

Guidelines for early 17th-century unfigured basses

The examples below show some of the most common figures (and realizations) for standard bass progressions.

1. *Mi* takes a 6th

(But there are a few other options for "leading tones"...)

6 6 (?) 6/5 6 - 5 5 b7

2. Scales ascending can use 5-6 on each step

5 - 6 5 - 6 6

3. Scales descending can use 7-6 on each step

5 - 6 7 - 6 7 - 6 7 - 6

4. A step down can take 7-6 or 5-6

(The 5-6 passing tone also works well here...)

7 - 6 5 - 6 5 - 6

5. Cadences take the major third, or end with a bare octave or fifth

6. "Short" 5̂-1̂ cadences often use the same "4-3" figure in the right hand

4 - # 6/5 (b3) 7 [3] b 7 7

7. "Long" 5̂-1̂ cadences usually use 3-4-4-3

3 4 4 - 3 5 6 5 7 6 5