Keys and Key Signatures

What does a "Key" mean? - You have to be careful because a "key" can refer to a few different things in music. Obviously, a key can mean a specific note or key on the piano. The Key we will be talking about in this lesson is the type of key people talk about when they talk about playing in different keys. When people talk about the word key this way, they are talking about the notes that are common in piece of music. For example, if you are playing in the key of C Major, you probably won't be playing a lot of black keys since the key of C Major contains no sharps or flats. I doesn't mean that you absolutely can't have any black keys, it just means that for the most part, you won't be playing many notes outside of the key. You may have heard of playing scales before. Well a scale is all of the notes that exist in a key in music alphabetical order from a starting note to that same note. So for instance the C Major scale (which is all of the notes of C Major placed in a row) will start at C and go in alphabetical order to the next C. So the C Major scale will be C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C.

Key Signatures

Order of Sharps: F , C, G, D, A, E, B

Order of Flats: B, E, A, D, G, C, F

Why learn the order of sharps? The order of sharps is the order in which the sharps or added. For example. The key with one sharp has F as its sharp (first one in the order of sharps). The key with two has F and C, which are the first two in the order of sharps. The key with three sharps has F, C, and G. Four sharps has F, C, G and D...etc. The flats work the same way.