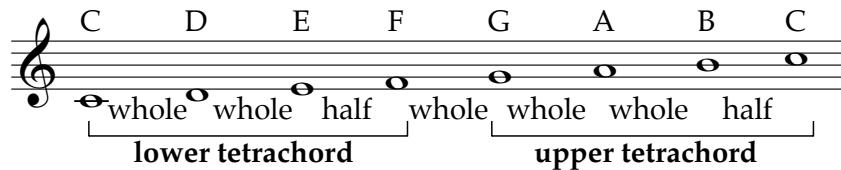


MAJOR SCALES

C major scale

Tetrachord

The white piano keys from C to C form a **C major scale**. These eighth notes (C, D, E, F, G, A, B, and then C again) divide into two four-note scale segments called **tetrachords**:



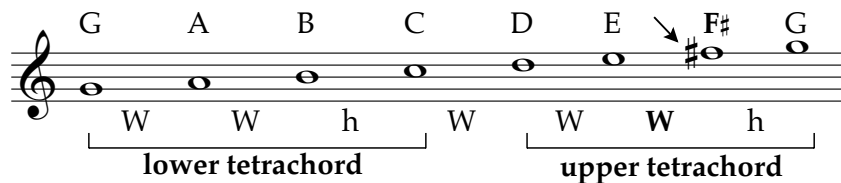
Major tetrachord

The lower tetrachord and the upper tetrachord each follow the **major tetrachord** pattern: W-W-h, with a whole step between them. To visualize the whole step/half step pattern shown above, review **1.2 The Chromatic Scale and the Piano**. Remember that E to F and B to C are **natural half steps** (no accidentals needed).

Key of C major

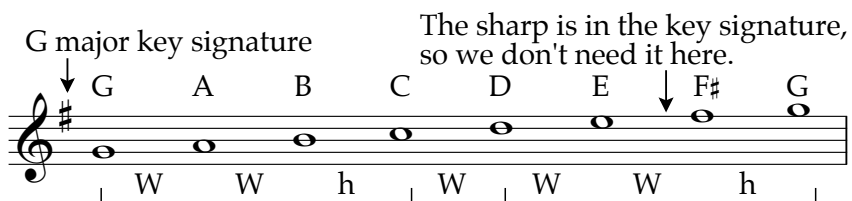
G major scale

A piece of music that uses the C major scale for its melodies and harmonies is **in the key of C major**. The major scale can also start on notes other than C, as long as it follows the correct pattern of whole steps and half steps: W-W-h, then W, then W-W-h again. A **G major scale** requires F sharp to create the E-F sharp whole step, since E to F is a natural half step.



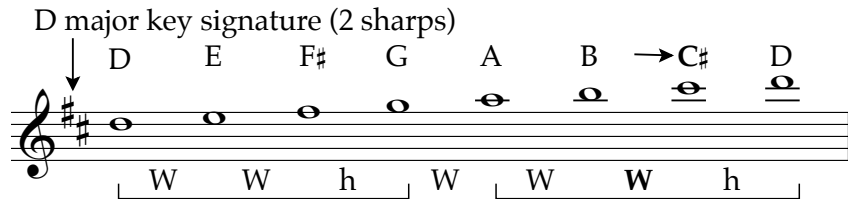
Key signature

A **key signature** indicates the accidentals for the key at the start of each line of music instead of next to each note.



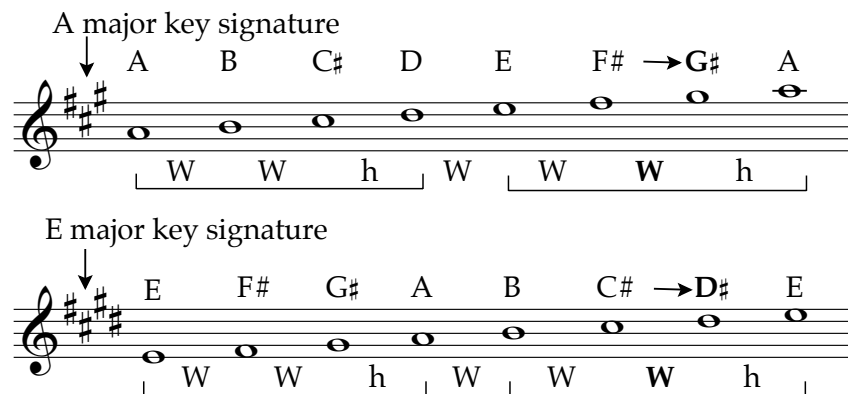
D major scale

G is the fifth scale note in C major, and the G major scale has one more sharp than C major. Changing the key to the fifth scale note of a particular scale **always** adds a sharp (or takes away a flat). Since D is the fifth scale note of G (G, A, B, C, D), the **D major** scale uses **two** sharps. The added sharp is always **one scale note below the new key**.



A major E major

Continuing “up 5, add a sharp,” **A major** has **three** sharps, **E major** has **four**, and so on. Again, the new sharp in the key signature is always **one scale note below the new key**.



F major

Similarly, **counting down five scale notes takes away a sharp (or adds a flat)**. For instance, C, B, A, G, F = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Since F is the fifth scale note down starting from C, F major has one more flat than C major. All flat keys follow the same pattern: counting down five scale notes adds a flat.

