

**2023**

**AP®**



---

# **AP® Music Theory**

## **Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary**

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 5**

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

**Question 5: Part-writing from figured bass****25 points***One possible 25-point answer (others are possible):*

g: i      V      6      i      iv      i      ii<sup>⁰</sup>      V

**I. Roman Numerals**

Award 1 point for each correct Roman numeral.

**1 point per  
numeral  
(max 7)**

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

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

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

**1 point per  
chord  
(max 6)**

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

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

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

- C.** Award  $\frac{1}{2}$  point each for a correctly realized chord that has exactly one of the following errors:

1. A doubled leading tone, a doubled chordal seventh, or incorrect doubling of a  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord.
2. More than one octave between adjacent upper parts.
3. 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.
1. Two or more errors listed in **II.C.** (e.g., double leading tone and spacing error or two spacing errors), and/or
  2. The correct accidental on the wrong side of a notehead. (For an incorrect accidental on the wrong side of a notehead, see **II.A.1.**)

### III. Voice Leading

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>A.</b> Award 2 points for acceptable voice leading between two correctly realized chords.</p> <p>N.B.: This includes the voice leading from the given chord to the second chord.</p> <p><b>B.</b> If all chords are correctly realized, and there are no voice-leading errors (as described in <b>III.C.</b> and <b>III.D.</b>), but the response has excessive leaps within the upper three voices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Award 12 points for voice leading if there are six or fewer leaps in the three upper voices combined.</li> <li>2. Award 11 points for voice leading if there are more than six leaps in the three upper voices combined.</li> </ol> <p><b>C.</b> Award only 1 point for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in <b>II.A.</b>) with exactly one of the following errors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Uncharacteristic unequal fifths. (See <i>DCVLE</i>, no. 4.)</li> <li>2. Uncharacteristic hidden (covered) or direct octaves or fifths between outer voices. (See <i>DCVLE</i>, nos. 5 and 6.)</li> <li>3. Overlapping voices. (See <i>DCVLE</i>, no. 7.)</li> <li>4. A chordal seventh approached by a descending leap of a fourth or larger.</li> <li>5. The fourth of a cadential <math>\frac{6}{4}</math> (i.e., <math>\hat{1}</math>) approached by a descending leap of a fourth or larger.</li> </ol> <p><b>D.</b> Award 0 points for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in <b>II.A.</b>) if any of the following statements is true:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parallel octaves, fifths, or unisons occur (immediately successive or beat-to-beat), including those by contrary motion. (See <i>DCVLE</i>, nos. 1–3.)</li> <li>2. An uncharacteristic leap occurs (e.g., augmented second, tritone, or more than a fifth).</li> <li>3. A chordal seventh is unresolved or resolved incorrectly. (The voice with the seventh should move down by step if possible. In some cases, such as ii<sup>7</sup> to cadential <math>\frac{6}{4}</math>, the seventh will be retained in the same voice. The seventh may move UP by step only in the case of the i–<math>\text{V}_3^4</math>–i<sup>6</sup> progression.)</li> <li>4. The leading tone in an outer voice is unresolved or resolved incorrectly.</li> <li>5. The 6th or 4th of the cadential <math>\frac{6}{4}</math> chord is unresolved or resolved incorrectly.</li> <li>6. At least one of the chords has more or fewer than four voices (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass).</li> </ol> | <b>2 points per chord connection (12 max)</b> |
|---|---|

7. The suspension is not prepared.
  8. More than one error listed in section III.C. occurs.
- E. Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of an incorrectly realized chord.

#### IV. Scores with Additional Meaning

- 1** This score can be given to a response that has two or more redeeming qualities. (e.g., a correct soprano line throughout; a correctly spelled chord written in the wrong inversion).
- 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

#### V. Scoring Notes

- A. Do not penalize a response that includes correctly used nonchord tones.
- B. An incorrectly used nonchord tone will be considered a voice-leading error.
  1. Award 1 point if the incorrect nonchord tone results in one error listed in III.C.
  2. Award 0 points if the incorrect nonchord tone results in at least one error from III.D. or more than one error from III.C.
- C. Half-point totals round up with one exception: A total score of 24½ rounds down to 24.

**Total for question 5      25 points**

Record points for chord spelling, spacing, and doubling in row 1, for voice leading between chords in row 2, and for Roman numeral analysis in row 3.

One possible 25-point answer (others are possible):

g: I      V      i      iv      i      ii<sup>7</sup>      V

Chord spelling:							
Voice leading:							
Roman numeral:							

## 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	Unequal 5ths	OK	Not OK	Hidden (covered)	Direct
		motion	(d5 to P5)				Overlapping voices

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

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

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

4. Unequal fifths

**d5→P5 (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>06</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):**

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

5. Hidden (or covered) fifths and octaves in outer voices (similar motion to a perfect interval that involves one voice moving by step).

- When the step is in the upper voice, as shown in Ex. 5a: acceptable (no deduction).

- When the leap is in the upper voice, as shown in Ex. 5b: unacceptable (award 1 point only).

6. Direct fifths and octaves in outer voices: unacceptable (award 1 point only).

Definition: Similar motion to a perfect interval that involves a skip in each voice.

N.B.: Many sources equate “hidden” and “direct.”

7. Overlapping voices: unacceptable (award 1 point only).

Definition: Two voices move to a position in which the lower voice is higher than the previous note in the higher voice, or they move to a position where the higher voice is lower than the previous note in the lower voice.

## Question 5

**Write your response to QUESTION 5 on this page.**

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

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

numeral that appropriately indicates harmonic function.

6      6      6      6      6      6  
 $\frac{5}{4}$       6      6      6      6      6

g: i      Vii      vi      iv      vii      ii<sup>o</sup>      I<sup>4+3</sup>



**Question 5**

Write your response to QUESTION 5 on this page.

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

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

g: I    iv    I    iv    I    ii    V

684 765 4392



## Question 5

Write your response to QUESTION 5 on this page.

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

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

g: I V I IV II VII I

afd      bdg      bdg      Cea      dbg

i.	g	b	d
ii <sup>a</sup>	e	e	
III <sup>b</sup>	d	f	
IV <sup>c</sup>	e	g	
V <sup>d</sup>	f	a	
VI <sup>e</sup>	g	b	
VI <sup>f</sup>	a	c	



## Question 5

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

### Overview

This question assessed the following abilities:

- chord spelling, spacing, and doubling rules;
- knowledge of inversions;
- Roman numeral analysis;
- raising the leading tone in minor keys;
- understanding of a half cadence in minor keys;
- understanding of the preparation and resolution of a 4-3 suspension;
- 6/4 chord doubling;
- understanding of the figured bass notation for a raised sixth above the bass (slash mark);
- understanding of 18th century style voice leading practices;
- understanding of minor keys (including the key label before the Roman numeral analysis); and
- writing four parts on a grand staff.

#### **Sample: 5A**

**Score: 22**

This represents a good response. All Roman numerals are correct and were awarded 1 point each. All chords are spelled correctly and were awarded 1 point each. The connection between chord two and chord three contains an uncharacteristic leap in the soprano, and was awarded 0 points. The connection between chord five and chord six contains a hidden fifth and was awarded 1 point. All other voice leading connections are correct and were awarded 2 points each. (Roman numerals: 7; Chord spelling: 6; Voice leading: 9; Total = 22)

#### **Sample: 5B**

**Score: 15**

This represents a fair response. The Roman numeral for chord two is incorrect and was awarded 0 points. All other Roman numerals are correct and were awarded 1 point each. Chords two and seven are spelled incorrectly, and 0 points were awarded. All other chords are spelled correctly and were awarded 1 point each. The connection between chord three and chord four contains a hidden octave and was awarded 1 point. The connection between chord four and chord five is correct and was awarded 2 points. The connection between chord five and chord six is correct and was awarded 2 points. No other voice leading could be considered, because there are no other consecutive chords that are spelled correctly. (Roman numerals: 6; Chord spelling: 4; Voice leading: 5; Total = 15)

### Question 5 (continued)

**Sample: 5C**

**Score: 8**

This represents a poor response. Roman numerals for chords one through five are correct and were awarded 1 point each. Chord three is spelled correctly and was awarded 1 point. Chords four and five are spelled correctly, but both contain a spacing error and were each awarded  $\frac{1}{2}$  point. Chords two, six, and seven are misspelled, so each was awarded 0 points. The connection between chord three and chord four contains a hidden octave and was awarded 1 point. The connection between chord four and chord five contains a parallel octave in the soprano and bass and was awarded 0 points. No other voice leading could be considered, because there are no other consecutive chords that are spelled correctly. (Roman numerals: 5; Chord spelling: 2; Voice leading: 1; Total = 8)