

Basic Interval Theory

There are 4 types of accidentals. (5 if we count the natural sign)

Sharp = \sharp = raises the note by a half tone (1 fret on the guitar)

Flat = \flat = lowers the note by a half tone (1 fret on the guitar)

Not too often seen are the double sharp and the double flat.

Double sharp = \times = raises the note by a whole tone (2 frets on the guitar)

Double flat = $\flat\flat$ = lowers the note by a whole tone (2 frets on the guitar)

E F E F \sharp E \flat F E \flat F \sharp

half tone 1 fret whole tone 2 frets whole tone 2 frets one and a half tones 3 frets

Notice that when we add sharps or flats to one note or perhaps both, we can stretch or shorten the distance between the two notes without changing the letter names of the notes.

G A G \sharp A G A \sharp G A \flat

whole tone 2 frets half tone 1 fret one and a half tones 3 frets half tone 1 fret

G \sharp A \flat G \flat A \sharp G \flat A \flat G \sharp A \sharp

same note (enharmonic notes= sound the same but are written differently) two tones 4 frets whole tone 1 fret whole tone 1 fret

Notice that in the above examples with the two letters "G and A", we started off with the notes being a whole tone apart. In music, only the natural notes B & C and E & F are separated by a half tone. All other alphabetically consecutive natural notes are a whole tone apart.

G A double sharp G double flat A G double flat A double sharp G double sharp A double flat

2 tones 2 tones 3 tones 1 tone??????

With the double flats and double sharps, we can create some pretty silly musical situations but you will see the purpose of these symbols in the future lessons. Double sharps and double flats are not very common in music. Even some experienced players are surprised by them when they occur in a piece of music.