

# HOW DO YOU TRANSPOSE?

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There is a very easy formula to use:

Given horn in F (what we play) TO new horn in \_\_\_\_\_  
Given key of (key signature) TO new key of \_\_\_\_\_

You start with the given horn in F, which is what we play. You also know the key signature in the piece that you have, let's say the key signature is B<sup>b</sup>. If the piece is in B<sup>b</sup> but indicates that it is written for the E<sup>b</sup> horn, then we must find the interval of transposition (tells us how to figure out what notes to play). F horn to E<sup>b</sup> horn is down one whole step (200 year ago, the horn player would have put the E<sup>b</sup> crook in his horn and just played the printed notes) and this is our interval of transposition. The interval of transposition is always the distance between the two horns (what you play and what horn the piece was written for). So, all of the music that is printed in this imaginary part is one whole step off. Since the interval of transposition is DOWN one whole step, everything about the piece goes down one whole step – the key signature is B<sup>b</sup>, then the new key signature is A<sup>b</sup>. We must play all the notes that we see down one whole step in the key of A<sup>b</sup>. So, if we see a printed C, we play a B<sup>b</sup>. If we see a printed B<sup>b</sup>, we play an A<sup>b</sup>. If we see an E<sup>b</sup>, we play a D<sup>b</sup>. If we see a G, we play an F. The accidentals all go down one whole step too.

Consider the completed formula for a second example:

Given horn in F (what we play) TO new horn in D  
Given key of C (key signature) TO new key of A

The interval of transposition (distance between horns) is a minor third down. The key signature then becomes a minor third lower (C Major to A Major). Over time practicing transposition, we learn to visualize the new notes on the page quickly. Start learning very slowly by playing through exercises as they are written to hear "how it goes" and then practice some transpositions (horn in E, horn in E<sup>b</sup>, horn in D) on the same studies listening for it to sound the same.