

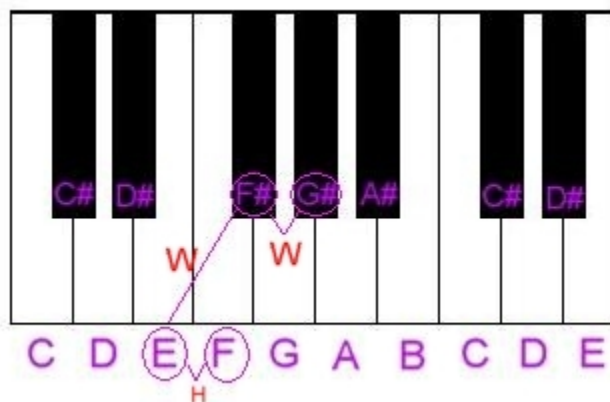
## Intervals

Understanding intervals will help you in understanding how chords are built as well as how scales are constructed. An interval is simply the distance between two notes. This lesson will touch on the 12 most common types of intervals found in western music. In order to deal with these 12 intervals you will need to know a little bit about half steps and whole steps. Half and Whole steps are also important to understanding how scales are built in some of our subsequent theory lessons.

The smallest distance between 2 notes in western music is called a half step. Half steps can best be seen on the piano which contains every possible note used in western music.



The distance from C to C# is a half step, as is the distance from C# to D. The distance from C to D is what is known as a whole step. A whole step is equal to 2 half steps.



The distance between E and F is only a half step because there is no black key between E and F as there was with C and D. Thus, the distance between E and F# is a whole step, as is the distance between F# and G#.

Now that you know what a half step is, we will take a look at 12 of the most common intervals in western music. Below is a list of these 12 intervals. These intervals are important because help you to understand the way that chords are constructed.

### **12 Common Intervals**

Minor Second = 1 half step  
Major Second = 2 half steps

Minor Third = 3 half steps  
Major Third = 4 half steps

Perfect Fourth = 5 half steps

Tritone = 6 half steps

Perfect Fifth = 7 half steps

Minor Sixth = 8 half steps  
Major Sixth = 9 half steps

Minor Seventh = 10 half steps  
Major Seventh = 11 half steps

Octave = 12 half steps

To help demonstrate, listed below are the intervals each starting with the note "C"

Minor Second = C-Db (1 half step)  
Major Second = C-D (2 half steps)

Minor Third = C-Eb (3 half steps)  
Major Third = C-E (4 half steps)

Perfect Fourth = C-F (5 half steps)

Tritone = C-Gb (6 half steps)

Perfect Fifth = C-G (7 half steps)

Minor Sixth = C-Ab (8 half steps)  
Major Sixth = C-A (9 half steps)

Minor Seventh = C-Bb (10 half steps)  
Major Seventh = C-B (11 half steps)

Octave = C-C (12 half steps)

A knowledge of intervals is important as it will help you in your understanding of how chords and scales are built.