

# **Fletch Diatonic**

## **A Harmonica Tablature Font**

### **User's Manual**

For an interactive table of contents in Acrobat,  
enable bookmarks  
(Window, Bookmarks)



# About Fletch Diatonic

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## What it does

Fletch Diatonic is a font for writing harmonica tablature, or tab, for 10-hole and 12-hole diatonic harmonicas.

With a single keystroke you can write a tabbed note. This includes the hole number and the breath direction:

↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑  
2 3 4 5 5 5 4 3 4 5 6 6 6

If the note is bent down, you can indicate how many semitones:

↑ ♯ ↑ † † ↑ ↓ † † † ↓ † †  
10 10 9 9 8 7 3 3 3 3 2 2 2

Overblows and overdraws may be notated:

↑ † ↓ φ ↑ ↓ φ ↑ † ↓ φ ↓ ↑  
4 4 4 4 5 5 5 6 6 6 6 7 7 (middle octave chromatic scale)

You can also show ways of starting and ending a note with a bend or a rip:

↓ ↑ † ↑ †  
↘4 ↘4 ↘3 2 ↘2

You can show various ways of alternating two or more notes with shakes and rakes:

↑ ↑ ↓ ↓  
2≈6 ≈6≈ 4≈

You can indicate tongue blocked effects such as split intervals:

↓ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑  
1004 2005 3006

and slaps, pull-offs, and tremolo lifts:

↑ † ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓  
\*3 \*3 \*3 5\* 5\* 4\* \*4 3\*\*\*\*\*

## Capabilities

Fletch Diatonic places the most frequently used characters on the keyboard. Characters used less frequently are included in the extended character set. Characters include:

Symbols	Range of Holes	Accessed via
Blow and draw notes	1 – 12	keyboard
All standard bends	Draw 1–6, Blow 7–12	keyboard
Standard overblows	Blow 1–6	keyboard
Standard overdraws	Draw 7–10	keyboard
Ornaments	n/a	keyboard
blow bends, 1 semitone	1-6	keyboard
Nonstandard draw bends, 1 semitone	7-10	Keyboard
Blow bends lowered 2 semitones	1-10	Extended character set
Blow bends lowered 3 semitones	1-10	Extended character set
Overblows	1-10	Extended character set
Overblows raised 1 semitone	1-10	Extended character set
Overblows raised 2 semitones	1-10	Extended character set
Overblows raised 3 semitones	1-10	Extended character set
Draw bends lowered 2 semitones	1-10	Extended character set
Draw bends lowered 3 semitones	1-10	Extended character set
Overdraws	1-10	Extended character set
Overdraws raised 1 semitone	1-10	Extended character set
Overdraws raised 2 semitones	1-10	Extended character set
Overdraws raised 3 semitones	1-10	Extended character set

# Getting Started with Fletch Diatonic

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## Blow notes and draw notes

The most basic information you can tab for harmonica is:

- What hole you play
- Whether you blow or draw

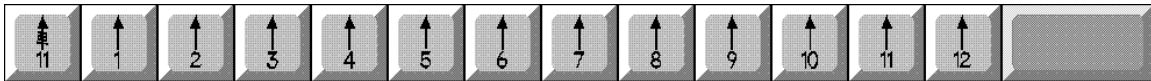
The holes of a harmonica are traditionally numbered, starting with Hole 1 at the left. For each tabbed note, Fletch Diatonic uses a number to indicate which hole is played. Above the number is an arrow that points up for a blow note, down for a draw note:



Each tabbed note can be produced by a single keystroke.

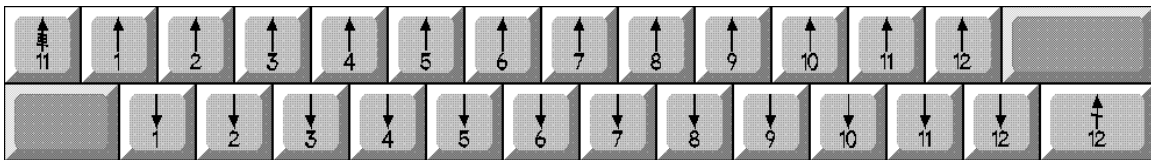
### The blow note row

The top row of the keyboard is labeled with numbers 1 through 9, and 0. Fletch uses this row to tab blow notes. The <1> key is for Blow 1, the <2> key is for Blow 2, and so on. The <0> is Blow 10. The neighboring keys extend to Blow 12:



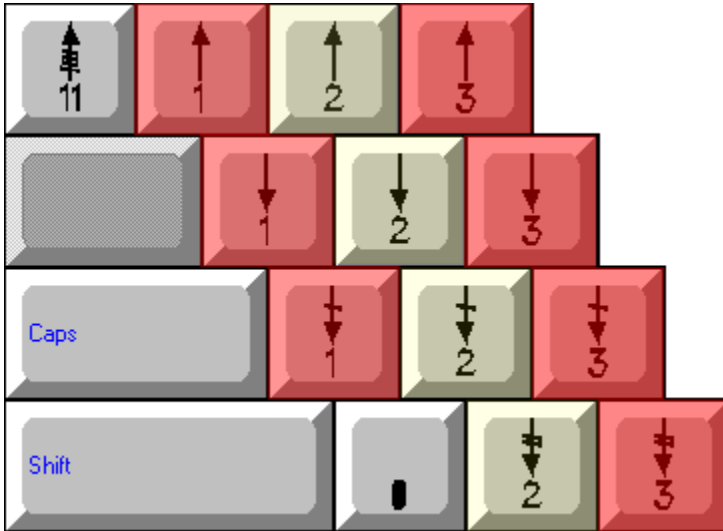
### The draw note row

The second row places the draw notes beneath the blow notes.



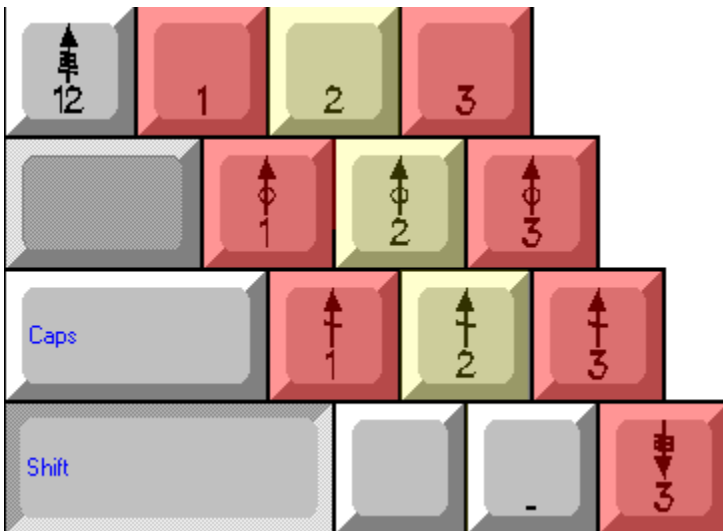
## The diagonal path

Each row of the keyboard is offset to the right from the one above it. This creates a series of diagonal columns:



A number key — a numbered blow note — is at the head of each diagonal column. The rest of the column contains additional notes and bends available in the same hole.

The shifted keys in the same column also contain symbols for that hole:



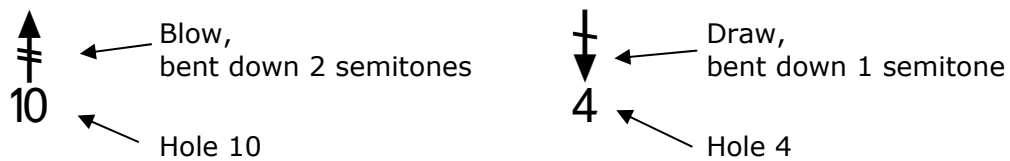
To get your bearings, always start with the number key for any hole, and follow the column down diagonally.

# Beyond blow and draw

Notes on the harmonica may be treated in a variety of ways that go beyond hole numbers and breathing in and out. New pitches may be created by lowering the pitch of a note, or bending. Notes may be combined into chords, and they may be approached, combined, and alternated using physical actions that are characteristic to the harmonica. Fletch Diatonic includes symbols for these.

## Bent notes

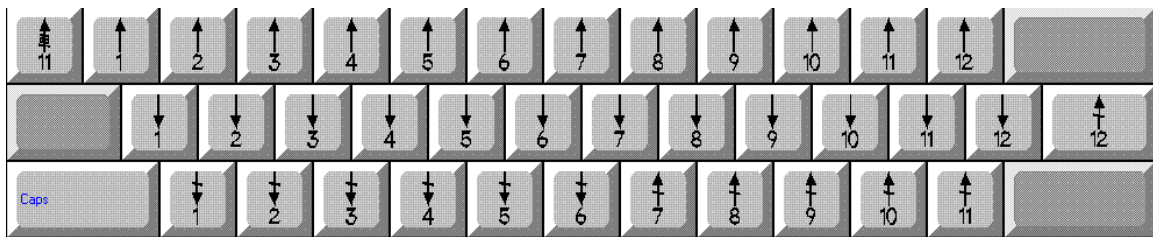
Fletch Diatonic indicates bends with slashes, one slash for each semitone. Slashes for notes that are bent down in pitch incline downward from left to right and are placed across the arrow shaft:



The standard diatonic harmonica has a limited number of bent notes available. These are all represented on the keyboard.

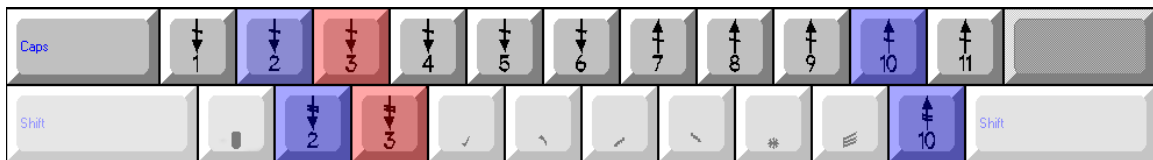
## One-semitone bends

One-semitone bends in holes Draw 1–6 and Blow 7–10 appear on the third row of the keyboard, below the draw notes. To find the bend for any hole number, follow the diagonal path from the number row down two rows.



## Two-semitone bends

Two-semitone bends occur only in Draw 2, Draw 3, and Blow 10. These occur on the fourth row, below the one-semitone bends:



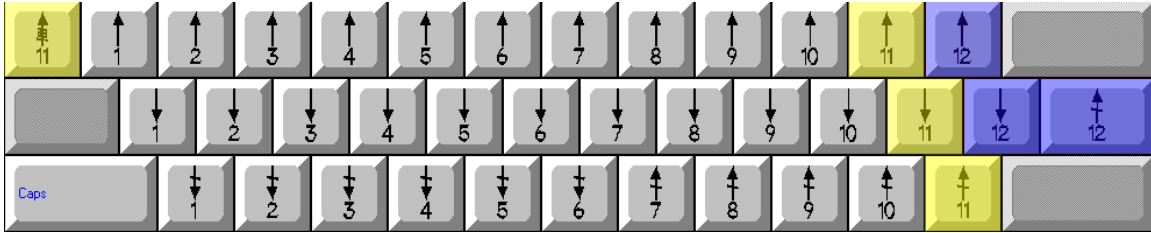
## Three-semitone bend

The only three-semitone bend is in Draw 3. To access it, hold down the <shift> key and press the key for a two-semitone bend.

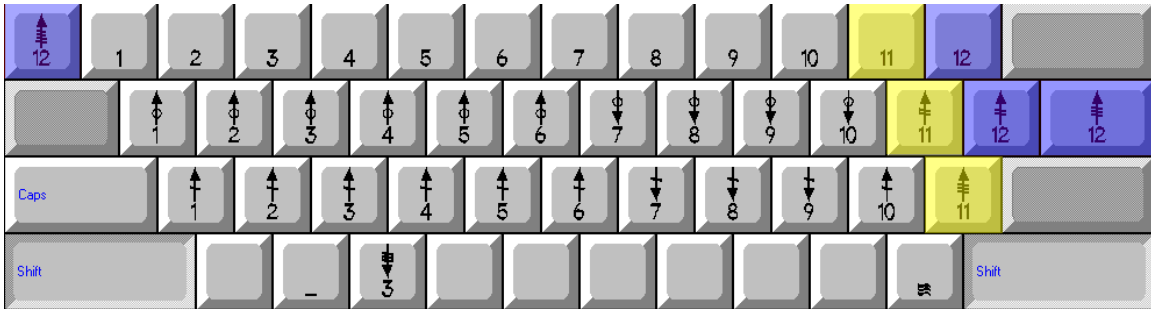
## Holes 11 and 12

The 12-hole diatonic harmonica is seldom used, but it offers some spectacular bending possibilities — Blow 11 and 12 each bend four semitones.

Fitting these on the keyboard is a challenge. You can see that Hole 11 follows the diagonal path, while Hole 12 is forced to veer off to the right



Shifting the keys allows for two and three semitones bends:

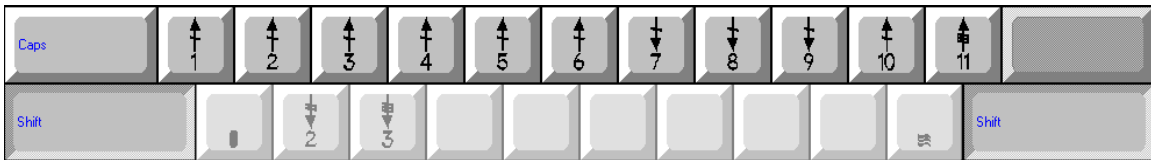


Four-semitone bends are placed in the upper left corner of the keyboard, to the left of the <1> key. For Hole 11, use the key unshifted. For Hole 12, hold down the <shift> key.

## Supplemental bent notes

Blow 1–6 or in Draw 7–10 do not bend on a standard diatonic harmonica. However, they do bend on various other 10-hole harmonicas such as the Discrete Comb, Suzuki Overdrive, Suzuki Valved Promaster, and Hohner XB-40, as well as on various alternate tunings.

If you hold down the <shift> key, the one-semitone bends in Row 3 will reverse breath direction. Draw 1 bend becomes Blow 1 bend, and so on.



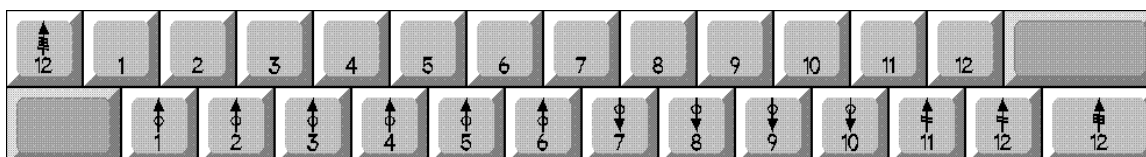


## Overblows and overdraws

A standard unvalved 10-hole diatonic harmonica produces 10 overbends, with overblows in Holes 1–6 and overdraws in Holes 7–10. The symbol for an overbend is a small circle through the arrow shaft:



Standard overblows and overdraws are indicated by holding down the <shift key> and using the second row.

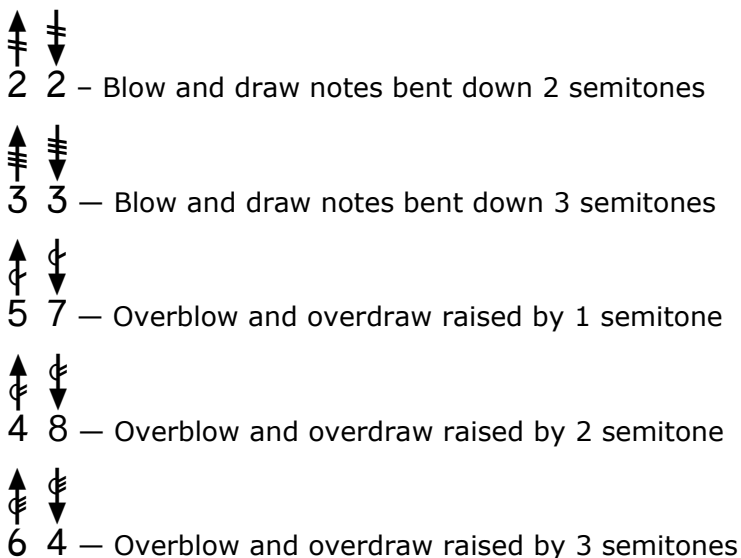


Again, the hole number follows the diagonal path down from the number row.

## Extended bends and overbends

Beyond the limits of the standard diatonic, there are many bends and overbends made available by modifying standard instruments with alternate tunings and the addition of valves. There are also several new models that offer extended bending capabilities, such as the Discrete Comb, Overdrive, and XB-40.

Fletch Diatonic offers symbols for these bends through the extended character set. Each type of bend is included for both blow and draw in all 10 holes:



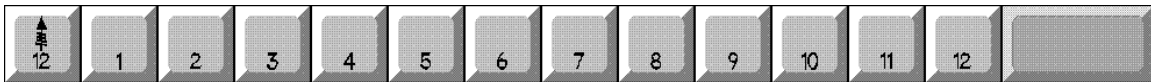
For a complete list and how to access these characters, see [Extended Character Sets](#) under the **Reference** section at the end of this document.

## Chords

Playing more than one hole at a time produces a chord. All notes in the chord are either blow or draw, so only the top note in a chord needs a breath arrow.

↑  
4  
3  
2  
1

The keys for hole numbers without arrows are accessed by holding down the <shift> key and using the number row:



Chords may be arranged horizontally or vertically:

↑  
4  
3  
2  
1

or

1234 ↑

Vertical alignment is traditional in publishing and is easy with notation software. But when you just want to jot down a lick in a text notepad, vertical alignment can be incredibly difficult to produce, while horizontal alignment is fast and easy. But how do you tell which holes go with which chord?

↑ ↑ ↓ ↓  
1234 321 5678 2345

By using a ligature to tie chord notes together, you can easily see which holes go together:

↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓  
1.2.3.4 2.3.4.5 2.3.4.5 2.3.4.5 1.2.3.4

The ligature symbol is found on the upper case <X> key.

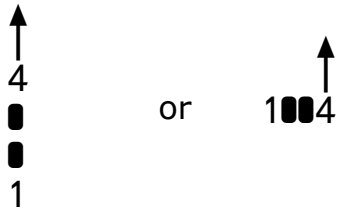
If you are using a word processor that supports underlined text, you can get a similar effect:

↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓  
1234 2345 2345 2345 1234

## Tongue Blocking

Tongue blocking involves placing several holes of the harmonica in the player's mouth, and covering some of them with the tongue, so that some holes are exposed and others are covered.

The symbol for a hole that is tongue blocked is found on the lowercase <z> key. As with chords, tongue blocked intervals may be arranged vertically or horizontally:



## Ornaments

Articulations and ornaments are effects involving ways of beginning, ending, combining, and alternating notes. The symbols for these are placed before or after a tabbed note. They are grouped on the fourth row of the keyboard:



These are independent of the hole number and can be placed before or after a note, as shown in the following examples.

### Tongue blocked ornaments

A harmonica player can create various ornaments and textures by lifting (pulling) or lowering (slapping) the tongue on the holes of the mouthpiece. These are represented by an asterisk character placed before or after a tabbed note.

#### Tongue Slaps – the <,> (comma) key

↓  
\*4 A note may be approached by first playing a brief chord, then slapping the tongue down to isolate a single note.

#### Pull-offs – the <,> (comma) key

↓  
4\* A single note may be followed by a lift of the tongue to expose a chord.


#### Lifts – the <,> (comma) key


↓  
4\*\*\* Single note and chord may be rapidly alternated by using many rapid slaps in a rhythmic succession.

## Articulations


An articulation is a distinctive way of beginning or ending a note. The diatonic harmonica offers several characteristic articulations


### Bending UP – the <v> key

 You can initiate a note bent down in pitch, then approach it by releasing the bend.


 Or you can slide up to release a bend as you leave a note.


### Bending DOWN – the <b> key

 You can approach a bent note by starting it unbent, then sliding down to it.


 Or you can end a note by bending the pitch down.


### Rip UP – the <n> key

 You can start several holes below your target note and “rip” across several holes to approach it

 You can end a note by ripping upward across several holes.

### Rip DOWN – the <m> key

 You can start several holes above your target note and “rip” across several holes to approach it

 You can end a note by ripping downward across several holes.

## Alternating notes

### Shakes – the <.> (period) key



To rapidly alternate one hole with the hole to the left, use this symbol, found on the . (period) key

### Shimmers – the <.> (period) key



Alternately, you can name both holes. This works for tongue split shakes as well.

### Tremulando– the <.> (period) key



Using the symbol on both side of a note indicates a tongue flick or tremulando. You can rapidly flick the tip of your tongue from side to side across the opening in your mouth, getting a soft, rapid note repetition that works with both blow and draw notes.

### Rakes – the <?> key

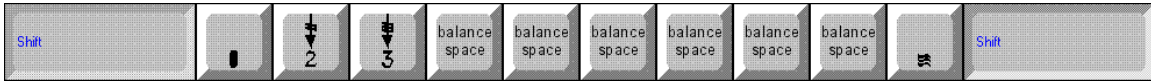


Raking the tongue across several holes produces a textured effect sort like a wet shake. Shift the </> key to <?> for this symbol.

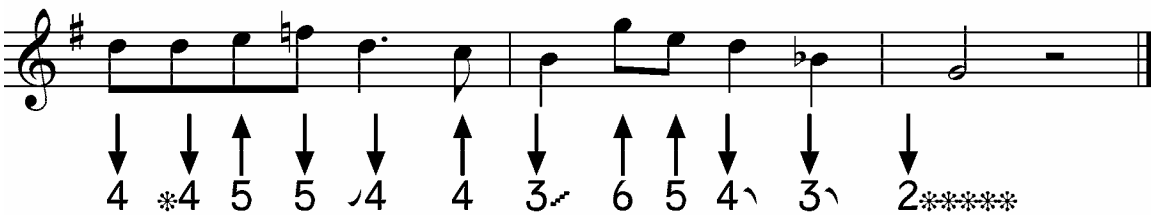
## Vertical alignment characters

Balance spaces are special space characters. They are used when tabbed notes must be vertically aligned with other tab or with musical notation

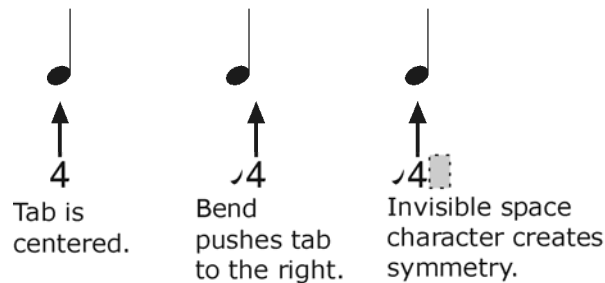
Balance spaces are used to keep tab in vertical alignment with each other and with music notation. There is one for each of the articulations and effects that may be placed before or after a tabbed note.



If a tabbed note is centered under a note of music, placing an effect symbol next to it will throw the centering off, as in the example below:



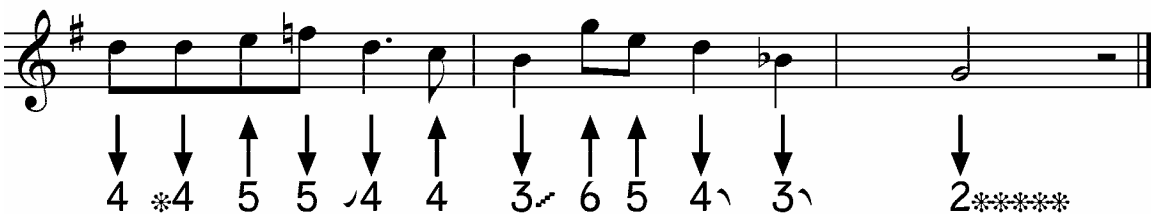
To compensate, a balance space of equal width is placed on the opposite side of the tabbed note:



This way, vertical alignment is preserved.

To access a balance character, use the same key as for the effect character, but with the shift key.

Here is the same piece of music with balance characters:



# Reference

## Keyboard layouts

### Unshifted

↑ 11	↑ 1	↑ 2	↑ 3	↑ 4	↑ 5	↑ 6	↑ 7	↑ 8	↑ 9	↑ 10	↑ 11	↑ 12	
`	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	-	=	(backspace)
	↓ 1	↓ 2	↓ 3	↓ 4	↓ 5	↓ 6	↓ 7	↓ 8	↓ 9	↓ 10	↓ 11	↓ 12	↑ 12
(tab)	q	w	e	r	t	y	u	i	o	p	[	]	\
Caps	↓ 1	↓ 2	↓ 3	↓ 4	↓ 5	↓ 6	↑ 7	↑ 8	↑ 9	↑ 10	↑ 11		
(caps)	a	s	d	f	g	h	j	k	l	;	'		(enter)
Shift		↓ 2	↓ 3	↓ 4	↓ 5	↓ 6	↓ 7	↓ 8	↓ 9	↓ 10	↑ 10	Shift	
(shift)		z	x	c	v	b	n	m	,	.	/		(shift)

### Shifted

↑ 12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
~	!	@	#	\$	%	^	&	*	(	)	_	+	(backspace)
	↑ 1	↑ 2	↑ 3	↑ 4	↑ 5	↑ 6	↓ 7	↓ 8	↓ 9	↓ 10	↑ 11	↑ 12	↑ 12
(tab)	Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	{	}	
Caps	↑ 1	↑ 2	↑ 3	↑ 4	↑ 5	↑ 6	↓ 7	↓ 8	↓ 9	↑ 10	↑ 11		
(caps)	A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	:	"		(enter)
Shift	balance space	-	↓ 3	balance space	balance space	balance space	balance space	balance space	balance space	balance space	?	Shift	
(shift)		Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	<	>	?		(shift)

## Extended character set

### What extended characters do

Using extended characters, you can notate:

- blow bends lowered as much as three semitones in Holes 1-10.
- draw bends lowered as much as three semitones in Holes 1-10.
- overblows in Holes 1-10.
- overblows raised in pitch by as much as three semitones in Holes 1-10.
- overdraws in Holes 1-10.
- overdraws raised in pitch by as much as three semitones in Holes 1-10.

### Access from the Windows Character Map:

Windows has a cut-and-paste utility called the **Character Map**. It maps all the characters in a font using a grid. You can click on the desired character and paste it into your document. This is easy to see but can be slow if multiple characters are needed.

To access it, go **Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools**. You may want to drag a shortcut to your desktop or a toolbar for convenience.

### Access from the keyboard

To enter an extended character from the keyboard:

- hold down the <alt> key
- type the 4-digit code from the numeric keypad  
(the numbers on the main keyboard will not work for this purpose).

For instance <alt>0227 produces  $\downarrow$  7, the symbol for Overdraw 7 bent up one semitone.

Keyboard access can be very rapid but requires either knowing or looking up the codes for specific characters. Use the extended character table on the following pages for lookup.



## Extended Character Table

Note: some characters are out of numerical sequence due to limitations in how the operating system maps certain characters.

### Blow bends

Blow Bends – lowered two semitones

♯ <sub>1</sub> 0131	♯ <sub>2</sub> 0132	♯ <sub>3</sub> 0133	♯ <sub>4</sub> 0134	♯ <sub>5</sub> 0135	♯ <sub>6</sub> 0136	♯ <sub>7</sub> 0137	♯ <sub>8</sub> 0138	♯ <sub>9</sub> 0139	♯ <sub>10</sub> 0140
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Blow Bends – lowered three semitones

♯ <sub>1</sub> 0141	♯ <sub>2</sub> 0251	♯ <sub>3</sub> 0143	♯ <sub>4</sub> 0144	♯ <sub>5</sub> 0145	♯ <sub>6</sub> 0146	♯ <sub>7</sub> 0147	♯ <sub>8</sub> 0148	♯ <sub>9</sub> 0149	♯ <sub>10</sub> 0150
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### Overblows

Overblows at default pitch

♭ <sub>1</sub> 0151	♭ <sub>2</sub> 0152	♭ <sub>3</sub> 0153	♭ <sub>4</sub> 0154	♭ <sub>5</sub> 0155	♭ <sub>6</sub> 0156	♭ <sub>7</sub> 0157	♭ <sub>8</sub> 0252	♭ <sub>9</sub> 0159	♭ <sub>10</sub> 0253
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Overblows – raised one semitone

♮ <sub>1</sub> 0161	♮ <sub>2</sub> 0162	♮ <sub>3</sub> 0163	♮ <sub>4</sub> 0254	♮ <sub>5</sub> 0165	♮ <sub>6</sub> 0166	♮ <sub>7</sub> 0167	♮ <sub>8</sub> 0168	♮ <sub>9</sub> 0169	♮ <sub>10</sub> 0170
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Overblows – raised two semitones











♮ <sub>1</sub> 0171	♮ <sub>2</sub> 0172	♮ <sub>3</sub> 0173	♮ <sub>4</sub> 0174	♮ <sub>5</sub> 0175	♮ <sub>6</sub> 0176	♮ <sub>7</sub> 0177	♮ <sub>8</sub> 0178	♮ <sub>9</sub> 0179	♮ <sub>10</sub> 0180
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Overblows – raised three semitones











♮ <sub>1</sub> 0181	♮ <sub>2</sub> 0182	♮ <sub>3</sub> 0255	♮ <sub>4</sub> 0184	♮ <sub>5</sub> 0185	♮ <sub>6</sub> 0186	♮ <sub>7</sub> 0187	♮ <sub>8</sub> 0188	♮ <sub>9</sub> 0189	♮ <sub>10</sub> 0190
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## Draw bends

Draw Bends – lowered two semitone











 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6	 7	 8	 9	 10
0191	0192	0193	0194	0195	0196	0197	0198	0199	200

Draw Bends – lowered three semitones











 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6	 7	 8	 9	 10
0201	0202	0203	0204	0205	0206	0207	0208	0209	0210

## Overdraws











Overdraws at default pitch

 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6	 7	 8	 9	 10
0211	0212	0213	0214	0215	0216	0217	0218	0219	0220











Overdraws – raised one semitone

 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6	 7	 8	 9	 10
0221	0222	0223	0224	0225	0226	0227	0228	0229	0230

Overdraws – raised two semitone

 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6	 7	 8	 9	 10
0231	0232	0233	0234	0235	0236	0237	0238	0239	0240

Overdraws – raised three semitones

 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	 6	 7	 8	 9	 10
0241	0242	0243	0244	0245	0246	0247	0248	0249	0250

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