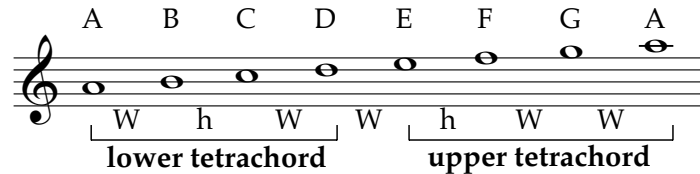


MINOR SCALES: TWO ROADS

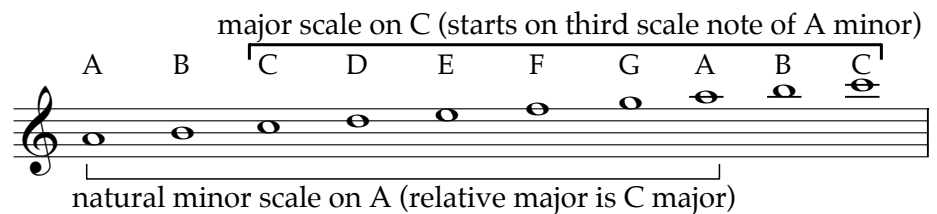
Minor scale

The most common minor scale, the **natural minor scale**, follows the pattern of half steps and whole steps formed by the white piano keys from A up to the next A: whole, half, whole; then whole; then half, whole, whole.



Relative keys

Relative keys are any major scale and natural minor scale that share a key signature. The **third note** of the minor scale is the first note of the **relative major** with the same key signature. For example, C is the third scale note of A minor. C major and A minor are relative keys sharing a key signature with no flats or sharps. Remember: **Relatives at a family reunion look alike, and relative key signatures “look alike” also.**



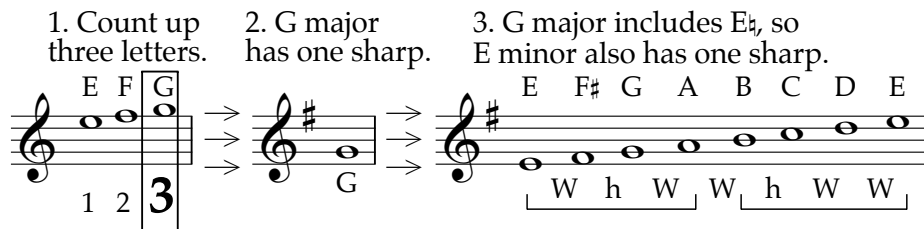
Road one: relative minor

There are two roads to find key signatures for minor scales: relative and parallel. The example below illustrates the **relative minor** method for spelling E minor.

STEP 1: Count up **three** letter names to find the relative major.

STEP 2: Spell the relative major key signature.

STEP 3: Adjust if necessary to match the minor scale you want.



Relative minor with adjustment

Sometimes counting up three letters gives a major key that doesn't fit with the minor key you want. C minor is a good example. Counting up from C gives E: C, D, E. E major has four sharps, including C **sharp**. Since we want C **natural**, not C sharp, we need to use the key signature for E **flat** major (three flats) instead of E major.

1. Count up three letters.
C D E
1 2 3

2. E major has four sharps.

3. E major includes C \sharp , not C \flat , so use the E \flat major key sig. instead.

Road two: parallel minor

Parallel keys share the **same starting note** (called the **tonic**). To find the natural minor notes using the **parallel key**, write a major scale on the same note, then **lower 3, 6, and 7** using accidentals. Although the parallel and relative methods both work, minor keys should be **memorized**.

E major = 4 #

E F \sharp G \sharp A B C \sharp D \sharp E

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

E minor = 1 #

E F \sharp G \flat A B C \flat D \flat E

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Lower steps 3, 6, and 7 with accidentals.

Melodic minor

Melodic minor is **natural minor** with steps 6 and 7 raised going up, but like **natural minor** going down. Notice the F sharp in the key for E minor.

E F \sharp G A B C \sharp D \sharp E E D \flat C \flat B A G F \sharp E

6 7 7 6

Harmonic minor

Harmonic minor is natural minor with **step 7 raised** (only) both up and down. Again, the F sharp reflects the key signature for E natural minor.

E F \sharp G A B C D \sharp E E D \sharp C B A G F \sharp E

7 7