

Scale Donuts

In search for the simplest way to introduce scales to students we provide only the most basic information needed: the order and name of notes. By taking away the need to decipher musical notation learning scales becomes a natural extension of the musical alphabet in a circular pattern.

Introducing a New Scale!

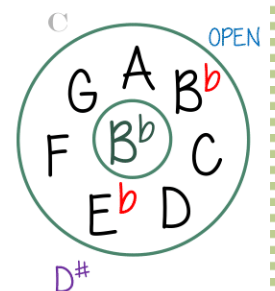
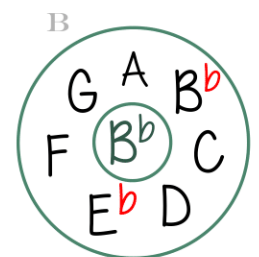
1. Draw a large donut on the board and write the musical alphabet in the donut clockwise starting with the A at twelve o'clock. (Diagram A)
2. Introduce sharps/flats associated with an individual major/minor scale. (Diagram B: B \flat Major Scale)
 - a. Write the scale name in the center of the donut.
 - b. Indicate sharps/flats with a different color to bring out importance of notes that are not natural.
3. Review each individual note of the scale donut.
 - a. Notate specific fingerings of notes that represent potential problems outside of the donut adjacent to specified note. (Diagram C)
 - b. Show enharmonic relationships of tricky notes on the outside of the donut with a subordinate color. (Diagram C)

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Develop strong performance proficiency of one octave scales

Understanding relationships of enharmonic notes

Understanding relationship of scales



Performing the New Scale!

1. Students finger notes and sing note names through one rotation of the donut.
 - a. Teachers may demonstrate on instrument or on keyboard to provide reference pitch.
 - b. Consider ascending scale initially. When students are comfortable with ascending then introduce descending before playing the full one-octave scale through.
2. After successfully demonstrating correct fingering and note names, students should then be given an opportunity to perform the scale.
 - a. Initially give each note the same rhythmic value so that every note is given the same importance. We like to introduce scales with a half-note value and then eventually transition into a half-note and quarter-note pattern.

Notes

- As students gain proficiency of performing each scale, have them notate the scale on a staff to gain the perspective of written notation.
- Students of all levels find easy success with utilizing scale donuts as a way of developing critical muscle memory and diatonic ear training.
- Have students compare neighboring scales side-by-side: A Major vs. A \flat Major. Students will be able to find relationships between scales easier in a drawn format. "All of the natural notes in the A scale are lowered to flats in the A \flat scale as the sharps are lowered to naturals." Point out similar connection to all other major scales.
- Teaching other forms of scales can be derived in this same fashion: minor scales, modes, pentatonic, etc.