

Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2022 AP[®] Music Theory Free-Response Questions

• Number of Readers	91		
Music Theory			
• Number of Students Scored	15,594		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	2,922	18.7
	4	2,763	17.7
	3	3,970	25.5
	2	3,697	23.7
	1	2,242	14.4
• Global Mean	3.03		
Music Theory Aural Subscore			
• Number of Students Scored	15,596		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	2,937	18.8
	4	2,694	17.3
	3	3,868	24.8
	2	3,885	24.9
	1	2,212	14.2
• Global Mean	3.02		
Music Theory Nonaural Subscore			
Number of Students Scored	15,596		
Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	3,006	19.3
	4	2,601	16.7
	3	3,945	25.3
	2	3,841	24.6
	1	2,203	14.1
• Global Mean	3.02		

* The number of students with Music Theory aural and nonaural subscores may differ slightly from the number of students who took the AP Music Theory Exam due to exam administration incidents.

The following comments on the 2022 free-response questions for AP[®] Music Theory were written by the Chief Reader, Ronald Rodman, Carleton College. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Question 1

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Melodic Dictation

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 4.67

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- convert an aural melody in bass clef, simple meter, and a minor key using the melodic minor form to traditional music notation;
- notate rhythms in simple meter, including beat and division patterns and the dotted quarter-eighth rhythm;
- hear and notate the raised leading tone and the raised scale degrees 6 and 7 in the ascending melodic minor; and
- hear and notate a primarily stepwise melody, with leaps in the tonic and dominant.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate ability of converting a heard melody into music notation;
- understanding of the topics (melodic minor scale, bass clef, simple meter) through moderately correct notation; and
- limited difficulty with pitch and rhythm as demonstrated by common errors of notation.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failure to demonstrate understanding of rhythms in simple meter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transcribed a heard melody into correct notation of both pitch and rhythm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to correctly notate the minor-key melody	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct notation of the melody using melodic minor with the raised sixth and seventh scale degree using the proper accidentals

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Practice rhythm patterns in simple meter starting at the beginning of the year. Use visual aids, such as charts or flash cards of these patterns, and have students listen and notate the rhythm of simple melodies using just these patterns.
- Begin to attach solfege or scale degrees to pitch patterns.

- Work on helping students become proficient with notation from the very beginning of the year. Help them understand the grouping of notes through the beaming of simple meter rhythmic patterns.
- Cover minor keys early in the year, and drill melodies in melodic minor often.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Please refer to the [AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description](#) to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing students’ melodic dictation skills. Of particular use is the “Aural Skills Progression” outline on pp. 197–203.

Also see: [Sight-Singing: Your Key to Success in Melodic Dictation](#) and other publications posted on the [AP Music Theory Classroom Resources](#) page.

AP Classroom contains several free-response melodic dictation questions with scoring guidelines that mimic those used on the AP Music Theory exam:

- Formative free-response melodic dictation questions in minor modes (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Half-length Melodic Dictation Topic Questions:
 - Unit 2: Melodic Dictation in G Minor
 - Full-length Melodic Dictation Topic Question:
 - Unit 6: Melodic Dictation in G Minor
 - Unit 8: Melodic Dictation in C Minor
 - Half-length Melodic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 2 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (D Minor)
 - Full-length Melodic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 3 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (A Minor)
 - Unit 6 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (D Minor)
- Summative free-response melodic dictation questions (accessible using the Question Bank search function in AP Classroom):
 - To find all available melodic dictation questions in the Question Bank, search using the following filters:
 - Assessment Purpose and Source: Summative
 - Question Type: FRQ: Melodic Dictation
 - Question titles show key, clef, and meter type. There are 5 questions that are in simple meter, bass clef, and a minor key.
- Summative free-response major mode melodic dictation questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Assessments” tab in the Question Bank):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 2 (E minor, treble, compound meter)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 2 (C minor, bass, simple meter)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 2 (D minor, treble, compound meter)

Question 2

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Melodic Dictation

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 3.40

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- convert an aural melody in treble clef, compound meter, and a major key to standard musical notation;
- notate rhythms in compound meter, with division and subdivision patterns, including the dotted eighth-sixteenth-eighth rhythm;
- hear and notate the chromatic neighbor tone and cancel the accidental in the same measure; and
- hear and differentiate between melodic skips and steps.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate ability of converting a heard melody into music notation;
- basic understanding of the topics (major scale, chromatic alteration, treble clef, compound meter) through moderately correct notation; and
- moderate ability to recognize diatonic pitch patterns in a major key (with a raised fourth scale degree) and common rhythmic patterns in compound meter.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to notate the rhythm of a melody in compound meter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transcribed a melody heard into correct notation of both pitch and rhythm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to correctly notate pitches of the melody, including differentiating half steps and whole steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct notation of the raised fourth scale degree using the proper accidental

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Practice compound meter starting at the beginning of the year.
- Use structured rhythmic practice first using the most common 6/8 patterns: quarter-eighth, three eighth notes, dotted eighth-sixteenth-eighth, quarter-two sixteenths, dotted quarter note. Show a chart of these patterns and have students listen and notate the rhythm of simple melodies using just these patterns.
- Begin to attach solfege or scale degrees to the pitch patterns.

- Work on helping students become proficient with notation from the very beginning of the year.
- Help them understand the beaming of compound meter.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Please refer to the [AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description](#) to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing students’ melodic dictation skills. Of particular use is the “Aural Skills Progression” outline on pp. 197–203.

Also see: [Sight-Singing: Your Key to Success in Melodic Dictation](#) and other publications posted on the [AP Music Theory Classroom Resources](#) page.

AP Classroom contains several free-response melodic dictation questions with scoring guidelines that mimic those used on the AP Music Theory exam:

- Formative free-response melodic dictation questions in major modes (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Half-length Melodic Dictation Topic Questions:
 - Unit 1: Melodic Dictation in A-flat Major, Melodic Dictation in E Major
 - Unit 2: Melodic Dictation in D Major
 - Full-length Melodic Dictation Topic Question:
 - Unit 3: Melodic Dictation in D Major
 - Half-length Melodic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 1 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Questions 1 & 2 (B-flat Major, D Major)
 - Unit 2 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (A Major)
 - Full-length Melodic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 8 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (A Major)
- Summative free-response melodic dictation questions (accessible using the Question Bank search function in AP Classroom):
 - To find all available melodic dictation questions in the Question Bank, search using the following filters:
 - Assessment Purpose and Source: Summative
 - Question Type: FRQ: Melodic Dictation
 - Question titles show key, clef, and meter type. There are five questions that are in compound meter, treble clef, and a major key.
- Summative free-response major mode melodic dictation questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Assessments” tab in the Question Bank):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 1 (B-flat major, bass, simple meter)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 1 (E major, treble, compound meter)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 1 (E-flat major, bass, simple meter)

Question 3

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Harmonic Dictation

Max Score: 24

Mean Score: 12.91

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students’:

- ability to distinguish the bass and soprano lines;
- knowledge of common chord progressions;
- notation skills;
- knowledge of cadences;
- knowledge of inversions; and
- knowledge of chord quality.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate understanding of standard chord progressions in a minor key;
- recognition of tonic and dominant chords; and
- a knowledge of the cadential 6/4 chord.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notation problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good notation practices (legible, stems on correct side of notehead, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of knowledge of common chord progressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roman numerals that follow common practice harmonic norms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty hearing seventh chords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correctly labeled V4/3 and V7 chords
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty hearing bass line skips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correctly notated leaps in the bass line

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Have students engage in aural skill activities every class period.
- Spend time on listening to and writing common chord progressions.

- Spend time on notational skills.
- Work with students on melodic contour and practice bass- and soprano-line dictations.
- Drill aural recognition of seventh chords, especially the V7 and its inversions.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Please refer to the [AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description](#) to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing students' harmonic dictation skills. Of particular use is the "Aural Skills Progression" outline on pp. 197–203.

Also see: *Techniques for Teaching Harmonic Dictation* in [Building AP Music Theory Skills from the Ground Up](#) (p. 20) and other publications posted on the [AP Music Theory Classroom Resources](#) page.

AP Classroom contains several free-response harmonic dictation questions with scoring guidelines that mimic those used on the AP Music Theory exam:

- Formative free-response harmonic dictation questions in minor mode (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Harmonic Dictation Topic Questions:
 - Harmonic Dictation in A Minor
 - Harmonic Dictation in C Minor
 - Full-length Harmonic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 3 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (A Minor)
 - Unit 6 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (D Minor)
 - Unit 7 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (G Minor)
 - Summative free-response harmonic dictation questions (accessible using the Question Bank search function in AP Classroom):
 - To find all available harmonic dictation questions in the Question Bank, search using the following filters:
 - Assessment Purpose and Source: Summative
 - Question Type: FRQ: Harmonic Dictation
 - Question titles list key, most advanced content found in each question (i.e., secondary [or applied] dominant, cadential six-four, passing six-four, etc.), and occasionally additional content information like cadence type.
 - Summative free-response minor mode harmonic dictation questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the "Assessments" tab in the Question Bank):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 4 (B minor, secondary dominant)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 4 (E minor, secondary dominant, DC)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 3 (G minor, cadential six-four)

Question 4

This is the end of the harmonic dictation section. Question 4 was not administered in the main exam administration in 2022 due to a printing error. Please proceed to Question 5. The corrected item and scoring guidelines are available in AP Classroom. There is no Chief Reader report associated with this question since it was not administered.

Question 5

Task: Complete Based on Cues

Topic: Part writing from a Figured Bass

Max Score: 25

Mean Score: 15.72

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed the following abilities:

- chord spelling from a figured bass;
- Roman numeral analysis;
- knowledge of four-part part writing and voice leading;
- knowledge of the deceptive progression/deceptive cadence;
- handling of the cadential 6/4 chord;
- chord spacing and doubling rules;
- treatment of the chordal seventh; and
- treatment of the leading tone.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- generally good interpretation of the figured bass into Roman numerals; there were many perfect or near perfect scores for Roman numerals written;
- moderate understanding of figured bass realization, as shown by the number of correctly spelled chords and correct Roman numeral analyses; and
- limited abilities in employing smooth voice leading procedures.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

- Many student responses demonstrated poor voice-leading in chord connections
- Many student responses demonstrated a lack of understanding for motion out of the cadential 6/4 to V7
- Some student responses demonstrated a lack of knowledge of chord spelling and doubling, especially for the ii⁴/₃ chord and the V⁶ chord (doubled leading tone)
- Some student responses attempt to insert a secondary dominant, when none were indicated
- Some student responses demonstrated a lack of understanding when matching chord spellings with Roman numerals
- Some student responses realized the figured bass in a minor key
- Some student responses misunderstood the deceptive cadence at the end, writing an authentic cadence instead

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect cadential 6/4 resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct writing and resolution of the cadential 6/4 chord
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unresolved leading tones in the soprano at the cadence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct resolution of the leading tone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubled leading tone in chord 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct doubling of chords
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inverted chords need all chord tones, including the 7th of the ii4/3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inverted seventh chords that have all chord tones present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6/4 chord doubling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct doubling of the 6/4 chord
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to preserve the 7th in the same voice when it can't resolve down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper motion of the chordal seventh
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spacing errors between upper voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct spacing of upper voices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many leaps of a 4th/5th resulting in not very smooth voice leading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding large leaps in the upper voices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hidden fifth on chord three was easily missed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding hidden fifths and octaves

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Continuously teach the proper resolution of the V7 chord, including:
 - Don't double the leading tone
 - Resolve the chordal 7th down
 - Resolve the leading tone up
- Teach the correct descending stepwise resolution of the cadential 6/4.
- Teach Roman numerals; proper case and notation; distinguish the difference between IV (iv) and vi (VI).
- Use examples that include a deceptive cadence so that students don't come to expect that every phrase ends with tonic.
- Music notation/calligraphy in general:
 - Be attentive to the size of note heads
 - Write legibly
 - Teach students how to write the interval of a harmonic 2nd
- Advise students to sing what they write; if they can't sing it, it's probably wrong. Demonstrate and practice in class examples.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Please refer to the [AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description](#) to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing part writing and figured bass realization skills. Also see “Instructional Approaches” in the back of the CED, specifically: Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 4, pp. 194–195.

Also see: [Thinking Horizontally: Learning Part Writing and Figured Bass Through Analysis](#) (p. 140) and other publications posted on the [AP Music Theory Classroom Resources](#) page.

AP Classroom contains several free-response figured bass questions with scoring guidelines that mimic those used on the AP Music Theory exam:

- Formative free-response figured bass questions (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Topic Questions:
 - Unit 4: Figured Bass in B Major
 - Unit 7: PW from Figured Bass in G
 - Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 4 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (D Minor)
 - Unit 7 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (B Minor)
- Summative free-response figured bass questions (accessible using the Question Bank search function in AP Classroom):
 - To find all available questions in the Question Bank, search using the following filters:
 - Assessment Purpose and Source: Summative
 - Question Type: FRQ: Part Writing from Figured Bass
 - Question titles list key, most advanced content found in each question (i.e., inverted 7th, cadential six-four, 4–3 suspension, etc.), and occasionally additional content information like cadence type.
- Summative free-response figured bass questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Assessments” tab in the Question Bank):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (A minor, 3rd inversion 7th chord)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (A minor, 2nd inversion vii^{o7})
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (D minor, predominant 7th, vii^{o7})

Question 6

Task: Complete Based on Cues

Topic: Part writing from Roman numerals and figures

Max Score: 18

Mean Score: 7.20

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

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.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- proficient understanding of diatonic Roman numerals, as demonstrated by the spelling of chords;
- limited abilities at spelling secondary dominant seventh chords, as shown by the frequent errors in the spelling of this chord: and
- insufficient understanding of voice leading procedures, as demonstrated by the limited number of proficient responses.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect use of accidentals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included G# on the secondary dominant and D# for the primary V chords, and no other accidentals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to recognize the half-diminished symbol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used only diatonic notes in chord six
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfamiliarity with secondary dominants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrote a single chord at the end of measure 2 that included a G#
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency tone resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolved leading tones and secondary leading tones up by step and resolved sevenths down by step

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approach to a chordal seventh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approached the chordal seventh by step or common tone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chord spacing, particularly between the inner voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not exceed an octave between adjacent upper voices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion between the figures 4/2 and 4/3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had a D in the bass on the secondary dominant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chord completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not omit any notes from inverted chords

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

To improve student performance on this question:

- Consider in the abstract which accidentals are expected and which are unexpected
 - There will surely be at least one accidental in the secondary chord
 - In a minor key, we expect the leading tone to be raised in all V and vii^o chords
 - Any other accidentals are extremely unlikely
- Check the figures carefully
 - Be sure to distinguish triads from seventh chords
 - Do not add a seventh if the figures indicate a triad, and do not omit the seventh if the figures indicate a seventh chord
 - Make sure the bass is consistent with the figures
 - To avoid confusing 4/3 and 4/2, make sure students understand that figures literally represent intervals above the bass
- Prioritize outer-voice counterpoint
 - Write outer voices first
 - It is wise to write the bass first and the soprano second because the bass should be essentially determined by the Roman numerals and figures
 - Resolve tendency tones (e.g., leading tones and sevenths)
 - Avoid leaps into dissonances
 - Move in contrary motion when root motion is by step (e.g., IV–V)
 - Write inner voices as a pair
 - Take inventory and make sure missing notes are covered by the inner voices
 - Resolve sevenths
 - In general, use the smoothest voice leading that accomplishes these goals
 - Particularly expect smooth upper voices at the cadence
- Explicitly address spacing and the small distance between the bass and treble clefs
 - The alto and tenor should not be more than an octave apart (and generally they are much closer)
 - It is not unusual to need ledger lines for the inner voices
 - In general, avoid writing the tenor very close to the bass

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Please refer to the [AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description](#) to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing part-writing skills. See “Instructional Approaches” in the back of the CED, specifically: Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 4, pp. 194–195.

Also see: [Thinking Horizontally: Learning Part Writing and Figured Bass Through Analysis](#) (p. 140) and other publications posted on the [AP Music Theory Classroom Resources](#) page.

AP Classroom contains several free-response Roman numeral realization questions with scoring guidelines that mimic those used on the AP Music Theory exam:

- Formative free-response part writing from Roman numerals questions (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Topic Questions:
 - Unit 4: Part writing Roman numeral in F Minor
 - Unit 6: Part writing from Roman numerals in G Major
 - Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 4 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (B-flat Major)
 - Unit 6 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (E Minor)
- Summative free-response part writing from Roman numerals questions (accessible using the Question Bank search function in AP Classroom):
 - To find all available questions in the Question Bank, search using the following filters:
 - Assessment Purpose and Source: Summative
 - Question Type: FRQ: Part Writing from Roman Numerals
 - Question titles list key, whether the question contains an applied chord, and occasionally additional content information like cadence type.
- Summative free-response part writing from Roman numerals questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Assessments” tab in the Question Bank):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 6 (A-flat major, secondary dominant of vi)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 6 (B-flat major, secondary dominant, V8–7)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 6 (G major, secondary dominant, deceptive cadence)

Question 7

Task: Complete Based on Cues

Topic: Harmonizing a Melody

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 4.62

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

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.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate understanding of adding a bass line and Roman numeral analysis to a melody, as shown by the number of responses that earned a middle score; and
- fair understanding of cadences, as demonstrated by proper use of harmonic patterns and bass lines at the ends of phrases.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorrect use of embellishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used unaccented passing and neighbor tones, and avoided escape tones, appoggiaturas, and dissonant chordal skips
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unfamiliarity with secondary dominants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used proper secondary dominant notation (e.g., V/V) at the modulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tendency tone resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolved leading tones up by step and chordal sevenths down by step

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the 6/4 chord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used a pedal 6/4 chord in m. 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency tone doubling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not use the V6/V that would double the leading tone at the cadence in m. 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chord succession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not use retrogressions (e.g., V-IV, ii-I, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chord choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The given soprano note was included in the Roman numeral

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

To improve student performance on this question:

- Guide the students in writing proper cadences
- Guide the students in writing embellishing notes judiciously
- Use 6/4 chords carefully and without creating new voice-leading errors
- Emphasize avoiding parallel fifths and octaves
- Be sure that the bass note matches the bass implied by the Roman numeral and inversion

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Please refer to the [AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description](#) to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing part-writing skills. See “Instructional Approaches” in the back of the CED, specifically: Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 4, pp. 194, 196.

Also see: [Interpreting and Harmonizing Melodies: Some Formulas for Success](#) (p. 32) and other publications posted on the [AP Music Theory Classroom Resources](#) page.

AP Classroom contains several free-response harmonization of melody questions with scoring guidelines that mimic those used on the AP Music Theory exam:

- Formative free-response harmonization of melody questions (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Half-length Topic Questions:
 - Unit 4: Harmonization of Melody in A major
 - Unit 4: Harmonization of Melody in A-flat
 - Full-length Topic Questions:
 - Unit 7: Harmonization of Melody in E
 - Unit 8: Harmonization of Melody in G
 - Half-length Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 5 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (B-flat Major)
 - Unit 6 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 3 (D Major)
 - Unit 7 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 3 (B-flat Major)
 - Full-length Progress Check Question:
 - Unit 8 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (E-flat Major)

- Summative free-response harmonization of melody questions (accessible using the Question Bank search function in AP Classroom):
 - To find all available questions in the Question Bank, search using the following filters:
 - Assessment Purpose and Source: Summative
 - Question Type: FRQ: Harmonization of a Melody
 - Question titles list key and occasionally additional content information like soprano scale degrees at cadences 3 or 4.
- Summative free-response harmonization of melody questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Assessments” tab in the Question Bank):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 7 (G major)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 7 (G major)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 7 (F major)

Question 8 (S1)

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Sight Singing

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 5.12

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- sing three-note segments from a major scale;
- accurately perform in compound meter;
- sing in the major mode;
- accurately sing a sequence; and
- establish and maintain a tonic.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- most students received high scores for their performances; and
- vocal range was an issue for some students.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to identify tonality by looking at the key/starting pitch or sing in a major key	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to sing a major scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to distinguish between compound vs. simple meter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to sing in notated meter

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Have students vocalize every class period
- Teach effective warm-up and preparation techniques
- Distinguish between major and minor keys and simple and compound meters; drill pitch and rhythm patterns continuously
- For test preparation:
 - Have students practice uploading their responses to the College Board-offered website/app.
 - Have students sing in the room where they will be testing
 - Check with the proctor to make sure they know the rules of the exam. (It's ok to restart the melody, even though they'll lose the flow point)
 - Coach students to use the practice time during the test administration effectively

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Please refer to the [AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description](#) to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing sight singing skills. Additional suggestions for teaching and practicing sight singing can be found in the “Instructional Approaches” in the back of the CED, specifically:

- Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 3, p. 193
- Aural Skills Progression, pp. 197–203

Also see: [Teaching Sight Singing](#) and [Sight Singing: A Strategy for the Non-Singer and the Underprepared Student](#) (p. 16).

AP Classroom contains several sight singing questions with scoring guidelines that mimic those used on the AP Music Theory exam:

- Formative sight singing questions in major mode (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Half-length Topic Question:
 - Unit 1: Sight Singing in B-flat
 - Full-length Topic Questions:
 - Unit 1: Sight singing in D major
 - Unit 2: Sight Singing in D major
 - Half-length Progress Check Question:
 - Unit 1 Progress Check: FRQ Part B, Question 1 (G major)
 - Full-length Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 3 Progress Check: FRQ Part B, Question 1 (E-flat major)
 - Unit 4 Progress Check: FRQ Part B, Question 1 (B-flat major)
 - Unit 7 Progress Check: FRQ Part B, Question 1 (A-flat major)
- Summative sight singing questions (accessible using the Question Bank search function in AP Classroom):
 - To find all available questions in the Question Bank, search using the following filters:
 - Assessment Purpose and Source: Summative
 - Question Type: FRQ: Sight-Singing
 - Question titles list key, clef, and information about meter type. The title will occasionally include information about whether the melody contains a chromatically inflected note.
- Summative major mode sight singing questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Assessments” tab in the Question Bank):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 9 (B-flat major)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 8 (D major)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 7 (B-flat major)

Question 9 (S2)

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Sight Singing

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 3.52

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed the following abilities:

- performing stepwise contours and common skips/leaps, such as 3rds, P4s, and P5s;
- applying music reading skills to melodic and rhythmic performance at sight;
- reading bass clef, key signature, and accidentals;
- singing in the minor mode;
- treatment of leading tone and chromatic alterations;
- maintaining the same simple quadruple meter throughout;
- singing with a steady tempo;
- demonstrating an understanding of rhythmic notation; and
- retention of the tonic.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

- Students had difficulty navigating the P4 and P5 leaps within segments 1–3; the remaining segments were off by whole or half steps throughout and thus could not receive credit
- Many students sang segments 3–4 (and sometimes more) in compound meter; some were able to return to simple meter
- Many students modulated segments because they missed the P4 and P5 leaps in segments 1–3, but then maintained the original tonic at the end
- In general, the range of scores was very low
- Many students chose not to sing the melody but only performed the rhythm

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to sing correct rhythms and note durations, including sustaining the last note of the prompt to full durational value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Last note held for full value
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to vocalize, and resorting to clapping or tapping the response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students who could sing the melody
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to recognize and sing in melodic minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students who could sing the melody in melodic minor

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Have students vocalize every class period
- Teach effective warm-up and preparation techniques
- Distinguish between major and minor keys and simple and compound meters; drill pitch and rhythm patterns continuously
- Be sure to cover minor keys and the melodic minor form thoroughly
- Drill diatonic and chromatic melodic patterns, especially chromatic passing tones and neighbor tones

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Please refer to the [AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description](#) to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing sight singing skills. Additional suggestions for teaching and practicing sight singing can be found in the “Instructional Approaches” in the back of the CED, specifically:

- Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 3, p. 193
- Aural Skills Progression, pp. 197–203

Also see: [Teaching Sight Singing](#) and [Sight Singing: A Strategy for the Non-Singer and the Underprepared Student](#) (p. 16).

AP Classroom contains several sight singing questions with scoring guidelines that mimic those used on the AP Music Theory exam:

- Formative sight singing questions in minor mode (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Half-length Topic Question:
 - Unit 2: Sight singing in C minor
 - Full-length Topic Questions:
 - Unit 2: Sight singing E minor
 - Unit 2: Sight singing in E minor
 - Unit 6: Sight singing in B minor
 - Unit 6: Sight singing in D minor
 - Half-length Progress Check Question:
 - Unit 2 Progress Check: FRQ Part B, Question 1 (E minor)
 - Full-length Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 5 Progress Check: FRQ Part B, Question 1 (B minor)
 - Unit 6 Progress Check: FRQ Part B, Question 1 (A minor)
 - Unit 8 Progress Check: FRQ Part B, Question 1 (C minor)
- Summative sight singing questions (accessible using the Question Bank search function in AP Classroom):
 - To find all available questions in the Question Bank, search using the following filters:
 - Assessment Purpose and Source: Summative
 - Question Type: FRQ: Sight Singing
 - Question titles list key, clef, and information about meter type. The title will occasionally include information about whether the melody contains a chromatically inflected note.

- Summative minor mode sight singing questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Assessments” tab in the Question Bank):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 8 (D minor)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 9 (F minor)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 8 (E minor)