

Transposition Chart

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Transposition is an important skill for every horn player. Although pre-transposed copies of solos and orchestral pieces are becoming more common, many times they are full of errors and they also hide one of the most important considerations for performing classical and romantic horn repertoire - which notes would be played with the hand out of the bell, in the bell, half-stopped, or fully stopped.

The following chart gives information about the most common (and some uncommon) transpositions that are found in the orchestral and solo literature.

The "Key" column is the indication that you will see in the music. Be aware that sometimes solfège will be used instead of the more common letter-named keys (Do = C, Fa = F, etc.).

The "Interval" column gives the direction and distance from the written note to the note that you will play to transpose by interval. The "Key signature" column gives the direction and new key signature in order to transpose by scale. The Example column gives you an idea of some of the pieces which use the transposition, and the Musical example column gives an example in musical notation (the written note in all musical examples is "C")

For example:

Horn in Eb



You could either think:

-One whole step down for every note. For notes like D, E, G, etc. this is easy. For C and F you need to remember that a whole step down flattens the lower note.








-Adjust the note the appropriate amount up or down, and apply the indicated key signature. For example, one note directly below a written C is B, and the key signature is 2 flats (Bb and Eb), so a written C becomes a played Bb.






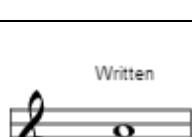
Either one gets you this:

Transposed to F



Different transpositions may be easier or harder depending upon the method you use. It is certainly advisable to learn both methods (especially for the more awkward keys like Ab alto and basso, and B natural) so that you are able to quickly adapt if you have to sightread a tricky part or if you must make an adjustment on-the-fly ("the singer has a cold, can you play this song a little lower?")

Key (Horn in...)	Interval	Key signature	Examples	Musical example
C Alto	Up a perfect 5th	If in a space, 2 spaces up, if line, 2 lines up. 1#; G major	Rarely encountered. Playing in concert pitch, early Haydn	
B alto	up a tritone	If in a space, go up 1 space and 1 line, if on a line, go up 1 line and 1 space. 6#; F# major	Rarely encountered. Haydn symph #46	
Bb alto	up a perfect 4th	If in a space, go up 1 space and 1 line, if on a line, go up 1 line and 1 space. 1b; F major	Not very common. Mozart Divertimento #14	
A alto	up a major 3rd	If in a space, the space above, if on a line, the line above. 4#; E major	Not very common. Beethoven symph #7	
Ab alto	up a minor 3rd	If in a space, the space above, if on a line, the line above. 3b; Eb major	Rarely encountered. Schubert symph. #4	
G alto	up a major 2nd	One note directly above the written note. 2#; D major	Not very common. Ravel Pavanne, Brahms symphonies	
Gb/F# alto	up a minor 2nd	One note directly above the written note. 5b; Db major	Rarely encountered. Bizet's Carmen, Haydn symph #45	
F	as written			

E	down a minor 2nd	One note directly below the written note. 5#; B major	Quite common. Brahms, Beethoven, Haydn symphonies	
E_b	down a major 2nd	One note directly below the written note. 2b; B _b major	Quite common. Mozart Horn Concerti 2-4, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart.	
D	down a minor 3rd	If in a space, the space below, if on a line, the line below. 3#; A major	Quite common. Mozart Horn Concerto 1, Haydn Horn Concerti, Brahms symphonies	
D_b	down a major 3rd	If in a space, the space below, if on a line, the line below. 4b; A _b major	Rarely encountered. Verdi opera	
C basso	down a perfect 4th	If in a space, go down 1 space and 1 line, if on a line, go down 1 line and 1 space. 1#; G major	Quite common. Brahms, Beethoven symphonies, concert pitch sounding an octave lower.	
B basso (H)	down a tritone	If in a space, 2 spaces down, if line, 2 lines down. 6#; F# major	Not very common. Brahms symphonies 1&2, Schumann symph 3	
B_b basso	down a perfect 5th	If in a space, 2 spaces down, if line, 2 lines down. 1b; F major	Not very common Beethoven, Brahms symphonies.	