

Major And Minor

So far, all the songs and exercises in this book have been written in major keys in which the tonic chord is based on do. There are many songs, however, which are based on "la" and are described as being in a minor key. Sing both examples and hear the differences between the two chords. In order to determine whether a song is in major or minor, look at the last note of the song. If the song ends with do, mi, and sol as the final chord, it is probably major; if it ends with la, do, mi as the final chord, then it probably is minor.

Major Chord

①

Minor Chord

②

Songs in minor often have accidentals, usually either the 6th or 7th notes of the scale. Try these three forms of the minor scale:

Natural Minor

③

Melodic Minor

④

Harmonic Minor

⑤

Major Keys And Their Relative Minor Keys

Major songs take their key name from "do." Since many songs are in a major key, you can usually check the location of "do" and know the name of the key. If the song title says "Sonata in F" they will mean F major, unless otherwise specified.

Minor songs take their key name from "la." As previously stated, they usually end on "la" and usually have several accidentals (especially on the 6th and 7th scale steps, making them "fi" and "si.")

Keys that share the same key signature (same amount of sharps or flats, etc.) are said to be "related." Therefore each major key has a "relative minor key," and each minor key has a "relative major key." To find the name of the relative minor key, look for the letter name of "la." To find the name of the relative major key, look for the letter name of "do." Here are some examples of major keys and their relative minor keys, with a tonic chord (pitch ladder) for each key.

Relative Major

C Major

do mi sol mi do sol do

Relative Minor

A Minor

la do mi do la mi la

F Major

do mi sol mi do sol do

D Minor

la do mi do la mi la

G Major

do mi sol mi do sol do

E Minor

la do mi do la mi la

A Flat Major

do mi sol mi do sol do

F Minor

la do mi do la mi la