

GENERAL GRADING GUIDELINES

- These are general guidelines. An Answer Key with specific instructions for your test level will be sent to you.
- TMTA is focusing more on concepts than construction, and the points should confirm that.
- **Please do not put answers for students or cover up their work.**
- Grade tests in **red ink**.
 1. To be uniform, please grade in the following manner.
 - a. Mark an X above the question missed. If possible, have one part of the X touch the incorrect answer. Put the "minus points" in the right margin.
 - b. At the bottom of each page, total the points missed on that page.
 - c. At the bottom of the last page, be sure to add the bonus points.
 - d. Add/subtract the total points of each page at the bottom of the last page, and then write the final score at the top of page 1.
 - e. Accuracy is essential in figuring and recording scores. If possible, have someone double check your arithmetic – especially if you have been grading late at night.
 2. The student grade level should be placed on the test, but no points will be deducted if the grade is missing.
 3. Please limit any comments made on the test. Positive comments only!
 4. If inappropriate comments or drawings are found on a test, scan or photograph the page(s) and email the document to the Theory Coordinator. (Scan in grayscale and review the scanned image to make sure the marks are visible when you email it to the Theory Coordinator.) Grade the rest of the association's tests, but do not mail the tests back until you hear from the Theory Coordinator. The Theory Coordinator and Re-Grading Consultant will determine if there are to be any point deductions.
 5. NPC = No Partial Credit for a test answer, particularly scales, key signatures, and chords.

Recording of Grades on the TMTA-SA Theory Test Score Sheets

1. Enter each student's score in the TMTA database per the instructions sent by the TMTA Theory Coordinator.
2. Using whole numbers only (no fractions or decimals), enter the scores on the TMTA Score Sheet and save. Fractions are dropped, not rounded up or down.
3. Mark any failing test with a **No Pass on the test** regardless of the exact score.
4. In the TMTA database, do not post the actual score. Enter **69** for every No-Pass. Do NOT put NP in the database.
5. Save the scores and notify by email that the grades have been posted to the: Local Chair and Theory Coordinator.
6. If you discover any of the following, contact the Theory Coordinator:
 - there is no score sheet for the grader's test level for the named association;
 - the student's name is not on the score sheet;
 - the student's name spelling on the test and score sheet differ;
 - the student's grade level on the test is not correct;

Hold the association's tests until all student identification or grade level issues are resolved.

Once the matter is resolved, mail all the association's tests back together.

All tests scores are to be recorded.

SPECIFICS of GRADING

Note Stems

Stem Direction and Length

- No deduction for third line stems.
- An octave length is acceptable on all levels.
- A note head on line 3 may have the stem drawn up or down.

Grading

- No deduction for stem length
- Levels 1-12: For each stem infraction (direction, wrong side), a ¼ point deduction will be made for the first 4 infractions. A maximum of 1 point will be deducted on a test for stem infractions. **No** deduction will be taken in the melodic dictation question for stem infractions.

Note Heads

Do not penalize students who try to shade notes like a printer, especially on half and whole notes.

For quarter notes not filled-in, deduct ½ point only, for the **first occurrence**.

All Levels: Neatness of drawing notes is a **motor skill development**. Do not deduct points.

Flags

The flag(s) of an eighth, sixteenth, etc. note must always be on the right.

For an **incorrectly placed** flag, deduct 1/4 point up to a total of one point. Mark the others.

Sixteenth note flags may or may not touch the ends – do not deduct points for either.

Dots

The dot(s) of a note must always be on the right. For line notes, the dot should be placed in the space above.

For an **incorrectly placed** dot, deduct 1/4 point up to a total of one point. Mark the others.

Clef Signs

Treble and Bass Clefs should be recognizable. There will be no partial deductions.

Brace

A brace must be present and recognizable. There will be no partial deductions.

Double Bar Line

EITHER two thin lines OR a thin and thick line will be accepted.

Rests

Rests should be recognizable

The half and whole rest must be drawn in the third space.

No credit for half and whole rests that fill the entire third space.

It is not necessary to draw the line below a half rest or above a whole rest when the rest is drawn on the staff, but no deduction if a line is drawn below a half rest or above a whole rest.

No deductions for placement of quarter, eighth, or sixteenth rests.

Accidentals

All accidentals must be placed in front of (before) and on the line or space of the note they affect.

Only “x” is accepted for a double sharp. Deduct ½ point only, for the first occurrence. A student writing ## understands the concept but has not learned the correct sign. The correct sign is “x”.

Scales

Levels 3-12: Scales are either right or wrong. No partial credit.

Do not count off for upper or lower case on any level for the name of the scale or note names.

Key Signatures

All test levels: Key signatures must have the correct number of sharps and flats. Placement must be correct.

No credit is to be given for partially correct number of sharps or flats or for partially correct placement.

Triads

Triads must have the correct accidentals for credit. **No partial credit.**

Natural signs are not required in triads spelled with letters.

Intervals, Circle of Fifths, Chords, and Figured Bass Symbols

If the student does not place the suffix by the number (e.g., 3 instead of 3rd), no deduction should be made.

Either uppercase or lowercase letters may be used, but all accidental signs must be correct.

Roman numerals must reflect the correct case (upper or lower) because of function and must be recognizable. The “i” must be dotted for lower case, or it is considered upper case. Lines do not have to be drawn above and below the letter to indicate upper case.

A **V** is always uppercase, unless it is preceded by a lowercase “i” or followed by a lowercase “i” or “ii”.

If the Roman numeral is correct, but the inversion is incorrectly labeled, the student will receive ½ credit for the answer unless the answer key states “NPC.” If the Roman numeral is incorrect, the full deduction is taken.

Rhythm

Any generally accepted system of counting will be counted as correct.

Composition (Upper Grades)

Follow the answer key guidelines.

Levels 11 and 12:

- For **V⁷ – I** errors, use stamp "See TMTA Student Theory Glossary, **GXI-3**"

For **melodic minor melody writing** errors use stamp "A raised 6th and 7th must ascend to tonic."

Four-Part Harmony

Follow the answer key guidelines.

Levels 11 and 12:

- For **V⁷ – I** errors, use stamp "See TMTA Student Theory Glossary, **GXI-3**"
- For **melodic minor melody writing** errors use stamp "A raised 6th and 7th must ascend to tonic."

Melodic Dictation

Levels 5-12: Grade by interval and rhythm.

No deduction will be taken in the melodic dictation question for stem infractions.

Bonus Questions

No deduction for any incorrect answer.

Grades 1-6: No partial credit. It is either all correct for 1 point or wrong for 0 points.

Grade 7: Award ½ point credit for correctly spelled chord. Total possible is 1 point.

Grades 8-12: Students can earn 0, ½ or 1 point according to the score written in red ink by the association monitor.

Indicate at the bottom of the last page that you included the bonus point.

Final Notes

Many areas are not specifically covered in this guideline. Each grader must grade according to the point value of the question, and the elementary skill level or advanced skill level that the question is asking. The specific Answer Key for your test level will give you guidance.

We are teaching basic theory to elementary and pre-college level students. Rules that are outlined here are within the common practice of music theory. If questions arise or suggestions become apparent during grading, contact the Theory Coordinator.

The main purpose of the grading guidelines is to bring consistency between test level grading, to assist graders, and to have a platform of support for graders and teachers.

Graders: If you have studied the Answer Key for your level but still have questions about how to grade a specific item, contact your Head Grader before you begin grading.

Head Graders: If you have questions, contact the Theory Coordinator.