

Basic Rules for First Species Counterpoint

Consonances

Dissonances

Perfect

Unison

Fifth

Octave

Imperfect

Third

Sixth

Second

Fourth

Tritone

Seventh

The Fundamental Rule

Never move to a perfect consonance by parallel motion.

Rules for First Species

- 1) Use only consonances
 - a. Imperfect consonances are preferable to Perfect Consonances
 - b. Avoid unisons except at the beginning and end
- 2) Begin and end with a Perfect Consonance
 - a. If your Cantus Firmus is above your counterpoint you must begin with a unison or octave.
- 3) In the penultimate bar use a 6th if the CF is on the bottom; or a 3rd if the CF is on the top.
- 4) Never use more than three of the same intervals in parallel motion
- 5) Avoid Hidden Fifths, octaves and unisons
- 6) Avoid melodic tritons (e.g. B-F or F-B)