

STEP 2 – SUSPENSIONS

After unaccented passing notes, the next most commonly found type of melodic decoration in chorales is the **suspension**.

To find a place to add a suspension, look for places in the **alto** and **tenor** parts where:

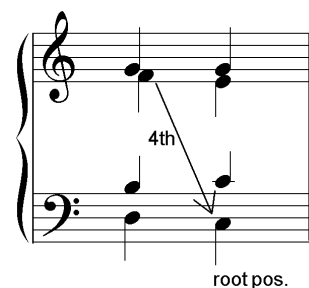
- The part moves downwards by step for 2 notes.
- The **first note** is a **4th** or **9th/2nd** above the bass note of the following chord, which is in **root position**, or
- The **first note** is a **7th** above the bass note of the following chord, which is in **first inversion**.
- The resolution note (2nd note) is not doubled in any other upper part (SAT).
- Do not include any paused note within a suspension.

In this example, the alto part moves down by step, F-E.

F is a **4th** above C.

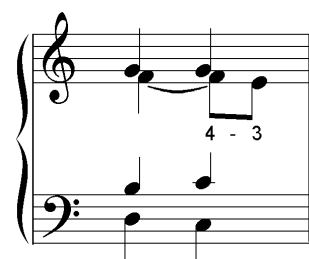
The C is the bass of a **root position** chord.

The resolution note E is not in the soprano or tenor.



A 4-3 suspension will work.

Tie the suspended note back to its preparation.



Suspensions can be combined with 7th passing notes at a cadence. In this example, the alto part is decorated with a 4-3 suspension, and the tenor has an unaccented passing note.



STEP 2 – EXERCISES

Staff A contains the harmonic outline of a Bach chorale. On staff B reconstruct the chorale by copying the harmony and adding **suspensions** where appropriate.

EXERCISE 1

Add two suspensions.



Exercise 1 consists of two staves, A and B, in common time (C). Staff A shows a harmonic outline with chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. The chords in the right hand are: C major (C4, E4, G4), D minor (D4, F4, A3), E minor (E4, G4, B3), F major (F4, A4, C5), G major (G4, B4, D5), and A minor (A4, C5, E5). The left hand notes are: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Staff B is empty, intended for the student to reconstruct the chorale by copying the harmony and adding two suspensions.

EXERCISE 2

Add three suspensions.



Exercise 2 consists of two staves, A and B, in common time (C) with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Staff A shows a harmonic outline with chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. The chords in the right hand are: D major (D4, F#4, A4), E minor (E4, G4, B3), F# major (F#4, A4, C5), G major (G4, B4, D5), and A minor (A4, C5, E5). The left hand notes are: D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Staff B is empty, intended for the student to reconstruct the chorale by copying the harmony and adding three suspensions.