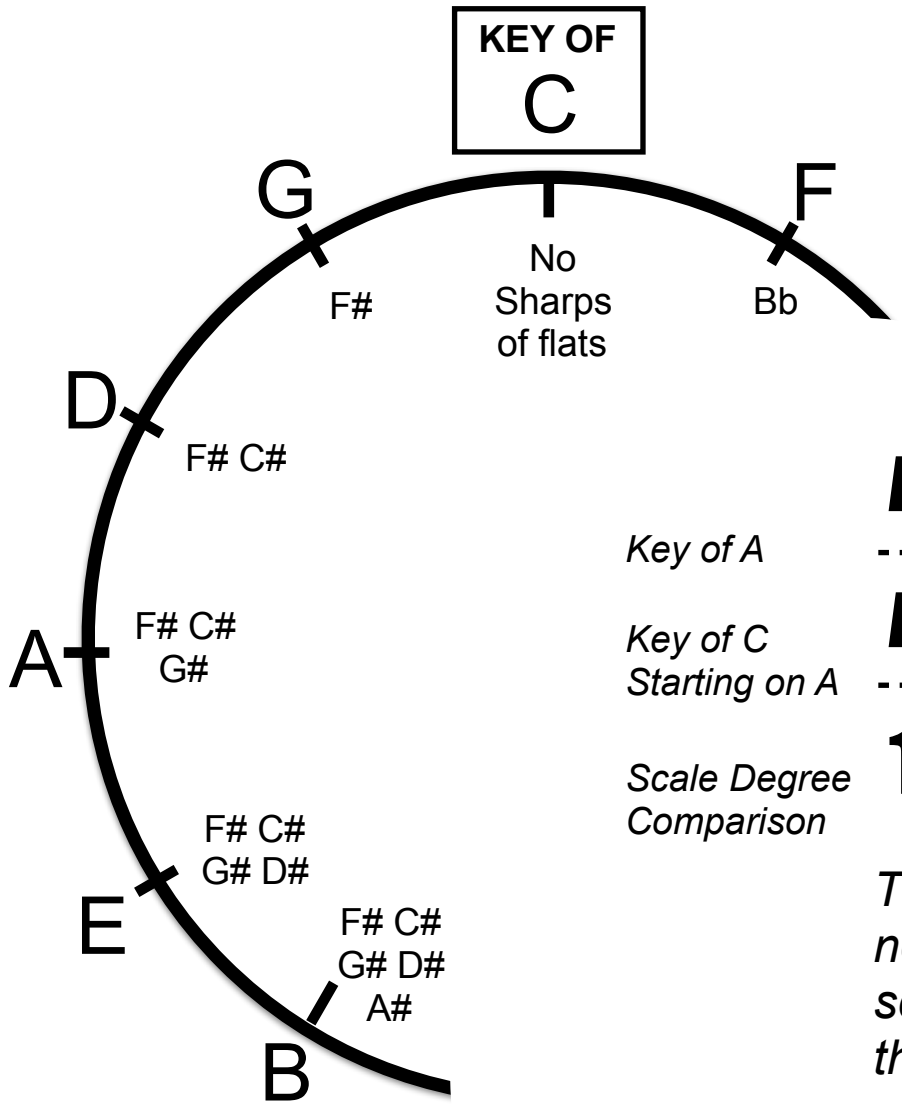
# Modes Of The Major Scale

A mode is an inversion of a scale. There are seven modes in a major key, each starting on a different scale degree. The first mode in a major key is the major scale, also called the Ionian mode. The more distant the starting pitch for each mode is from the key in the circle of fourths, the farther the sound is from the major scale.

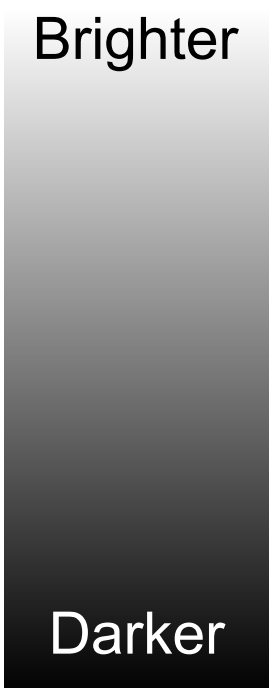



| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C# | D | E | F# | G# |
| *Key of A* | | | | | | | |
| *Key of C Starting on A* | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| *Scale Degree Comparison* | 1 | 2 | ↓3 | 4 | 5 | ↓6 | ↓7 |

*The sixth mode of C major starts on A and has no accidentals. The third, sixth, and seventh scale degrees are a half steps lower than those in the key of A major.*

# Parallel Comparison

The table below compares the modes of the major scale. When scale degrees are raised, the tonality is brighter. When scale degrees are lowered, the tonality is darker. Parent scales for each mode with the tonic C are given.




| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 4 | Lydian | $IV^{\Delta 7\#11}$ | G | ↑4 | | | | |
| *Major Scale* | 1 | Ionian | $I^{\Delta 7}$ | C | | | | | |
| | 5 | Mixolydian | $V^{7}$ | F | ↓7 | | | | |
| | 2 | Dorian | $ii^{-7\natural 6}$ | Bb | ↓7 | ↓3 | | | |
| *Natural Minor Scale* | 6 | Aeolian | $vi^{-7}$ | Eb | ↓7 | ↓3 | ↓6 | | |
| | 3 | Phrygian | $iii^{-7b9}$ | Ab | ↓7 | ↓3 | ↓6 | ↓2 | |
| | 7 | Locrian | $vii^{-7b5b9}$ | Db | ↓7 | ↓3 | ↓6 | ↓2 | ↓5 |

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