Knowing your KEY SIGNATURES

The Circle of Fifths
Major Key Signatures
Key Signatures

- At the beginning of every song are three important things:
  - Clef
    - Treble
    - Bass
    - Alto
  - Time Signature
    - 3/4
    - 4/4
    - 2/4
  - Key Signature
    - The sharps and flats that affect the notes you play
The Circle of Fifths

Key Signatures

Major Keys

Minor Keys

Circle of Fifths

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The Circle of Fifths

• Is a handy pattern by which we keep track our key signatures and the number of sharps and flats

• Counterclockwise on the following image we are exploring the flats and the pattern is descending by fifths (five notes)
  – C, F, Bb, Eb, etc...

• Clockwise we have our sharps and the pattern ascends by fifths
  – C, G, D, A, E, etc...
The Circle of Fifths

- Down by fifths (up by fourths)
- Add b then remove #
- Up by fifths (down by fourths)
- Add # then remove b

Key Signatures

Major Keys:
- C
- F
- G
- D
- A

Minor Keys:
- Eb
- Ab
- Bb
- Eb

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On your paper...

• Put C and 0 at the top of your paper in the space provided.
• Moving to the left, label your first four blanks F, Bb, Eb, and Ab. Also label them 1, 2, 3, 4
• Moving to the right, label those G, D, A, E. Also label them 1, 2, 3, 4
Adding sharps and flats

• The flats, in order of appearance on our staff are: B, E, A, D, G, C, F
• The sharps are the opposite: F, C, G, D, A, E, B

A handy sentence you can memorize to help you remember these is:

Battle Ends And Down Goes Charles’ Father
Father Charles Goes Down And Ends Battle

The first letter in each word is the flat or sharp you draw in your key signature
Key Signatures

C  G  D  A  E  B  F♯  C♯

F  B♭  E♭  A♭  D♭  G♭  C♭
Add the sharps and flats

- Add the first four key signatures to the left and right on the wheel
Enharmonics

• Enharmonic notes are notes with the same pitch but with different names, i.e. Db/C#
• The bottom three spaces are for these most common key signatures where this occurs.
  – Label theses, from left to right,

  \[
  \begin{array}{cccc}
  \text{Db/C#} & \text{F#/Gb} & \text{B/Cb} \\
  5 & 7 & 6 & 6 & 5 & 7
  \end{array}
  \]
Add the remaining sharps and flats

• Now add the remaining sharps and flats to these enharmonic key signatures.
Key signatures in order

- Start with G and fill in the sharp key signatures at the bottom of the page – in order, then do the flats starting with F.
Knowing your KEY SIGNATURES

The Circle of Fifths
Minor Key Signatures
Learning the Minor Key Signatures

• There are two ways to describe minor key signatures as they relate to major key signatures.
  – Parallel Minor: Where the major and minor keys share the same NAME.
    • C Major and c minor
  – Relative Minor: Where the major and minor keys share the same KEY SIGNATURE.
    • C Major and a minor

• Let’s look at that same wheel again...
Parallel vs. Relative

- C Major and c minor are different places on the wheel and so have different key signatures but the fact that they share the same starting note [name/tonic] we call them PARALLEL keys.

- C Major and a minor are directly adjacent and share the same key signature so they are RELATED in that way.
How do we find the Relative minor Tonic/Starting Note?

• The way we figure this out is that you go down a m3 (minor 3rd) or three ½-steps and that’s its name.
  – Starting note is Ø.  B is 1\textsuperscript{st}, Bb is 2\textsuperscript{nd}, A is the 3\textsuperscript{rd}
  
  \begin{align*}
  &G & G\# & A & A\# & B & C & C\# & D & D\# & E & F & F\# & G \\
  \end{align*}

\[\text{Diagram of piano keys with notes labeled G, G#, A, A#, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G.} \]