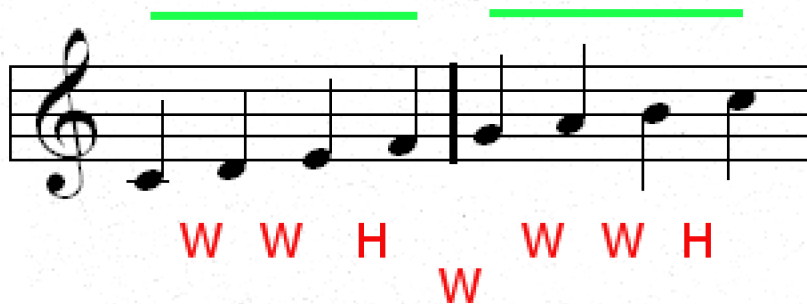


## Introduction to the Major Scale

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Major scales (keys) are common in tonal music. You have probably heard them almost all your life.

A scale is a sequence of notes in a certain pattern. Here is the pattern for the major scale (C Major). It starts and ends on C:



**Fig. 1. C Major Scale.**

This C major scale is divided in two parts, two tetrachords (four note groupings). The pattern between the four notes is Whole step, Whole step, Half step. We will call this repeated tetrachord pattern the “major tetrachord.” The lower and upper tetrachord are the same in the major scale. There is a connection between the two tetrachords of a Whole step (the lower W).

Major scales use each letter of the musical alphabet in order. They don't skip letters. For instance, although this sequence of notes has the right tetrachord pattern, it is not a major scale:



**Fig. 2. Not a Major Scale.**

Although D to D# (d sharp) are a half step, they are not diatonic half steps (half steps with different alphabet letters). The letter “E” is missing from the notes. Also the interval between the two tetrachords is not a whole step.

Here are two examples of correctly constructed major scales:



Fig. 3. Bb Major Scale.



Fig. 4. G Major Scale.

Notice the correct tetrachords and the whole step between them (the upper W).