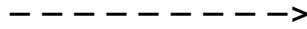


## Hierarchy of Typical Errors in Species Counterpoint

most problematic\*



least problematic\*

### Cantus Firmus

Wrong starting or ending note (i.e. not the tonic)	Repeated note	Repeated pattern/sequence	Motion too conjunct or disjunct
Dissonant leap (TT, 7, 9, aug/dim)	Dissonant outline (TT, 7)	9th outline (or more)	Range too wide or narrow
Leading-tone climax	Tonic or dominant outlined triad	Outlined triad (except tonic or dominant), leaps correctly handled	Too much emphasis on a particular note or notes
Repeated climax	Two (2) consecutive leaps in same direction	Dim. 4th outline in minor	Not enough changes in direction
Unresolved leap (greater than a 4th)	Unresolved leap of a 4th	More than five (5) notes in same direction	Too many/few notes (8-16 is the typical length)
Leap to last note	More than two (2) consecutive leaps (in any direction)	Unprepared leap more than a P4 up	
Incorrect ending (must end 2-1)	Leap back to same note	Unprepared leap more than a 3rd down	
Incorrect clef, key signature, or accidental	Leap more than a 3rd to penultimate note		
Chromaticism (notes not in the key)	Low rather than high climax (an inverted arch) – C.F. only		
	Leap more than an octave		

\*) This particular ordering of “errors” into relative degrees of undesirability is to some extent subjective on the instructor’s part. By the same token, specific occurrences may seem more or less problematic depending upon the particular context. Certain melodic “imperfections” are warranted in order to avoid other problems (see the separate page on “melodic imperfections”).