



How to Find the Key of a Song

Practical ways to know where “home” is

Finding the key tells you which scale and chords are most likely to appear. Here are the most reliable methods, from easiest to more advanced.

1. Look at the key signature

Count the sharps or flats at the beginning of the piece and match them to the Key Signatures sheet. This gives you the major key (or its relative minor).

2. Look at the last chord

Most songs end on the tonic (I). If the final chord is C, the song is very likely in C major or A minor.

3. Find the most common chord

The chord that appears most often, especially at the start of verses or choruses, is usually the tonic.

4. Check the melody

The melody often finishes on the tonic note. Hum the last note of the song — that is frequently the root of the key.

Major or minor?

If the overall mood is bright and the chords feel major, it is major. If it feels darker and the vi chord (relative minor) feels like home, it is minor. The same key signature serves both.

Combine two or three of these clues and you will almost always find the correct key.