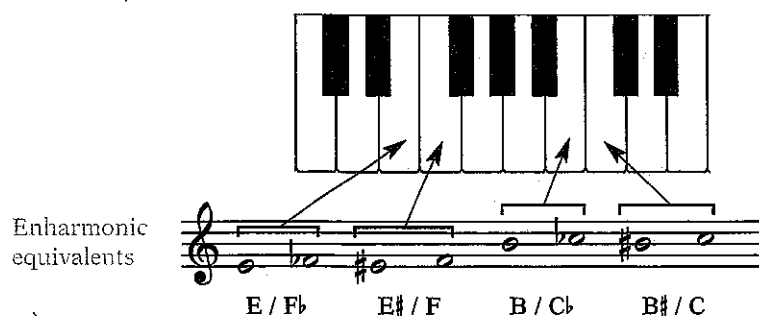


A note that is neither sharp nor flat is *natural* (♮). The white notes on the keyboard are thus C_♮, D_♮, E_♮, F_♮, G_♮, A_♮, and B_♮.

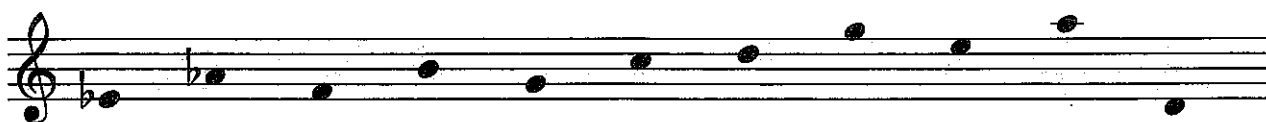
The use of sharp and flat signs is not limited to naming the black notes of the keyboard. A sharp sign raises any note by one semitone and a flat sign lowers any note by one semitone. C_♭, for example, is the note a semitone below C, so C_♭ is enharmonically equivalent to B. Similarly, E_♯ is the note a semitone above E, so E_♯ and F are enharmonic equivalents.



It may seem cumbersome or redundant to have different names for the same pitch. The reason has to do with the musical context in which the pitch occurs. Within one scale or harmony, for example, a given pitch might sound and act like a C_♯, whereas in a different scale or harmony, the same pitch might sound and act like a D_♭. A full discussion of this matter will have to wait until you know more about scales and harmonies, but the ability to confer different meanings on a single pitch is a wonderful musical resource.

Use the staves that follow to practice writing accidentals. In a flat sign, the vertical line is about two spaces long. The curved portion extends to the right and is aligned horizontally with the note it modifies.

Write flat signs in front of these notes



In a sharp sign, the two vertical lines are about three spaces long and the two horizontal lines are angled slightly upward. Like the flat sign, the sharp sign is aligned with the note it modifies.

Write sharp signs in front of these notes



In the natural sign, the vertical lines are about two spaces long and the two horizontal lines are angled slightly upward. Like all accidentals, the natural sign is aligned with the note it modifies.

Write natural signs in front of these notes

