

# **PHYS1406: Physics of Sound and Music**

**Spring 2021**

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# Topics we'll cover this semester

- Preliminaries: Basic math, music, and physics terminology
- Physics of oscillations and waves
- Production of sound (instruments and voice)
- Perception of sound (hearing, loudness, pitch & timbre)
- Auditorium and room acoustics; electrical reproduction of sound
- Musical scales and tuning systems (standardization of musical notes)

**Why are you in this class?**

**What questions about sound & music would you like to know the answer to?**

# What is sound? What differentiates speech, music, & noise?

- Sound is a **pressure wave** in air (or some other medium, which could be a liquid or solid).
- The pressure wave consists of alternating regions of **compression** and **expansion** of the air molecules.
- **Energy is transferred** from the source of sound to our ears, while the individual air molecules just oscillate back-and-forth in place.
- noise: chaotic, unorganized sound
- speech & music: organized sound
- **musical notes** have a **definite pitch** (low or high), while noise does not

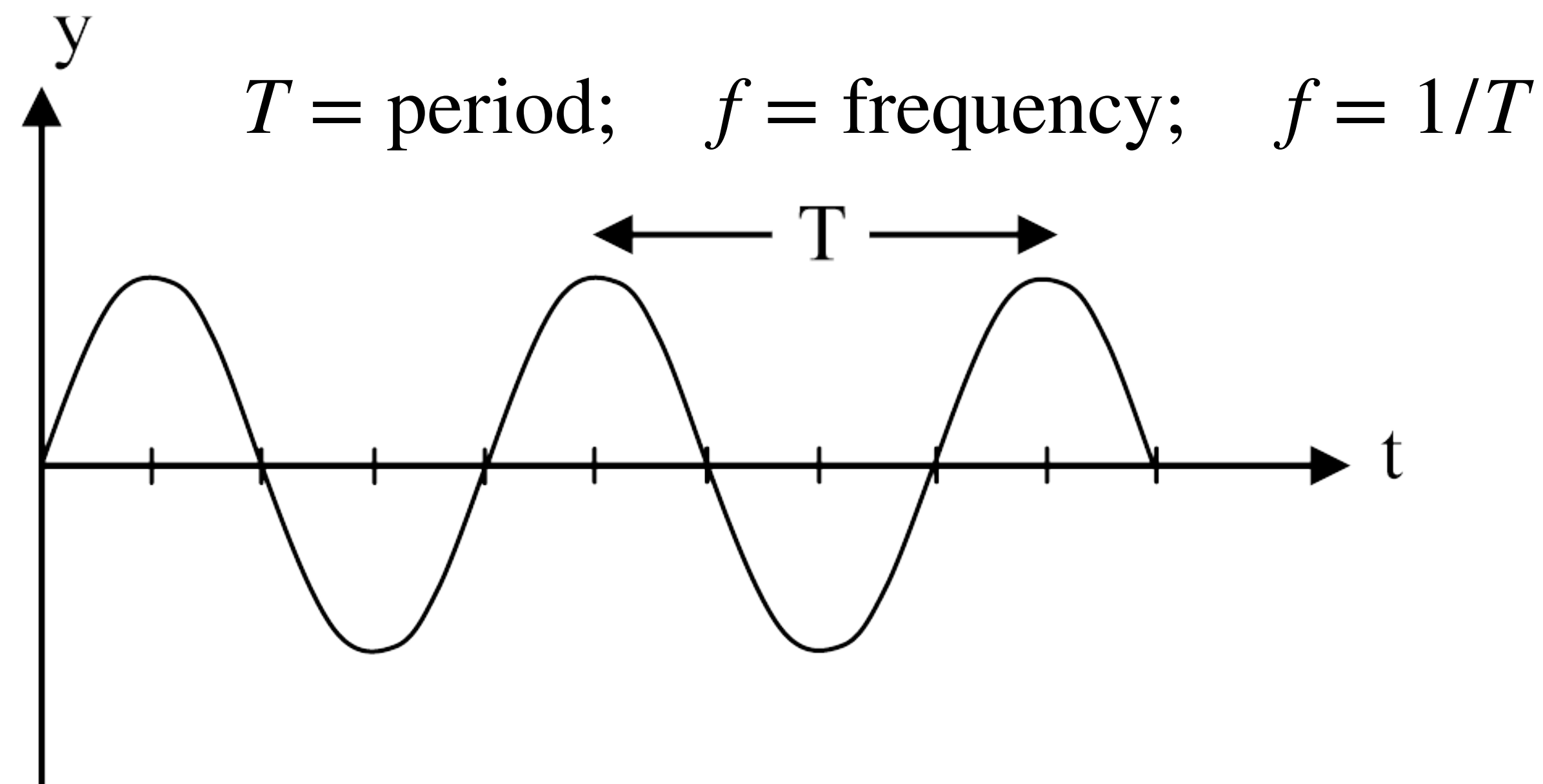
# Demos: sound measuring devices & musical instruments

- Measuring devices
  - **oscilloscope**: shows how the sound pressure wave changes in time
  - **FFT analyzer**: shows how much sound energy is associated with different pitch components
  - **spectrogram**: shows how the pitch content of a sound changes in time
- Musical instruments and sound-making devices:
  - whistle, singing, speaking
  - penny whistle, recorder, funny plastic recorder, train whistle, other wind instruments
  - plucked guitar string, bowed violin string
  - bell, drum, shakers, marimba bar, other percussion instruments
  - ratchet, crumpled paper, applause

# Range of human hearing

<https://www.szynalski.com/tone-generator/>

- Normal range: 20 Hz - 20,000 Hz
- What is frequency? Number of repetitions (oscillations, cycles, ...) in a given time interval
- Example: Heart rate: 70 beats/1 minute = 1.14 beats/sec
- Hertz (Hz): 1 Hz = 1 cycle/sec



# 1. Preliminaries

# Basic math review

- Entering numbers on a calculator: What’s the value of  $1/2\pi$ ? **Ans:**  $1 \div (2 \times \pi) = 0.16$  not  $1 \div 2 \times \pi = 1.57$
- Fractions: What’s the value of 2 divided by  $3/2$ ? **Ans:**  $2 \div (3/2) = 2 \times (2/3) = 4/3 = 1.33$
- Powers (exponential notation): What’s the value of  $2^4$ ?  $10^3$ ?  $10^{-2}$ ?

**Ans:**  $2^4 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16$ ;  $10^3 = 100$ ;  $10^{-2} = 1/10^2 = 0.01$

- Prefixes:

nano	micro	milli	centi	kilo	mega	giga	tera
$10^{-9}$	$10^{-6}$	$10^{-3}$	$10^{-2}$	$10^3$	$10^6$	$10^9$	$10^{12}$

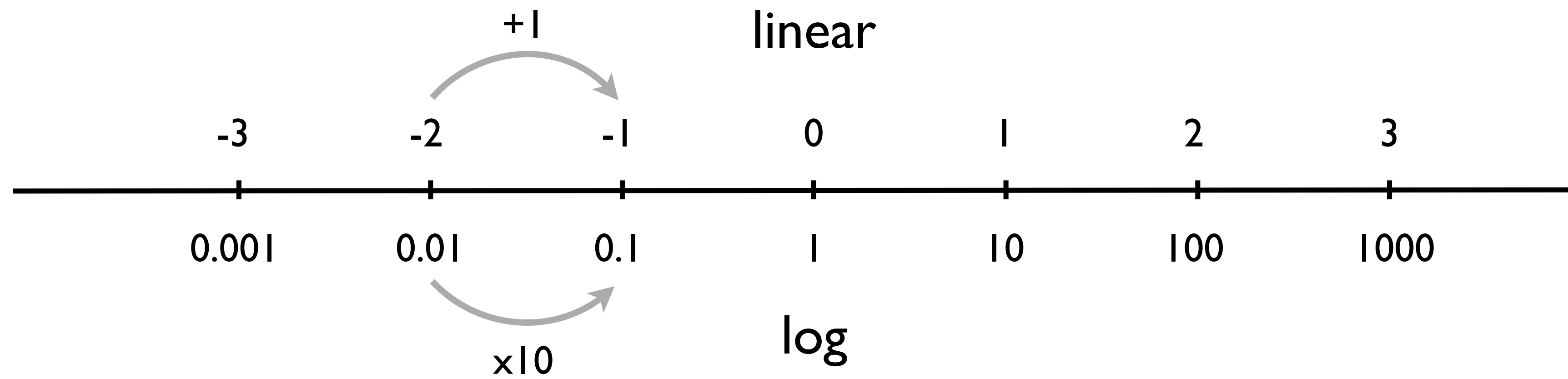
- Comparing two numbers: Compare the heights of two people, one who is 5.5 ft tall versus another who is 72 inches all.  
  
**Ans:** First convert 5.5 ft to 66 inches. Then subtract ( $72 \text{ in} - 66 \text{ in} = 6 \text{ in}$ ) or divide ( $72 \text{ in}/66 \text{ in} = 1.09$ ) or calculate percent difference ( $100 \times (72 - 66)/66 = 9 \%$ ). For music applications, taking ratios or percent differences are most convenient and useful
- Converting units: The speed of sound in air at room temperature (25 celsius) is 346 m/s. What is its value in ft/s? miles/s?

**Ans:** Using the conversion factors ( $1 \text{ m} = 3.28 \text{ ft}$  and  $1 \text{ mi} = 5280 \text{ ft}$ ), we find:

$$346 \frac{\text{m}}{\text{s}} \times \frac{3.28 \text{ ft}}{\text{m}} = 1135 \frac{\text{ft}}{\text{s}} \approx 1000 \frac{\text{ft}}{\text{s}} \text{ and } 1135 \frac{\text{ft}}{\text{s}} \times \frac{1 \text{ mi}}{5280 \text{ ft}} = 0.21 \frac{\text{mi}}{\text{s}} \approx \frac{1 \text{ mi}}{5 \text{ s}}$$



# Linear vs logarithmic scales

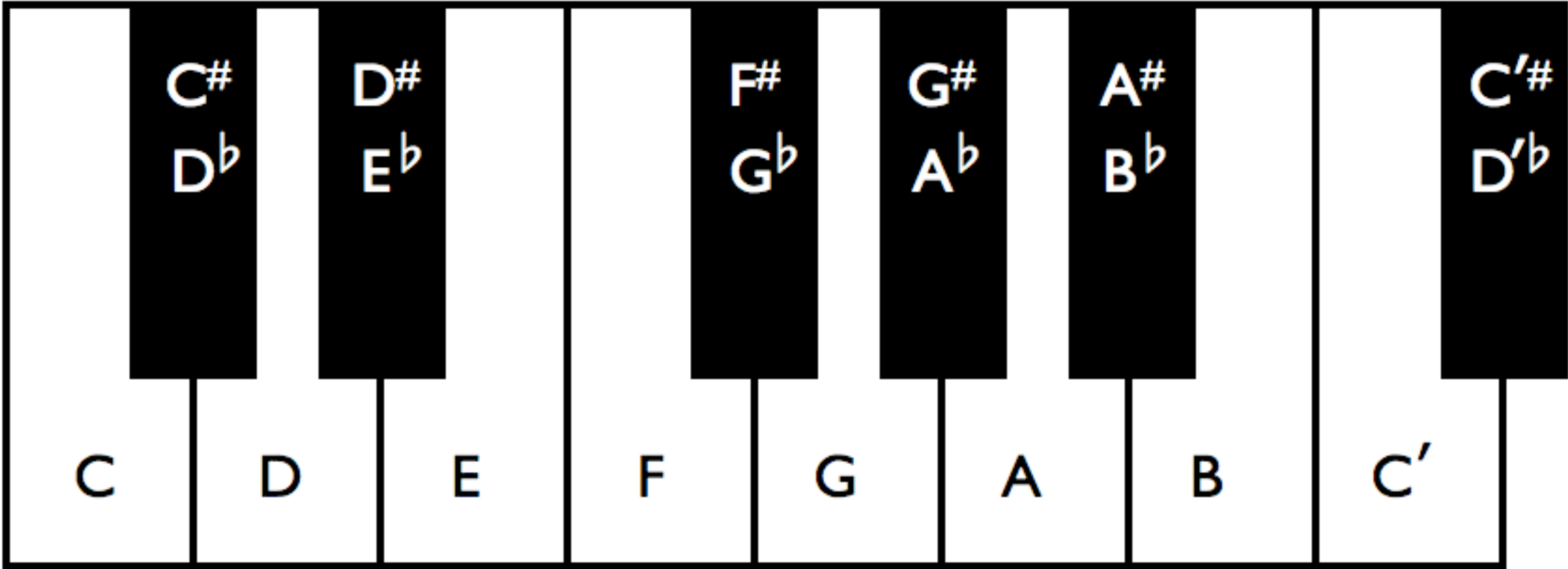


# Music terminology

- Pitch: fundamental frequency
- Timbre: richness of a sound, associated with contributions from higher harmonics. It's what makes a guitar sound different from a flute, etc., even though they are all playing the same musical note.
- Octave: Factor of 2 in frequency (e.g., C3 to C4)
- Chromatic, diatonic, and pentatonic scales: divide the octave into 12, 7, and 5 pieces (intervals)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaMA8LWW3C0> (pentatonic scale; all black keys in C-major scale)
- Equal temperament: musical scale where all semitone intervals are equal to one another (6% higher in frequency)
- Musical intervals:
  - **fifth** (C to G; 7 semitones; frequency ratio =  $3/2$ ), **fourth** (C to F; 5 semitones; frequency ratio =  $4/3$ ), **major third** (C to E; 4 semitones; frequency ratio =  $5/4$ ), **minor third** (E to G; 3 semitones; frequency ratio =  $6/5$ )
- Chord: Major chord C-E-G

# Chromatic and diatonic scales

C - C# - D- Eb - E - F - F# - G - Ab - A- Bb - B - C'



do – re – mi – fa – sol – la – ti – do

# Physics terminology

- Position, displacement: position = location of an object in space, specified by its distance from a reference point and its direction relative to reference axes; displacement = change in position  $\Delta x$ ; units for both are m, in, ft, mi, ...
- Time, duration: time = reading on a clock; duration = difference in times  $\Delta t$ ; units for both are s, min, hr, year, ...
- Velocity, speed, acceleration: velocity = displacement/duration; speed = distance traveled/duration; acceleration = change in velocity/duration; velocity and acceleration have both magnitude and direction; units of velocity and speed are m/s, mi/hr, ...; units of acceleration are m/s<sup>2</sup>, mph/s, ...
  - (i) uniform circular motion: changing position, velocity, and acceleration even though speed = constant
  - (ii) mass on a spring: changing position, velocity, and acceleration; velocity = 0 at the turning points of the motion; acceleration = 0 at the equilibrium position where the speed is greatest
- Force, mass, Newton's 2nd law: force = that which produces an acceleration; mass = resistance that an object offers to changes in its state of motion;  $a = F/m$  or  $F = ma$  (units of force are Newtons or lbs; units of mass are grams or kilograms)
- Density, pressure, atmospheric pressure: density = mass/volume or mass/length; pressure = force/area; units of pressure are N/m<sup>2</sup> or lb/in<sup>2</sup> = psi; 1 atm = 10<sup>5</sup> N/m<sup>2</sup> = 14.5 psi

# Exercise

- Calculate the pressure exerted by a 120 lb woman standing on the floor, wearing stilettos having approximately circular heels with radius 0.25 in. Compare to the pressure exerted by a 10,000 lb elephant whose four feet are approximately circles with radius 10 in.

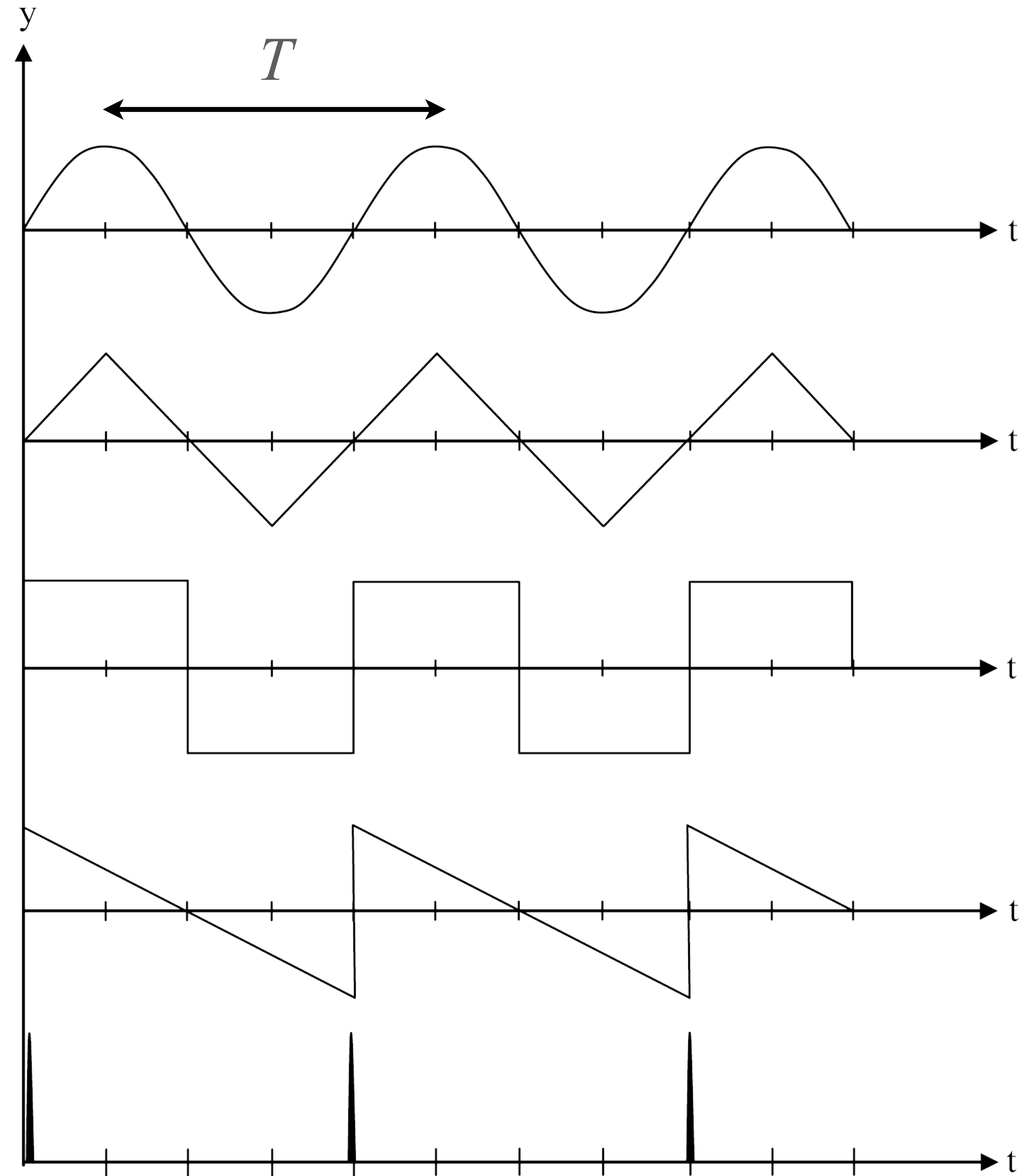
# 2. Oscillations

# Periodic motion

- Oscillation:
- Examples?
- Period ( $T$ ), frequency ( $f$ ):
  - What are the periods of sound waves corresponding to the range of human hearing?
  - **Ans:**
- Amplitude:
- Waveform:

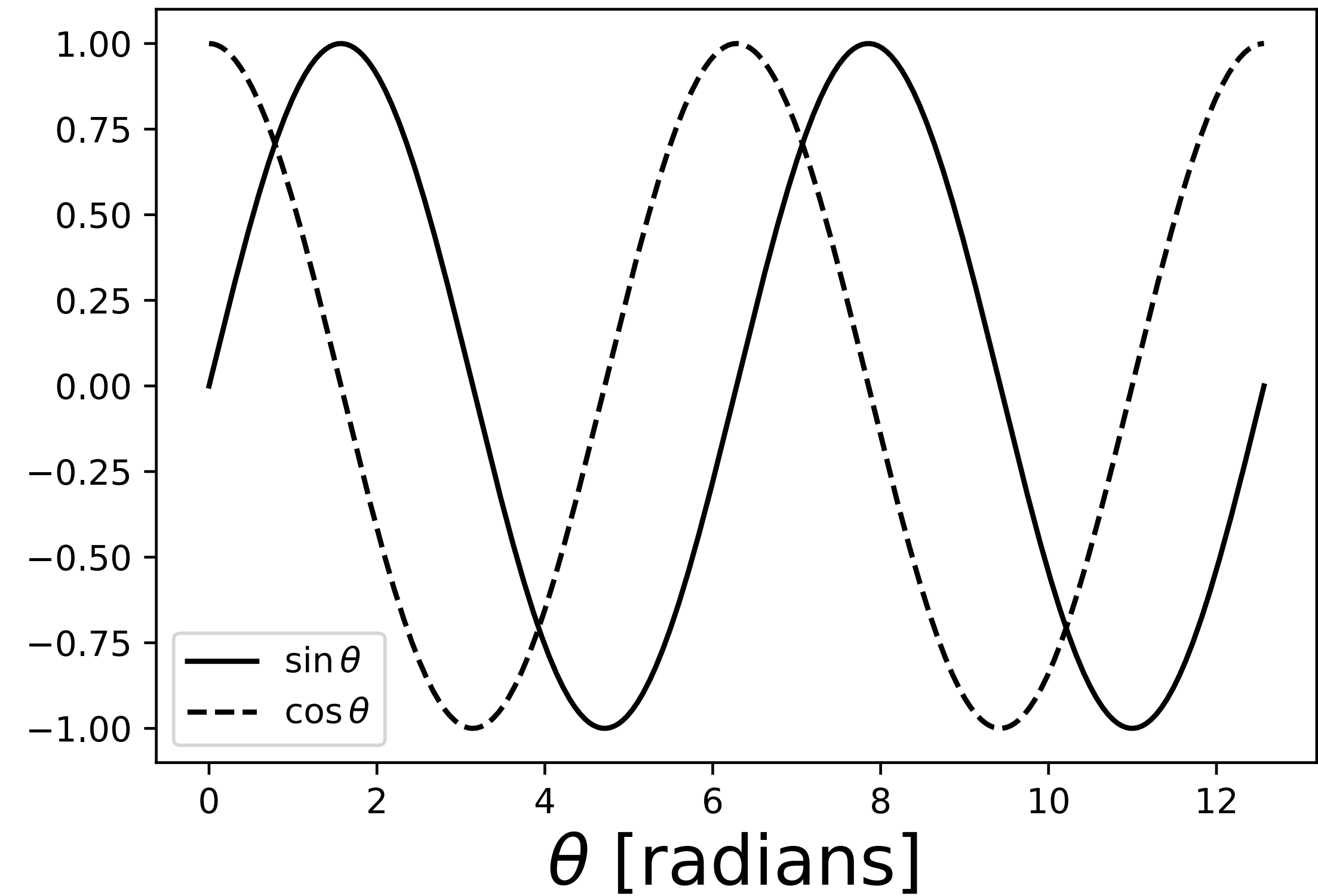
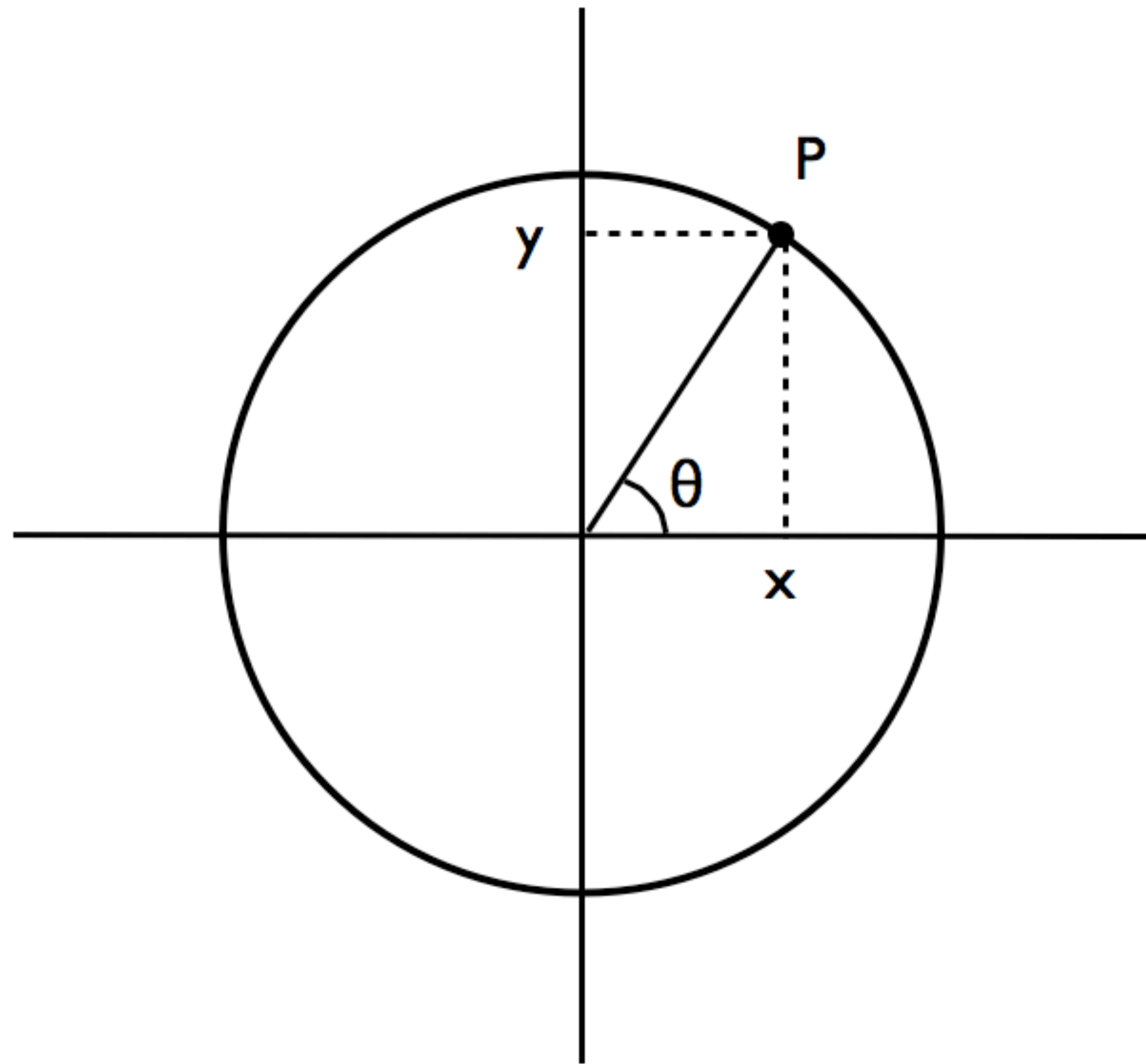
# Different waveforms

- Demo: Compare sounds





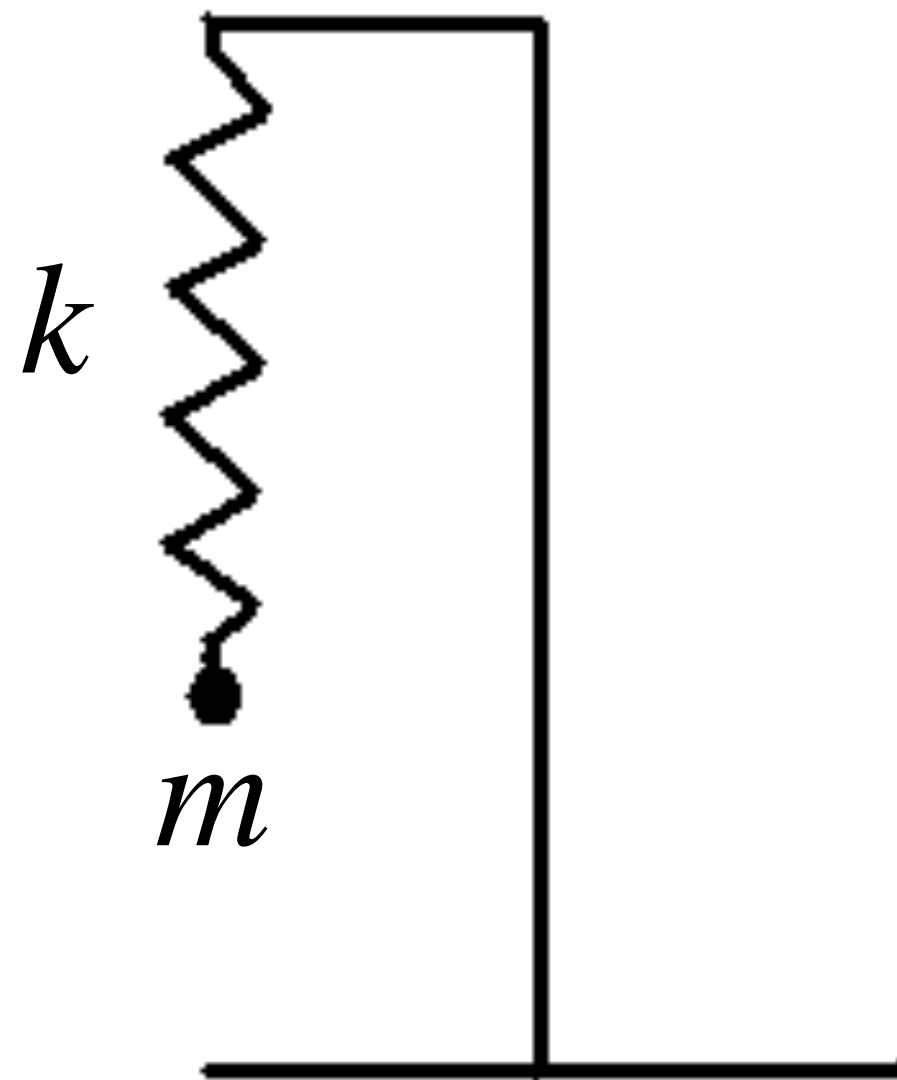
# Simple harmonic motion (SHM)



# Examples of SHM

- Mass on a spring

$$T = 2\pi\sqrt{\frac{m}{k}}, \quad f = \frac{1}{2\pi}\sqrt{\frac{k}{m}}$$



- Swinging pendulum bob

$$T = 2\pi\sqrt{\frac{L}{g}}, \quad f = \frac{1}{2\pi}\sqrt{\frac{g}{L}}$$

