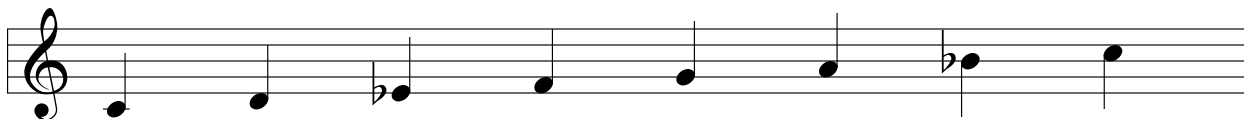


## Unit 10 ~The Modes

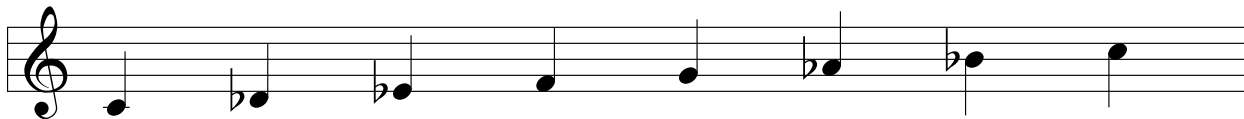
The word 'mode' can mean several different things in music. In this chapter, the modes we are referring to are seven scale types that were used hundreds of years ago and are often associated with church music such as Gregorian chant. They made a bit of a comeback during the 20th century in some types of classical music, especially sacred choral music.

These seven scale types each have their own name, and their own unique sequence of tones and semitones.

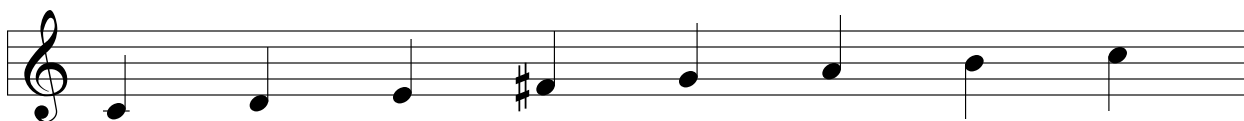
**Dorian Mode:** T - S - T - T - T - S - T



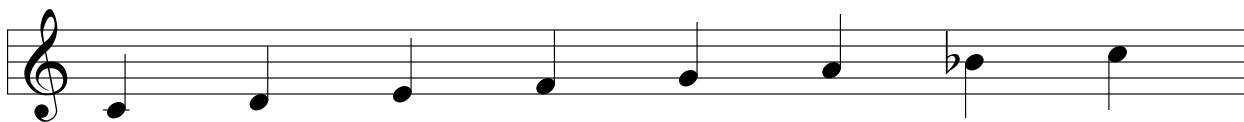
**Phrygian Mode:** S - T - T - T - S - T - T



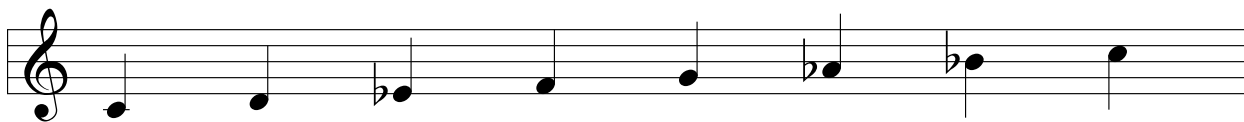
**Lydian Mode:** T - T - T - S - T - T - S



**Mixolydian Mode:** T - T - S - T - T - S - T



**Aeolian Mode:** T - S - T - T - S - T - T (same as the natural minor)



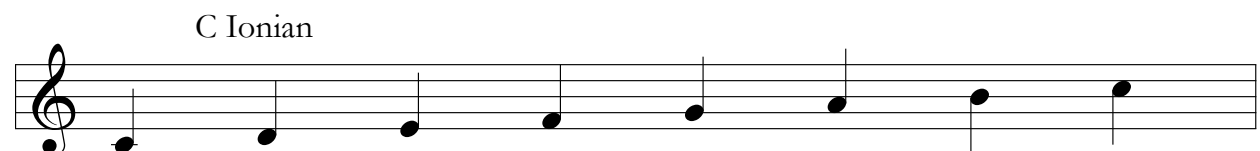
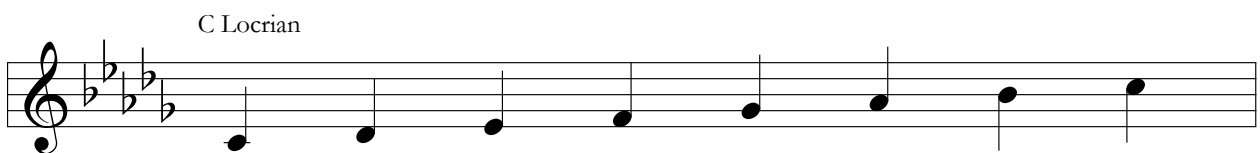
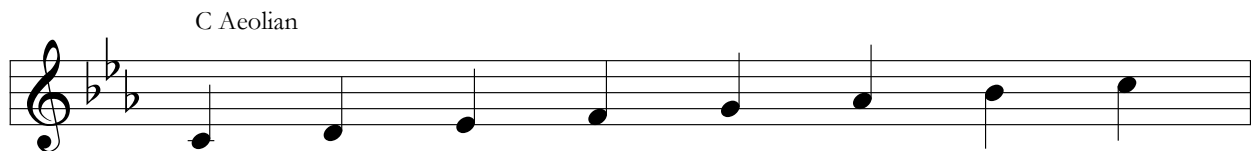
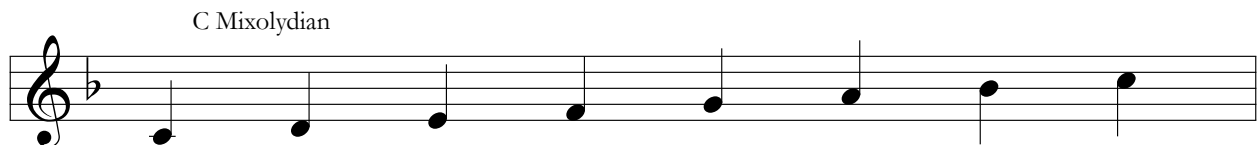
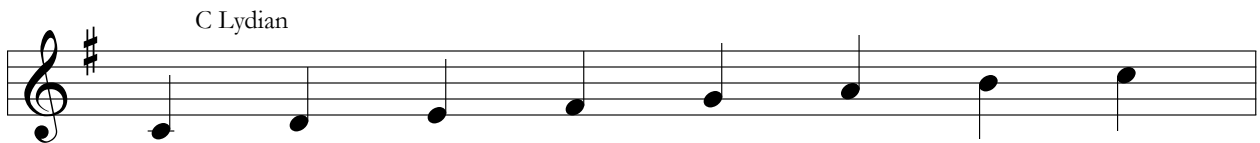
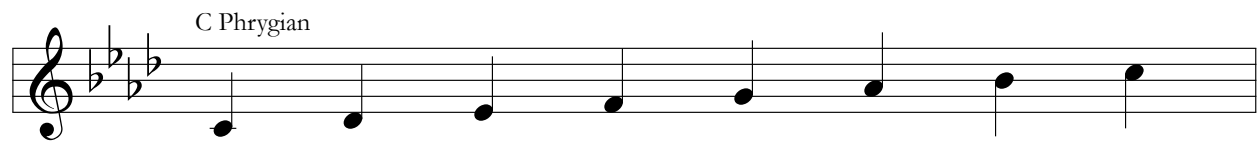
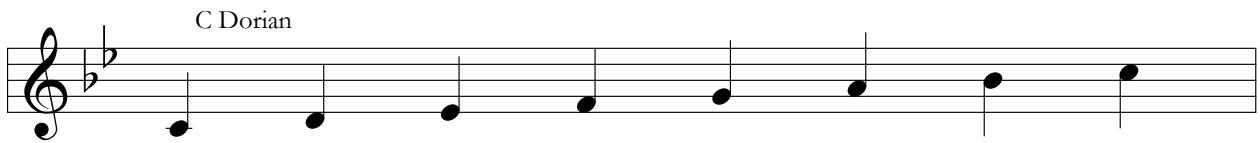
**Locrian Mode:** S - T - T - S - T - T - T



**Ionian Mode:** T - T - S - T - T - T - S (same as the major scale)

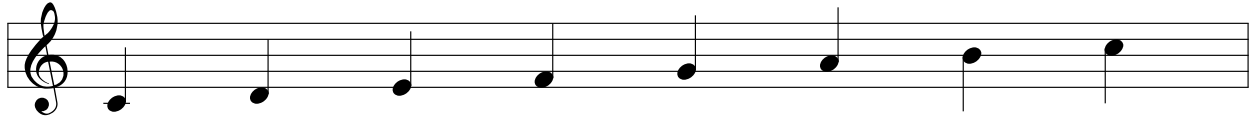


Here are the exact same seven scales, written this time with key signatures rather than with accidentals:



Very often you will see the modes written out just using the white note of the piano. This results in a different tonic for each mode:

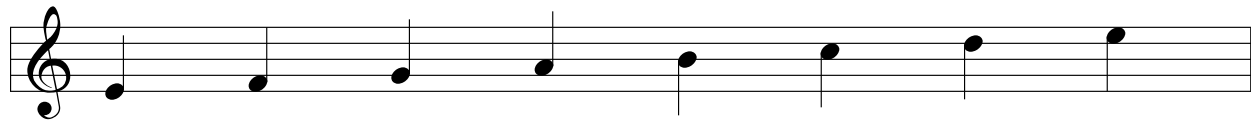
C Ionian



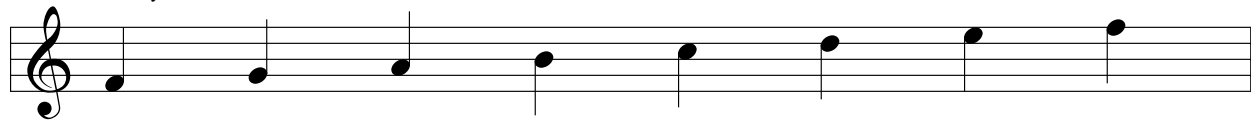
D Dorian



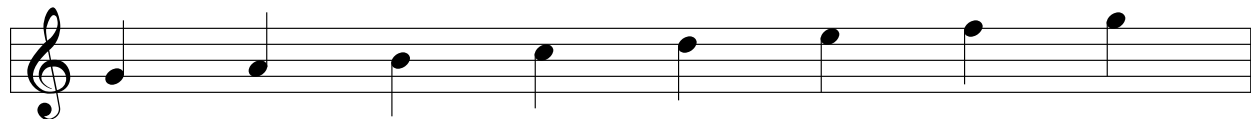
E Phrygian



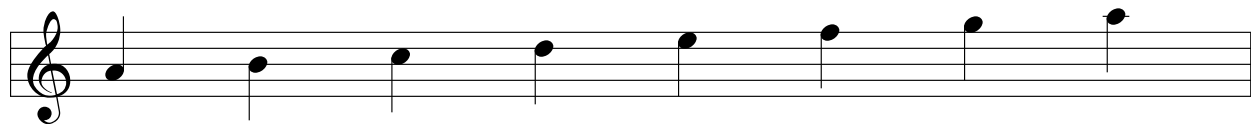
F Lydian



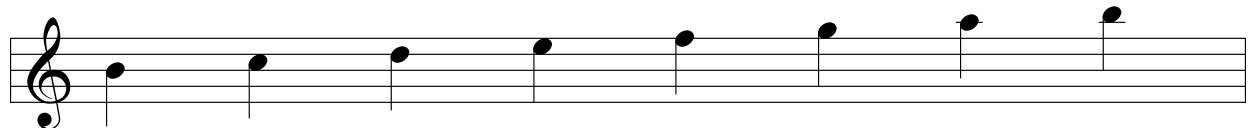
G Mixolydian



A Aeolian



B Locrian



This is a handy way of viewing and memorizing the modes.

## Figuring out the key signature of a modal scale for a given tonic

On exams, you are sometimes asked to work out the key signature of a particular mode, for example, "what is the key signature of E Dorian?". Now, you could memorize the key signatures of every mode for every possible tonic note, but that would be a LOT of work! An easier way is as follows:

You can see above that there is a D Dorian scale. Now D is the 2nd scale degree of C major. We can therefore make a general rule that you can build a Dorian scale on the 2nd degree of ANY major scale. Similarly, we see that there is an E Phrygian that starts on the 3rd degree of C major. Again, we can generalize and say we can build a Phrygian scale by starting on the 3rd degree of any major scale.

To answer the question above, "What is the key signature of E Dorian", we would simply ask ourselves, "what major scale has E as the 2nd degree?". The answer is D major. Therefore the key signature of E Dorian is the same as that of D major, i.e. two sharps.

If the question was, "What is the key signature of D Lydian?", then we would ask ourselves, "what major key has a D as the 4th degree?". The answer is A major, so D Lydian has the same key signature as A major, i.e., three sharps.