

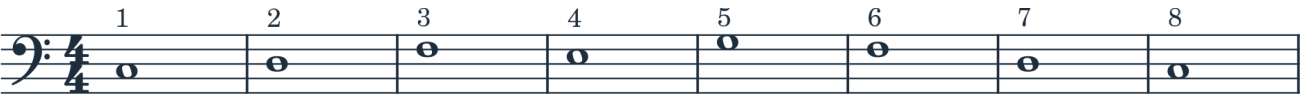
Two Lines, One Note at a Time

First-species counterpoint: compose an upper melody while a fixed lower melody stays unchanged.

1 · KEEP THE FIXED MELODY

The **cantus** is the fixed lower melody. Write an independent upper line: one note against each note, sounding together. Here each whole note fills one 4/4 bar.

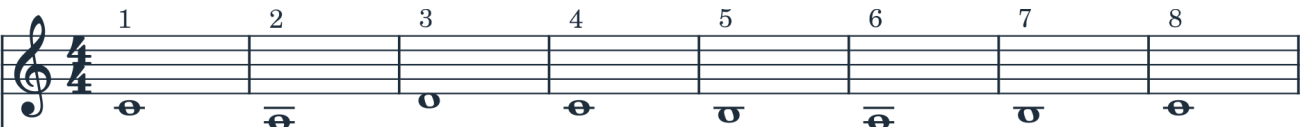
Cantus



C3–D3–F3–E3–G3–F3–D3–C3 · C4 is middle C.

2 · FOLLOW A CHECKED UPPER LINE

Upper



Cantus



Vertical intervals by bar: P8 · P5 · M6 · m6 · M3 · M3 · M6 · P8. P = perfect; M = major; m = minor.

3 · CHECK IN THREE PASSES

Our introductory policy (C major): leave the cantus unchanged; one whole note per bar. Upper voice stays above it, at most an octave away. Begin and end with P8; inside use m/M3, P5 or m/M6. No consecutive repeated upper pitch. Upper moves: m/M2, m/M3 or P4 only; after a P4 leap, reverse by step. Approach each later P5/P8 by contrary motion. Contrary motion means one line rises while the other falls; a held note does not count. Give the upper line one high point in a different bar from the cantus high point. Use at most three successive thirds or three successive sixths. Close M6–P8 by contrary steps (lower D3–C3, upper B3–C4).

1. Vertical: count letter names and semitones; a fourth above the bass is excluded. Into bar 2's P5, the cantus rises C3–D3 while the upper line falls C4–A3: contrary motion. Inspect every later P5/P8.

2. Shape: upper high point D4 is in bar 3; cantus high point G3 is in bar 5. The upper P4 leap A3–D4 reverses by step to C4.

3. Close: D3 falls to C3 while B3 rises to C4: M6–P8.

This is a bounded training method. Other methods allow more choices; a full course adds refinements.

Try it Replace upper A3 with G3 in bar 6. Say the interval and explain why it fails. Then sing each original line separately before hearing the pair.



Listen: tissimo.co/worksheets/first-species-two-line-check
Neutral piano · quarter = 80 · Cantus, upper line, then complete pair.

Mini-check: M2 (a major second), which is outside the allowed interior consonances.