Unit 06: Key Signature: Major Keys

Content Area: **Music**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **2 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will learn how key signatures are derived from the major scales covered in the previous unit. The circle of fifths will be introduced and used to ensure the use of the correct accidentals for each key and their proper arrangement on the staff.

Revised: July 2026

Standards

Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.3E.12prof.Cr1a	Generate melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas for compositions or improvisations using digital tools.
1.3B.12prof.Cr2a	Assemble and organize sounds or short musical ideas to create initial expressions of selected experiences, moods, images or storylines.
1.3E.12prof.Cr2a	Select melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas to develop into a larger work using digital tools and resources.
1.3B.12prof.Cr2b	Identify and describe the development of sounds or short musical ideas in drafts of music within simple forms (e.g., one part, cyclical, binary).
1.3E.12prof.Cr3a	Drawing on feedback from teachers and peers, develop and implement strategies to improve and refine the technical and expressive aspects of draft compositions and improvisations.
1.3B.12prof.Cr3a	Identify, describe and apply teacher-provided criteria to assess and refine the technical and expressive aspects of evolving drafts leading to final versions.

1.3E.12prof.Cr3b	Share compositions or improvisations that demonstrate musical and technological craftsmanship as well as the use of digital tools and resources in developing and organizing musical ideas.
1.3B.12prof.Cr3b	Share music through the use of notation, performance or technology, and demonstrate how the elements of music have been employed to realize expressive intent.
1.3E.12prof.Pr4a	Develop and explain the criteria used for selecting varied sound resources based on interest, music reading skills, and an understanding of the performer's musical and technological skill.
1.3E.12prof.Pr4b	Describe how context, structural aspects of the music, and digital media/tools inform prepared and improvised performances.
1.3E.12prof.Pr4c	Identify the context, expressive challenges, and use of digital tools in a varied repertoire of music influence prepared or improvised performances.
1.3E.12prof.Pr5	Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
1.3B.12prof.Pr5	Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
1.3B.12prof.Pr6a	Share live or recorded performances of works (both personal and others') and explain how the elements of music are used to convey intent.
1.3B.12prof.Pr6b	Identify how compositions are appropriate for an audience or context, and how this will shape future compositions.
1.3B.12prof.Re8a	Develop and explain interpretations of varied works, demonstrating an understanding of the composer's intent by citing technical and expressive aspects as well as the style/genre of each work.
1.3B.12prof.Re9a	Describe the effectiveness of the technical and expressive aspects of selected music and performances, demonstrating an understanding of the fundamentals of music theory.
1.3B.12prof.Re9b	Describe the way(s) in which critiquing others' work and receiving feedback from others can be applied in the personal creative process.

Essential Questions

- In what ways does an understanding of key signatures and major scales empower a composer or performer to realize their expressive intent?
- What do I hear when I listen to music?
- What purposes do key signatures serve in musical notation and performance?

Enduring Understandings

- Key signatures help musicians understand the composition of a piece of music.
- Key signatures serve as a notation shortcut that reduces visual clutter on the staff, allowing performers to read music more fluidly by establishing a clear tonal center from the outset.
- Key signatures were derived to aid performers, informing them of the scale in which a piece of music has been composed.

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- How to assign a given scale its key signature.

- How to correctly position flats and sharps in the notation of a key signature in both treble and bass clef.
- How to find the starting note (or tonic note) of a major scale from the given key signature.
- How to name scales from their key signatures.
- How to use and construct a circle of fifths as a tool for identifying and constructing key signatures.
- The order of sharps and flats.

Learning Plan

- Preview the essential questions and return to them throughout the course, in discussion and written assignments.
- Students memorize the order of sharps and flats, related to the circle of fifths.
- Students practice creating scales from given key signatures. Students may use the keyboard or the circle of fifths as tools.
- Students practice memorizing key signatures using and the placement of sharps and flats on the appropriate lines and spaces of the staff, using worksheets, games, practice drills, flash cards, etc.
- Teacher demonstrates the placement of key signatures on the treble and bass clef, in the patterns for both sharps and flats.
- Using the major scales written in the previous unit, students determine what accidentals are in each scale.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Performing Arts students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Evidence of progression may be demonstrated in divergent ways through the Artistic Processes of Creating, Performing/ Presenting/ Producing, Connecting, and Responding.

- Students will correctly place sharps and flats in key signatures from the scales they have written.
- The student will be able to construct a circle of fifths given starting notes.
- The student will use the circle of fifths to identify and construct key signatures, and position them correctly on the staff, in both treble and bass clefs.
- When given a key signature, students will write the corresponding scale.
- When given starting note, the student will construct a scale and write the corresponding key signature.

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations: Performing Arts Accommodations & Modifications