DOLLAR LESSONS ™ KEYS

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By Phil Black

Rm. 6:23

Definition: **A major scale is a major key.**

The first note of a major scale is the note from which the key gets it's name. From the notes of the scale most of the chords and "licks" are constructed. Certainly, there are exceptions. Knowing the key will give you most of the material used in the piece of music. This subject is VERY IMPORTANT!

First, you will need to know about **semitones**, **whole-tones** and, the **chromatic scale**.

Whole-tones and Semitones

Definition: The **semitone** is the smallest interval. (The difference in pitch between two notes is called an interval.) A semitone is the distance between any note and its nearest higher or lower neighbor.

In Figure 1 shown below, examples of semitones would be: E (note 1) to F (note 2), B (note 8) to C (note 9), F# (note 3) to F (note 2), etc.

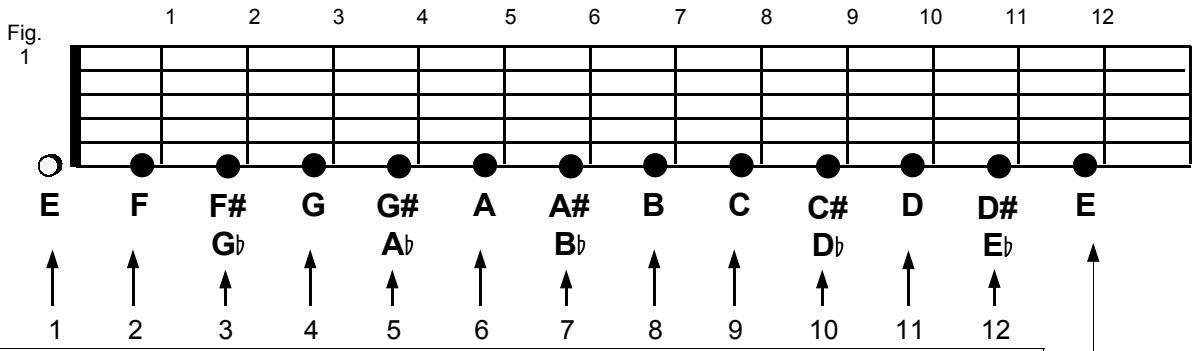
Definition: A **whole-tone** (or simply **tone**) is an interval consisting of two semitones.

In Figure 1 shown below, examples of whole-tones would be: E (note 1) to F# (note 3), F (note 2) to G (note 4), C# (note 10) to B (note 8), etc.

The Chromatic Scale

Definition: A chromatic scale is a scale that progresses entirely by semitones.

Fig. 1



After the twelfth note, the note names start over. We started with E (open - note number 1) and ended with D# (11th fret - note number 12).

As you can see in Figure 1 above, there are twelve different notes. A chromatic scale can be formed on any one of the twelve different notes by ascending or descending twelve semitones.

The Major Scale

Definition: A major scale progresses, in ascending order, by these intervals:
Tone, Tone, Semitone, Tone, Tone, Tone, Semitone

Fig. 2

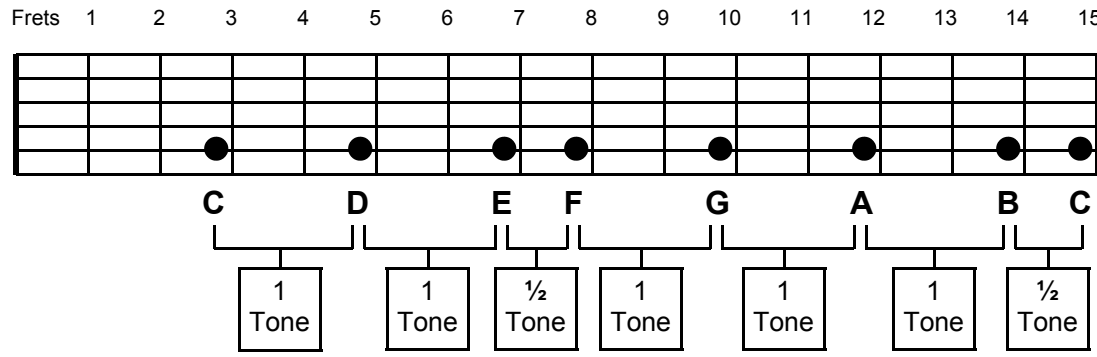



Figure 2 is the C major scale. Applying the major scale formula to any of the twelve notes in the chromatic scale would produce twelve major scales and therefore, twelve major keys.