**Determining a Major Key**

In determining a key signature for any named major key, it's important to know whether the key signature has sharps or flats.

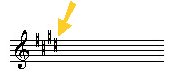
With the exception of the key of **C Major (no sharps or flats)** and **F Major (one flat)**, any "stand-alone" letter is going to be a Major key with sharps:  G, D, A, E, B. If a sharp follows the letter name (F#, C#), the key signature will have sharps.

If a flat follows the letter name, the key signature will have flats:  B*b*, E*b*, A*b*, D*b*, G*b*, C*b*. Again, the exception is F Major with one flat.

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| C Major (no sharps or flats) | |
| **Sharps** | **Flats** |
| G (1) | F (1) |
| D (2) | B*b*(2) |
| A (3) | E*b*(3) |
| E (4) | A*b*(4) |
| B (5) | D*b* (5) |
| F# (6) | G*b*(6) |
| C# (7) | C*b* (7) |

In order to determine the name of a major key that contains sharps, simply name the note that is a

half-step above the last sharp.



Above, the last sharp is D#, so the major key would be E major.

In order to determine the name of a major key that contains flats, simply name the next-to-last flat and that will be the key.  Again, the key of F major, with one flat, is the exception.

http://spider.georgetowncollege.edu/music/burnette/mus111/Treble-Ab.jpg

Above, the next-to-last flat is A*b*, which is the name of the major key.