

## LESSON 1

### MAJOR AND MINOR KEY SIGNATURES

The **KEY SIGNATURE** for a musical composition is found at the beginning, next to the clef signs.

The **KEY SIGNATURE** indicates the following:

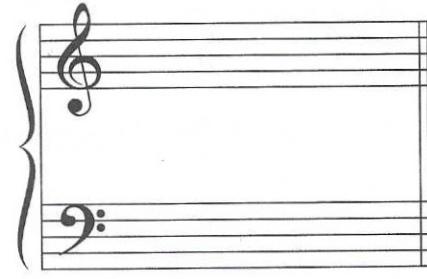
1. The **key or tonality** of the music.
2. **Which notes in the music receive sharps or flats.**



**SHARPS**



**FLATS**



**NO SHARPS  
OR FLATS  
(Key of C Major)**

If the key signature has **SHARPS**, they will be written in this order, on these lines and spaces. This is called the **ORDER OF SHARPS**.

**FCGDAEB**

A saying to help you remember this order is:

**Fat Cats Go Down Alleys Eating Bologna**

If a key signature has one sharp, it will be F#. If a key signature has two sharps, they will be F# and C#, etc.

1. Fill in the blanks.

- If a key signature has two sharps, they will be F# and C#.
- If a key signature has three sharps, they will be F#, C#, and G#.
- If a key signature has one sharp, it will be F#.
- If a key signature has six sharps, they will be F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, and E#.

2. Draw the Order of Sharps three times in both clefs.

The image shows two sets of musical staves. The top set is in treble clef, and the bottom set is in bass clef. Each set contains three identical measures. Each measure starts with a sharp sign (F#) and adds one more sharp each time (C# at the second measure, G# at the third). The notes are quarter notes, and the time signature is common time (indicated by a 'C').

To determine which Major key a group of sharps represents, find and name the last sharp (the sharp furthest to the right), then go up a half step from that sharp. The note which is a half step above the last sharp is the name of the Major key.

This image shows two sets of musical staves, one in treble clef and one in bass clef. Both staves begin with a sharp sign (F#) and continue with two more sharp signs (C# and G#).

Three sharps: F#, C#, G#

Last sharp is G#

A half step above G# is A

Key of A Major

3. Name these Major keys. The first one is given.

A handwritten musical staff consisting of two staves: treble clef on top and bass clef on bottom. The staff is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines. Each measure contains a sharp sign (#) indicating a key signature. Below the staff, the names of the keys are written under each measure: D Major, C<sup>#</sup> M, B M, A M, E M, and C M. The first measure is explicitly labeled "D Major".

To determine which sharps are in a Major key, find the sharp which is a half step below the name of the key. Name all the sharps from the Order of Sharps up to and including that sharp.

Key of D Major

A half step below D is C<sup>#</sup>

Name all sharps from the  
Order of Sharps up to and  
including C<sup>#</sup>



F<sup>#</sup> and C<sup>#</sup>

4. Draw the key signatures for these keys in both clefs.

A handwritten musical staff consisting of two staves: treble clef on top and bass clef on bottom. The staff is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines. Each measure contains a sharp sign (#) indicating a key signature. The sharps are placed at different positions across the measures, corresponding to the keys G Major, F<sup>#</sup> Major, A Major, B Major, E Major, and C<sup>#</sup> Major.

G Major    F<sup>#</sup> Major    A Major    B Major    E Major    C<sup>#</sup> Major

If a key signature has flats, they will be in the following order, written on these lines and spaces. This is called the **ORDER OF FLATS**.



### THE ORDER OF FLATS

The Order of Flats can be memorized this way:

### BEAD Gum Candy Fruit

If a key signature has one flat, it will be B-flat. If it has two flats, they will be B-flat and E-flat, etc.

5. Fill in the blanks.

- If a key signature has two flats, they are B<sup>b</sup> and E<sup>b</sup>.
- If a key signature has four flats, they are B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>, and D<sup>b</sup>.
- If a key signature has three flats, they are B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b</sup>, and A<sup>b</sup>.
- If a key signature has five flats, they are B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>, D<sup>b</sup>, and G<sup>b</sup>.

6. Draw the Order of Flats three times in both clefs.

To determine which Major key a group of flats represents, name the next to last flat.

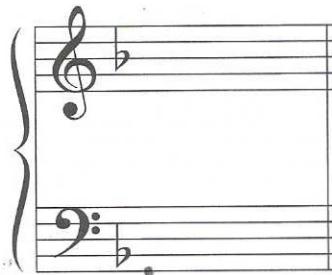


Three flats: B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , A $\flat$

Next to last flat is E $\flat$

Key of E $\flat$  Major

The key signature for F Major has to be memorized. It has one flat: B $\flat$ .



### KEY SIGNATURE FOR F MAJOR

7. Name these Major keys.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The top line shows a key signature of five flats, followed by a blank line, then a key signature of two flats, a blank line, a key signature of one flat, a blank line, and finally a key signature of four flats. Below the staff, the student has handwritten the names of the corresponding major keys: C $\flat$  M, B $\flat$  M, A $\flat$  M, D M, F M, E $\flat$  M, and G $\flat$  M.

To determine which flats are needed for a key, name all the flats from the Order of Flats up to and including the name of the key, then add one more.

Key of E♭ Major

Name all flats from the Order of Flats up to and including E♭, then add one more.

B♭, E♭, A♭



8. Draw the key signatures for these keys in both clefs. The first one is given.

B♭ Major A♭ Major D♭ Major C♭ Major E♭ Major F Major G♭ Major

9. Memorize these key signatures.

C Major	No sharps or flats
G Major	F♯
D Major	F♯ C♯
A Major	F♯ C♯ G♯
E Major	F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯
B Major	F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯
F♯ Major	F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯ E♯
C♯ Major	F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯ E♯ B♯
F Major	B♭
B♭ Major	B♭ E♭
E♭ Major	B♭ E♭ A♭
A♭ Major	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭
D♭ Major	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭
G♭ Major	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ C♭
C♭ Major	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ C♭ F♭

Each Major key has a **RELATIVE MINOR**. The relative minor is found by going down three half steps from the name of the Major key.



**KEY SIGNATURE FOR D MAJOR  
THREE HALF STEPS BELOW D IS B  
KEY OF B MINOR**

One way to determine whether a composition is in the Major or minor key is to look at the last note. It is usually the same as the name of the key. For example, if the music is in e minor will probably end on E. Also, look at the music to find the note around which the music appears to be centered; which note appears to be the main note of the piece.

**PARALLEL** Major and minor keys have the same name, such as C Major and c minor.

10. Write the name of the relative minor for each of the following Major keys. Determine the relative minor by going down three half steps from the name of the Major key. The first one is given.

a. G Major	e minor
b. E♭ Major	C♯ m
c. C Major	A minor
d. F Major	D m
e. B♭ Major	A♭ m
f. D Major	B m
g. A♭ Major	F m

11. Write the name of the relative Major for each of the following minor keys. Determine the relative Major by going up three half steps. The first one is given.

a. d minor	F Major
b. e minor	G M
c. f minor	A♭ M
d. c minor	E♭ M
e. a minor	C M
f. g minor	B♭ M
g. b minor	D M

12. Name these minor keys. Determine the Major key, then go down three half steps to find the relative minor. The first one is given.

Four sets of blank musical staves (G clef and Bass clef) for identifying minor keys. Below each set of staves are handwritten labels:

- d minor
- b m
- c m
- g m
- f m
- e m
- a m

13. Draw the key signatures for these minor keys in both clefs. Go up three half steps to find the relative Major, then write the key signature for that Major key. The first one is given.

Four sets of blank musical staves (G clef and Bass clef) for drawing key signatures. Below each set of staves are handwritten labels:

- e minor
- c minor
- g minor
- d minor
- b minor
- f minor
- a minor

14. Memorize these key signatures.

a minor	no sharps or flats	relative of C Major
e minor	F♯	relative of G Major
b minor	F♯ C♯	relative of D Major
d minor	B♭	relative of F Major
g minor	B♭ E♭	relative of B♭ Major
c minor	B♭ E♭ A♭	relative of E♭ Major
f minor	B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭	relative of A♭ Major