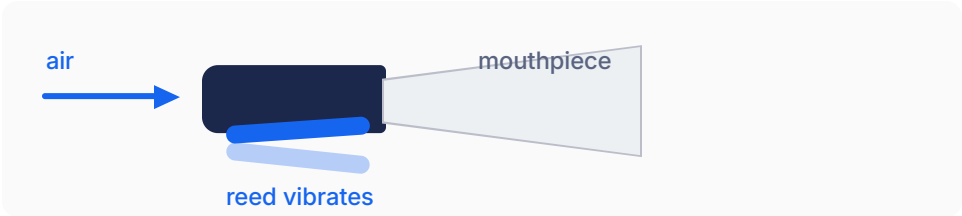


The main keys

How a saxophone makes a note, and where your six fingers sit.

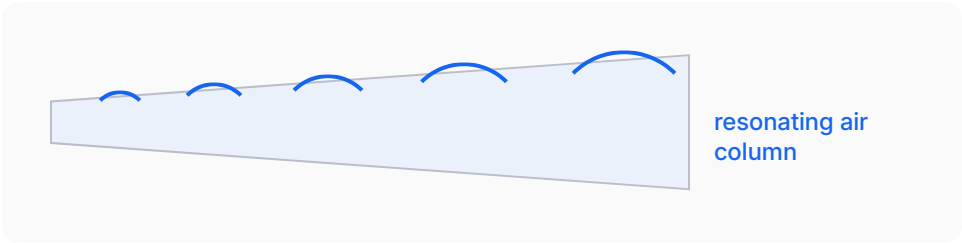
1 Air sets the reed vibrating

The saxophone is a single-reed woodwind. Air pressure from your breath makes the reed vibrate against the mouthpiece.



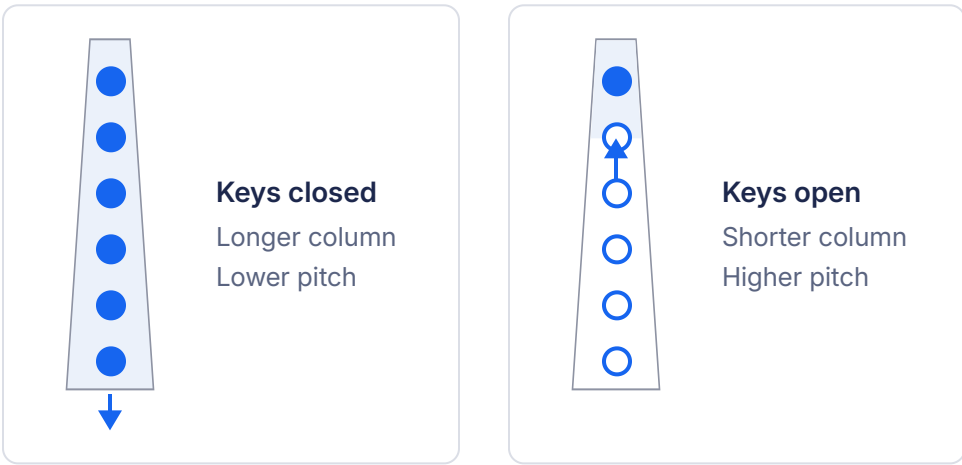
2 The vibration resonates in the cone

The body is a conical bore. The vibrating air column inside that cone is what you actually hear.



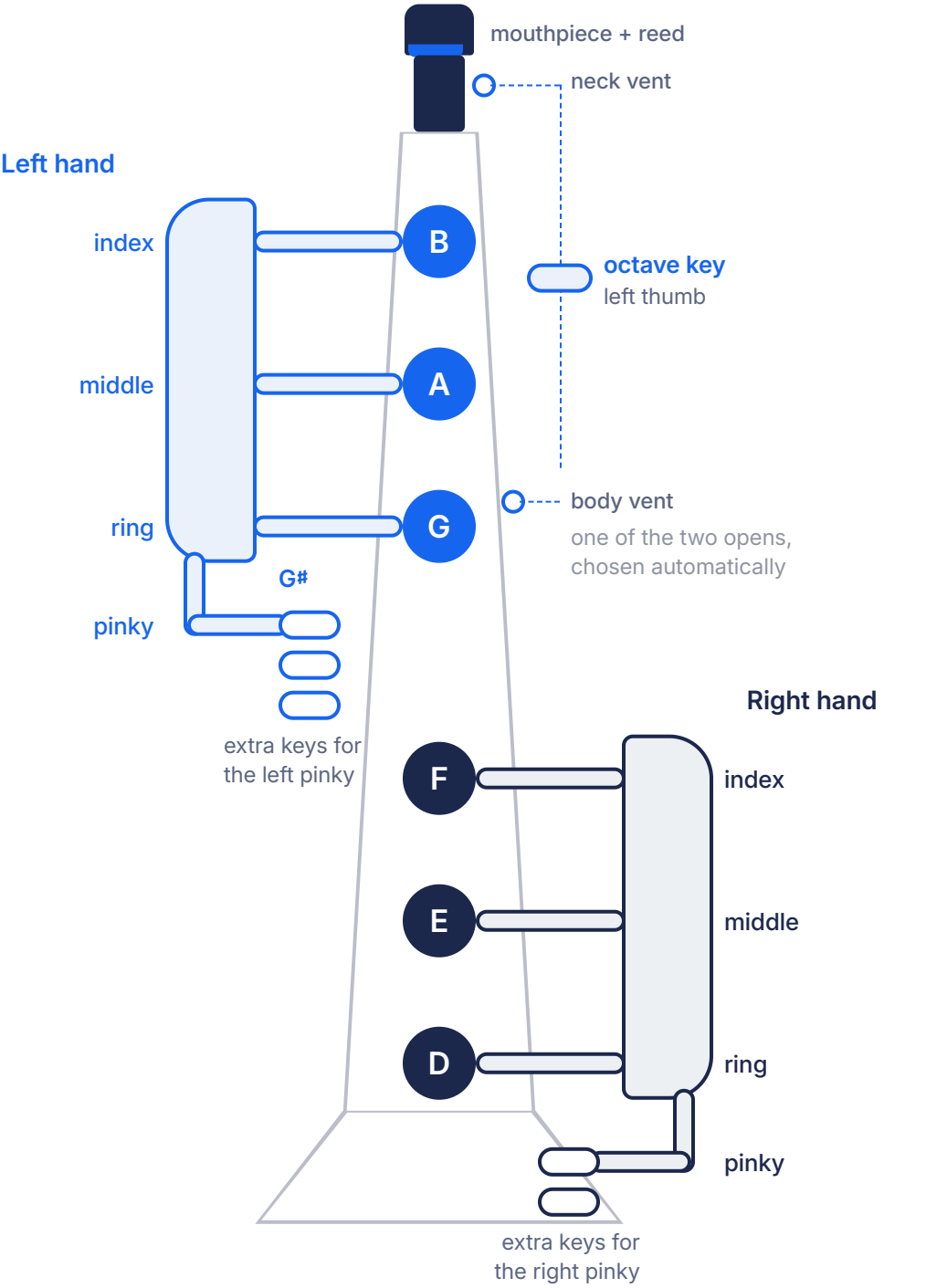
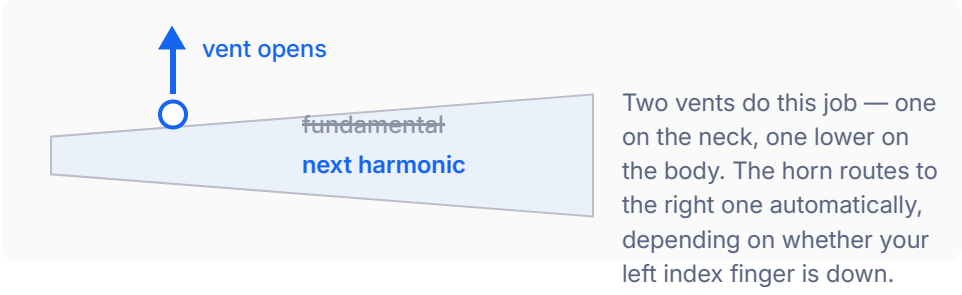
3 Keys change the length, so they change the pitch

Covering a tone hole makes the resonating column longer; opening it makes the column shorter.



4 The octave key jumps to the next harmonic

It produces no note of its own. It opens a small vent that suppresses the fundamental resonance, so the next harmonic takes over and the same fingering sounds an octave higher.



Six main keys, top to bottom: B A G for the left hand, F E D for the right.