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# AP<sup>®</sup> Music Theory

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 6**

- Scoring Guidelines**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

**Question 6: Part-writing from Roman numerals****18 points**

One possible 18-point answer (others are possible):

e:    i     $V_5^6$     i     $V_2^4/iv$      $iv^6$      $ii^{\#6}_5$     V

**I. Chord Spelling, Spacing, and Doubling**

- A.** Award 1 point for each chord that correctly realizes the given chord symbols. **1 point per chord (max 6)**
- The chord must be spelled correctly and in the proper inversion (i.e., the bass note must be correct). A missing accidental will be considered a misspelling. An incorrect accidental on the wrong side of the notehead will also be considered a misspelling.
  - The fifth (but *not* the *third*) may be omitted from any root-position triad.
  - The fifth (but *not* the *third* or *seventh*) may be omitted from a root-position seventh chord.
  - All inverted triads and inverted seventh chords must be complete.
  - All triads must contain at least three voices.
  - 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 **I.A.**  
N.B.: Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of these chords.
- C.** Award ½ point for a correctly realized chord that has exactly one of the following errors:
- A doubled leading tone, a doubled chordal seventh, or incorrect doubling of a  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord.
  - More than one octave between adjacent upper parts.
  - Crossed voices.
- D.** Award 0 points for a correctly realized chord that has any of the following:  
N.B: *Do* check the voice leading into and out of these chords.
- Two or more errors listed in **I.C.** (e.g., doubled leading tone and spacing error, or two spacing errors), and/or
  - The correct accidental on the wrong side of a notehead. (For an incorrect accidental on the wrong side of a notehead, see **I.A.1.**)

**II. Voice Leading**

- A.** Award 2 points for acceptable voice leading between two correctly realized chords. **2 points per chord connection (12 max)**  
 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 **II.C.** and **II.D.**), but the response has excessive leaps within the upper three voices:
1. Award 12 points for voice leading if there are five or fewer leaps in the three upper voices combined.
  2. Award 11 points for voice leading if there are more than five leaps in the three upper voices combined.
- C.** Award only 1 point for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in **I.A.**) with exactly one of the following errors:
1. Uncharacteristic 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. A chordal seventh approached by a descending leap of a fourth or larger.
- D.** Award 0 points for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in **I.A.**) if any of the following statements is true:
1. Parallel octaves, fifths, or unisons occur (immediately successive or on successive beats), including those by contrary motion. (See *DCVLE*, nos. 1 through 3.)
  2. An uncharacteristic leap occurs (e.g., augmented second, tritone, or more than a fifth).
  3. A chordal seventh is unresolved or resolved incorrectly. (The voice with the seventh must move down by step if possible. In some cases, such as  $ii^7$  to cadential  $\frac{6}{4}$ , the seventh will be retained in the same voice. The seventh may move UP by step only in the case of the  $i-\text{V}_3^4-i^6$  progression.)
  4. The leading tone in an outer voice is unresolved or resolved incorrectly. (When I and vi are connected by  $\text{V}$ ,  $\text{V}^7$ , or  $\text{V}^6$  (e.g.,  $I-\text{V}^7-vi$ ) early in the phrase (so that there is no expectation of a cadence), an  $\hat{8}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}$  line is acceptable in any voice.
  5. At least one of the chords has more or fewer than four voices (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass).
  6. More than one error listed in section **II.C.** occurs.
- E.** Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of an incorrectly realized chord.

### III. Scores with Additional Meaning

- 1** This score can be given to a response 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.
- NR** Reserved for blank responses.

### IV. 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 **II.C**.
  - 2. Award 0 points if the incorrect nonchord tone results in at least one error from **II.D**. or more than one error from **II.C**.
- C.** Half-point totals round up with one exception: A total score of 17½ rounds down to 17.

**Total for question 6      18 points**

Record points for chord spelling, spacing, and doubling in row 1 and for voice leading between chords in row 2.

One possible 18-point answer (others are possible):

**e:**    **i**    **V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup>**    **i**    **V<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup>/iv**    **iv<sup>6</sup>**    **ii<sup>o6</sup><sub>5</sub>**    **V**

|                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Chord spelling: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Voice leading:  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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

|          |              |                       |                            |                     |                     |        |                       |
|----------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Ex. 1    | Ex. 2        | Ex. 3                 | Ex. 4                      | Ex. 5a              | Ex. 5b              | Ex. 6  | Ex. 7                 |
|          |              |                       |                            |                     |                     |        |                       |
| Parallel | Beat-to-beat | By contrary<br>motion | Unequal 5ths<br>(d5 to P5) | Hidden<br>(covered) | Hidden<br>(covered) | Direct | Overlapping<br>voices |

1. Parallel fifths and octaves (immediately consecutive): unacceptable (award 0 points).

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2. Beat-to-beat fifths and octaves (equal perfect intervals on successive beats): unacceptable (award 0 points).

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3. Fifths and octaves by contrary motion: unacceptable (award 0 points).

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4. Unequal fifths
 

**d5 → P5 (by step):**

  - An ascending d5 → P5 is acceptable ONLY between upper voices when passing between I and I<sup>6</sup>, e.g., I–V<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup>–I<sup>6</sup> and I–vii<sup>o6</sup>–I<sup>6</sup> (no deduction).
  - An ascending d5 → P5 in other situations is unacceptable (award 1 point only).
  - A descending d5 → P5 is acceptable between upper voices (no deduction).
  - Any d5 → P5 (ascending or descending) between the bass and an upper voice is unacceptable (award 1 point only).

**P5 → d5 (by step):**

  - An ascending P5 → d5 between two upper voices is acceptable (no deduction).
  - A descending P5 → d5 between two upper voices is acceptable (no deduction).

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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).

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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.”

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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.

Question 6

Write your response to QUESTION 6 on this page.

Question 6. (Suggested time—10 minutes)

Write the following progression in four voices, following eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Continue logically from the spacing of the first chord. Do not add embellishments unless indicated by the Roman and Arabic numerals. Use only quarter and half notes.

e: i V<sub>3</sub><sup>6</sup> i V<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup>/iv iv<sup>6</sup> ii<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> V

Use a pencil only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

0018082



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Use a pencil only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

0018342

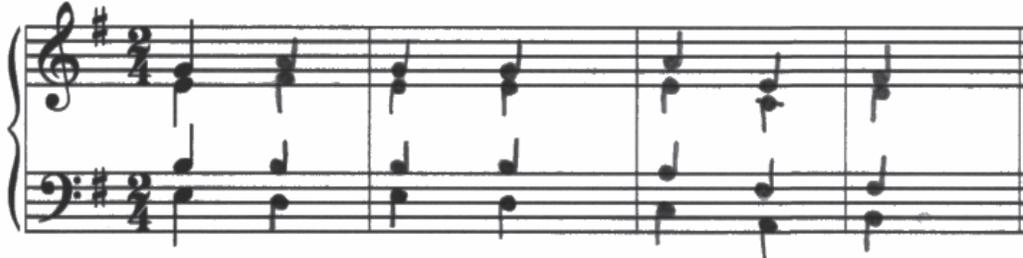


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e: i V<sup>6</sup> i V<sup>4</sup>/<sub>2</sub>/iv iv<sup>6</sup> ii<sup>o6</sup> V

*b d f a* *e g b* *e g b d* *a c e* *f a c e* *b d f*

*e g b a c*



Use a pencil only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

0020340



## Question 6

**Note:** Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

### Overview

This question assessed students’:

- knowledge of chord spelling and chord construction, including root within a key, quality, inversion, spacing, and doubling;
- ability to interpret Roman and Arabic numerals as representing chords;
- ability to recognize, and to properly write, the Roman numeral for a secondary dominant;
- understanding of when to use accidentals and how to notate them; and
- knowledge of voice leading, including appropriate resolution of chordal sevenths and leading tones, as well as acceptable and unacceptable voice-leading intervals.

### Sample: 6A

**Score: 16**

This represents a good response. All chords are spelled correctly and were awarded 1 point each. The voice-leading connection between chords six and seven was awarded 0 points due to the parallel fifths between the alto and bass, the unresolved chordal seventh, and the augmented second in the tenor (any one of which individually would have resulted in 0 points being awarded). All other voice-leading connections are good and were each awarded 2 points. Overall, this response was awarded 6 points for chord spelling and 10 points for voice leading, for a total of 16 points.

### Sample: 6B

**Score: 8**

This represents a fair response. Chords two, three, five, and six are spelled correctly and were each awarded 1 point for chord spelling. Chords four and seven are missing a necessary accidental and are therefore considered misspelled. They were each awarded 0 points for chord spelling. The connection between chords one and two is good and was awarded 2 points. The connection between chords two and three is also good and was awarded 2 points. The connection between chords five and six was awarded 0 points due to the uncharacteristic leap of a diminished fifth in the soprano. No other voice-leading connections could be considered. Overall, this response earned 4 points for chord spelling and 4 points for voice leading, for a total of 8 points.

### Sample: 6C

**Score: 3**

This represents a weak response. Chords three, five, and six are spelled correctly and were awarded 1 point each. Chords two, four, and seven are missing the necessary accidentals and are therefore considered misspelled. They were awarded 0 points each. The only voice-leading connection that could be considered is between chords five and six. This voice-leading connection was awarded 0 points due to the descending fourth leap into the chordal seventh and the direct fifths in the outer voices. Overall, this response earned 3 points for chord spelling and 0 points for voice leading, for a total of 3 points.