



# SAXOPHONE

Even if you tune your instrument correctly, there are still some factors that will cause it to play out of tune. There are MANY factors that will affect pitch, but here is a summary of the most common:

FACTOR	AFFECT
Amount of Mouthpiece	Taking too much mouthpiece in your mouth will cause a wide, uncontrolled tone that is <b>flat</b> . Taking too much mouthpiece in your mouth will restrict tone and cause biting which will cause <b>sharp</b> pitch.
Vowel Shape	An incorrect tongue position can greatly affect pitch. To correct <b>sharpness</b> in pitch, open up the space inside your mouth by saying "AHH." To correct <b>flatness</b> in pitch, arch your tongue by thinking of the syllable "EEE." Focus on increasing your air support and aiming the air stream forward.
Strength/Age of Reed	A reed that is too hard (brand new or usually a strength 3 or higher) will cause the pitch to be <b>sharp</b> . A reed that is too soft (older reed or usually a strength 2.5 or lower) will cause the pitch to be <b>flat</b> . Vandoren 2.5 reeds are great for beginners, but most of the strength depends on the mouthpiece being played. Experiment with different strengths to see what works best. Aim to rotate your reeds on a daily basis to extend their life, and retire a reed after it has been played for 10 to 15 hours. If the reed becomes moldy or chipped, throw it out sooner!
Temperature	<b>Warm</b> air temperature will cause the pitch to be <b>sharp</b> . <b>Cold</b> air temperature will cause the pitch to be <b>flat</b> . For best results, play in a space that is around 72 degrees Fahrenheit.
Dynamics	Playing <b>louder</b> dynamics will cause the pitch to be <b>flatter</b> . Playing <b>softer</b> dynamics air temperature will cause the pitch to be <b>sharper</b> . NOTE: This is the opposite of most other wind instruments!
Equipment	An instrument that is not in good working order will cause poor pitch overall. Leaking tone holes, bent rods, or instrument misalignment are all signs of an instrument in need of a repair. On a saxophone, a pad that is too closed will cause the pitch to play <b>flat</b> . A pad that is too open will cause the pitch to play <b>sharp</b> . Have the instrument checked by an instrument repair shop once a year.
Mouthpiece Selection	The stock mouthpieces that come with most new saxophones are usually mediocre and can greatly affect pitch. Ask your band director for ideas of great mouthpieces for your particular instrument.