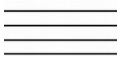



Basics of Music Theory Cheat Sheet

Staff: five lines and four spaces representing pitches 

Clef: a symbol showing which pitches the staff represents

treble clef for higher pitches  bass clef for lower pitches 

Notes: symbols placed on a staff to show what pitches and rhythms should be sung 

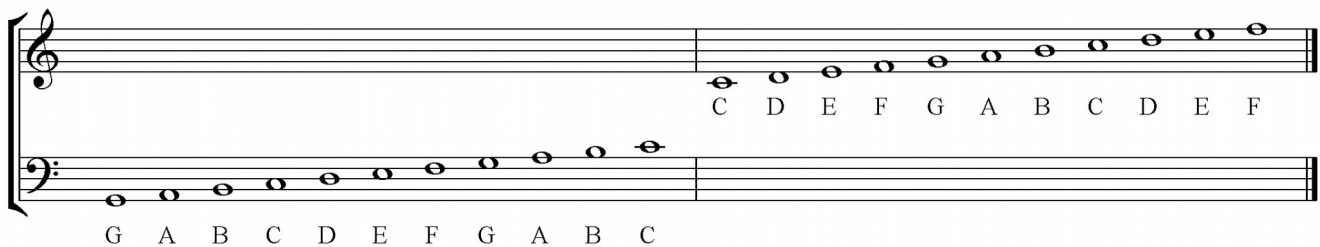
Scale: a collection of ascending and descending pitches used to build the melody and harmony of a piece of music

Solfege: syllables assigned to each note in a scale
DO RE MI FA SO LA TI DO (this is a major scale, the most common scale)
Knowing these syllables makes it easier for many singers to find their starting notes and to learn new music.

Key: the pitch on which the scale is built—the pitch that sounds like DO

The staff is usually called by the name of the clef. A staff with a treble clef on it is called a treble staff. A staff with a bass clef on it is called a bass staff.

The pitches on a treble staff are indicated with seven letters from the alphabet, A-G. The pitches on a bass staff are also indicated with the letters A-G, but the letters on the two staves are in different places. Learn both.



C D E F G A B C D E F

G A B C D E F G A B C

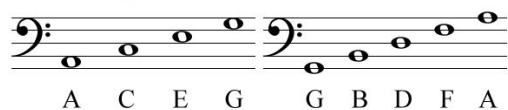
Memorizing lines and spaces:
(you can make up your own sayings, too)

Treble staff:
Lines: Every Good Boy Does Fine (E G B D F)
Spaces: F A C E



F A C E E G B D F

Bass staff:
Lines: Good Boys Do Fine Always (G B D F A)
Spaces: All Cows Eat Grass (A C E G)



A C E G G B D F A

The key of a song is indicated by the key signature which is found at the beginning of a song. The key signature indicates where DO is. It can have anywhere from 1-7 sharps (#) or flats (b) or no sharps or flats.

Memorizing key signatures

No sharps or flats: C

Sharps: Go Down And Eat Breakfast First Charlie (G D A E B F# C#)

Flats: Fat Boys Eat Apple Dumplings Greedily Charlie (F Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb)

Finding DO and your starting pitch:

1. Find the key signature.
2. Identify the key using the section above (remember that the key = DO).
3. On the staff, find the line or space where DO is.
4. From that line or space, count up or down the scale until you come to your starting pitch (each line and each space is a new note).
5. Using a pitch pipe or piano, play the key of the song—DO.
6. Sing DO, then sing up or down the scale until you arrive at your note (eventually, you will want to do this in your head so that you can hear DO and think your starting note without singing it).
7. Sing the song!

Tip #1: Most of the songs you ever sing will start on DO, MI, or SO.

Tip #2: If DO is on a line, MI and SO will be on the two lines above it. If DO is on a space, MI and SO will be on the two spaces above it. How nice.

Tip #3: If the song starts on something other than DO, MI, or SO (for example, LA), follow the same process listed above and simply stop on the correct note.

Have fun!

Remember: Practice makes permanent.

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