

AP MUSIC THEORY

AP Music Theory exists to develop a student's ability to recognize, understand, and describe the basic materials and processes of music that are heard or presented in a score of music. The achievement of this goal may be best promoted by integrated approaches to the student's development of:

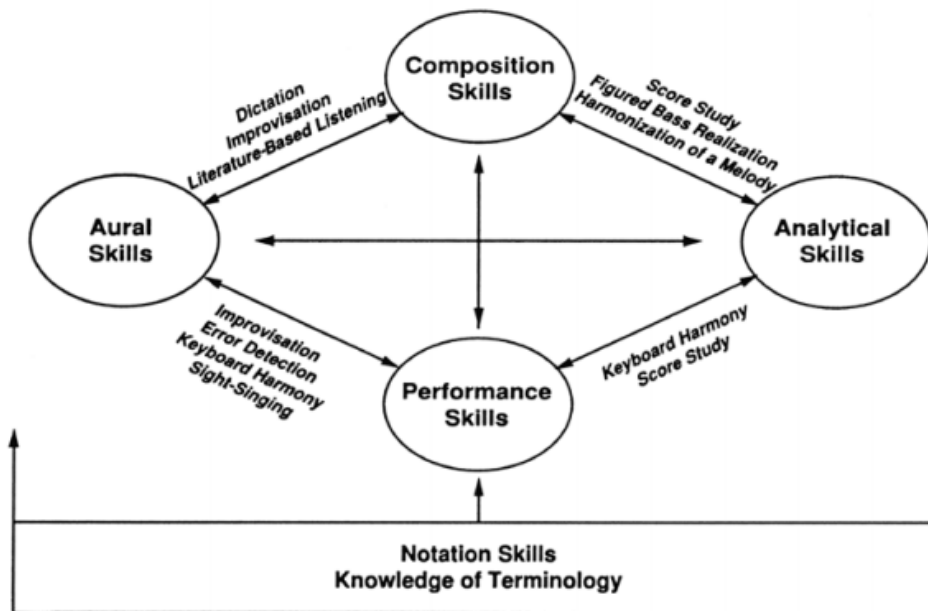
aural skills
sight-singing skills
written skills
compositional skills
analytical skills

through

listening exercises
performance exercises
written exercises
creative exercises
analytical exercises

Content

In an AP Music Theory course, students should be required to read, notate, write, sing, and listen to music. The figure below shows some of the ways in which exercises of various types foster and integrate these abilities.



The development of aural skills is a primary objective of this course. Aural skills is the ability to hear pitch, chords, rhythms, etc. and be able to accurately dictate what is being heard at any time. In addition to aural skills, students study:

- Functional triadic harmony in traditional four-voice textures
- Melodic and harmonic compositional processes
- Standard rhythms and meters
- Phrase structure
- Small forms
- Pitches, intervals, scales, and key signatures
- Chordal structure
- Meter and rhythm

Exam Information: The AP Theory exam is divided into two sections.

Section I Multiple Choice - 75 questions - 80 minutes - 45% of exam score

- Questions based on aural stimuli (questions based on listening examples)
- Questions not based on aural stimuli
- Discrete questions
- Questions in sets – some based on aural stimuli and some not

Section II Free Response – 9 exercises – 80 minutes – 55% of exam score

- 2 questions on melodic dictation (writing out pitch and rhythm by ear to an example)
- 2 questions on harmonic dictation (writing out pitch, rhythm, and chord quality by ear after listening to the chord progression)
- 2 sight-singing exercises – singing correct pitch and rhythm after given a single starting pitch
- Part writing from Roman Numeral Analysis and Figured Bass. Part writing is filling in chords based on given chord progressions. Figured Bass is a similar concept.
- Composition of a Bass Line when provided with a single melodic line. Bass line must be accompanied with a stylistically appropriate chord progression conforming to traditional tonal harmony.

AP MUSIC THEORY SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

Sample Multiple-Choice Question



The correct analysis of the chord above is

- (A) ii_5^6 in A-flat major
- (B) V_5^6 in E-flat major
- (C) ii_2^4 in D-flat major
- (D) V_2^4 in B-flat major

Correct Answer: A

Sample Free-Response Question

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.

D: I V_2^4/IV IV^6 ii_5^6 V^{4-3} I