

2025



AP[®] Music Theory

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free-Response Question 6

- Scoring Guidelines**
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Question 6: Part-writing from Roman numerals**18 points**

One possible 18-point answer (others are possible):

$A_b:$ I V_4^6 I^6 V_5^6/IV IV ii_5^6 V

I. Chord Spelling, Spacing, and Doubling

- A.** Award 1 point for each chord that correctly realizes the given chord symbols. **1 point per chord (max 6)**
1. The chord must be spelled correctly and in the proper inversion (i.e., the bass note must be correct). 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 seventh chord.
 4. All inverted triads and inverted seventh chords must be complete.
 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 **I.A.**
 N.B.: Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of these chords.
- C.** Award $\frac{1}{2}$ point 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 **I.C.** (e.g., doubled 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 **I.A.1.**)

II. Voice Leading

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| <p>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.</p> <p>B. If all chords are correctly realized, and there are no voice-leading errors (as described in II.C. and II.D.), but the response has excessive leaps within the upper three voices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Award 12 points for voice leading if there are five or fewer leaps in the three upper voices combined. 2. Award 11 points for voice leading if there are more than five leaps in the three upper voices combined. <p>C. Award only 1 point for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in I.A.) with exactly one of the following errors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uncharacteristic unequal fifths. (See <i>DCVLE</i>, no. 4.) 2. Uncharacteristic hidden (covered) or direct octaves or fifths between outer voices. (See <i>DCVLE</i>, nos. 5 and 6.) 3. Overlapping voices. (See <i>DCVLE</i>, no. 7.) 4. A chordal seventh approached by a descending leap of a fourth or larger. <p>D. Award 0 points for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in I.A.) if any of the following statements is true:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parallel octaves, fifths, or unisons occur (immediately successive or on successive beats), including those by contrary motion. (See <i>DCVLE</i>, 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 must 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. At least one of the chords has more or fewer than four voices (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass). 6. More than one error listed in section II.C. occurs. <p>E. Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of an incorrectly realized chord.</p> | <p>2 points per chord connection (12 max)</p> |
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III. Scores with Additional Meaning

- 1** This score can be given to a response that has two or more redeeming qualities. (e.g., correct chord spelling with the wrong inversion, knowledge of chord roots/inversions demonstrated through a correct bass line, or voice leading such as resolving a leading tone or chordal seventh correctly).
- 0** This score is used for a response that represents an unsuccessful attempt to answer the question (has no redeeming qualities, or only one) or a response that is off-topic or irrelevant.
- NR** Reserved for blank responses.

IV. Scoring Notes

- A.** Do not penalize a response that includes correctly used nonchord tones.
- B.** An incorrectly used nonchord tone will be considered a voice-leading error.
 - 1. Award 1 point if the incorrect nonchord tone results in one error listed in **II.C**.
 - 2. Award 0 points if the incorrect nonchord tone results in at least one error from **II.D**. or more than one error from **II.C**.
- C.** Half-point totals round up with one exception: A total score of 17½ rounds down to 17.

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

One possible 18-point answer (others are possible):

	A^b : I	V_4^6	I^6	V_5^6/IV	IV	ii_5^6	V
Chord spelling:							
Voice leading:							

Question 6

Write your response to QUESTION 6 on this page.

Question 6. (Suggested time—10 minutes)

Write the following progression in four voices, following eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Continue logically from the spacing of the first chord. Do not add embellishments unless indicated by the Roman and Arabic numerals. Use only quarter and half notes.

Musical notation showing a progression of chords in A-flat major (4/4 time). The chords are: G major (I), F major (VI), E-flat major (I°), D major (IV), C major (ii), and B-flat major (V). The notation includes a treble and bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature.

Handwritten Roman and Arabic numerals for the chord progression:

G⁺ A^b: I VI I° ^{A^b}V₃/IV^{D^b} IV ii₃ V

Handwritten chord spellings:

G E B A E C A^b G^b E C A F D C B A F D B G E

Handwritten scale and chord diagrams:

G	A	B	C	D	E	F
E	F	G	A	B	C	D
C	D	E	F	G	A	B
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vi ^o

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



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Write the following progression in four voices, following eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Continue logically from the spacing of the first chord. Do not add embellishments unless indicated by the Roman and Arabic numerals. Use only quarter and half notes.

A \flat :	I	V_6^6	I^6	V_3^6/IV	IV	ii_6^6	V
		E B	A E	B A E D G	D F A	B D F A	

A B C D E F G
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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



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A \flat : I V 4 I 6 V 3 /IV IV ii 3 V

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



Question 6

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: 6A

Score: 17

This represents a very good response. Chord seven has a doubled leading tone and was awarded $\frac{1}{2}$ point for chord spelling. All remaining chords are spelled correctly and were each awarded 1 point for chord spelling. All voice leading connections are acceptable and were awarded 2 points each. (Chord spelling: $5\frac{1}{2}$ points; Voice leading: 12 points; Total = $17\frac{1}{2}$ points, rounded down to 17)

Sample: 6B

Score: 11

This represents a fair response. Chord four contains wrong notes, so it was awarded 0 points for chord spelling. All other chords are spelled correctly and were awarded 1 point each. Due to the chord misspelling, the voice leading connections into and out of chord four could not be considered. The bass has an uncharacteristic leap of a seventh between chords six and seven, so this voice leading connection was awarded 0 points. The remaining three voice leading connections were awarded 2 points each. (Chord spelling: 5 points; Voice leading: 6 points; Total = 11 points)

Sample: 6C

Score: 3

This represents a weak response. Chord two has a doubled leading tone and a spacing error and was awarded 0 points (although voice leading may still be considered leading into and out of this chord). Chord three is spelled correctly and was awarded one point for chord spelling. The remaining chords are misspelled and were awarded 0 points for chord spelling. The voice leading connection between chords one and two is acceptable and was awarded 2 points. The leading tone in the soprano in chord two does not resolve properly, so 0 points were awarded for voice leading between chords two and three. Voice leading could not be considered for any of the remaining chords. (Chord spelling: 1 point; Voice leading: 2 points; Total = 3 points)