

## Circle of Fifths

The **CIRCLE OF FIFTHS** is useful in understanding scales and key signatures. It shows the relationship of one key to another by the number of sharps or flats in the key signature and the order in which the sharps or flats occur.

### SHARP KEYS

Start with C and go clockwise in *ascending* tetrachord order.

### FLAT KEYS

Start with C and go counterclockwise in *descending* tetrachord order.

The sharp keys *ascend* by 5ths (W W H W);\* the flat keys *descend* by 5ths (H W W W).

### SHARP SCALES

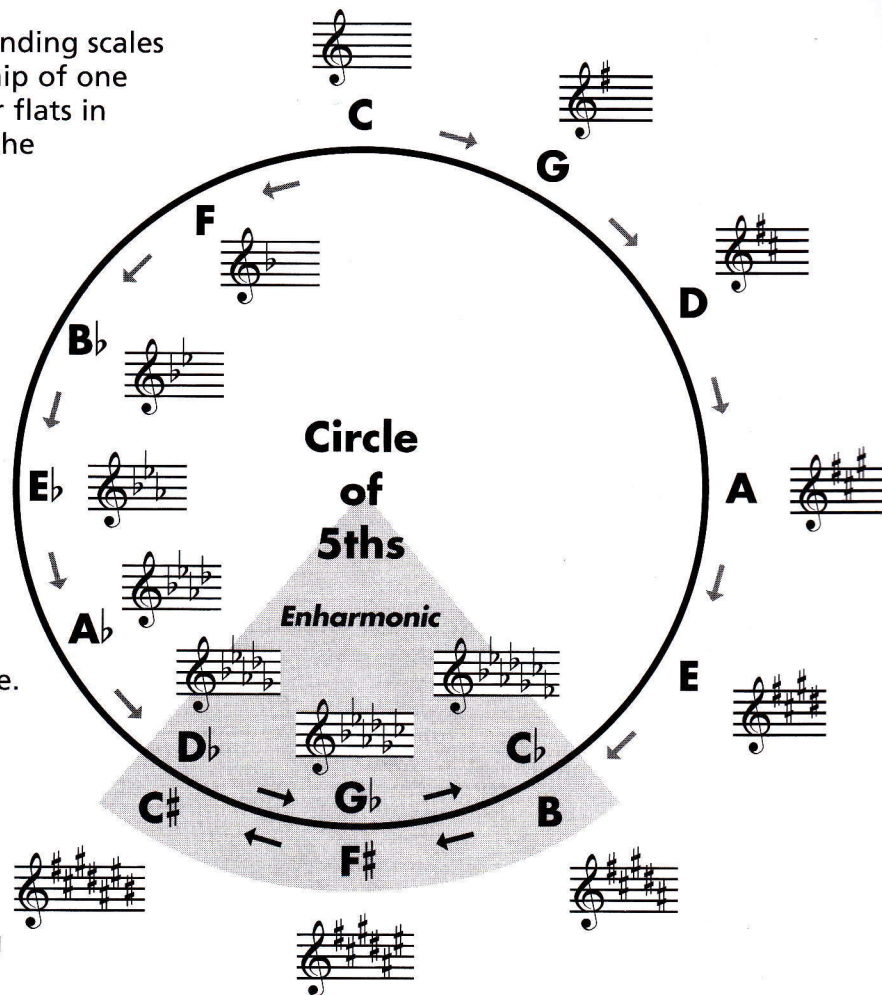
Starting with C, the 2nd tetrachord of the *ascending* major scale becomes the 1st tetrachord of the following ascending scale. The scale's name is derived from the 1st note of that tetrachord, and one sharp is added to the key signature.

### FLAT SCALES

Starting with C, the 2nd tetrachord of the *descending* major scale becomes the 1st tetrachord of the following descending scale. The scale's name is derived from the 1st note of that *descending* tetrachord, and one flat is added to the key signature.

### OPTIONAL

Another way to determine the order of the flat keys is to ascend by 4ths (W W H). Starting on C: C to F, F to B $\flat$ , B $\flat$  to E $\flat$ , etc.



The order of sharps in the key signature:

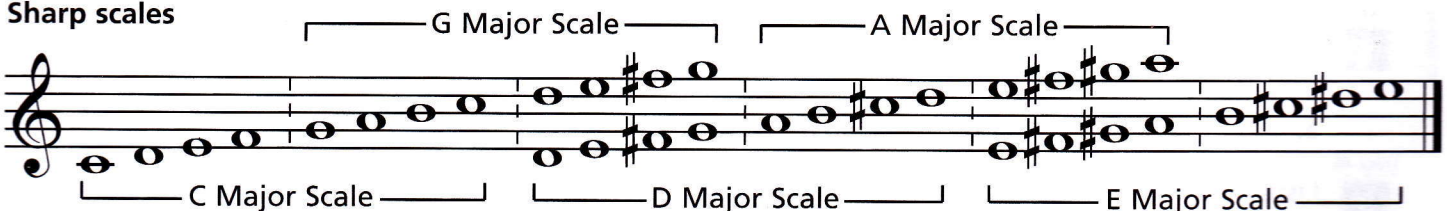
**F C G D A E B.**

The order of flats in the key signature:

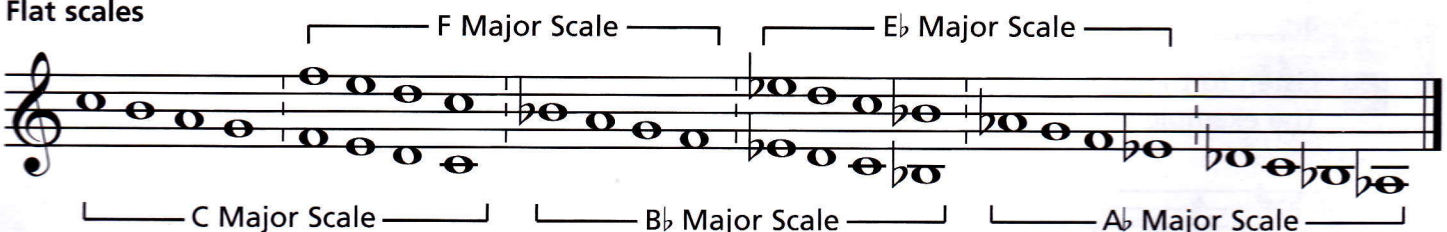
**B E A D G C F.**

### OVERLAPPING TETRACHORD PATTERNS

#### Sharp scales



#### Flat scales



\*W=Whole Step. H=Half Step.

**Unit 8 ACTIVITY 5** Name/Class \_\_\_\_\_**Circle of Fifths**

- 1** One way to remember the order of sharps is by remembering the saying:  
Fat Cats Go Down Alleys Eating Bread. Make up your own sentence to  
remember the order of sharps using words that start with the letters F C G D A E B.\*

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- 2** One way to remember the order of flats is by remembering the following: B E A D + G C F.  
Make up your own sentence to remember the order of flats using words that start with  
the letters B E A D G C F.\* \_\_\_\_\_

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- 3** By what interval do sharp keys ascend (go clockwise) in the circle of fifths? \_\_\_\_\_

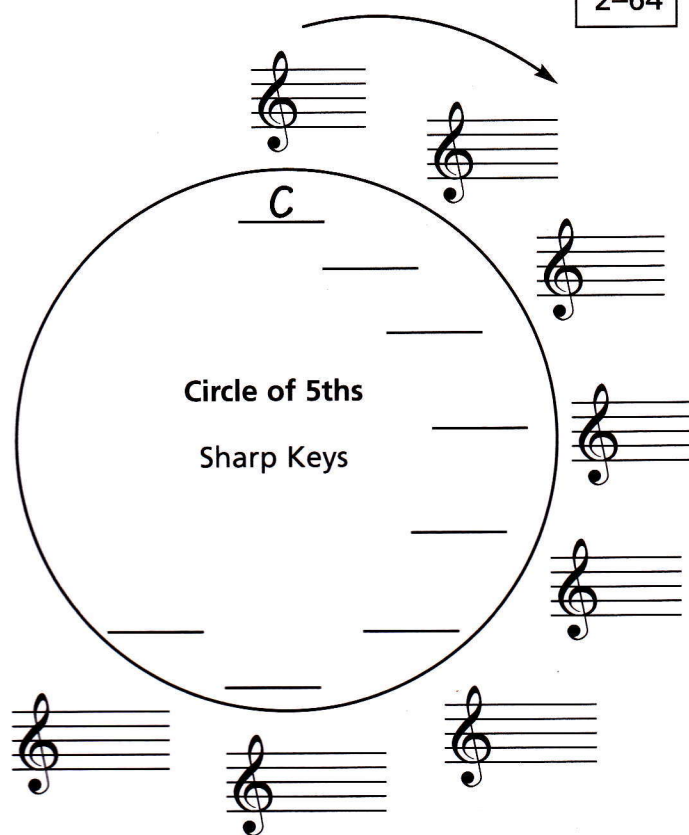
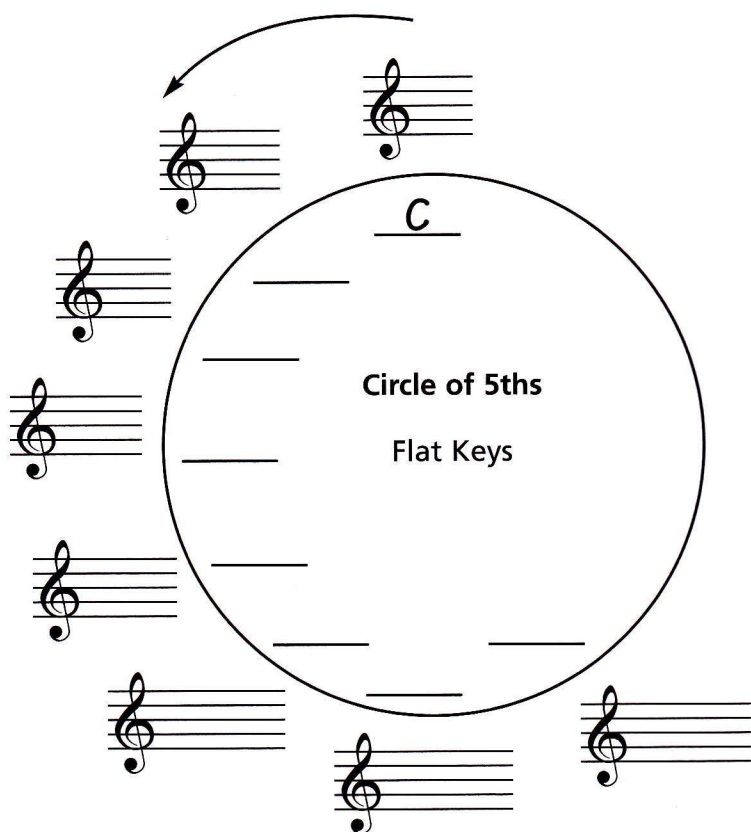
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- 4** By what interval do flat keys descend (go counter clockwise) in the circle of fifths? \_\_\_\_\_

5

- 5** Write the missing keys and their key signatures in each circle of fifths.

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- 6** The enharmonic keys in the circle of fifths are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

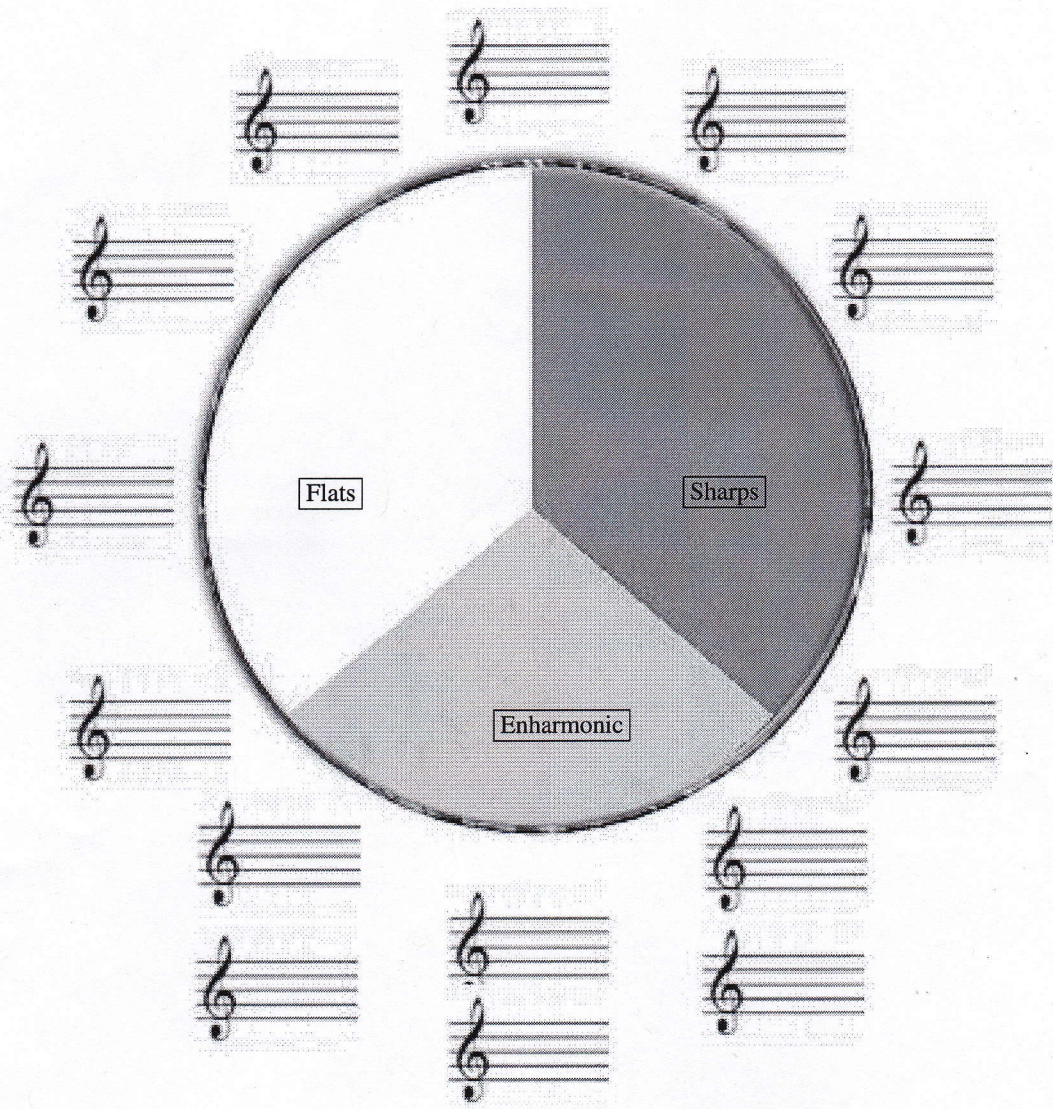
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# Circle of Fifths Treble Clef

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Fill in the major key signatures on the circle above and the staff below.

						
	G	D	A	E	B	F#
	Sharps					C#
						
	F	Bb	Eb	Ab	Db	Gb
	Flats					Cb