

Hearing intervals - #1



- An interval is the distance between two notes. In western music we measure these distances by comparing them to the major scale.
- For instance, a major second interval is the distance between the first and second notes of the major scale. A major third is the distance between the first and third notes of the major scale.
- (we will cover minor intervals later)

Recognising ascending major intervals



- Method #1: Sing through the scale
- Listen to the interval being played and identify the lower of the two notes. Start singing a major scale (in your head if possible) from the lower note until you reach the higher note then stop.
- How far did you get through the scale? If you got to the third note of the major scale then the interval is a major third. If you got to the seventh note of the major scale then the interval is a major seventh.

Recognising ascending major intervals



- Method #2: Associated melodies
- Another way to hear intervals is to associate each one with familiar notes in a melody. For instance, the first two (moving) notes in Happy Birthday are a major second. The first two notes in Amazing Grace are a major (perfect) fourth.
- See <http://www.earmaster.com/intervalsongs/> for many examples to choose from.

Recognising ascending major intervals



- Method #3: subjective
- A third way to recognise intervals is to associate descriptions with each interval. For instance, some people say that the major third interval has the same “happy” sound as a major chord, a major (perfect) fourth has an “Asian” sound, a major 5th has a “strong” sound (like a powerchord).
- This method is very personal and each person will assign different descriptions for each interval. Sometimes this method can be unreliable if you hear the interval in the wrong context.

Practice



- Go to www.guitargames.net and click on *Theory and Ear Training*, then choose the *Ear Tester*. Click *Intervals* to play. Use the *Settings* button to choose the intervals you will be tested on.
- Record your best score.