

Explaining Music 9: Sharp Key Signatures – part 3

To review, the order of sharps in a key signature is:

Father Charles Goes Down And Ends Battle

And they always appear like this:
on the **grand staff**



In the last lesson we looked at how to figure out the key of a piece of music from the **key signature**.

In this lesson we'll look at how to figure out the number of sharps in a given **key**.

(Keep in mind that we're still looking only at major keys.)

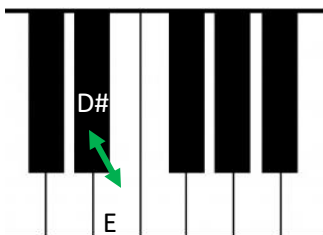
The method is:

1. Figure out the name of the second last note of the scale (the semitone below the scale's note name)
2. Take all of the sharps in order up to and including that one

Here's an example:

If we want to know the number of sharps in E major we need to know the note a semitone (or half step) below E

That note is D#



Now we need to run through the order of sharps and take all of them to D# (but no more)

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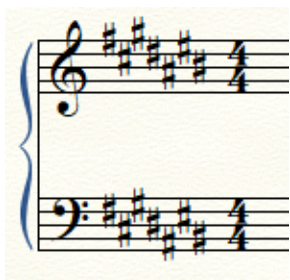
So, the **sharps** in E major are F#, C#, G# and D#

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Here's a few for you to try:

[Remember that the sharps need to appear exactly as in the picture below:]

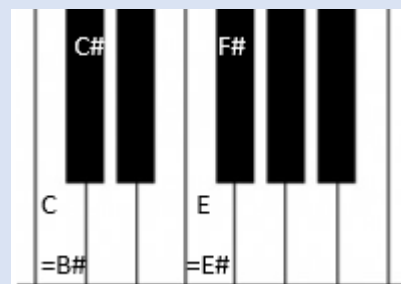
Order of Sharps



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Note: If you are looking for the semitone below C# or F# you will have to use the # name for that note.

So C=B# and F=E#



D major



A major



B major



F# major

