

Section 5.6

NONCHORD TONES 2: SUSPENSIONS

Suspensions
(S or sus)

A **suspension** is a delayed step down. Suspensions may occur on any part of the chord (root, third, fifth, or seventh), but they always resolve down by step. Ties are optional. A suspension always has three parts:

Preparation

1. The **preparation (P)** note before the suspension, which is consonant and metrically weak (see "stress patterns" in **Section 1.5**);

Suspension
Resolution

2. The **suspension (S)** itself, which is dissonant and metrically strong;
3. The **resolution (R)** note, which is always metrically weak.

...becomes

Suspension types

Suspensions are labeled based on intervals above the bass. The four **common suspension types** are 9-8, 7-6, 4-3, and 2-3. Many other types are possible, especially if the bass moves before the resolution occurs.

C: V I C: I IV⁶ C: IV I C: I V⁶

Chain of suspensions

A **chain of suspensions** (or **suspension chain**) uses the resolution of one suspension as the preparation for another.

chain of 4-3 suspensions (top of bass clef staff)

Bb: iii⁶ IV I⁶ vii⁶ I