1st Inversion Triads

• Each of the 3 notes of a triad may serve as a bass note. A triad is in 1st inversion if the 3rd of the chord is in the bass. The notes above the bass may be in either close or open spacing.

• Doubling: In considering doublings for any chord, double the scale degree which represents the chords function. The scale degrees 1, 4, and 5 are the most important and should be considered before others. These are tones that contribute to the solidity of the key. In a I6 double the 1st scale degree. In a V6 double the 5th scale degree. No chord tones should be omitted in a first inversion chord. Write complete chords.

• 1st inversion chords allow stepwise (contrapuntal) motion in the bass. This creates more connectivity between notes in the bass line as well as a greater variety of vertical sound. 1st inverted chords improve the contour of the bass line.

• Rhythmically, they often but not always appear in a weak position.

• Chord function by chord function:

ii6 very common at cadences.

III6 Not an independent chord. It exists many times merely as the temporary displacement of notes of some other chord (III6 is like V).

IV6 Often used after V (similar to the deceptive motion to vi).

V6 The leading is in the bass and therefor gains greater emphasis.

VI6 Like III6 it is not independent. It is very close to a I chord. It should not follow V!

vii°6 Often used as a passing chord between I and I6. The vii° was used in 1st inversion so that only consonant intervals were formed between the bass and the upper notes.