

Working Out the Key

To work out the key of a piece of music:

- 1) Look at the key signature.
- 2) Look at the last note - often (but not always) this will be the tonic note.
- 3) Look for the raised seventh of the harmonic minor scale.

For example:

1) This piece has a key signature of one sharp, therefore it is either G major or E minor.

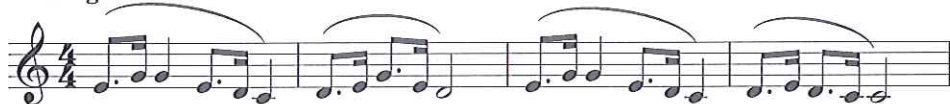
2) The final note is E, so that makes it seem likely that it is E minor.



3 - The presence of a D sharp (which is the raised seventh of E minor) confirms that this piece is in E minor.

Work out the key of the following classical themes:

Largo



key: _____

Moderato



key: _____

Allegro



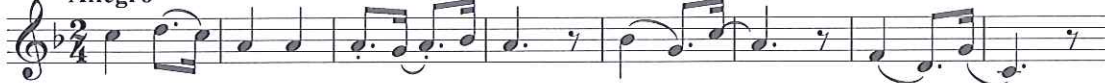
key: _____

Moderato



key: _____

Allegro



key: _____

Sample Worksheet from "Printable Music Theory Books" from the Fun Music Company
[Download a free printable and watermark free version](#)

45

pizz. *p*

50 (violin)

55

60 (flutes)

65 *p* *mf* *mf* *p* *cresc.*

70 *f* *p* *mf*

75 *mf* *p cresc.* *f* (violin) pizz.

Second listening

- Which of these instruments plays a solo at bar 19?
☐ cor anglais ☐ trumpet ☐ cello
- Which of these words describes the bass, during the middle section?
☐ walking ☐ ostinato ☐ off-beat ☐ drone
- When music A reappears as A², is it exactly the same as at first, or does Tchaikovsky make any important changes?

Third listening

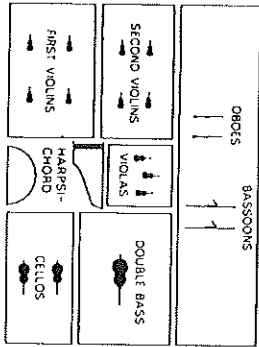
- Mention two important differences between the tune of music A and the tune of music B.
- Describe any other noticeable contrasts (differences) between music A and music B.

Play or listen to this rondo by Purcell. He composed it as part of the incidental music to a play called *Abdelazer*. Discover:

- how many times the main rondo tune is heard;
- how Purcell structures bars 3-6 of his main tune;
- how many episodes there are, and where each one begins.

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff, with a bass line on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into seven systems, each containing a main melodic line and a bass line. The main melodic line is marked with a 'w' (trill) and a '5' (fingering). The bass line is marked with a 'w' (trill) and a '5' (fingering). The score is numbered 1 through 40, with the main tune appearing at bars 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40. The episodes are marked with a 'w' (trill) and a '5' (fingering). The score is written in a style typical of 17th-century manuscript notation, with a focus on the main melodic line and the bass line.

Final Movement from Concerto Grosso, Opus 3 No. 1 *Handel*



[Allegro]

1 2 3 4 *4r*

5 6 7

8 9 10

11 12 Solo 13

14 15 16

17 18 19

20 21 22 *4r*

Chapter 5

Major, minor, and pentatonic

Key signatures

In each of the examples below, the white note shows the tonic of the major key, and the black note shows the tonic of the relative minor – the minor key which shares the same key signature. The leading-note of each minor key is shown in brackets. (This is 'extra' to the key signature and, where necessary, needs to be written in the music as an accidental.)

Four staves of musical notation showing major and relative minor key signatures. Each staff has four examples. The first staff shows C major/A minor, G major/E minor, D major/B minor, and A major/F# minor. The second staff shows E major/C# minor, B major/G# minor, F# major/D# minor, and C# major/A# minor. The third staff shows F major/D minor, Bb major/G minor, Eb major/C minor, and Ab major/F minor. The fourth staff shows Db major/Bb minor, Gb major/Eb minor, and Cb major/Ab minor. In each example, the major key tonic is a white note and the relative minor tonic is a black note. Leading notes for minor keys are shown in brackets with accidentals.

Intervals

An interval is the distance, or difference, in pitch between two notes. The notes may be sounded together, or one after another. (Top and bottom notes are included in the count).

A musical staff showing various intervals between two notes. The intervals are labeled below the staff: major 2nd (tone), minor 2nd (semitone), major 3rd, minor 3rd, perfect 4th, perfect 5th, major 6th, minor 6th, major 7th, minor 7th, and perfect octave.

If perfect or major intervals are increased by a semitone, they become **augmented** ('made larger'). If perfect or minor intervals are reduced by a semitone, they become **diminished** ('made smaller').

Four musical staves showing augmented and diminished intervals. The first staff shows a perfect 4th (C to F). The second staff shows an augmented 4th (C to F#). The third staff shows a perfect 5th (C to G). The fourth staff shows a diminished 5th (C to Gb).