

Building Block No. 1: Unlocking the Secret System of the Black & White Keys **Half Steps and Whole Steps**

The Piano Keyboard:

You probably know at least two facts about the piano keyboard:

1. There are 88 keys
2. The keys are black and white

Have you noticed that the black keys are arranged in groups of 2's and 3's?

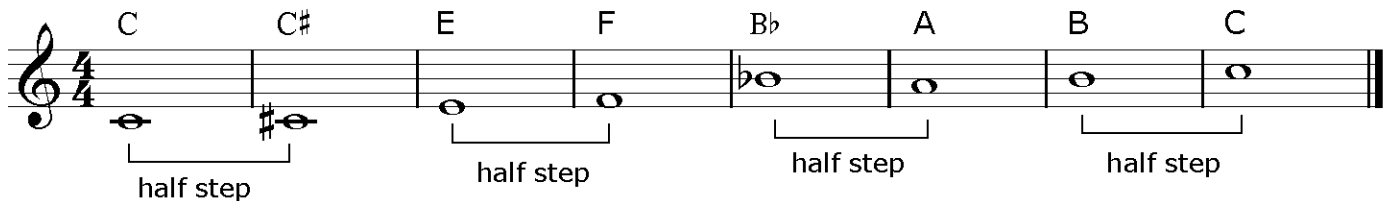
Do you know why?

These groups of 2's and 3's are set up to work with a system of **half steps** and **whole steps**. Once you know the the secret to this system, you'll be on your way to unlocking the door to understanding how music works.

What is a Half Step?

A **half step** is the distance from one note on the piano to the very next note whether it is white or black.

Here are some examples of **Half Steps** that you will see on the piano keyboard:

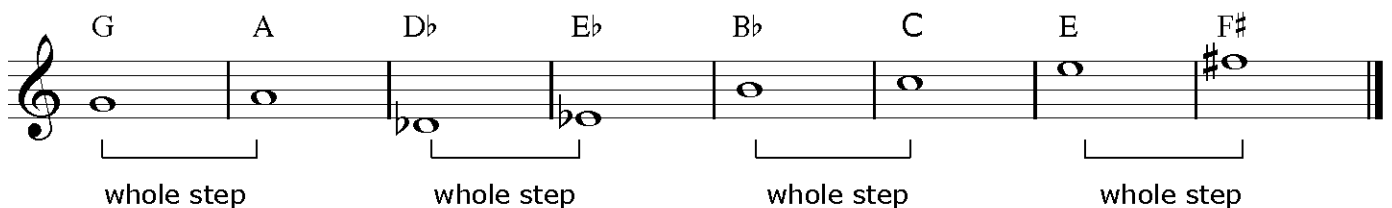


Since whole numbers are easier to count than fractions, you will want to use **whole steps**.

What is a Whole Step?

A **whole step** is a combination of two **half steps**.

Here are some examples of **Whole Steps** that you will see on the piano keyboard:



Tip: Half Steps and **Whole Steps** are exactly the same for treble clef and bass clef.