

Major scales and chords

A major scale is constructed of 8 consecutive notes.

Each of these notes is numbered 1 to 8 (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII), with the first and the eighth notes being the *tonic*, *key* or *root* note – the note that the scale is named after.

There is a specific pattern of *interval* jumps that gives a major scale its definition.

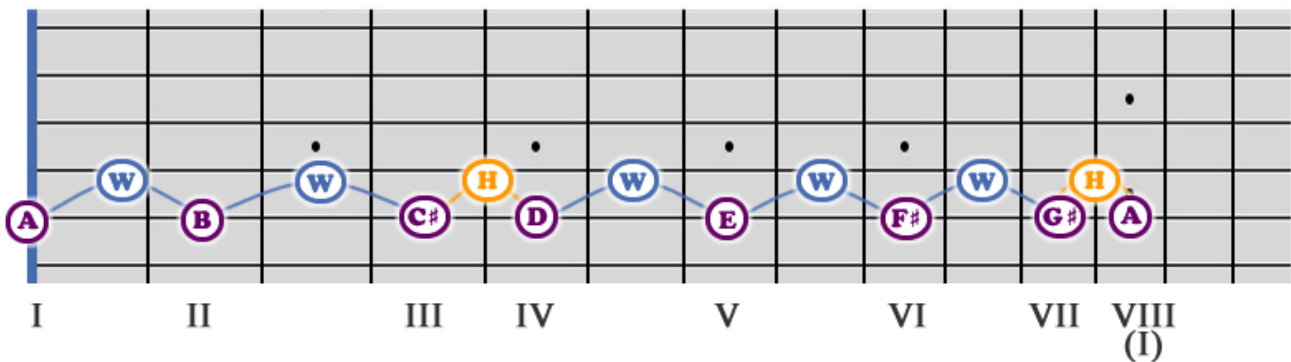
On a guitar, an interval is represented by a fret space – by moving from one fret space to the next the guitarist has shifted one interval.

The specific pattern of interval jumps associated with a major scale is:

Whole Whole Half Whole Whole Whole Half

A *Whole* jump is defined by a two interval space, whereas a *Half* jump is realised by a single interval movement. This can be seen in the diagram below using the A major scale as an example

A Major (Ionian) Scale



A major chord is constructed from three of the notes from the major scale (*major triad*).

The first note of the chord is the *root* note, followed by the *major third* note and finally the *perfect fifth* note.

There is a 4 interval space between the root and the major third, and a further 3 intervals between the major third and the perfect fifth.

The notes relevant to an A major triad are shown at work in an A major chord played on a guitar in the chord box illustrated below.

A Major Chord

