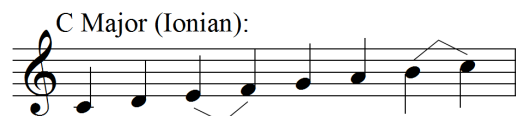


## Scales: Major, minor, and the Medieval modes

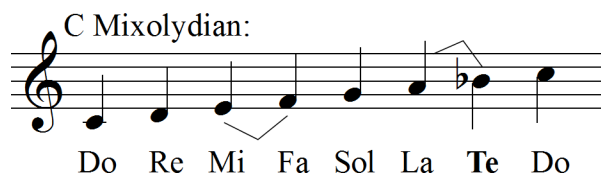
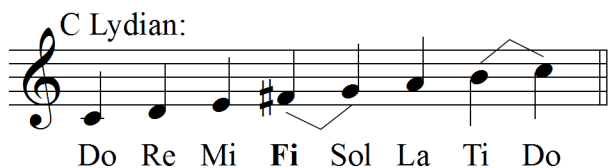
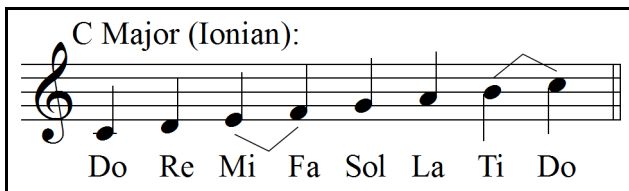
The quality of a scale comes from the intervals it contains – where the half steps fall in the scale. No matter what note a Major scale starts on (for example, C Major vs. E Major), the half steps will always be in the same place within the scale – that is what makes the scale “Major.” You should know where the half steps are in the Major and minor scales (shown by brackets in these examples):

- In the **Major** scale, the half steps are between notes 3-4 and notes 7-8 (WWH-WWWH);
- The minor scale has three forms:
  - In the **natural minor** scale, the half steps are between notes 2-3 and notes 5-6 (WHW-WHWW);
  - In the **harmonic minor** scale, the half steps are between notes 2-3, notes 5-6, and notes 7-8; additionally, there is an Augmented 2<sup>nd</sup> (A2) between notes 6-7 (WHW-WHAH);
  - In the **melodic minor** scale, the half steps are between notes 2-3 and notes 7-8 when the scale is ascending (WHW-WWWH); when the scale is descending it is played as natural minor.



To learn the modes, you should compare them to the Major or natural minor scale and see how they are different. This is a faster technique than remembering the half steps for all scales or starting with the natural alphabet. It can also be helpful to use solfege in this process, to relate the changes in each scale to what you would sing/hear.

- The Lydian and Mixolydian scales are alterations of the Major (Ionian) scale:
  - Lydian mode is a Major scale with a raised 4<sup>th</sup> note (**Fi** instead of **Fa**).
  - Mixolydian mode is a Major scale with a lowered 7<sup>th</sup> note (**Te** instead of **Ti**).



- The Dorian, Phrygian and Locrian scales are alterations of the natural minor (Aeolian) scale:
  - Dorian mode is a minor scale with a raised 6<sup>th</sup> note (**La** instead of **Le**).
  - Phrygian mode is a minor scale with a lowered 2<sup>nd</sup> note (**Ra** instead of **Re**).
  - Locrian mode is a minor scale with both a lowered 2<sup>nd</sup> (**Ra** instead of **Re**), and a lowered 5<sup>th</sup> note (**Se** instead of **Sol**).

C minor (Aeolian) ("natural" minor):

Do Re Me Fa Sol Le Te Do

C Dorian:

Do Re Me Fa Sol **La** Te Do

C Phrygian:

Do **Ra** Me Fa Sol Le Te Do

C Locrian:

Do **Ra** Me Fa **Se** Le Te Do

- The Harmonic and melodic minor scales are also alterations of the natural minor scale:
  - Harmonic minor has a raised 7<sup>th</sup> note, like the Major scale does (**Ti** instead of **Te**).
  - Melodic minor has a raised 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> note on the way up the scale (**La** and **Ti** instead of **Le** and **Te**), but when the scale is going down the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> are lowered again (back to **Te** and **Le**), so the descending scale is just natural minor.

C minor (Aeolian) ("natural" minor):

Do Re Me Fa Sol Le Te Do

C "harmonic" minor:

Do Re Me Fa Sol Le **Ti** Do

C "melodic" minor:

Do Re Me Fa Sol **La Ti** Do Do **Te Le** Sol Fa Me Re Do