First Steps.

A gentle start: reading notes and rhythm, scales and your first chords.

Free printable · A2

RHYTHM

Note & Rest Values

NOTE	REST	NAME	BEATS IN 4/4
		Semibreve	4 beats
		Minim	2 beats
		Crotchet	1 beat
		Quaver	½ beats
		Semiquaver	¼ beats

A dot adds half the note's value: a dotted minim = 2 + 1 = 3 beats.

Time signatures

Top number: how many beats in a bar. Bottom number: which note gets the beat (4 = crotchet, 8 = quaver).

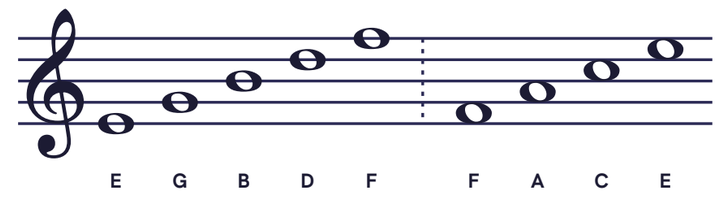
TIME	WHAT IT MEANS	USED FOR
4/4	4 crotchet beats per bar	Most pop, rock and hip-hop C (common time)
3/4	3 crotchet beats per bar	Waltz
2/4	2 crotchet beats per bar	March, polka
6/8	6 quavers, felt as 2 beats of 3	Lilting, rolling (compound time)

FOUNDATIONS

Note Names on the Stave

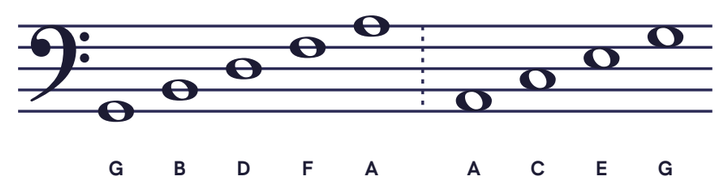
Read from the bottom line up.

Treble clef



Lines: **Every Good Boy Does Fine** · Spaces: **FACE**

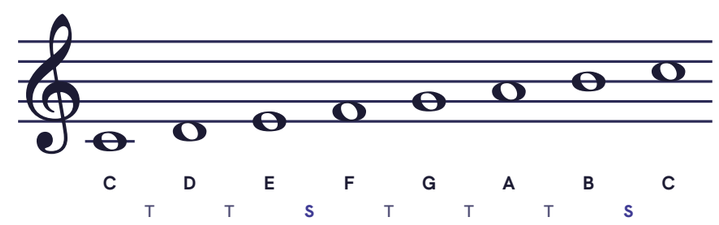
Bass clef



Lines: **Good Boys Do Fine Always** · Spaces: **All Cows Eat Grass**

SCALES & KEYS

Major Scale



T = tone (2 semitones), S = semitone

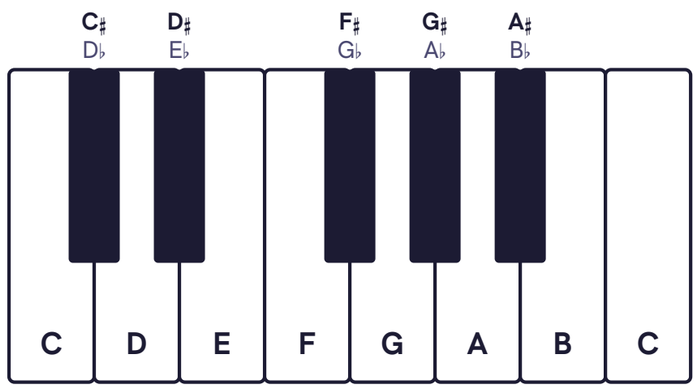
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tonic	Supertonic	Mediant	Subdominant	Dominant	Submediant	Leading note

Every major key uses the notes of its major scale. C major uses only white keys, so it has no sharps or flats.

FOUNDATIONS

Piano Keyboard

One octave from C. Each black key has two names: the sharp of the white key to its left and the flat of the white key to its right.



PRACTICE TIP

Say the note names out loud as you read.

FOUNDATIONS

Intervals

The distance between two notes, counted in semitones.

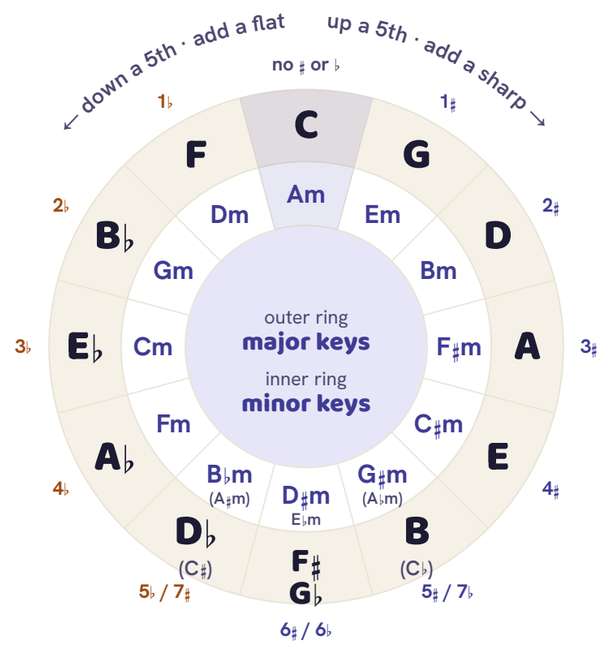
	INTERVAL	SEMITONES	FROM C	SOUND
P1	Unison	0	C–C	consonant
m2	Minor 2nd	1	C–D♭	dissonant
M2	Major 2nd	2	C–D	dissonant
m3	Minor 3rd	3	C–E♭	consonant
M3	Major 3rd	4	C–E	consonant
P4	Perfect 4th	5	C–F	consonant
A4 / d5	Tritone	6	C–F♯	dissonant
P5	Perfect 5th	7	C–G	consonant
m6	Minor 6th	8	C–A♭	consonant
M6	Major 6th	9	C–A	consonant
m7	Minor 7th	10	C–B♭	dissonant
M7	Major 7th	11	C–B	dissonant
P8	Octave	12	C–C	consonant

The perfect 4th counts as consonant here; in some classical harmony it's treated as a dissonance.

SCALES & KEYS

Circle of Fifths

Clockwise, each key is a perfect 5th higher and adds one sharp. Counter-clockwise, each is a 5th lower and adds one flat.



Where a position has two names, the one with fewer sharps or flats is the main label and the other is smaller. At 6 o'clock both have six, so both are the same size.

CHORDS & HARMONY

Chord Formulas

Numbers are scale degrees of the major scale built on the root.

SYMBOL	CHORD	FORMULA	NOTES
C	Major	1 3 5	C E G
Cm	Minor	1 ♭3 5	C E♭ G
C° · Cdim	Diminished	1 ♭3 ♭5	C E♭ G♭
C+ · Caug	Augmented	1 3 ♯5	C E G♯
Csus2	Sus2	1 2 5	C D G
Csus4	Sus4	1 4 5	C F G
SEVENTH CHORDS			
C7	Dominant 7th	1 3 5 ♭7	C E G B♭
Cmaj7 · CΔ7	Major 7th	1 3 5 7	C E G B
Cm7 · C–7	Minor 7th	1 ♭3 5 ♭7	C E♭ G B♭
Cø7 · Cm7♭5	Half-diminished 7th	1 ♭3 ♭5 ♭7	C E♭ G♭ B♭
C°7 · Cdim7	Diminished 7th	1 ♭3 ♭5 𝄫7	C E♭ G♭ B𝄫

♭ lowers a degree by a semitone, ♯ raises it.

PRACTICE TIP

Practise slowly. Speed comes from playing it right, not from playing it fast.

trebly

Read it. Write it. Hear it.

Free note-reading games and lessons at **trebly.fun**

Make your own poster
trebly.fun/posters