

Natural Minors Review

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The major mode, which we learnt about earlier in the semester, has one form, that in which the distance between the notes is WWHWWWH.

The minor mode is more problematic, as it takes on three main different forms – the natural, harmonic, and melodic forms, each represented by different scales. Regardless of the form of the minor, each form of the minor scale has the same key signature ie. E natural minor, E harmonic minor, and E melodic minor all have the same key signature, one sharp, F#.

The natural form of the minor has this pattern of half and whole steps (remembering that the half steps are diatonic half steps): WHWWHWW.

Every major scale has a **relative** minor. This is the minor scale that has the same key signature. To find the relative minor for a major scale, go to the sixth note of the major scale, and that is the tonic note of its relative minor. Alternatively, the note that is the interval of a major 6th above the tonic note of the major key is the tonic note of its relative minor key (or a minor 3rd below the major tonic note). For example, the sixth note of C major is 'A', and an interval of a major sixth above 'C' is 'A' – this is the tonic note of A minor, the relative minor of C major, which has the same key signature – no sharps or flats.

Remember that the order of sharps and flats in key signatures for minor keys is the same order as for major keys. The order of sharps as they occur in the key signature is F C G D A E B (**F**at **C**ats **G**et **D**runk **A**fter **E**very **B**eer). The order of the flats is the reverse of the sharps – B E A D G F C. As you only need to remember the first 3 flats in this class, remembering the word 'BEAD' for the order of the flats will be helpful.



Make sure that each flat or sharp is on the correct line or space eg. the F# of a key signature in the treble clef must go on the top line, NOT the bottom space.

Each major key has a **parallel** minor key – this is the minor key that has the same tonic note. Therefore, the parallel minor for C major is C minor, which has a key signature of 3 flats, B flat, E flat, and A flat. Likewise, the parallel major for C minor is C major, which has a key signature of no sharps or flats. Parallel majors and minors do have different key signatures from each other.

The key signatures you need to know for this class are:



C Major/
A minor



G Major/
E minor



D Major/
B minor



A Major/
F# minor



F Major/
D minor



B flat Major/
G minor



E flat Major
C minor