If you want to know what notes the Dorian mode will have if you used B as the keytone, run your finger down five boxes under the column marked Dorian until you come to the box labeled "B." Then reading left to right continuously, your notes will be "B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, A, B." (Note that when you come to the end of the line on the right, you continue on the far left of that line.)

Where there are two notes in the same box separated by a slash mark (/), the top note is the sharp and the bottom is the flat. Sharps and flats are never read together in the same scale. An F-sharp is generally considered the same as a G-flat, although this is not strictly true; however, there are few musicians who can actually tell otherwise. (For the sake of "even-tempered" scales, these sharp-flat tones have come to be synonymous in modern music systems and are known as enharmonic notes.)

Another thing this chart does is tell you the sharps or flats in each chromatic scale or key. Starting from any point and reading up and down, the appropriate sharps and flats are revealed. Remember that the major scale evolved to duplicate the tones of the Ionian mode, whose fixed scheme is 1—1—½—1—1—1—½. Since the major scales are mirror images of the Ionian's scheme, count the Ionian's scheme to determine the elements of any major scale. Minor scales can be figured by following the fixed scheme 1—½—1—1—1—1—½.

For example, say you want to know where the sharps are in the key of E. At any place on the chart find an E and read up or down, counting off the intervals 1—1—½—1—1—1—½. Remember not to count the initial E as your first whole (1—) tone. Following this procedure, you will see that the key of E consists of the notes E—F#—G#—A—B—C#—D#—E. In other words, the key of E has four sharps, and they appear on the second, third, sixth, and seventh tones of the scale.