

Theory Guidelines

(Based on the 2012 practice theory tests)

Level 1

We can read this level aloud to the kids if they are too young to read.

9. *Note values on lines and spaces*--The stem direction does not matter. The space notes need to not go past either bordering line. This will take some careful practice for the little guys. The line notes are harder to get precisely, so as long as they don't go up to either of the neighboring lines, they are okay. (1 pt each for note value, 1 pt each for line/ space)

Level 2

2. *Missing notes in a scale*--We will be changing these instructions to read: "Fill in the 5 missing notes to make this C major scale complete." (2 points for each note; if they add any extra notes at the end it will be -2 points; if they just fill in random notes out of order, there will be no points awarded – they need to demonstrate that they know what a scale is)

4. *Drawing flats and sharps*--For each note they need to get the correct symbol, the correct line or space placement, and it needs to come before the note. If they get 2 of those 3, they will get half credit (1 pt). Otherwise they will get no credit.

5. *Numbering beats in a measure*--Students need to count to the number of beats in a measure for each measure: 1 2 3. If they count m. 1 as 1 1-2, then they would get only half credit for that measure (1 pt.). Also, the numbers need to line up at the correct place in the measure.

6. *Numbering beats in a measure*--Same as #5.

7. *Intervals*--This is worth 1 pt. per measure.

8. *Intervals*--Same as #7.

Level 3

1. *Adding bar lines*--Bar lines are worth 2 points a piece. If it is in the wrong place but after the correct number of beats, that will be 1 point. The double bar line needs to be a final double bar line, with the thick line on the outside of the thin line. If they put a single bar line, they get no points; if they put 2 light lines they get 1 point.

2. *Adding bar lines*--Same as #1.

3. *Identifying key signatures*--They can write only the letter name of the key, or the letter name and the quality, i.e. F Major. However, if they get the letter name correct but put minor or a lowercase "m", then they lose 1 point. This brings up an important point for all levels. **Please make sure when labeling things major or minor that there is a clear difference in their "M" and their "m".**

4. *Triads*--These are worth 3 points each. Have them pay careful attention to the clef signs. Even if the chord would be correct in the other clef, then they still miss all the points. If the root is correct but they miss one or two of the other notes, then they miss 1 point each for those notes. If they add an accidental, changing the quality, then they lose 1 point. If they improperly space ledger lines, then they lose 1 point.

7. *Notes on staff*--The clef is worth 2.5 points – if it is shaped correctly but not in the right place, they will earn 1 point. 1 pt. for each correct pitch, correct stemming is .5 ea. We will take off 2 points total for incorrect note values. In some cases there could be 2 correct answers for the given letter name – we will take either one.

8. *Major scale*--Either ascending OR descending. Use key signature or accidentals, not both (-1). If they draw in no symbols or incorrect symbols they will lose 2 points. 2 points possible for correct clef; only 1 if they make it correctly but put it in the wrong place. 1 pt. for each correct pitch, correct stemming is .5 ea. We will take off 2 points total for incorrect note values.

(Level 3 - continued)

9. *Intervals*--Size of interval only – no need to write M, m, P. For octave we will take “8ve,” “8th,” or “octave.”

Level 4

2. *Intervals*--Sharps or flats are irrelevant – if they write some we won't count off.

3. *Adding bar lines*--Bar lines are worth 2 points a piece. If it is in the wrong place but after the correct number of beats, that will be 1 point. The double bar line needs to be a final double bar line, with the thick line on the outside of the thin line. If they put a single bar line, they get no points; if they put 2 light lines they get 1 point.

4. *Major Scale*--Only one clef needs to be completed, and either ascending OR descending. Use key signature or accidentals, not both (-1). If they draw in no symbols or incorrect symbols they will lose 2 points. 1 pt. for each correct pitch, correct stemming is .5 ea. We will take off 2 points total for incorrect note values. **Also, at Level 4 and above, the student needs to know correct placement for dotted notes.** If it is a space note, the dot goes in the space to the right of the note head. If it is a line note, the dot goes in the space just above that line (-.25 ea.).

5. *Enharmonic notes*--2 points each if everything is correct. If note is right but they use the wrong symbol, it is completely wrong. If the symbol is correct but on wrong side, -1 pt. If the symbol is correct but on the wrong line or space, -1 pt. Stem placement is worth .5 pt.

6. *Identifying key signatures*--If they write “minor” then -1 pt.

8. *Triads*--We will re-word this to say, “Form **root position** triads above each of these notes.” Each missing note in the triad is worth 1 pt.

9. *Ledger lines*--For the last couple of years, the tests have given ledger lines and the student had to label them. However, in the past, they have given the note name and the student had to draw it in correctly above/ or below the staff. They might bring that back on future tests. Make sure your student can do it either way. Also, warn them that there are some in both clefs.

10. *Rests*--If the rest is correct value but put in a different part of the measure than the answer key shows, that is okay unless it is egregious, such as placing a rest between 2 beamed eighth notes. If the example is in 3/4 time and there is a whole measure of rest, they need to put a whole rest in. A dotted half rest will be counted wrong.

This caveat is from Courtney, regarding Levels 5-12:

“My basic philosophy is this. By the time a student is in level 5+, there are certain things that we as teachers should be able to expect from them. They can identify types of notes and rests, and their stems should be correct, etc. While I think it's important to reward students for their hard work, and in some cases partial credit should be given to reflect their knowledge, I don't want to give points just for guessing. In the upper levels, there are some things that we can reasonably require from them without giving gratuitous partial credit. That will not engender excellence in our students.”

Level 5

2. *Categories of orchestral instruments*--will not count off for misspelling

3. *Transposition*--students will miss: 0.5pts per stem if incorrect, 1.0pts if the notes are correct but note values are wrong, 1.5pts if the note is correct but in the wrong measure

4. *Key signatures*--these are right or wrong, no gray area; sharps/flats need to be placed on the correct line/space and in the correct order

(Level 5 continued)

5. *Minor scale*--very clearly explained in directions; student will miss 1.0pts if both key signature and accidentals are used, 0.25pts per dot for missing/misplaced dots (after the note head, in the space of the notes or the space above a line note), 0.25pts per stem for incorrect stems, 1.0 if tonic is correct but wrong scale form is drawn, 2.0pts if the scale is correct but the wrong note value is used, 5.0pts if scale is drawn in wrong direction)

6. *Triad identification*--student scores 1.0pts each for tonic and quality

7. *Drawing intervals*--student scores 1.0pts each for distance and quality

8. *Major scale*--very clearly explained in directions; student will miss 1.0pts if both key signature and accidentals are used, 0.25pts per stem for incorrect stems, either flagged eighths or grouped eights are okay, but if they are grouped illogically (two groups of three and one of two, for example) the student will lose 1.0pts--UNLESS THIS CHANGES A STUDENT'S LEVEL (because this is isn't "wrong" but it really isn't right, either)

9. *Bar lines*--student will lose 1.0pts if the last barline isn't a final barline (one thin, one thick line); if there is a measure that is incorrect and all following barlines are wrong as a result, student will lose points only on the first incorrect barline, provided that there are the correct number of beats between all other barlines (but really the student should see then that the last measure is incorrect and be able to fix it).

Level 6

1. *Key signatures*--these are right or wrong, no gray area; sharps/flats need to be placed on the correct (standard) line/space and in the correct order

2. *Transposition* (from bass to treble clef)--students will miss: 0.5pts per stem if incorrect, 1.0pts if the notes are correct but note values are wrong, 1.5pts if the note is correct but in the wrong measure; if there are 16th notes, they may be beamed in groups of two or four

4. *Minor scale*--very clearly explained in directions; student will miss 1.0pts if both key signature and accidentals are used, 0.25pts per dot for missing/misplaced dots (after the note head, in the space of the notes or the space above a line note), 0.25pts per stem for incorrect stems, 1.0 if tonic is correct but wrong scale form is drawn, 2.0pts if the scale is correct but the wrong note value is used, 5.0pts if scale is drawn in wrong direction)

5. *Orchestral instruments*--will not count off for misspelling

6. *Matching/dates*--use the dates given in the bulletin for periods of musical history, ie Baroque is 1600-1750

7. *Writing intervals*--student scores 1.0pts each for distance and quality, will lose 1.0pts per note if direction is wrong

8. *Triad identification*--student scores 1.0pts each for tonic and quality

9. *Bar lines*--student will lose 1.0pts if the last barline isn't a final barline (one thin, one thick line); if there is a measure that is incorrect and all following barlines are wrong as a result, student will lose points only on the first incorrect barline, provided that there are the correct number of beats between all other barlines (but really the student should see then that the last measure is incorrect and be able to fix it)

10. *Triad inversions*--each is worth two points, but there are three factors here: tonic, quality, inversion; to get full credit a student must have all three correct; student will miss 1.5pts if tonic is wrong (asks for a D Major 1st inversion but student writes a G Major 1st inversion), 1.0pts if the inversion is wrong (student writes D Major root position), 1.0pts if the quality is wrong (student writes d minor 1st inversion); obviously no student can miss more than two points per chord

Level 7

1. *Matching*--use dates from bulletin, ie Classical period is 1750-1820, NOT 1830 or 1825
3. *Sequence*--student must have correct note values and intervals, may sequence higher or lower by step, but must be consistent, not back and forth; student will miss 0.5pts per stem if incorrect
4. *Naming key signatures with tonic given*--these are right or wrong; since there is a tonic note given, partial credit will not be awarded for relative keys.
7. *Orchestral instruments*--will not count off for misspelling
8. *Transposition*--student scores 2.0pts per measure if everything is correct: misplaced/incorrect stems and dots will lose 0.25pts each, correct letter names with incorrect rhythm will lose 1.0pts for each measure, correct rhythm but incorrect letter names will lose 1.0pts per measure; if a mistake is made in one measure that results in incorrect intervallic transposition for the rest of the piece, only the incorrect measure will be counted wrong provided that everything else is accurate
9. *Writing intervals*--student scores 1.0pts each for distance and quality; student should not alter the given note but place accidentals when necessary on the new note, student will lose 1.0pts per note if direction is wrong
10. *Forming triads*--tonic is given, student scores 1.0pts for each of the other two notes; missing/incorrect accidentals will not be given partial credit (if they ask for an augmented triad and give an F, student needs A and C#, but if both new notes are sharped, student will score only one point, for the one correct note)

Level 8

2. *Key signatures and tonics*--these are right or wrong, sharps/flats need to be placed on the correct (standard) line/space and in the correct order; since there is a tonic note specified, partial credit will not be awarded for relative keys
3. *Writing intervals*--student scores 1.0pts each for distance and quality, student will lose 1.0pts per note if direction is wrong
4. *Triad identification*--student scores 1.0pts for tonic name, 0,5pts each for quality and inversion
5. *Transposition*--student scores 2.0pts per measure if everything is correct: misplaced/incorrect stems and dots will lose 0.25pts each, correct letter names with incorrect rhythm will lose 1.0pts for each measure, correct rhythm but incorrect letter names will lose 1.0pts per measure; if a mistake is made in one measure that results in incorrect intervallic transposition for the rest of the piece, only the incorrect measure will be counted wrong provided that everything else is accurate
6. *Melody harmonization*--self-explanatory, but make an obvious difference between major (upper case) and minor (lower case) roman numerals, student will lose 1.0pts each if the quality is incorrect
7. *Matching composers/dates*--use dates from bulletin, Romantic Period is 1820-1900, no other answer will be marked correct
9. *Enharmonic notes*--student will lose 0.5pts if stem is incorrect
10. *Orchestral instruments*--will not count off for misspelling

Level 9

1. *Orchestral instruments*--will not count off for misspelling
2. *Matching composers/dates*--use dates from bulletin, Impressionist Period is 1890-1940, no other answer will be marked correct
3. *Transposition*--student scores 2.0pts per measure if everything is correct: misplaced/incorrect stems and dots will lose 0.25pts each, correct letter names with incorrect rhythm will lose 1.0pts for each measure, correct rhythm but incorrect letter names will lose 1.0pts per measure; if a mistake is made in one measure that results in incorrect intervallic transposition for the rest of the piece, only the incorrect measure will be counted wrong provided that everything else is accurate

(Level 9 continued)

4. *Whole tone scale*--make sure students begin and end on the same note (A to A in this example); student will lose 1.0pts if direction is incorrect, 2.0pts if note values are incorrect, 0.5pts per stem if they are incorrect, 0.5pts if accidentals are incorrectly placed; enharmonic spellings are okay as long as the correct pitches are present
5. *Key signatures and tonics*--these are right or wrong, sharps/flats need to be placed on the correct (standard) line/space and in the correct order; since there is a tonic note specified, partial credit will not be awarded for relative keys
6. *Interval identification*--student scores 1.0pts each for distance, 1.0pts each for quality, will lose 0.5pts for incorrect stem
7. *Melody harmonization*--self-explanatory, but make an obvious difference between major (upper case) and minor (lower case) roman numerals, student will lose 1.0pts each if the quality is incorrect
8. *Forming triads*--student scores 1.0pts for correct notes and inversion, and 1.0pts for the correct quality (so if they ask for an f minor 1st inversion but the student correctly forms an F Major 1st inversion, he will score 1.0pts; if he makes an f minor triad in root position, he will score 1.0pts)

Level 10

1. *Key signatures and tonics*--these are right or wrong, sharps/flats need to be placed on the correct (standard) line/space and in the correct order; since there is a tonic note specified, partial credit will not be awarded for relative keys
3. *Writing intervals*--student scores 1.0pts each for distance and quality, student will lose 1.0pts per note if direction is wrong
4. *Transposition*--student scores 2.0pts per measure if everything is correct: misplaced/incorrect stems and dots will lose 0.25pts each, correct letter names with incorrect rhythm will lose 1.0pts for each measure, correct rhythm but incorrect letter names will lose 1.0pts per measure; if a mistake is made in one measure that results in incorrect intervallic transposition for the rest of the piece, only the incorrect measure will be counted wrong provided that everything else is accurate
5. *Chords*--use either key signature or accidentals, student will lose 1.0pts if they use both; students score 1.0pts for correct notes (0.5pts if accidental is incorrect) and 1.0pts for the correct inversion
6. *Soprano line*--lots of latitude here, make sure students use mostly chord tones on strong beats; at this level I would assume that students will have the correct number of beats in a measure, clefs are drawn correctly, and all stems/beams/dots are correct, etc.; the only thing I should have to really check for is the melody itself
7. *Matching composers/dates*--use dates from bulletin, early Modern Era is first part of the twentieth century, 1900-1940 (no specific dates given in bulletin, this came from the answer key)
9. *Compose a twelve-tone melody*--again, plenty of latitude; all twelve tones must be present, and the chromatic scale is not appropriate; otherwise, see number 6

Level 11

1. *Minor scale*--very clearly explained in directions; please advise students to use whole notes or filled in note heads, because if stems are present they must be correct; at this level, the test requires a key signature and clef to be drawn; student scores 1.0pts for the clef, 1.5pts for the key signature, and 0.5pts per note; missing or incorrect accidentals and incorrect stems will lose 0.25pts each
3. *Orchestral instruments*--students will lose points if more than ten are circled (1.0pts each)
4. *Writing intervals*--student scores 1.0pts each for distance and quality, student will lose 1.0pts per note if direction is wrong

(Level 11 continued)

5. *Harmonic analysis*--student will score 0.5pts each for correct roman numeral, correct quality, and correct inversion; each non-harmonic tone scores 0.5pts, and any incorrect nonharmonic tones will lose 0.5pts; please make an obvious difference between major (upper case) and minor (lower case) roman numerals

6. *Interval inversions*--student scores 1.0pts each for distance and quality

7. *Matching composers*--self-explanatory

8. *Matching musical terms*--self-explanatory

9. *Transposition*--student scores 2.0pts per measure if everything is correct: misplaced/incorrect stems and dots will lose 0.25pts each, correct letter names with incorrect rhythm will lose 1.0pts for each measure, correct rhythm but incorrect letter names will lose 1.0pts per measure; if a mistake is made in one measure that results in incorrect intervallic transposition for the rest of the piece, only the incorrect measure will be counted wrong provided that everything else is accurate

10. *Alto line*--lots of latitude here, make sure students use mostly chord tones on strong beats; at this level I would assume that students will have the correct number of beats in a measure, clefs are drawn correctly, and all stems/beams/dots are correct, etc.; the only thing I should have to really check for is the melody itself

Level 12

2. *Major-minor seventh chords on given notes*--student scores 1.0pts for correct notes and 1.0pts for the correct quality (since the point for correct notes amounts to nothing more than stacking thirds...easy point...partial credit will not be given if some of the accidentals are correct--all three must be correct)

3. *Intervals*--student scores 1.0pts for the correct note and 1.0pts for the correct quality; harmonic or melodic intervals are okay

4. *Figured bass*--student scores 2.0pts for completely correct chords (all notes must be present and in the correct inversion); each parallel fifth or octave will lose 1.0pts

6. *Minor scale*--very clearly explained in directions; please advise students to use whole notes or filled in note heads, because if stems are present they must be correct; at this level, the test requires a key signature and clef to be drawn; student scores 1.0pts for the clef, 1.5pts for the key signature, and 0.5pts per note; missing or incorrect accidentals and incorrect stems will lose 0.25pts each

7. *Harmonic analysis and transposition*--student scores 0.75pts for each blank; each non-harmonic tone scores 0.5pts, and any incorrect nonharmonic tones will lose 0.5pts; please make an obvious difference between major (upper case) and minor (lower case) roman numerals; student scores 1.0pts for correct transposition key signature and 0.75pts per chord in transposition; student will lose 3.0pts if everything is correct but transposed to the wrong key

10. *Matching terms/dates*--use dates from bulletin, Middle Ages is 450-1450, Renaissance is 1450-1600