

Basic Music Theory for Junior Cert.

Reading Different Clefs

The most commonly used clefs are the treble and bass. The ability to read both of these clefs proficiently is *essential* for Junior Cert. Music. Clef reading exercises are available online on sites such as www.teoria.com.

Treble Clef

Every Good Boy Deserves Fun F A C E

Bass Clef

Green Buses Drive Fast Always All Cows Eat Grass

Time Signatures

The number at the top of a time signature tells you how many beats are in a bar, the number on the bottom refers to the type of beats.

1	Semibreve
2	Minim
4	Crotchet
8	Quaver
16	Semi-quaver

E.G:

Four crotchet beats per bar Three minim beats per bar Six quaver beats per bar

C stands for common time which is 4/4 time.

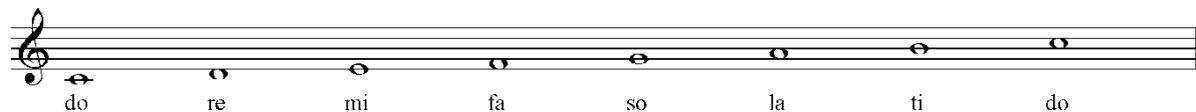
Anacrusis/Upbeat

Some melodies don't begin on the first beat of the bar. When this happens it is known as an anacrusis (or an upbeat). The final bar of the melody must make up for this anacrusis, as shown below:

Anacrusis/Upbeat

Scales and Key Signature

Scales are made of eight notes. The major scale goes as follows: do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do'.



Each scale has a different number of sharps or flats. Sharps and flats are placed on the staff in a particular order, the following helps to remember what that order is:

For sharps(#): **Father Charlie** Goes Down And Ends Battle

For Flats(b): **Battle Ends** and Down Goes Charlie's Father

For Junior Cert. Music you must learn to recognise the key signatures of major or minor scales with **up to two sharps or flats**.

(no sharps or flats)	C major		
Keys with Sharps		Keys with Flats	
F# (father)	G major	Bb (battle)	F major
F# C# (father Charlie)	D major	Bb Eb (battle ends)	Bb Major

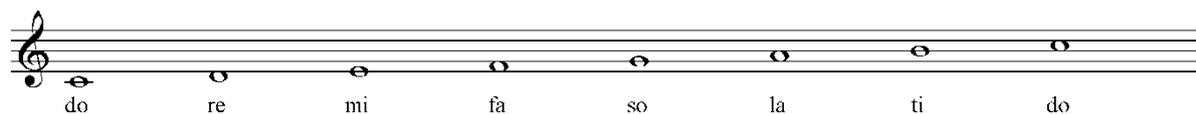
G major D major
d r m f s l t d' d r m f s l t d'

F major Bb major
d r m f s l t d' d r m f s l t d'

Minor Scales

Minor scales begin on la: la, ti, do, re, mi, fa, si, la. Minor scales are related to a major scale and share the same key signature. A minor scale starts on la and shares a key signature with do. For example, a minor is related to C major and shares its key signature:

C major:

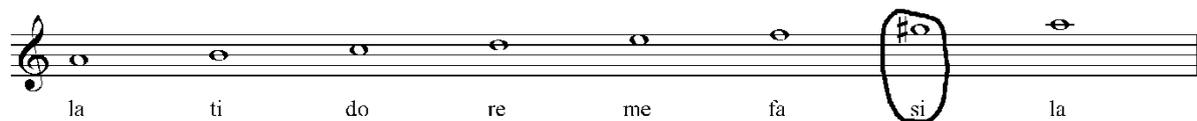


a minor:



So a minor is the **relative minor** of C major.

Once you've worked out what major key signature your minor scales shares, you have to do one more thing – raise the 7th note:



This note belongs in the minor scale but is not included in the major key signature. When writing a melody in a minor key, the raised 7th is added into the melody as an accidental every time it appears:



Major keys and their relative minors:

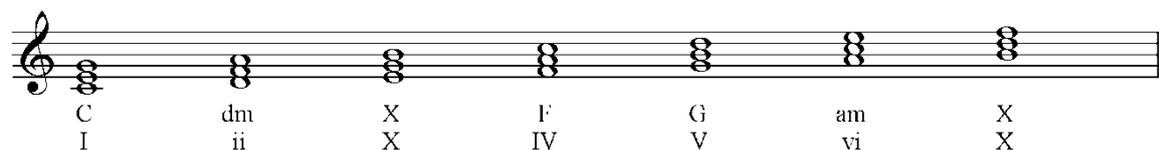
Major (do)	Key sig.	Minor (la)
C	no # or b	a
G	F#	e
D	F# C#	b
F	Bb	d
Bb	Bb Eb	g

Chords and triads

A chord is two or more notes sounded together. Triads are made up of three notes: root, third and fifth. Of these the root is most important. Second most important is the third, as it tells us whether the chord is major or minor. If you build a triad on each note of the scale of C major some chords turn out major, some turn out minor.

G	A	B	C	D	E	F
E	F	G	A	B	C	D
C	dm	em	F	G	am	bdim
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°

Chord charts can also be written out like this:



This pattern (major, minor, minor, major, major, minor, diminished) is the same for every major scale. For HL Music you are expected to be able to use chords I, ii, IV, V and vi in a major key. DO NOT USE iii OR vii° in any of your exercises – they're not on the syllabus.

N.B. always indicate minor chords by using lower case letters and following each name with a small m e.g. dm for d minor. Similarly, when using roman numerals capitals are for majors and lower case for minors.

Cadences

A cadence is a musical full stop – it marks the end of a phrase. A cadence is made up of a sequence of two chords. There are four types of cadences:

Perfect	V-I
Plagal	IV-I
Imperfect	Anything-V
Interrupted	V-vi

Only cadences ending on I (i.e. Perfect and Plagal) can be used at the very end of a piece. You should be able to identify cadences visually and aurally for HL Leaving Cert. Try naming these cadences:



The Instruments of the Orchestra

There are four families of instruments in the orchestra: **strings, woodwind, brass and percussion**. In each family there are four main instruments (except percussion). Here they are listed from highest to lowest:

Strings	Woodwind	Brass
Violin	Flute	Trumpet
Viola	Oboe	French Horn
Cello	Clarinet	Trombone
Double Bass	Bassoon	Tuba

Percussion instruments can be tuned (instrument you can play a melody on) or untuned (instrument you can't play a melody on – not tuned to any pitch)

Tuned		Untuned	
Timpani	Glockenspeil	Bass drum	Wood Block
Xylophone	Tubular Bells	Triangle	Cymbals

Form

Form means the structure of a piece of music – how many parts it has and whether they are repeated. There are two main types of form: Binary and Ternary. There are lots of other forms with different rules and regulations but Binary and Ternary are the most basic forms that all the other forms grew out of.

Binary Form	AB
Ternary Form	ABA

Example: *Edelweiss* from 'The Sound of Music'

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Edelweiss' from 'The Sound of Music'. It consists of four staves of music in G major and 3/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts at measure 9 with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second staff starts at measure 17. The third staff starts at measure 25 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The fourth staff ends with a double bar line. The lyrics are: 'E - del - weiss, E - del - weiss, eve - ry morn - ing you greet me. Small and white, clean and bright, you look hap - py to meet me. Blossom of snow may you bloom and grow, bloom and grow for - eve - er. E - del - weiss, E - del - weiss, bless my home - land for - ev - er.'

The words help you to see where each phrase (musical sentence) ends – at the full stops. In the melody there are long notes at the end of each phrase. Listening to the music (without words) you can tell where a phrase ends because the melody comes to rest for a moment on a long note. Each phrase is given a label: phrase one is A, phrase two is A¹ (almost the same melody as A), phrase three is B (completely different) and phrase four is A² – AA¹BA². **Simplified it becomes ABA – Ternary form.**

Texture

Texture refers to the **number of layers** in the music and how they sound together. You can describe texture using adjectives such as very full –e.g. lots of layers and instruments – or light – e.g. few layers and instruments – or sparse – e.g. a few layers with very low instruments and very high instruments and nothing in between. Be careful not to be too flowery, e.g. rich, blooming texture filled with emotion. Some people call this waffle, and they're correct! There are musical terms for three basic types of texture: **monophonic, homophonic and polyphonic.**

Monophonic	one melody only
Homophonic	melody and accompaniment (harmony)
Polyphonic	more than two melodies (e.g. two melodies and accomp, three melodies, etc.)

Note that **it doesn't matter how many instruments are playing it matters how many layers** there are. So whether there are one or fifty instruments, if they're all playing the same melody with no accompaniment (harmony) the texture is monophonic.