

Transposition drill

A clarinet in B $\flat$ plays a written C and a B $\flat$ comes out. That is the whole idea. Everything else is bookkeeping — and the bookkeeping is what this sheet drills.

THE TWO DIRECTIONS

GET THESE THE RIGHT WAY ROUND

Concert to written. You have the sound you want; you need the part. Transpose *up* by the instrument's interval. For a B $\flat$ clarinet, up a major second.

Written to concert. You have the part; you need to know what it sounds like. Transpose *down* by the interval. For a B $\flat$ clarinet, down a major second.

Transpose the key signature too, by the same interval, and then transpose every note within it. Never transpose the notes and leave the old key signature behind — that is the error markers see most.

THE TABLE TO KNOW

FROM MEMORY · ANSWERS OVERLEAF

INSTRUMENT	WRITTEN C SOUNDS	CONCERT → WRITTEN	KEY SIG IF CONCERT IS C
Clarinet in B $\flat$ · trumpet in B $\flat$	B $\flat$ below	up a major 2nd	D major
Horn in F · cor anglais	F below		
Alto saxophone in E $\flat$	E $\flat$ below		
Tenor saxophone in B $\flat$	B $\flat$ a 9th below		
Clarinet in A	A below		
Double bass · guitar	C an octave below		
Piccolo		down an octave	C major

WORKING METHOD

FOUR STEPS, EVERY TIME

- 1 Name the interval and its direction. Write it in the margin before you touch a note.
- 2 Transpose the key signature and write it in.
- 3 Move every note by the same number of letter names — the interval's number decides the position on the stave, so a second always moves line to space.
- 4 Check the accidentals last. An accidental in the original becomes an accidental in the copy, but not always the same one.

The trap. Transposing by letter name alone gets the number right and the quality wrong. C up a major second is D; C $\sharp$ up a major second is D $\sharp$, not E $\flat$ — same sound, wrong spelling, no mark. Count the semitones as well as the letters.

Transposition drill

Answers overleaf

NAME _____ DATE _____ SCORE _____

A · WHAT DOES THIS WRITTEN NOTE SOUND LIKE?

CONCERT PITCH, IGNORING OCTAVE

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------|---|--|-------|
| 1 | Written G, clarinet in B $\flat$ | _____ | 5 | Written D, clarinet in A | _____ |
| 2 | Written C, horn in F | _____ | 6 | Written F $\sharp$, trumpet in B $\flat$ | _____ |
| 3 | Written A, alto sax in E $\flat$ | _____ | 7 | Written B $\flat$, horn in F | _____ |
| 4 | Written E, tenor sax in B $\flat$ | _____ | 8 | Written C $\sharp$, alto sax in E $\flat$ | _____ |

B · WHAT MUST THE PLAYER READ?

WRITTEN PITCH

- | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|-------|----|--|-------|
| 9 | Concert F, clarinet in B $\flat$ | _____ | 13 | Concert A $\flat$, horn in F | _____ |
| 10 | Concert C, alto sax in E $\flat$ | _____ | 14 | Concert G, clarinet in A | _____ |
| 11 | Concert D, horn in F | _____ | 15 | Concert E $\flat$, tenor sax in B $\flat$ | _____ |
| 12 | Concert B, trumpet in B $\flat$ | _____ | 16 | Concert F $\sharp$, alto sax in E $\flat$ | _____ |

C · TRANPOSE THE KEY SIGNATURE

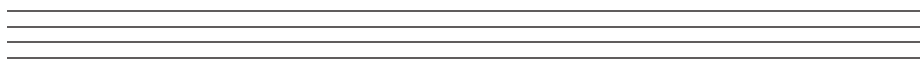
NAME THE WRITTEN KEY

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|-------|----|--|-------|
| 17 | Concert E $\flat$ major, for B $\flat$ clarinet | _____ | 20 | Concert D major, for alto sax | _____ |
| 18 | Concert F major, for horn in F | _____ | 21 | Concert G minor, for B $\flat$ trumpet | _____ |
| 19 | Concert A major, for clarinet in A | _____ | 22 | Concert B $\flat$ major, for tenor sax | _____ |

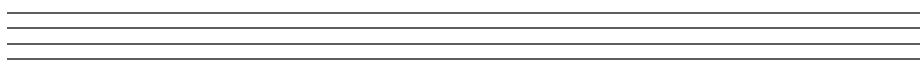
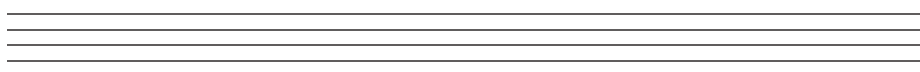
D · WRITE OUT THE PART

KEY SIGNATURE FIRST, THEN THE NOTES

The phrase below is at concert pitch: **C major, 4/4** — G A B C · D C B A · G. Write it as each player would read it, with the correct key signature at the front of the staff.

23 · Clarinet in B $\flat$ 

24 · Horn in F

25 · Alto saxophone in E $\flat$ 

E · SPOT THE MISTAKE

ONE SENTENCE EACH

- 26 A copyist transposes a B $\flat$ clarinet part up a tone but leaves the concert key signature. What will the player hear?

- 27 Concert C $\sharp$ is written for alto sax as B $\flat$. What is wrong with it? _____

Answer key

THE TABLE ON PAGE ONE

Printed in full at the foot of this page, with the key-signature column — mark your cells against it.

A · WRITTEN TO CONCERT

1 F · 2 F · 3 C · 4 D · 5 B · 6 E · 7 E $\flat$ · 8 E.

B · CONCERT TO WRITTEN

9 G · 10 A · 11 A · 12 C $\sharp$ · 13 E $\flat$ · 14 B $\flat$ · 15 F · 16 D $\sharp$.

C · WRITTEN KEYS

17 F major · 18 C major · 19 C major · 20 B major · 21 A minor · 22 C major.

D · THE WRITTEN PARTS

23 **Clarinet in B $\flat$** — D major, two sharps: A B C $\sharp$ D · E D C $\sharp$ B · A.

THE TABLE, COMPLETED

One point a question · italics are marked by the teacher

24 **Horn in F** — G major, one sharp: D E F $\sharp$ G · A G F $\sharp$ E · D.

25 **Alto saxophone in E $\flat$** — A major, three sharps: E F $\sharp$ G $\sharp$ A · B A G $\sharp$ F $\sharp$ · E.

Full marks need the key signature at the front, the right letter names, and no stray accidentals — the sharps belong to the signature, not to the notes.

E · THE MISTAKES

26 Not a part a tone too high — the notes themselves are right. The player applies the untransposed signature to them, so every note the old signature altered comes out a semitone away from what was meant. Transpose the signature with the notes.

27 The interval is wrong in both size and direction. Alto sax transposes up a major sixth, so concert C $\sharp$ is written A $\sharp$ — B $\flat$ is the same sound but the wrong spelling, and it would sit in the wrong place in the key.

CUT THIS OUT AND KEEP IT BY THE DESK

INSTRUMENT	WRITTEN C SOUNDS	CONCERT → WRITTEN	WRITTEN → CONCERT	KEY SIG IF CONCERT IS C
Clarinet in B $\flat$ · trumpet in B $\flat$	B $\flat$ below	up a major 2nd	down a major 2nd	D major
Clarinet in A	A below	up a minor 3rd	down a minor 3rd	E $\flat$ major
Horn in F · cor anglais	F below	up a perfect 5th	down a perfect 5th	G major
Alto saxophone in E $\flat$	E $\flat$ below	up a major 6th	down a major 6th	A major
Tenor saxophone in B $\flat$	B $\flat$ a 9th below	up a major 9th	down a major 9th	D major
Double bass · guitar	C an octave below	up an octave	down an octave	C major
Piccolo	C an octave above	down an octave	up an octave	C major
Glockenspiel	C two octaves above	down two octaves	up two octaves	C major

Where the marks go. Half of every transposition question is the key signature, and it is the half most often skipped — write it before a single note. The other half is spelling: get the letter name from the interval's number and the accidental from its quality, so a major sixth above C $\sharp$ is A $\sharp$ and never B $\flat$. If your answer needs a double sharp, that is usually correct, not a mistake.