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## HALF-STEPS AND WHOLE STEPS

Also called Half-tones (or Semitones) and Whole tones

The pitch-difference between a given tone\* and its nearest tone up or down is one half-step. On the guitar a half-step is the distance from an open string to the first fret, or from one fret to its nearest fret up or down.

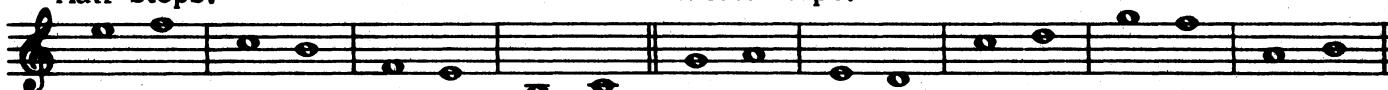
Two adjacent half-steps form one *whole step*. Either an open string to the second fret, or from one fret to the second fret away produce whole steps.

### Natural Half-Steps and Whole Steps

A note with neither sharp nor flat alterations is called a *natural*.

Natural half-steps and whole steps occur only between two notes placed in *alphabetical order*.

#### Half-Steps:



#### Whole Steps:



Notice that half-steps occur only twice in the seven letter musical alphabet, between B-C, and between E-F. The other five pairs of letters are whole steps apart:

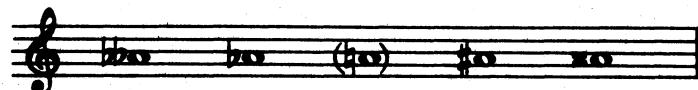


### Accidentals

The five signs indicating note (pitch) alterations are called *accidentals*.

1. the *sharp* ♯, which raises the pitch of its note *one half-step*.
2. the *double sharp* ♯♯, which raises the pitch of its note *two half-steps*.
3. the *flat* ♭, which lowers the pitch of its note *one half-step*.
4. the *double flat* ♭♭, which lowers the pitch of its note *two half-steps*.
5. the *natural* ♮, which restores its note to natural pitch (after having been altered by one of the above).

One written note, therefore, may indicate *five* different pitches according to the sign preceding it:



\*Developing proficiency in the art of music involves two distinct areas of study—music as it sounds and music as it is written.

A musical sound is called a *tone*.

A written symbol representing a tone is called a *note*.

It should be observed that neither of these terms is used in a single consistent sense in musical writings. A tone is often called a note and vice versa. In America, however, an apparent attempt to eliminate this confusion has been made, and it has become more or less customary to define these terms according to the rules above. In the interest of clarity this custom is followed throughout the present work. Remember that a *tone is played, a note is read*.