



SONGS

by ear

**MAJOR &
MINOR CHORDS**

CHEATSHEET

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT CHORDS	03
MAJOR	04
MINOR	05
CHORD SYMBOLS	06
HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK	07
C MAJOR & MINOR	08
C[#]/D^b MAJOR & MINOR	09
D MAJOR & MINOR	10
D[#]/E^b MAJOR & MINOR	11
E MAJOR & MINOR	12
F MAJOR & MINOR	13

F[#]/G^b MAJOR & MINOR	14
G MAJOR & MINOR	15
G[#]/A^b MAJOR & MINOR	16
A MAJOR & MINOR	17
A[#]/B^b MAJOR & MINOR	18
B MAJOR & MINOR	19
LEVEL UP! CHORD INVERSIONS	20

ABOUT CHORDS

An excerpt taken from the *Songs By Ear* lesson 'Building Blocks'.

In music we have two main threads that come together to form a song: melody and harmony. **Melody** is when a succession of notes are played one after the other to form a focal point for the song. **Harmony** is when a group of notes are played together to form a basis of support for the melody. These groups of notes in harmony are what we call '**chords**'.

There are a great many complicated types of chords but there are two main simple chord types that are essential for you to know first: major and minor.

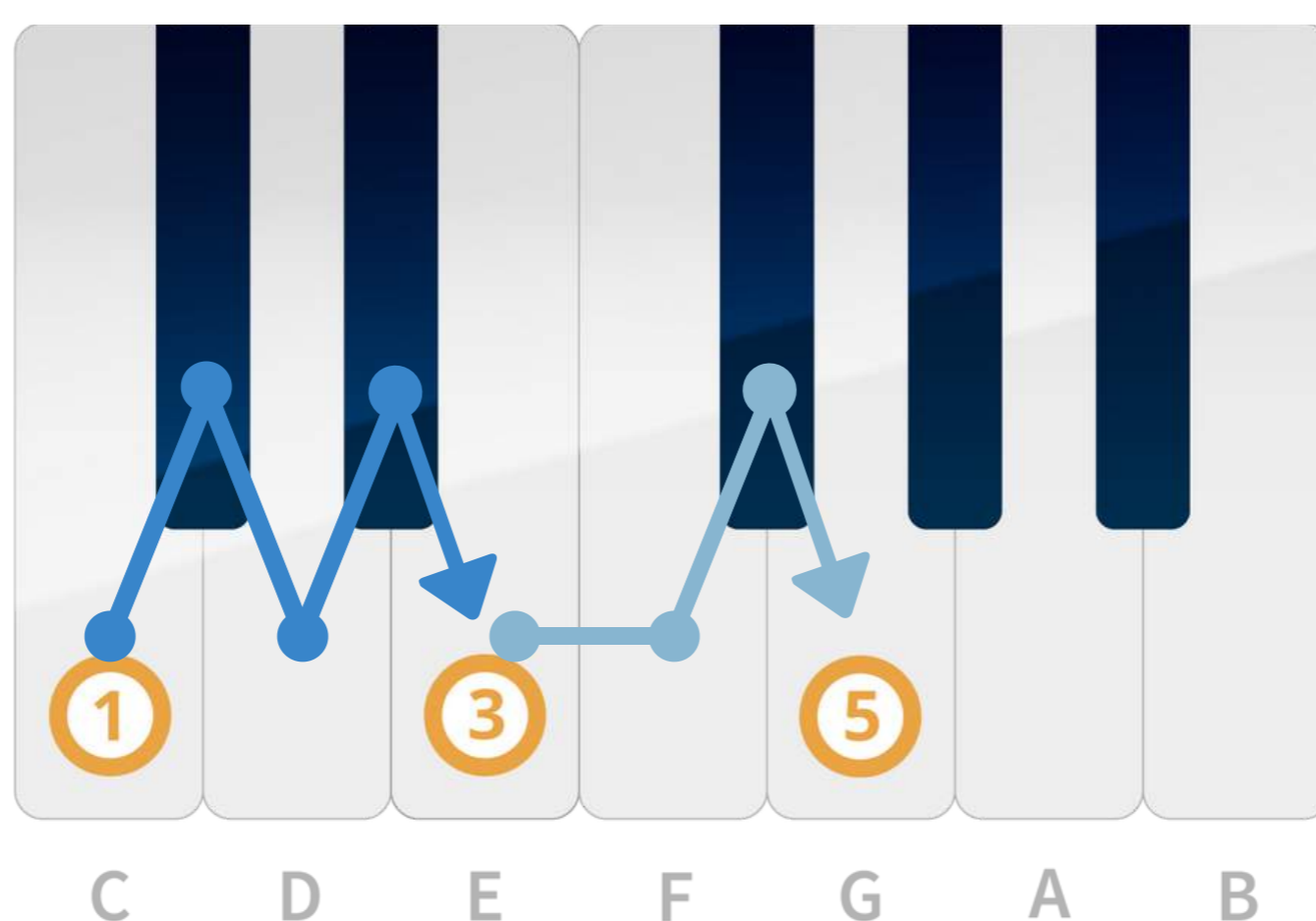
Both these chords are three-note chords which we call a 'triad'. The three notes look roughly the same distance apart and are played with the 1, 3 & 5 fingers in both hands.

MAJOR

Just like a tree grows up from the roots, in a chord we build it starting from the root. So with a **C major chord**, the C note is also called the **root note**.

From C with the thumb (*in the Right Hand*), we count up **four half-steps** to the **E** with the 3rd finger, so between the first note of the chord (C) and the middle note (E) is four half-steps.

From the E with the 3rd finger, we count up **three half-steps** to the **G** with the 5th finger, so between the middle note of the chord (E) and the last note (G) is three half-steps.



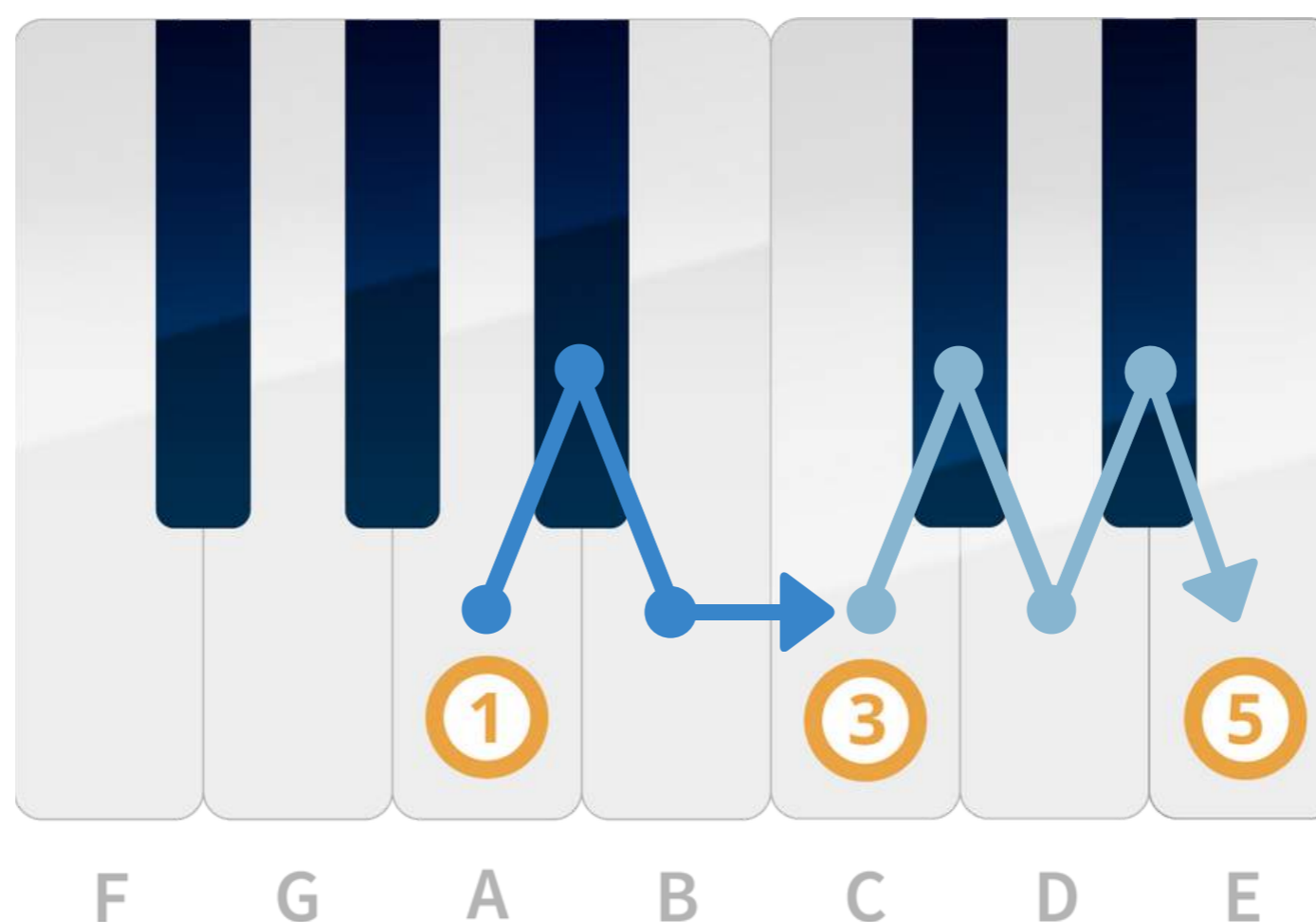
Now we can take this pattern to find any major chord on the keyboard!

MINOR

The **minor chord** is very easy to figure out when we already know the major chord. The easiest way to make a minor chord is to take the major chord we already have and **flatten** the third (middle note).

To 'flatten' means to take down a half-step.

In the case of the **C major chord**, our third finger is on the E, we are going to flatten this down to the black note to the left. This is called E^b , (*E flat*).



The minor chord is made up of **four half-steps + three half-steps**. Use this pattern to build a minor chord anywhere on the piano.

CHORD SYMBOLS

In this course we are mainly learning about chords in order to identify them with our ear.

When you are figuring out a new song it is helpful to write down the chords that you can hear. But how do we write those chords? We use chord symbols in order to quickly write & read them.

The **major chord** is most often symbolised by the root note of the chord alone. Sometimes 'maj' or 'M' are added to it:

C **Cmaj** **CM**

The **minor chord** is most often the root note with a small 'm' beside it, but sometimes this is replaced with 'min' or a minus sign:

Cm **Cmin** **C-**

HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK

This eBook can be used in two ways:

PRACTISE

Go through this eBook one page at a time and play each chord with your left hand and right hand separately, then together. Play both the major and minor chord on each page and think about the distances (*intervals*) between each note of the chord. Recognise the patterns that make up each chord. You will find that by playing these chords regularly you will memorise them and eventually not need to 'think' about how they're made up. It will become automatic!

REFERENCE

Once you have practised these chords, including with inversions (*see final pages*), you can begin to test yourself by naming a chord at random and playing it. You can then refer to this eBook to check your answers.

C major

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

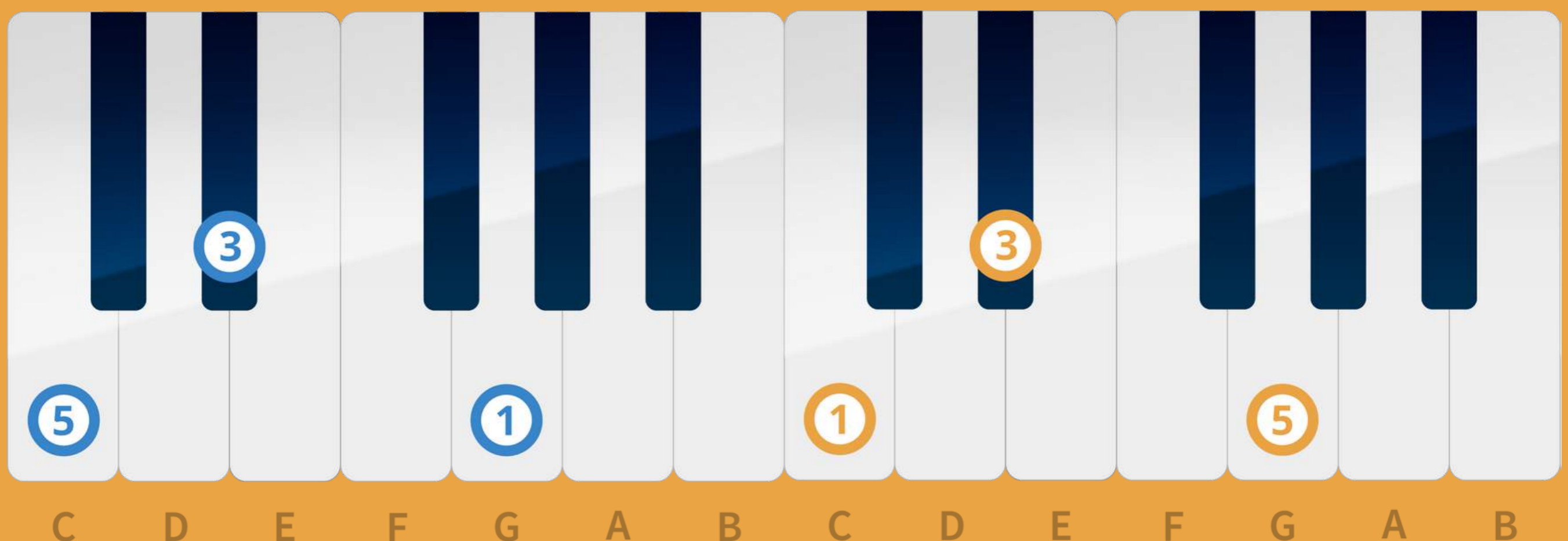


C minor

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

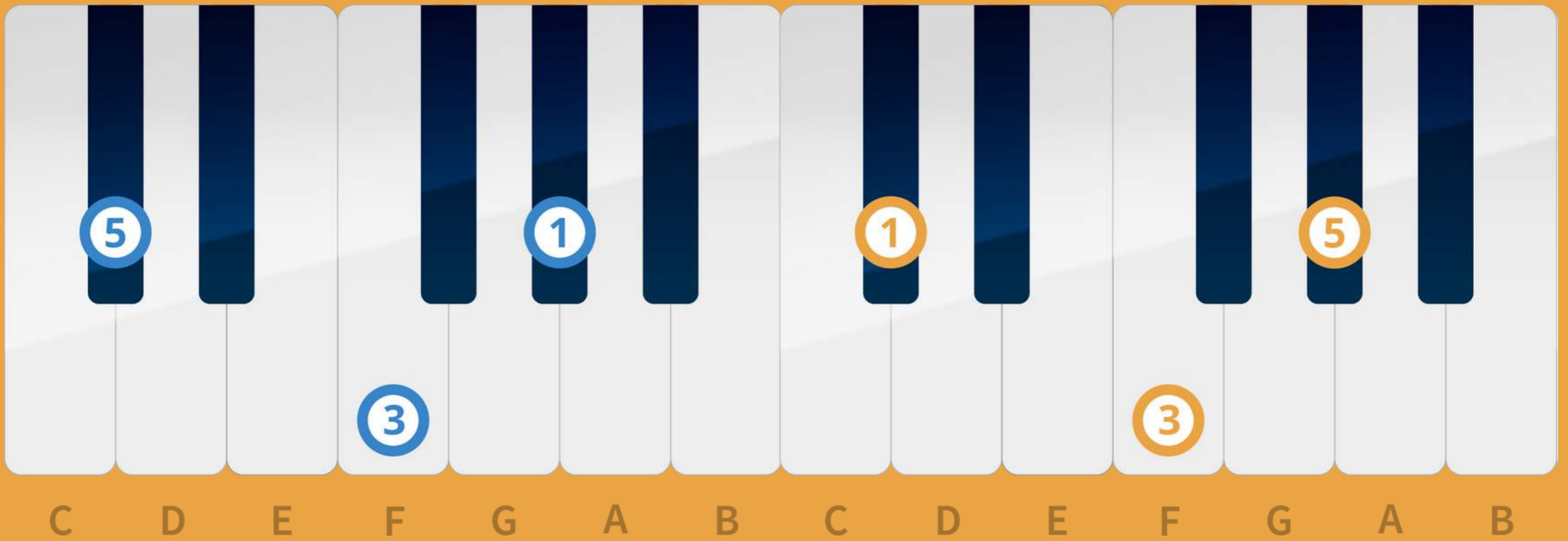


C[#] major

/ D^b CHORD

Fingering for the **Left Hand**.

Fingering for the **Right Hand**.

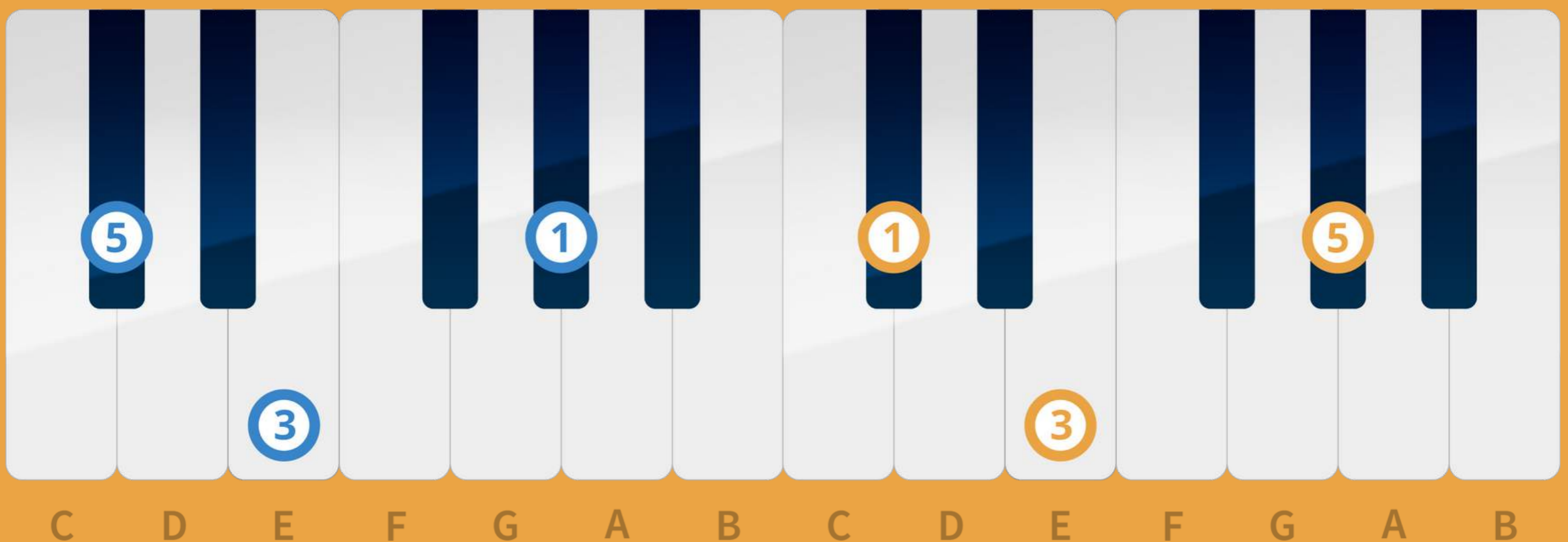


C[#] minor

/ D^b CHORD

Fingering for the **Left Hand**.

Fingering for the **Right Hand**.

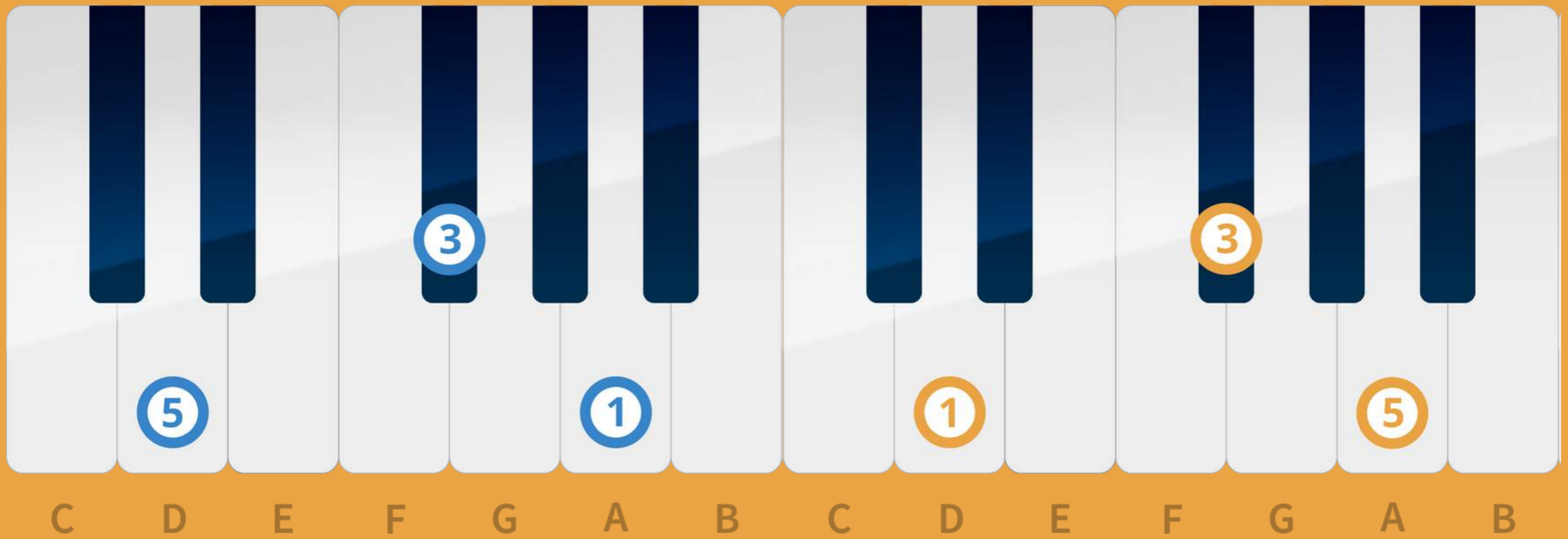


D major

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

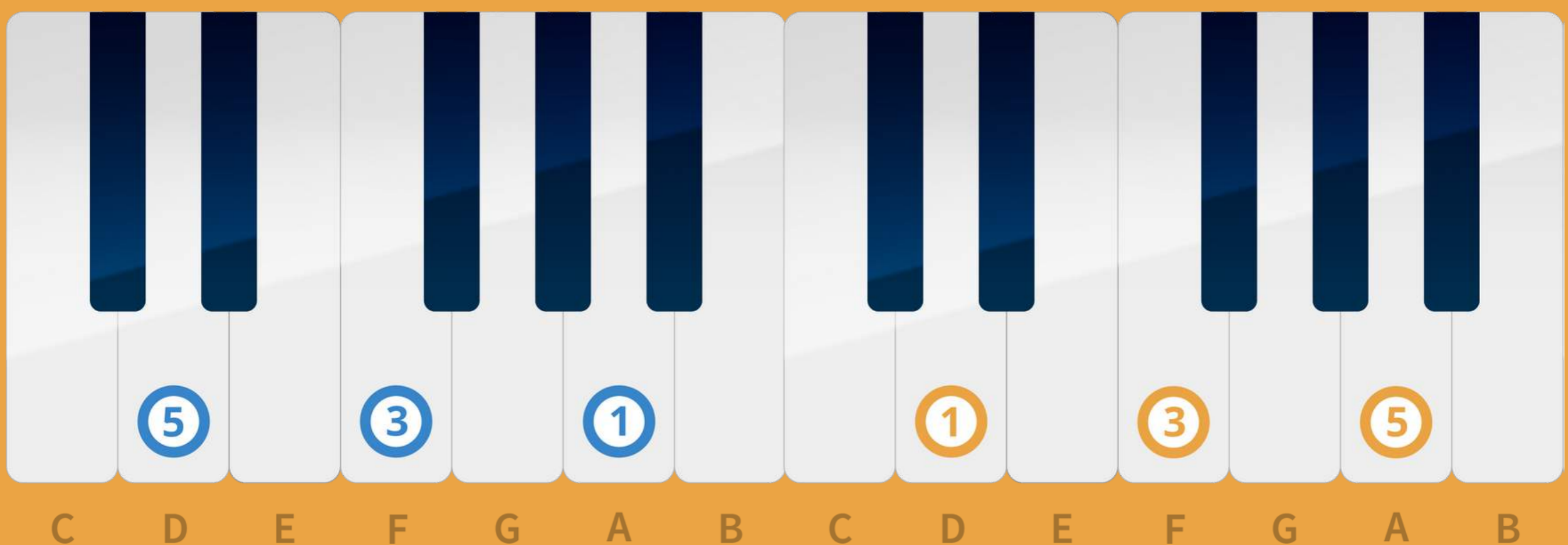


D minor

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

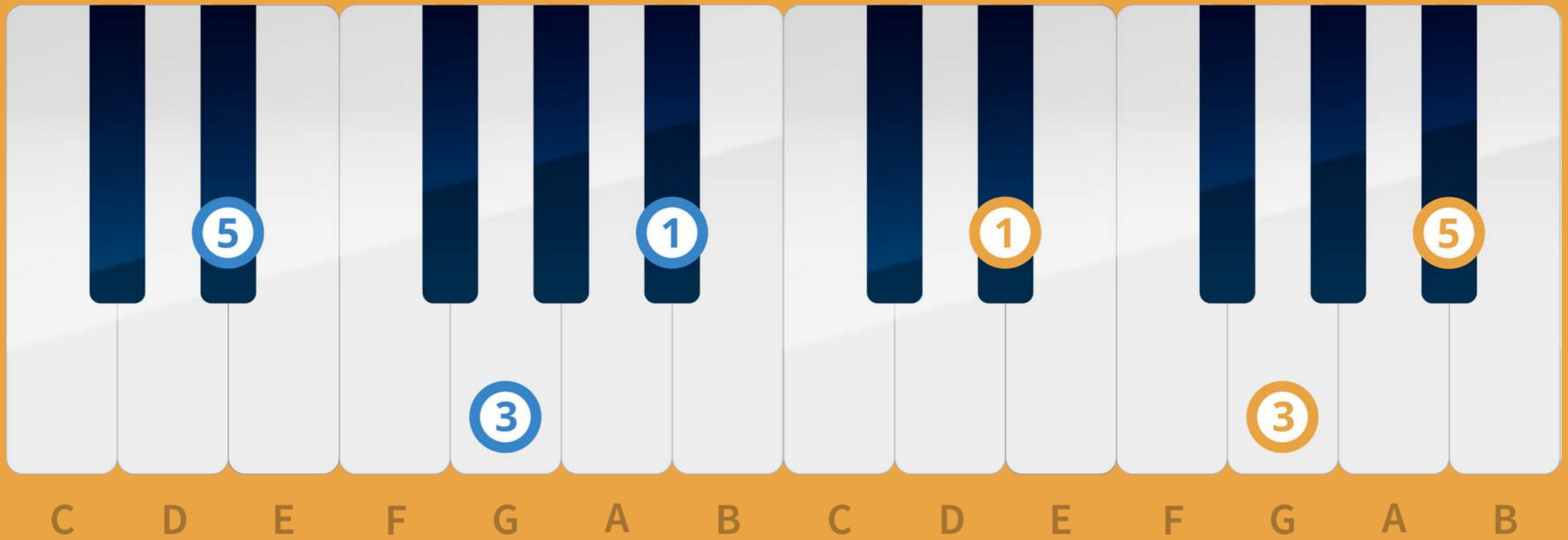


D[#] major

/ E^b CHORD

Fingering for the **Left Hand**.

Fingering for the **Right Hand**.

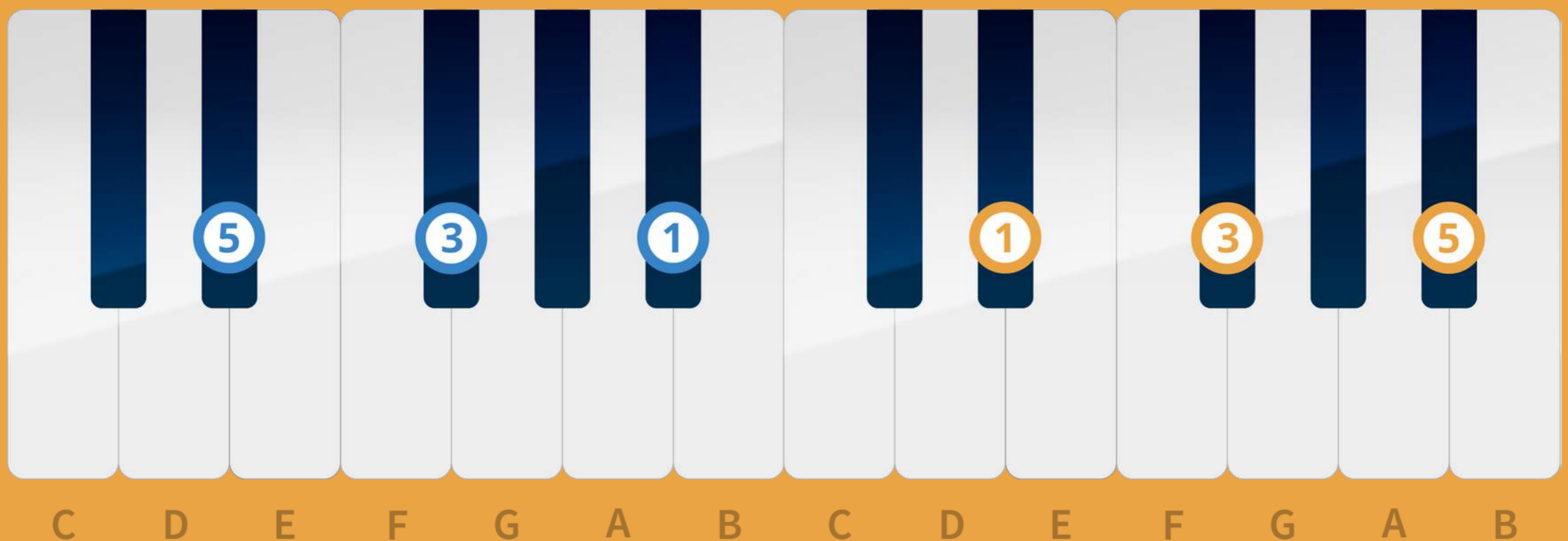


D[#] minor

/ E^b CHORD

Fingering for the **Left Hand**.

Fingering for the **Right Hand**.

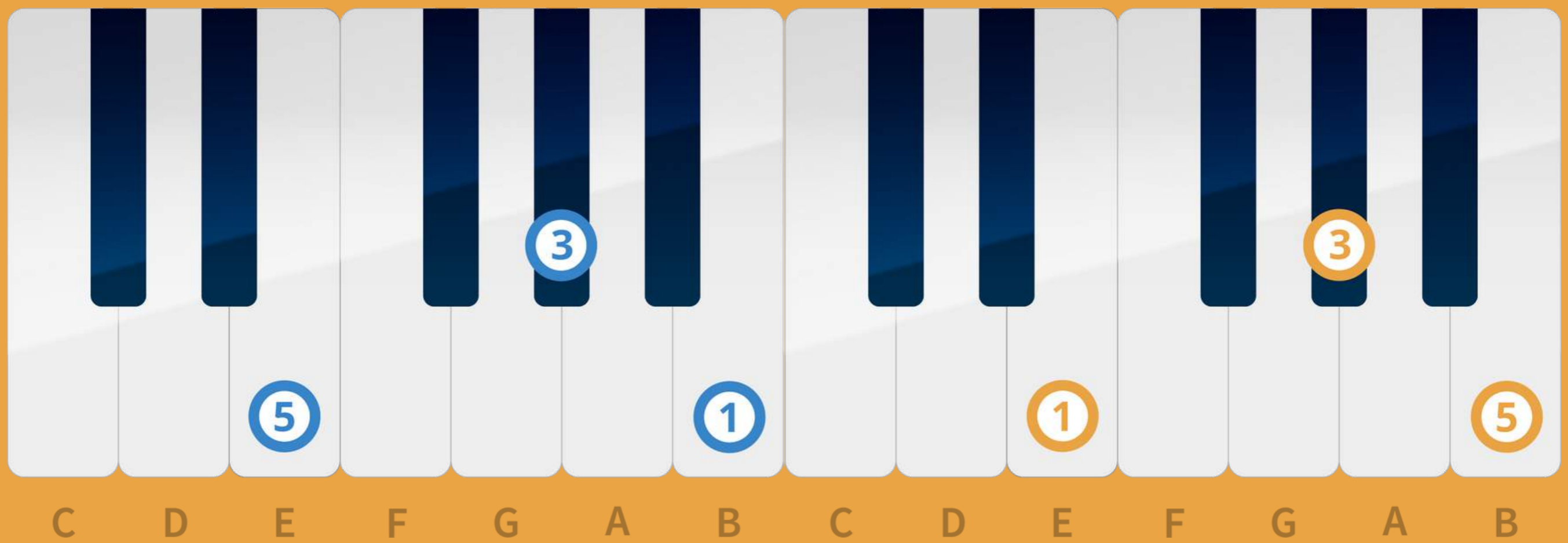


E major

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

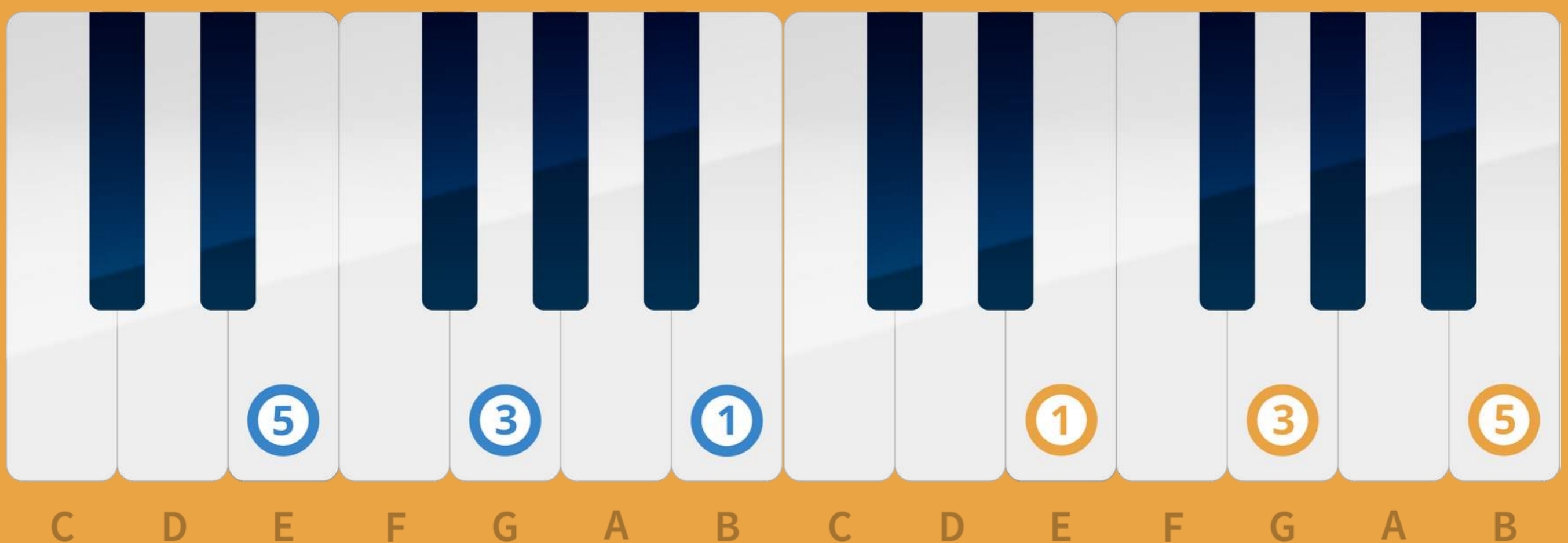


E minor

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

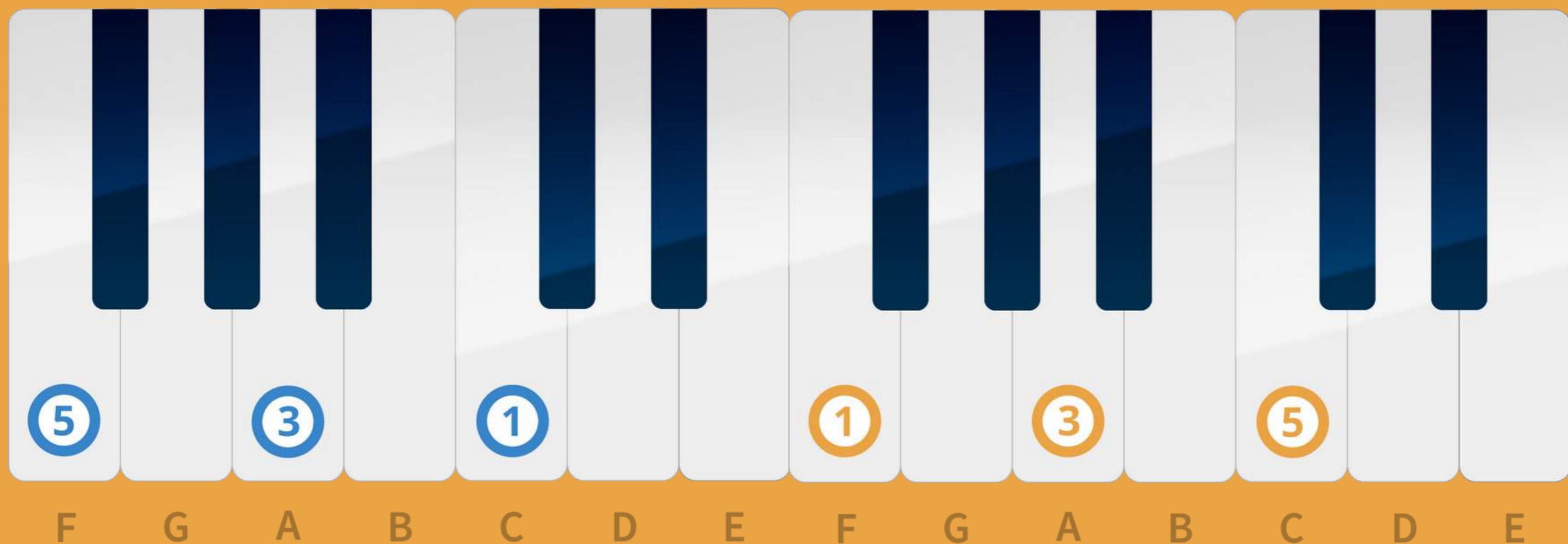


F major

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

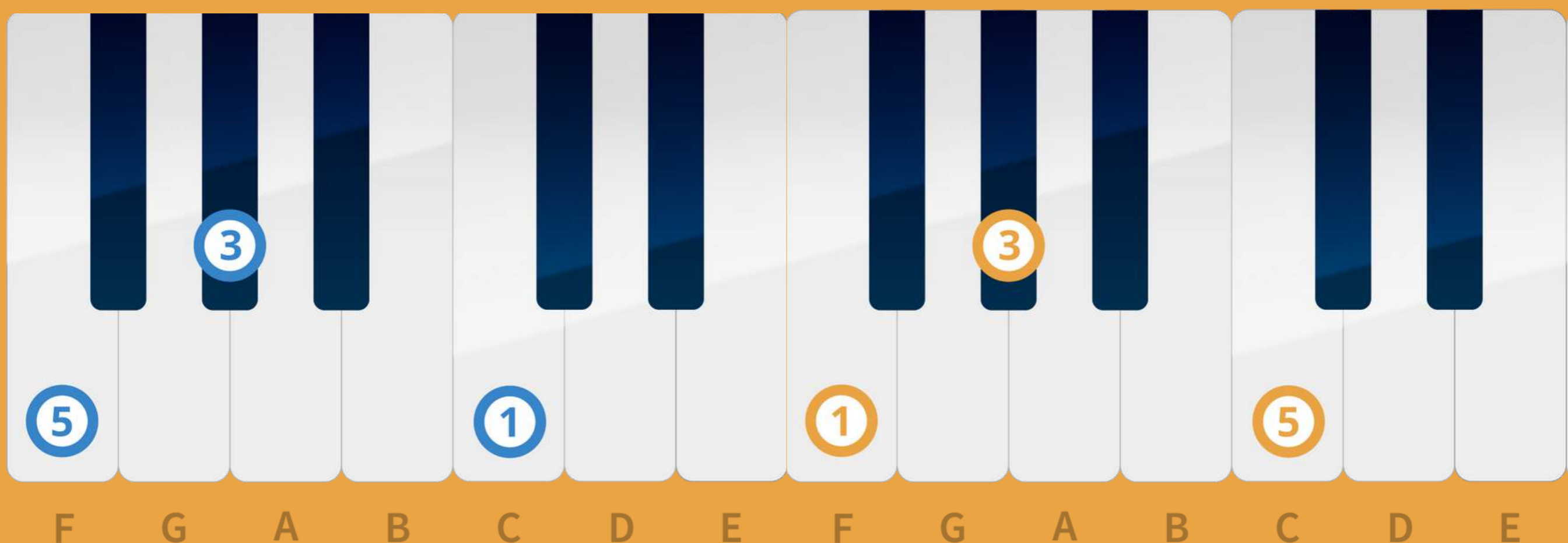


F minor

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

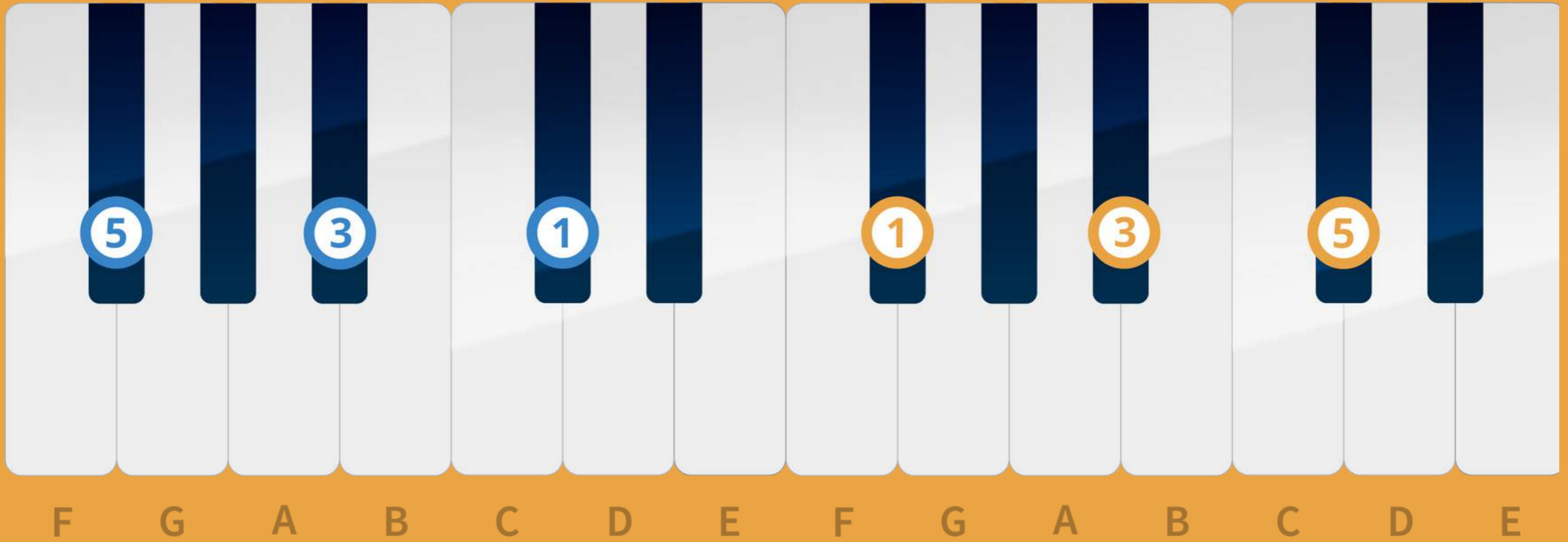


F[#] major

/ G^b CHORD

Fingering for the **Left Hand**.

Fingering for the **Right Hand**.

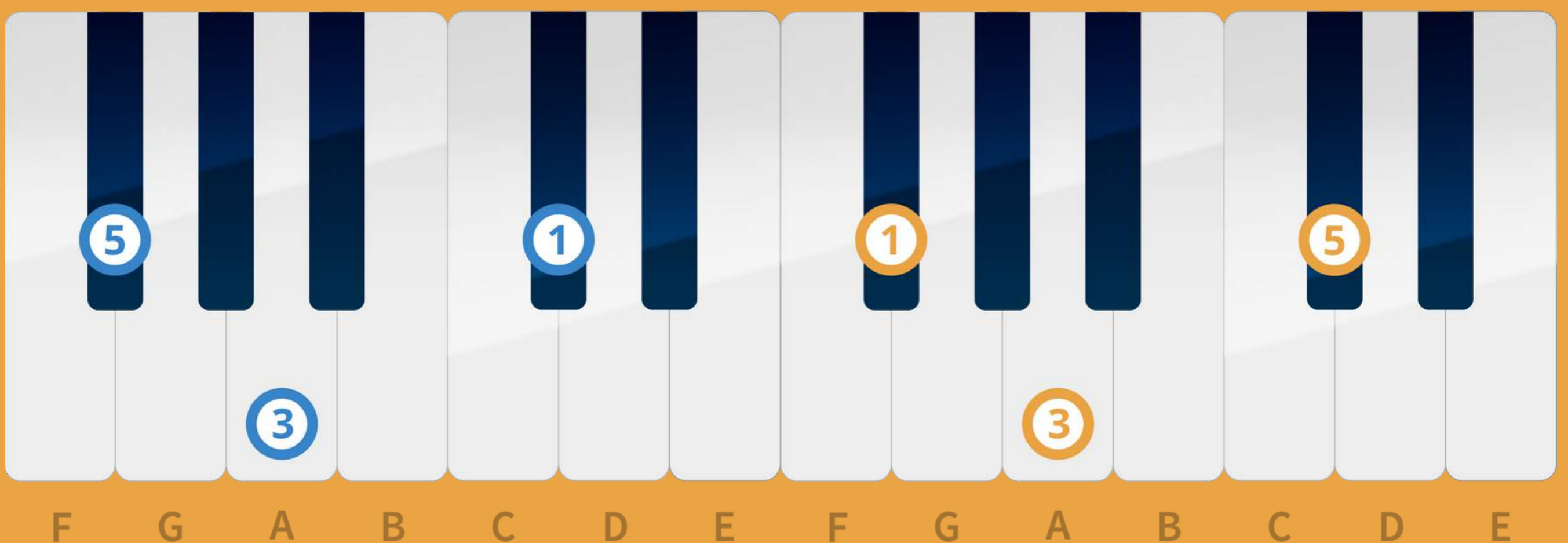


F[#] minor

/ G^b CHORD

Fingering for the **Left Hand**.

Fingering for the **Right Hand**.

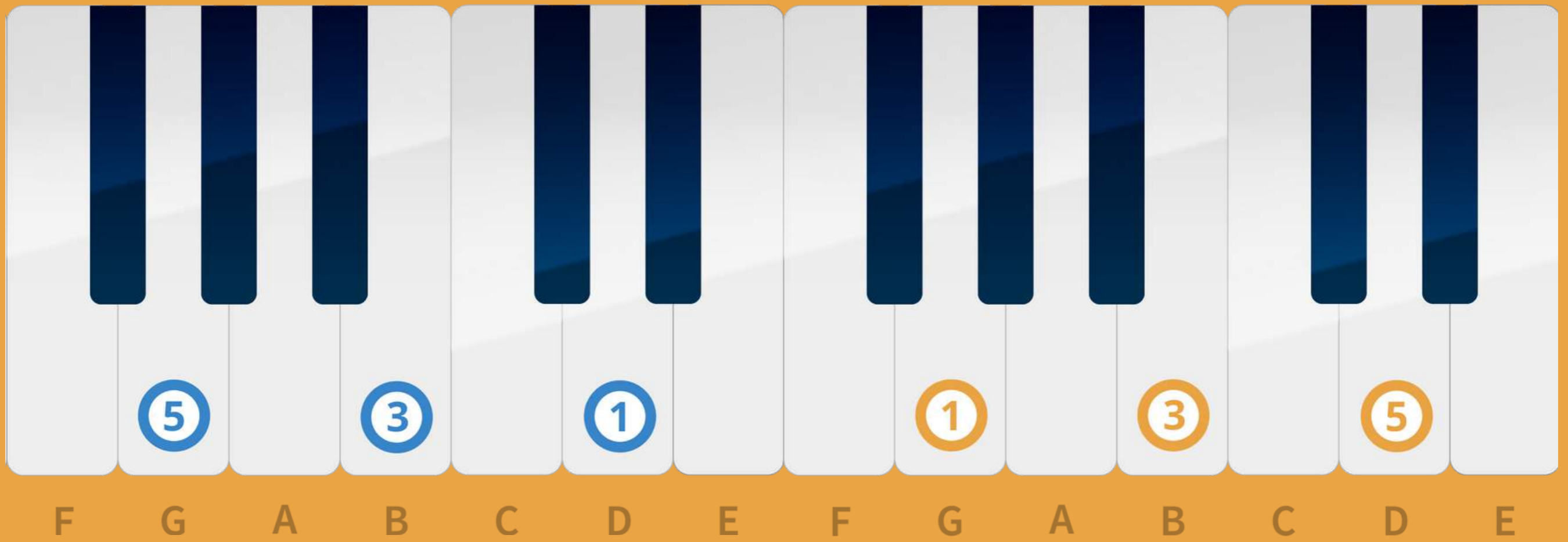


G major

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

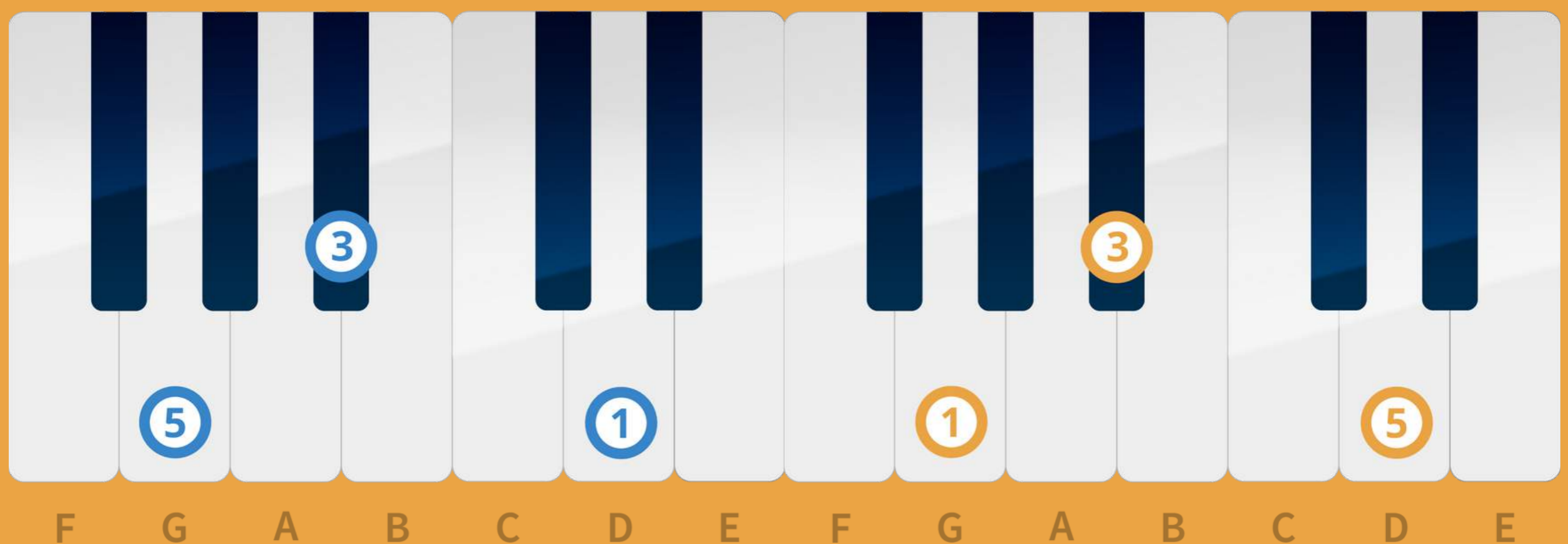


G minor

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

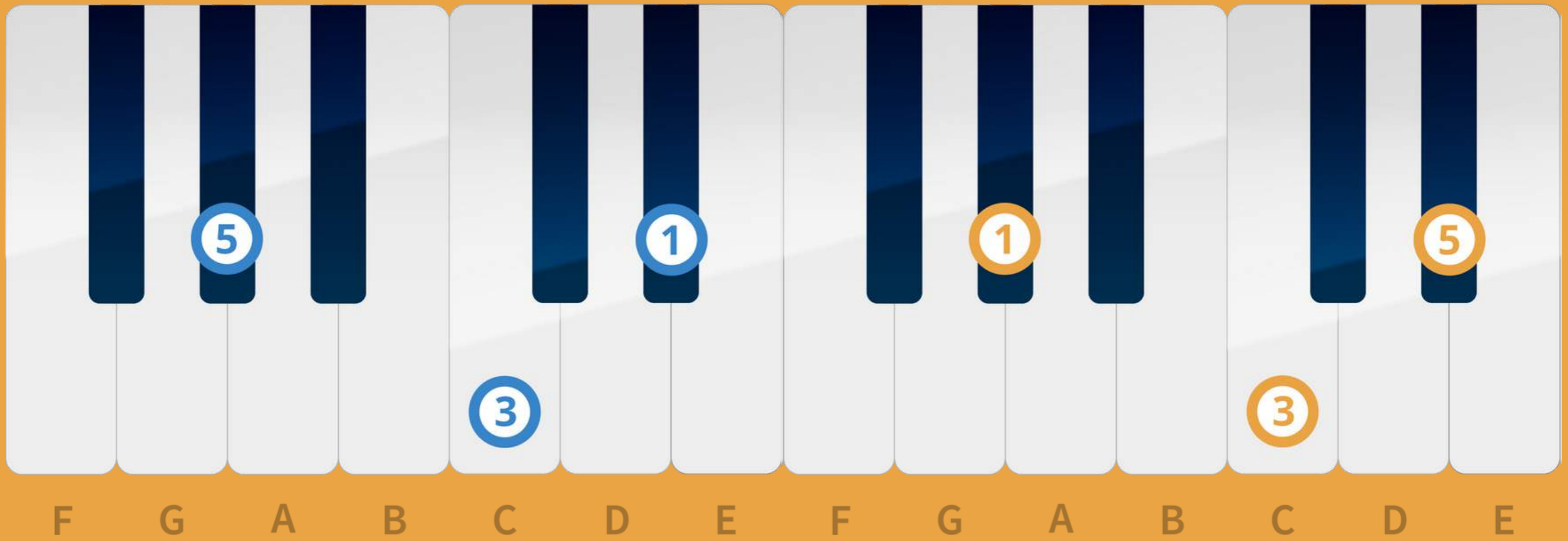


G[#] major

/ A^b CHORD

Fingering for the **Left Hand**.

Fingering for the **Right Hand**.

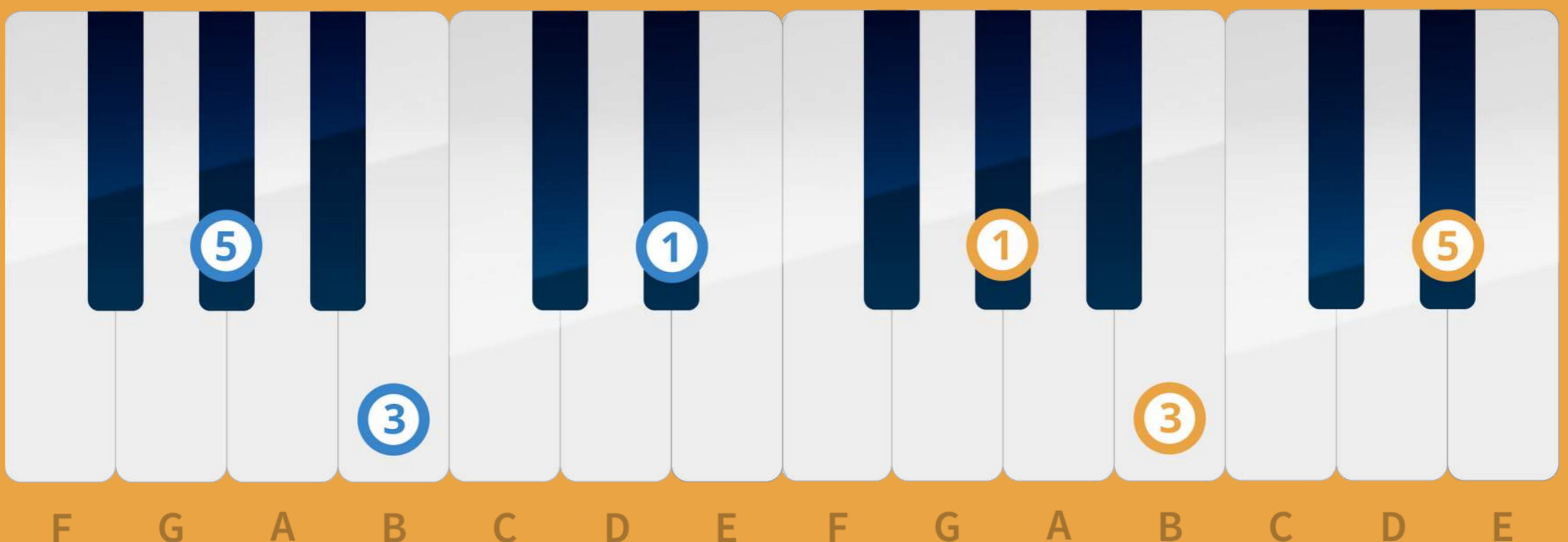


G[#] minor

/ A^b CHORD

Fingering for the **Left Hand**.

Fingering for the **Right Hand**.

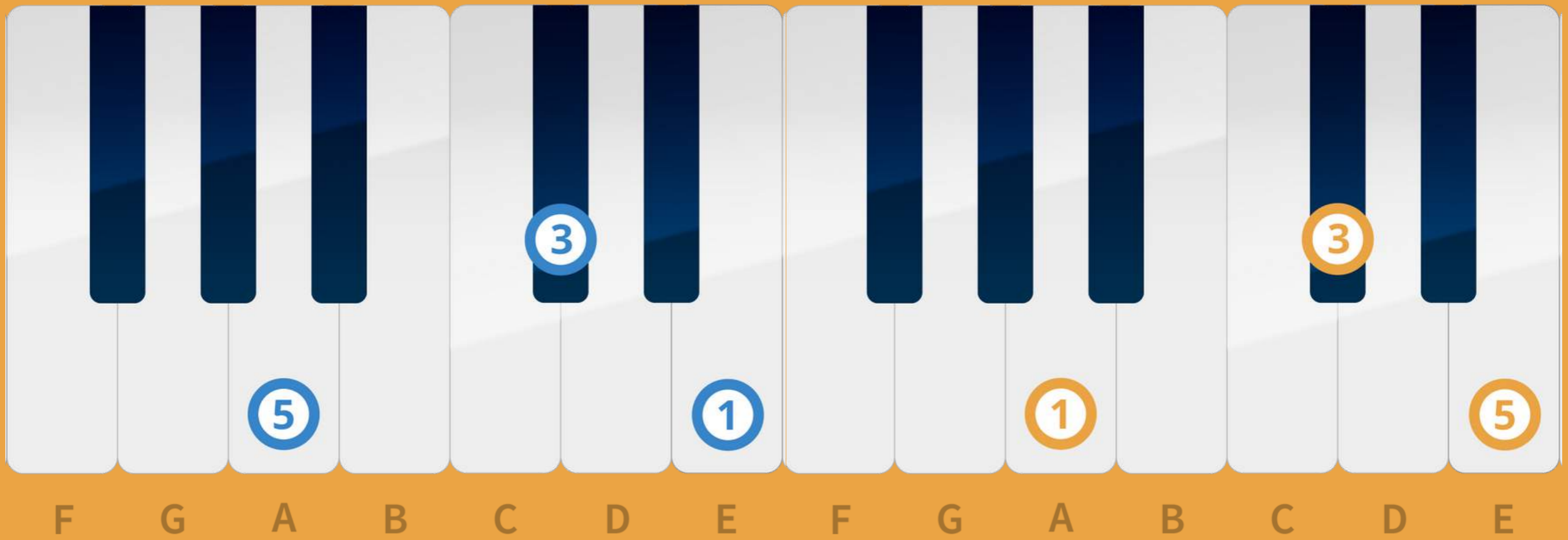


A major

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

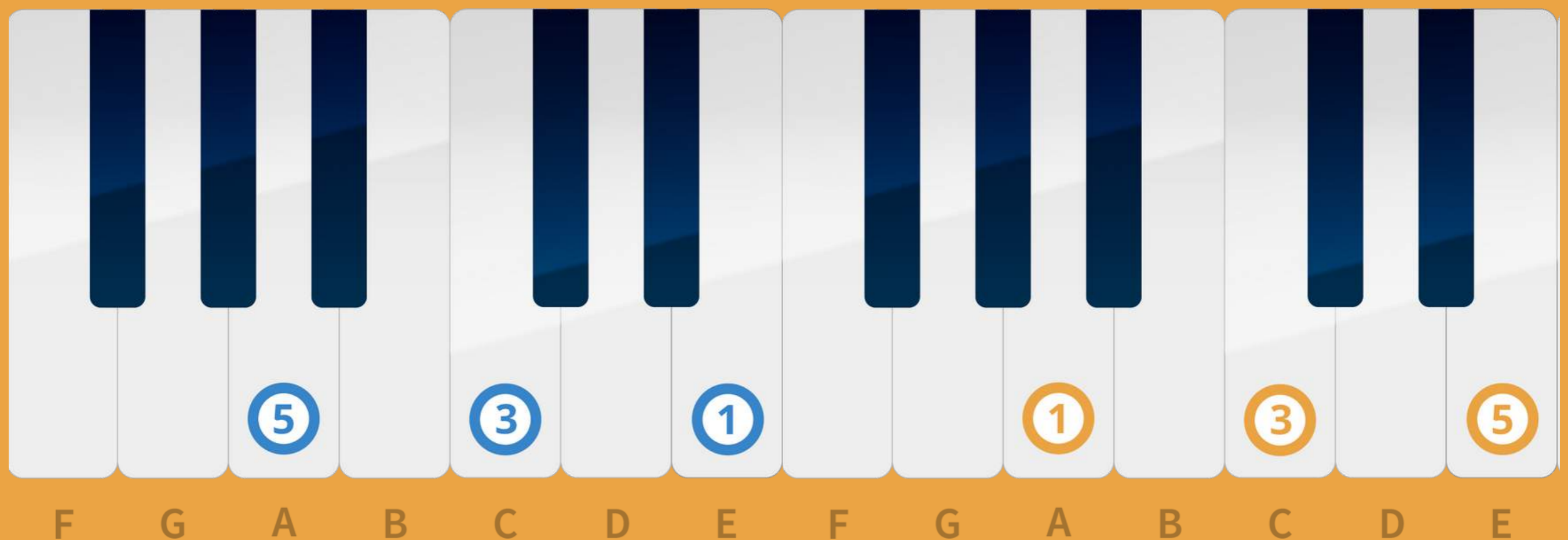


A minor

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

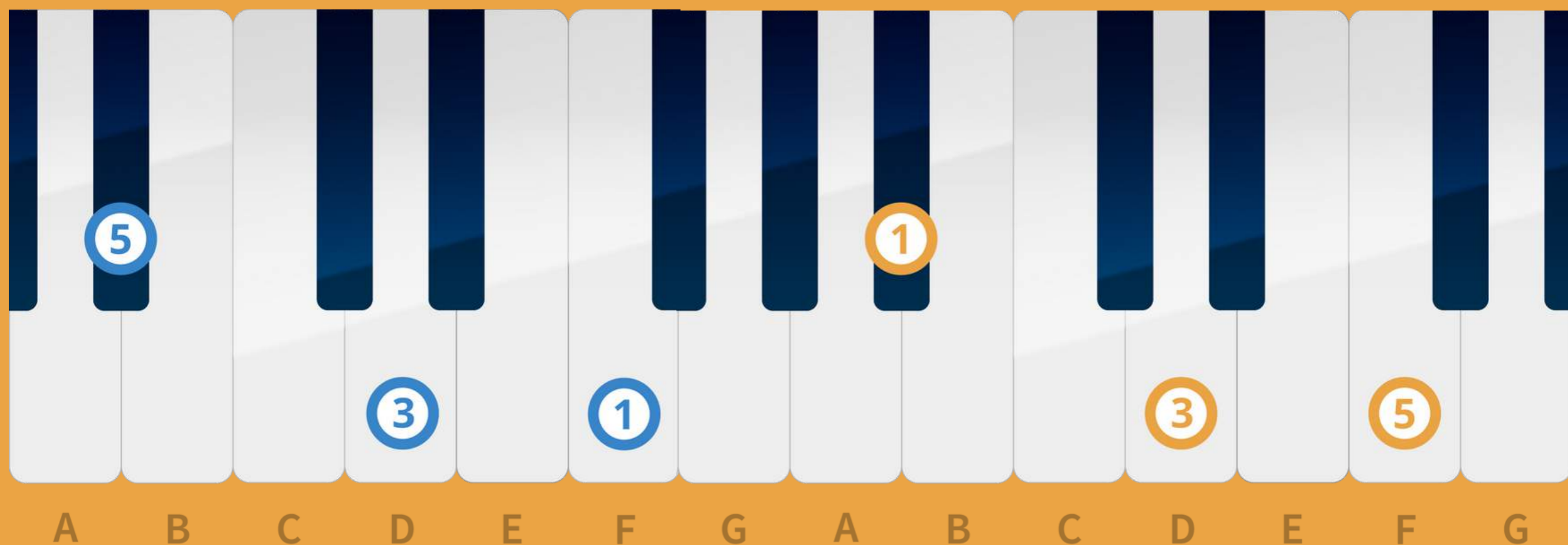


A[#] major

/ B^b C H O R D

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

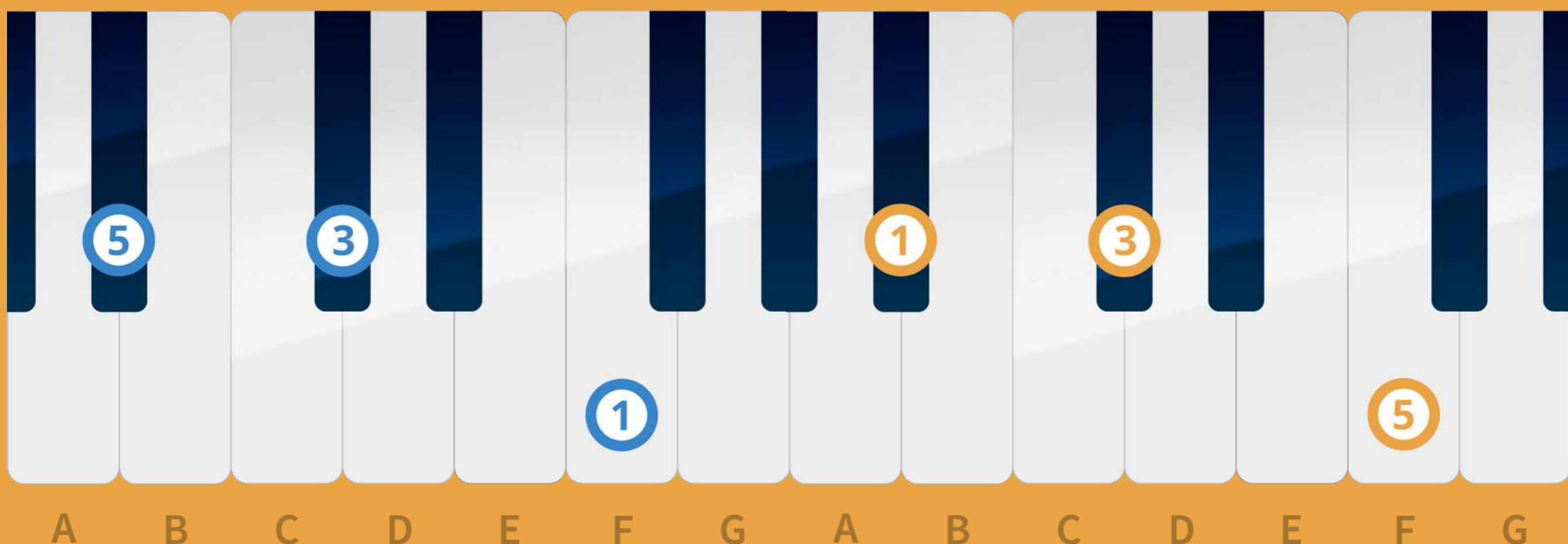


A[#] minor

/ B^b C H O R D

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

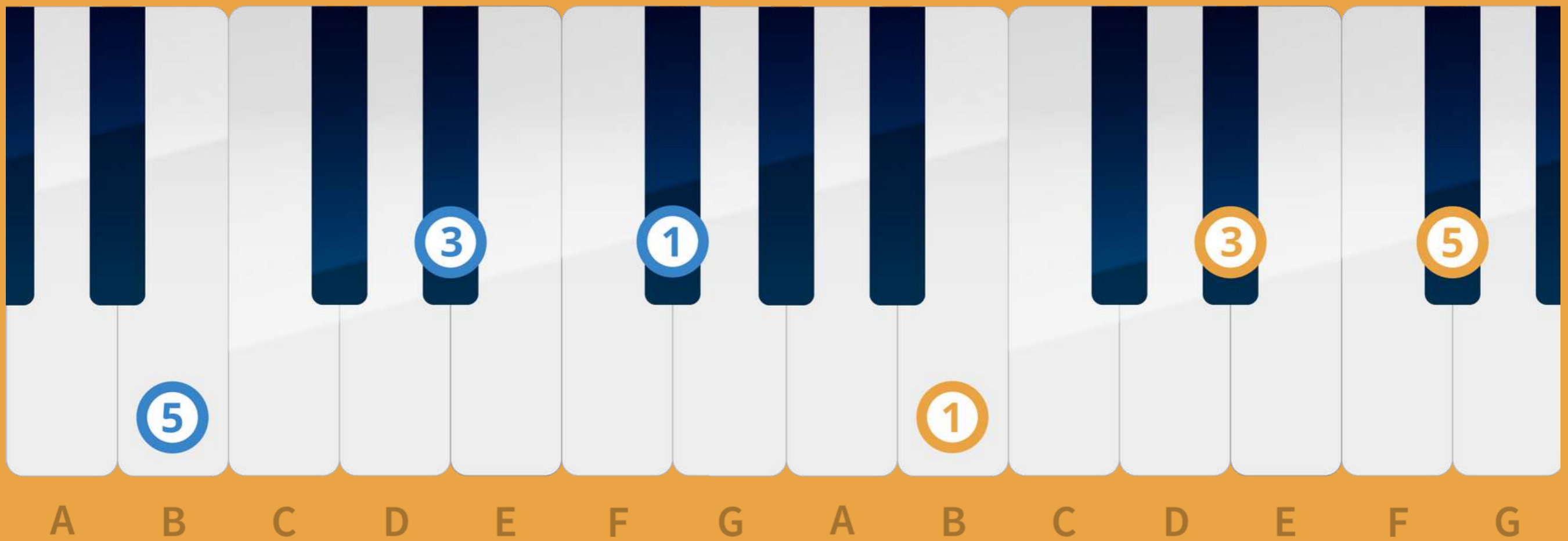


B major

CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).

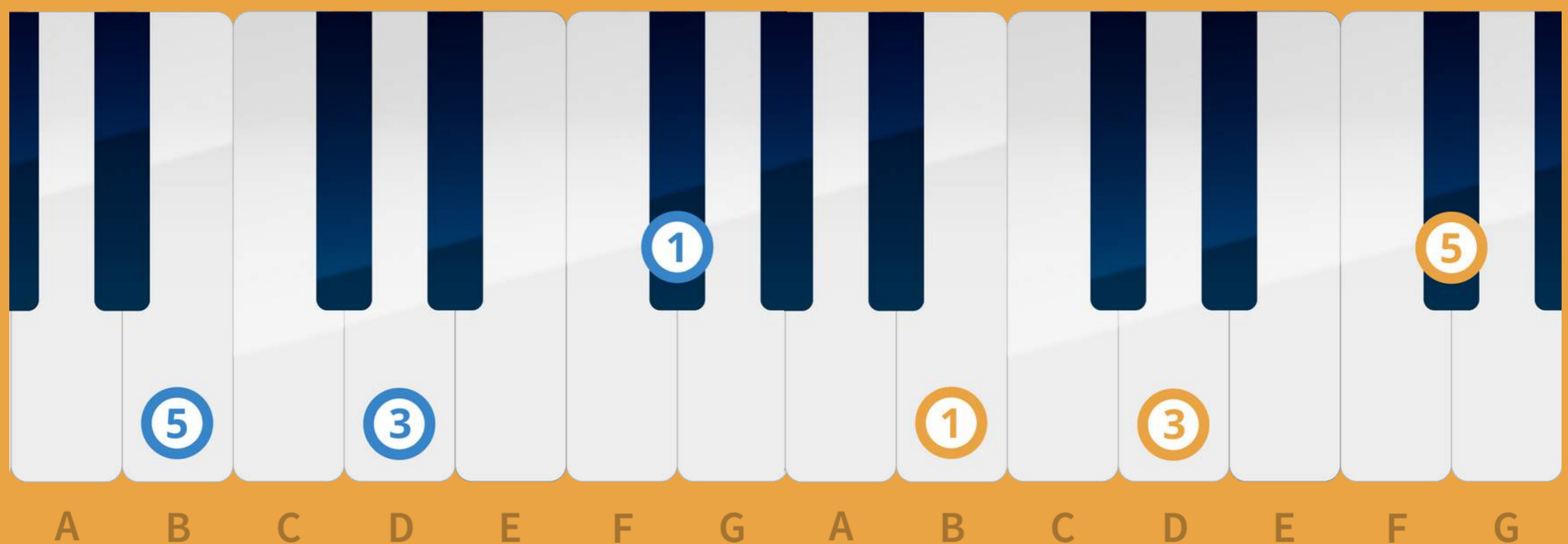


B minor

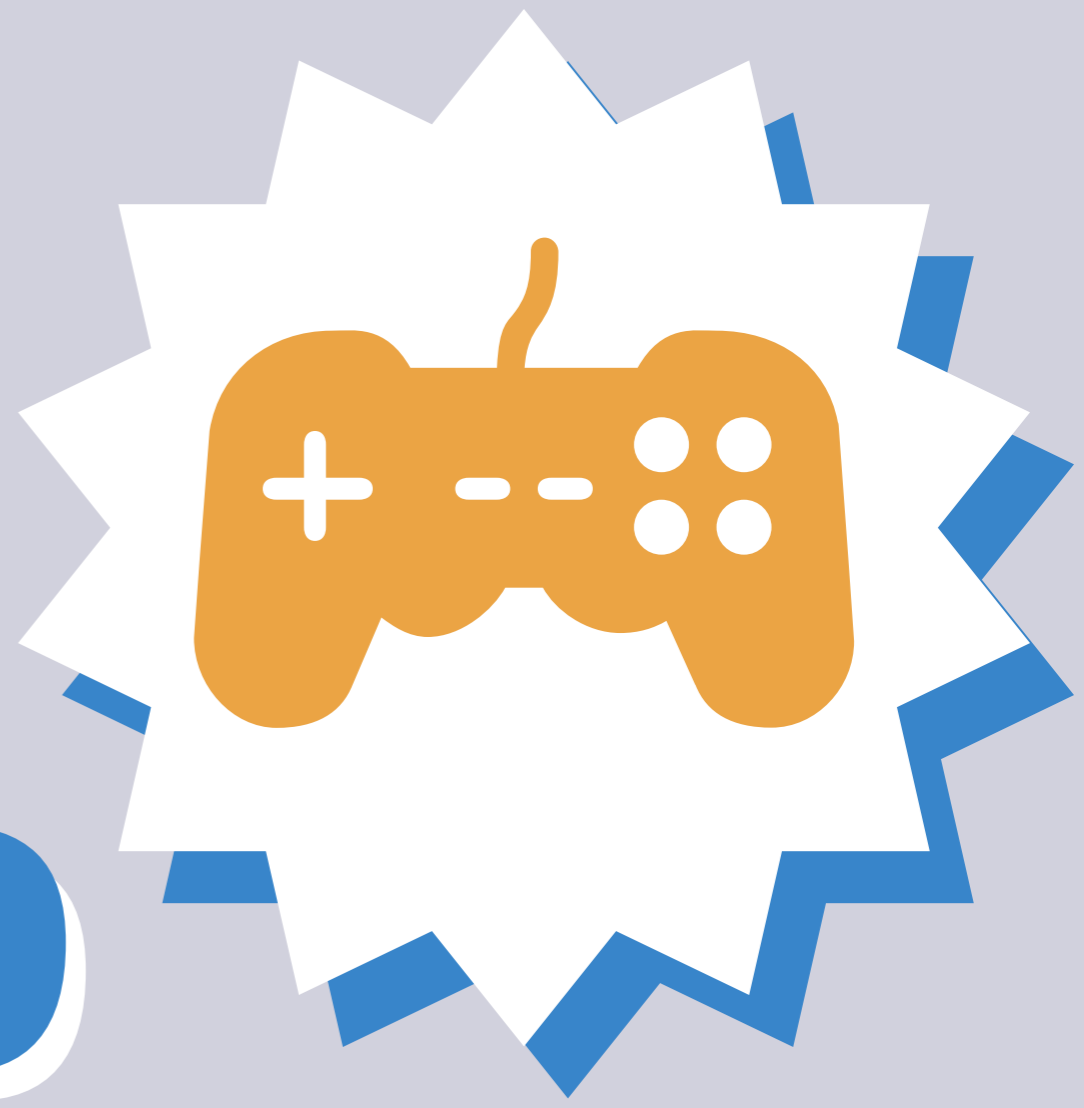
CHORD

Fingering for the [Left Hand](#).

Fingering for the [Right Hand](#).



LEVEL UP!

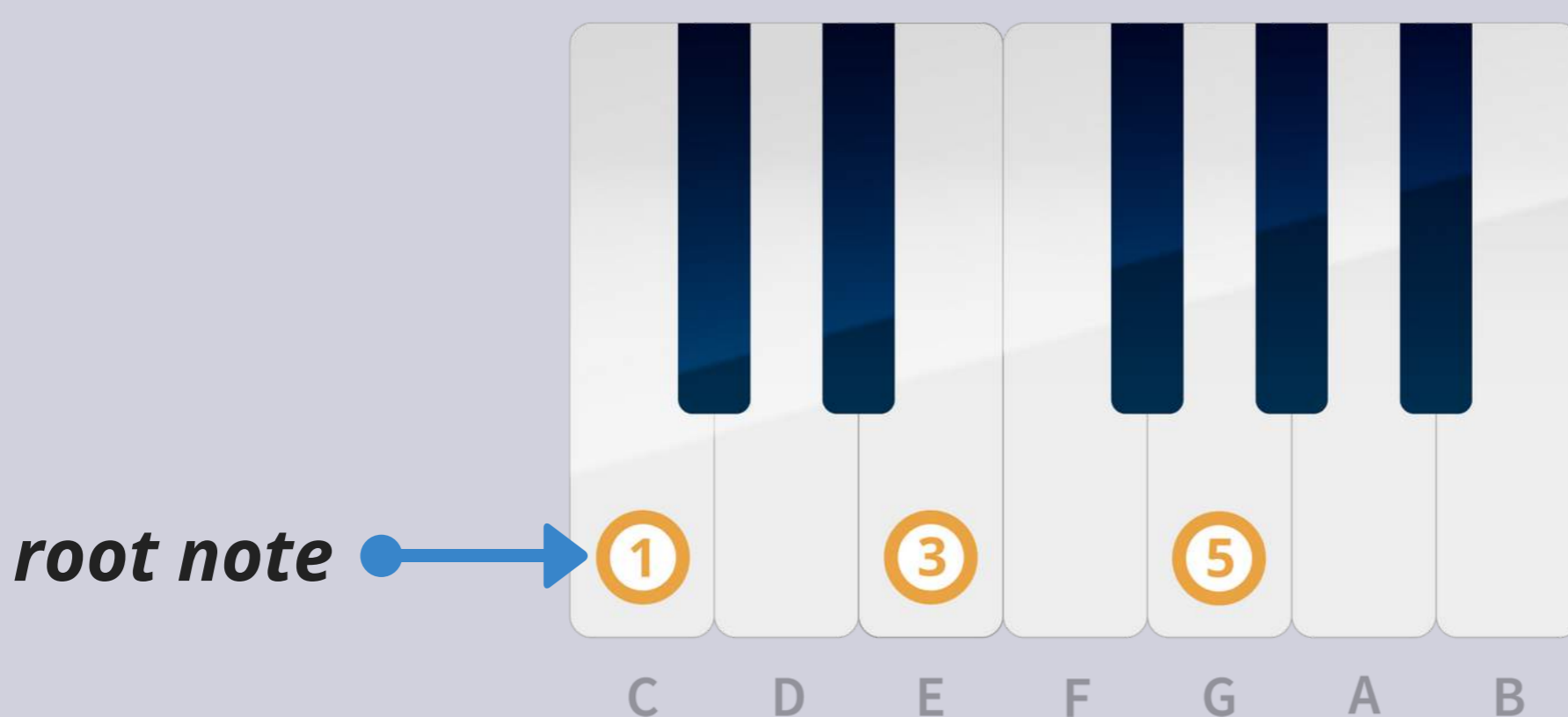


CHORD INVERSIONS

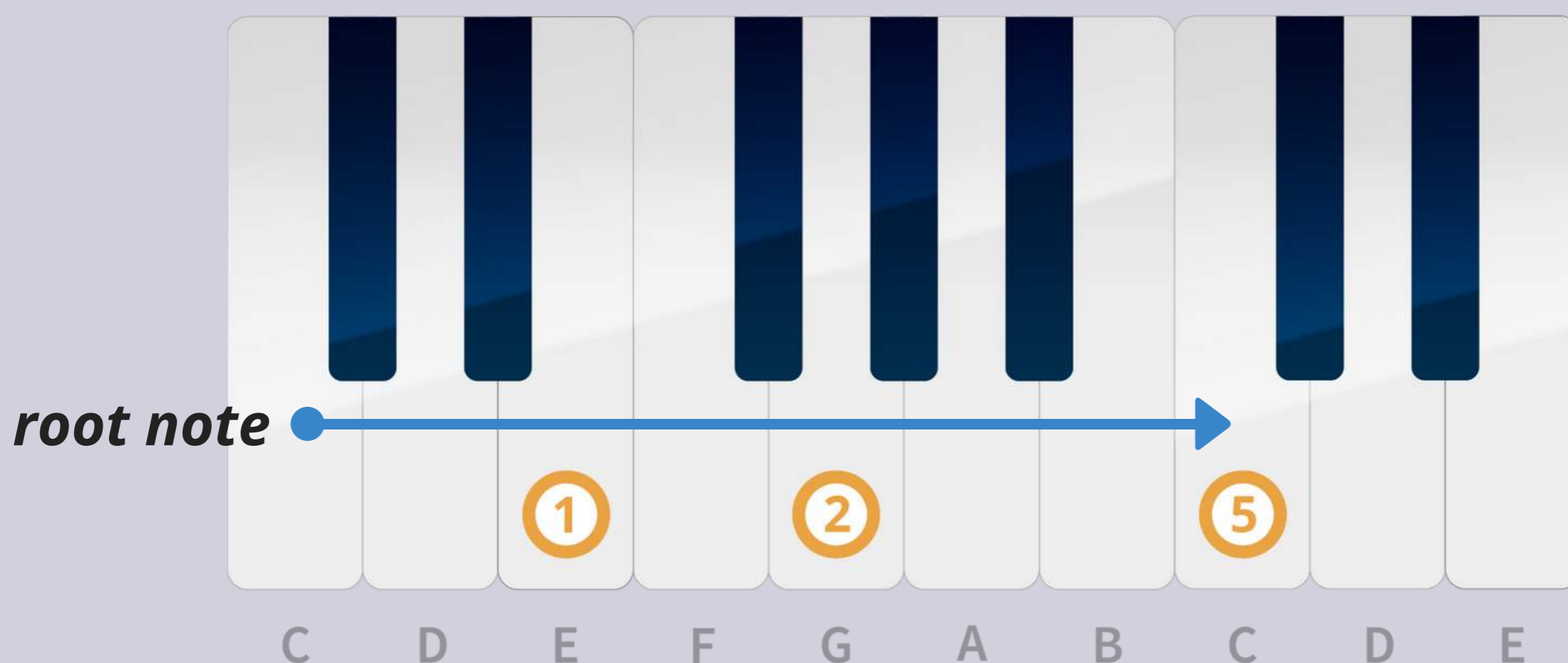
Once you are familiar with the chords in this way it's time to LEVEL UP!

When you know chords well you can begin to play them in different positions on the keyboard. The idea is to play the same notes but in different orders, these different orders of a chord are called **inversions**.

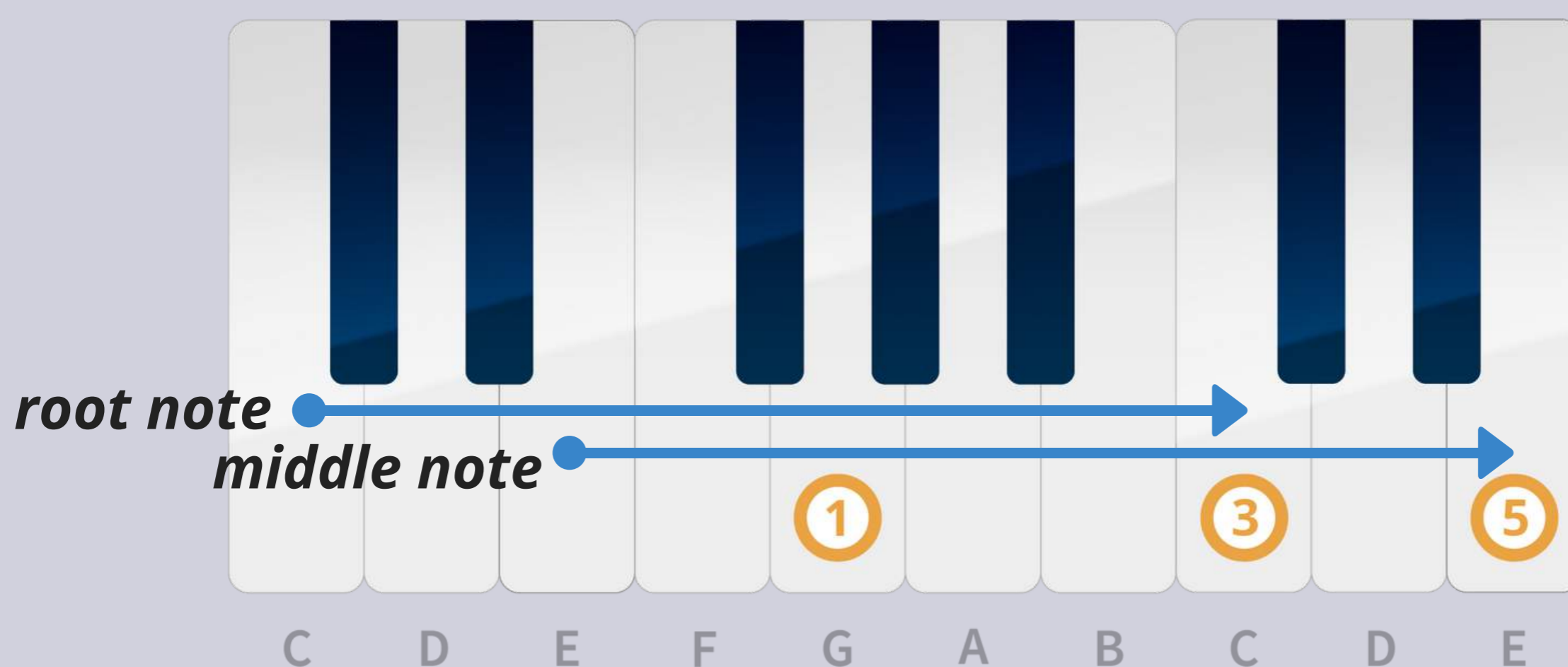
The way you've been learning them so far is called **root position**, because it is built on the root note. Here is C major in root position:



When we take that root note and *level up* an octave so that it is at the top of the chord we get the same chord feel but a slightly different sound. This is called **1st inversion**.



From there, if we also take the 3rd chord tone of the original chord (E in this example) and *level up* an octave, that note is now at the top of the chord. This is now **2nd inversion**.



LEVEL UP! Introduce these inversions to all the major & minor chords you've learned!