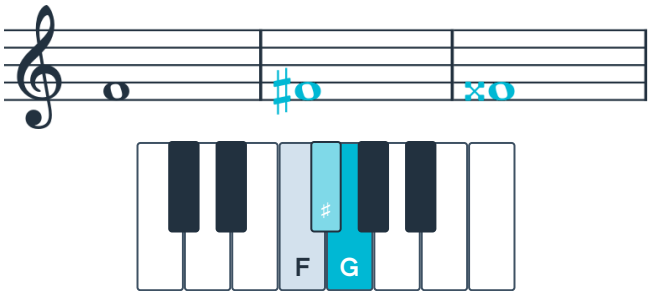
Double sharps and double flats

A sharp raises a note one half step; a flat lowers it one (Handouts 06–08). Now and then a note has to move **two**. The **double sharp** 𝄪 raises it two half steps, the **double flat** 𝄫 lowers it two. The key you play is one you already know — only its **name** is new.

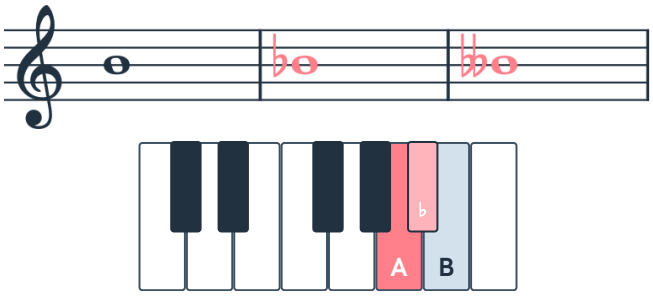
TWO HALF STEPS, ONE SIGN

F → F♯ → F𝄪



The double sharp looks like a small bold **x**. F𝄪 lands on the white key we usually call **G**.

B → B♭ → B𝄫
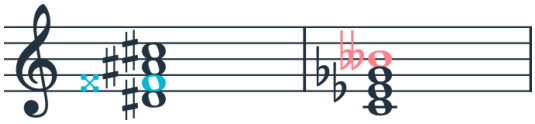


The double flat is simply **two flats** side by side. B𝄫 lands on the white key we usually call **A**.

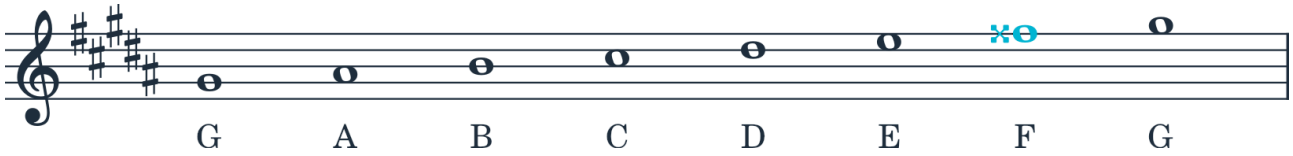
WHY NOT JUST WRITE G? THE LETTERS MUST CLIMB

A scale uses **every letter once**. G♯ harmonic minor raises its 7th note, F♯, by a half step — and F♯ raised is **F𝄪**. Call it G and the scale would have two Gs and no F at all.

Chords follow the same rule: they are spelled in stacked thirds, every other letter. The V7 of G♯ minor is **D♯–F𝄪–A♯–C♯** (Handout 95), and a diminished 7th on C is **C–E♭–G♭–B𝄫** (Handout 210).



D♯7 C°7



G♯ harmonic minor: the key signature has five sharps, so the only sign you see is the raised 7th. Read the letters under the notes — G A B C D E F G, each one once.

SAME KEY, NEW NAME — QUICK DRILL

Name the key you would play. Then, for 7 and 8, write the note with the *other* letter.

1 **F𝄪 =** _____ 2 **C𝄪 =** _____ 3 **E𝄪 =** _____ 4 **B𝄫 =** _____

5 **E𝄫 =** _____ 6 **D𝄫 =** _____ 7 **A = G** _____ 8 **G = A** _____

Answers: 1. G 2. D 3. F♯ 4. A 5. D 6. C 7. G𝄪 8. A𝄫

Try it Find each drill answer on the keyboard and say both names out loud: "F double sharp — G." Notice **E𝄪** lands on a *black* key. Then play G♯ harmonic minor, saying the letters as you go, and feel the F𝄪 pull up into the top G♯.

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