

The Harmonic Minor Scale

The most common form of minor scale is the Harmonic Minor.

The harmonic minor is the same as the natural minor, but with the seventh degree raised by one half step. The seventh degree raised is always written with an accidental, not in the key signature.

The harmonic minor scale of A:



The raised seventh creates an interval of a step and a half between the 6th and 7th degrees, giving it a distinctive sound.

The pattern of whole steps and half steps is therefore:

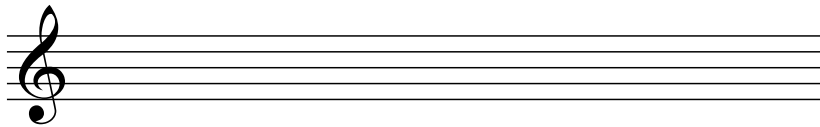
whole step | half step | whole step | whole step | half step | whole + half step | half step |

Three half steps now occur in this scale between the 2nd & 3rd, 5th & 6th, and the 7th & 8th degrees.

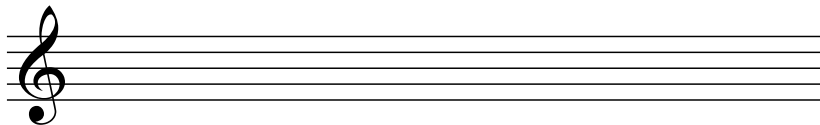


Write out the pattern of whole steps and half steps in the harmonic minor scale three times:

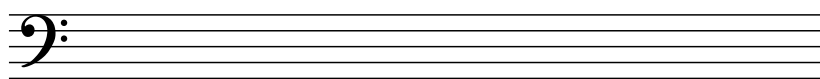
Write the scale of E harmonic minor, and mark the half steps with slurs:



Write the scale of D harmonic minor, and mark the half steps with slurs:

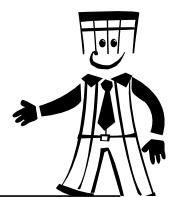


Write the scale of A harmonic minor in the bass staff, and mark the half steps with slurs:



Complete this sentence:

There are three half steps in the harmonic minor scale, between the ___ and ___, ___ and ___ and the ___ and ___ degrees.



Helpful Hint

The raised seventh found in the harmonic minor scale is one of the most useful factors in working out if a piece of music is in a major or a minor key.