

2025 Unit 4: Key Signatures, Scales, and Transposition: Exploring Tonal Relationships

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Key Signatures, Scales, and Transposition: Exploring Tonal Relationships

This unit guides students through the circle of fifths, key signatures, and the relationships between major, minor, and modal scales. Students will analyze, identify, and compose music in various keys, including those with sharps and flats, and develop proficiency in transposing musical examples accurately. Emphasis is placed on understanding key alterations, relative minors, modal scales, and harmonic chord qualities across different keys. Through performance, analysis, and composition activities, students will deepen their grasp of tonal organization and practical application in music.

Learning Objectives

- Students will accurately demonstrate and apply scales, chords, keys, arpeggios, cadences, and sight-reading on different scale degree roots across various key settings. They will also properly figure out how to transpose musical examples to other keys through activities involving performing, identifying, analyzing, comparing, drawing, spelling, transcribing, transposing, and composing.
- Students will accurately determine and apply the correct notes of a relative modal key or scale. They will demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose to deepen their understanding of modal relationships.
- Students will accurately determine the key of a musical example by analyzing key signatures and other musical elements. They will demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose to reinforce their understanding of key identification.
- Students will accurately determine the notes of a relative minor key or scale in relation to its relative major key, including identifying which notes should be raised or lowered when playing a particular key or scale. They will demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose to strengthen their understanding of key relationships and alterations.
- Students will accurately determine which notes to raise or lower when playing a particular key or scale, including identifying the notes of a minor key in relation to its major key. They will demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose to deepen their understanding of key alterations.
- Students will accurately figure out and draw the correct positions of any required key signature. They will demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose to reinforce their mastery of key signature notation.
- Students will accurately write music in various keys, including those with up to two sharps or flats. They will demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose to develop proficiency in key-specific notation.
- Students will become familiar with and apply the circle of fifths alongside the order of flats and sharps. They will demonstrate, analyze, discuss, and use this knowledge to deepen their understanding of key signatures and relationships between keys.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize,

spell, transcribe, transpose or compose Determining harmonic chord qualities of chords built on differing scale degree roots in differing key settings.

- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose or compose Properly figuring out how to transpose a musical example to another key

Essential Skills

- Accurately identify key signatures using the order of sharps and flats.
- Analyze and identify harmonic chord qualities built on various scale degrees.
- Analyze and identify the notes of relative minor keys in relation to their relative majors.
- Analyze how key changes affect harmonic and melodic structure in compositions.
- Analyze musical examples to determine their key signatures.
- Apply knowledge of scales and keys to improvisation and creative composition.
- Compare and contrast major, minor, and modal keys in both analysis and performance.
- Compose chord progressions that reflect correct harmonic and key relationships.
- Compose short melodies or phrases using major and relative minor keys.
- Demonstrate understanding of the circle of fifths and its application to key relationships.
- Discuss and explain the theoretical basis behind key signatures and key relationships.
- Draw key signatures correctly on staff paper for any given key
- Identify and apply notes of modal scales relative to their major counterparts.
- Identify notes that must be raised or lowered in major and minor keys.
- Integrate theoretical knowledge with practical skills in performance, transcription, and composition across multiple keys and modes.
- Perform arpeggios and cadences within different keys and modal settings.
- Perform modal scales and melodies demonstrating correct pitch and key alterations.
- Perform scales and melodies in keys with up to two sharps or flats.
- Recognize and spell key signatures and accidentals fluently in written and aural contexts.
- Recognize the functional role of chords within different key contexts.
- Sight-read music accurately in various key signatures and modes.
- Transcribe melodies and harmonies with proper notation of key signatures and accidentals.
- Transpose melodies accurately from one key to another.
- Use the circle of fifths to facilitate key modulation and understanding of key relationships.
- Write and notate music correctly in keys with sharps and flats

Standards

MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Cr1a

Describe how sounds and short musical ideas can be used to represent personal experiences, moods, visual images, and/or storylines.

MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Cr2a

Assemble and organize sounds or short musical ideas to create initial expressions of selected experiences, moods, images or storylines.

MU.9-12.1.3B.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).
MU.K-12.1.3D.12nov.Cr3a	Apply teacher or student-provided criteria to critique, improve and refine drafts of simple melodies as well as chordal accompaniments for given melodies.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12nov.Cr3b	Share final versions of simple melodies and chordal accompaniments for given melodies, demonstrating an understanding of how to develop and organize personal musical ideas.
MU.9-12.1.3B.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.
MU.9-12.1.3B.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.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Pr4c	Develop interpretations of works based on an understanding of the use of elements of music, style and mood, explaining how the interpretive choices reflect the creator's intent.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Pr5a	Create rehearsal plans for works, identifying repetition and variation within the form.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Pr5b	Using established criteria and feedback, identify the way(s) in which performances convey the elements of music, style and mood.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Pr5c	Identify and implement strategies for improving the technical and expressive aspects of multiple works.
MU.9-12.1.3B.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.
MU.K-12.1.3C.12nov.Re7a	Identify reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest, and purpose or context.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12nov.Re7b	Identify and describe how interest, experiences and contexts (e.g., personal, social) effect the evaluation of music.
MU.K-12.1.3C.12nov.Re7b	Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities and contrasts inform the response to music.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Re7a	Apply teacher-provided criteria to select music that expresses a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (e.g., one-part, cyclical, binary), and describe the choices as models for composition.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Cn10a	Demonstrate how interests, knowledge and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12prof.Cn11a	Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Instructional Tasks/Activities

1. Circle of Fifths Exploration: Students create and label their own circle of fifths diagrams, identifying key signatures and relative minors.
2. Key Signature Flashcards: Use flashcards to drill identification of key signatures and their order of sharps and flats.
3. Key Identification Practice: Analyze short musical excerpts to determine the key based on key signatures and melodic/harmonic clues.
4. Scale Performance: Practice playing and singing major and relative minor scales in keys with up to two sharps or flats.
5. Key Signature Notation: Write key signatures accurately on staff paper for assigned keys.
6. Transposition Exercises: Transpose simple melodies or chord progressions between closely related keys using the circle of fifths as a guide.
7. Compose in Key: Compose short melodies or phrases focusing on correct use of key signatures and accidentals.

8. Modal Scale Exploration: Learn and perform modal scales; compose short phrases using modal notes.
9. Chord Quality Analysis: Identify chord qualities built on different scale degrees in various keys using examples or worksheets.
10. Harmonic Function Discussion: Discuss the function of chords within key contexts and create chord progressions demonstrating these functions.
11. Sight-Reading Practice: Sight-read exercises in various keys and modes, emphasizing key-specific accidentals and notation.
12. Transcription Activity: Transcribe a melody from audio or notation, focusing on accurate key signature and accidental notation.
13. Peer Teaching: In pairs, students explain key signature rules, transposition processes, or chord functions to reinforce understanding.
14. Technology Integration: Use notation software to compose, transpose, and analyze pieces in different keys and modes.
15. Reflective Journaling: Students write about challenges and insights in learning key signatures, transposition, and harmonic concepts.

Throughout this unit, students engage in a variety of instructional activities designed to deepen their understanding of key signatures, the circle of fifths, and related musical concepts. They begin by creating and labeling their own circle of fifths diagrams and practicing key signature identification through flashcards. Students analyze musical excerpts to determine keys and perform major and relative minor scales in keys with sharps and flats. Writing key signatures accurately and transposing melodies between closely related keys reinforce their notation and theoretical skills. Composing short melodies within assigned keys helps apply their knowledge creatively, while exploring modal scales broadens their tonal palette. Chord quality analysis and harmonic function discussions enhance their grasp of harmony within different keys. Sight-reading exercises, transcription tasks, and peer teaching promote practical application and collaborative learning. Finally, integrating notation software and reflective journaling supports technology use and self-assessment, rounding out a comprehensive approach to mastering key relationships and musical structure.

- Chord Quality Analysis
- Circle of Fifths Exploration
- Compose in Key
- Harmonic Function Discussion
- Key Identification Practice
- Key Signature Flashcards
- Key Signature Notation
- Modal Scale Exploration
- Peer Teaching
- Reflective Journaling
- Scale Performance
- Sight-Reading Practice
- Technology Integration
- Transcription Activity
- Transposition Exercises

Assessment Procedure

- Chord Quality Analysis Worksheet
- Circle of Fifths Diagram Test
- classwork/homework
- Composition Project
- discussions, peer observation
- Key Signature Identification Quiz
- Modal Scale Application Test
- participation in performance
- Performance Assessment
- Reflective Journal Submission
- Sight-Reading Evaluation
- Teacher observation
- tests/quizzes
- Transcription Assignment
- Written Transposition Exercise

Recommended Technology Activities

- Audio Recording and Playback
- Chord Analyzer Apps
- Collaborative Cloud-Based Notation
- Digital Flashcards
- Google Classroom
- Google Docs
- Google Forms
- Google Slides
- Interactive Circle of Fifths Apps
- Interactive Theory Games
- Kahoot
- MagicSchool AI
- Notation Software Composition
- Online Sight-Reading Tools
- Quiziz
- Screencastify
- Transposition Practice Software
- Virtual Keyboard Labs

Accommodations & Modifications & Differentiation

Accommodations and Modifications should be used to meet individual needs. Their IEP and 504 plans should be used in addition to the following suggestions.

Gifted and Talented

- Compare & Contrast
- Conferencing
- Debates
- Jigsaw
- Peer Partner Learning
- Problem Solving
- Structured Controversy
- Think, Pair, Share
- Tutorial Groups

Instruction/Materials

- alter format of materials (type/highlight, etc.)
- color code materials
- eliminate answers
- extended time
- extended time
- large print
- modified quiz
- modified test
- Modify Assignments as Needed
- Modify/Repeat/Model directions
- necessary assignments only
- Other (specify in plans)
- other- named in lesson
- provide assistance and cues for transitions
- provide daily assignment list
- read class materials orally
- reduce work load
- shorten assignments
- study guide/outline

- utilize multi-sensory modes to reinforce instruction

Environment

- alter physical room environment
- assign peer tutors/work buddies/note takers
- assign preferential seating
- individualized instruction/small group
- modify student schedule (Describe)
- other- please specify in plans
- provide desktop list/formula

Resources

- Google Classroom
- handouts
- instruments
- Music Theory texts
- MusicFirst
- Noteflight,
- screen recordings
- SoundTrap
- The internet
- Tonesavvy
- virtual instruments
- whiteboard