

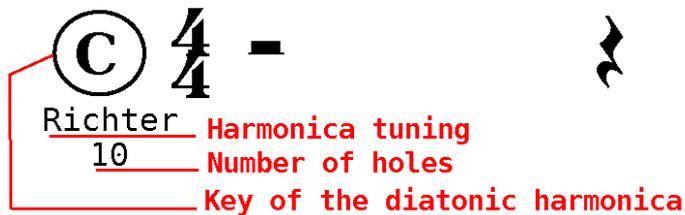
Rhythmic tabs for diatonic harmonica

(Farmotabs)

The Farmotabs are a new kind of tabs for diatonic harmonicas which include rhythmic notation.

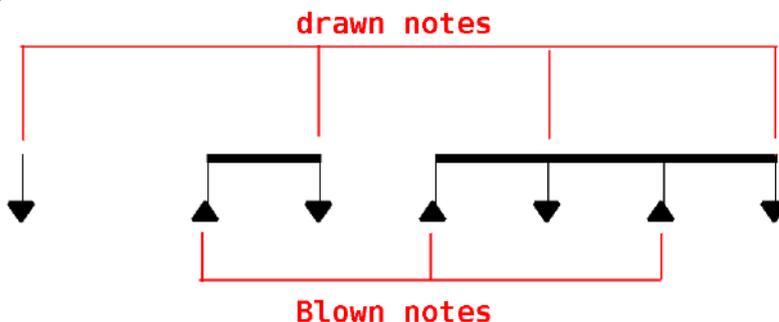
Tablature (tab for short) is a form of musical notation indicating how to produce the notes on an instrument rather than musical pitches.
Tablature is common for fretted stringed instruments as well as many free reed aerophones such as the harmonica.

They can be read with or without theoretical knowledge of music.



– At the beginning of the first staff, the key of the harmonica is noted, the tuning (the most common for major diatonic harmonica is the Richter system), and the number of holes of the harmonica.

2) Blown or drawn:

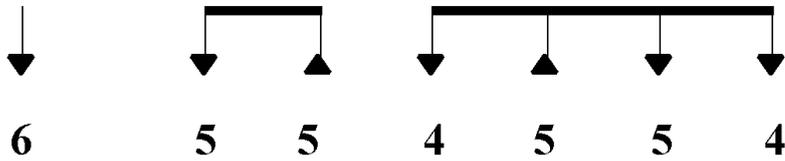


Each note's head is shaped like a triangle

- The triangle is upward if the note is to be blown
- The triangle is downward if the note is to be drawn.

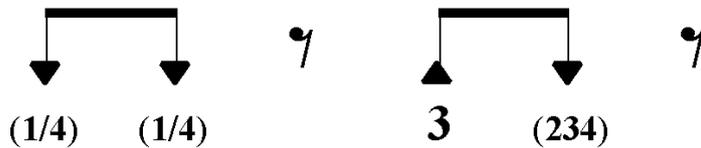
The stem is always upward

3) Reading which hole of the harmonica is played:



The holes to be played on the harmonica are written under the notes.

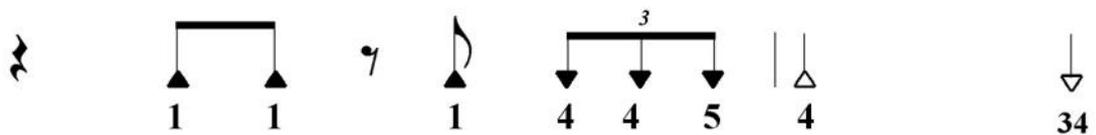
a) Groups of notes



For tongue blocking, we write for example: (1/4)
1 is played, 2 and 3 are blocked with the tongue and 4 is played.

For chords, we write for example: (234)
Holes 2, 3 and 4 are played simultaneously.

4) Rhythmic notation and articulation are the same as for a conventional score

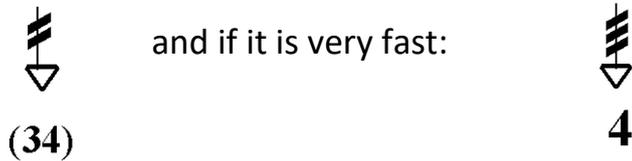


Here are 2 complete measures (4/4) separated by a measure bar.

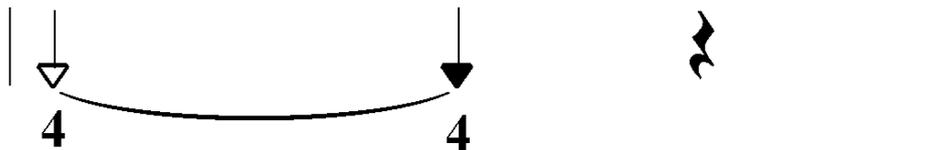
The duration of the notes is indicated in the usual way, eighth notes, quarter notes, triplets etc ...

Reminder

a) For a tremolo, repetition effect of a note, or tremor (for the throat vibrato), this writing is used::



b) If both notes are the same pitch, be careful, a tie prolongs the note. This is only one note.



c) for notes with slight or very slight volume, this writing is used:



The letter *p* indicates that the volume of the note is slight, *pp* is very slight. Likewise, the letter *f* means that the note is Strong, *ff* means very strong note.

An example with a well-known American traditional song, Oh Susanna:

Oh Susanna (2nd position)

(American trad.)



4 4 5 6 6 6 6 5 4 4

bar4 5 5 4 4 4 4 5 6 6 6

bar7 6 5 4 4 5 5 4 4 4 4 4

bar10 5 6 6 6 6 5 4 4 5 5 4 4

bar13 4 4 5 6 6 6 6 5 4 4

bar16 5 5 4 4 4 5 5 6 6 6

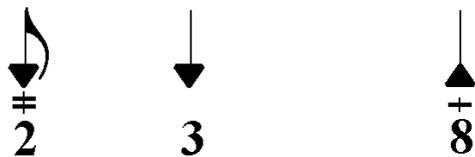
bar20 6 6 5 4 4 4 4 5 6 6 6

bar23 6 5 4 4 5 5 4 4 4 4 4

4) If a note is produced by bending.

On the harmonica, a bend lowers the pitch of the original note.

A bend is produced if, when changing the position of the tongue while blowing or drawing in certain holes of the harmonica, the note is lowered.



Bends work only with certain drawn notes as well as with certain blown notes. The blown and drawn bends are written using horizontal bars above the holes numbers. The pitch lowering depends on the amount of horizontal bars. One half tone per each horizontal bar.

(in this example, the first note is played by drawing the second hole and bending 1 tone (2 halftones) and the 3rd note is played by blowing in the 8th hole while bending one halftone)

a) Available bends on a diatonic harmonicas
a Richter tuning harmonica, the most common tuning

Drawn bends:



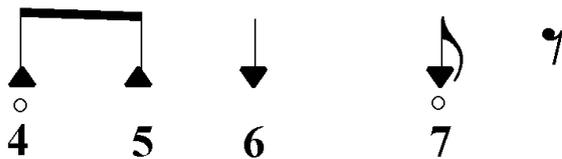
Blown bends:



5) If the note to play is an overbend (overblow or overdraw)

The overbend raises the pitch of the note

Overblowing and overdrawing are an important modern technique among players of diatonic harmonica. The resulting pitch is generally a semitone higher than the opposite reed pitch (if you blow, the opposite reed is the drawn reed for example)

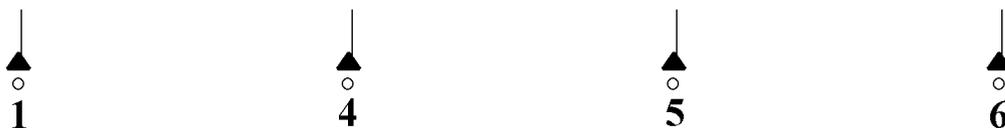


The overbends are written with a circle above the hole number.

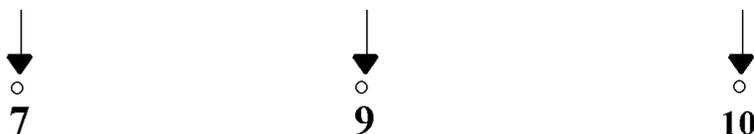
The overbends can be drawn (overdraw) or blown (overblow) only on certain notes. If you amplify the movement of the tongue, you can obtain even higher notes. you can write these notes by adding a circle for every additional halftone you raise the pitch.

a) Available overbends on a diatonic harmonica with the Richter tuning, the most common tuning

Blown overbends (overblows):



Drawn overbends (overdraws)



Some other overbends can be played on the harmonica but these are necessary if you want to play the chromatic scale over the 3 octaves.

6) Some notations specific to the harmonica:

a) We write, if necessary, the pronunciation of the notes.

For example, “To” under the note to attack its beginning or the sound “Wa”, etc.



8) Example with all the available notes on a C major harmonica

(A 10 holes harmonica in Richter tuning)

On the lines 1 and 3, notes are written on harmonica tabs.

On the staves 2 and 4, notes are written using the conventional scores

octave 4

Richter 10

1 1̇ 1 1̇ 2 2̇ 2̇ 2 3 3̇ 3̇ 3̇ 3 4 4̇ 4 4̇ 5 5 5̇

C Db D Eb E F F# G = G Ab A Bb B C Db D Eb E F F#

6 6̇ 6 6̇ 7 7 7̇ 8 8̇ 8 9 9̇ 9 9̇ 10 10̇ 10̇ 10 10̇

G Ab A Bb B C Db D Eb E F F# G Ab A Bb B C C#