



Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2024 AP[®] Music Theory Free-Response Questions

• Number of Readers	104		
Music Theory			
• Number of Students Scored	19,045		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	3,625	19.0
	4	3,336	17.5
	3	4,503	23.6
	2	4,821	25.3
	1	2,760	14.5
• Global Mean	3.01		
Music Theory Aural Subscore			
• Number of Students Scored	19,045		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	3,675	19.3
	4	3,236	17.0
	3	4,708	24.7
	2	4,636	24.3
	1	2,790	14.6
• Global Mean	3.02		
Music Theory Nonaural Subscore			
Number of Students Scored	19,045		
Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	3,736	19.6
	4	3,303	17.3
	3	4,365	22.9
	2	4,943	26.0
	1	2,698	14.2
• 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 2024 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 in D major, bass clef, simple meter

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 4.41

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 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 skill(s) required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate ability in converting a heard melody into correct music notation;
- understanding of the topics (major key, bass clef, simple meter) through moderately correct notation;
- moderate understanding of rhythm patterns consisting of quarter notes and eighth notes;
- limited difficulty with pitch and rhythm as demonstrated by common errors of notation; and
- a diatonic melody that highlighted the ability to understand conjunct and disjunct motion.

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 distinguish between steps and skips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to hear and correctly notate pitches of a diatonic melody in a major key
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to feel pulse of the melody in order to correctly identify rhythmic patterns and difficulty in metrically aligning pitches using correct music notation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to hear and correctly notate rhythms in simple meter

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

- Practice correct music notation (placement on the staff, stems and beams, accidentals on left side of notehead, etc.).
- Expose students to multiple timbres in dictation, not just piano.
- Practice writing and listening to melodies using different clefs.
- Low scoring students leaned more toward identifying pitch over rhythm, so practice more on rhythm patterns.
- Work on short term musical memory to help students prepare for only three hearings of the melody with limited time between each hearing.
- Practice hearing and notating dotted rhythms similar to the dotted rhythm in this melody (having a dotted rhythm midway through the prompt, with a skip on the dominant, often derailed student success).

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.

In the "Review" tab of the Course Guide 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)
- 2024 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 **major mode melodic dictation questions in bass clef, simple meter** (Topic Questions are searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions are accessible from the Unit tabs in the AP Classroom Course Guide):
 - Half-length Melodic Dictation Topic Questions:
 - Unit 1: Melodic dictation in E Major
 - Half-length Melodic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 1 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (B-flat Major)
 - Full-length Melodic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 8 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (A Major)

- Summative free-response **major mode melodic dictation questions in bass clef, simple meter** (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:
 - B-flat major melodic dictation – bass, common time
 - D major melodic dictation – bass, simple meter
 - E-flat major melodic dictation – bass, simple
- Summative free-response **major mode melodic dictation questions in bass clef, simple meter** on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exams” tab in the Course Guide):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 1 (B-flat major, bass, simple meter)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 1 (E-flat major, bass, simple meter)

Question 2

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Melodic Dictation in G minor, treble clef, compound meter

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 2.79

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- convert an aural melody which uses the melodic minor key, compound meter, and light chromaticism to standard musical notation;
- notate rhythms in compound meter with division and subdivision elements;
- hear and notate the tonicized dominant;
- hear the raised sixth and seventh scale degrees of the melodic minor; and
- hear and differentiate between conjunct and disjunct melodic movement.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate to poor ability in converting an aural melody into music notation,
- moderate to poor understanding of the melodic minor scale, chromatic tonicization, and compound meter notation, and
- moderate to poor understanding of 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 rhythms of duple compound meter correctly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transcribing an aural melody into correct notation of pitch and rhythm.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to notate pitches of a melodic minor melody correctly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transcribing a melody successfully in melodic minor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to differentiate whole steps and half steps, especially in identifying the raised fourth, sixth, and seventh scale degrees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct notation of the chromatic raised fourth as well as the melodic minor raised sixth and seventh scale degrees.

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

- Use structured rhythmic reading practice with 6/8 metric patterns.
- Have students listen to and notate the rhythm of melodies with correct beaming notation.
- Introduce daily chromatic solfege for the minor key to instruction early and often in the school year.

- Help students to discern whole steps and half steps.
- Inform students of the need to practice melodic dictation outside of the class period.
- Emphasize melodic and harmonic chromatic alterations for the minor key in melodic training.

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.

In the “Review” tab of the Course Guide 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)
- 2024 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 **minor mode melodic dictation questions in treble clef, compound meter** (Topic Questions are searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions are accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Full-length Melodic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 3 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (A Minor)
- Summative free-response **minor mode melodic dictation questions in treble clef, compound meter** (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:
 - B minor melodic dictation – treble, compound met
 - C minor melodic dictation – treble, six-eight time
 - D minor melodic dictation – treble, compound
 - E minor melodic dictation – treble, compound
 - G minor melodic dictation – treble, compound
- Summative free-response **minor mode melodic dictation questions in treble clef, compound meter** on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exams” tab in the Course Guide):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 2 (E minor, treble, compound meter)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 2 (D minor, treble, compound meter)

Question 3

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Harmonic Dictation in A-flat major

Max Score: 24

Mean Score: 12.19

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- hear and notate outer voices and identify chord function and qualities in a four-part chorale texture.
- specifically, the question expected the students to demonstrate:
 - the ability to aurally distinguish the bass and soprano lines of a four-voice harmonic progression;
 - knowledge of common diatonic chord progressions;
 - notation skills;
 - knowledge of and ability to differentiate cadences; and
 - knowledge of and ability of hear chord qualities and inversions.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Students demonstrated:

- recognition of tonic, dominant, and predominant chords;
- recognition of a deceptive motion (V-vi) in a progression;
- recognition of a half cadence

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"> • When the leading tone is in the bass, a root position vii triad is unlikely to appear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students chose a V6/5 chord when the leading tone appeared in the bass
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notation problems that made the intended note unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legible notation on lines and spaces that were clear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge of common chord progressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roman numerals that follow common harmonic norms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty hearing predominant chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctly labeling IV and ii⁶ chords

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

- Have students engage in aural skill activities every class period.
- Teach proper case and notation of Roman numerals in major and minor keys.
- Practice differentiating between V and V⁷ chords.
- Practice differentiating between IV and ii⁶ chords.
- Encourage students to listen to the bass line.
- Drill music notation in general, preferably on AP-sized staff paper. There should be a point where computer notation is put on hold to gain practice with notation manuscript:
 - Be attentive to the size of note heads
 - Align the notation with the provided blanks
 - Write Roman numerals 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 [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.

In the "Review" tab of the Course Guide 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)
- 2024 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 **major mode harmonic dictation questions** (Topic Questions are searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions are accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Harmonic Dictation Topic Question:
 - Unit 3: Harmonic Dictation in B-flat Major
 - Half-length Harmonic Dictation Progress Check Question:
 - Unit 3 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (B-flat Major)
 - Full-length Harmonic Dictation Progress Check Question:
 - Unit 5 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 1 (A Major)

- Summative free-response **major mode 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:
 - A major harmonic dictation – authentic cadence
 - B-flat major harmonic dictation – passing six-four
 - E major harmonic dictation – authentic cadence
- Summative free-response **major mode harmonic dictation questions** on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exams” tab in the Course Guide):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 3 (E-flat major, deceptive progression)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 3 (A major, predominant 7th)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 4 (A major, secondary dominant)

Question 4

Task: Convert Between Performed and Notated Music

Topic: Harmonic Dictation in A minor

Max Score: 24

Mean Score: 9.56

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- hear and notate the outer voices and Roman numeral analysis of a chord progression.
- specifically, the question expected students to demonstrate:
 - knowledge of secondary chords;
 - knowledge of common chord progressions;
 - traditional music notation skills;
 - knowledge of chord qualities and inversions;
 - ability to notate soprano and bass melodic lines; and
 - knowledge of cadences.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Students showed:

- a moderate understanding of the harmonic progressions;
- a strong understanding of the melodic movement in soprano and bass;
- knowledge of common perfect authentic cadential progressions; and
- moderate understanding of secondary harmonies

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">• Lack of understanding of secondary harmonies: incorrect placement of secondary chord in the progression, incorrect chord choice, incorrect inversion symbol	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correctly notated V6 of iv chord
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of notational skills: accidentals on the wrong side of the pitch, noteheads that are unreadable, illegible Roman numerals and Arabic figures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good notation: accidentals on the correct side of the note, legible manuscript, noteheads that are the correct size

- Difficulty hearing soprano and bass melodic lines: inability to notate skips in the soprano, inability to hear the chromatic movement in bass, problems hearing the final pitches

- Good notation of soprano and bass lines; ability to hear the leaps in the soprano; ability to notate the final tonic pitches in both parts

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

- Spend time listening to and notating common chord progressions.
- Spend time listening to and notating cadences.
- Practice identifying and remembering melodic contour with students.
- Practice soprano and bass line dictation.
- Teach the function of secondary chords in root position and inversion.
- Practice aural skills daily.

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.

In the "Review" tab of the Course Guide 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)
- 2024 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 **minor mode harmonic dictation questions** (Topic Questions searchable in Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions accessible from the Unit tabs):
 - Harmonic Dictation Topic Questions:
 - Unit 3: Harmonic Dictation in A Minor
 - Unit 5: Harmonic Dictation in C Minor
 - Harmonic Dictation Progress Check Questions:
 - Unit 3 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (A Minor)
 - Unit 7 Progress Check: FRQ Part A, Question 2 (G Minor)

- Summative free-response **minor mode 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:
 - A minor harmonic dictation – secondary dominant
 - B minor harmonic dictation – secondary dominant
 - F minor harmonic dictation – secondary dom, HC
- Summative free-response **minor mode harmonic dictation questions** on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exams” tab in the Course Guide):
 - 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 5

Task: Complete notation based on cues

Topic: Part writing from figured bass

Max Score: 25

Mean Score: 15.44

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The responses to this question were expected to demonstrate:

- principles of voice leading (including the effectiveness of using contrary motion)
- understanding and interpreting figured bass symbols: the ability to identify roots of chords and spell out chords of variable difficulty based on figures and bass line
 - In other words, understanding of simultaneously realizing vertical and horizontal notation
- more specifically, concepts and skills that were expected to be demonstrated include:
 - writing and resolving a 4-3 suspension
 - proper approach to and resolution of chordal 7ths
 - proper doubling of a 6/4 chord
 - raising and proper handling of the leading tone in minor keys

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

The question was appropriately challenging and represented a “very concise test of advanced diatonic harmony” in the words of one reader. Besides the welcome change to the question being in triple meter, the question allowed students to demonstrate root knowledge (i.e., through the labeling of Roman numerals), an ability to interpret notes above the given bass (i.e., chord spelling), and use common voice leading formulas (e.g., voice exchange) in a way that set them up for success:

- The progression began i - V - i and encouraged contrary motion.
- Less voice crossing was observed than in past years, which was attributed at least in part to students understanding that they could double the inner voices (frequently on chord 4, the iv6, but elsewhere, too).
- The given bass note in chord 2 was the leading tone (E#), reminding students that the leading tone should be raised later in the progression (but, to the students’ benefit, only once—in chord 7). Placed at the end of the progression, this meant that students likely lost fewer points if they didn’t add the accidental than it would have if that chord requiring the raised leading tone occurred earlier in the phrase.
- The question required responses that demonstrated just how far students got into the curriculum.
 - The progression seemed to move in an order that mirrored the progression of topics in the curriculum (7th chord and suspension near the end; i - V - i at the beginning, 6/4 chord in the middle).

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"> • Knowledge of what a “4-#” suspension is (preparing and resolving) in chord 7, and failing to raise the leading tone even when they included proper 4-3 motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses that could correctly realize the suspension with preparation, suspension, and resolution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not avoiding parallel octaves, especially coming in to the 6/4 chord (which may have been due to misunderstanding of doubling on 6/4 chords) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses that realized chords with contrary motion, and followed the figures given
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of not doubling the leading tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses that realized the leading tone is a sensitive pitch and should not be doubled

Other frequent (though less common) student misconceptions/gaps in knowledge observed in the responses included:

- Writing inverted chords that were incomplete
- Misunderstanding of 7th chord inversions
- Many students wrote an opening melody of F# - E natural - F# (similar to the error of doubling the leading tone issue, but misspelled)
- Adding a secondary dominant
- A lack of comfort in writing Roman numerals (e.g., vi instead of iv)
- Other errors around the suspension (e.g., writing F# to F double sharp, failing to recognize the dash as indication of a suspension)
- Uncharacteristic leaps: descending leaps into the chordal 7th, descending leaps into the 4th of the 6/4 chord, simultaneous leaps creating parallel fifths and octaves

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

- Remind students to avoid certain types of parallel motion
- In many instances Roman numerals seemed like an afterthought. Have students write the Roman numerals first because it informs them what to expect harmonically
 - On the other hand, there’s a different pedagogical tradition that teaches to deal with pitches before Roman numerals in figured bass, so we shouldn’t prioritize one over the other. Teachers might present both methods of understanding so students are aware of both and how they can work hand in hand.
- Teach that in figured bass notation, a sharp alone means to raise the third
- Students seem to have been taught to expect an authentic cadence; teach and practice cadences, so they know what other chords might be at the end besides V-i

- More work on 6/4 chords: proper doubling, proper approach to the (dissonant) 4th
 - Teach the difference between cadential 6/4 and passing 6/4, teach the difference between cadential 6/4 notation and the suspension notation that was included in this question
- Instruct students not to use nonchord tones unless specified (as per the instructions)
- Teach and encourage standard music notation conventions (placement of accidentals, stem placement and direction, etc.) and clear, legible note placement on the line or space intended

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 other publications posted on the [AP Music Theory Classroom Resources page](#).

In the “Review” tab of the Course Guide 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)
- 2024 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):
 - 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 **minor mode 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.
 - B minor figured bass – 4–3 suspension
 - C minor figured bass – 4–3 sus, cad six-four
 - F-sharp minor figured bass – cadential six-four

- Summative free-response figured bass questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exam” tab in Course Guide):
 - 2008 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (A minor, 3rd inversion 7th chord)
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (A minor, 2nd inversion viio7)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 5 (D minor, predominant 7th, viio7)

Question 6

Task: Complete notation based on cues

Topic: Part writing from Roman numerals and figures

Max Score: 18

Mean Score: 9.03

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The question tested students' knowledge of eighteenth-century chorale-style voice-leading.

Skills included:

- appropriate interpretation of Roman numerals and figures;
- writing and resolving secondary dominants;
- resolving tendency tones;
- triads vs. seventh chords;
- correct chord spelling; and
- understanding inverted chords.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

There was a wide range of responses, appropriately reflecting a wide range of knowledge.

Students who performed well could:

- Recognize and accurately spell chords required by the Roman numerals, which included:
 - the symbol for a secondary dominant chord,
 - the symbols for seventh chords,
 - the symbols for root position and inverted triads.
- Write the four voices with smooth voice leading, minimizing leaps and progressing mostly in stepwise motion.

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

Commonly misunderstood concepts included:

- Knowledge of correct spelling of secondary dominants (primarily the use of correct accidentals)
- Knowledge of leading-tone chords: spelling (especially knowing that the diatonic leading-tone triad is diminished), the distinction between diminished triads and diminished seventh chords, and typical voice-leading patterns associated with vii^{b6}
- Awareness of inversions
- Correct resolution of sevenths
- Good spacing (in particular, many students write two pairs of voices with a large gap between them)
- Appropriate use of an incomplete V^7 chord, and the need for inverted chords to be complete
- The important distinction between the chordal seventh and scale-degree 7
- The usual practice of smooth voice leading (avoiding unnecessary leaps)
- Notation skills, such as writing the accidental on the correct side of the notehead

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary dominant with no accidentals, or with incorrect accidentals (often D#) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary dominant with the correct accidental (G#)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a sharp to the right of the G in the secondary dominant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a sharp to the left of the G in the secondary dominant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding flats to the vii^{o6} chord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using only diatonic notes for the vii^{o6} chord
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including leaps in the opening three chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing smooth counterpoint in the opening three chords
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing I⁶ with a G in the bass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing I⁶ with a B in the bass
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not resolving chordal sevenths (either leaping away or moving up by step) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolving chordal sevenths down by step
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omitting notes from inverted chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including all chord members in inverted chords

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

- Teach multi-chord part-writing formulas rather than employing a chord-by-chord approach (gestures rather than individual notes, analogous to reading words rather than letters).
- Focus on common opening and closing gestures.
- Practice resolving dominant seventh chords, both in root-position and in inversion.
- Clarify when incomplete chords are typical, what is likely to be doubled under those circumstances, and why.
- Look at musical literature and point out how composers use incomplete chords at cadences.
- Advise students not to add sevenths when a symbol indicates a triad.
- Emphasize tendency tone resolution and be clear about situations in which exceptions are acceptable.
- Prioritize correct chord spelling.
- Stress the importance of good musical notation. (Note: music notation software enables students to not learn many basic elements of correct notation.)
- Make sure students realize that 4-3 in the figures is expected to be realized as a suspension (vs. 4/3 as a second inversion seventh chord).

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. Also see “Instructional Approaches” in the back of the CED, specifically: Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 4, pp. 194–195.

Videos on strategies for answering part writing from Roman numerals free-response questions are available in AP Classroom, under the “Review” tab of the Course Guide section:

- 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)
- 2024 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 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:
 - A-flat major part writing – second dom, vii dim6
 - B-flat major part writing – secondary dom, V8-7
 - E major part writing – secondary dominant
- Summative free-response **part writing from Roman numerals questions** on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exams” tab in Course Guide):
 - 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 notation based on cues

Topic: Harmonizing a Melody in E-flat Major

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 4.52

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

- Students were expected to demonstrate the ability to compose a bass line under a provided melody, demonstrating knowledge of good soprano-bass counterpoint and an understanding of traditional harmonic progressions that matched the bass line and melody.
 - Students were expected to compose appropriate cadences at the end of each phrase.
 - Students were expected to demonstrate knowledge of tonicization, in this case of the V chord.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

- The question emphasizes knowledge of soprano-bass counterpoint, and many of the low scores demonstrated difficulty with this concept.
- This year's melody contained some discriminating aspects that separated very good responses from others, such as avoiding a direct octave in phrase 3.
- The question always contains a reference to a secondary dominant; some student responses to Phrase 2 did not demonstrate knowledge of how to tonicize V.
- Many student responses contained inappropriate harmonic progressions for the style.

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"> • Inappropriate use of iii chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid iii, as it is tricky to employ correctly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonally inappropriate 6/4 chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid 6/4 chords altogether, or employ them in properly executed passing, pedal, or cadential contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flawed PACs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate appropriate bass line and Roman numerals at the PAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to recognize/execute the tonicization of V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate appropriate bass line and Roman numerals to tonicize V
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many root position triads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of triads and awareness of the counterpoint between outer voices

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor harmonic progressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of appropriate chord progressions for the style
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor cadences, including Plagal and IACs at the final cadence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of appropriate cadences for this exercise

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

- When teaching part writing, start with the outer voice framework, then add the inner voices in the order of your teaching.
- Make sure to cover cadences in depth, especially authentic and half cadences, including secondary dominant chords.
- Just a few principles of counterpoint can go a long way; e.g., resolve leading tones and chordal sevenths. P4ths in the outer voices can only be used for appropriate 6/4 chords.
- Teach and review appropriate harmonic progressions, as covered in most current textbooks.

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. Also see “Instructional Approaches” in the back of the CED, specifically: Developing Course Skills, Skill Category 4, pp. 194–195.

Videos on strategies for answering melody harmonization free-response questions are available in AP Classroom, under the “Review” tab of the Course Guide section:

- 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)
- 2024 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 a melody questions** (Topic Questions are searchable in the Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions are 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 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 a 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:
 - E major compose bass line
 - F major compose bass line – 2-2-1 final cadence
 - G major compose bass line – 3-sharp4-5 cadence
- Summative free-response **harmonization of a melody questions** on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exam” tab in the Course Guide):
 - 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 notated and performed music

Topic: Sing a notated melody in a major key and a simple quadruple meter

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 5.34

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- convert a notated melody in bass clef, simple quadruple meter, and a major key into an aural performance;
- determine major tonality based on the notated key signature, clef, and starting pitch;
- recognize and perform common melodic patterns, such as diatonic steps and leaps;
- recognize and perform common rhythmic patterns, such as dotted quarter-eighth and quarter-eighth combinations;
- maintain steady tempo, tonal center, and major tonality in a vocal performance; and
- sing the range of one octave.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- Moderately good ability to convert the notated melody into an aural performance
- Fair ability to sing with good intonation
- Good ability to interpret and perform common rhythmic patterns
- Moderate ability to interpret and perform common diatonic melodic patterns
- Moderately good ability to determine the major tonality from the clef, key signature, and starting pitch
- Moderate ability to execute an octave range in the given key, which put many students in the lower end of their vocal range, and could have impacted their ability to demonstrate proficiency
- The range of the melody seemed too low for some students' vocal ranges, which affected some students' ability to demonstrate mastery of the target skills. While students are permitted to adjust to a more fitting key, most students sing in the given key

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">• Singing in the wrong mode—many students did not correctly interpret key signature, clef, and starting pitch to determine that the melody was in the major mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful responses were sung in the major mode

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in recognizing and performing melodic leaps—many responses contained pitch errors at those places in the melody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful responses demonstrated recognition and execution of melodic leaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in maintaining a single tonal center throughout the performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most successful responses demonstrated a clear tonal center

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

- Sing early and often in your AP Music Theory class!
- Become familiar with the AP scoring guides, even if you do not use them to grade student work in your own class
- Have students perform their “Preflight Checklist”: naming the key, clef, and time signature before beginning to practice the melody
- Practice typical beginning and cadential melodic patterns
- Practice typical rhythmic patterns
- Utilize melodic error detection exercises as another way to practice converting between aural and notated music
- Simulate the conditions under which the students will sight sing on the AP Exam (singing alone in front of a proctor, using the DAC app practice tool when it becomes available, etc.)
- Emphasize that the duration of the final note of the melody must be correct
- Coach your AP and/or Testing Coordinator in best practices for administering the exam (procuring the best sound quality that is available, having a good logistical plan for one-on-one administration of sight singing, familiarity with DAC app or other recording technology, 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 [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

Videos on strategies for sight singing free-response questions are available under the “Review” tab of the Course Guide in AP Classroom.

- 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)
- 2024 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 **major mode sight singing questions in bass clef, simple meter** (Topic Questions are searchable in the Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions are accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom):
 - Half-length Topic Question:
 - Unit 1: Sight Singing in B-flat
- Summative **major mode sight singing questions in bass clef, simple meter** (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:
 - A major sight-singing – bass – four-four time
 - B-flat major sight-singing – bass – common time
 - D major sight-singing – bass – common time
- Summative **major mode sight singing questions in bass clef, simple meter** on full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exams” tab in the Course Guide):
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 8 (D major)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 9 (B-flat major)

Question 9 (S2)

Task: Convert between notated and performed music

Topic: Sing a notated melody in a minor key and compound duple meter

Max Score: 9

Mean Score: 3.44

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to apply music reading skills to melodic and rhythmic performance at sight, including:

- 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 perform in compound meter and maintain the same compound duple meter throughout their performance;
- ability to accurately sing six different compound meter patterns and rhythms;
- ability to sing with a steady tempo;
- retention of tonic throughout their performance;
- ability to sing leaps within the dominant triad, especially in segment seven;
- ability to sustain a dotted quarter note for three eighth-note beats (as in segment eight);
- ability to sing a melody in two phrases with good musical flow;
- ability to perform whole-step approaches to segments three and seven; and
- ability to perform stepwise contours and common skips and leaps such as diminished, minor, and major 3rds, and minor 6ths (segment seven).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- difficulty performing in compound meter, in particular segments 1-2, and navigating the compound meter between segments 5-6;
- some difficulty performing rhythmic durations in segments 1-2, 4, 5, and 7;
- some difficulty singing in the minor key and maintaining good intonation among half steps, whole steps, and diminished thirds in segment 3;
- difficulty leaping from the dominant to the leading tone in segment 7;
- difficulty performing in the correct mode (Many students sang the melody in the major mode or in octatonic.);
- difficulty understanding the distance of a half step to approach segments 4 and 7 and whole step approaches in segments 3 and 7;
- difficulty maintaining the tempo and flow.

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• Inability to internalize compound meter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Last note held full value• Ability to sing compound meter patterns and pitch patterns
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to recognize and sing in melodic minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to sing in 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 student performance on the exam?

- Practice common melodic and rhythm patterns
- Have students sing and vocalize every class period
- Practice more compound meter
- Encourage students to internalize and embody the pulse
- Encourage students to sing individually and in pairs and small groups
- Teach effective warm-up and preparation techniques
- Encourage good air support and help students learn their vocal ranges
- Distinguish between major and minor keys and simple and compound meters
- Be sure to cover minor keys and the melodic minor form thoroughly
- Drill chromatic melodic patterns, especially chromatic passing tones and neighbor tones
- Encourage prepared and unprepared singing practice
- Encourage students to record themselves singing

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

Videos on strategies for sight singing free-response questions are available under the “Review” tab of the Course Guide in AP Classroom.

- 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)
- 2024 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 minor mode sight singing questions topic questions and progress check questions (Topic Questions are searchable in the Question Bank; Personal Progress Check questions are accessible from the Unit tabs in AP Classroom)
- Summative **minor mode sight singing questions in treble clef, compound meter** (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:
 - C minor sight-singing – treble – compound – chrom
 - D minor sight-singing – treble – compound – chrom
 - F minor sight-singing – treble – compound meter
- Summative minor mode sight singing questions on the three full-length practice exams (accessible via the “Practice Exams” tab in Course Resources):
 - 2016 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 9 (F minor)
 - 2020 Practice Exam FRQ: Question 8 (E minor)