

2025



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# AP<sup>®</sup> Music Theory

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 4**

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

**Question 4: Harmonic Dictation**

**24 points**

E: I I<sup>6</sup> IV V vi V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup>/V I<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I  
 or V<sub>4</sub><sup>8</sup> = V<sub>3</sub><sup>7</sup>

**I. Pitches**

- A. Award 1 point for each correctly notated pitch. Do not consider duration. (An accidental placed *after* the notehead is not considered correct notation.) **1 point per pitch (max 16)**
- B. Award full credit for octave transpositions of the correct bass pitch. (Octave transpositions of soprano pitches are *not* allowed.)
- C. No enharmonic equivalents are allowed.

**II. Chord Symbols**

- A. Award 1 point for each chord symbol correct in both Roman and Arabic numerals. **1 point per complete chord symbol (max 8)**
- B. Award ½ point for each correct Roman numeral that has incorrect or missing Arabic numerals.
- C. Accept the correct Roman numeral regardless of its case.
- D. Award no credit if an accidental is placed before a Roman numeral.
- E. Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied.” Accept any symbol that means “of” or “applied” for chord six, e.g.: V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup>/V, [V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup>], V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup>→V, V<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup> of V, etc.
- F. The cadential six-four may be correctly labeled as shown above. Also, give full credit for the labels “Cad <sup>6</sup>/<sub>4</sub>” or “C <sup>6</sup>/<sub>4</sub>” for the antepenultimate chord. If the Roman numeral of the antepenultimate chord is V, the space below the penultimate chord should contain a figure, a dash, or a V in order for the antepenultimate chord to receive any credit. If the space below the penultimate chord is blank and follows V, no credit is awarded for the penultimate or the antepenultimate chord symbol.

Ex.	V <sub>4</sub> <sup>(8)6</sup>	V <sub>4</sub> <sup>(5)6</sup>	V <sub>4</sub> <sup>(3)6</sup>	V <sub>4</sub> <sup>6</sup>	V	V	V <sub>4</sub> <sup>6</sup>	I	I <sub>4</sub> <sup>6</sup>	IV	V <sub>(4)</sub> <sup>(6)</sup> IV	V	—	V	V <sup>7</sup>	V <sub>4</sub> <sup>6</sup>	V <sub>4</sub> <sup>6</sup>				
→	1	1	1	½	0	0	½	½	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	1	1	½
Pts.	1	1	1	½	0	0	½	½	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	1	1	½
→																					



## Question 4

Write your response to QUESTION 4 on this page.

**Question 4.** Before listening to the first playing, please look at the staff below. Notice that there are nine chords in the progression; the soprano and bass notes and the Roman numeral of the first chord are given.

Remember to notate only the soprano and bass voices and to write, in every blank, the numerals indicating the chords and their inversions.

Now listen to the progression for the first time and begin working. 



E: I I<sup>6</sup> IV V vi V/V I<sup>4</sup> V I

The progression for **Question 4** will now be played a second time. 

The progression for **Question 4** will now be played a third time. 

The progression for **Question 4** will now be played a final time. 

The remaining free-response questions for the Music Theory exam are without audio prompts. You may answer them in the order you choose. You have a total of 45 minutes to complete free-response questions 5–7. A suggested time for each question is printed in your exam booklet. Read the three questions carefully and use your time effectively. Now turn the page and begin working.

Use a pencil only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

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Now listen to the progression for the first time and begin working. 



E:    I    I<sup>6</sup>    I    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_

The progression for Question 4 will now be played a second time. 

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Now listen to the progression for the first time and begin working. 



E:    I    ii    V<sup>5</sup>    I    V<sup>4</sup>    vii<sup>6</sup>    Vi    V<sup>4</sup>    V<sup>5</sup>

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## Question 4

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

### Overview

The question overviews can be found in the “Chief Reader Report on Student Responses” on [AP Central](#).

#### Sample: 4A

**Score: 22**

This represents a good response. Eight soprano and seven bass pitches are notated correctly; 15 points were awarded for the soprano and bass lines. The Roman numerals and Arabic figures are correct for chords two, three, four, five, seven and nine; 6 points were awarded. The Roman numerals for chords six and eight are correct, but the Arabic figures are missing;  $\frac{1}{2}$  point was awarded for each. (Soprano: 8; Bass: 7; Roman numerals: 7; Total = 22)

#### Sample: 4B

**Score: 13**

This represents a fair response. Eight of the soprano pitches are correct; 8 points were awarded. The response contains one correctly notated bass pitch; 1 point was awarded. The Roman numerals and Arabic figures for chords two, eight and nine are correct; 3 points were awarded. The Roman numeral is correct for chord seven, but the Arabic figure is missing;  $\frac{1}{2}$  point was awarded. The Roman numerals for chords three, four, five and six are incorrect; 0 points were awarded. (Soprano: 8; Bass: 1; Roman numerals:  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ; Total =  $12\frac{1}{2}$ , rounding up to 13)

#### Sample: 4C

**Score: 1**

This represents a poor response. No soprano or bass pitches are correct; 0 points were awarded. The Roman numeral for chord eight is correct but the Arabic figure is incorrect;  $\frac{1}{2}$  point was awarded. The Roman numerals for chords two, three, four, five, six, seven and nine are incorrect; 0 points were awarded. (Soprano: 0; Bass 0; Roman numerals:  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; Total =  $\frac{1}{2}$ , rounding up to 1)