

Relative and Parallel Minor Scales

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An interesting fact about natural minor scales is that their order of whole and half steps is already found in a major scale by starting on the sixth degree (note) of the major scale. This minor scale's relationship is called the "relative minor."



F: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1

F Major Scale



F: 6 7 8/1 2 3 4 5 6

d: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1

D Natural Minor Scale, which is the relative minor of F Major

As mentioned before, a major scale can be altered to become a minor scale. When a major scale keeps the same starting pitch but is altered to sound as a natural minor scale (by flattening the 3rd, 6th, and 7th degrees), the minor scale's relationship to the major scale is called a "parallel minor".



F: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8/1

F Major Scale



f: 1 2 \flat 3 4 5 \flat 6 \flat 7 8/1

F Natural Minor Scale, which is the parallel minor of F Major