Intervals in Detail

Harmonic Interval=when the two notes occur at the same rhythmic point.

Melodic Interval=when the two notes occur at different rhythmic points in time.

5th   CdefG   6th   FgabcD

Numerical degree is determined by counting the number of letters from the low to the high note and of course including both the low and high notes.

C to C	C to D	C--d--E	C--d-e--F	C--d-e-f--G	etc.
1 letter	2 letters	3 letters	4 letters	5 letters	

Prime   2nd   3rd   4th   5th   6th   7th   octave

Anything larger than an octave is called a "compound interval".

9th   10th   11th   12th

Intervals fall into at least 7 different categories called: Perfect, Major, Minor, Diminished, Augmented Doubly Diminished and Doubly Augmented.

An interval is "perfect" when both notes belong to the major scales of both notes. Notice that in these examples, the definition of perfect holds true. The prime and the octave are obvious but the 4th and 5th take a bit more careful thought. Only primes, 4ths, 5ths and octaves or compounds of thes intervals can ever be perfect.

P prime   P 4th   P 5th   P octave

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In these examples, only one note belongs to the major scale of the other note so they are not "perfect" but fall into one of the other remaining categories.

3rd   7th   6th   9th

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Special Note:
Most theory books on the market do not seem to recognize some of the facts that are suggested in my presentation of this subject matter. In fact, most books simply say that Primes, 4ths, 5ths and Octaves are perfect. This is not quite true because all of these numerical intervals can be augmented or diminished, doubly diminished or doubly augmented if you alter one or both notes with an accidental of some kind.