

# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS AND KEY SIGNATURES

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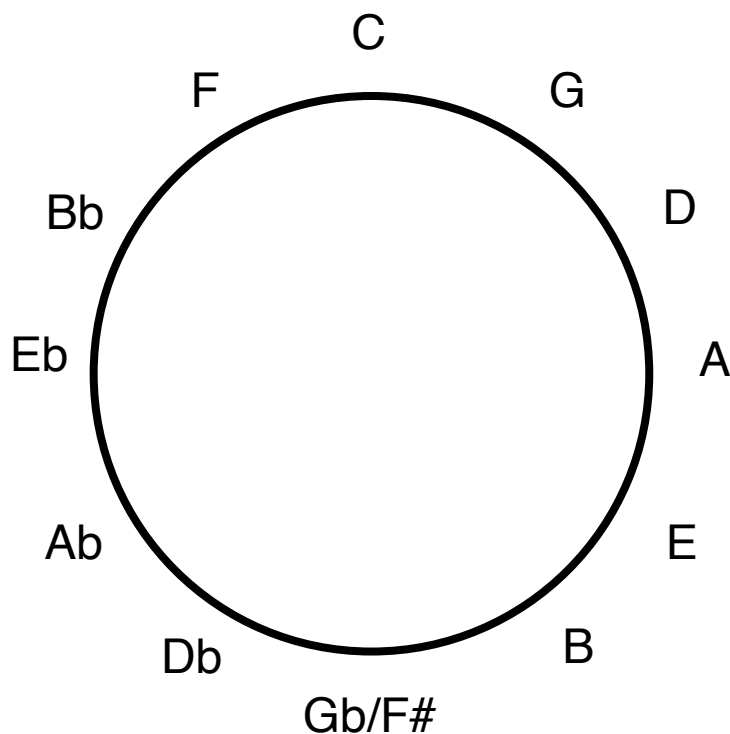
THEORY WORKSHEETS

BROCK CHART

# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS AND KEY SIGNATURES

There are 12 Major and Minor keys in Western music. It can be difficult to remember the accidentals (sharps and flats) for every key. The **Circle of Fifths** is a tool we can use to help remember and identify key signatures.

Down below is a picture of the **Circle of Fifths**.



Notice how the notes are arranged much like a clock.

Moving **clockwise** from C, the notes are going up by a **Perfect Fifth**.  
The next six notes clockwise from C are the keys that use **sharps**.

Moving **counterclockwise** from C, the notes are going up by a **Perfect Fourth**.  
The next six notes **counterclockwise** from C are the keys that use **flats**.

# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS AND KEY SIGNATURES

We can look at the **Circle of Fifths** to easily see how many accidentals are in a key signature. Starting at the top of the circle in the 12:00 position is the key of C which has no accidentals.

Each key moving **clockwise** from C will add one **sharp** to the key signature. Each key moving **counterclockwise** from C will add one **flat** to the key signature.

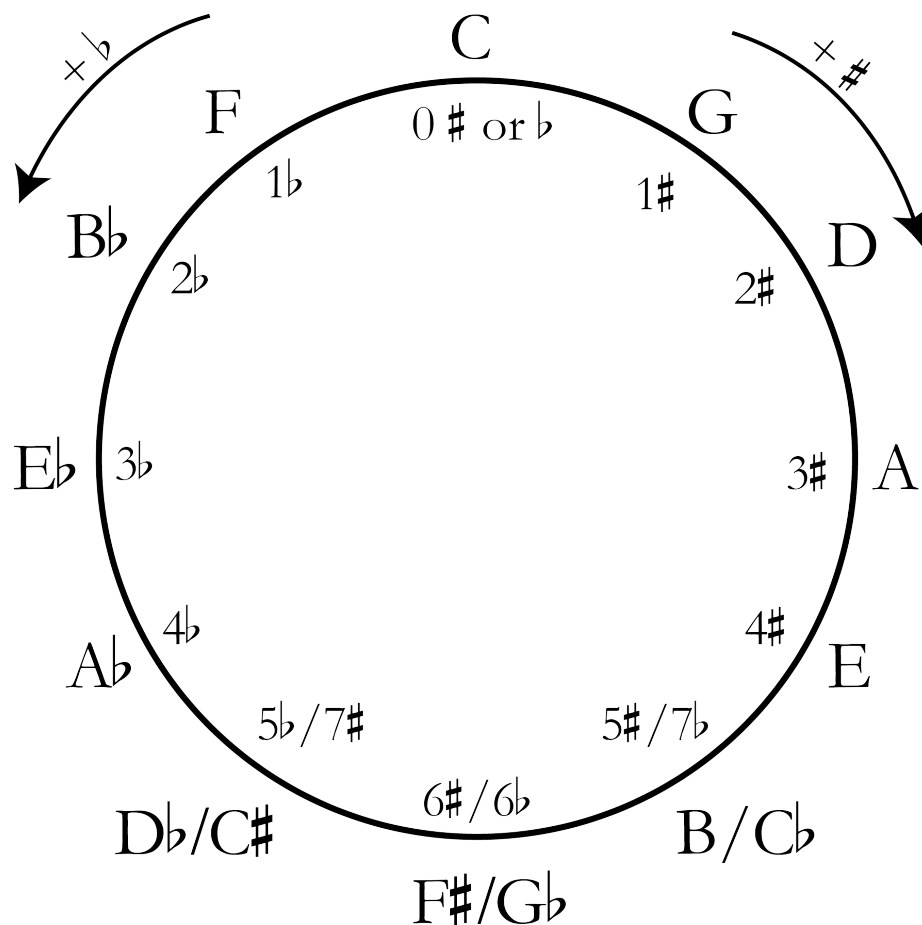
For example:

The key of G is one note **clockwise** from C and has one **sharp** in the key signature.

The key of D is two notes **clockwise** from C and has two **sharps** in the key signature.

The key of F is one note **counterclockwise** from C and has one **flat** in the key signature.

The key of B $\flat$  is two notes **counterclockwise** from C and has two **flats** in the key signature.



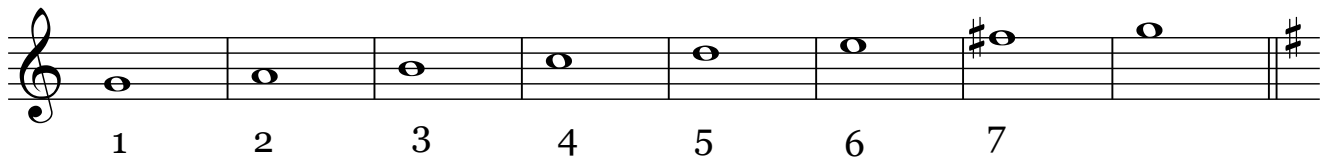
# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS AND KEY SIGNATURES

The tricky thing about key signatures is that the accidentals (sharps and flats) are written in a specific order on the staff. The **Circle of Fifths** can also help with this.

For this part, it's important to go in order starting from C at the 12:00 position. This is because each of the subsequent keys build on the last and add their accidentals too.

**Sharp Keys:** Find what note is the **seventh** of the key, then **sharp** it. An easy way to find the **seventh** is to go down a half-step from the root or the tonic. That will always be the **seventh**.

For example: In the key of G we have one sharp. We simply find the **seventh** note of the scale and give it a sharp. In this case, the seventh is F and with the added sharp, it would be F#.

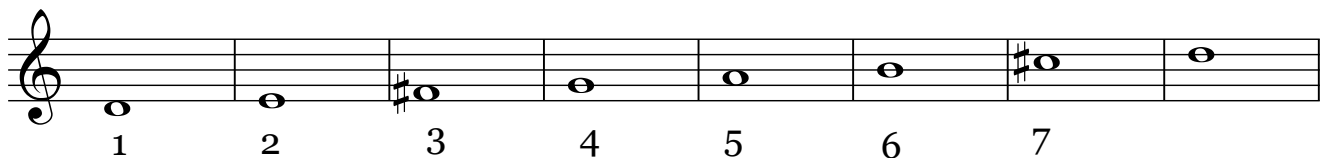


We write F# on the staff on the far left of the staff.  
Here is how it is written in Treble Clef and Bass Clef



Another example: In the key of D we have two sharps. The seventh note of the D scale is C, so we add a sharp and it becomes C#. But what about the other sharp?

Remember that D is after G on the **Circle of Fifths**. Therefore we also have to add the accidental from G, which would be F#. This is a tricky step, but always remember to go in order starting from C at the 12:00 position.



We write C# on the staff on the far left of the staff after the F#  
Here is how it is written in Treble Clef and Bass Clef



# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS AND KEY SIGNATURES

Now we'll quickly go through the rest of the **sharp** keys using the same method.  
Pay special attention to where the sharps are placed on the staff.

## A Major

Musical notation for the A Major scale in treble clef. The notes are A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, and A. The notes are numbered 1 through 7 below the staff.

Key signature for A Major in treble and bass clefs. The treble clef shows two sharps (F# and C#). The bass clef shows two sharps (B# and F#).

## E Major

Musical notation for the E Major scale in treble clef. The notes are E, F#, G#, A, B, C#, D#, and E. The notes are numbered 1 through 7 below the staff.

Key signature for E Major in treble and bass clefs. The treble clef shows three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The bass clef shows three sharps (B#, F#, C#).

## B Major

Musical notation for the B Major scale in treble clef. The notes are B, C#, D#, E, F#, G#, A#, and B. The notes are numbered 1 through 7 below the staff.

Key signature for B Major in treble and bass clefs. The treble clef shows four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#). The bass clef shows four sharps (B#, F#, C#, G#).

## F# Major

Musical notation for the F# Major scale in treble clef. The notes are F#, G#, A, B, C#, D#, E#, and F#. The notes are numbered 1 through 7 below the staff.

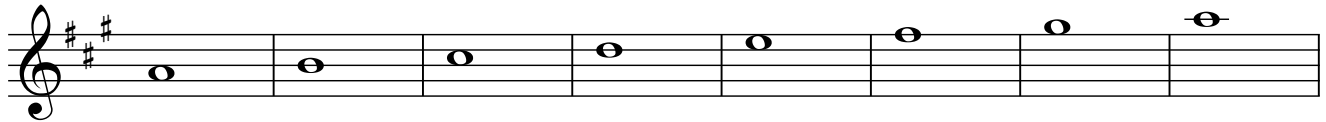
Key signature for F# Major in treble and bass clefs. The treble clef shows five sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#). The bass clef shows five sharps (B#, F#, C#, G#, D#).

# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS AND KEY SIGNATURES

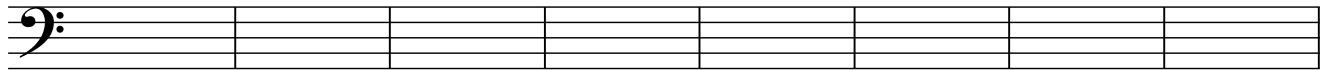
Let's practice writing key signatures and scales in **sharp** keys.

In the examples below write the key signature of each key in the correct order on the staff.  
Then write the eight-note scale in whole notes.

## A Major



## E Major



## D Major



## B Major



## F# Major



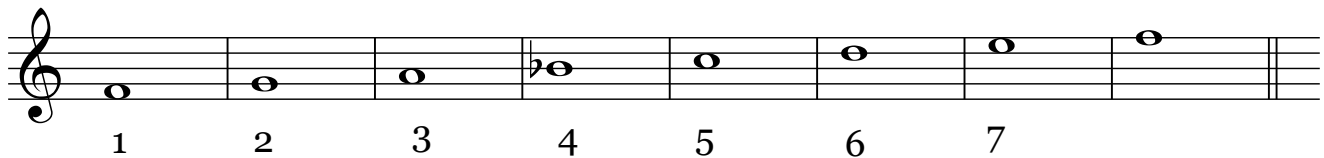
# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS AND KEY SIGNATURES

The tricky thing about key signatures is that the accidentals (sharps and flats) are written in a specific order on the staff. The **Circle of Fifths** can also help with this.

For this part, it's important to go in order starting from C at the 12:00 position. This is because each of the subsequent keys build on the last and add their accidentals too.

**Flat Keys:** Find what note is the **seventh** of the previous key in the Circle, then **flat** it. An easy way to find the **seventh** is to go down a half-step from the root or the tonic.

For example: In the key of F we have one flat. We simply find the **seventh** note of the previous scale and give it a flat. In this case, the key before F in the Circle is C. The seventh of C is B. Therefore the key of F will have a B $\flat$ .

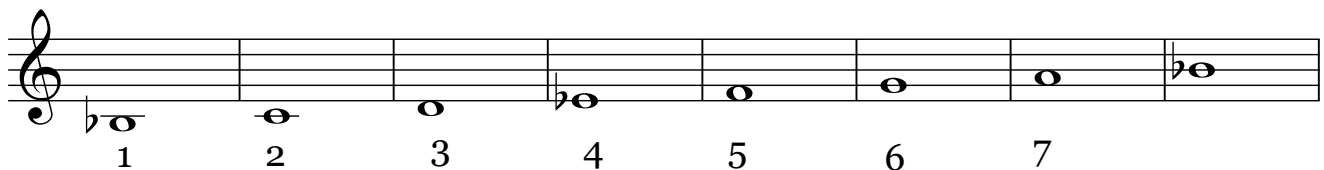


We write B $\flat$  on the staff on the far left of the staff.  
Here is how it is written in Treble Clef and Bass Clef



Another example: In the key of B $\flat$  we have two flats. The previous key in the Circle was F. The seventh of F is E. Therefore, we make it an E $\flat$ . But what about the other flat?

Remember that B $\flat$  is after F on the **Circle of Fourths**. Therefore we also have to add the accidental from F, which would be B $\flat$ . This is a tricky step, but always remember to go in order starting from C at the 12:00 position.



We write E $\flat$  on the staff on the far left of the staff after the B $\flat$   
Here is how it is written in Treble Clef and Bass Clef



# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS AND KEY SIGNATURES

Now we'll quickly go through the rest of the **flat** keys using the same method.  
Pay special attention to where the flats are placed on the staff.

## E $\flat$ Major

Musical notation for E $\flat$  Major scale. The first staff shows the treble clef with notes: E $\flat$  (1), F (2), G (3), A $\flat$  (4), B $\flat$  (5), C (6), D (7). The second staff shows the bass clef with notes: E $\flat$ , F, G, A $\flat$ , B $\flat$ , C, D.

## A $\flat$ Major

Musical notation for A $\flat$  Major scale. The first staff shows the treble clef with notes: A $\flat$  (1), B $\flat$  (2), C (3), D $\flat$  (4), E $\flat$  (5), F (6), G (7). The second staff shows the bass clef with notes: A $\flat$ , B $\flat$ , C, D $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , F, G.

## D $\flat$ Major

Musical notation for D $\flat$  Major scale. The first staff shows the treble clef with notes: D $\flat$  (1), E $\flat$  (2), F (3), G $\flat$  (4), A $\flat$  (5), B $\flat$  (6), C (7). The second staff shows the bass clef with notes: D $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , F, G $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , B $\flat$ , C.

## G $\flat$ Major

Musical notation for G $\flat$  Major scale. The first staff shows the treble clef with notes: G $\flat$  (1), A $\flat$  (2), B $\flat$  (3), C (4), D $\flat$  (5), E $\flat$  (6), F (7). The second staff shows the bass clef with notes: G $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , B $\flat$ , C, D $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , F.

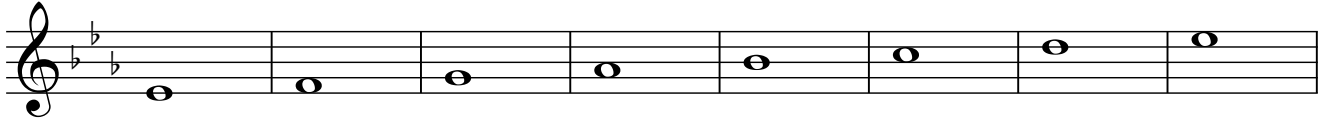


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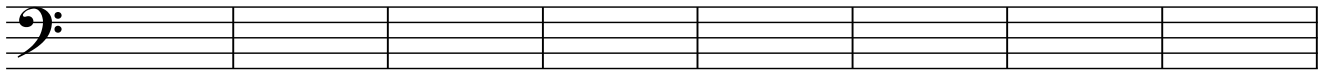
Let's practice writing key signatures and scales in **flat** keys.

In the examples below write the key signature of each key in the correct order on the staff.  
Then write the eight-note scale in whole notes.

## **E $\flat$ Major**



## **A $\flat$ Major**



## **B $\flat$ Major**



## **D $\flat$ Major**



## **G $\flat$ Major**

