The Blitz Key Signature Number Line

Add flats ← Add sharps →

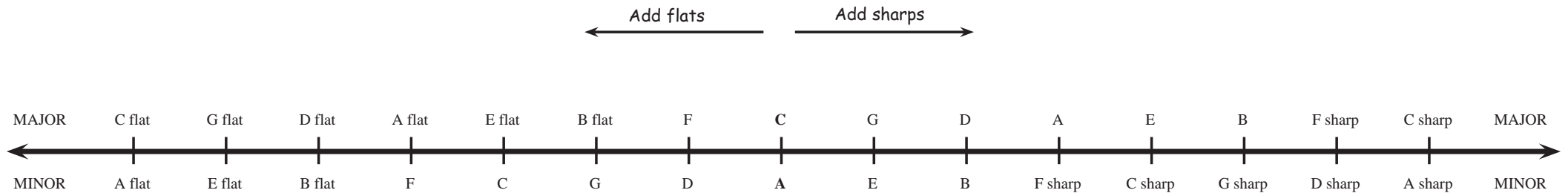| MAJOR	C flat	G flat	D flat	A flat	E flat	B flat	F	**C**	G	D	A	E	B	F sharp	C sharp	MAJOR
MINOR	A flat	E flat	B flat	F	C	G	D	**A**	E	B	F sharp	C sharp	G sharp	D sharp	A sharp	MINOR

This number line can help in two ways:

1. You can easily work out the dominant/subdominant of any key, and find other closely related keys.

2. You can work out how many sharps or flats are in any key
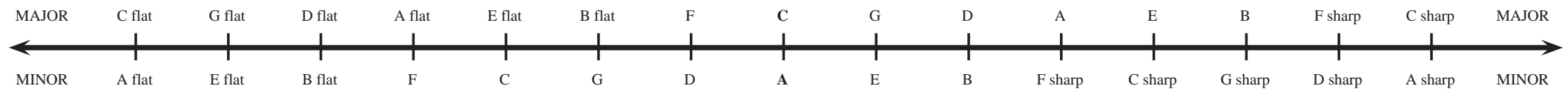
More on the next two pages!

This number line is a great way to work out which are the closely related keys. This is useful because your pieces will usually modulate to a key close by on the number line.

The closest relative to any key is the key directly above or below, because it has the same key signature. It is usually called the 'relative minor' or 'relative major'.

One step to the right of any key is the DOMINANT KEY. Most pieces of music modulate to the dominant at some point.

One step to the left of any key is the SUBDOMINANT KEY. This is also a very common key for modulations.

One 'diagonal' step left or right (e.g. from C major to D minor) is also regarded as a closely related key.

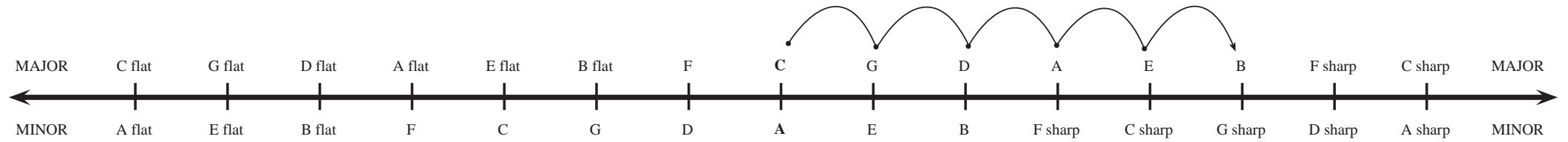| MAJOR	C flat	G flat	D flat	A flat	E flat	B flat	F	**C**	G	D	A	E	B	F sharp	C sharp	MAJOR
MINOR	A flat	E flat	B flat	F	C	G	D	**A**	E	B	F sharp	C sharp	G sharp	D sharp	A sharp	MINOR

OTHER MODULATIONS:

2 steps to the right of any key is the dominant of the dominant! This is not as closely related.

2 steps to the left of any key is the subdominant of the subdominant! This is also not as closely related.
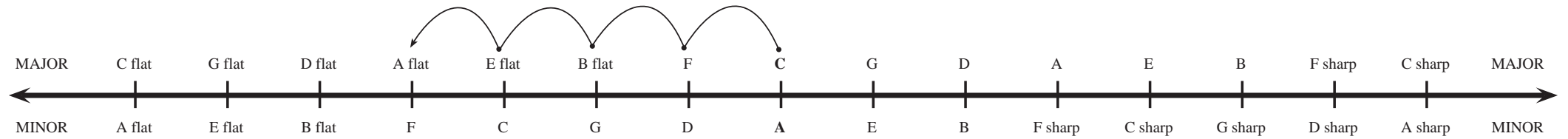
Keys which are 3 or more steps away, in either direction, are regarded as unrelated keys. Modulations to keys this far away are not common.

(Exception: Modulations to the 'tonic major' or 'tonic minor' (e.g. from C major to C minor) are very common, and these are actually three steps away!)

You can also use the number to work out key signatures. To find the key signature of B major, just start from C major (which is in the middle because it has no sharps or flats) and count how many steps it takes you to get to B. You need to move 5 steps to the right, so that means B major has 5 sharps!

MAJOR	C flat	G flat	D flat	A flat	E flat	B flat	F	**C**	G	D	A	E	B	F sharp	C sharp	MAJOR
MINOR	A flat	E flat	B flat	F	C	G	D	**A**	E	B	F sharp	C sharp	G sharp	D sharp	A sharp	MINOR

To work out the key signature of A flat major, just start from C (in the middle) and count how many steps it takes you to get to A flat. You need to move 4 steps to the left, so that means A flat major has 4 flats!

MAJOR	C flat	G flat	D flat	A flat	E flat	B flat	F	**C**	G	D	A	E	B	F sharp	C sharp	MAJOR
MINOR	A flat	E flat	B flat	F	C	G	D	**A**	E	B	F sharp	C sharp	G sharp	D sharp	A sharp	MINOR

REMEMBER: RIGHT = ADD SHARPS, LEFT = ADD FLATS