



Key Signatures

The sharps or flats at the start of a piece

A key signature tells you which notes are permanently raised or lowered throughout the piece. It is the quickest way to know what key you are in.

Common key signatures

Major	Minor	Sharps / Flats	Order of accidentals
C	Am	None	—
G	Em	1 sharp	F#
D	Bm	2 sharps	F# C#
A	F#m	3 sharps	F# C# G#
E	C#m	4 sharps	F# C# G# D#
F	Dm	1 flat	Bb
Bb	Gm	2 flats	Bb Eb
Eb	Cm	3 flats	Bb Eb Ab

How to read them

- Sharps always appear in the order: F# C# G# D# A# E# B#
- Flats always appear in the order: Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb Fb
- The last sharp is a half-step below the major key name.
- The second-to-last flat is the name of the major key.

Quick tip

If there are no sharps or flats, the key is C major or A minor. Look at the final chord or the overall feel to decide which.

This sheet works hand-in-hand with the Circle of Fifths and Relative Major & Minor sheets.