

Major and Minor Keys

Did you notice that every key signature had two different names? **Every major key has a relative minor key.**

Music written in **minor keys** are often thought to sound **sad** or **scary**. Music written in a **major key** usually sounds **happier** than music in a minor key. But this is not always true.

Music in a minor key can also sound happy and music in a major key can sound sad or scary.

It takes practice to tell if the music you hear is written in a major or minor key. The more you listen to music, the better you will become at identifying major and minor keys.

Listen to [In the Hall of the Mountain King](#) by [Edvard Grieg](#). Is it in a major or minor key?

Listen to [Funeral March](#) by [Frederic Chopin](#). Is it in a major or minor key?

Listen to [Scherzo](#) from **A Midsummer Night's Dream** by [Mendelssohn](#). Is it in a major or minor key?

Listen to [Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy](#) by [Tchaikovsky](#). It is in a major or minor key?

All of these pieces began in the minor key.

Did you hear that sometimes the music you just heard changed from the minor to the major key and back to the minor key? It happened in [Scherzo](#).

Listen to [Scherzo](#) again and try to identify the passages in the major key.

Check back a bit later to hear examples of music in major keys.

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