

In previous lessons, we've seen intervals and the armor. However, we have omitted to say that each armor is linked to 2 different ranges: a minor range, and a major range. This is what we will see in this course. We will first give definitions related to the ranges, then see what the degrees are. We will finally see the cadences.

1. Definitions

- Range

A scale is a series of 8 joint notes. It is said to be major or minor depending on its characteristics.

- The major range

This range has 2 semitones. The semitones are always placed in the same places: between the 3rd and 4th note, as well as between the 7th and 8th note.

A major scale will be noted by the 1st note of this range.

- The minor range

The 7th note of this scale is generally altered. This note is called the sensitive, we add a semitone.

This range therefore has 3 semitones, which are always placed in the same places:

- between 2nd and 3rd note
- between 5th and 6th note
- between 7th and 8th note

A minor scale will be noted by the 1st note in that range, then by an m.

- Move from the major scale to the minor scale

To pass from the major scale to the minor scale, we take the 1st note of the major scale, we apply a minor third (1 tone + 1 semitone) descending. The note obtained is the name of the minor scale.

Example: C → Am

Indeed, between C and A, there is a minor third.

- Tone

The tone is the range associated with the armor and the overall mood of the song.

2. Degrees

As can be seen below, there are 7 degrees in the range, noted with Roman numerals. The degree is what indicates the place of the note in the scale, and it is also what will allow us then to quantify the chords.



Each degree of the range (major or minor) also has a name, here they are:

I: The tonic

II: The above-tonic

III: The mediant

IV: The sub-dominant

V: The dominant

VI: The over-dominant

VII: The Sub-tonic or the sensitive

Attention, the name of degree VII depends on the qualification of the interval formed by the notes of degree I and of degree VII:

Degree VII is named sub-tonic only if the interval between degree I and degree VII is a minor seventh.

Degree VII is named sensitive or sensitive note only if the interval between degree I and degree VII is a major seventh.


3. Cadences

A cadence corresponds to the end of a musical phrase, it is musical punctuation.

There are several types of cadences:

- Perfect authentic cadence: sequence V - I ground state
- Half cadence: rest on the dominant
- Imperfect authentic cadence: sequence V - I, one or both in the inverted state
- Deceptive cadence: sequence V - VI or other except I in the same tone
- Avoided cadence: cadence broken leading to a change in tone
- Plagal cadence: sequence IV - I
- Picardy cadence: minor scale to major scale (ex: G minor the whole piece and last measure in G major)

4. Armor and range names

Key signature	Major key	Minor key
	C major	A minor
no sharps or flats		

Key signature	Added #	Major key	Minor key	Key signature	Added ♭	Major key	Minor key
	F#	G major	E minor		B♭	F major	D minor
1 sharp				1 flat			
	C#	D major	B minor		E♭	B♭ major	G minor
2 sharps				2 flats			
	G#	A major	F# minor		A♭	E♭ major	C minor
3 sharps				3 flats			
	D#	E major	C# minor		D♭	A♭ major	F minor
4 sharps				4 flats			
	A#	B major	G# minor		G♭	D♭ major	B♭ minor
5 sharps				5 flats			
	E#	F# major	D# minor		C♭	G♭ major	E♭ minor
6 sharps				6 flats			
	B#	C# major	A# minor		F♭	C♭ major	A♭ minor
7 sharps				7 flats			

Conclusion: THE TIPS TO REMEMBER

- A scale is made up of 8 notes.
- It can be major or minor.
- There is a relation between major scale and minor scale: they have the same armor.
- There is a relationship to go from major to minor range: descending minor third.
- Each note in the scale has a degree, which has a name. The tonic is the note which will give its name to the scale.
- Cadences are musical punctuation. There are several depending on the chords that end the musical phrase.