

Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2023 AP® Music Theory Free-Response Questions

• Number of Readers	100			
Music Theory				
• Number of Students Scored	17,834			
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At	
	5	3,531	19.80	
	4	3,012	16.89	
	3	4,288	24.04	
	2	4,299	24.11	
	1	2,704	15.16	
Global Mean	3.02			
Music Theory Aural Subscore				
• Number of Students Scored	17,834			
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	% At	
	5	3,558	19.95	
	4	3,066	17.19	
	3	4,168	23.37	
	2	4,359	24.44	
	1	2,683	15.04	
• Global Mean	3.03			
Music Theory Nonaural Subscore				
Number of Students Scored	17,834			
Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At	
	5	3,588	20.12	
	4	2,955	16.57	
	3	4,198	23.54	
	2	4,390	24.62	
	1	2,703	15.16	
Global Mean	3.02			

The following comments on the 2023 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.

Task: Convert between performed and notated music

Topic: Melodic Dictation

Max Score: 9 Mean Score: 4.88

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- convert an aural melody in treble clef, simple meter, and a major key to traditional music notation;
- notate rhythms in simple meter including beat and division patterns, and the dotted quarter-eighth rhythm;
- hear and notate a primarily stepwise melody, with leaps in the tonic and dominant triads; and
- hear and notate a melody with an octave range.

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 in converting a heard melody into music notation;
- understanding of the topics (major key, treble 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?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Inability to correctly notate rhythms of simple meter melody	Transcribed a heard melody into correct notation of both pitch and rhythm
Inability to correctly notate pitches of a major key melody	Notated pitches successfully in a major key melody

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 students understand the grouping of notes through the beaming of simple meter rhythmic patterns.
- Cover major keys very early in the year, and drill melodic patterns emphasizing functional scale degrees, e.g., 7-1, 1-3-5, 4-3, 5-7-1, etc.

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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> 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: <u>Sight-Singing: Your Key to Success in Melodic Dictation</u> and other publications posted on the <u>AP Music Theory Classroom Resources</u> page.

In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering the melodic dictation free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 4: Free-Response Questions 1 & 2 Guide: Melodic Dictation
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 3: FRQ (Part A, Question 1/2: Melodic Dictation)

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
 - o 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 Question:
 - 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.

- Summative free-response major mode melodic dictation questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the "Practice Exams" tab in the Course Resources):
 - o 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 1 (B-flat major, bass, simple meter)
 - o 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 1 (E major, treble, compound meter)
 - o 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 1 (E-flat major, bass, simple meter)

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Melodic Dictation

Max Score: 9 Mean Score: 3.33

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- convert an aural melody in bass clef, compound meter, and a melodic minor key to standard musical notation;
- notate rhythms in compound meter with division and subdivision patterns, including the dotted eighth-sixteenth-eighth and dotted eighth-three sixteenth rhythms;
- hear and notate the chromatic neighbor tone; and
- hear and differentiate between melodic leaps 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 in converting a heard melody into music notation;
- basic understanding of the topics (minor scale, chromatic alteration, bass clef, compound meter)
 through moderately correct notation; and
- moderate ability to recognize diatonic pitch patterns in a minor 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?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Inability to correctly notate rhythms of compound meter	Transcribed a heard melody into correct notation of both pitch and rhythm
Inability to correctly notate pitches of a melodic minor melody	Transcribed the melody successfully in melodic minor
Inability to differentiate whole steps and half steps, especially in identifying the chromatic neighbor tone (raised fourth scale degree)	Correctly notated the chromatic neighbor tone

Based on your experience at the AP^{\otimes} 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, dotted eighth-sixteenth-eighth, dotted eighth-three sixteenth, and dotted quarter notes. 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; introduce chromatic solfege early in the year. Help students differentiate between whole steps and half steps.
- Work on helping students become proficient with notation from the very beginning of the year. Help students understand the beaming/grouping of compound meter.
- Emphasize melodic and harmonic chromatic alterations later in the year, especially chromatic passing 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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> 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: <u>Sight-Singing: Your Key to Success in Melodic Dictation</u> and other publications posted on the <u>AP Music Theory Classroom Resources</u> page.

In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering the melodic dictation free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 4: Free-Response Questions 1 & 2 Guide: Melodic Dictation
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 3: FRQ (Part A, Question 1/2: Melodic Dictation)

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 Question:
 - Unit 2: Melodic Dictation in G Minor
 - o Full-length Melodic Dictation Topic Questions:
 - Unit 6: Melodic Dictation in G Minor
 - Unit 8: Melodic Dictation in C Minor
 - Half-length Melodic Dictation Progress Check Question:
 - Unit 2 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (D Minor)
 - o 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
 - o Question titles show key, clef, and meter type.
- Summative free-response minor mode melodic dictation questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the "Practice Exams" tab in the Course Resources):
 - o 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 2 (E minor, treble, compound meter)
 - o 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 2 (C minor, bass, simple meter)
 - o 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 2 (D minor, treble, compound meter)

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Harmonic Dictation

Max Score: 24 Mean Score: 13.75

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students':

- ability to aurally distinguish the bass and soprano lines of a four-voice harmonic progression;
- knowledge of common chord progressions;
- notation skills;
- knowledge of and ability to differentiate cadences;
- knowledge of and ability to hear chord inversions; and
- ability to hear differing chord qualities.

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:

- recognition of tonic and dominant chords;
- knowledge of the cadential 6/4 chord;
- · knowledge of raising the leading tone in the dominant chord in a minor key; and
- recognition of a deceptive chord progression.

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Notation problems	Good notation practices (legible, stems on correct side of notehead, etc.)
Lack of knowledge of common chord progressions	Roman numerals that follow common practice harmonic norms
Difficulty hearing triad quality and inversion	Correctly labeled iv6/4, ii ^{o6} , and V ⁷ chords
Difficulty hearing bass line skips	Correctly notated leaps in the bass line

Based on your experience at the AP^{\otimes} 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.
- Continuously teach the proper resolution of the V⁷ chord, including:
 - o Avoiding doubling the leading tone
 - Resolving the leading tone up by step
 - Resolving the chordal seventh down by step
 - o Raising the leading tone in minor
- Teach the function of 6/4 chords (cadential, passing, and pedal) and demonstrate the proper voice leading.
- Teach proper case and notation of Roman numerals, distinguish between IV (iv) and vi (VI).
- Practice distinguishing predominant chords (iv and ii chords).
- Practice differentiating between V and V⁷ chords.
- Demonstrate examples that include a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) with the cadential 6/4.
- Drill music notation/calligraphy in general:
 - Be attentive to the size of note heads
 - Align the notation with the provided blanks
 - Write legibly

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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> 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 <u>Building AP Music Theory Skills from the Ground Up</u> (p. 20) and other publications posted on the <u>AP Music Theory Classroom Resources</u> page.

In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering the harmonic dictation free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 5: Free-Response Questions 3 & 4 Guide: Harmonic Dictation
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 4: FRQ (Part A, Question 3/4: Harmonic Dictation)

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):
 - Harmonic Dictation Topic Questions:
 - Harmonic Dictation in A Minor
 - Harmonic Dictation in C Minor
 - o 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 "Practice Exams" tab in the Course Resources):
 - o 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 4 (B minor, secondary dominant)
 - o 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 4 (E minor, secondary dominant, DC)
 - o 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 3 (G minor, cadential six-four)

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Harmonic Dictation

Max Score: 24 Mean Score: 11.16

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students':

- ability to aurally distinguish the bass and soprano lines of a four-voice harmonic progression;
- knowledge of common chord progressions;
- notation skills;
- knowledge of cadences;
- · knowledge of chord quality and inversions; and
- knowledge of secondary function 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 standard chord progressions in a major key;
- recognition of tonic and dominant chords; and
- knowledge of deceptive motion (V-vi).

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Notation problems	Good notation practices (legible, stems on correct side of notehead, etc.)
Lack of knowledge of common chord progressions	Roman numerals that follow common practice harmonic norms
Difficulty hearing secondary dominant chords	Correctly labeled the V4/2 of ii chord
Difficulty hearing chord inversions	Correctly notated chord inversions

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.
- Teach the structure and function of secondary dominant chords (with inversions), including V/V, V/IV, V/ii, and V/vi.

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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> 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 <u>Building AP Music Theory Skills from the Ground Up</u> (p. 20) and other publications posted on the <u>AP Music Theory Classroom Resources</u> page.

In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering the harmonic dictation free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 5: Free-Response Questions 3 & 4 Guide: Harmonic Dictation
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 4: FRQ (Part A, Question 3/4: Harmonic Dictation)

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 major mode (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - o Harmonic Dictation Topic Question:
 - Harmonic Dictation in B-flat Major
 - o Half-length Harmonic Dictation Progress Check Question:
 - Unit 3 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (B-flat Major)
 - o Full-length Harmonic Dictation Progress Check Question:
 - Unit 5 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (A Major)
- 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 major mode harmonic dictation questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the "Assessments" tab in the Question Bank):
 - o 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 3 (E-flat major, deceptive progression)
 - o 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 3 (A major, predominant 7th)
 - o 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 4 (A major, secondary dominant)

Task: Complete Based on Cues

Topic: Part writing from a Figured Bass

Max Score: 25 Mean Score: 14.47

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

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.

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, as 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 ability in employing smooth voice leading procedures.

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Poor voice-leading in chord connections	Correct voice-leading connections
Lack of understanding of motion into and out of the suspension	Correct preparation and resolution of the suspension
Doubled leading tone in chord 2	Correct doubling of chords
Missing chord tones in inverted chords (V6/4, i ⁶ , ii ^o 6/5)	Inverted chords that have all chord tones present
Incorrect resolution of chordal sevenths	Correct resolution of chordal sevenths
Incorrect voice-leading and motion of the passing 6/4 chord (chord 2)	Proper motion of the passing 6/4 chord
Misspelling the V chord in minor	Raised leading tone in the V chord in minor
Many leaps exceeding a fourth or fifth in the upper voice, resulting in poor voice leading	Avoided large leaps in the upper voices
Illegible writing on the staff	Legible notation on the staff, including situations requiring two notes a second apart on the staff

Based on your experience at the AP^{\otimes} Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Emphasize chord spelling in these exercises; misspelling chords negates any consideration of voice leading, leading to poor scores.
- Sing your part-writing answers in class, have students sing and/or mentally auralize their part-writing solutions to determine the musicality of their solutions.
- Teach the correct spelling and voice-leading for the passing 6/4 chord.

- Emphasize that suspensions have three parts: the preparation, the suspension, and the resolution.
- Teach figured bass as intervals above a bass, then as analytic labels for chord inversions and motions.
- Teach Roman numerals, their proper case and notation, and distinguish the difference between IV (iv) and vi (VI). Keep in mind that the iii chord is extremely rare and not typically used.
- Music notation/calligraphy in general (have the students routinely practice by hand):
 - Be attentive to the size of note heads
 - Write legibly
 - Teach students how to write accidentals legibly and to the left of the note head.
- Ensure that voice leading is done throughout the year, not just as an isolated chapter or unit.

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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> 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: <u>Thinking Horizontally: Learning Part Writing and Figured Bass Through Analysis</u> (p. 140) and other publications posted on the <u>AP Music Theory Classroom Resources page</u>.

In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering figured bass free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 6: Question 5 Guide: Part Writing from Figured Bass
- 2022 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 5: Part Writing: An Aural Approach
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 5: FRQ (Part A, Question 5: Part-Writing from Figured Bass)

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):
 - o 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):
 - o 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 "Practice Exam" tab in Course Resources):
 - o 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (A minor, 3rd inversion 7th chord)
 - o 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (A minor, 2nd inversion viio7)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (D minor, predominant 7th, viio7)
 https://musictheoryoutreach.wordpress.com/

Task: Complete Based on Cues

Topic: Part writing from Roman numerals and figures

Max Score: 18 Mean Score: 8.94

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assesses 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 and their inversions;
- recognition of the Roman numeral for a secondary dominant and ability to write it properly;
- understanding of when to use accidentals and how to notate them;
- 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;
- 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?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Incorrect use of accidentals	Included the correct chromatically altered pitch on the secondary dominant
Inattention to counterpoint	Used contrary motion between the bass and upper voices from chord 5 to chord 6
Unfamiliarity with secondary dominants	Contained a single chord at the end of measure 1 that included a chromatically altered pitch
Incorrect tendency tone resolution	Resolved leading tones and secondary leading tones up by step and resolved sevenths down by step
Incorrect approach to a chordal seventh	Approached the chordal seventh by step
Issues with chord spacing, particularly between the inner voices	Did not exceed an octave between adjacent upper voices
Confusion regarding the figure 6/5	Spelled seventh chords in first inversion
Incomplete chord spelling	Did not omit any notes from inverted chords
Inappropriate voice leading	Used stepwise motion and small consonant leaps

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:

- Have students consider in the abstract which accidentals are expected and which are unexpected:
 - o There will surely be at least one accidental in the secondary function chord
 - o In a minor key, we expect the leading tone to be raised in all V and vii° chords
 - Any other accidentals are extremely unlikely
- Remind students to check the Roman numerals and Arabic figures carefully:
 - o 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

- o Make sure the bass is consistent with the figures
- 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 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
 - o 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)
 - o It is not unusual to need ledger lines for the inner voices
 - o 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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing part writing skills. Also see "Instructional Approaches" in the back of the CED, specifically: Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 4, pp. 194–195.

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

In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering Roman numeral realization free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 7: Question 6 Guide: Part Writing from Roman Numerals
- 2022 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 5: Part Writing: An Aural Approach
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 6: FRQ (Part A, Question 6: Part Writing from Roman Numerals)

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 numerals 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):
 - o 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 "Practice Exam" tab in Course Resources):
 - o 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 6 (A-flat major, secondary dominant of vi)
 - o 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 6 (B-flat major, secondary dominant, V8-7)
 - o 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 6 (G major, secondary dominant, deceptive cadence)

Task: Complete Based on Cues **Topic:** Harmonizing a Melody

Max Score: 9 Mean Score: 4.47

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 were half cadences at the end of the second and third phrases, and a perfect authentic cadence at the end.);
- ability to compose a bass line that implied root position chords or chords in inversion (yielding a smoother bass line);
- usage of appropriate embellishing tones. There were many opportunities for embellishing notes in the bass (unaccented neighbor and passing tones);
- knowledge of voice leading, including appropriate resolution of chordal sevenths and leading tones, as well as acceptable and unacceptable voice-leading note-to-note intervals;
- ability to write Roman and Arabic numerals as correctly representing chords; and
- ability to visualize good chord progressions for the given the melody.

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 how to add 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?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Incorrect use of embellishments	Used unaccented passing and neighbor tones and avoided escape tones, appoggiaturas, and dissonant chordal skips
Unfamiliarity with secondary dominants	Used proper secondary dominant notation (e.g., V/V) at the cadence in phrase 2
Incorrect tendency tone resolution	Resolved leading tones up by step and chordal sevenths down by step
Improper use of the 6/4 chord	Correctly used pedal, passing, and/or cadential 6/4 chords
Doubling of tendency tones	Used correct doubling
Poor chords successions, including retrogressions (V-IV, V-ii, ii-I)	Used good progressions
• Poor chord choices (iii, vi ⁶ , I ⁷ , etc.)	Used common practice chord spellings.

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
- Advise students to use 6/4 chords sparingly, if at all, and without creating new voice-leading errors
- Emphasize avoiding parallel fifths and octaves
- Remind students to be sure that the bass note matches the bass implied by the Roman numeral and inversion
- Guide the students in resolving tendency tones
- Guide the students in good chord successions (i.e., successions that follow the phrase model, or tonic-predominant-dominant-tonic model of chord progression)

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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> to find suggestions for introducing, practicing, and assessing part writing skills. Also see "Instructional Approaches" in the back of the CED, specifically: Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 4, pp. 194–195.

Also see: <u>Interpreting and Harmonizing Melodies: Some Formulas for Success</u> (p. 32) and other publications posted on the <u>AP Music Theory Classroom Resources page</u>.

In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering melody harmonization free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 8: Simplifying Question 7: Harmonization of a Melody
- 2022 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 7: Demystifying FRQ 7: Making the Complex Simple
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 7: FRQ (Part A, Question 7: Harmonization of a Melody)

AP Classroom contains several free-response melody harmonization 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
 - o 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)
 - o 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 and 4.
- Summative free-response part writing from Roman numerals questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the "Practice Exam" tab in Course Resources):
 - o 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 7 (G Major)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 7 (G Major)
 - o 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: 5.06

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- recognize notes in the bass clef;
- accurately perform simple meter with rhythms on the beat and division level;
- sing in the major mode;
- accurately sing a diatonic melody, with whole steps, half steps, and leaps in the tonic and dominant triads; and
- establish and maintain the tonic pitch throughout.

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:

- proficiency in singing a major melody in simple meter, as 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?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Inability to identify tonality by looking at the key/starting pitch or sing in a major key	Ability to sing a major scale
Inability to sing triadic leaps	Ability to sing the melody

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:
 - o 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.)
- o 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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> 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: <u>Teaching Sight Singing</u> and <u>Sight Singing</u>: <u>A Strategy for the Non-Singer and the Underprepared Student</u> (p. 16) and other publications posted on the <u>AP Music Theory Classroom Resources page</u>. In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering sight singing free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 1: Overview of the Exam & Strategies for Sight Singing
- 2022 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 3: Ideas and Strategies for Sight Singing
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 8: FRQ (Part B: Sight-Singing)

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):
 - o 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 "Practice Exams" tab in Course Resources):
 - o 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 9 (B-flat major)
 - o 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 8 (D major)
 - o 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: 3.57

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students':

- ability to perform stepwise contours and common skips and leaps such as 3rds, P4s, and P5s;
- ability to apply music reading skills to melodic and rhythmic performance at sight;
- knowledge of treble clef, key signature, and accidentals;
- ability to sing in the minor mode;
- treatment of leading tone and chromatic alterations in minor;
- ability to maintain the same compound duple meter throughout their performance;
- ability to sing with a steady tempo; and
- retention of tonic throughout their performance.

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:

- some difficulty navigating the minor key and maintaining good intonation between half steps and whole steps in segments 2, 4-5, and 7, as well as in leaps within segment 3;
- ability to sing the major second in segment 1, but some students may have sung the rhythm incorrectly;
- some difficulty in singing in compound meter;
- difficulty performing in the correct mode (Many students sang the melody in the major mode);
- difficulty with the leap to segment 7;
- ability to begin correctly and regain tonic at the end, but with intervening errors (Many students strayed from the given melody by the end of m. 3, sang an incorrect tonic in segment 4, but regained tonic at the end);
- difficulty singing the pitches of the melody (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?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
Inability to sing correct rhythms and note durations, including sustaining the last note of the prompt to full durational value	Last note held for full value
Inability to vocalize, and resorting to clapping or tapping the response	Ability to sing the melody
Inability to recognize and sing in melodic minor	Ability to 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 <u>AP Music Theory Course and Exam Description</u> 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: <u>Teaching Sight Singing</u> and <u>Sight Singing</u>: <u>A Strategy for the Non-Singer and the Underprepared Student</u> (p. 16) and other publications posted on the <u>AP Music Theory Classroom Resources page</u>.

In the "Review" tab of Course Resources in AP Classroom, one can find videos on strategies for answering sight singing free-response questions:

- 2021 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 1: Overview of the Exam & Strategies for Sight Singing
- 2022 AP Exam On-Demand Review Session 3: Ideas and Strategies for Sight Singing
- 2023 AP Exam On-Demand Review, Practice Session 8: FRQ (Part B: Sight Singing)

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 in 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):
 - o 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 "Practice Exams" tab in Course Resources):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 8 (D minor)
 - o 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 9 (F minor)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 8 (E minor)