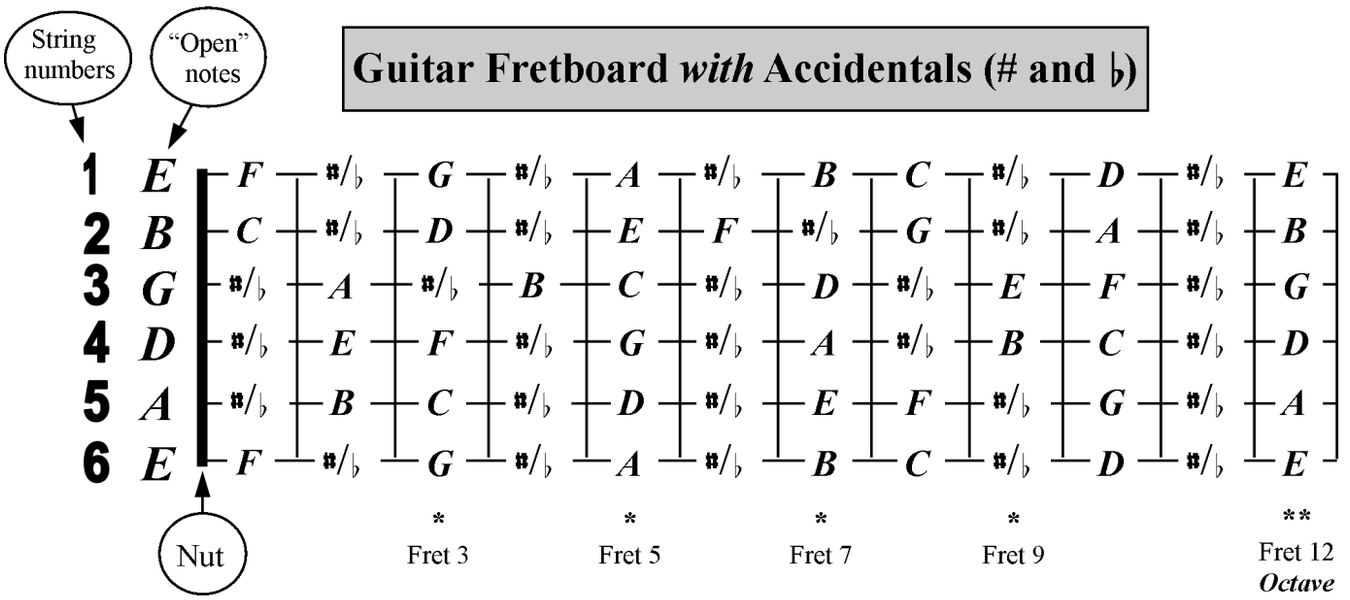
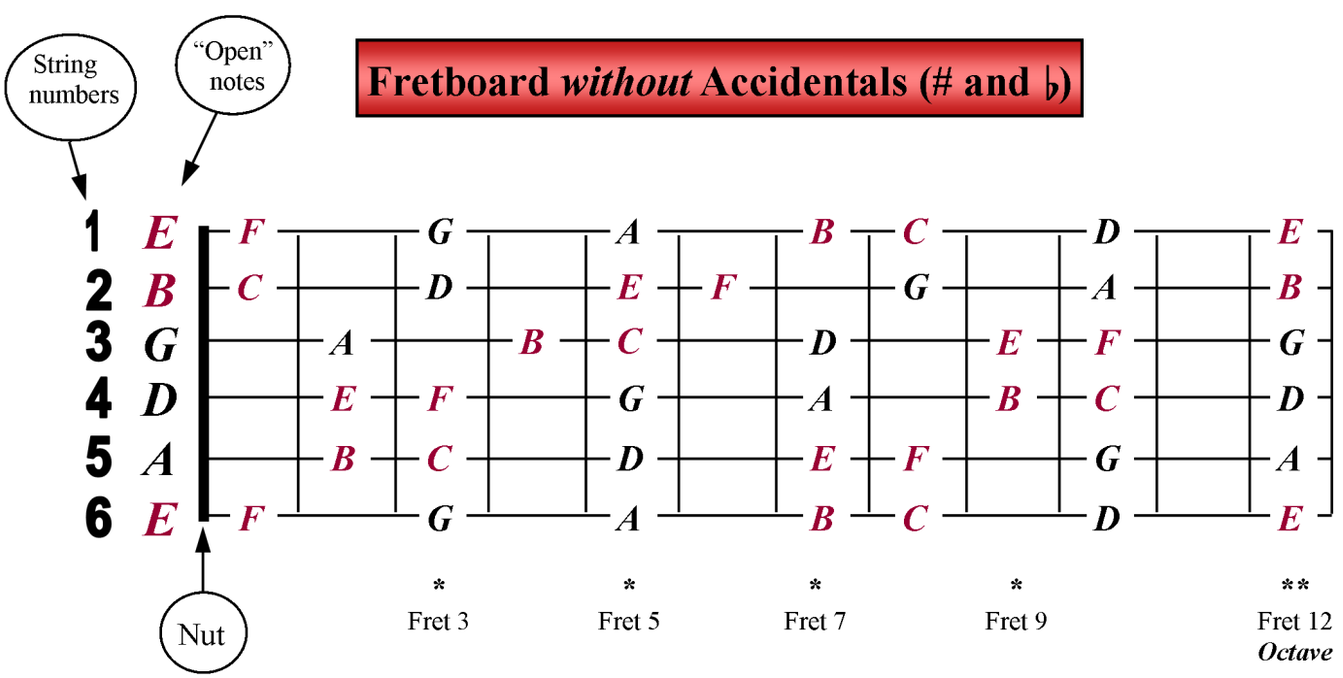


The traditional chart of the fingerboard and notes (see picture above) **looks a bit daunting at first.** Memorizing this chart does seem difficult to most of us at a first glance. However, there is a pattern going on that is much easier to see in the chart listed below. Removal of the accidentals (sharps and flats), leaves only the letters, making it much less visually confusing and, consequently, easier to understand.

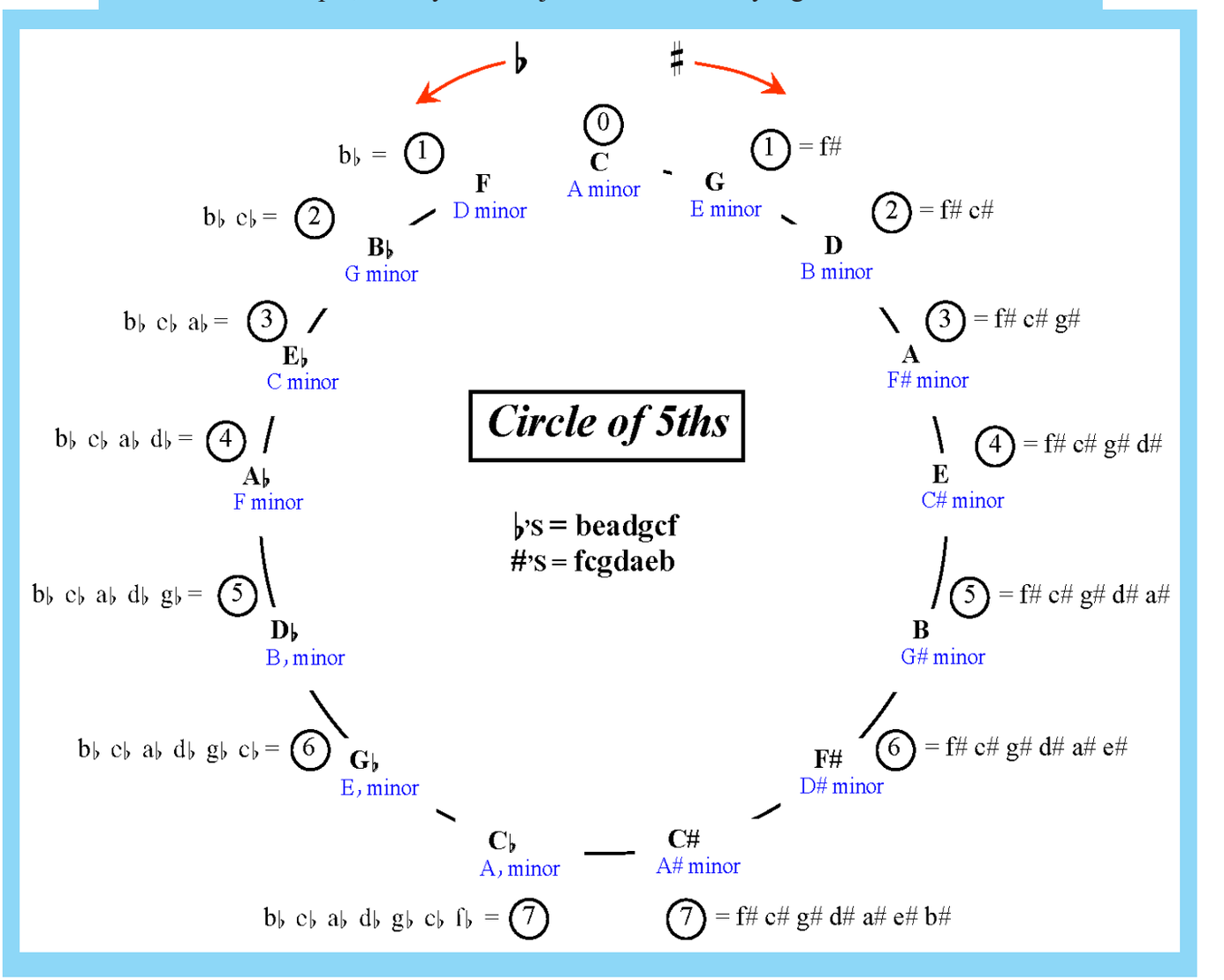
- The notes on the guitar are alphabetical, starting at the nut with the open notes, ***EADGBE*.**
- Only the *B's & C's, E's & F's* are side-by-side (adjacent frets).
- All the other letters of the alphabet are separated by an "accidental" fret (which could be either a sharp or a flat depending on the pitch-direction you take or the key you're in).
- The pattern of **EADGBE** (the open notes) begins repeating all over again at the 12th fret. Once you know that the chromatic pattern repeats itself, all you need to know are the names of the "open" notes in order to figure out every note on the fretboard.



Key Signatures

The *Circle of 5ths* is an ingenious symbolic representation invented centuries ago that tells us the number of sharps or flats in one key as compared to another in increasing order of accidentals, whether they be *sharp* (#) or *flat* (♭). The sharp keys to the right of the circle add on sharps in the order, ***FCGDAEB***. The flat keys to the left of the circle add on flats in the reverse order, ***BEADGCF***. The numbers listed next to each key tell how many of the appropriate accidentals belong to each key. The reason for sharping or flatting is to maintain the sound of "happy" or "sad" to the ear. The *number* of sharps or flats required for each key is circled to the side of each key. *C Major* and *A minor* share the same lack of need for any accidentals, so they are referred to as the *natural* keys.

Relative keys share the same key signature, so each has the same flatted or sharped notes as the other. For example, the key of C major has the same key signature as A minor.



The drawback to the *Circle of 5ths* is that it is confusing for beginners, despite being an ingenious representation of keys. An alternative way of learning the keys is by use of the following tables I have constructed. These tables are easier to understand and to use, eventually leading to a much better understanding and memorization of the *Circle of 5ths* device listed above.

---Keys are listed from top to bottom, scale degrees ascending from left to right (⟶).

Sharp (#) Major Keys

1 Key	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8 Octave*	*Number of Sharps*	*Sharps (#)*
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	*0*	---
G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G	*1*	f
D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D	*2*	fc
A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A	*3*	fcg
E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E	*4*	fcgd
B	C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A#	B	*5*	fcgda
F#	G#	A#	B	C#	D#	E#	F#	*6*	fcgdae
C#	D#	E#	F#	G#	A#	B#	C#	*7*	fcgdaeb

In order to know these tables "off the top of your head", so to speak, simply memorize the Order of #'s Memory Cue: *fcgdaeb,* and its evil twin (!), the Order of ♭'s Memory Cue, *beadgcf.* Next, follow these directions:

For Sharps (#'s):
1) Take the letter of the target key –1 in the ***music alphabet***.
2) Count forward in the Order of #'s Memory Cue until you reach that letter.

Example Question: How many #'s are in the key of E, and what are they?
Answer: **4**, *f# c# g# **d#*** (stop), *"d"* being the letter in the music alphabet before "E".

Flat (♭) Major keys

1 Key	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8 Octave*	*Number of flats*	*Flats (♭)*
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	*0*	---
F	G	A	B♭	C	D	E	F	*1*	b
B♭	C	D	E♭	F	G	A	B♭	*2*	be
E♭	F	G	A♭	B♭	C	D	E♭	*3*	bea
A♭	B♭	C	D♭	E♭	F	G	A♭	*4*	bead
D♭	E♭	F	G♭	A♭	B♭	C	D♭	*5*	beadg
G♭	A♭	B♭	C♭	D♭	E♭	F	G♭	*6*	beadgc
C♭	D♭	E♭	F♭	G♭	A♭	B♭	C♭	*7*	beadgcf