

6.2 First Species, Part 2

You should now be ready to place the cantus firmus in the middle and upper voices.

Task 6.2.1—Prepare staves for three-voice exercises with the Set Eight [cantus firmi](#) placed in the middle voice. No clef changes will be necessary.

Task 6.2.2—Prepare staves for three-voice exercises with the Set Eight [cantus firmi](#) placed in the highest voice. Write the tenor-clef cantus firmi an octave higher, in the soprano clef.

Unless the exercise is in ‘E’, cadences are formed by adding a voice below the usual progression | 6 | 8 || or | 3 | 1 ||. The only note that can possibly be added below the 6 or 3 is the fifth scale-degree or dominant; the only note that can possibly be added below the 8 or 1 is the final or tonic. The inevitable result is movement from dominant to tonic in the lowest voice, which was known to Renaissance theorists as the **clausula basizans**. Its modern names are, of course, the ‘perfect cadence’ or ‘full close’.

As you can see from the examples below, the clausula basizans approaches a perfect consonance in similar motion, regardless of whether it leaps up or down. This is acceptable for the simple reason that it is unavoidable.

As usual, cadences in ‘E’ have their own special formations. The lowest voice must be ‘D’→‘E’; the third voice must be either ‘A’→‘G#’ or ‘D’→‘B’.

Task 6.2.3—Write your cadences. Bear in mind that, with the clausula basizans, you must often choose between an upward and a downward leap.

The principles of chord construction that you observed when the cantus firmus was in the lowest voice continue to apply when it is in the middle or highest voice. A descending scale in the cantus firmus can thus form the basis of a 6/3 chain. Elsewhere, maximize on triads while minimizing on similar motion.

The opening chord’s lowest note must form a Unison, an Octave or a Fifteenth with the cantus firmus. Its third note may be a Third, a Tenth, or any perfect consonance—the choice can be postponed until the rest of the exercise is complete.

Test the possibilities of every remaining chord by trying out each of its possible bass notes, which vary according to the cantus firmus note:

cantus firmus note	‘A’	‘B’	‘C’	‘D’	‘E’	‘F’	‘G’
possible bass notes	‘F’	‘G’	‘A’	‘B’	‘C’	‘D’	‘E’
	‘D’	‘E’	‘F’	‘G’	‘A’		‘C’
			‘E’				‘B’
	Octaves or (as a last resort) Unisons						

A good starting point is the highest note of the cantus firmus. Here, to promote contrary motion, the chord must be widely spaced: 10/5, 15/10, or—with a ‘C’ or ‘G’ in the cantus firmus—13/10.

Remember that approaching a perfect consonance in similar motion is acceptable when the progression satisfies at least three of the four special conditions listed in §6.1.

Task 6.2.4—Complete your Set Eight exercises with the cantus firmus in the middle and highest voices.

Task 6.2.5—Write three exercises (placing the cantus firmus in the lowest, the middle and the highest voices) on each of the first three cantus firmi from any other set.

Sample Workings

5	6	3	3	6	3	4	3	6	8

1	3	6	6	3	6	3	3	3	1