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# AP<sup>®</sup> Music Theory

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 7**

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

**Question 7: Harmonizing a Melody****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**).
- E.** A maximum of two egregious errors (or four minor errors) may be marked per half phrase, with a maximum total of three egregious errors (or six minor errors) per phrase.

**II. Scoring Phrase 2****2 points max**

- 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); do not consider the approach.
- B. The phrase is scored 2** only if:
1. the bass has no egregious errors, and
  2. the final two Roman numerals (and inversions) match the last two bass notes.
- N.B.: Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied.”
- 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; or
  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.

## 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
No egregious errors	Second half of the phrase contains an egregious error, or Roman numerals do not match bass notes at the cadence	1
No egregious errors	Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	1
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
Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	0

## III. Scoring Phrases 3 and 4

6 points max (3 points per phrase)

- A. For each of these phrases, judge the bass and Roman numerals separately, considering each in two halves.
- The first half of phrase 3 consists of the first four beats of the phrase.
  - The second half of phrase 3 consists of the last three beats of the phrase and their approach.
  - The first half of phrase 4 consists of the first five beats of the phrase.
  - The second half of phrase 4 consists of the last four beats of the phrase and their approach.
- 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), or 0–3 minor errors
fair	2 egregious errors (+ 1 minor error), or 4–5 minor errors
poor	3 or more egregious errors, or 6 or more minor 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.
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” ( $\text{V}/\text{V}$ ,  $[\text{V}]$ ,  $\text{V} \rightarrow \text{V}$ ,  $\text{V}$  of  $\text{V}$ , etc.).
- E. Award at most **2 points** to a phrase that uses half notes exclusively.

#### IV. Weighting Errors

- A. The following are **egregious** errors:
1. Parallel fifths or octaves, consecutive perfect fifths or octaves in contrary motion (*marked on the second chord*)  
N.B.: Perfect fifths to diminished fifths are OK, though some may create other problems with incorrect resolutions of tendency tones and/or chordal sevenths (*marked on the second chord*)
  2. Doubling the leading tone; unresolved or incorrectly resolved leading tone (*marked on the first chord*)  
N.B.: A bass line that moves  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}$  is OK, i.e., *not* an unresolved leading tone
  3. Tonally inappropriate six-four chord (*marked on the first chord*)  
N.B.: Cadential six-fours, passing six-fours, and neighboring (pedal) six-fours are allowed.
  4. Unresolved seventh or incorrectly resolved seventh (*marked on the first chord*)
  5. Other note-against-note dissonance (including fourths) that is not treated correctly, including Roman numerals (and inversions) that do not match with the given melody note (*marked on the first chord*)  
N.B.: fourths that could result from a correctly treated inverted seventh chord and that resolve appropriately are acceptable, regardless of the Roman numerals.
  6. Poor chord succession (e.g.,  $\text{V}-\text{IV}$ ,  $\text{V}-\text{ii}$ ,  $\text{ii}-\text{iii}$ ,  $\text{IV}-\text{iii}$ ,  $\text{ii}-\text{I}$ ,  $\text{iii}-\text{I}$ ,  $\text{vi}-\text{I}$ ,  $\text{V}-\text{iii}$ ,  $\text{iii}-\text{ii}$ ,  $\text{iii}-\text{vii}^\circ$ , etc.) (*marked on the second chord*)  
N.B.: Motions from  $\text{V}$  or  $\text{V}^6$  to  $\text{IV}^6$  are allowed.

7. Root-position leading-tone chord ( $\text{vii}^\circ$ ) followed by anything other than root-position I (*marked on the first chord*)
8. Poor chord use, such as  $\text{vi}^6$  (unless as part of a parallel  $\frac{6}{3}$  sequence, modulation, or following a strong-beat I—i.e., a 5–6 motion);  $\text{iii}^6$  (unless as part of a parallel  $\frac{6}{3}$  sequence) (*marked on the first chord*)
9. Inappropriate leap (seventh, augmented interval, or compound interval), successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad, descending leap of a fourth or larger into a chordal seventh, or leap of an octave that does not change direction afterwards (*marked on the last chord of the leap[s]*)  
N.B.: Leaps of diminished intervals that change direction and resolve by step afterwards are allowed
10. An entire phrase of consecutive thirds or sixths (applicable only to phrases 3 and 4)
11. Use of an unacceptable rhythmic value (i.e., any rhythmic value not allowed by the prompt), including any rest

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

1. Diminished fifth to perfect fifth (*marked on the second chord*)
2. Repeated note and/or Roman numeral (and inversion) from weak beat to strong beat, unless at start of phrase (*marked on the second chord*)
3. Metrically inappropriate six-four chord (*marked on the first chord*)
4. Approach to fifth or octave in similar motion in which the upper voice leaps (*marked on the second chord*)
5. Cross-relation (*marked on the first chord*)
6. Root-position  $\text{vii}^\circ$  triad that moves directly to I (*marked on the first chord*)
7. Four or more consecutive thirds or sixths for half of a phrase
8. Incomplete inverted seventh chord

## V. Other Considerations

**1 point**

**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 has no errors.
  - 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.

**NR** Reserved for blank responses

**Total for question 7**

**9 points**

## Supplemental Summary Chart of the Weighting Errors (IV)

Egregious Errors	Minor Errors
<b>A.1.</b> Parallel fifths or octaves, consecutive perfect fifths or octaves in contrary motion ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )	<b>B.1.</b> Diminished fifth to perfect fifth ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> ) <b>B.4.</b> Approach to fifth or octave in similar motion in which the upper voice leaps ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )
<b>A.2.</b> Doubling the leading tone ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> ); unresolved or incorrectly resolved leading tone ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	
<b>A.3.</b> Tonally inappropriate six-four chord ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	<b>B.3.</b> Metrically inappropriate six-four chord ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )
<b>A.4.</b> Unresolved seventh or incorrectly resolved seventh ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	<b>B.8.</b> Incomplete inverted seventh chord
<b>A.5.</b> Other note-against-note dissonance (including fourths) that is not treated correctly, including Roman numerals (and inversions) that do not match with the given melody note ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	<b>B.5.</b> Cross relation ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )
<b>A.6.</b> Poor chord succession (e.g., V–IV, V–ii, ii–iii, IV–iii, ii–I, iii–I, vi–I, V–iii, iii–ii, iii–vii°, etc.) ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )	<b>B.2.</b> Repeated note and/or Roman numeral (and inversion) from weak beat to strong beat, unless at start of phrase ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )
<b>A.7.</b> Root-position leading-tone chord (vii°) followed by anything other than root-position I ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	<b>B.6.</b> Root-position vii° triad that moves directly to I ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )
<b>A.8.</b> Poor chord use, such as vi <sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel $\frac{6}{3}$ sequence, modulation, or following a strong-beat I—i.e., a 5–6 motion); iii <sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel $\frac{6}{3}$ sequence) ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	
<b>A.9.</b> Inappropriate leap (seventh, augmented interval, or compound interval), successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad, descending leap of more than a third into a chordal seventh, or leap of an octave that does not change direction afterwards ( <i>marked on the last chord of the leap(s)</i> )	
<b>A.10.</b> An entire phrase of consecutive thirds or sixths (applicable only to phrases 3 and 4)	<b>B.7.</b> Four or more consecutive thirds or sixths for half of a phrase
<b>A.11.</b> Use of an unacceptable rhythmic value, including any rest	

## Question 7

Write your response to QUESTION 7 on this page.

## 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. (Embellishing tones are not required. If you choose to use them, the only acceptable embellishing tones are unaccented passing tones, unaccented neighbor tones, and unaccented chordal skips.)
  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: B $\flat$

Chord analysis: I vii<sup>o6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> I ii<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I V V<sup>6</sup> I V I I/X V

Chord analysis: I V V<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I II V I<sup>6</sup> II V I I<sup>6</sup> II V<sup>7</sup> I

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## Question 7

Write your response to QUESTION 7 on this page.

## 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. (Embellishing tones are not required. If you choose to use them, the only acceptable embellishing tones are unaccented passing tones, unaccented neighbor tones, and unaccented chordal skips.)
  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 *Perfect*

Key: B $\flat$ Chord analysis: I vii<sup>o6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> I ii<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I V V<sup>6</sup> I V I V<sup>7</sup> V

Chord analysis:

V ii<sup>6</sup> V vii I V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>6</sup> V vi V<sup>6</sup> I I<sup>6</sup> ii V<sup>6</sup> I<sup>6</sup>B  
G  
E  
C  
F

HdC

B (C) E (F) G (A) B

Perfect Authentic

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### Question 7

**Write your response to QUESTION 7 on this page.**

**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. (Embellishing tones are not required. If you choose to use them, the only acceptable embellishing tones are unaccented passing tones, unaccented neighbor tones, and unaccented chordal skips.)
  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

A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. It features a treble and bass staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The score includes a key signature change from B-flat to A-flat in the second measure of the second system. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing beamed eighth notes. The accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the first measure of each system, followed by a more complex rhythmic pattern in the second measure. The score is divided into two systems, each with four measures.

**Key: B $\flat$**

Chord analysis: I vii<sup>o6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> I ii<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I V V<sup>6</sup> I V I V<sup>6</sup>/V<sub>4</sub> V

A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. It features a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The score includes a repeat sign at the beginning and a final cadence at the end.

*Chord analysis:*

i7 ~~v~~ ~~iv~~ iv v7i<sup>6</sup> v7 I ~~iv~~ v ~~iv~~ ~~iv~~ i v I

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## Question 7

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

### Overview

This question assessed students’:

- knowledge of soprano–bass counterpoint;
- ability to write proper cadences, including a cadence in the dominant (There was a half cadence at the end of the third phrase and a perfect authentic cadence at the end.);
- ability to compose a bass line accommodating a melody that implied root position chords almost exclusively or chords in inversion (yielding a smoother bass line);
- usage of appropriate embellishing tones (There were many opportunities for embellishing notes in the bass by using unaccented neighbor and passing tones.);
- knowledge of voice leading, including appropriate resolution of chordal sevenths and leading tones, as well as acceptable and unacceptable note-to-note intervals; and
- ability to write Roman and Arabic numerals as correctly representing chords.

### Sample: 7A

**Score: 9**

This represents a very good response. The bass line of the second phrase is without error. The Roman numerals are also without error. The cadence is good, the bass line and Roman numerals match, and the phrase was awarded 2 points. The bass line of the third phrase is without error. The Roman numerals are also without error. With a good bass line, good Roman numerals, and a good cadence where bass line and Roman numerals match, this phrase earned 3 points. The bass line of phrase four is without error. The Roman numerals are also without error. With a good bass line, good Roman numerals, and a good cadence where bass line and Roman numerals match, this phrase earned 3 points. Because this response was entirely error free, the response earned the special point. The scoring summary for this response is  $2/3/3 + 1$  for a total score of 9 points.

### Sample: 7B

**Score: 5**

This represents a fair response. In the second phrase, the bass line F in measure 4, beat 2 creates an unacceptable dissonance and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals, the  $V^7$  at the cadence is a poor chord choice and is an egregious error. Because the first half of the phrase contains no egregious errors, the phrase earned 1 point. In the third phrase, the bass line F in measure 6, beat 2 creates an unresolved dissonance and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals, the  $V\text{-}ii^6$  motion in measure 5, beats 1–2 is a poor chord succession and is an egregious error. The  $vii^\circ\text{-}I$  chord succession in measure 5–6 is a minor error, and the  $V^7$  chord in measure 6, beat 2 is a poor chord choice because it creates an unresolved dissonance and thus is an egregious error. With a good bass line, fair Roman numerals, and a cadence that contains errors, the phrase earned 2 points. In the fourth phrase, the D in measure 8, beat 3 is unacceptable (the final cadence must be a Perfect Authentic Cadence) and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals, the  $vi$  in measure 7, beat 1 is a poor chord choice and is an egregious error. The  $ii\text{-}V^6$  chord succession in measure 8 implies parallel octaves and a doubled leading tone in the  $V^6$ ; both are egregious errors but marked in the

**Question 7 (continued)**

same place. The  $V^6$  at the final cadence is a poor chord choice and is an egregious error, marked in the same place as the two previously mentioned errors. The  $I^6$  at the final cadence is also a poor choice and is an egregious error. With a good bass line, poor Roman numerals, and a cadence that contains errors, the phrase earned 2 points. The scoring summary for this phrase is 1/2/2 for a total of 5 points.

**Sample: 7C****Score: 3**

This a poor response. In the second phrase, the bass line is acceptable. In the Roman numerals, the  $V^6/V$  contains a doubled leading tone, and the  $V^6/V-V$  progression contains parallel octaves. Both are egregious errors. Because the first half of the phrase is without error, the phrase was awarded 1 point. In the third phrase, the G–A in measure 5, beats 1–2 create unacceptable dissonances and are egregious errors. Note that the perfect fourth C–F in measure 5, beat 3 is allowed because it can plausibly imply a  $V^{4/3}$  extending through beat 4 and resolving in measure 6, beat 1. The Bb in measure 6, beat 2 creates an unacceptable dissonance and is an egregious error. The D in measure 6 beat 3 creates an unacceptable dissonance and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals, the chords throughout the phrase do not harmonize the given melody: the  $I^7$  leaves an unresolved chordal seventh, the  $V^{6/4}$  is a poor chord choice and does not contain G,  $vii^{6/4}$  is a poor chord choice and does not contain F,  $V^7$  does not contain D,  $I^6$  does not contain Eb, and the  $V^7$  is a poor chord choice at the cadence. With a poor bass line, poor Roman numerals, and a cadence that contains errors, this phrase earned 0 points. In the bass line of the fourth phrase, the D in measure 7, beat 1 creates an unacceptable dissonance and is an egregious error. The repeated Fs in measure 7 create a weak–strong minor error. The D in measure 8, beat 2, is an unacceptable note at the cadence. In the Roman numerals, the  $I^{6/4}$  is an improper use of a 6/4 chord and an egregious error. The  $V-I^{6/4}$  also implies a weak–strong minor error (marked in the same place as the preceding egregious error). The I chord in measure 8, beat 1 is a poor chord choice. With a fair bass line, fair Roman numerals, and a cadence that contains errors, this phrase earned 2 points. The scoring summary for this response is 1/0/2 for a total score of 3 points.