

# Music Theory 5

## Key Signatures

Second Chances Music Program

### Order of Sharps & Flats in a Key Signature

In music, the saying “Father Charles Goes Down and Ends Battle” is used to determine the order of sharps in a particular key signature. For example, if the key signature has 4 sharps in it, then they will always be written in this order: F, C, G & D (Father-Charles-Goes-Down).

1 <sup>st</sup> sharp	2 <sup>nd</sup> sharp	3 <sup>rd</sup> sharp	4 <sup>th</sup> sharp	5 <sup>th</sup> sharp	6 <sup>th</sup> sharp	7 <sup>th</sup> sharp
<b>F</b> ather	<b>C</b> harles	<b>G</b> oes	<b>D</b> own	<b>A</b> nd	<b>E</b> nds	<b>B</b> attle
7 <sup>th</sup> flat	6 <sup>th</sup> flat	5 <sup>th</sup> flat	4 <sup>th</sup> flat	3 <sup>rd</sup> flat	2 <sup>nd</sup> flat	1 <sup>st</sup> flat

Reversing the saying, “Battle Ends and Down Goes Charles’ Father,” the sequence is used to determine the order of flats in a given key signature. For example, if the key signature has 5 flats in it, then they will always be written in this order: B, E, A, D, & G (Battle-Ends-And-Down-Goes).

### Determining Key Signatures for Major Scales

There are a number of ways to teach a student how to determine the key signature for a given major scale. One such way is through a pattern buried inside the two sayings we’ve already been introduced too: “Father Charles Goes Down and Ends Battle” and “Battle Ends and Down Goes Charles’ Father”.

Keep in mind however, that different students will learn and internalize concepts in different ways. If the following method is confusing for you, feel free to research other methods of determining key signatures, such as ‘the circle of fifths’.

F# Major 6 sharps	C# Major 7 sharps	G Major 1 sharp	D Major 2 sharps	A Major 3 sharps	E Major 4 sharps	B Major 5 sharps
<b>F</b> ather	<b>C</b> harles	<b>G</b> oes	<b>D</b> own	<b>A</b> nd	<b>E</b> nds	<b>B</b> attle
F Major 1 flat	Cb Major 7 flats	Gb Major 6 flats	Db Major 5 flats	Ab Major 4 flats	Eb Major 3 flats	Bb Major 2 flats

Key of C Major - the key of C-Major has no sharps and no flats in it

Now, imagine that your conductor/teacher says, “Please play a D Major scale.” From the chart above, you can see that a D major scale will have 2 sharps in it. Then going back to the first chart, you can determine that those two sharps will be F# and C# (Father-Charles).

## For Guitar & Piano

You have already realized that as piano or guitar players, you are able to either play a major scale on your instrument using single notes or choose to accompany the rest of the band using chords.

When talking about the degrees of any scale, musicians will always number the notes of the scale starting at the root or first note and continuing up until you reach the last note of the scale. In the following example, a C Major scale is used.



The first (or ROOT) is the C, the 2<sup>nd</sup> is the D, the 3<sup>rd</sup> is the E, the 4<sup>th</sup> is the F, etc... When we reach the 8<sup>th</sup> (or OCTAVE) we have again arrived on a C.

When you change these single notes into triads (or CHORDS), you instead use Roman Numerals to represent the various degrees of the scale. Upper case roman numerals will represent MAJOR chords, and lower case roman numerals will represent MINOR chords.



Using this information, a guitar/piano player can then extract the I, IV, V chords from any major scale and use them to accompany the band. The order of chords for a major scale will always be the same, but will need to be transposed for the given key.

### Order of Chords for a Major Scale

<b>I</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>
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Now, using this chart, you can see that you only need the I, the IV and the V chords in order to accompany the major scale. In the key of C-Major you would need the C-chord (I), the F-chord (IV) and the G-chord (V).

Order of Chords	<b>I</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>
C Major Scale	C	G	C	F	G	F	G	C

Now let's go back and look again at the accompaniment for the very first scale you learned, the Bb Concert Scale. If the guitar players remember to transpose with the capo on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret, they will see the pattern is the same.

Order of Chords	<b>I</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>I</b>
Bb Major Scale	Bb	F	Bb	Eb	F	Eb	F	Bb
Capo on 3 <sup>rd</sup> fret	G	D	G	C	D	C	D	G