

# Trumpet: reading any part on a B flat or a C trumpet

Find your instrument's table, then the row for the words printed at the top of the part. The third column is the note you play, with the fingering you already use.

## IF YOUR TRUMPET IS IN B FLAT

| The part is headed            | Written C sounds            | Read every note                  | And change the printed key by |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Trumpet in B flat</b>      | B flat, a tone below        | as written                       | no change                     |
| <b>Trumpet in C</b>           | C, at pitch                 | up a tone                        | add two sharps                |
| <b>Trumpet in D</b>           | D, a tone above             | up a major third                 | add four sharps               |
| <b>Trumpet in E flat</b>      | E flat, a minor third above | up a fourth                      | add one flat                  |
| <b>Trumpet in E</b>           | E, a major third above      | up a tritone (three whole tones) | add six sharps                |
| <b>Trumpet in F</b>           | F, a fourth above           | up a fifth                       | add one sharp                 |
| <b>Trumpet or cornet in A</b> | A, a minor third below      | down a semitone                  | add five sharps               |

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## IF YOUR TRUMPET IS IN C

| The part is headed            | Written C sounds            | Read every note    | And change the printed key by |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Trumpet in B flat</b>      | B flat, a tone below        | down a tone        | add two flats                 |
| <b>Trumpet in C</b>           | C, at pitch                 | as written         | no change                     |
| <b>Trumpet in D</b>           | D, a tone above             | up a tone          | add two sharps                |
| <b>Trumpet in E flat</b>      | E flat, a minor third above | up a minor third   | add three flats               |
| <b>Trumpet in E</b>           | E, a major third above      | up a major third   | add four sharps               |
| <b>Trumpet in F</b>           | F, a fourth above           | up a fourth        | add one flat                  |
| <b>Trumpet or cornet in A</b> | A, a minor third below      | down a minor third | add three sharps              |

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How to use a row, in three moves. First fix the key, once, before the downbeat: the last column says what the part's heading does to the printed signature, and adding a sharp means removing a flat first. Then the eye shifts every note by the same number of staff steps and lets the new key supply the accidentals: a tone is one step (line to the neighbouring space), a third is two (line to line), a fourth is three. Printed accidentals travel with the note: a sharp still lifts it a semitone, a flat still lowers it, a natural cancels the signature; pencil any bar that knots up.

Practise it on music you already know by ear: play any familiar written tune once as printed, then again pretending the page is headed, say, Trumpet in C — same printed notes, each played a tone higher with two sharps added. Your ear already knows the tune, so every wrong note announces itself. Five minutes a day for a week fixes a transposition for good.

Why the old keys exist: classical and early Romantic parts in D, E flat, E and F were written for long valveless trumpets, and today almost everyone reads them on a B flat or C instrument by the rows above. Modern parts are usually in B flat or C.

