

# KEY MUSIC THEORY

## WORKBOOK GUIDE.

A course dedicated to giving you an in-depth coverage of the theory of music. You will walk away feeling confident in your new-found knowledge of the subject ready to input it into your lesson groups.



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# KEY MUSIC THEORY

## COURSE OVERVIEW

### OBJECTIVES

To be able to clearly and confidently define various musical terminology including rhythmic, dynamic and notation.

To be able to clearly and confidently define various musical terminology including rhythmic, dynamic and notation.

To be able to clearly identify the importance of music theory when teaching practical music

### YOUR PERSONAL GOALS

What is it you would like to gain from taking this course?

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### ADDITIONAL NOTES

Add any additional notes before starting the course here.

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## LESSON ONE

# THE BASICS OF MUSIC

We all want to be efficient in leading music lessons and workshops. This part of the course is designed to give you a basic understanding of reading, writing and playing music.

Although as primary teachers, it may not be necessary to read music fluently, it is an incredibly helpful skill to possess. As you learn to read music, your playing or singing skills will develop accordingly.

## LESSON TOPICS

The Musical Alphabet

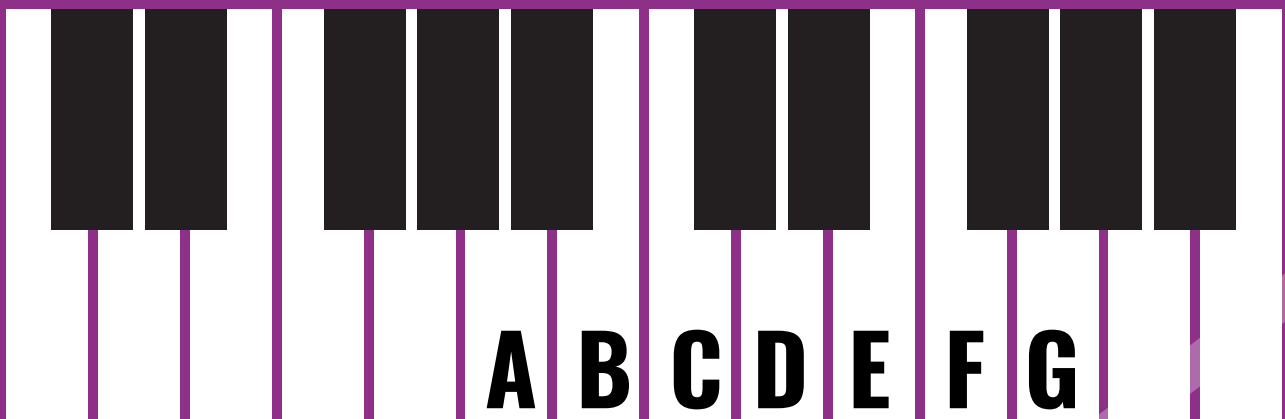
The Clefs

Reading Notation

The Beat/Pulse

## The Musical Alphabet

In music, there are 12 notes. The musical alphabet goes from A - G, which takes up seven of the 12 notes. These seven are white keys on the piano. The other five notes are the black keys. We can refer to these as sharps, represented by a hashtag sign, or flats, represented by a lowercase b. Sharps are notes one up from any given note, and flats are one down. These 12 notes can be repeated over and over again, going up or down the piano, depending on how high or low the pitch is.



# THE CLEFS

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## THE TREBLE CLEF

Clefs are used to tell us what pitch written notes are, for instance, a treble clef is usually used for higher sounding instruments, for example, a recorder. It's also called the G Clef because the curl at the bottom goes through the note G on the staff, making it an easy way of finding your first note.



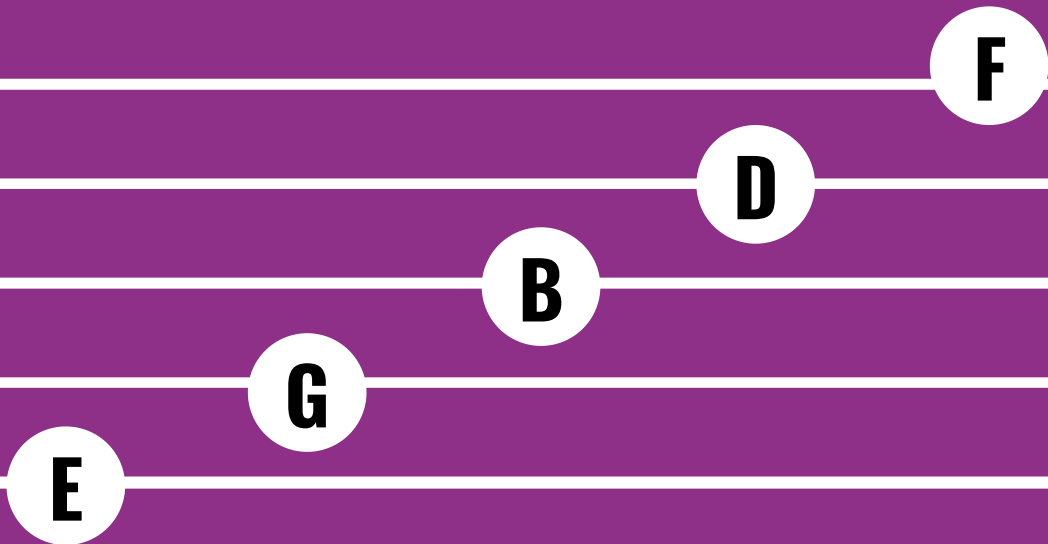
## THE BASS CLEF

If an instrument can't play the notes written, such as the bass guitar, then we need a way of writing these notes. This is where the bass clef comes in.

If you think about it another way, on a piano, there are 88 keys, but we can't fit 88 notes on one staff, so we need to split it in 2. Between the treble and bass clef, we fit all of the notes of a piano in on the staves.

## THE NOTES ON THE LINES

Let's have a look at the notes that sit on the lines. These go up in order from E, which sits on the bottom line. E, G, B, D, F. There are loads of rhymes to remember this; The famous one is Every Good Boy Deserves Football. I would recommend you make up your own to remember it easier.

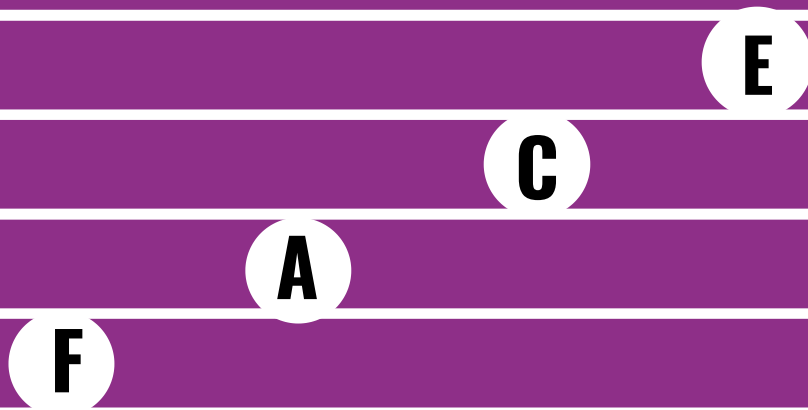


**E**VERY **G**OOD **B**OY

**D**ESERVES **F**OOTBALL

# THE NOTES IN THE SPACES

The spaces in between the lines go F, A, C, E, Spelling out the word face. If you try and memorise these rhymes for the notes on the lines and the notes in between the lines, you'll be well on your way to conquering reading music. The one thing to bear in mind, however, is that they always start from the bottom and move up.



**FACE**  
IN THE SPACE

## TOP TIP!

If the note is a black note, or a sharp or flat, you can show this on the stave by adding a sharp or a flat symbol before the note.



# THE BEAT/PULSE



## LET'S TALK ABOUT THE PULSE

A beat is a pulse of time. A ticking clock is a good example. Every minute, the second-hand ticks 60 times, and each one of those ticks is a beat. If you speed up or slow down the second hand, you're changing the tempo of the beat.

Without being able to find the pulse, it is tough to control other elements in music such as rhythms. The tempo and the beat create a skeleton on which you build a rhythm. The rhythm is expressed as notes, which tell you what pitch to play and how long or often to play them.

The beat is an essential skill for us to teach early on in a child's development. For example, in 2013 there was a study that found children who were able to keep in time with a beat were more attentive and showed less ADHD-like behaviours than children who hadn't been taught this skill.

It's as simple as that; the beat is the origin of all music and rhythm.



**"When figuring out how to follow the beat, drum sticks come in handy. If you've got a pair, grab them — if not, clapping or tapping your hand against your desktop works just as well."**



## LESSON TWO

### LETS FIND SOME NOTES

This lesson is designed to give you a clear understanding of how all music is made up of notes, the importance of the distance in between these notes and how you can easily find these on a piano.

Even if you already know the basics of this, keep working through the lesson, as we guarantee you'll learn something new that you can employ in your classroom.

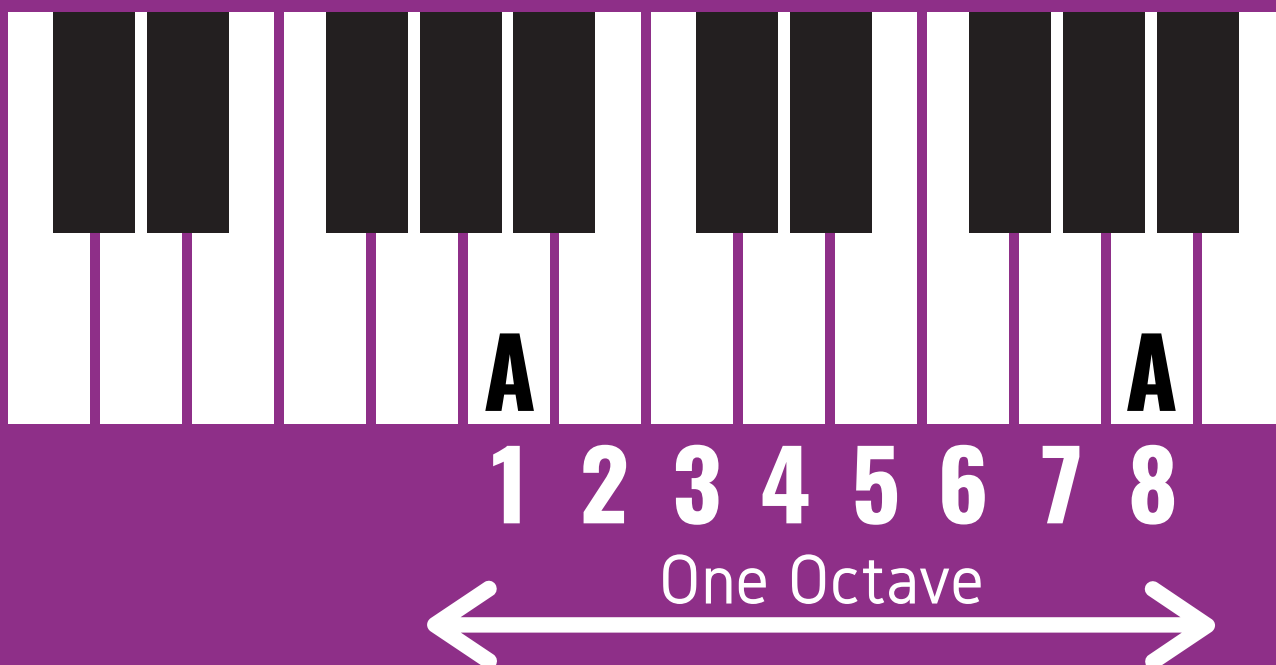
## LESSON TOPICS

An Octave Explained  
Naming Notes on a Piano  
Tones & Semitones

# AN OCTAVE EXPLAINED

## What is an Octave?

In Music, an octave is a distance between one note, say C, and the next C higher or lower. In physics, an octave is a distance between one note and another note that's double its frequency. For instance, the 4th A up a piano has a frequency of 440Hz, so the 5th A up a piano has a frequency of 880Hz.



### TOP TIP!

An octave is always a distance of 8 notes. If you think about an octagon having 8 sides - you can remember how to find an octave!

# NAMING NOTES ON A PIANO

## Finding F & C

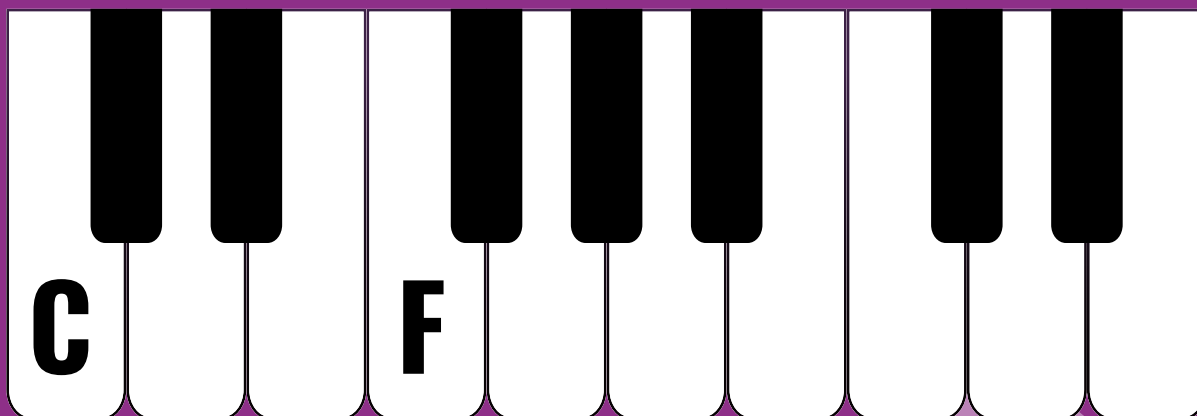
If we look at a piano, we see groups of two and three black notes together.

Try to find two black notes together. We can call these the chopsticks. Chopsticks begins with the letter C, and if you remember that you can always find a C on the piano as it's the white note just below the chopsticks.

Find three notes together. We can call these notes the fork. If you remember this you can always find an F, as you've guessed it, the white note just below the fork is an F.

**CHOPSTICKS**

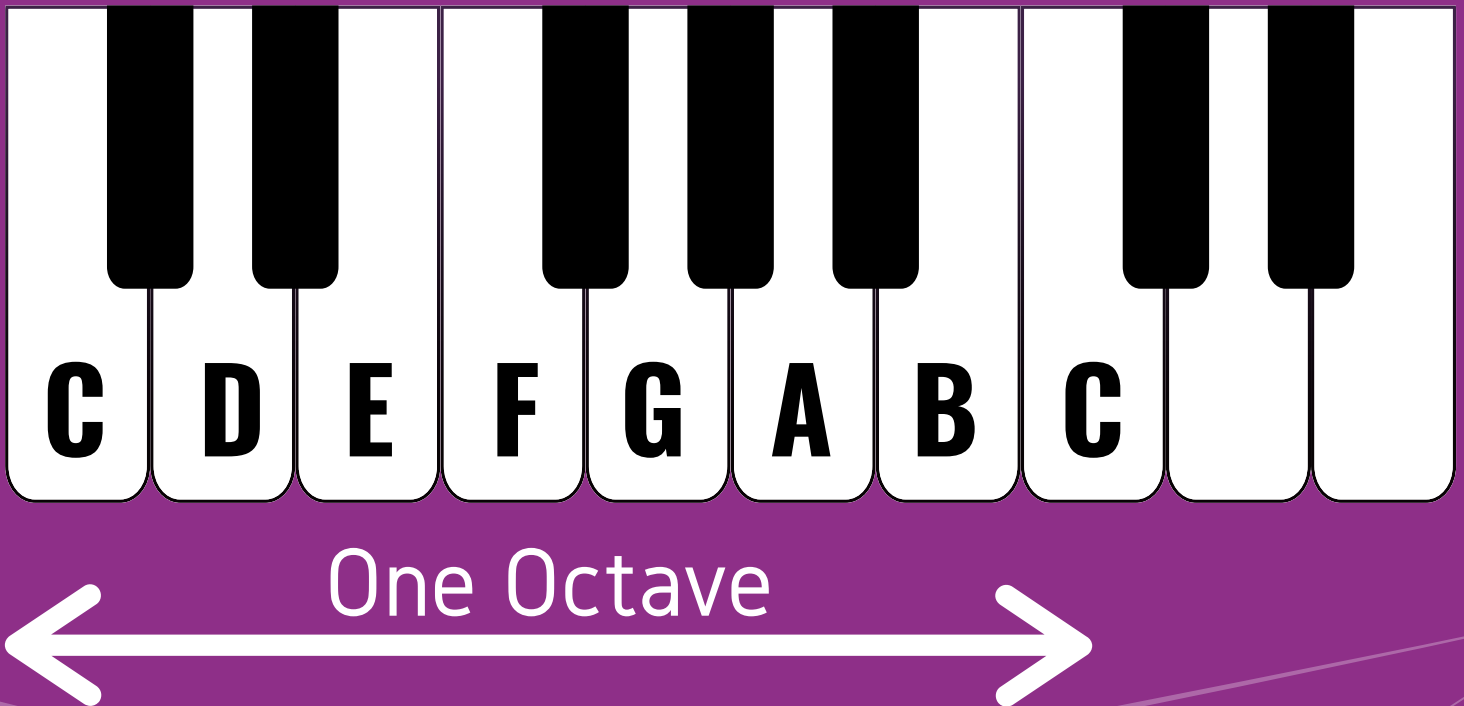
**FORKS**



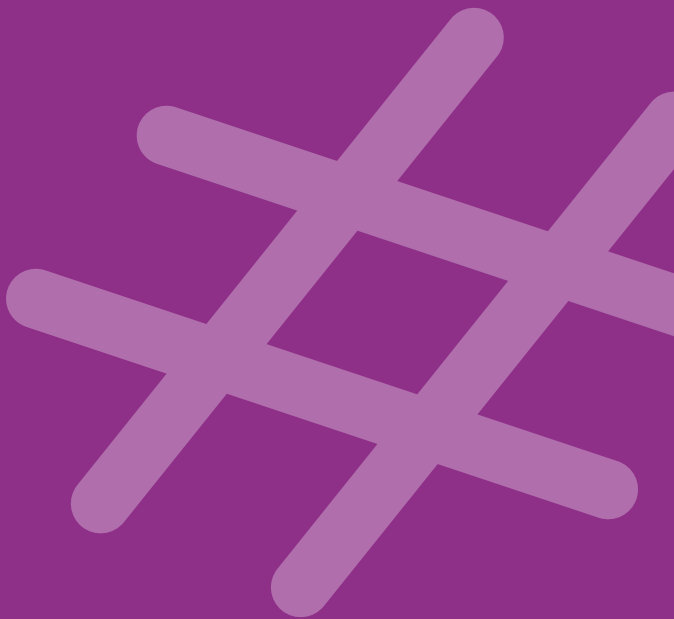
# NAMING NOTES ON A PIANO

## Finding All The Notes

So now we've found our F and our C on the piano. We can easily find all the other notes. Let's go back to the C. If we continue following the white notes up the piano, and remember that the musical alphabet goes from A - G then repeats, we know that the consecutive notes are D, E, F, G, A, B and back to C. Now this C is an octave above the last C we were at, as they're eight white notes apart. You may have noticed that we've missed out some notes, the black notes. This is where the sharps and flats come in.



# TONES & SEMITONES



## LET'S TALK ABOUT TONES & SEMITONES

All music is made up of tones and semitones; it's like the cellular structure of music. A semitone means a half step. This means that on a piano, if you pick any note, and go directly to the note next door, this is a semitone. It is irrelevant whether it is white to a black note, black to a white note or white to a white note.

G - G# is a distance of a semitone. G# is a semitone above G, and G is a semitone below G#.

If a semitone is called a half step, then a tone is a whole step, or you could think of it as 2 semitones.

So C to C# is a semitone, and C# to D is another semitone. So, therefore, the distance between C & D is a tone.

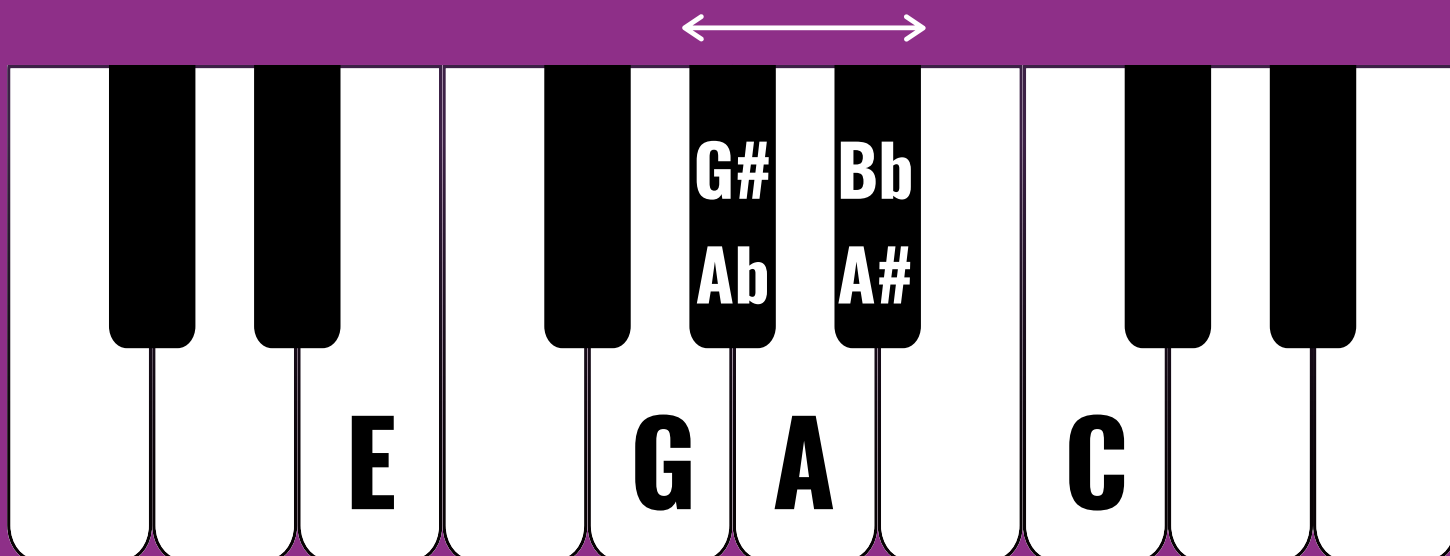
**"One of the most famous pieces to use a semitone is the jaws theme."**

# TONES & SEMITONES

## Semitones On A Piano

Now let's think of this in terms of sharps or flats on a piano. Let's find an A. Now, go a half step (or semitone) up from there to the black note next to it, we get to A Sharp. If you go down one semitone, that's called A flat.

Just remember: If you go up one semitone from a white note, the black note you get to is called the sharp. If you go down one semitone, the black note you get to is called a flat.



You'll notice that this means that any black note can have two names. For instance, from an A you could go down a semitone to get Ab, but if you start on G and go up one semitone, you get G#, so that note there can be either G# or Ab. There are a few white notes without a black note either above them or below them, for instance, C, doesn't have a flat below it, and E doesn't have a sharp above it. Don't be alarmed. A b to a C is a semitone, if we saw it written in music as Cb, this would mean a B.



## LESSON THREE

# AN INTRODUCTION TO SCALES

A scale is the harmonic basis of music, and it's how we make all our melodies and harmonies. Choosing what scale to use in a song can change how it sounds, what atmosphere it creates and can completely change the mood of a song. In a practical sense, when playing music, scales can be beneficial, especially for improvising and for soloing, and that is why it is one of the first things you learn on any instrument. There are two types of scales we're going to concentrate on, Major & Minor.

Further on in the course, we'll explore the specific differences between major & minor sounds, but for now, let's focus on the scales.

## LESSON TOPICS

The Major Scale

The Minor Scale



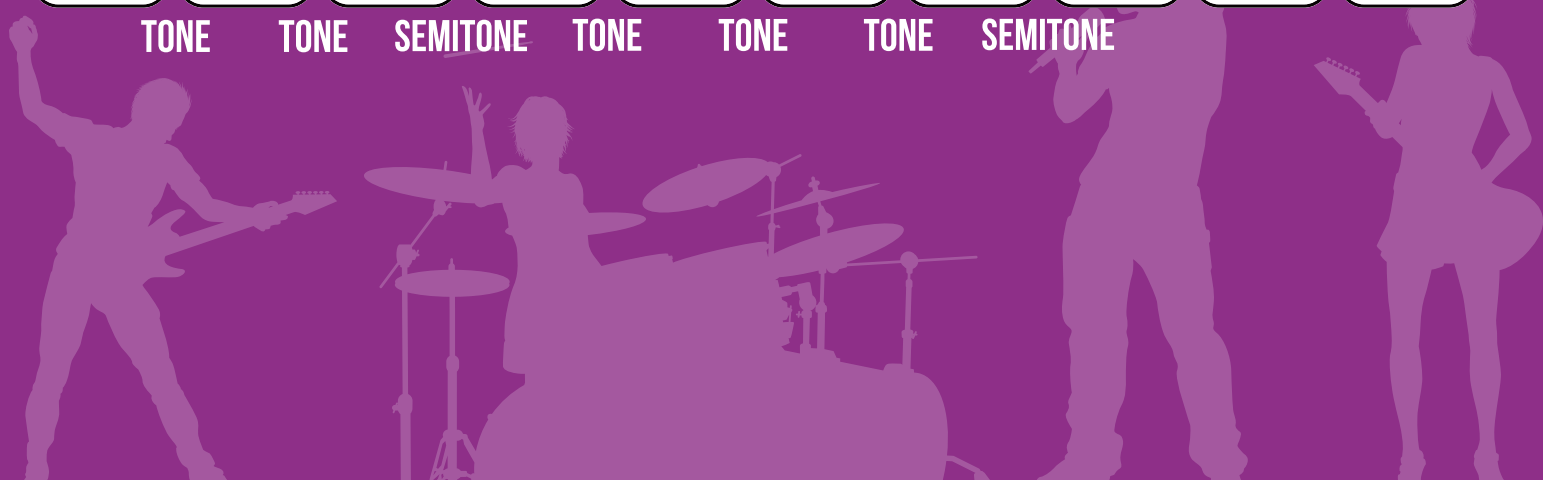
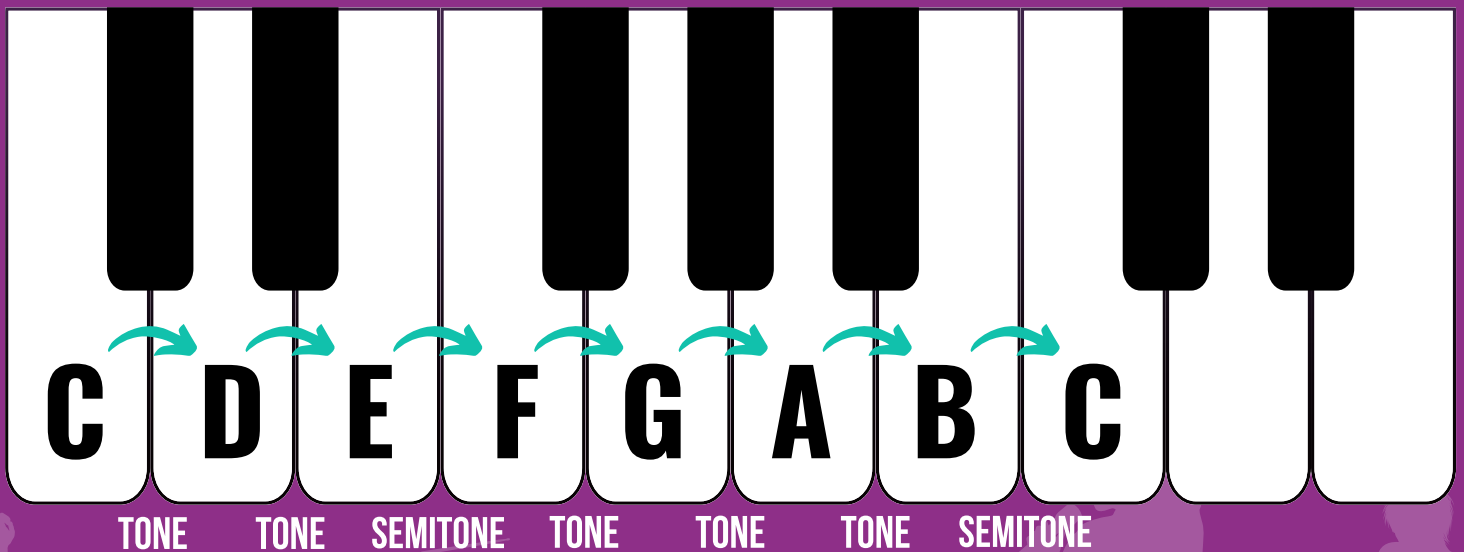
# THE MAJOR SCALE

## What Makes A MAJOR Scale?

A major scale is a pattern of semitones and tones in a specific order. Below is the C Major Scale going C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C.

C to D is a tone, D to E is a tone. E to F is a semitone, F to G is a tone, G to A is a tone, A to B is a tone and B to C is a Semitone. So what's that pattern? Tone, Tone, Semitone, Tone, Tone, Tone Semitone. If you repeat that exact pattern starting on any note on the piano. It will always sound like a major scale.

**TONE TONE SEMITONE TONE TONE TONE SEMITONE**



# THE MINOR SCALE

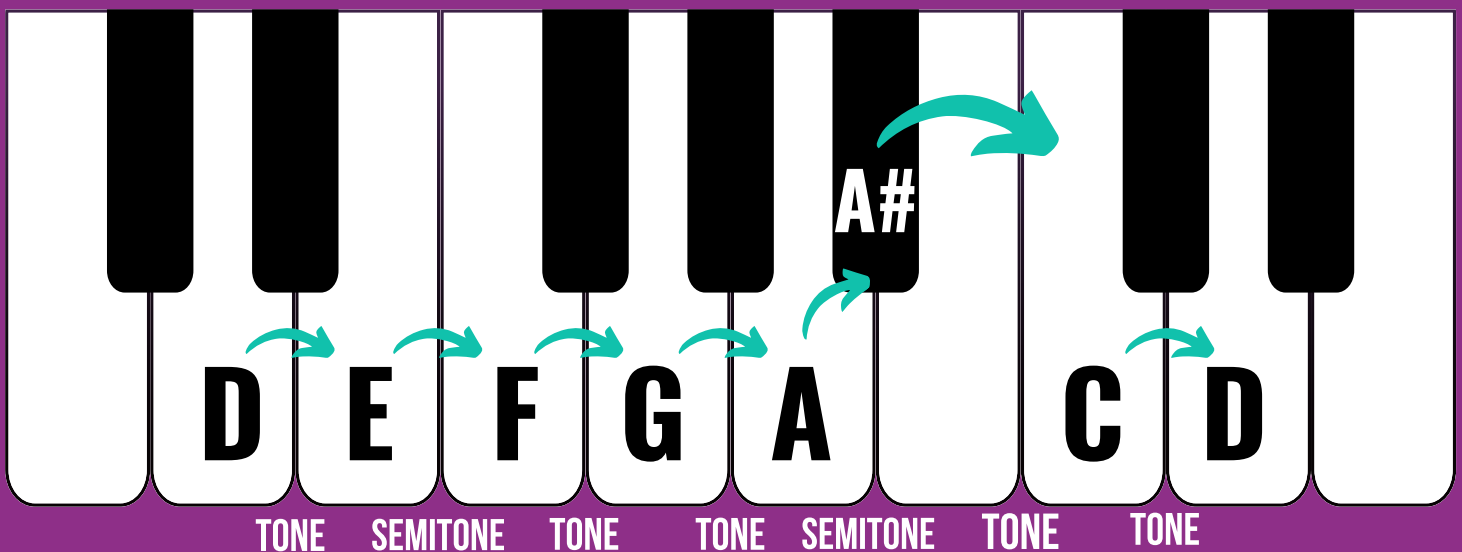
## What Makes A MINOR Scale?

A minor scale has a sad tone. Below is a D minor scale. The pattern for a minor Scales is Tone, Semitone, Tone, Tone, Semitone, Tone, Tone. That's all it is—another pattern of tones and semitones.

D up a tone to E, E up a semitone to F, F up a tone to G, G up a tone to A, A up a semitone to A#, A# up a tone to C, C up a tone to D.

And there we have it, a D Minor Scale.

**TONE SEMITONE TONE TONE SEMITONE TONE TONE**



Ready to see if you can work out a MAJOR or MINOR Scale?  
Just use the patterns!

# TRY TO WORK OUT THE SCALE

D MAJOR - FILL IN THE BLANK

D E ... G A B ... D

C MINOR - FILL IN THE BLANK

C D ... F G ... A# ...

Use the keyboard notes below  
to help you work out the  
missing notes in these scales.





## LESSON FOUR

# THE IMPORTANCE OF KEY SIGNATURES

Every piece of music has a key signature.

As your students will probably say, they look like a bunch of hashtags after the treble clef. What do these mean for the music? If we link back to scales, a key signature tells us the notes we're allowed to use.

## LESSON TOPICS

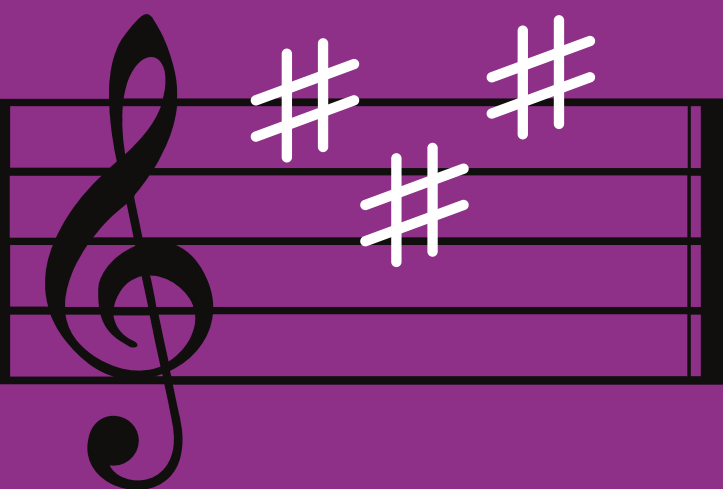
Key Signatures With Sharps

Key Signatures With Flats

## KEY SIGNATURES WITH SHARPS

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# HOW DO WE FIND KEY SIGNATURES WITH SHARPS IN THEM?



How do we find out what that key is just by looking at this? That's actually really easy.

First of all, there is one that you'll just need to remember, C Major. It has absolutely no sharps or flats.

For all the other keys, you can find the key of a piece easily by looking at the last note on the signature and moving up one semitone.

Take this one, on the left. We can see that the final note there is a G#. If you go up one semitone from that last note, you'll get the key signature. Which is A Major.

**Remember: C Major has NO sharps or flats in the key signature!**

# KEY SIGNATURES WITH SHARPS

## LETS TAKE A LOOK AT THE REST OF THE KEY SIGNATURES




A musical staff in treble clef with a sharp sign (#) on the G line (second line).

**G Major**



A musical staff in treble clef with sharp signs (#) on the G line (second line) and the A space (third space).

**A Major**



A musical staff in treble clef with sharp signs (#) on the G line (second line), the A space (third space), and the B space (fourth space).

**B Major**



A musical staff in treble clef with sharp signs (#) on the G line (second line) and the A space (third space).

**D Major**

This key signature's last note is C#, so up one semitone is D. That means this key signature is D Major



A musical staff in treble clef with sharp signs (#) on the G line (second line), the A space (third space), and the B space (fourth space).

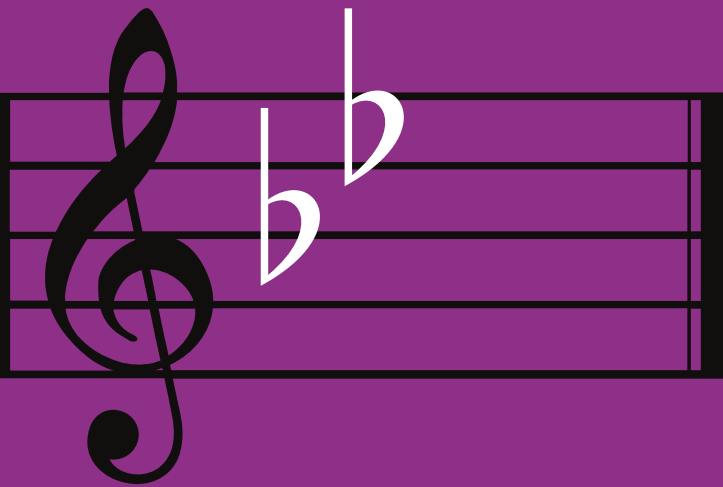
**E Major**

This key signature's last note is D#, so up one semitone is E. That means this key signature is E Major

This Key signatures last note is A#, so up one semitone is B. That means this key signature is B Major.

## KEY SIGNATURES WITH FLATS

# BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FLATS?



To work out key signatures which include flats instead of sharps, we just need to learn a different rule to figure these out.

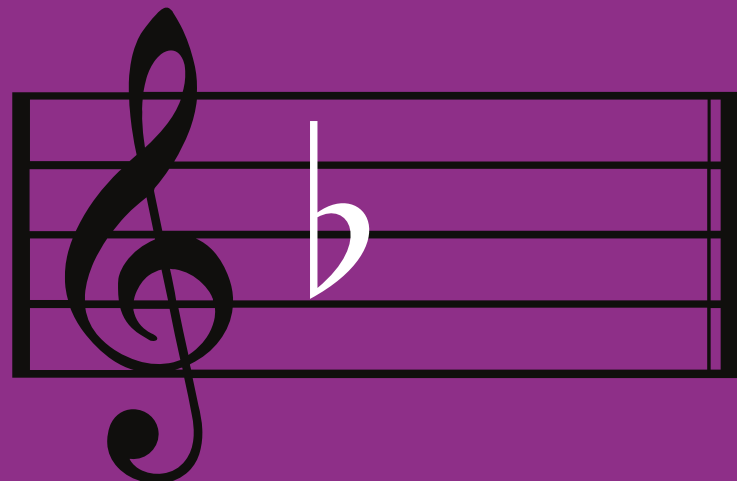
“We can find flat key signatures by looking at the penultimate flat”

So let's explore this, take this key signature on the left. It has 2 flats on it. Bb and Eb. The penultimate flat is Bb;

So, therefore, this key signature is Bb Major.

However, we find a problem with this rule when there is only one flat in the key signature. This is something you've just got to learn, one B flat in the key signature gives us F Major.

# F Major





## LESSON FIVE

## INTERVALS

An interval is a distance in pitch between two notes. Intervals are used throughout all songs that use more than one note. We hear them all the time without necessarily realising that's what they are.

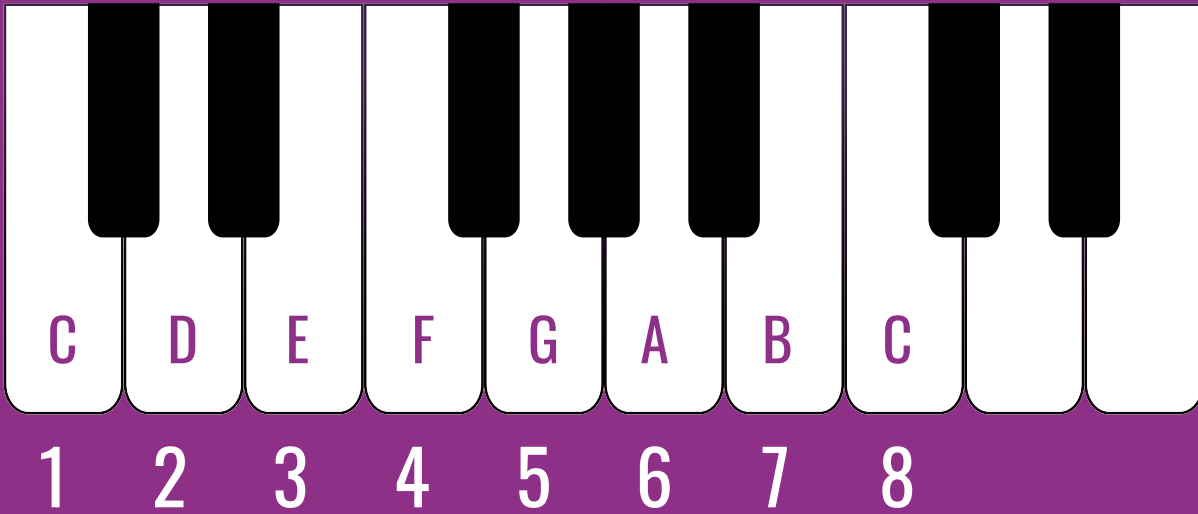
Take a second to think about one of your favourite songs and think about the notes used. Can you hear any jumps between notes? These are intervals.

## LESSON TOPICS

What are intervals?



# WHAT ARE INTERVALS



Our octave is 8 notes. If we started on C and then played G, this would be an interval of a 5th. It was a distance of five notes.

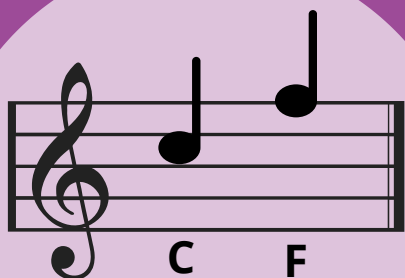


If we started on C and then played E, this would be an interval of a 3rd. It was a distance of three notes.

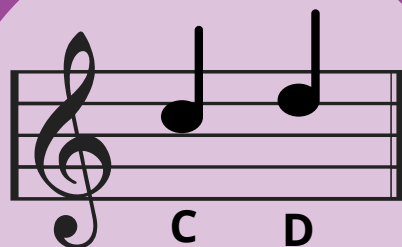


# WHAT ARE INTERVALS

Intervals may seem like a tricky or tedious aspect of music theory to grasp at first. However, they are the fundamental “building blocks” of music, and as such learning and understanding them puts you in a solid position to go further with ear training. So, let's see if you can identify some of the intervals below



This is a .....

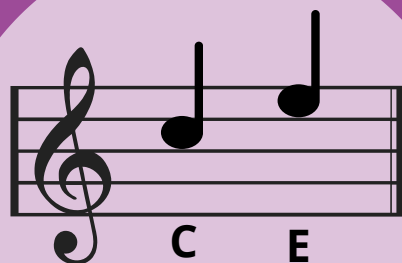


This is a .....

Fill in the  
Blanks



This is a .....



This is a .....





## LESSON SIX

# TONALITY, AN INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR & MINOR

Tonality is the arrangement of notes that a composer uses to give specific characteristics or emotion. The two most basic types of tonality are Major and Minor.

Just like painters arrange colours on a palette, composers arrange notes into combinations of major or minor. Major or minor don't refer to single notes, but to the spaces in between notes and how far notes are from each other. These distances are measured in semitones or tones; Some combinations make the sound of major and others make the sound of minor.

## LESSON TOPICS

The Difference in Notes  
Major & Minor Chords

# THE DIFFERENCE IN NOTES

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## The Difference In Notes

The Major Scale was a pattern of notes going :  
**Tone, Tone, Semitone, Tone, Tone, Tone Semitone.**

And the Minor Scale was another pattern of notes going:  
**Tone, Semitone, Tone, Tone, Semitone, Tone, Tone.**

So what's the difference? Both scales start with a tone interval. But then we see the first difference. In a Major Scale, the third note is a tone away from the second note. In a Minor Scale, however, the third note is only a semitone away from the second note. This is where the **minor sound** comes from. The third note in a scale is the main note that gives away whether a scale is major or minor.

## MAJOR

TONE TONE SEMITONE TONE TONE TONE SEMITONE

## MINOR

TONE SEMITONE TONE TONE SEMITONE TONE TONE

# THE DIFFERENCE IN NOTES

## Major and Minor Chords

A chord is two or more notes played at the same time. Both a major or minor chord are usually built around notes 1, 3 & 5 of the scale. If you want to make a major chord, remember the major pattern and find notes 1, 3 & 5 of that scale. The same can be done for the minor.

### TOP TIP!

Try this out with some chords of your own. If you don't have a keyboard you can use apps like Garageband on a phone or tablet to use a keyboard on them. Start on any note, decide if you want it to be major or minor, then find notes 1,3 & 5 of that scale.

### Examples of major & minor chords.

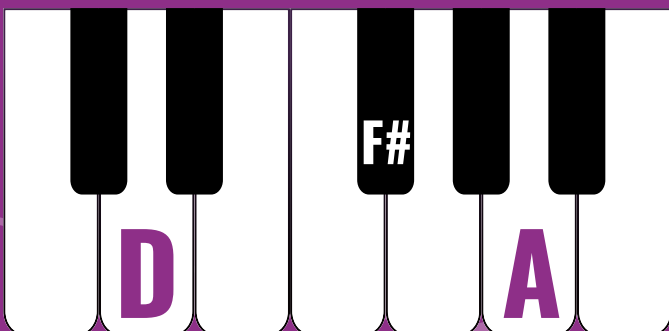
#### C MAJOR



#### E MINOR



#### D MAJOR



#### C MINOR





## LESSON SEVEN

# RHYTHMIC NOTATION

Music notation is a way of musicians communicating all the elements of music that we've previously discussed with each other.

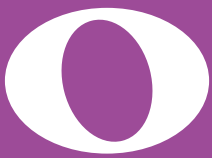
Musicians use rhythmic notation to share how to play certain parts of rhythm with one another. The rhythm of a piece of music specifies how long each note, or pause between notes should last. This is not to be confused with tempo, which refers to the speed of the underlying beat. In written music, we use a series of different symbols to represent different note lengths.

## LESSON TOPICS

Note Values  
Time Signatures  
Reading Notation  
Rests

## The Different Note Types

How do we go about writing music down in a way that we can universally understand? Music Notation looks complicated, but once you learn a few introductory notes, you'll be able to read music in no time. We can tell how many beats a note is supposed to last because of its shape.



This is a Semibreve or a whole note in the American system. A Semibreve lasts four beats.



This is a minim or a half note. A minim lasts two beats.



This is a crotchet or a quarter beat. It lasts just one beat.



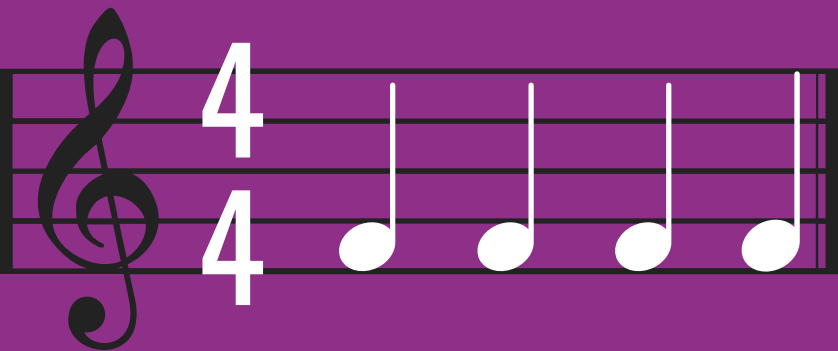
This is a quaver or an eighth note. It is mostly seen in sets of 2. It lasts for half a beat. You can fit 2 of them into one crotchet.

# TIME SIGNATURES

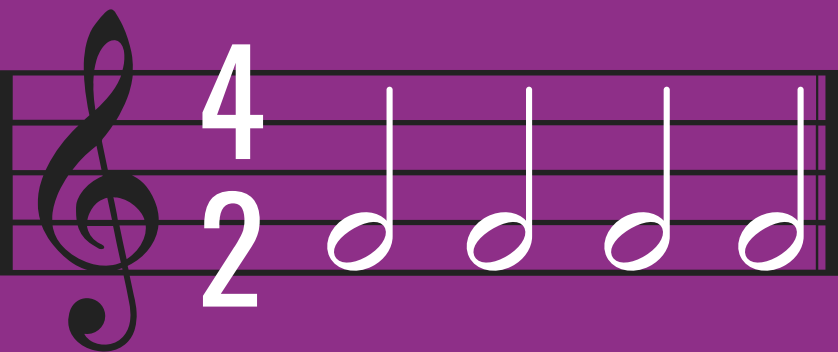
## What is a Time Signature?

Time signatures tell us how many notes we count to before going back to 1. We call this is a bar. There are two numbers in a time signature. The top number shows us the number of notes or beats in a bar.

In 4/4, the top number is showing us that there are four beats in every bar, so we count to four before going back to one. The bottom number is a fraction or the type of note we're using.



So in 4/4, we see it's four crotchets per bar.



In 4/2 its four Minims per bar



In 4/8 its four Quavers per bar.

1/4 Note - Crotchet  
1/2 Note - Minim  
1/8 Note - Quaver



## READING NOTATION

Here we can see a bar, let's stick to our standard 4/4 time signature. This bar has a Semibreve in it. It lasts for four beats, so it leaves no room for anything else.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. A single semibreve note (a large white circle) is placed on the second line of the staff. Below the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are spaced out to represent the four beats of the bar.

Now, let's swap that out for a Minim. This lasts for two beats so we can fit 2 of them in the bar.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Two minim notes (white circles with stems) are placed on the second line of the staff, one on the first beat and one on the third beat. Below the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are spaced out to represent the four beats of the bar.

If we swap that out for a crotchet, we can fit four of them into a bar.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Four crotchet notes (white circles with stems) are placed on the second line of the staff, one on each of the four beats. Below the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are spaced out to represent the four beats of the bar.

If we filled a bar with quavers they only last half a beat so we can fit eight of them into a bar.

A musical staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Eight quaver notes (white circles with stems) are placed on the second line of the staff, grouped into four pairs of beamed notes. Below the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are spaced out, with an ampersand (&) between each number to represent the eighth notes.

When we count 1,2,3,4, we're counting every beat. But when a note lasts for only half a beat, we need a way to count in between the beats. The simplest way to do this is to count 1&2&3&4&

# RESTS

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## What about the Rests?

So we've looked at note symbols so far, which make sounds.

But if we want to stop making a sound, we can't just leave space in the bar blank. We have to use something called a rest.

Rests work in precisely the same way as notes.



This is called a semibreve rest, and it plays silence over four beats.



This is called a minim rest, and it plays silence over two beats.



This is called a crotchet rest, and it plays silence over one beat.



This is called a quaver rest, and it plays silence over half a beat.







# KEY MUSIC THEORY

Why not use this opportunity to reflect on the work you have done so far?

What elements music theory were you unsure/unconfident with prior to taking this course?

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What elements of music theory do you feel have improved since taking this course?

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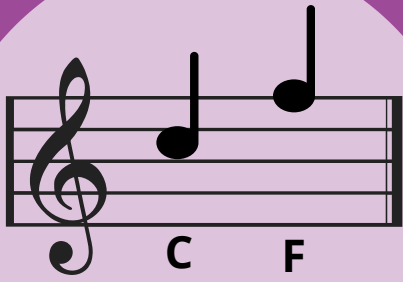
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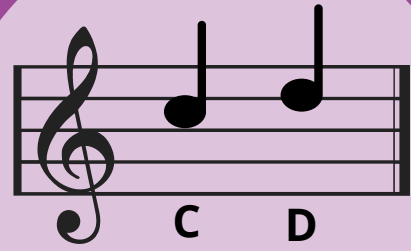
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# Answer sheet

## Fill in the Blanks



This is a fourth

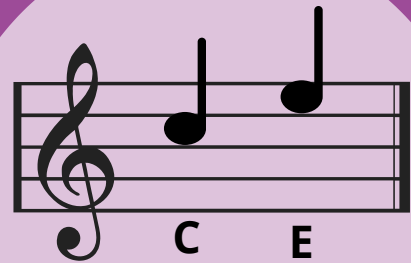


This is a second

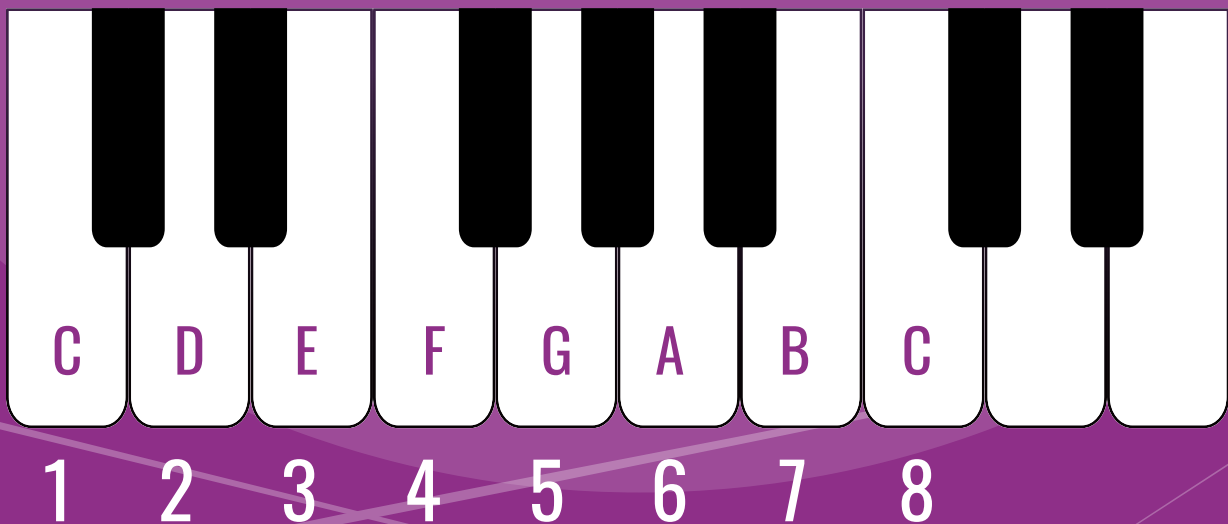
## ANSWER SHEET



This is a sixth



This is a third



# ANSWER SHEET

D MAJOR - FILL IN THE BLANK

D E **F#** G A B **C#** D

C MINOR - FILL IN THE BLANK

C D **D#** F G **A** **A#** **C**

Use the keyboard notes below  
to help you work out the  
missing notes in these scales.



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