

WHOLE STEPS and HALF STEPS

by Stacy Kastner



Moving up a note from C to D is called going up a “**whole step**”. Moving down from D to C is called going down a “whole step”.

However, a note halfway between the C and the D also exists.

To raise or lower a note only halfway to the next note, we use a symbol called an **accidental**.

The **sharp** (#) symbol is the accidental which raises a note one **half-step**.

The **flat** symbol (b) is the accidental which lowers a note one half-step.

For example, to raise C halfway to D, we would play the note called C-sharp (C#).

To lower D halfway down to C, we would play the note called D-flat (Db).

Notice that the note halfway between the C and the D has two names: C# and Db. When two different names result in the same note, these notes are called **enharmonic equivalents**.

Going up or down a whole step is always equal to going up or down two consecutive half-steps. For example, to go down a whole-step from D#, you would go down a half-step to D and then down another half-step to end up on C#.

An important thing to remember is that E to F, and also B to C, is already only a half-step. There is no note halfway in between these notes.

SCALES

A **scale** is a series of notes in a row, determined by a special order of whole steps and half-steps.

The **chromatic scale** begins on a note and continues by half-steps up or down.

The ascending **major scale** begins on a note, and continues up a Whole step, then another Whole step, and then a half-step. Another Whole step, Whole step, Whole step, and half-step complete the ascending scale.

Other types of scales include the **whole-tone scale** (constructed of consecutive whole steps), and the **diminished scale** (constructed of alternating whole steps and half-steps). The **modal scales** and **minor scales** are generally derived from the major scale.

WHOLE STEPS, HALF-STEPS, AND SCALES QUIZ

4 points each

Write the note one whole-step up from the following notes:

1. A ___
2. F ___
3. E ___
4. F# ___

Write the note one whole-step down from the following notes:

5. G ___
6. D ___
7. C ___
8. Bb ___

Write the note one half-step up from the following notes:

9. D ___
10. F# ___
11. B ___
12. Ab ___

Write the note one half-step down from the following notes:

13. E ___
14. G# ___
15. F ___
16. Db ___

Write the note that is the enharmonic equivalent of the following notes:

17. F# ___
18. Bb ___
19. C# ___
20. Fb ___

21. The notes of the minor and modal scales are generally derived from what other scale? _____

22. What is one example of an accidental? _____

23. Please write the notes of the ascending Ab major scale. Please use flats instead of sharps when necessary.

24. Please write the notes of the ascending Ab chromatic scale. You may use flats or sharps when necessary.

25. What note, would you guess, is the enharmonic equivalent of G double-flat (Gbb)? ____

Extra credit (10 points): Write the notes of either the descending Ab whole-tone scale or the descending Ab diminished scale. You may use flats or sharps when necessary.
