
AP[®] Music Theory

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free-Response Question 5

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Question 5: Part-writing from figured bass**25 points**

One possible 25-point answer (others are possible)

g: i V i ii° i V i

OR V —

I. Roman Numerals

Award 1 point for each correct Roman numeral.

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

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

II. Chord Spelling, Spacing, and Doubling**A.** Award 1 point for each chord that correctly realizes the given figured bass.**1 point per chord
(max 6)**

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

B. Award 0 points for a chord that breaks one or more of the conditions of **II.A.**N.B.: Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of these chords. (See **III.E.**)**C.** Award ½ point each for a correctly realized chord that has exactly one of the following errors:

1. A doubled leading tone, a doubled chordal seventh, or incorrect doubling of a $\frac{6}{4}$ chord.
2. More than one octave between adjacent upper parts.
3. Crossed voices

D. Award 0 points for a correctly realized chord that has any of the following:

N.B.: Do check the voice leading into and out of these chords.

1. Two or more errors listed in **II.C.** (e.g. double leading tone and spacing error, or two spacing errors), and/or
2. The correct accidental on the wrong side of a notehead. (For an incorrect accidental on the wrong side of a notehead, see **II.A.1.**)

III. Voice Leading

A. Award 2 points for acceptable voice leading between two correctly realized chords.

N.B.: This includes the voice leading from the given chord to the second chord.

B. If all chords are correctly realized, and there are no voice-leading errors (as described in **III.C.** and **III.D.**), but the response has excessive leaps within the upper three voices:

1. Award 12 points for voice leading if there are six or fewer leaps in the three upper voices combined.
2. Award 11 points for voice leading if there are more than six leaps in the three upper voices combined.

C. Award only 1 point for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in **II.A.**) with exactly one of the following errors:

1. Uncharacteristic unequal fifths. (See *DCVLE*, no. 4.)
2. Uncharacteristic hidden (covered) or direct octaves or fifths between outer voices. (See *DCVLE*, nos. 5 and 6.)
3. Overlapping voices. (See *DCVLE*, no. 7.)
4. A chordal seventh approached by a descending leap of a fourth or larger.
5. The fourth of a cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ (i.e., $\hat{1}$) approached by a descending leap of a fourth or larger.

D. Award 0 points for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in **II.A.**) if any of the following statements is true:

1. Parallel octaves, fifths, or unisons occur (immediately successive or beat-to-beat), including those by contrary motion. (See *DCVLE*, nos. 1 through 3.)
2. An uncharacteristic leap occurs (e.g., augmented second, tritone, or more than a fifth).
3. A chordal seventh is unresolved or resolved incorrectly. (The voice with the seventh should move down by step if possible. In some cases, such as ii^7 to cadential $\frac{6}{4}$, the seventh will be retained in the same voice. The seventh may move UP by step only in the case of the $i-\underline{V}_3^4-i^6$ progression.)
4. The leading tone in an outer voice is unresolved or resolved incorrectly. (When I and vi are connected by \underline{V} , \underline{V}^7 , or \underline{V}^6 (e.g., $I-\underline{V}^7-vi$) early in the phrase (so that there is no expectation of a cadence), an $\hat{8}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}$ line is acceptable in any voice.)
5. The 6th or 4th of the cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ chord is unresolved or resolved incorrectly.

**2 points per
chord
connection
(12 max)**

Definitions of Common Voice-Leading Errors (DCVLE)

Ex. 1 Ex. 2 Ex. 3 Ex. 4 Ex. 5a Ex. 5b Ex. 6 Ex. 7

Parallel Beat-to-beat By contrary motion Unequal 5ths (d5 to P5) Hidden (covered) Direct Overlapping voices

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

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

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

4. Unequal fifths
 - d5 → P5:**
 - An ascending d5 → P5 is acceptable ONLY between upper voices when passing between I and I⁶, e.g., I–V₃⁴–I⁶ and I–vii⁰⁶–I⁶ (no deduction).
 - An ascending d5 → P5 in other situations is unacceptable (award 1 point only).
 - A descending d5 → P5 is acceptable between upper voices (no deduction).
 - Any d5 → P5 (ascending or descending) between the bass and an upper voice is unacceptable (award 1 point only).
 - P5 → d5:**
 - Any P5 → d5 (ascending or descending) between any two voices is acceptable (no deduction).

5. Hidden (or covered) fifths and octaves in outer voices (similar motion to a perfect interval that involves one voice moving by step).
 - When the step is in the upper voice, as shown in Ex. 5a: acceptable (no deduction).
 - When the leap is in the upper voice, as shown in Ex. 5b: unacceptable (award 1 point only).

6. Direct fifths and octaves in outer voices: unacceptable (award 1 point only).
 Definition: Similar motion to a perfect interval that involves a skip in each voice.
 N.B.: Many sources equate “hidden” and “direct.”

7. Overlapping voices: unacceptable (award 1 point only).
 Definition: Two voices move to a position in which the lower voice is higher than the previous note in the higher voice, or they move to a position where the higher voice is lower than the previous note in the lower voice.

Question 5

Write your response to QUESTION 5 on this page.

Question 5. (Suggested time—15 minutes)

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

Handwritten figured bass notation below the musical staff:

G: i V[#] i^b i^b6 i^b V⁷ i

Handwritten annotations above the figured bass:

- A sharp sign (#) above the second chord.
- The number 6 above the third and fourth chords.
- A vertical stack of numbers 8, 6, 4, 4 above the fifth chord.
- A vertical stack of numbers 7, 5, # above the sixth chord.

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



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g: I # 6 6 8 8 4 = 7 6 6

V⁷ I⁶ ii^{o6} I₄⁶ V I

(Handwritten notes: G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G)

gab^bcdef^bg

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



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g: V I I V $\begin{matrix} 8 \\ 6 \\ 4 \end{matrix}$ V I V

6 6 $\begin{matrix} 8 \\ 6 \\ 4 \end{matrix}$ $\begin{matrix} = \\ = \\ = \end{matrix}$ $\begin{matrix} 7 \\ 5 \\ \# \end{matrix}$

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



Question 5

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: 5A

Score: 23

This represents an excellent response. All chords are spelled correctly and were awarded 1 point each. The connection between the cadential six-four to the dominant seventh chord is incorrect because all voices from the cadential six-four must move down by step. It was not awarded any points. All Roman numerals are correct and were awarded 1 point each. (Chord spelling: 6; Voice leading: 10; Roman numerals: 7; Total = 23)

Sample: 5B

Score: 12

This represents a fair response. Chords three, four, and seven are spelled correctly and were awarded 1 point each. Chords two and six are spelled incorrectly due to a lack of a leading tone accidental, and chord five is spelled incorrectly due to the lack of an octave above the bass, as specified by the figures. These chords were awarded 0 points each and voice leading cannot be considered in or out of these chords. The connection between chords three and four is correct and was awarded 2 points. Additional voice leading cannot be considered. All Roman numerals are correct and were awarded 1 point each. (Chord spelling: 3; Voice leading: 2; Roman numerals: 7; Total = 12)

Sample: 5C

Score: 4

This represents a poor response. Chords three and four are spelled correctly. They were awarded 1 point each. Chord seven is spelled correctly but contains a spacing error. It was awarded $\frac{1}{2}$ point. The connection between chords three and four contains parallel octaves in the soprano and bass. It was awarded 0 points. Voice leading cannot be considered into or out of any other chords. The Roman numeral for chord three is correct. It was awarded 1 point. Chord five is labeled as a V while chord six is labeled as a I. This is incorrect because chord six is a root-position dominant chord and must be labeled as a V. In order for chord five to be correctly labeled as V, it must also be followed by a V for chord six. (Chord spelling: $2\frac{1}{2}$; Voice leading: 0; Roman numerals: 1; Total = $3\frac{1}{2}$, rounding up to 4)