

## AP Music Theory Summer Work

Music theory is a skill-based and knowledge-based course. That means you need to be able to know a lot of information, apply that information AND perform it. We sing every day in AP Music Theory and you need to sing on the AP test. I would recommend singing over the summer. You don't need to be ready to make All State Choir but you have to be comfortable taking a big breath and singing loudly.

The summer work for the class is intended to get some basics down so you are ready to start working on day one. There are two big skills that you need to master over the summer. They are:

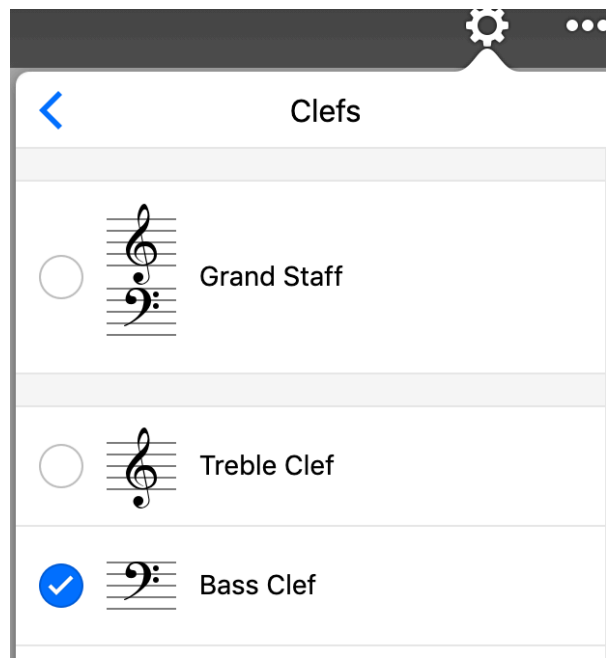
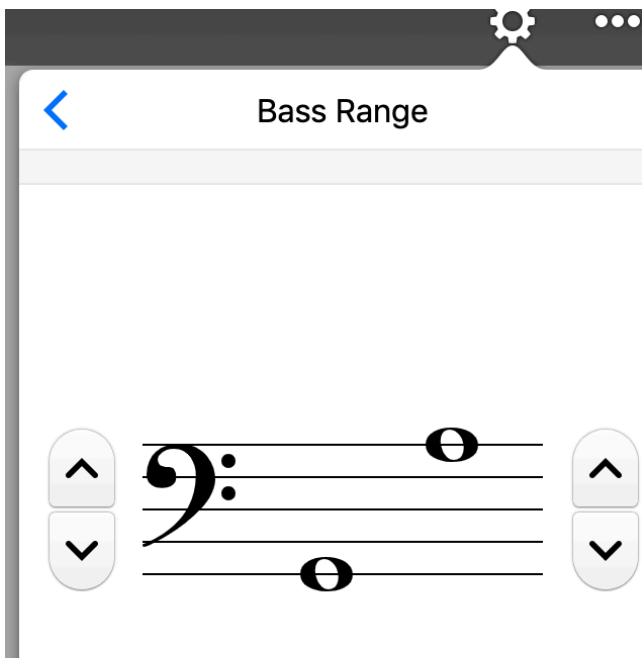
1. Fluent note-reading in treble and bass clef. Fluency means that you see a note and know what it is immediately.
2. Major key signature identification. You need to know how many sharps or flats are in every major key.

Most students do not have these two skills totally mastered in June! You should dedicate 20-30 minutes to this per week all summer. I recommend about 5 minutes per day to work on either note-reading or major key signatures. Make it a habit to do one of the exercises below each day at the same time and it won't even feel like work. I highly encourage you to purchase the Tenuto app on either the App Store or Google Play so you can do these activities on your phone. You can also use your browser on your phone or computer but the app is really nice and you can leave it on the home screen of your phone to remind you to do it.

Exercise #1: Note reading <https://www.musictheory.net/exercises/note>

Many (most) of you should be fluent readers in one clef. Start with the one where you struggle and work on the notes in the staff. You can go to the settings and set them to work on just one clef at a time and even select a limited range for that clef. Expand from there as you get more comfortable. If I were a treble clef reader that didn't have great skills in the bass clef, my settings would look like this to start:

*Clef is bass clef only and the range is set from the bottom to the top of the staff:*



*I would then move on to a wider range and start to explore ledger lines. I may even start doing some extended ledger lines in both clefs. You can eventually move on and go to “challenge mode” and start timing yourself. You’ll start out slow in the clef(s) where you are uncomfortable but if you do this for a brief amount of time daily, you’ll get fast quickly.*

**Cramming this material doesn’t work. You will maybe get away with it on the test on the first day of class but it will constantly be a problem for your throughout AP Theory if it is not committed to your long-term memory. Much like my favorite basketball team, you need to trust the process on this and do the method prescribed above. I promise you it will work!!**

Exercise #2: Key Signature Identification  
<https://www.musictheory.net/exercises/keysig>

We’re going to talk about the how and why of key signatures in class, but for the summer you need to get the “what” locked down. The image below is a good cheat sheet. Instead of trying to remember what every single sharp is in each key, memorize the number of accidentals and then whether they are sharps or flats. For example: “B major has 5 sharps” instead of “B major has F#, C#, G#, D# & A#.” The order of sharps and flats is actually the same every time, but we’ll learn about that in the first week of class. If you want to read about the circle of fifths and work on applying it, the Wikipedia page is a great place to start: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circle\\_of\\_fifths](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circle_of_fifths). [r/musictheory](https://www.musictheory.net) is also a great resource. For those of you that are working on this for the first time start with just a few keys (3-4) in the settings and eventually open it up to all of them. If you have experience already, start with all of the keys and move over to minor when you know you’ve mastered major keys.

The image displays two musical staves, each with eight columns representing different major key signatures. The top staff shows major keys with sharps: C Major (no sharps), G Major (one sharp: F#), D Major (two sharps: F#, C#), A Major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#), E Major (four sharps: F#, C#, G#, D#), B Major (five sharps: F#, C#, G#, D#, A#), F# Major (six sharps: F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#), and C# Major (seven sharps: F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#). The bottom staff shows major keys with flats: F Major (one flat: Bb), Bb Major (two flats: Bb, Eb), Eb Major (three flats: Bb, Eb, Ab), Ab Major (four flats: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db), Db Major (five flats: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb), Gb Major (six flats: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb), and Cb Major (seven flats: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb, Fb). Each column includes a treble clef staff with the key signature and a bass clef staff with the key signature.

We will take a test on this material in the first week of class (maybe even on the first day!) There is no work to submit, but you must be practicing for this test. In the past, students who mastered this material ahead of time had much more successful experiences in the class. Those that did not ended up having to start the year out with a ton of study sessions, extra help and extra work. If you have questions, want help or just would like to talk about music theory please email me! My email address is [christopher.burkhart@cape.k12.de.us](mailto:christopher.burkhart@cape.k12.de.us). I check my email throughout the summer and reply as quickly as I can. I won’t be checking Schoology messages as regularly so email is your best bet.