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# AP<sup>®</sup> Music Theory

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 7**

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

**Question 7: Harmonizing a Melody****9 points****I. Arriving at a Score for the Entire Response**

- A.** Score each phrase separately and then add the phrase scores together to arrive at a preliminary tally for the entire response.
- B.** Before deciding on the final score for the entire response, consider giving another point to a response that is extremely good, or awarding a point to a response that would otherwise receive a score of 0 (see **V.B.** below).
- C.** Except for instances where the guidelines specify otherwise, judge the bass and Roman numerals separately and ignore mismatches between them.
- D.** Errors are categorized as either minor or egregious. Two minor errors equal one egregious error (see **IV**).
- E.** A maximum of two egregious errors (or four minor errors) may be marked per half phrase, with a maximum total of three egregious errors (or six minor errors) per phrase.

**II. Scoring Phrase 2****2 points max**

- A.** Judge the bass and Roman numerals separately, considering each in two halves.
- The first half consists of the opening beat and the approach to it.
  - The second half consists of beats two and three of measure 4 (the cadence); do not consider the approach.
- B. The phrase is scored 2 only if:**
1. the bass has no egregious errors, and
  2. the final two Roman numerals (and inversions) match the last two bass notes.
- N.B.: Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied.” ( $\text{V}/\text{V}$ ,  $[\text{V}]$ ,  $\text{V} \rightarrow \text{V}$ ,  $\text{V}$  of  $\text{V}$ , etc.)
- C. The phrase is scored 1 if:**
1. the bass has no egregious errors, but any of the two final Roman numerals (and inversions) do not match the final bass notes; or
  2. one half of the bass contains an egregious error, and at least one half of the Roman numerals has no egregious errors; or
  3. both halves of the bass have an egregious error, but the Roman numerals have no egregious errors.
- D. The phrase is scored 0 if:**
1. both halves of the bass have an egregious error, and at least one-half of the Roman numerals has an egregious error; or
  2. at least one-half of the bass has an egregious error, and both halves of the Roman numerals have egregious errors.

Summary of the Method for Scoring Phrase 2		
Bass Line	Roman Numerals	Score
No egregious errors	Roman numerals (and inversions) must match bass notes	2
No egregious errors	First half of the phrase contains an egregious error, but the cadence is good	2
No egregious errors	Second half of the phrase contains an egregious error, or Roman numerals do not match bass notes at the cadence	1
No egregious errors	Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	1
One half of the phrase contains an egregious error	No egregious errors	1
One half of the phrase contains an egregious error	One half of the phrase contains an egregious error	1
Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	No egregious errors	1
Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	One half of the phrase contains an egregious error	0
One half of the phrase contains an egregious error	Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	0
Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error	0

**III. Scoring Phrases 3 and 4****6 points max (3 points per phrase)**

- A.** For each of these phrases, judge the bass and Roman numerals separately, considering each in two halves.
- The first half of phrase 3 consists of the first five beats of the phrase.
  - The second half of phrase 3 consists of the last three beats of the phrase and their approach.
  - The first half of phrase 4 consists of the first five beats of the phrase.
  - The second half of phrase 4 consists of the last four beats of the phrase and their approach.
- B.** Then provide a phrase descriptor both for the bass line and for the Roman numerals according to the following guidelines:
1. Judge it to be **good** even if it contains up to one egregious error and one minor error.
  2. Judge it to be **fair** if:
    - (a) it contains two egregious errors or two egregious errors and one minor error; or
    - (b) it contains three or more egregious errors, but one half of the phrase is without egregious error.
  3. Judge it to be **poor** if it contains three or more specific egregious errors, with at least one egregious error in each half of the phrase.

Summary of Good/Fair/Poor Determinations for Bass Lines and Roman Numerals for Phrases 3 and 4	
good	0–1 egregious errors (+ 1 minor error), or 0–3 minor errors
fair	2 egregious errors (+ 1 minor error), or 4–5 minor errors
poor	3 or more egregious errors, or 6 or more minor errors

- C. Combine the descriptors to arrive at the following preliminary scores:

Summary of the Method for Scoring Phrases 3 and 4		
Bass Line	Roman Numerals	Score
good	good to fair	3
good	poor	2
fair	good to fair	2
fair	poor	1
poor	good to fair	1
poor	poor	0

- D. Before giving a final score of 0 or 3, first consider the cadence.
1. Award **at least 1 point** for the phrase if its cadence (i.e., its final two chords considered by themselves, without the approach) is good in both bass and Roman numerals, even if nothing else in the phrase is good; the bass and Roman numerals (and inversions) *must agree* in this case.
  2. A phrase that receives **3 points** must have a good cadence (i.e., its final two chords considered by themselves, without the approach) in both bass and Roman numerals, with the bass and Roman numerals (and inversions) matching one another; otherwise, give the phrase *at most 2 points*.
  3. Phrase 4 must end with a perfect authentic cadence.
  4. Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied” ( $\text{V}/\text{V}$ ,  $[\text{V}]$ ,  $\text{V} \rightarrow \text{V}$ ,  $\text{V}$  of  $\text{V}$ , etc.).
- E. Award at most **2 points** to a phrase that uses half notes exclusively.

#### IV. Weighting Errors

- A. The following are **egregious** errors:
1. Parallel fifths or octaves, consecutive perfect fifths or octaves in contrary motion (*marked on the second chord*)  
N.B.: Perfect fifths to diminished fifths are OK, though some may create other problems with incorrect resolutions of tendency tones and/or chordal sevenths (*marked on the second chord*)
  2. Doubling the leading tone; unresolved or incorrectly resolved leading tone (*marked on the first chord*)  
N.B.: A bass line that moves  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}$  does *not* contain an unresolved leading tone.
  3. Tonally inappropriate six-four chord (*marked on the six-four chord*)  
N.B.: Cadential six-fours, passing six-fours, and neighboring (pedal) six-fours are allowed.
  4. Unresolved seventh or incorrectly resolved seventh (*marked on the first chord*)
  5. Other note-against-note dissonance (including fourths) that is not treated correctly, including Roman numerals (and inversions) that do not match with the given melody note (*marked on the first chord*)  
N.B.: Fourths that could result from a correctly treated inverted seventh chord and that resolve appropriately are acceptable, regardless of the Roman numerals.

6. Poor chord succession (e.g., ii–I, ii–iii, iii–I, iii–ii, iii–vii<sup>°</sup>, IV–iii, V–ii, V–iii, V–IV, vi–I, etc.) (*marked on the second chord*)

N.B.: Motions from V to IV<sup>6</sup> are allowed. Motions from V<sup>6</sup> to IV<sup>6</sup> are allowed in the context of a  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}$  bass line.

N.B.: Motions from vi–I<sup>6</sup> are allowed.

7. Root-position leading-tone triad (vii<sup>°</sup>) followed by anything other than root-position I (*marked on the first chord*) (see B.6 below)
8. Poor chord use, such as vi<sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel  $\frac{6}{3}$  sequence, modulation, or following a strong-beat I—i.e., a 5–6 motion); iii<sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel  $\frac{6}{3}$  sequence) (*marked on the first chord*)
9. Inappropriate leap (seventh, augmented interval, or compound interval), successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad, descending leap of a fourth or larger into a chordal seventh, or leap of an octave that does not change direction afterwards (*marked on the last chord of the leap[s]*)  
N.B.: Leaps of diminished intervals that change direction and resolve by step afterwards are allowed.
10. An entire phrase of consecutive thirds or sixths (applicable only to phrases 3 and 4)
11. Use of an unacceptable rhythmic value (i.e., any rhythmic value not allowed by the prompt), including any rest

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**B.** The following are **minor** errors (two minor errors = one egregious error):

1. Diminished fifth to perfect fifth (*marked on the second chord*)
2. Repeated note and/or Roman numeral (and inversion) from weak beat to strong beat, unless at start of phrase (*marked on the second chord*)
3. Metrically inappropriate six-four chord (*marked on the six-four chord*)
4. Approach to fifth or octave in similar motion in which the upper voice leaps (*marked on the second chord*)
5. Cross-relation (*marked on the first chord*)
6. Root-position vii<sup>°</sup> triad that moves directly to I (*marked on the first chord*)
7. Four or more consecutive thirds or sixths for half of a phrase
8. Implied incomplete inverted seventh chord

## V. Other Considerations

**1 point**

**A.** General considerations:

1. Consider each phrase independently; do not judge the connections between each phrase.
2. Ignore any inner voices supplied by the students; ignore any/all extraneous labels (nonchord tones, etc.).
3. Judge the bass line as either part of a contrapuntal two-part framework or as a bass line for a four-part harmony exercise, giving the student the benefit of the doubt.
4. In judging harmonies, always consider the implied bass line suggested by the Roman numerals (and inversions).

**B.** Special scores:

- Award 1 additional point for a truly musical response (e.g., regular use of inverted chords and/or passing tones to create a melodic bass line; correct use of chromatic harmonies) *or* for a response that has no errors or only one minor error.
- Award 1 point to a response that otherwise would earn a 0 but that has two or more redeeming qualities (e.g., one consonant note in the bass line; one correct Roman numeral).
- 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

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### Supplemental Summary Chart of IV. Weighting Errors

Egregious Errors	Minor Errors
<b>A.1.</b> Parallel fifths or octaves, consecutive perfect fifths or octaves in contrary motion ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )	<b>B.1.</b> Diminished fifth to perfect fifth ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> ) <b>B.4.</b> Approach to fifth or octave in similar motion in which the upper voice leaps ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )
<b>A.2.</b> Doubling the leading tone; unresolved or incorrectly resolved leading tone ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	
<b>A.3.</b> Tonally inappropriate six-four chord ( <i>marked on the six-four chord</i> )	<b>B.3.</b> Metrically inappropriate six-four chord ( <i>marked on the six-four chord</i> )
<b>A.4.</b> Unresolved seventh or incorrectly resolved seventh ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	<b>B.8.</b> Implied incomplete inverted seventh chord
<b>A.5.</b> Other note-against-note dissonance (including fourths) that is not treated correctly, including Roman numerals (and inversions) that do not match with the given melody note ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	<b>B.5.</b> Cross relation ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )
<b>A.6.</b> Poor chord succession (e.g., ii–I, ii–iii, iii–I, iii–ii, iii–vii°, IV–iii, V–ii, V–iii, V–IV, vi–I, etc.) ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )	<b>B.2.</b> Repeated note and/or Roman numeral (and inversion) from weak beat to strong beat, unless at start of phrase ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )
<b>A.7.</b> Root-position leading-tone triad (vii°) followed by anything other than root-position I ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	<b>B.6.</b> Root-position vii° triad that moves directly to I ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )
<b>A.8.</b> Poor chord use, such as vi <sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel $\frac{6}{3}$ sequence, modulation, or following a strong-beat I—i.e., a 5–6 motion); iii <sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel $\frac{6}{3}$ sequence) ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )	
<b>A.9.</b> Inappropriate leap (seventh, augmented interval, or compound interval), successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad, descending leap of a fourth or larger into a chordal seventh, or leap of an octave that does not change direction afterwards ( <i>marked on the last chord of the leap(s)</i> )	
<b>A.10.</b> An entire phrase of consecutive thirds or sixths (applicable only to phrases 3 and 4)	<b>B.7.</b> Four or more consecutive thirds or sixths within half of a phrase
<b>A.11.</b> Use of an unacceptable rhythmic value, including any rest	

## Question 7

Write your response to QUESTION 7 on this page.

**Question 7.** (Suggested time—20 minutes)

Complete the bass line for the melody below, following eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Below the bass line, write the Roman and Arabic numerals that indicate the harmonies and inversions implied by the soprano and bass.

Observe the following:

- A. Keep the portion you compose consistent with the first phrase.
1. Write an appropriate cadence at each phrase ending, including a perfect authentic cadence at the final cadence.
  2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Nonharmonic tones, if included, must be limited to unaccented passing and neighbor tones.)
  3. Vary the motion of the bass line in relation to the soprano.
  4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)
- B. Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

Start here  
↓

Key: D

Chord analysis: I V<sup>6</sup> I I<sup>6</sup> IV vii<sup>o6</sup> I I<sup>6</sup> IV IV<sup>6</sup> I V I' V<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup>

Chord analysis: I V<sup>6</sup> I ii V<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I V I<sup>6</sup> IV V I IV<sup>6</sup> V I

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





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  3. Vary the motion of the bass line in relation to the soprano.
  4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)
- B. Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

Start here

Key: D

Chord analysis: I V<sup>6</sup> I I<sup>6</sup> IV vii<sup>o6</sup> I I<sup>6</sup> IV IV<sup>6</sup> I V I vii<sup>o7</sup> I IV

Chord analysis: I I<sup>6</sup> I IV V VI<sup>6</sup> iii I<sup>7</sup> I ii V I IV V I

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

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Observe the following:

**A.** Keep the portion you compose consistent with the first phrase.

1. Write an appropriate cadence at each phrase ending, including a perfect authentic cadence at the final cadence.
2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Nonharmonic tones, if included, must be limited to unaccented passing and neighbor tones.)
3. Vary the motion of the bass line in relation to the soprano.
4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)

**B.** Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

Start here

Key: D

Chord analysis: I V<sup>6</sup> I I<sup>6</sup> IV vii<sup>o6</sup> I I<sup>6</sup> IV IV<sup>6</sup> I V

Chord analysis: VI V<sup>6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> VI I VII<sup>o</sup> VI V ii<sup>o</sup> IV I V V I

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

## Question 7

**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: 7A

**Score: 9**

This represents a very good response. Phrase two contains no errors in the bass line, Roman numerals, nor cadence. Hence, this phrase was awarded 2 points. The bass line in phrase three contains one minor error: in measure 5, beat 3, the soprano leaps into a perfect octave with the bass by similar motion. The Roman numerals in phrase three contain one minor error: the  $V^6-I$  progression in measure 5, beats 2-3 creates either an implied similar-motion leap into a perfect octave between the bass and soprano (minor error) or an inappropriate leap out of the leading tone (2 egregious errors), depending on the octave of the bass pitch; candidate-oriented scoring results in marking the minor error in this location. Overall, phrase three was awarded 3 points because the bass line is good, the Roman numerals are good, and the cadence contains no errors. In phrase four, the bass line contains one minor error: in measure 8, beat 2, the soprano leaps into a perfect fifth with the bass by similar motion. (N.B., the final D in measure 8 sits low on the staff; candidate-oriented scoring results in giving the student the benefit of the doubt in this case.) The Roman numerals in phrase four contain one minor error: the  $IV^6-V$  progression in measure 8, beats 1-2, creates either an implied similar-motion leap into a perfect fifth between the bass and soprano (minor error) or an inappropriate leap (egregious error), depending on the octave of the bass pitch; candidate-oriented scoring results in marking the minor error in this location. Overall, phrase four was awarded 3 points because the bass line is good, the Roman numerals are good, and the cadence contains no errors. Because this response contained an unusually fluid bassline created by multiple instances of correctly used unaccented passing tones, it was awarded the point for a “truly musical” response. The scoring summary for this response is 2/3/3 (+1 for the “truly musical” point) for a total score of 9 points.

### Sample: 7B

**Score: 5**

This represents a fair response. The bass line in phrase two contains one egregious error, which is the D on beat 3 of measure 4 (incorrect pitch for this cadence since the cadence tonicizes V). The Roman numerals in phrase two contain two egregious errors: 1) The  $vii^{o7}/V$  on beat 2 of measure 4 creates an implied doubled leading tone in the key of the dominant, and; 2) the I on beat 3 of measure 4 is a poor chord choice for this cadence. Overall, phrase two was awarded 1 point, because the first half of the phrase has no egregious errors, but the second half contains the egregious errors listed above. The bass line in phrase three contains no errors. The Roman numerals in phrase three contain two egregious errors: 1) the  $VI^6$  in measure 6, beat 2 is a poor chord use, and; 2) the  $iii$  in measure 6, beat 3 is a poor chord use. Overall, phrase three was awarded 2 points because the bass line is good and the Roman numerals are fair, but the cadence contains a Roman-numeral error in measure 6, beat 3. The bass line in phrase four contains two egregious errors: 1) the D in measure 6, beat 4, creates an unacceptable dissonance with the C# in the melody, and; 2) the consecutive leaps that end in measure 8, beat 1, do not outline a triad. The Roman numerals in phrase four contain one

### Question 7 (continued)

egregious error, which is the  $I^7$  in measure 6, beat 4, which is an inappropriate chord use. Overall, phrase four was awarded 2 points because the bass line is fair, the Roman numerals are good, and the cadence contains no errors. The scoring summary for this response is 1/2/2 for a total score of 5 points.

#### Sample: 7C

#### Score: 1

This represents a poor response. There are no pitches nor Roman numerals in phrase two, creating two egregious errors in both the bass line and the Roman numerals, so the phrase was awarded 0 points. The bass line in phrase three contains three egregious errors and one minor error (we stop marking at three egregious errors, but for the sake of completeness, all errors are listed here): 1) the missing bass note in measure 4, beat 4 (egregious); 2) the E in measure 5, beat 2, is an unacceptable dissonance with the A in the melody (egregious); 3) the C# in measure 6, beat 1, is an unresolved leading tone (egregious), and; 4) the pitches in measure 6, beats 2-3, create a weak-strong error (minor). The Roman numerals in phrase three contain five egregious errors and one minor error (again, all listed for the sake of completeness): 1) no Roman numeral is indicated for measure 4, beat 4 (egregious); 2) the  $V6/4$  chord in measure 5, beat 2 is a tonally inappropriate  $6/4$  chord (egregious); 3) the  $I6/4$  chord in measure 5, beat 3 is a tonally inappropriate  $6/4$  chord (egregious); 4) the vi-I motion between measure 5, beat 4, and measure 6, beat 1, creates a poor chord succession (egregious), and; 5) the  $vii^{o7}$ -to-vi motion in measure 6, beats 2-3, is an inappropriate chord succession (egregious) and also implies diminished-to-perfect fifths (minor). Overall, phrase three was awarded 0 points because the bass line is poor, the Roman numerals are poor, and the cadence is poor. The bass line in phrase four contains five egregious errors: 1) there is a missing note in measure 7, beat 3 (egregious error); 2) the C# in measure 7, beat 4, creates an unresolved leading tone (egregious error), and; 3) the three missing pitches in measure 8 (3 egregious errors). The Roman numerals in phrase four contain three egregious errors: 1) the  $V-ii6/5$  motion between measures 6-7 is a poor chord succession; 2) the V chord in measure 7, beat 4, is a poor chord choice, and; 3) there is no Roman numeral indicated for measure 8, beat 1. Overall, phrase four was awarded 0 points because the bass line is poor, the Roman numerals are poor, and the cadence contains the missing-pitch errors listed above. Before arriving at a final score for the entire response, it was checked for redeeming qualities, with more than two being found. Hence, the scoring summary for this response was 0/0/0 (+1 for redeeming qualities) for a total score of 1 point.