



Key Signature Tricks

How to learn the order of sharps in a key signature



1. Up a 5th beginning on F

The order of sharps in a key signature begins on F and each one is up a 5th:

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

2. Use one of the following mnemonics to remember the order:

Fat	Cats	Go	Down	Alleys	Eating	Birds
Father	Charles	Goes	Down	And	End	Battle
Five	Cats	Got	Drunk	At	Eddie's	Bar

How to learn the order of flats in a key signature



1. It is the reverse the order of sharps

Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb Fb

2. Down a 5th beginning on B

The order of flats in a key signature begins on B and each one is down a 5th:

Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb and Fb

3. Use one of the following mnemonics to remember the order:

Big	Elephants	Always	Do	Great	Circus	Feats
Battle	Ends	And	Down	Goes	Charles'	Father
BEAD-----				Glass	Falls	Down



Finding a key from its key Signature

When sharps you see, the last is “ti”

In a key signature with sharps the Major key will be the note a semitone higher than the last sharp of the key signature.

For example,

- if the key signature is three sharps then the last sharp will be G#.
- The note a semitone higher than G# is A
- therefore A Major has three sharps in its key signature.



When flats there are, the last is “fa”

In a key signature with flats the Major key will be the second last flat of the key signature.

For example,

- if the key signature is three flats then the second last flat will be E \flat .
- Therefore E \flat Major has three flats in its key signature.



The Circle of 5ths

The “Circle of 5ths” chart can also help to remember how many sharps and flats each key has. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circle_of_fifths

How to Find Relative Major and Minor Keys

1. Find “la” in a Major scale. This will be the tonic of the relative minor key.

For example, to find the relative minor of D Major, find “la” when D is *do*. (In the scale of D Major “B” is *la* therefore B minor is related to D Major and shares the same key signature).

2. Count down three semitones from the tonic of the Major key.

This will be the tonic of the relative minor key.