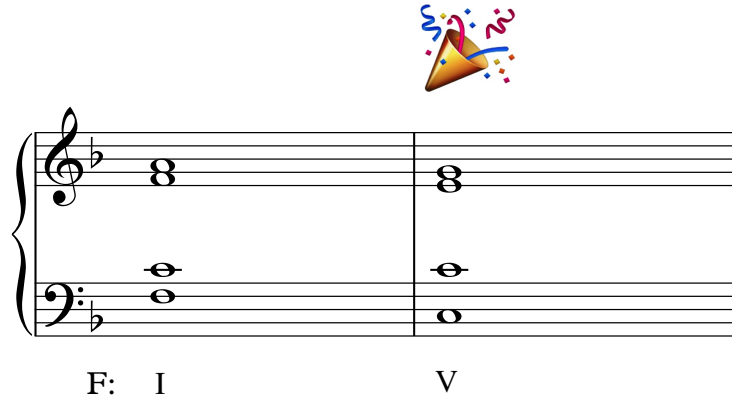


suspensions

Late to the Party: a Suspenseful Story

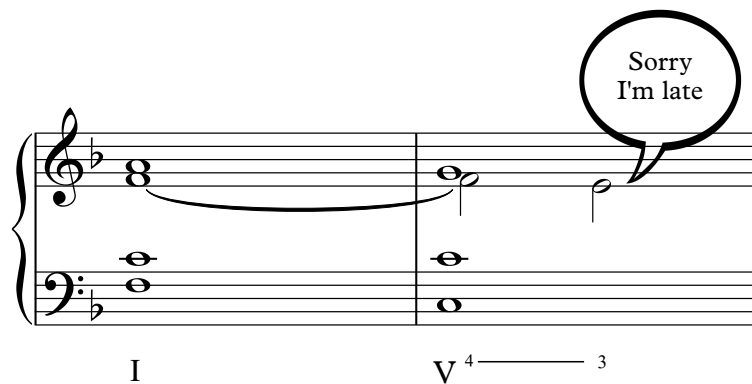
Four roommates, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass are going to a party on the dominant. If they had all left home and arrived at the party at the same time, it would have looked like this:



The image shows a two-measure musical progression in F major. The first measure is labeled 'F: I' and contains a whole note chord with notes F2, A2, C3, and F3. The second measure is labeled 'V' and contains a whole note chord with notes C3, E3, G3, and C4. A party horn icon is positioned above the second measure.

But instead one of them, in this case Alto, wants to stay at home just a little longer. Alto says 'you guys go ahead, I'll be there in a couple beats.'

This causes a little dissonance between the friends as Alto hangs out at home a little longer. But it all works out. As promised, a couple beats later Alto moves **down by step**, showing up to the party fashionably late.



The image shows a two-measure musical progression in F major. The first measure is labeled 'I' and contains a whole note chord with notes F2, A2, C3, and F3. The second measure is labeled 'V' and contains a whole note chord with notes C3, E3, G3, and C4. A suspension is shown in the Alto voice (the second line of the treble clef) where the note F3 from the first measure is held over into the second measure. A speech bubble above this note says 'Sorry I'm late'. The suspension is resolved by moving down by step to the E3 note of the second chord. The suspension is marked with a '4' and a '3' below the staff.

And that's a suspension: three of the voices move on, but one voice holds on to the previous chord tone; that tone is dissonant until it then resolves down by step into the new chord. It arrives fashionably late.

Anatomy of a suspension

<i>prep</i>	<i>sus</i>	<i>res</i>
consonant	dissonant	consonant
	accented	unaccented

F: I V⁴ — 3

Figured bass indicates intervals above the bass. As you saw with the cadential $\overset{6}{4}$, analyzing with figured bass indicates the nonharmonic tone and its resolution into a chord tone.

Must be a dissonant interval with the bass

Some nonharmonics walk the walk, but they can't be called a suspension unless they form a dissonant interval with the bass, i.e. 2nd, 4th, or 7th.

This is fine, just don't call it a suspension:

I V⁶ — 5

fun fact: you've probably already written a suspension before, without knowing it or calling it that.

When the cadential $\overset{6}{4}$ is preceded by I or IV, the dissonant 4th is prepared and walks down by step. Thus, in these cases, the cadential $\overset{6}{4}$ features a suspension.

I IV V^{6/4} — 5/3

The suspended voice should be the only one to provide the note of resolution.



F: V⁷ I⁴ — 3

Therefore....here's your general method of spotting where/how to write suspensions:

Say you've already done your 4-part chorale without nonharmonics.

(Remember: neighbor tones can fit where you have a common tone between chords.

Passing tones can fill in a third between two chords.)

Suspensions will work whenever there is a descending step.

The step down is just delayed.

...and also make sure the suspended note is a dissonant interval with the bass.

...and also make sure the note of resolution isn't present yet.

ex: Find places to add suspensions in this chorale.

F: I V₃⁴ I⁶ IV V vi V₃⁶ 7 I

Types of suspensions and the figured bass for each.

You could/would stumble upon these in your own work just by following the method on the previous page. Nonetheless, you should get familiar with these as the possibilities.

As you know, there are three dissonant intervals (above a bass). What are they?

For each one of these intervals, there is at least one type of suspension.

- 9 - 8 suspension

For suspended 2nds, we don't label it a 2 - 1 suspension. It's a 9 - 8 suspension. Just accept it.

say you wrote this...

F: V⁷ I

suspend the alto...

V⁷ I

*** so...this is the one case where the resolved note will already be present. It's already in the bass!**

- 9 - 10 suspension

The other suspension involving a 2nd is where the bass itself is suspended.

say you wrote this...

I V⁶

suspend the bass...

I V

- 4 - 3 suspension

say you wrote this...

F: V⁷ I

suspend the soprano...

V⁷ I

- 7 - 6 suspension

say you wrote this...

F: I ii⁶

suspend the tenor...

I ii

And of course, all of these suspensions work in minor too. Try playing these in f minor instead.