

Fundamental Harmony

Figured Bass

Abbreviation	Full	Description	Notes
(Blank)	5 3	Root position triad	Accidental only - alter the 3rd.
6	6 3	1st inversion triad	Bass note=3rd of the triad
6 4	6 4	2nd inversion triad	Always written in full. Double bass at cadence
7	7 5 3	Triad + 7th Root Position	All 7ths are dissonant. Prepare and resolve every dissonance in the same part.
6 5	6 5 3	Triad + 7th 1st inversion	5th above the bass is dissonant. Use 5th and 6th above bass for trio sonatas
4 3	6 4 3	Triad + 7th 2nd inversion	Mid phrase. 3rd above bass is diss. Use 3rd and 4th above bass for trio sonatas
4 2 (or just 2)	6 4 2	Triad + 7th 3rd inversion	Strong sound. Dissonance is the bass note. Usually is followed by 6 as bass note 3 resolves.
9	9 (7) 5 3	Triad + 9th. Usually part of a 9-8 suspension. Sometimes 9 is followed by 6 (1st inversion triad)	Triad with added dissonance (9th) above bass. Prepare and resolve as normal. For trio sonatas, use 3rd and 9th above the bass.
8	8 5 3	Root position triad with a double bass note (root) Usually part of a 9-8 suspension	Follows 9. Known as 9-8 suspension. T.S. use 3rd and 8th above bass. 9 and 8 chords usually have same bass note
4	5 4	Dissonance decorating a root position triad. Usually part of a 4-3 suspension	4th above bass is dissonant. Mostly used at cadences or in a chain of suspensions (often in combination with 9-8 suspensions). Usually followed by the figure 3 (root pos. triad) as the 4th falls to the 3rd above the bass i.e. same bass note for both chords.