

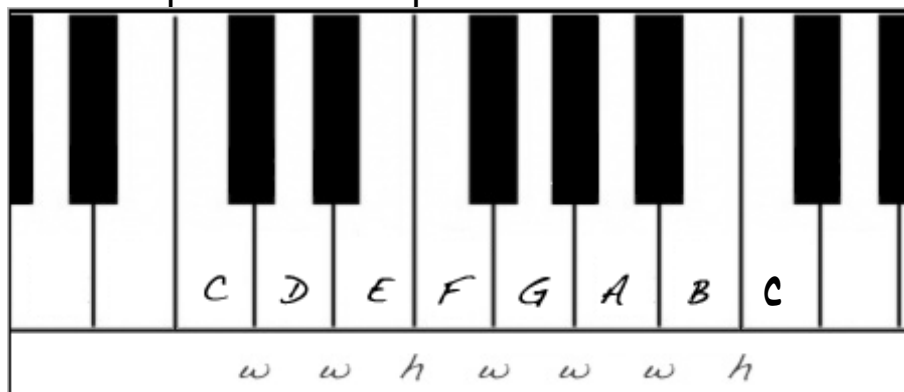
Major Scales

All major scales use the following pattern from its first note:

WWHWWWH (W stands for whole step and H stands for half step)



On a piano the whole steps and half steps are easier to see:



In Symphonic band you will be required to play all 12 Major scales from the circle of fifths above

Explanation of “Concert” Scales

Looking at the chart above, you see that playing a Bb major scale on your instrument requires you to play a scale that contains two flats. Using the acronym you determine the two flats to be Bb and Eb (**B**ody **E**xercising). But what does your first note (Bb,) actually sound like.

Did you know that not all instruments playing a Bb sound like the Bb of a piano???

A trumpet, flute, alto sax and french horn player all playing a Bb are actually producing different notes. This is due to the fact that each instrument is designed to play in a specific key from our circle of fifths above. For us to all sound the same in our ensembles, some of us need to change the key we are playing.

As a director I will therefore use the term “concert” scale when I want all of the members of my ensemble to sound the same. If you hear me ask for an F concert scale here is what each member of the ensemble has to do in order to match:

Piano, mallets, flutes, oboes, bassoons, trombones, tubas, baritones and guitars have it simple. When they play an F it sounds like an F. They will therefore play the F scale. Using the Circle of Fifths chart, we see they need to play one flat in their scale, the Bb flat (**B**ody)

Clarinets, bass clarinets, trumpets and tenor saxes **sound a whole step lower** than the piano and the rest of the instruments above. In order to match they need to start their scale one step higher. To accomplish this, they play a G scale instead of an F scale. Using the Circle of fifths chart you can see that a G scale has one sharp, the F sharp (**F**it).

Alto and bari saxes sound a minor third or 3 half steps higher than the piano and the rest of the instruments in the first group above. In order to match them they need to start their scale a minor third or 3 half steps lower. To accomplish this, they play a D scale instead of an F scale. Using the Circle of fifths chart you can see that a D scale has two sharp, the F and C sharp (**F**it **C**harlie).

French horns sound 5 half steps higher than the piano and the rest of the instruments in the first group above. In order to match them they need to start their scale 5 half steps lower. To accomplish this, they play a C scale instead of an F scale. Using the Circle of fifths chart you can see that a C scale has no sharps or flats.