

## REPRESENTATION

**key** — major/minor key designation

## DESCRIPTION

For many tasks it is helpful to identify explicitly the prevailing key of a passage or work. The **key** tandem interpretation permits an explicit analytic judgement of key to be encoded in a Humdrum representation.

Key tandem interpretations consist of a single asterisk, followed by a single upper- or lower-case letter (A-G), followed by one or more sharps (#) or flats (-), followed by a colon character. Upper-case letters are designate major keys whereas lower-case letters designate minor keys. (No other modes can be encoded using this tandem interpretation for key indications.) By way of example, the following tandem interpretation specifies the key of F-sharp minor:

\*f#:

Successive key interpretations supercede one other. That is, if a key of C major is indicated, followed some measures later by a key of G major tandem interpretation, then the preceding C major designation is considered to be entirely superceded.

The key tandem interpretation also permits the explicit encoding of undefined or unknown keys (\*?:) and key-less or atonal passages (\*X:).

## SIGNIFIERS

The following table summarizes the mappings of signifiers and signifieds for keys.

A-G	major diatonic key signifiers
a-g	minor diatonic key signifiers
#	sharp key signifier
-	flat key signifier
X	atonal key signifier
?	unknown key signifier
:	end of key interpretation delimiter

*Summary of key Signifiers*

## EXAMPLES

Several examples of key indications are given below:

*C:	key of C major
*c:	key of $\tilde{C}$ minor
*F#:	key of F-sharp major
*B--:	key of B double-flat major
*X:	atonal passage
*?:	key unknown or undefined

*Examples of key Interpretations*

**SEE ALSO**

**key signature** (3)