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](image1)

![Flats](image2)

![No Sharps or Flats](image3)

**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**.

![Order of Sharps](image4)

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.
   a. If a key signature has two sharps, they will be __ and __.
   b. If a key signature has three sharps, they will be __, __, and __.
   c. If a key signature has one sharp, it will be ___.
   d. If a key signature has six sharps, they will be ___, ___, ___, ___, ___, and ___.

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

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.

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.

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
C^\# & M & B\text{M} & A & m & F\text{M} & C\text{M} \\
\end{array}
\]

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\#

Name all sharps from the Order of Sharps up to and including C\#

F\# and C\#

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

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
G & M &\text{Major} & F\# & M &\text{Major} & A & M &\text{Major} & B & M &\text{Major} & E & M &\text{Major} & C\# & M &\text{Major} \\
\end{array}
\]
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**.

![Order of Flats Diagram]

**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♭. If it has two flats, they will be B♭ and E♭, etc.

5. Fill in the blanks.

a. If a key signature has two flats, they are \( B^\flat \) and \( E^\flat \).

b. If a key signature has four flats, they are \( B^\flat, E^\flat, A^\flat, \) and \( D^\flat \).

c. If a key signature has three flats, they are \( B^\flat, E^\flat, \) and \( A^\flat \).

d. If a key signature has five flats, they are \( B^\flat, E^\flat, A^\flat, D^\flat, \) and \( G^\flat \).

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

![Order of Flats Clef Diagram]
To determine which Major key a group of flats represents, name the next to last flat.

Three flats: B♭, E♭, A♭

Next to last flat is E♭

Key of E♭ Major

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

**KEY SIGNATURE FOR F MAJOR**

7. Name these Major keys.

C♭ M  B♭ M  A♭ M  D♭ M  F M  E♭ M  C♭ 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C Major</td>
<td>No sharps or flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Major</td>
<td>F♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Major</td>
<td>F♯ C♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>F♯ C♯ G♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Major</td>
<td>F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Major</td>
<td>F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F♯ Major</td>
<td>F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯ E♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C♯ Major</td>
<td>F♯ C♯ G♯ D♯ A♯ E♯ B♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Major</td>
<td>B♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B♭ Major</td>
<td>B♭ E♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E♭ Major</td>
<td>B♭ E♭ A♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A♭ Major</td>
<td>B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D♭ Major</td>
<td>B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G♭ Major</td>
<td>B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ C♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C♭ Major</td>
<td>B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ C♭ F♭</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

![Musical notation](image)

**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.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
 & & & \\
\text{d minor} & \text{b m} & \text{c m} & \text{a m}
\end{array}
\]

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.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
 & & & \\
\text{e minor} & \text{c minor} & \text{g minor} & \text{d minor}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
 & & & \\
\text{b minor} & \text{f minor} & \text{a minor}
\end{array}
\]
14. Memorize these key signatures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a minor</th>
<th>no sharps or flats</th>
<th>relative of C Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e minor</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>relative of G Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b minor</td>
<td>F# C#</td>
<td>relative of D Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d minor</td>
<td>B♭</td>
<td>relative of F Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g minor</td>
<td>B♭ Eb</td>
<td>relative of B♭ Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c minor</td>
<td>B♭ Eb Ab</td>
<td>relative of E♭ Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f minor</td>
<td>B♭ Eb Ab Db</td>
<td>relative of A♭ Major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>