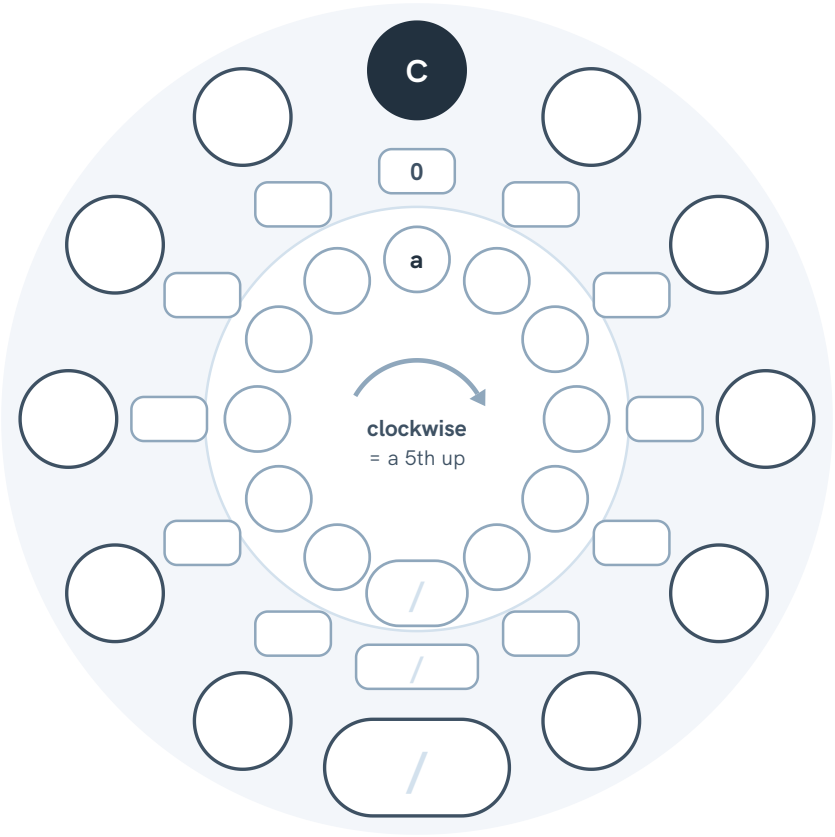
Fill in the circle of fifths

Handout 56 set out the twelve major keys like the hours on a clock. Now fill one in yourself: **C** is done for you. Then use your clock to find each key's **neighbors**, and the keys at the bottom that have **two names**.

1 · BUILD THE CLOCK



Outer ring: the major key. **Middle:** how many sharps or flats (write 2♯ or 3♭). **Inner ring:** the relative minor (Handout 74), in small letters (a = A minor). The wide spaces at the bottom take both names. Everywhere else, use the name with fewer sharps or flats (B, not C♭; D♭, not C♯).

2 · NEXT-DOOR KEYS

Write the major key **one step** each way around the clock, and the relative minor. The first row is done for you.

Major key	Clockwise a 5th up	Counter-clockwise a 5th down	Relative minor
D	A	G	B minor
B♭			
E			
A♭			
A			
E♭			
B			
F			

3 · ONE KEY, TWO NAMES

At the bottom of the clock the sharp keys meet the flat keys, so three keys have two names. Past the bottom, keep counting: after 6 sharps comes 7, after 6 flats comes 7. Fill in the blanks.

B major (5♯) = **C♭ major** (_____♭)

F♯ major (6♯) = _____ **major** (6♭)

D♭ major (5♭) = _____ **major** (_____♯)

Add the two numbers in each pair. What do you get every time? _____

Hint **Clockwise** = up a 5th (count five letter names: C-D-E-F-**G**) = one more sharp, or one flat fewer. **Counterclockwise** = down a 5th = one more flat, or one sharp fewer. Sharps arrive in the order **F C G D A E B**, flats in the order **B E A D G C F**. The **relative minor** starts on the major key's 6th note, three half steps down: C major → A minor. Parallel minors: Exercise 82.

Answers (flip the page)

1 Clockwise from C: G 1♯ e · D 2♯ b · A 3♯ f♯ · E 4♯ c♯ · B 5♯ g♯ (= C♭ 7♭ a♭) · F♯/G♭ 6♯/6♭ d♯/e♭ · D♭ 5♭ b♭ (= C♯ 7♯ a♯) · A♭ 4♭ f · E♭ 3♭ c · B♭ 2♭ g · F 1♭ d

2 B: F, E♭, G minor · E: B, A, C♯ minor · A♭: E♭, D♭, F minor · A: E, D, F♯ minor · E♭: B♭, A♭, C minor · B: F♯ or G♭, E, G♯ minor · F: C, B♭, D minor

3 B = C♭ (5♯ = 7♭) · F♯ = G♭ (6♯ = 6♭) · D♭ = C♯ (5♭ = 7♯) · every pair adds up to 12 (the clock has 12 steps)

© 2026 Tissimo. All rights reserved.