

Tenor/Alto Clef Transposition

A lot of composers/arrangers like to use Tenor Clef for 1st trombone parts because it reduces the amount of ledger lines used. Below is a transposition chart. The notes in tenor clef are the same as the notes directly above them in bass clef, and the notes in alto clef are the same as the ones in tenor, making them the same as the bass clef notes also.

Tenor clef is written a 5th away from Bass Clef. What was an F in the staff becomes middle C instead. What was a Bb on top of the staff becomes a high F. Alto Clef just moves the notes all down one more line/space.

Tenor clef is used more often for trombone parts than Alto clef, but it's good to have the transposition chart handy and to understand how it works. Using this chart you should be able to figure out any bass/tenor clef or bass/alto (or tenor/alto) transpositions you need to do. It's best to learn the clef instead of writing the transposition in over the note- that way you don't have to translate all the time. In other words, if you look at a note on the 4th line in tenor clef, think of it as a middle C instead of being a 5th up from F. If you are constantly translating it will kill your ability to sightread tenor clef, and you never know when you might need to.