
AP[®] Music Theory

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free Response Question 7

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2019 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 has 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 has 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.

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Question 7 (continued)

| Summary of the Method for Scoring Phrase 2 | | |
|--|---|----------|
| Bass Line | Roman numerals | Score |
| No egregious errors | Roman numerals (and inversions) must match bass notes | 2 |
| No egregious errors | First half of the phrase contains an egregious error, but the cadence is good | 2 |
| One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error | No egregious errors | 1 |
| One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error | One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error | 1 |
| Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error | No egregious errors | 1 |
| Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error | One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error | 0 |
| One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error | Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error | 0 |

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.** 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 |

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Question 7 (continued)

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.

1. 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.
2. 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*.
3. Phrase 4 must end with a perfect authentic cadence.
4. Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied” (V/V , $[\text{V}]$, $\text{V} \rightarrow \text{V}$, V of V , etc.).

E. Award at most **2 points** to a phrase that uses half notes exclusively or almost exclusively.

IV. Weighting Errors

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

1. Blatant violations of the instructions
2. Parallel fifths or octaves, consecutive perfect fifths or octaves in contrary motion, 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., $\text{V}-\text{IV}$; $\text{V}-\text{ii}$; $\text{ii}-\text{iii}$; $\text{IV}-\text{iii}$, $\text{ii}-\text{I}$; $\text{V}-\text{vi}^6$; $\text{iii}-\text{vii}^0$, etc.)
8. Root-position leading-tone chord (vii^0) followed by anything other than root-position I
9. Poor chord use, such as vi^6 (unless as part of a parallel $\frac{6}{3}$ sequence, modulation, or following a strong-beat I—i.e., a 5–6 motion); iii^6 (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)

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Question 7 (continued)

- 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 fifth or octave in similar motion in which the upper voice leaps
 4. Cross-relations
 5. Root-position vii^o 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., vi⁶, iii⁶, etc.)
 3. Tonally or metrically inappropriate six-four chord
 4. Cross relations
- D.** The following errors are marked on the second chord:
1. Parallel fifths or octaves
 2. Hidden fifths or octaves
 3. Unequal fifths (diminished fifth to perfect fifth)
 4. Inappropriate leaps
 5. Successive nontriadic leaps
 6. Poor chord progression
 7. Repeated notes and/or Roman numerals and inversions from weak beat to strong beat

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 additional 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 at the final cadence.
2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Nonharmonic tones, if included, must 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: E \flat

Chord analysis: I I⁶ V₃⁴ I IV V I IV vii^{o6} I V⁶ I V

Chord analysis: I IV I ii⁶ V₇^{6/V} V I IV I IV I⁶₄ V I

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 2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Nonharmonic tones, if included, must 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: E \flat

Chord analysis: I I⁶ V₃⁴ I IV V I IV vii^{o6} I V⁶ vi IV V

Chord analysis: I IV V vi ii V⁴/V V vi⁷ IV V I V⁷ I⁶ V I

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 at the final cadence.
 2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Nonharmonic tones, if included, must 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: $E\flat$

Chord analysis: I I⁶ V₃⁴ I IV V I IV vii^{o6} I V⁶ VI⁶ IV V

Chord analysis: ii⁶₅ VI⁴₂ VI⁷ I⁶₅ vii^o ↑ I V⁶ ii I⁶ I⁶₅ ii⁶ vi V⁶ I

~~V₄~~

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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 4 in the 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 Identifier: 7A

Score: 8

This represents a very good response. The second phrase is correct in both the bass line and Roman numerals. In the third phrase, the A-flat in the bass on the downbeat of measure 6 creates a cross relation with the A-natural in the soprano on beat 2, but the cross relation was considered a minor error. The A-flat in the bass then moves down to an F and skips to a B-flat, creating successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad, which is an egregious error. The Roman numeral ii on the downbeat of measure 6 suggests the same cross relation as the bass, but the rest of the harmony is good and the phrase earned 3 points. In phrase four, the weak beat to strong beat repetition at the half note on E-flat in measure 7 causes a minor error in the bass line and Roman numerals. This is the only error, and the phrase earned 3 points. The scoring summary was 2/3/3 for a total score of 8.

Sample Identifier: 7B

Score: 6

This represents a good response. The second phrase has a good bass line and good harmonies and earned 2 points. The third phrase has a poor bass line but good Roman numerals. In measure 5 there are two egregious errors. The bass descends a seventh from A-flat on beat 2 to B-flat on beat 3, and the next A-flat on beat 4 is a dissonant harmonic seventh with the G in the melody. In measure 6, the A-flat on beat 1 in the bass continues to descend to an F and then a B-flat, creating successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad. This is the third egregious error in the bass. The Roman numerals, however, are good, as the cross relation the ii chord on beat 1 creates with the V/V on beat 2 is a minor error. Phrase three earned 1 point. Phrase four begins with a C in the bass that is a dissonant harmonic seventh with the B-flat in the soprano, and the vi^7 is a poor chord choice. Although there is a minor error in the weak-to-strong beat repetition of the B-flat from measure 7 to measure 8, the rest of the bass and Roman numerals are good. The phrase was awarded 3 points. The scoring summary was 2/1/3 for a total score of 6.

Sample Identifier: 7C

Score: 2

This represents a poor response. Phrase two has a good bass line. The first Roman numeral is an incorrect usage of a vi^6 chord, but the phrase still earned 2 points. Phrase three has three dissonant bass notes in measure 5. The B-flat and C in the bass on beats 2 and 3 create consecutive harmonic minor sevenths with the soprano. The D in the bass on beat 4 creates a perfect fourth with the soprano. The E-flat in the bass at the

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Question 7 (continued)

fermata in measure 6 does not support the dominant harmony implied by the preceding A-natural in the soprano on beat 2. The Roman numerals are incorrect on the same beats as the incorrect bass notes. This phrase earned no points. Phrase four has three egregious errors in the bass, with at least one error in each half of the phrase. After the fermata, the first D in the bass moves to an F, leaving an unresolved leading tone. The D in measure 8 does not support the perfect authentic cadence required by the question's directions. There are two instances of weak-to-strong beat repetition: the G to G on beats 2 and 3 in measure 7 and the C to C crossing over the bar line from measures 7 to 8. These two minor errors combine for the third egregious error in the bass. The first three Roman numerals of V^6 , ii, and I^6 create consecutive retrogressions. In measure 8, the V^6 on beat 2 does not support the root position V needed for the required perfect authentic cadence. Phrase four earned 0 points. The scoring summary was 2/0/0 for a total of 2.