

The image shows a musical score for G minor in 4/4 time. The first measure contains a half note G4 in the treble clef, marked with a lowercase 'p' above it and enclosed in parentheses. The second measure contains a half note G4 in the treble clef and a whole note chord (G2, Bb2, D3) in the bass clef. The third measure contains a whole note chord (G2, Bb2, D3) in the bass clef.

G minor:            i

Second species counterpoint is a model for this common non-chord tone. Composers write diatonic passing tones when they write stepwise motion up or down to and from a chord tone in the scale of the key of the piece, or passage at hand. Theorists (such as you) annotate passing tones by putting them and all other non-chord tones in parentheses, as above. You annotate passing tones with a lower case "p".