Ever since the 1820’s, a different type of trombone has been available to use. This trombone, called an f-key trombone or a valve trombone, has always been useless. It has always been more expensive and takes even more maintenance.

The regular tenor trombone, while expensive, is rather quite a bargain compared to other instruments such as a French horn or violin. The regular trombone can cost from $2,000 to 12,000 where as a valve trombone can cost upwards of $10,000. Obviously, as this a huge difference the question is, is an F-key worth the cost? Regular trombones have been in use for centuries since their invention in the early 1450’s. We don’t really need another instrument that is used less and costs more.

Many professional trombone instructors and players agree. Mr. Anderies a Band instructor for over 50 years long time player of the trombone says,” A regular trombone can play in almost any style of music. An f-key trombone is only useful in a symphonic band and only as a lower chair.” Another professional trombonist John Brady says,” I’ve been using a regular trombone forever and it’s served me just fine.”

Others may claim that regular trombones do not have as low a reach as f-key trombones. The regular trombone can reach all the major notes that an f-key trombone can, except the lowest three. These notes, rarely if ever are used, are only used for bass and contra-bass trombones. People might also say,” F-key trombones can reach sixth position with just a touch of a button.” Learning to use the real sixth position is a good thing as you can then play the higher notes that can only be played in actual sixth position.

There just is not a need for f-keys in the world. F-keys cost more, take more effort to maintain and cannot be used except in a symphonic band setting. That is why f-keys are not good for trombonists.