Music Theory Essentials.

The core references for anyone learning music.

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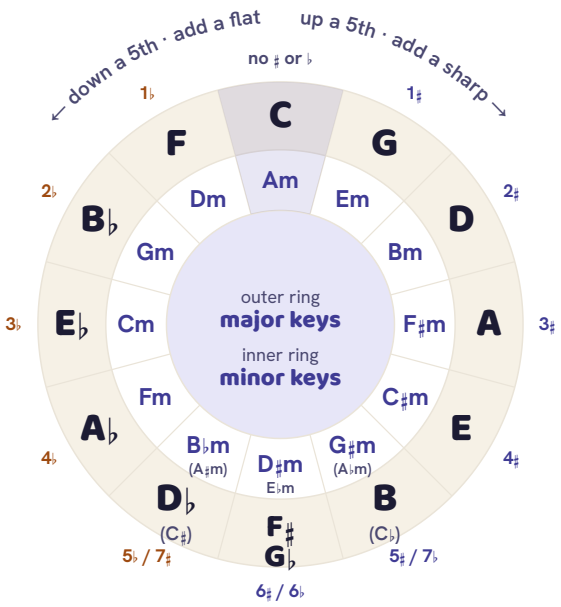
SCALES & KEYS

Circle of Fifths

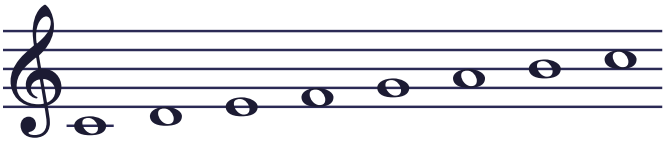
Clockwise, each key is a perfect 5th higher and adds one sharp. Counter-clockwise, each is a 5th lower and adds one flat.



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.

SCALES & KEYS

Major Scale

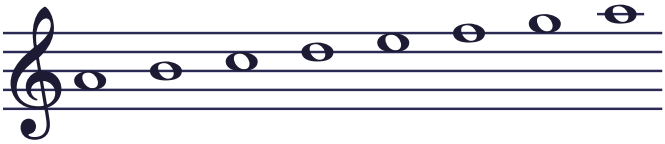


C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
	T	T	S	T	T	T	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

T = tone (2 semitones), S = semitone

SCALES & KEYS

Natural Minor Scale



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
	T	S	T	T	S	T	T

T = tone (2 semitones), S = semitone

1 2 ♭3 4 5 ♭6 ♭7

Every minor key shares its key signature with the major key a minor 3rd above. A minor ↔ C major: same notes, different home note.

FOUNDATIONS

Intervals

	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

CHORDS & HARMONY

Chord Formulas

SYMBOL	CHORD	FORMULA				NOTES
C	Major	1	3	5		C E G
Cm	Minor	1	♭3	5		C E♭ G
C°	Diminished	1	♭3	♭5		C E♭ G♭
C+	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	Major 7th	1	3	5	7	C E G B
Cm7	Minor 7th	1	♭3	5	♭7	C E♭ G B♭
Cø7	Half-diminished 7th	1	♭3	♭5	♭7	C E♭ G♭ B♭
C°7	Diminished 7th	1	♭3	♭5	𝄫7	C E♭ G♭ B𝄫

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

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