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# AP Music Theory

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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# AP<sup>®</sup> MUSIC THEORY 2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

## Question 5

b: i      i      iv      V      i      iv      V

**0–25 points**

### **I. Roman Numerals (7 points, 1 point per numeral)**

Award 1 point for each correct Roman numeral.

1. Accept the correct Roman numeral regardless of its case.
2. Ignore any Arabic numerals because they are included in the question itself.
3. Award no credit if an accidental is placed *before* a Roman numeral.

### **II. Chord Spelling, Spacing, and Doubling (6 points, 1 point per chord)**

**A.** Award 1 point for each chord that correctly realizes the given figured bass.

1. The chord must be spelled correctly. An incorrect accidental on the wrong side of the notehead will be considered a misspelling. A suspension sounding against the resolution will be considered a misspelling.
2. The fifth (but *not* the *third*) may be omitted from any root-position triad.
3. The fifth (but *not* the *third* or *seventh*) may be omitted from a root-position dominant seventh chord.
4. All inverted triads and inverted seventh chords must be complete (i.e., have all chord tones).
5. All triads must contain at least three voices.
6. All seventh chords must contain at least four voices.

**B.** Award 0 points for a chord that breaks one or more of the conditions of **II.A.**

N.B.: Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of these chords. (See **III.E.**)

**C.** Award ½ point each for a correctly realized chord that has exactly one of the following errors:

1. A doubled leading tone, a doubled chordal seventh, or incorrect doubling of a  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord.
2. More than one octave between adjacent upper parts.

**D.** Award 0 points for a correctly realized chord that has:

1. More than one error listed in **II.C.**, or
2. The correct accidental on the wrong side of a notehead. (For an incorrect accidental on the wrong side of a notehead, see **II.A.1.**)

However, *do* check the voice leading into and out of these chords.

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### Question 5 (continued)

#### III. Voice Leading (12 points)

- A.** In general, award 2 points for acceptable voice leading between two correctly realized chords. N.B.: This includes the voice leading from the given chord to the second chord.
- B.** If all chords are correctly realized, and there are no voice-leading errors (as described in **III.C.** and **III.D.**), but the response seems to have excessive leaps within the upper three voices:
1. Award 12 points for voice leading if there are six or fewer leaps in the three upper voices combined.
  2. Award 11 points for voice leading if there are more than six leaps in the three upper voices combined.
- C.** Award only 1 point for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in **II.A.**) that features exactly one of the following errors:
1. Uncharacteristic rising unequal fifths. (See *DCVLE*, no. 4.)
  2. Uncharacteristic hidden (covered) or direct octaves or fifths between outer voices. (See *DCVLE*, nos. 5 and 6.)
  3. Overlapping voices. (See *DCVLE*, no. 7.)
  4. Motion leading to a chord with crossed voices. (See *DCVLE*, no. 8.)
  5. A chordal seventh approached by a descending leap.
- D.** Award 0 points for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in **II.A.**) if any of the following statements is true:
1. Parallel octaves, fifths, or unisons occur (immediately successive or beat-to-beat), including those by contrary motion. (See *DCVLE*, nos. 1 through 3.)
  2. Uncharacteristic leaps occur (e.g., augmented second, tritone, or more than a fifth).
  3. Chordal sevenths are unresolved or resolved incorrectly. (The voice with the seventh should move down by step, but may move UP by step only in the case of the  $i-V \frac{4}{3} -i^6$  progression.)
  4. The leading tone in an outer voice is unresolved or resolved incorrectly.
  5. The 6<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> of the cadential  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord is unresolved or resolved incorrectly.
  6. At least one of the chords has more or fewer than four voices (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass).
  7. No preparation or incorrect preparation of the suspension or incorrect resolution of the suspension.
  8. More than one error listed in section **III.C.** occurs.
- E.** Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of an incorrectly realized chord.

#### IV. Scores with Additional Meaning

- 1** This score can be given to a response that has 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.

#### V. Scoring Notes

- A.** Do not penalize a response that includes correctly used nonchord tones.
- B.** An incorrectly used nonchord tone will be considered a voice-leading error.
1. Award 1 point if the incorrect nonchord tone results in one error listed in **III.C.**
  2. Award 0 points if the incorrect nonchord tone results in at least one error from **III.D.** or more than one error from **III.C.**
- C.** Half-point totals round up with one exception: A total score of  $24\frac{1}{2}$  rounds down to 24.

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## Definitions of Common Voice-Leading Errors (DCVLE)

Ex. 1   Ex. 2   Ex. 3   Ex. 4   Ex. 5a   Ex. 5b   Ex. 6   Ex. 7   Ex. 8

Parallel   Beat-to-beat   By contrary   Unequal 5ths   Hidden   Not OK   Direct   Overlapping   Motion to  
motion   (d5 to P5)   (covered)   voices   crossed voices

1. Parallel fifths and octaves (immediately consecutive) — unacceptable (award 0 points).
2. Beat-to-beat fifths and octaves (equal perfect intervals on successive beats) — unacceptable (award 0 points).
3. Fifths and octaves by contrary motion — unacceptable (award 0 points).
4. Unequal fifths (d5→P5).
  - In a three- or four-part texture, a rising d5→P5 is acceptable ONLY when passing between I and I<sup>6</sup> where neither tone of the d5 forms a dissonance with the bass, e.g., I–V<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub>–I<sup>6</sup> and I–vii<sup>o6</sup>–I<sup>6</sup> (no deduction).
  - A rising d5→P5 in other progressions is unacceptable (award 1 point only). Unequal fifths between two upper voices are acceptable in either order when the voices are descending (no deduction).
  - P5→d5 is acceptable voice leading in either direction involving any pair of voices (no deduction).
5. Hidden (or covered) fifths and octaves in outer voices (similar motion to a perfect interval that involves one voice moving by step).
  - When the step is in the upper voice, as shown in Ex. 5a — acceptable (no deduction).
  - When the step is in the lower voice, as shown in Ex. 5b — unacceptable (award 1 point only).
6. Direct fifths and octaves in outer voices — unacceptable (award 1 point only).  
Definition: Similar motion to a perfect interval that involves a skip in each voice. N.B.: Many sources equate “hidden” and “direct.”
7. Overlapping voices — unacceptable (award 1 point only).  
Definition: Two voices move to a position in which the lower voice is higher than the previous note in the higher voice, or they move to a position where the higher voice is lower than the previous note in the lower voice.
8. Crossed voices — unacceptable (award 1 point only).  
Definition: Voicing in which the normal relative position of voices is violated, e.g., if the soprano is below the alto or the bass is above the tenor.

5A

**Question 5.** (Suggested time—15 minutes)

Realize the figured bass below in four voices, following traditional eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Continue logically from the spacing of the first chord. Do not add embellishments unless indicated by the figured bass. On the blank below each chord, write the Roman numeral that appropriately indicates harmonic function.

b: i    i    IV    V    i    iv    V

E03    TRANCE    B.F.#

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5B

**Question 5.** (Suggested time—15 minutes)

Realize the figured bass below in four voices, following traditional eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Continue logically from the spacing of the first chord. Do not add embellishments unless indicated by the figured bass. On the blank below each chord, write the Roman numeral that appropriately indicates harmonic function.

5C

**Question 5.** (Suggested time—15 minutes)

Realize the figured bass below in four voices, following traditional eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Continue logically from the spacing of the first chord. Do not add embellishments unless indicated by the figured bass. On the blank below each chord, write the Roman numeral that appropriately indicates harmonic function.

Handwritten Roman numerals below the figured bass:

b: i   ~~VI~~<sup>6</sup>   IV   vii<sup>A</sup><sub>2</sub>   ~~VI~~<sup>6</sup>   ii<sup>o</sup>   V<sup>4</sup>

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## 2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 5

#### Overview

This question assessed students' ability to:

- realize a figured bass progression in Common Practice style in four voices;
- employ smooth voice-leading procedures;
- demonstrate understanding of diatonic harmony, including chord spelling, spacing, doubling, and voice leading in a four-part texture;
- analyze chords using Roman numerals;
- spell chords in a minor key, including raising the leading tone in the dominant chord;
- notate a Phrygian (iv<sup>6</sup>-V) half cadence;
- correctly prepare and resolve a 4–3 suspension;
- correctly realize inverted triads and seventh chords utilizing all chord members; and
- correctly employ a voice exchange between *i* and *i*<sup>6</sup> (use of the voice exchange is optional).

#### Sample: 5A

**Score: 25**

This represents an excellent response. All Roman numerals are correct, and all chords are spelled correctly. Voice leading is correct between all chords. (Roman numerals: 7; Chord spelling: 6; Voice leading: 12; Total = 25)

#### Sample: 5B

**Score: 15**

This represents a fair response. All Roman numerals are correct. Chord six is spelled incorrectly and did not receive any points for chord spelling; no points were awarded for voice leading into and out of this chord. The five remaining chords are spelled correctly. The voice leading between chords two and three contains parallel octaves between the soprano and the bass, and the voice leading between chords three and four contains an augmented second in the alto; no points were awarded for these two voice-leading connections. The voice leading between chords four and five contains a hidden octave between the outer voices; 1 point was awarded for this voice-leading connection. (Roman numerals: 7; Chord spelling: 5; Voice leading: 3; Total = 15)

#### Sample: 5C

**Score: 4**

This represents a weak response. Three Roman numerals are correct; 3 points were awarded. Only chord three is spelled correctly. Because all other chords are spelled incorrectly, no voice-leading points were awarded. (Roman numerals: 3; Chord spelling: 1; Voice leading: 0; Total = 4)