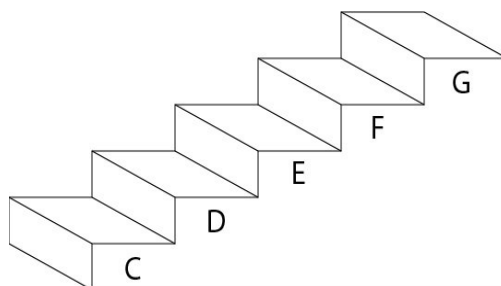


## Part I – Fundamentals Scales

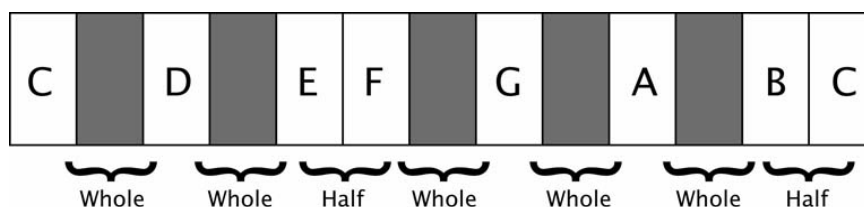
An understanding of music theory, and of composition, starts with an understanding of scales. A scale is a series of closely spaced notes in order from low to high, or high to low. Scale means “staircase”.



In Western music, the most common scale is the C Major Scale. The major scale is also called the *Diatonic* (seven note) scale. The major scale can be thought of as the ruler by which everything else is measured. By understanding the structure of the major scale, we can easily understand how all other scales and chords are named.

When we move from one note to the next in a scale, it is called a *step*. As we mentioned before, the major scale can be thought of as a ruler. Unlike an ordinary ruler, however, the elements of a major scale are not evenly spaced. There are two sizes of steps called a *half step* and a *whole step*. A half step is the smallest unit in our musical system. It is the distance from one note to the nearest neighboring note. On the piano it is usually the distance from a white key to the nearest adjacent black key. On the guitar, it is the distance from one fret to the neighboring fret. A whole step, on the other hand, is twice as large and is equal to two half steps.

The C major scale is created by starting on C and following the pattern whole whole half, whole whole whole half. Notice that most of the notes are separated by a whole step, except between E/F, and B/C where you find half steps.



This pattern is so fundamental to Western music that it is literally built in to the structure of the piano and many other instruments. If at any time you forget the pattern of half steps and whole steps, simply look at the piano keyboard.