

Key Signatures

Relative Major and Minor Keys

Every major key has a relative minor key. In the key of C Major there are no sharps and flats. Similarly, in the key of A Minor there are no sharps and flats. These keys are "related" because they share the same key signature. The notes of a song in the key of C Major will be based upon the notes in the C Major scale. The notes in a song in the key of A Minor will be based upon the notes from the A Minor scale(s).

Relative minor keys can be determined by going down 3 half steps from the relative major key. For example, if I want to know what the relative minor key is to C Major, count down from "C" by 3 half steps. Since "A" is 3 half steps beneath "C", the relative minor to the key of C Major is A Minor.

Musical notation showing key signatures with 0, 1, 2, and 3 sharps. Each measure contains a treble and bass clef staff with the key signature indicated by sharp signs. Below the staves, text boxes describe the corresponding major and minor keys.

No sharps or flats: Key of C Major or A Minor	1 sharp: Key of G Major or E Minor	2 sharps: Key of D Major or B Minor	3 sharps: Key of A Major or F# Minor
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Memorizing the order of the sharps can easily be done using the following mnemonic device:
Fat Cats Go Down Alleys Eating Bananas. (F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#)

Musical notation showing key signatures with 4, 5, 6, and 7 sharps. Each measure contains a treble and bass clef staff with the key signature indicated by sharp signs. Below the staves, text boxes describe the corresponding major and minor keys.

4 sharps: Key of E Major or C# Minor	5 sharps: Key of B Major or G# Minor	6 sharps: Key of F Sharp Major or D# Minor	7 sharps: Key of C Sharp Major or A# Minor
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The same application is made to keys containing flats. If I have 1 flat in my key signature, the major key would be F Major. Three half steps below "F" is "D." The relative minor to F Major is D Minor.

Musical notation showing key signatures with 1, 2, and 3 flats. Each measure contains a treble and bass clef staff with the key signature indicated by flat signs. Below the staves, text boxes describe the corresponding major and minor keys.

1 flat: Key of F Major or D Minor	2 flats: Key of B Flat Major or G Minor	3 flats: Key of E Flat Major or C Minor
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Memorizing the order of the flats can easily be done by using the following mnemonic device:
But Even A Dumb Goat Can Fly. (B flat, E flat, A flat, G flat, C flat, and F flat)

Musical notation showing key signatures with 4, 5, and 6 flats. Each measure contains a treble and bass clef staff with the key signature indicated by flat signs. Below the staves, text boxes describe the corresponding major and minor keys.

4 flats: Key of A Flat Major or F Minor	5 flats: Key of D Flat Major B Flat Minor	6 flats: Key of G Flat Major E Flat Minor
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