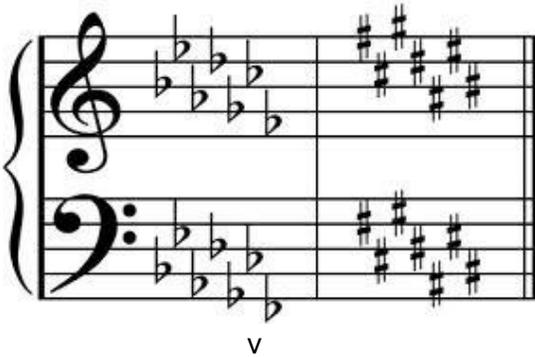


### Lesson Three: Key Signatures & Scale Degree Names

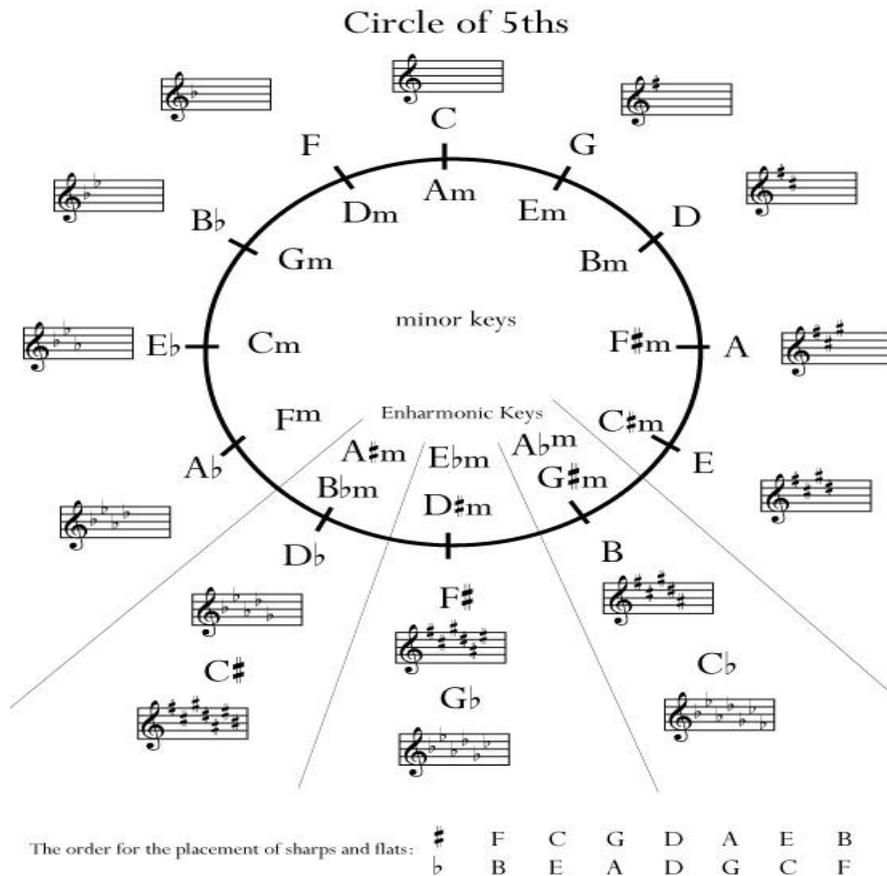
**Key signature**—accidentals written at the beginning of a composition (which can be changed throughout the work) used to designate the key or tonality of a work.

The **order of flats** is always: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb, Fb

The **order of sharps** is always: F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#



**Circle of fifths**—a diagram that illustrates the order of keys from the least to the greatest number of sharps (clockwise), and the least to the greatest number of flats (counterclockwise)



**Note:** It is best to just memorize both the major and minor key signatures! There are just 15 major keys and 15 minor keys to learn for a total of 30 keys. While there are all sorts of clever methods to use to figure out the keys, it is in your best interest to have all the keys memorized without using aids to “figure out the keys.” For example, when you see a key signature of 4 sharps, 2 keys should IMMEDIATELY pop into your head—E major and c# minor. Using tricks and other clever methods will ultimately slow you down and potentially increase the possibility for error for more complicated theory problems.

**Note:** The flats and sharps appear in the same order and pattern for key signatures written in both the alto and tenor clefs).

**Relative Keys**—the pair of major and minor keys that share the same key signature (e.g., G major and e minor both share the same key signature of 1 sharp).

**Parallel Keys**—the pair of major and minor keys that share the same tonic note (e.g., C major and c minor both share the same c tonic pitch).

**Enharmonic Keys**—the pair of major keys or pair of minor keys that share the same tonic note in sound, but are written with a different key signature. (e.g., C# major and Db major both share the same tonic note in sound, but are written as 7 sharps and 5 flats respectively).

**Scale degree names**—the traditional names given to the pitches of a scale as represented by their order.

1<sup>st</sup> scale degree—**tonic**

2<sup>nd</sup> scale degree—**supertonic**

3<sup>rd</sup> scale degree—**mediant**

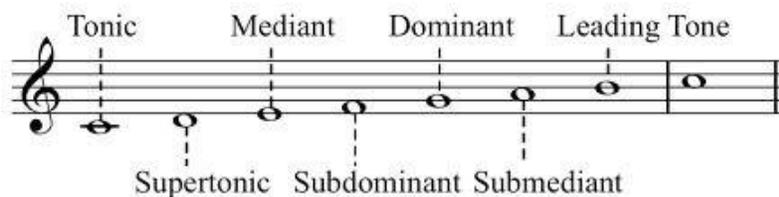
4<sup>th</sup> scale degree—**subdominant**

5<sup>th</sup> scale degree—**dominant**

6<sup>th</sup> scale degree—**submediant**

7<sup>th</sup> scale degree—**leading tone** or **subtonic**

(The term leading tone is used for a raised 7<sup>th</sup> and the term subtonic is used for a lowered 7<sup>th</sup>)



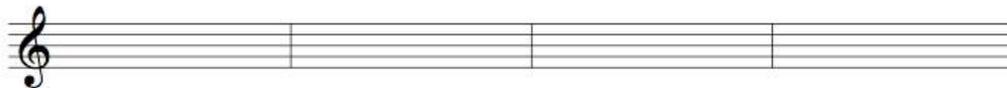
**Lesson Three: Key Signatures & Scale Degree Names**  
**Practice Questions**

- 1) List the correct order of flats: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) List the correct order of sharps: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What is the relative key of f minor? \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) What is the relative key of B major? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What is the parallel key of c# minor? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) What is the parallel key of Eb major? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) What is the enharmonic key of B major? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) What is the enharmonic key of F# major? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Name the following keys with both a major and minor key for each key signature:



- 10) Write the key signature for the requested keys:



D Major                      Eb Major                      c# minor                      bb minor



F# Major                      Ab Major                      g minor                      E Major

- 11) Name all 7 scale degrees in order:

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 \_\_\_\_\_