



## **AP<sup>®</sup> Music Theory 2005 Scoring Commentary**

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**AP<sup>®</sup> MUSIC THEORY**  
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**Question 1**

**Overview**

The intent of this question was to test various skills involved in single-line melodic dictation. This melody in E-flat major featured a pleasant contour, with no intervals larger than a major third. The motion of the entire second half of the melody was conjunct, perhaps contributing to the success that many students had on this portion of the melody. It featured familiar diatonic patterns that would help the student to remember/analyze the melody (e.g., arpeggiated tonic triad at the beginning, descending scalar passage in the sixth measure, do-ti-do at cadence, familiar rhythmic patterns).

**Sample: 1A**

**Score: 8**

The first four segments are correct in every way. Even though the manuscript in measure 3 is sloppy (noteheads are not filled in completely), the answer as given is still considered within an acceptable range. The pitches in measure 5 are correct, but the error in rhythmic notation cost the student the point for that segment. The extra point was awarded since the regular scoring guide was used.

**Sample: 1B**

**Score: 5**

The first two segments are correct in pitch and rhythm. Measures 3–6 contain various errors in either pitch, rhythm, or both, so no credit was given for those segments. Two points were awarded for the last two measures, which are correct. Another way to earn 2 points at the end of the melody would be to consider the last beat in measure 6, which could be combined with the E-flat in measure 7 for 1 point. The D in measure 7 would be ignored, and the final point would be awarded in measure 8. It is important to note that there can be no overlap of segments. For example, a point cannot be given for the correct segment between measures 6 and 7, then another point for all of measure 7. The E-flat in measure 7 can be counted only once. The extra point was awarded since the regular scoring guide was used.

**Sample: 1C**

**Score: 3**

There are no segments with the correct pitch and rhythm in the first three measures. The pitches in measure 4 are rhythmically correct but shifted by a beat, so a point was awarded for measure 4. A second point was awarded for the segment spanning measures 7–8. This segment is also metrically shifted by one beat. The extra point was awarded since the regular scoring guide was used.

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**Question 2**

**Overview**

This question was designed to test the ability to hear and transcribe melodic dictation, and to hear compound meter, minor mode, and the raised fourth scale degree.

**Sample: 2A**

**Score: 9**

The student can hear and notate the melody correctly in both pitch and rhythm. All pitches and rhythms are accurate, so the response earned a perfect score.

**Sample: 2B**

**Score: 5**

The student can hear and notate some of the melody correctly in both pitch and rhythm. The first two segments are correct in both pitch and rhythm. Because of the “three consecutive eighth-note segment” scoring guideline, correct pitch and rhythms can be found for segments 6 and 7 in measures 3 and 4 (the F-sharp to the B in measure 3 and the C-sharp to the F-sharp in measure 4). Because of the incorrect rhythmic value of the final note (quarter note tied to a dotted quarter), no credit was awarded for the final segment. Thus points were awarded for four successful segments. The extra point was awarded since the regular scoring guide was used.

**Sample: 2C**

**Score: 3**

The student can hear and comprehend the basic outline and contour of the melody but manages to notate only the first and last segments correctly in both pitch and rhythm. The extra point was awarded since the regular scoring guide was used.

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**Question 3**

**Overview**

The intent of this question was to test students' ability to hear outer voices, diatonic harmonic functions, inversions of triads and dominant seventh chords, and cadences. In addition, it tested students on their ability to differentiate between the soprano, alto, tenor, and bass lines and to discriminate between the IV and ii<sup>6</sup> predominant harmonies.

**Sample: 3A**

**Score: 22**

All 16 pitches of the combined melody and bass are correct. Only two of the eight Roman numerals are incorrect. The student, while missing the correct information for these two, shows good understanding of the harmonic function, labeling them with appropriate "substitute" functions: V 4/3 in measure 2 is replaced by vii<sup>o</sup> (incorrectly displayed as vii<sup>o</sup>), and ii<sup>6</sup> is replaced by another "pre-dominant" function, IV. However, because of the conditions set in the scoring guideline, neither substitute chord could receive points. The student displays considerable melodic and functional aural perception. Final score: 8/8/6.

**Sample: 3B**

**Score: 14**

Of the eight melody notes possible, four are correct; of the eight bass notes possible, seven are correct. Of the eight Roman numerals possible, only three are correct. All are root position tonic and dominant chords. The V–I cadence at the end is clearly heard. Altogether, the student has an adequate perception of melodic lines and, to a lesser degree, dominant-tonic harmonic relationships. Improvement is most needed in harmonic perception beyond simple dominant-tonic relationships. Final score: 4/7/3.

**Sample: 3C**

**Score: 8**

Of the eight melody notes possible, only one is correct; of the eight bass notes possible, only three are correct. The three correct bass notes are the only roots of the tonic or the dominant that occur in the line, indicating that the student is hearing those two primary harmonies in their most basic forms. This is reflected in the choice of Roman numerals as well. Only three Roman numerals are completely incorrect. All the others were correctly perceived as tonic or dominant functions, but their inversions are overlooked, and, in the penultimate chord, a nonexistent seventh is added. Therefore, the V 4/3 and I<sup>6</sup> chords in measures 2 and 3, respectively, and the V chord in measure 4 received half a point each. Final score: 1/3/3.5, rounded up to 8.

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**Question 4**

**Overview**

The question was intended to measure the degree to which students could hear and transcribe soprano and bass lines; recognize chromatic pitches; distinguish the leading tone from the subtonic; recognize the Picardy third; recognize secondary functions; distinguish chord qualities; recognize melodic clues to harmony; hear and label the cadential six-four; and differentiate between bass and soprano voices.

**Sample: 4A**

**Score: 20**

The student can hear both bass and soprano lines and ascribe mostly correct Roman numerals to the chords. All soprano pitches are correct, so the student earned 8 points; all bass pitches are correct with the exception of the F# in chord 4, for a bass total of 7 points. In the Roman numerals, the student demonstrates a knowledge of secondary dominants, but the labels used are incorrect, especially the “vi/V” label in chord 4. According to the scoring guideline, “V/iv” is not an acceptable answer for the final I chord. The student received a half point for labeling the V<sup>6</sup> chord in chord 2 as “V”. Final score: soprano=8, bass=7, RNs=5.

**Sample: 4B**

**Score: 13**

The response shows that the student can hear most of the bass line and much of the soprano line but has difficulty with the Roman numerals. In particular, the ii<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub> labels for chords 2 and 4 are inappropriate. Two half points were awarded for the “V–V” labels in measure 4. Final score: soprano=2, bass=7, RNs=3.5, rounded up to 13.

**Sample: 4C**

**Score: 5**

The student has difficulty in all areas. In the soprano line, only the first two pitches are correct. For the bass line, 1 point was awarded for the final pitch, even though it is in the wrong octave. For the Roman numerals, half a point was given for the V chord in measure 1 (the correct response being “V<sup>6</sup>”), half a point for the V 6/4 of the penultimate chord, and 1 point for the final I chord. Final score: soprano=2, bass=1, RNs=2.

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**Question 5**

**Overview**

The intent of this question was to determine if the student could combine vertical and linear hearing and thinking; work with root position and inverted chords; deal with the leading tone in minor; understand figured bass symbols; write good outer voice counterpoint; deal with the cadential six-four chord; understand correct spacing for the top three voices; understand harmonic function; and understand the meaning of Roman numerals.

**Sample: 5A**

**Score: 22**

The Roman numerals are all correct, so the student earned 7 points. All the chords are spelled correctly, but the cadential six-four chord and the last tonic chord have spacing errors; these two chords were awarded only half a point each. A total of 5 points were earned for chord spelling. Despite the spacing issue, all chords were examined for proper voice leading. All the connections are fine except for the voice leading between the last two chords, where the student writes parallel fifths in contrary motion. Ten points were awarded for voice leading, bringing the final score for the exercise to 22.

**Sample: 5B**

**Score: 16**

The Roman numerals are all correct, so 7 points were awarded. All of the chords are spelled correctly except for the penultimate chord. Even though the soprano was missing from the ii chord, a point was awarded because it contains three voices. Five points were awarded for chord spelling. Because the ii chord has only three voices and the penultimate chord is misspelled, the voice leading into and out of these two chords received no points. With the 4 points that were awarded for voice leading, the final score was 16.

**Sample: 5C**

**Score: 7**

The second Roman numeral is incorrect, and the penultimate one was missing, so only 5 points were earned for Roman numerals. Two chords are missing, and two others are misspelled: the V 6/5 and the cadential six-four chord. (The latter was missing the third.) Two points were awarded for chord spelling, but no points for voice leading, so the final score was 7.

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**Question 6**

**Overview**

The intent of this question was for the student to demonstrate the ability to spell a secondary dominant; resolve the seventh of a seventh chord; realize Roman numerals and figures; use proper voice-leading principles; and recognize and write a deceptive cadence.

**Sample: 6A**

**Score: 16**

This response has only one error in voice leading. All chords are spelled correctly, so all voice leading could be checked. The single error is in measure 1 between beats 2 and 3, where there are parallel octaves between the bass and the soprano. In the same measure, points were awarded for voice leading between beats 3 and 4, regardless of the cross relation between the soprano and alto. Final score: 6/10.

**Sample: 6B**

**Score: 10**

In measure 2, beats 1 and 2, the third is omitted. Although the fifth can be omitted from triads and seventh chords, the third may not be omitted. Because of this, voice leading into and out of these chords could not be checked. Chord-spelling points were awarded for all three of the chords in measure 1 and for the last chord in measure 2. Voice-leading points (2 each) were awarded for three connections in measure 1, but no points for voice leading were awarded in measure 2. Final score: 4/6.

**Sample: 6C**

**Score: 5**

Only 3 points for chord spelling and 2 points for voice leading were awarded to this response. The chords spelled correctly are on beats 2 and 3 in measure 1 and on beat 1 in measure 2. The final chord is missing the third. The secondary dominant is misspelled, and the  $V^{8-7}$  is not attempted. This means that voice-leading points could only be awarded going from beat 1 to 2 in measure 1. In the same measure, there are parallel octaves between beats 2 and 3 in the bass and tenor voices. Final score: 3/2.

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**Question 7**

**Overview**

The intent of this question was to test students' understanding of harmonic function, cadential norms, relationships between soprano and bass voices, modulation and/or tonicization, and overall synthesis.

**Sample: 7A**

**Score: 8**

This response shows very good understanding of harmony and counterpoint. Phrase 2 contains a good half cadence and no errors in part-writing; the bass line and Roman numerals in phrase 2 are all good. Rather than notate secondary dominants in phrase 3, the student chooses to indicate a modulation to C major, and then a subsequent modulation back to F major for phrase 4. In phrase 3 the bass line and Roman numerals are good, although the vii<sup>o6</sup>-I cadence (C major) is a little weak. The bass line and Roman numerals in phrase 4 are also good, although the I 6/4 is inappropriate. Final score: 2/3/3.

**Sample: 7B**

**Score: 6**

This response shows a basic understanding of harmony and counterpoint, though the student has difficulty with the tonicization in phrase 3. Phrase 2 contains a good half cadence, but the parallel fifths at the outset (B-flat/F to A/E) prevented the phrase from receiving maximum points. The bass line in phrase 3 is good, with the only problem involving the Es in measure 5 (repetition from weak to strong). The Roman numerals are poor, with the nonfunctional III chords and the mismatch of the I chord with the (correct) half cadence in measure 6. Both the bass line and the Roman numerals in phrase 4 are good, with the only errors being the leap from the eighth note D in measure 7 and the leap from A to G from measure 7 to 8. Final score: 1/2/3.

**Sample: 7C**

**Score: 2**

This response shows some understanding of part-writing, but no harmonic analysis is evident because of the omission of Roman numerals. In phrase 2, the student manages to cadence on an implied V<sup>6</sup> chord, and the parallel thirds from bass to soprano are good. However, the phrase overall was rated "fair" because of the lack of Roman numerals. In phrase 3, there is a clash in measure 5, beat 4 (F against E), and the cadence pitch is on an implied tonic chord instead of V. In the final phrase, there are inappropriate fourths in measure 6, beat 4; measure 7, beat 4; and measure 8, beat 1. There is also a clash on the penultimate chord, and the bass pitch is not appropriate for an authentic cadence. Final score: 1/1/0.



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**Sight-singing melody S1**

**Overview**

This 4-bar melody gave students the opportunity to sing correct pitches and rhythms in tempo. Most students found the first 2 bars easier because of the simple scalar ascent and descent. Bars 4 and 5 presented more difficulty because of the disjunct motion at the beginning, followed by a more difficult contour, particularly in segments 6 and 7. Students could sing or even whistle the melody, using any system or neutral syllable of their choosing.

**Sample: S1A**

**Score: 9**

Although the sample contains minor flaws, this student received a perfect score of 9. He performs the melody with confidence on a neutral syllable with fairly good intonation, though not absolutely precise on all pitches. He also adds a staccato articulation to segment 7 near the cadence that shortens the quarter note values, but the attacks of those shortened quarters are properly positioned in tempo. While the student does not hold the final half to its full value, he does hold it to the beginning of beat 4, barely long enough to receive credit for the final segment. The student received the added flow point.

**Sample: S1B**

**Score: 7**

This sample demonstrates what emerged as a “classic 7” at the Reading because it represents a large number of students who faltered in segments 6 and 7 while maintaining flow. All segments of this sample received credit except 6 and 7, both of which contain incorrect notes. Segment 2 requires further explanation. The dotted quarter note sounds noticeably shortened, as one hears the following G-natural eighth note enter too quickly. Readers overlooked this slight error, but the deviation stretches the standard of allowed rhythmic flexibility to its limit. If the note were any shorter, segment 2 would not have counted.

**Sample: S1C**

**Score: 4**

This student sings the first three segments flawlessly but drops too low to the tonic in segment 4 instead of a step higher to the supertonic at the half cadence. All the ensuing segments contain pitch errors, though the student lands on the original tonic in the final segment. However, because she sings that tonic in the lower octave, she did not receive credit for segment 8. Because there is no interruption in the musical momentum, the student received the flow point.

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**Sight-singing melody S2**

**Overview**

The intent of this question was to evaluate “inner” hearing and the ability of students to sing the following accurately: intervals, scale degree function, and rhythm.

**Sample: S2A**

**Score: 9**

This sample illustrates that a perfect score of 9 can be earned even when a performance has minor imperfections. Every segment is essentially correct in pitch, rhythm, and tempo. At the end, the final two notes are sung slightly sharp. In segments 2, 5, and 7, the quarter notes are sung with a separation before the following eighth note, but the attack points of all rhythms are correct throughout. The other slight rhythmic flaw is a subtle rushing of the sixteenth notes in segments 3 and 6.

**Sample: S2B**

**Score: 7**

Though there are slight problems with intonation (e.g., C in segment 6 is sung somewhat sharp), this performance earned a point for every segment except 3 and 4. In the third segment, the student sings G-sharp instead of G, and segment 4 begins on the same F-sharp as the preceding two segments. In segment 5, he recovers the correct pitch and sings the rest of the sample without mistakes. Final score: 1100 1111 + 1 (the “flow” point).

**Sample: S2C**

**Score: 4**

This performance alters most of the melody to major mode (G-sharps in segments 1, 3, and 4; C-sharp in segment 6). The student earned points for segments 2, 7, and 8 (tuning in the final two segments is slightly faulty but within acceptable limits). Pitch is incorrect in segments 4 and 5, and the latter has incorrect rhythm. Final score: 0100 0011+ 1 (the “flow” point).