

The Musical Alphabet Part 1

So we can all describe the music in the same way we use The Musical Alphabet to distinguish all the notes. We only need to know the alphabet from A to G. i.e. A, B, C, D, E, F, G. We need to think of the notes from any starting note ascending and descending. Try going from G to A backwards, a little more tricky than you think!

Twelve Notes

In modern western music as we know it today we use twelve (12) notes (semitones) these can be in different pitches higher or lower. Seven are natural notes five are sharps and flats.

Seven Natural Notes

These are the notes A to G that have not be altered in any way. A, B, C, D, E, F, G there are 7 natural notes (tones)

Sharps

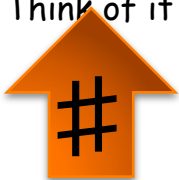
If we sharpen a note we increase the pitch by one above the natural note, its represented by the symbol #

Think of it like a sharp lemon increasing your tastbuds

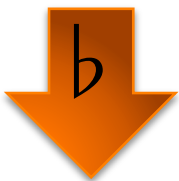
Flats b

If we flatten the note we reduce the pitch by one below the natural note its represented by the symbol b

Think of it like a tyre when its flat the wheel lowers



: Sharp, go up one note (semitone) i.e.
F raised becomes F #
C raised becomes C #



: Flat, go down one note (semitone) i.e.
B lowered becomes B b
G lowered becomes G b

Semitone

A Semitone the distance up or down by one note from your starting note. On the guitar a semitone is one fret up or down

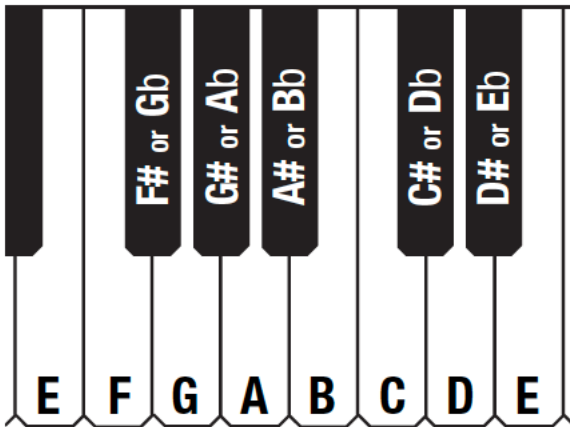
Tone

A Tone is two note up from the starting note up or down On the guitar two frets distance is a tone.

The Musical Alphabet Part 2

Visualising The Notes

If we use a piano key layout it is easy to see the natural, sharp and flat notes together



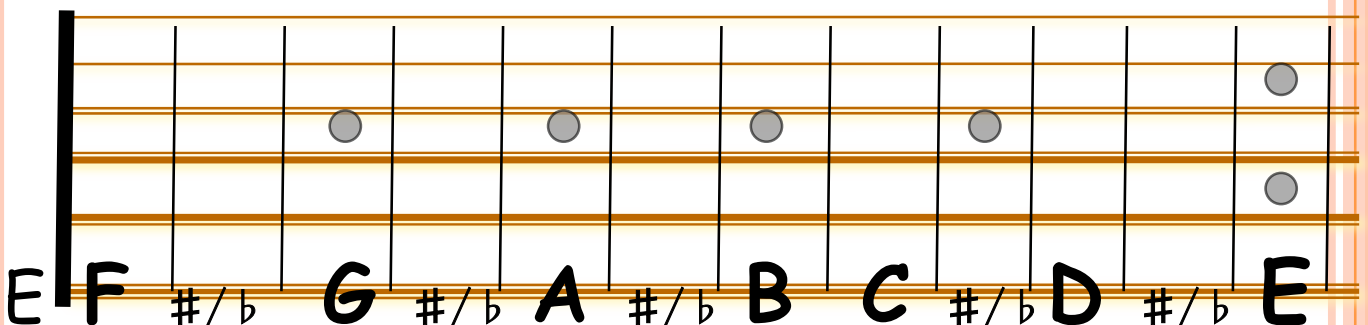
The white keys represent the natural notes and the black keys the sharps and flat notes.

Notice F# and Gb are the same note and also with the other black notes. These notes are said to be **enharmonic** i.e the same note but can be called different names.

Big Cats Eat Fish

Notice that B and C and E and F don't have a black key inbetween them. These are natural notes that separated by one pitch (semitone) Remember the saying **Big Cats Eat Fish** as this is a really important rule

Play It On The Guitar



Play up and down on the low string starting with the open E string. Use the fret markers to help you remember where the notes are.

Hint: Learn the natural notes first

The Major Scale Part 1

The Major is the building block of all western music that you know and love. It helps us to understand intervals, chords, melodies and much more. We first need to understand what an interval is. An interval is the distance between two notes. The larger the distance the bigger the interval.

Tones and Semitones

We can think of the guitar as a series of semitone and tones. We'll use T to represent tones and S to represent semitones. Now we have to remember this TTSTTTT. This is the formula for the major scale and its really important to know and memorize as all other theory is based on this!

Major Scale

The Major Scale is a seven note scale
A scale is a series of notes in ascending or descending order

To understand the scale we write out the numbers 1 to 7. 1 is the **root** note or **tonic**. We will use the Major scale in the key of C as it does not contain any sharps or flat notes. If we start on C and go up a Tone to the next note we get D then D up a tone to the next note we get E. From E we now go up a semitone which if you remember **Big Cats Eat Fish**. E and F are a Semitone for each other. From F we go up a Tone to G the G up a Tone to A and B up a semitone back to C.

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C Major	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Intervals		T	T	S	T	T	T	S

But why is C got an 8 above it as its only a seven note scale.
Well its now 8 notes higher in pitch than it was before.
Even though its still C They call this the **octave**

The Major Scale Part 2

Now Its Your Turn

Complete the Major scale below try and locate them on the guitar. **Hint: you should always have consecutive letters of the alphabet when doing this**

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
G Major	G							G
Intervals		T	T	S	T	T	T	S

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A Major	A							A
Intervals		T	T	S	T	T	T	S

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
B Major	B							B
Intervals		T	T	S	T	T	T	S

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
E _b Major	E _b							E _b
Intervals		T	T	S	T	T	T	S

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C# Major	C#							C#
Intervals		T	T	S	T	T	T	S

Try all the other keys working out the notes so that you feel comfortably and confident you can do it. Now try and play the notes on the guitar.