

What's that key?

Tricks for naming key signatures

1. Look at the end of the piece – *most of the time* the piece will end on the **tonic or 1st scale degree** of the key of the piece
2. If it is a **major key with sharps**, going a half-step up from the last sharp will tell you which key.
Here's an easy one: *The last sharp shown is F#. A half-step up from F# is G. The key is G Major.*



This one looks hard, but use the same trick: *The last sharp shown is E#. A half-step up from E# is F#. The key is F# Major.*



3. If it is a **major key with flats**, the name of the key is also the second-to-last flat in the key signature.
Here's an easy one: *The second to last flat shown is Bb. The key is Bb Major.*



This one looks hard, but use the same trick: *The second to last flat shown is Gb. The key is Gb Major.*



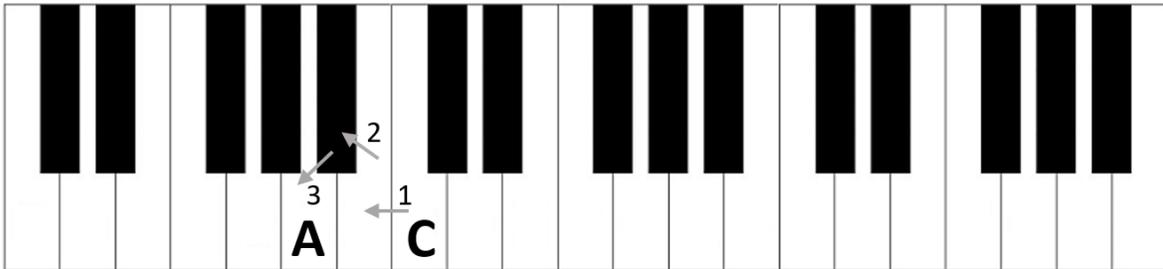
4. For **minor key signatures** you can use what you know about **major key signatures**.
 - a. **Relative keys** are major and minor keys that *have the same key signature*.
 - b. *You can figure out a key's relative key by*
 - i. *Going down a minor third or three half steps from the major key.*
 - ii. *Going up a minor third or three half steps from the minor key.*

Let's start with an easy one. Ask yourself: *What major key is this?*



Think: *There are no sharps or flats so it's C Major!*

Now, find C on the keyboard. What note is a *minor third or three half steps down* from C?



A is three half steps down from C. That means that C Major and A minor are **relative keys**.

So, time to ask yourself: *What minor key is this?*



Think: *I know that this is C Major because it has no sharps or flats. Three half-steps down from C is A. That means that C Major and A minor are **relative keys** so they share the same key signature. This key signature is both C Major and A minor!*

Let's try one more.

Ask yourself: *What **major** key is this?*

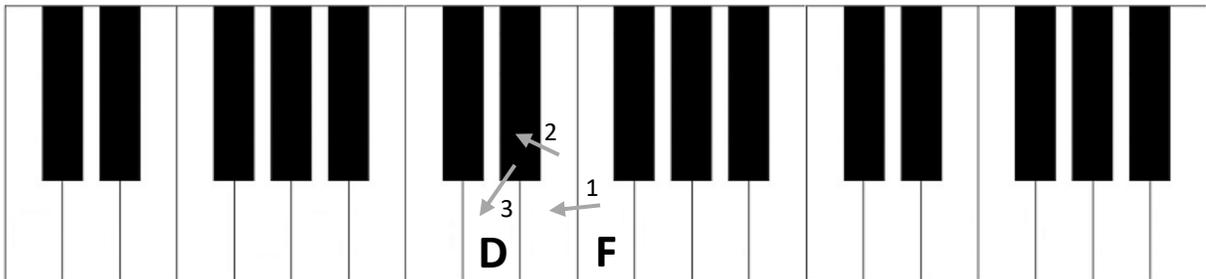


Think: *There is one flat so it is F Major!*

Now ask yourself: *What **minor** key is this?*



Think: *I know that F Major has 1 flat. F Major's **relative minor** shares the same key signature.*



*I can find the **relative minor** by going down a minor third or three half steps. D is three half steps down from F. So, the answer is D minor!*