

Music Theory: Checking for consecutives

The musical score shows two staves in 4/4 time. The Soprano staff has notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The Bass staff has notes: D3, E3, F3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2. The figured bass below the bass staff is: #6, 6, 6, 6, #, 6, 6, #, and a final chord symbol.

To check for 5ths and octaves, you need to take each pair of voices in turn **as I have done in the table below**. I have only identified the size of the interval not the quality (major, minor, augmented, diminished) I haven't shown the perfect 5ths or 8vas either. *[If you ever find two 5ths and one is diminished (e.g. C#-G then D-A) that is not ideal, but it isn't as bad as true consecutive 5ths. This is not the place to deal with this]*

If an interval is larger than an octave (compound interval) then I've subtracted an 'octave' (e.g. 10 - 7 = 3, NOT 10 - 8 = 2, think about it). **If I've made a mistake please let me know!**

Sop/Alto	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	3
Sop/Tenor	6	6	8	6	6	6	8	6	5	6	5
Sop/Bass	8	6	6	6	4	3	6	3	8	8	5
Alto/ Tenor	3	3	5	3	3	4	5	4	3	3	3
Alto/Bass	5	3	3	3	8	8	3	8	6	5	3
Tenor/Bass	3	8	6	8	6	5	6	5	4	3	8

There are no consecutives in the harmony.

In the pink boxes where you can see two 'consecutive' 8s, look at the music. In both cases the Alto/Bass or Sop/Bass STAY on the same two notes. Octaves are only consecutive if they move.

In the green boxes you can see 5 6 5. The two 5s are separated by a 6 and are therefore NOT consecutive.

In the pale yellow box is a 5. This follows an 8. Don't think that 8s are bad and 5s are bad so there are two 'bad' intervals together. It doesn't work like that. You can have a 5 after an 8 or an 8 after a 5 (There may be other problems with that when you get into harmony a bit more deeply, but for now it's fine)

Let's look at a piece of poor harmony.

The music is on the next page. Here are the intervals between the parts.

Sop/Alto	6	4	4	4	4	3	3	5	4	5	3
Sop/Tenor	4	6	8	8	6	6	6	8	6	3	6
Sop/Bass	8	8	6	6	4	3	3	3	3	7	3
Alto/ Tenor	6	3	5	5	3	4	4	4	3	6	4
Alto/Bass	3	5	3	3	8	8	8	6	3	3	8
Tenor/Bass	5	3	6	6	6	5	5	3	5	5	5

