

# The Numpties Guide To Musical Intervals

When working out a musical interval, first be able to NAME the two notes. On a piece of paper write the letter name of the LOWEST pitched note, then carry on writing alphabet names ascending until you reach your second note. At this stage ignore sharps, flats, or naturals, we are just concentrating on LETTER NAMES. Now count how many letter names you have used (so, DEFG would be 4). This is your interval number. If your interval is more than an octave (8 letters, e.g D,E,F#,G,A,B,C#,D,E,F#) Still just count from the lower letter to the upper letter (so; D, E, F#). At the end of your calculation you will add the word compound to the start (so, it's a *compound* Major Third).

Now look again at the LOWEST pitch note (now observing any flats, sharps, or naturals) of the two you are finding the interval for. We are going to pretend that this is the first note of a MAJOR SCALE (so if your lowest note is E, we are going to think in E major). Write out the 8 notes of that scale (ascending). Above each note of your scale write the formula underneath



Now look at your upper note (of your two interval notes). Is it the SAME as the same numbered note of your major scale?. If not, is it higher, or lower? If so, how much? Use the vertical guide on the right to find where your note has 'gone'. You must use the correct chart, and start on an orange oval.



For example, if your interval is E to B $\flat$ , that is a fifth. The NORMAL fifth for E major is B (which would be PERFECT). Start on the orange perfect oval. Our B $\flat$  has been lowered a semitone (from B), meaning our E to B $\flat$  interval is DIMINISHED

**Warning!** You will sometimes find a lower note to work from that *isn't* a major scale tonic note (we don't play A# major for example!) so in this case, move *both* notes either up or down a semitone; they must move in the same direction and not change letter name; So; A# - G, would become A-G $\flat$  if we move them both down.

