



Key Signatures

Key signatures (commonly referred to as “keys”) are found at the beginning of a piece of music between the clef and the time signature. Key signatures indicate the notes within a piece of music that need to be raised or lowered by a half step. Sharps raise notes by a half step while flats lower notes by a half step. In tonal music, two types of keys exist: major and minor. Every major key is shared by a relative minor key (e.g., C major = A minor). *Relative* keys share the same key signature, but have different tonal centers. *Parallel* keys share the same tonal center, but have different key signatures (e.g., G major and G minor). The *tonal center* is the same as the resolution note or tonic note of a key (e.g., B is the tonal center of B major and B minor).

Order Sharps in Key Signatures:

1 st Sharp	2 nd Sharp	3 rd Sharp	4 th Sharp	5 th Sharp	6 th Sharp	7 th Sharp
F#	C#	G#	D#	A#	E#	B#

Remember this order with the phrase: **F**ather **C**harles **G**oes **D**own **A**nd **E**nds **B**attle.

Order Flats in Key Signatures:

1 st Flat	2 nd Flat	3 rd Flat	4 th Flat	5 th Flat	6 th Flat	7 th Flat
Bb	Eb	Ab	Db	Gb	Cb	Fb

Remember this order with the phrase: **B**attle **E**nds **A**nd **D**own **G**oes **C**harles **F**ather.

It is the same phrase used with the order of sharps backwards.

The chart below links each major key with its shared relative minor key. It also shows a picture of the key signatures on a treble clef staff and lists the number of flats or sharps in each key.



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Major Key	Relative Minor Key	Staff	Number of Flats	Major Key	Relative Minor Key	Staff	Number of Sharps
C major	A minor		0				
F major	D minor		1	G major	E minor		1
Bb major	G minor		2	D major	B minor		2
Eb major	C minor		3	A major	F# minor		3
Ab major	F minor		4	E major	C# minor		4
Db major	Bb minor		5	B major	G# minor		5
Gb major	Eb minor		6	F# major	D# minor		6
Cb major	Ab minor		7	C# major	A# minor		7