

And here it is with the note skipped...simple! And it sounds just fine. In fact, since most people seem to play this tune with a syncopated accompaniment, it may actually sound better.



Sometimes the tune requires that there be no skip. Perhaps there are words to the tune, and skipping a note leaves out a syllable. Perhaps the rhythm of the tune is lost if the note is skipped. In this case, substitution of the note is a viable option.

The Ash Grove provides a very nice example of this concept. Here is the phrase with the accidental:



Since C-natural appears throughout the song, tuning ahead for this C-sharp will not work. Playing a C-natural may technically be all right, but the tune is so well known that it absolutely sounds wrong. And it might throw off a singer if you just skipped the note.

The best option here is to substitute another note for the one we lack. In fact, in *The Ash Grove* the substitution is one we've all heard before as singers either try to get a bit fancy with the melody, or are trying to avoid singing the difficult half-step of D to C-sharp. The first substitute to try should always be a third (or a skip) from the problem note. Start with the troublesome C, skip the D, and play the E, as shown here:



A "skip" is a third...you count the first note, the skipped note, and the second note: $1+1+1=3$. Another possible substitution is a note an interval of a fifth away. To find a fifth, count the first note, three skipped notes, and the second note: $1+3+1=5$. So, for example, a fifth above C is G.

Other intervals that work include fourths and sixths. Compound intervals, which are intervals that are bigger than an octave, also sometimes work. (By the way, an octave is an interval of an eighth.)

Here's an example of a tune in which we can use such a substitution. First, the way the tune is often given:



This tune, *Sleep Soond in da Mornin'*, demands the presence of some note for that G-sharp to keep the rhythm. One idea that works, and maintains the rhythm, is a third below the problem note. Count the offensive G string, skip the F and play the E in place of the G-sharp.



To use a compound interval, play that E an octave lower:



Or, we could have used the first idea presented in this article. Just ignore the sharp and play a G-natural!



TO SUM UP:

When faced with an accidental (or any sharp or flat you don't have....the missing sharp or flat could also be in the key signature) you have the following options:

1. Ignore the sharp or flat
2. Re-tune one octave on the harp with the accidental
3. Skip the note, put a rest in its place
4. Substitute another note