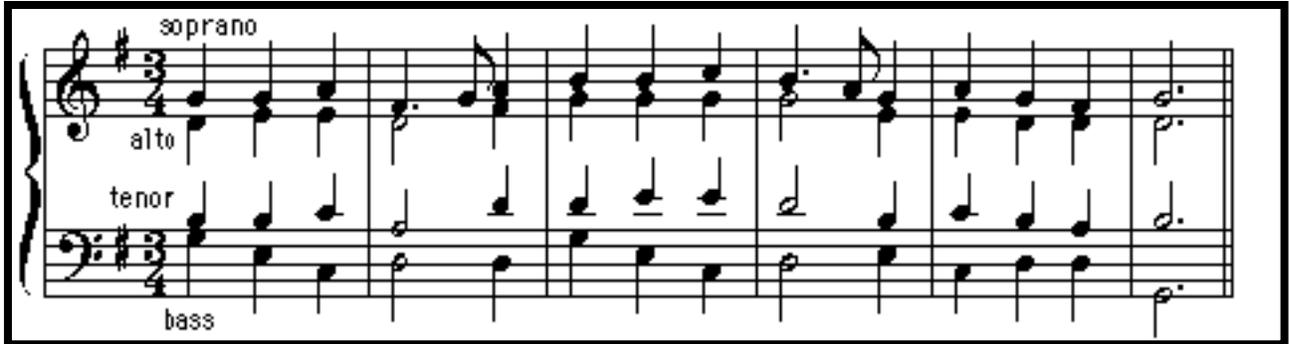


## Chapter 14 Writing Triads in Four Parts

In this chapter you will:

1. Recognize voices in four parts
2. Distinguish voices by staff and stem
3. Find doubled notes and inversions
4. Learn about close and open spacing
5. Write triads in close spacing
6. Write triads in open spacing
7. Find common tones for two triads
8. Find common tones and relate them to voices

### 14.1 Recognize voices in four parts



The image shows a musical score for the hymn "My Country 'Tis of Thee" arranged in four parts: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The soprano part is on a treble clef staff, the alto on a treble clef staff with a downward stem, the tenor on a bass clef staff with an upward stem, and the bass on a bass clef staff. The music consists of a series of triads, with one note in each triad being doubled.

This arrangement of “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” is written in four parts. These parts are modeled after the vocal parts in a chorus:

- The top voice is the soprano (high women’s voice).
  - The next lowest is the alto (low women’s voice).
  - Next is the tenor (high men’s voice).
  - The lowest is the bass (low men’s voice).
- The terms “voice” and “part” are interchangeable.

In Chapter 14 you will learn to write chords as they are written above:

- All the chords are triads so each one has three chord tones only. Since there are four notes per chord, one chord tone is always doubled.
- In root position triads the root is usually the doubled chord tone.

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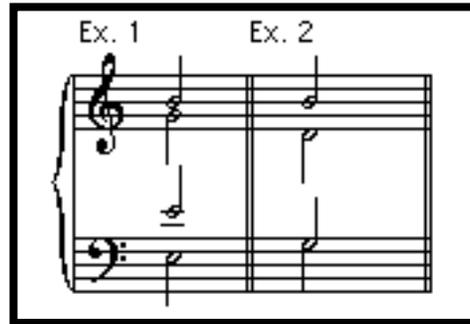
LABEL each of the following notes by voice. Use the letters S, A, T and B as abbreviations.



The image shows a musical score with four staves (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) and a treble clef. The notes are labeled with S, A, T, and B. The labels are: S (soprano), A (alto), T (tenor), and B (bass). The notes are: S (G4), A (F#4), T (E4), B (D4) in the first measure; S (A4), A (G#4), T (F#4), B (E4) in the second measure; S (B4), A (A4), T (G4), B (F#4) in the third measure.

## Pathways to Harmony, Chapter 14. Writing Triads in Four Parts

### 14.2 Distinguish voices by staff and stem



• Music in four voices will be written on grand staves. A grand staff is two staves joined together as in piano music.

To help distinguish the voices visually when four parts are written on a grand staff:

- The soprano and alto are written on the top staff, and
- The tenor and bass are written on the bottom staff. Sometimes this placement requires several ledger lines. See tenor in Example 1.
- Stems for soprano and tenor notes go up, and
- Stems for alto and bass notes go down.
- When adjacent voices sing the same note, a single notehead gets two stems. See Example 2.

1. NAME the voice written on the wrong staff. If all voices are correct, write “correct.”



2. CREATE half notes by adding a stem to every note in the proper direction.

Provide stems.



## Pathways to Harmony, Chapter 14. Writing Triads in Four Parts

### 14.3 Find doubled notes and inversions

1. REWRITE the following chords in four parts. The rewritten notes should be in the same octave as the original notes. ADD stems to make the notes half notes.

Example

2. IDENTIFY the doubled chord tone as the root, third or fifth.

Example

*third*  
(two C's)

3. WRITE inversion figures (5/3, 6/3, or 6/4) and the doubled note for each of these chords:

Example

$\frac{6}{3}$  *third*

## Pathways to Harmony, Chapter 14. Writing Triads in Four Parts

### 14.4 Learn about close and open spacing

The diagram shows two musical staves side-by-side, labeled 'Close Spacing' and 'Open Spacing'. Each staff has a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. In the 'Close Spacing' example, the top three voices (soprano, alto, and tenor) are written with notes that are as close together as possible. A text box above them says: 'Given the chord tones below, the top 3 voices are as close as possible'. In the 'Open Spacing' example, the top three voices are written with notes that have exactly one chord tone between each of them. A text box above them says: 'One, and only one, chord tone between each of the top 3 voices'. Below both examples, the chord tones are shown as small noteheads without stems, with an arrow pointing to them from the text 'chord tones'.

• Recall from Book 2 that a chord tone is a note of a chord for which an octave is not specified. Chord tones are notated with small noteheads without stems.

Follow these spacing and doubling suggestions:

- Adjacent voices, except bass and tenor, should never be more than an octave apart.
- In root position, double the root.

This spacing and doubling can be achieved by spacing the top three voices in either of these ways:

- In close spacing--when there are no chord tones between the top three voices. OR
- In open spacing--when there is one, and only one, chord tone between each of the top three voices.
- The interval between the bass and tenor does not matter in determining close and open spacing.

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The chords in the following phrase are in open spacing.  
DRAW a dot for the chord tone between each of the top three voices.

The example shows a four-part setting of a triad in open spacing. The top three voices (soprano, alto, and tenor) are written in a treble clef, and the bass part is written in a bass clef. The music is in G major and common time. The chords are G major, D major, and G major. The top three voices are spaced such that there is exactly one chord tone between each of them. The word 'Example' is written in the first measure.

- In Bach's time the alto part in choral music was written in alto clef.
- In alto clef the middle line is middle C.

REWRITE the alto part in the above phrase in alto clef.

A blank musical staff with an alto clef (C-clef on the third line) and a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The staff is divided into four measures, corresponding to the four measures of the example above.

## Pathways to Harmony, Chapter 14. Writing Triads in Four Parts

### 14.5 Write triads in close spacing

1. IDENTIFY these triads as being in close or open spacing.

Example

close

2. WRITE the key, Roman numeral, inversion figures and the doubled note for each of the following chords. IDENTIFY the doubled note as the root, third or fifth.

Example

G:    ii    5  
key Rom Num Inv.

root  
doubling

3. FILL IN the alto and tenor by using close spacing. All chords are in root position.

Start with the top note and work down:

a. First write the alto so that there are no chord tones between the alto and soprano.

b. Then fill in the tenor so there are no chord tones between the tenor and the alto.

Example

f minor    d diminished    G Major    G augmented    c minor    A Major

## Pathways to Harmony, Chapter 14. Writing Triads in Four Parts

### 14.6 Write triads in both open and close spacing

1. COMPLETE rewriting these triads in open spacing. Always work from the top note down.

Example

One chord tone in between

choose top note

choose top and bottom notes

2. FILL IN the missing voices according to the given spacing.

open close open close choose 3 notes open choose 4 notes close choose 4 notes

G diminished F# minor C Augmented E Major F Major root position G minor root position

3. WRITE key signatures and missing voices. All triads are in root position.

open close open Use harmonic minor. Raise 7. close

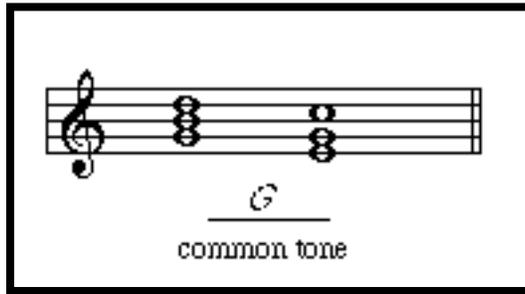
B: tonic g: ii° b: v3# A: subdominant

open close open close

f: III<sup>+</sup><sub>5b</sub> f#: v3# E: submediant E: IV

# Pathways to Harmony, Chapter 14. Writing Triads in Four Parts

## 14.7 Find the common tone for two triads



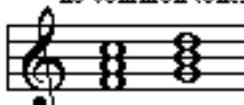
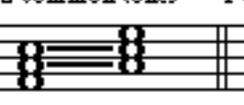
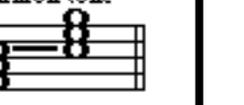
When moving from one chord to another it is important to be able to identify the note(s) common to both chords--the common tone(s).

IDENTIFY the common tones for these pairs of triads. They may be in different octaves.

Two musical exercises are presented. The first exercise shows a single staff with four pairs of triads. Each pair is separated by a double bar line. Below each pair is a horizontal line for the student to write the common tone(s). The second exercise shows a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with four pairs of triads. Brackets are drawn under the notes of each pair to indicate the common tones. Below the grand staff, two horizontal lines are provided for the student to write the common tones. The text 'two common tones' is written below the first and second lines.

## Pathways to Harmony, Chapter 14. Writing Triads in Four Parts

### 14.8 Find common tones and relate them to voices

no common tones	2 common tones	1 common tone
		
root movement: by step (same as down a 7th)	by 3rd (same as down a 6th)	by 5th (same as down a 4th)

If one chord follows another and:

- if the root moves by step or by seventh, then the two chords have no common tones.
- if the root moves by third or by sixth, then the two chords have two common tones.
- if the root moves by fourth or by fifth, then the two chords have one common tone.

In root position chords, look at the bass to find the number of common tones.

1. WRITE the number of common tones, 0, 1 or 2, below each pair of chords.

All chords are in root position.



2. For each pair of chords, WRITE “same” if the common tone is kept in the same voice or WRITE “different” if the common tone moves to a different voice.

Example 1	Example 2
	
<u>same</u> (tenor)	<u>different</u> same note, different voice