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# AP Music Theory

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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#### Free Response Question 7

- ☒ Scoring Guideline
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- ☒ Scoring Commentary

# AP<sup>®</sup> MUSIC THEORY

## 2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 7

**0–9 points**

#### **I. Arriving at a Score for the Entire Response**

- A.** Score each phrase separately and then add the phrase scores together to arrive at a preliminary tally for the entire response.
- B.** Before deciding on the final score for the entire response, consider giving an extra point to a response that is either extremely good or that would otherwise receive a score of 0 (see **V.B.** below).
- C.** Except for instances where the guidelines specify otherwise, judge the bass and Roman numerals separately and ignore mismatches between them.
- D.** Errors are categorized as either minor or egregious. Two minor errors equal one egregious error (see **IV**).

#### **II. Scoring Phrase 2 (0–2 points)**

- A.** Judge the bass and Roman numerals separately, considering each in two halves:

- The first half consists of the opening beat and the approach to it.
- The second half consists of the last two notes (the cadence).

- B. The phrase is scored 2 if:**

1. the bass has no egregious errors and
2. the final two Roman numerals match the last two bass notes (even if the first Roman numeral is incorrect).

N.B.: Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied.”

N.B.: A phrase that receives **2 points** must have a good cadence in both bass and Roman numerals, with the bass and Roman numerals (and inversions) matching one another; otherwise, give the phrase *at most* 1 point.

- C. The phrase is scored 1 if:**

1. the bass has no egregious errors, but any of the two final Roman numerals (and inversions) do not match the final bass notes;
2. one-half of the bass contains an egregious error, and at least one-half of the Roman numerals have no egregious errors; or
3. both halves of the bass have an egregious error, but the Roman numerals have no egregious errors.

- D. The phrase is scored 0 if:**

1. both halves of the bass have an egregious error, and at least one-half of the Roman numerals have an egregious error; or
2. at least one-half of the bass has an egregious error, and both halves of the Roman numerals have egregious errors.

#### **Summary of the Method for Scoring Phrase 2**

<b>Bass Line</b>	<b>Roman numerals</b>	<b>Score</b>
No egregious errors	Roman numerals (and inversions) must match bass notes	<b>2</b>
No egregious errors	First half of the phrase contains an egregious error, but the cadence is good	<b>2</b>
One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error	No egregious errors	<b>1</b>
One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error	One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error	<b>1</b>
Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	No egregious errors	<b>1</b>
Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error	<b>0</b>
One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error	Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	<b>0</b>

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## 2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 7 (continued)

#### III. Scoring Phrases 3 and 4

- A.** For each of these phrases, judge the bass and Roman numerals separately, considering each in two halves.
- The first half of phrase 3 is comprised of the first four beats of the phrase.
  - The first half of phrase 4 is comprised of the first five beats of the phrase.
  - The last three notes and their approach comprise the last half of each phrase.
- B.** Then provide a phrase descriptor both for the bass line and for the Roman numerals according to the following guidelines:
- Judge it to be **good** even if it contains a specific egregious error and one minor error.
  - Judge it to be **fair** if:
    - it contains two egregious errors or two egregious errors and one minor error; or
    - it contains three or more egregious errors, but one-half of the phrase is without egregious error.
  - Judge it to be **poor** if it contains three or more specific egregious errors, with at least one egregious error in each half of the phrase.

Summary of Good/Fair/Poor Determinations for Bass Lines and Roman numerals for Phrases 3 and 4	
good	0–1 egregious errors (+ 1 minor error)
fair	2 egregious errors (+ 1 minor error)
poor	3 or more egregious errors

- C.** Combine the descriptors to arrive at the following preliminary scores:

Summary of the Method for Scoring Phrases 3 and 4		
Bass Line	Roman numerals	Score
good	good to fair	3
good	poor	2
fair	good to fair	2
fair	poor	1
poor	good to fair	1
poor	poor	0

- D.** Before giving a final score of 0 or 3, first consider the cadence.
- Award **at least 1 point** for the phrase if its cadence (i.e., its final two chords considered by themselves) is good in both bass and Roman numerals, even if nothing else in the phrase is good; the bass and Roman numerals (and inversions) *must agree* in this case.
  - A phrase that receives **3 points** must have a good cadence in both bass and Roman numerals, with the bass and Roman numerals (and inversions) matching one another; otherwise, give the phrase *at most 2 points*.
  - Phrase 4 must end with a perfect authentic cadence.
  - Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied.”
- E.** Award at most **2 points** to a phrase that uses half notes exclusively or almost exclusively.

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## 2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 7 (continued)

#### IV. Weighting Errors

**A.** The following are **egregious** errors:

1. Blatant violations of the instructions
2. Parallel octaves or fifths, or diminished fifth to perfect fifth
3. Doubling the leading tone; unresolved or incorrectly resolved leading tone
4. Tonally inappropriate six-four chord (N.B.: Cadential six-fours, passing six-fours, and pedal six-fours are allowed.)
5. Unresolved sevenths or incorrectly resolved sevenths
6. Other note-against-note dissonances (including fourths) that are not treated correctly, including Roman numerals (and inversions) that do not match with the given melody note
7. Poor chord succession (e.g., V–IV; V–ii; ii–iii; IV–iii, ii–I; V–vi<sup>6</sup>; iii–vii<sup>o</sup>, etc.)
8. Root-position leading-tone chord (vii<sup>o</sup>) followed by anything other than root-position I
9. Poor chord use, such as vi<sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel  $\frac{6}{3}$  sequence or modulation); iii<sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel  $\frac{6}{3}$  sequence)
10. Inappropriate leaps (sevenths, augmented fourths, augmented seconds, compound intervals, etc.), successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad, or leaps of an octave that do not change direction
11. An entire phrase of consecutive thirds or sixths (applicable to phrases 3 and 4)

**B.** The following are **minor** errors (two minor errors = one egregious error):

1. Repeated notes and/or Roman numerals and inversions from weak beat to strong beat (unless at start of phrase, or if the second note is a suspension)
2. Metrically inappropriate six-four chords
3. Approach to octave or fifth in similar motion in which the upper voice leaps, or consecutive perfect fifths and octaves in contrary motion
4. Cross-relations
5. Root-position vii<sup>o</sup> triads that move directly to I
6. Four or more consecutive thirds or sixths for half of a phrase

**C.** The following errors are marked on the first chord:

1. Incorrectly resolved or unresolved leading tones, chordal sevenths, or incorrect dissonances (see **IV.A.6.**)
2. Poor chord use (e.g., vi<sup>6</sup>, iii<sup>6</sup>, etc.)
3. Tonally inappropriate six-four chord
4. Cross relations

**D.** The following errors are marked on the second chord:

1. Parallel fifths and octaves
2. Hidden fifths and octaves
3. Unequal fifths (diminished fifth to perfect fifth)
4. Inappropriate leaps
5. Successive nontriadic leaps
6. Poor chord progression

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## **2018 SCORING GUIDELINES**

### **Question 7 (continued)**

#### **V. Other Considerations**

##### **A. General considerations:**

1. Consider each phrase independently; do not judge the connections between each phrase.
2. Ignore any inner voices supplied by the students; ignore any/all extraneous labels (nonchord tones, etc.).
3. Judge the bass line as either part of a contrapuntal two-part framework or as a bass line for a four-part harmony exercise, giving the student the benefit of the doubt.
4. In judging harmonies, always consider the implied bass line suggested by the Roman numerals (and inversions).

##### **B. Special scores:**

- Award 1 bonus point for a truly musical response or for a response that is solid throughout.
- Award 1 point to a response that otherwise would earn a 0 but that has two or more redeeming qualities.
- 0** This score is used for a response that represents an unsuccessful attempt to answer the question (has no redeeming qualities, or only one) or a response that is off-topic or irrelevant.
- The dash is reserved for blank responses.

**Question 7.** (Suggested time—20 minutes)

Complete the bass line for the melody below, following eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Below the bass line, write the Roman and Arabic numerals that indicate the harmonies and inversions implied by the soprano and bass.

Observe the following.

- A. Keep the portion you compose consistent with the first phrase.
1. Write an appropriate cadence at each phrase ending, including a perfect authentic cadence in measure 8.
  2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Nonharmonic tones, if included, should be limited to unaccented passing and neighbor tones.)
  3. Vary the motion of the bass line in relation to the soprano.
  4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)
- B. Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

**Start here**  
↓

**Key: A**  
*Chord analysis:* I IV<sup>6</sup> V<sup>6</sup> I ii<sup>6</sup> V I I<sup>6</sup> I V<sup>6</sup> V I ~~V<sup>6</sup>~~ ~~V<sup>6</sup>~~

*Chord analysis:* I I<sup>6</sup> IV I<sup>6</sup> V<sup>6</sup> I V V I<sup>6</sup> I ii ii<sup>6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> V I

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  4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)
- B. Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

Start here  
↓

Key: A

Chord analysis: I IV<sup>6</sup> V<sup>6</sup> I ii<sup>6</sup> V I I<sup>6</sup> I V<sup>6</sup> V I  $\frac{V^{\#}}{2}$  V

Chord analysis: I V<sup>b</sup> I ii<sup>b</sup> I<sup>4</sup> V V<sup>b</sup> I I<sup>b</sup> IV ii<sup>b</sup> I<sup>4</sup> V I

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  3. Vary the motion of the bass line in relation to the soprano.
  4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)
- B. Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

Start here  
↓

Key: A

Chord analysis: I IV<sup>6</sup> V<sup>6</sup> I ii<sup>6</sup> V I I<sup>6</sup> I V<sup>6</sup> V I ii V/

Chord analysis: I V vi I V I V I V I

VI → [IV] → [V] → I

AB C D E F G A B C D E

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## 2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 7

#### Overview

This question assessed students' ability to:

- compose a bass line following the rules of eighteenth-century counterpoint;
- write standard authentic and half cadences;
- harmonize a melody with an appropriate chord progression;
- use conventional harmonic patterns;
- recognize and correctly use a secondary dominant chord;
- correctly harmonize a chromatically-altered scale degree four in an ascending step-wise melody;
- use six-four chords according to conventional common practice;
- treat the leading tone correctly, concerning both chord voicing and voice leading; and
- use embellishments correctly in a two-part framework.

#### Sample: 7A

**Score: 9**

This represents an excellent response. The second phrase is without error, although it ends with a half cadence on  $\text{V}^6$ , which is less ideal than ending with a root position  $\text{V}$ . Phrase 3 begins with four consecutive tenths between the bass and soprano, which is considered a minor error. The Roman numerals match the bass notes and also suggest the same minor error in the chosen harmonies. The bass line is good in measure 6, although the first harmony is  $\text{V}^6$ , which would be impossible with scale-degree 4 in the melody; that mismatch represents an egregious error in the harmony. With a nearly perfect bass line, the entire phrase was awarded 3 points. The final phrase begins with a good descending bass line that uses eighth-note passing tones appropriately. The voice exchange in the second half of measure 7 is also excellent, and the last measure begins with a cadential six-four that is properly prepared and resolved. There are no errors in the final phrase, and the harmonization is ideal; this phrase was awarded 3 points. The scoring summary for this response was 2/3/3. However, with the exception of the two minor errors and one noncadential egregious error in phrase 3, this is an example of a truly musical response to the question, and, therefore, 1 bonus point was awarded for a total score of 9.

#### Sample: 7B

**Score: 6**

This represents a good response. The second phrase has both a good bass line and good harmonies. The use of contrary motion and an inverted secondary dominant-seventh chord to approach the half cadence are particularly appropriate for the given melody. Phrase three begins well, but the use of a weak-beat cadential six-four chord at the cadence in measure 6 is unacceptable, and it also creates a weak-to-strong error with E repeated from beats two to three. Metrically inappropriate cadential six-four chords and weak-to-strong repetitions are normally minor errors, but at the cadence, any error is considered egregious. There is one other egregious error in the harmonies: at measure 5, beat three,  $\text{V}^6_5$  cannot support scale-degree 6 in the melody. With one egregious and one minor error in the bass line, and two egregious and one minor error in the harmonies, this phrase would normally be awarded 3 points, but because the cadence contains errors, the phrase was awarded 2 points. The final phrase begins with a doubled leading tone, which then moves in parallel octaves with the soprano. This creates two egregious errors: the doubled leading tone in measure 6, beat four and the illegal parallels at measure 7, beat one. The Roman numerals at the beginning of phrase four ( $\text{V}^6\text{-I}$ ) confirm the bass line errors and likewise create two egregious errors. There are no other errors in the

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## **2018 SCORING COMMENTARY**

### **Question 7 (continued)**

phrase. With fair bass line and harmonies, this phrase was awarded 2 points. The scoring summary was 2/2/2 for a total score of 6.

**Sample: 7C**

**Score: 2**

This represents a poor response. The first half of phrase two has no errors. The second half of the phrase has a missing bass note at the cadence point and two wrong Roman numerals, on beats two and three. The phrase earned 1 point. Phrase three has parallel octaves in the first half of the phrase and four missing pitches, resulting in a poor bass line. The Roman numerals V–VI in measure 5 imply the same parallel octaves with the given melody, and the Roman numerals are missing in measure 6, resulting in poor Roman numerals. The phrase earned 0 points. Phrase four is missing seven pitches in the bass line, including at the cadence, so it was judged to be a poor bass line. There are two missing Roman numerals in the first half of the phrase, resulting in two egregious errors, but the Roman numerals in the second half of the phrase are appropriate. With a poor bass line and fair Roman numerals, the phrase earned 1 point. The scoring summary was 1/0/1 for a total score of 2.