Transposition

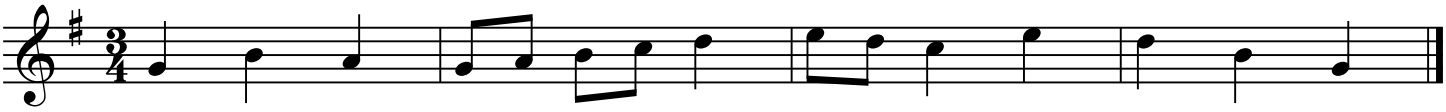
Transposition

- Many instruments (and voice) are referred to as C instruments - the pitch you see is the pitch you hear.
- Transposing instruments sound a different pitch than the pitch that is notated. Common examples are:
  * B♭ instruments - B♭ trumpet, B♭ clarinet, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone
  * E♭ instruments - alto saxophone, baritone saxophone, E♭ clarinet
  * F instruments - french horn, english horn
  * A instruments - A clarinet
  * Certain instruments such as horn, trumpet, and clarinet can be pitched in several different keys (C, D, A, etc.)
- When a transposing instrument plays a C, it will sound its transposition pitch (i.e. a B♭ trumpet would sound a B♭).
- Reference Appendix A in your text (pgs. 593-594) for additional instrument transposition information

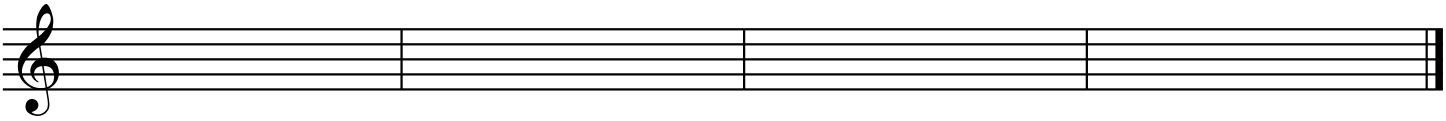
Notating for Transposing Instruments

- Determine the transposition necessary
  * If an instrument sounds a M2 lower, the notated part must be written a M2 higher to sound correctly
- Transpose by **key signature and generic interval**
  * Write the correct key signature for the transposing instrument
  * Transpose the notes each by the same generic interval (i.e. 2nd, 4th, etc.)
- Transpose by **key signature and scale degree**
  * Write the correct key signature for the transposing instrument
  * Transpose the notes by placing them on the same scale degree (i.e. tonic in C to tonic in D)
- Transpose by **specific interval** (music without key signature)
  * In cases without a key signature (particularly atonal music) it is necessary to transpose each note by the same specific interval (i.e. M2, P4, etc.)

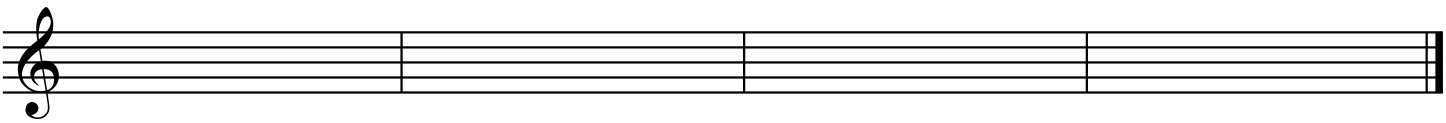
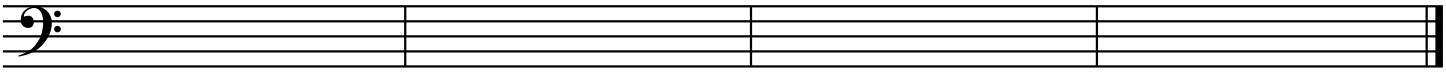
Assume the following four measures were written for violin:



Transpose these measures for B♭ trumpet (up a M2)



Transpose these measures for E♭ alto saxophone (up a M6)



Transpose these measures for tuba (down two octaves; still in C)