

①

Musical Concept #3

1. A key signature is a group of sharps or flats which are printed at the beginning of a line of music. It shows which notes have to be changed into sharps or flats.
2. C major and A minor are the only keys with no sharps or flats.
3. There are twelve major keys and twelve minor keys, which are called "Modes" (see *Musical Concept #10*).
4. There are fifteen possible key signatures – up to seven sharps, up to seven flats, or no sharps or flats.
5. The reason there are fifteen and not twelve is because three of the keys have two possible names. These are called "enharmonic," meaning the same note, but with a different name.
6. Key signatures are written at the beginning of each line of music. This helps the musician remember which sharps or flats they should be playing.
7. The "Time Signature," however, is written only at the beginning of the piece (see *Musical Concept #4*).
8. Sometimes a musical work changes key. This is called "modulation." If the music is going to stay in the new key for some time, the composer can change the key signature.
9. Each major key has its own key signature. The relationship between the keys is illustrated in the "Circle Of Fifths."
10. Each minor key shares a key signature with one of the major keys. So, every major key has a "relative minor" key.