

Music Reading Primer For Guitar

By Thom Gustafson



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Introduction

The desire to make music seems to be a fundamental part of being human. We all begin by singing, tapping rhythms, or playing with musical toys. Those who wish to take music to another level learn to play a musical instrument. Once a musical instrument can be played with competence, a life long relationship with music usually follows. Whether playing for your own enjoyment or performing professionally, the joy of music can be tapped in nearly all of us.

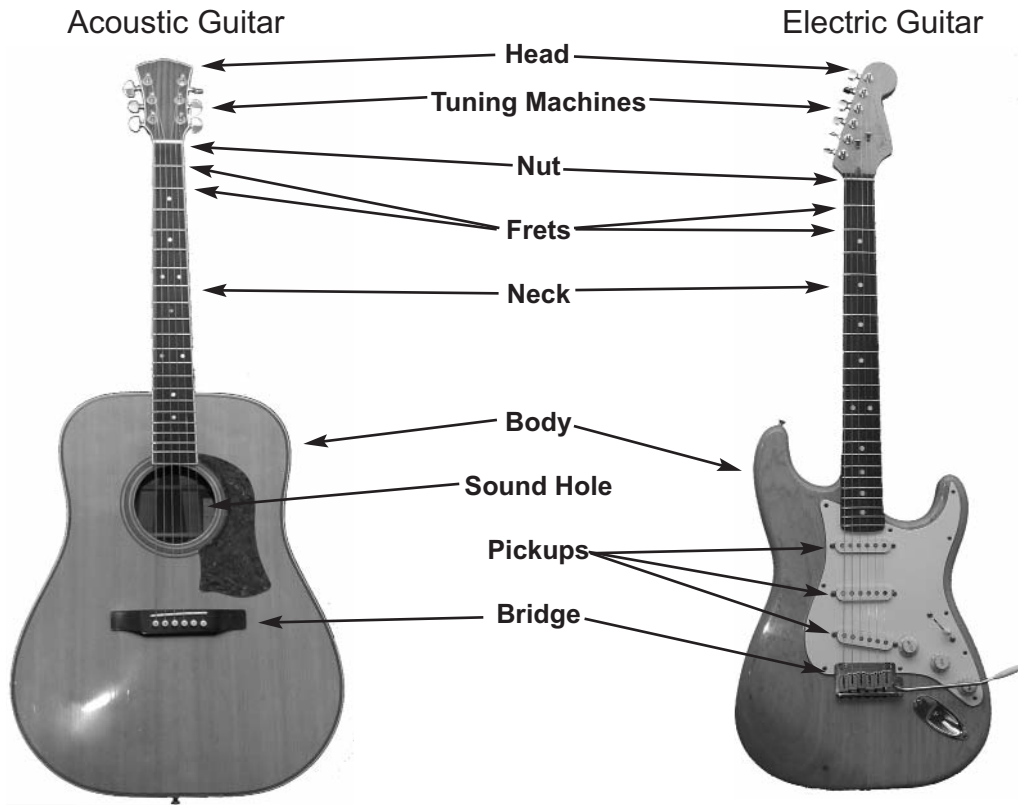
This book is a culmination of lesson strategies used during my 35 years as a professional guitar teacher. My goal was to introduce aspects of reading music on guitar in a steady, carefully chosen progression of concepts and pieces. I have included well known public domain pieces if they fit with the lesson currently being taught. I also have included pieces I've written to specifically forward a new concept.

I dedicate this work to my father who presented me with my first guitar at a time when our family was in too much financial difficulty for me to realistically ask for one.

Please enjoy this book and enjoy life as a guitarist!

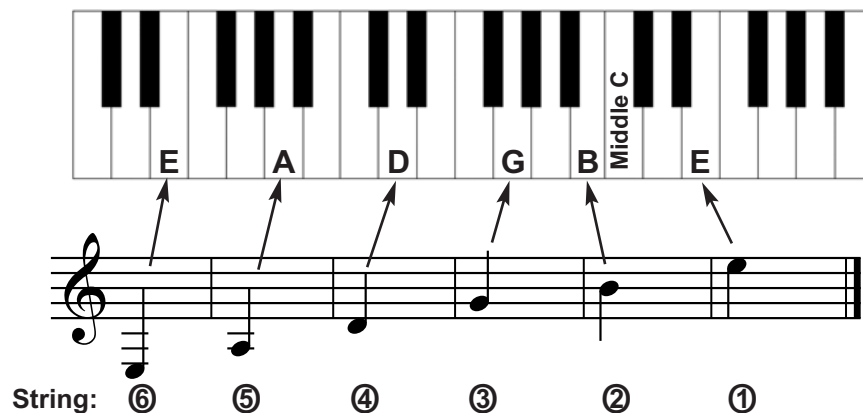
Thom Gustafson

Parts of the Guitar



Tuning The Guitar

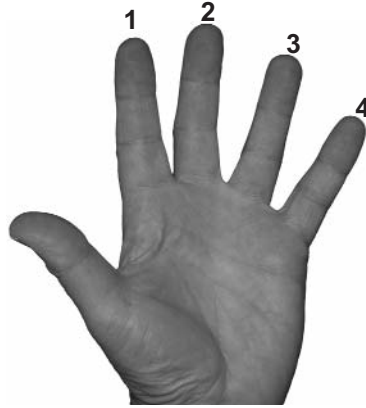
You may tune the guitar to a keyboard instrument in the manner shown below. Music written for the guitar sounds one octave below the actual or "concert" pitch. String one is the thinnest, highest sounding string.



Another Tuning Method

1. Tune string one to E above middle C using another instrument, pitch pipe or tuning fork.
2. Tune string two, fret five in unison with the open first string.
3. Tune string three, fret four in unison with the open second string.
4. Tune string four, fret five in unison with the open third string.
5. Tune string five, fret five in unison with the open fourth string.
6. Tune string six, fret five in unison with the open fifth string.

Left Hand Fingering



The left hand (fretting hand) fingers are shown as index finger:1, middle finger:2, ring finger:3 and little finger:4.

Gripping The Pick



Although many different and successful methods are used to hold a pick, it is good to use the most common as a starting point. Grip the pick firmly, but no more firmly than is necessary, between the thumb and the slightly curled index finger. The remaining fingers of the picking hand may lightly curl behind the index finger as shown.

Left Hand Positioning



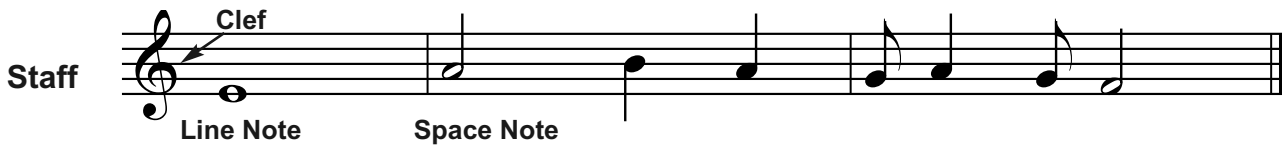
The left hand is positioned with the thumb at or near the back of the neck. The fingers arch gracefully over the fretboard. The left hand does not support the neck of the guitar. The guitar is instead supported when standing by a strap and when seated by being held/balanced between a leg and the right arm. The right leg is usually used to support acoustic or electric guitars and the left leg for classical (nylon strung) guitars.

Note Reading Basics

One of the most common ways to name musical notes (itches) is with the *musical alphabet*. The notes of the musical alphabet are A-B-C-D-E-F-G. As you climb up the alphabet the pitches also get higher. After the note G, we begin a new *octave* by starting again with the note A. If we were to look at two octaves of notes beginning and ending with A, we would have:

A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A

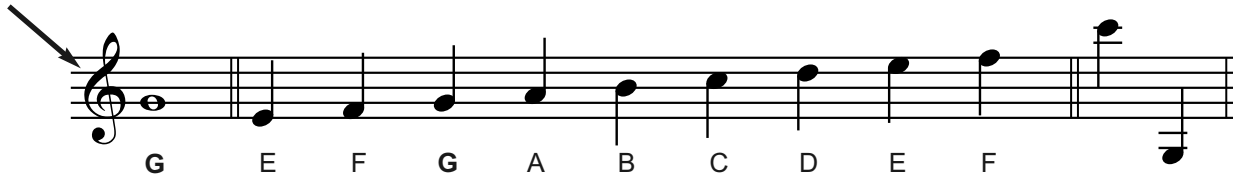
We place notes on a staff. The staff consists of five lines. Notes may be placed on lines, or between lines on spaces. Notes consist of heads, stems and flags. The line or space a note head is placed on will tell us the letter name of the note. Also, the higher a note head is placed on the staff the higher that note will sound. Below is a staff with notes of various types placed on lines and spaces.



Guitar music is written for *treble clef*. There are several other clefs commonly used by instrumentalists and vocalists. Treble clef is also known as "G" Clef. The symbol for treble clef is a stylized, cursive letter G. The treble clef locates a G note on the staff by drawing a loop around the second line.

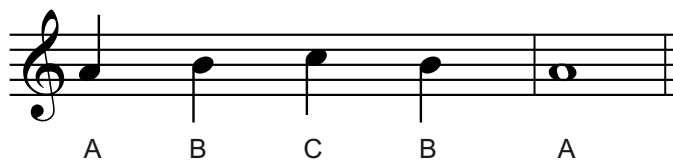
Once it is known the second line of the staff is a G note, the rest of the lines and spaces will follow according to the musical alphabet.

Treble or "G" Clef

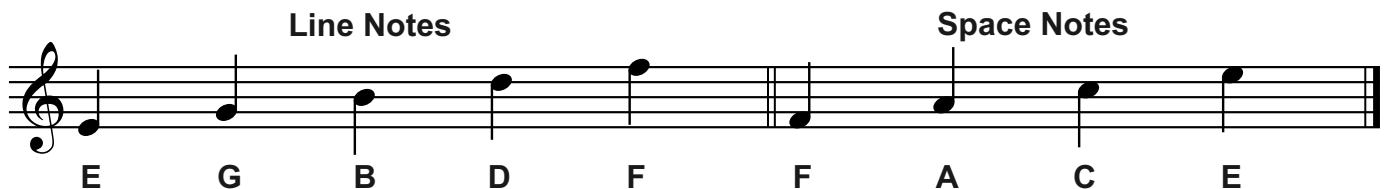


Notice the need to extend the staff by adding extra *ledger lines* so we can include both higher and lower notes

When a musical line moves by *step*, it is easiest to simply ascend or descend through the musical alphabet as the line moves. The following line ascends and descends by step.



When a melody skips or leaps from note to note, it might be quicker to figure the note if you know the lines and spaces separately. Below are shown the names of the lines and spaces of treble clef.



Notes on String 1

E 0 Open String Not fingered	F Fret 1 Finger 1	G Fret 3 Finger 3

Here We Go

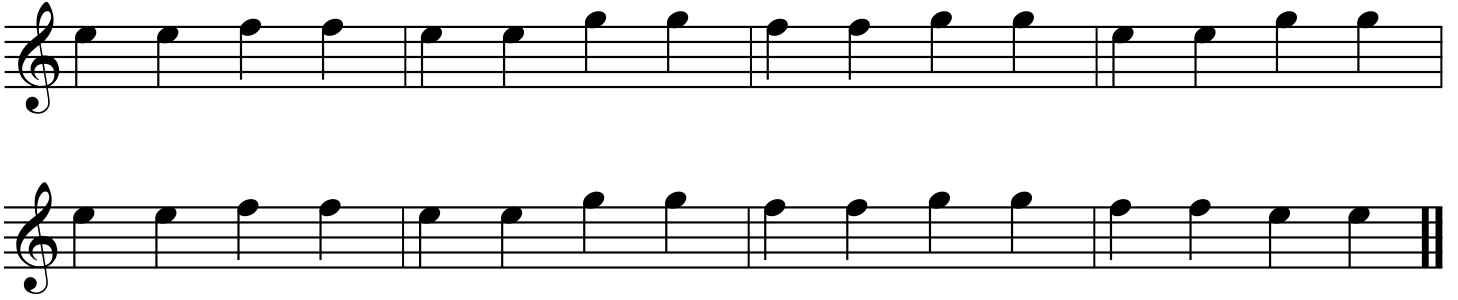
Two staves of musical notation. The first staff shows a sequence of notes: E (0), F (1), G (3), F (1). The second staff shows a sequence: E (0), G (3), F (1), E (0). Each note is marked with its fret number and finger number.

Suggestions: Say or sing note names as you play. Try to keep a slow, steady beat.

One More Time

Two staves of musical notation. The first staff shows a sequence of notes: E (0), F (1), G (3). The second staff shows a sequence of notes: F (1), G (3), F (1), E (0). Each note is marked with its fret number and finger number.

Twice As Nice



E-Z Does It



Rockin' On One



Notes on String 2

B 0	Open String Not fingered	C	Fret 1 Finger 1	D	Fret 3 Finger 3

Second Chance

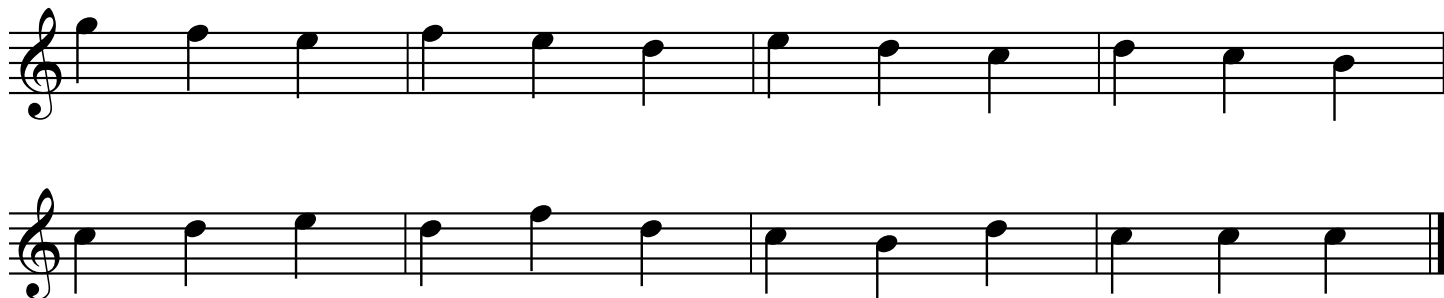
Two staves of musical notation for the 'Second Chance' exercise. The first staff contains four measures: B (0), C (1), D (3), and C (1). The second staff contains four measures: B (0), D (3), C (1), and B (0). Fret numbers are indicated above each note.

Reminder: Say or sing note names as you play.

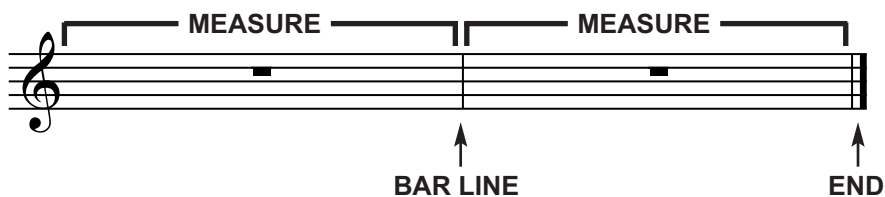
Two String Boogie

Two staves of musical notation for the 'Two String Boogie' exercise. The first staff contains four measures of notes: B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B. The second staff contains four measures of notes: B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B.

1 More For 2



The staff is divided into *measures* by vertical *bar lines*. A double bar line is used to mark the end.



Four Kinds Of Notes



A dot increases value by $\frac{1}{2}$ of what precedes it.

Time Signature

At the beginning of a piece of music are two numbers called the time signature. The top number tells us how many counts (or *beats*) are in each measure. The bottom number tells us the kind of note that gets one count.

The top 3 in three-quarter time means three counts per measure. The bottom 4 means a quarter note gets one count.



The top 4 in four-quarter time means four counts per measure. The bottom 4 means a quarter note gets one count.



Counting practice



Jingle Bells

Three staves of musical notation for the song "Jingle Bells". The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with a final whole note. The second and third staves continue the melody with similar rhythmic patterns.

Beautiful Brown Eyes

Three staves of musical notation for the song "Beautiful Brown Eyes". The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, ending with a half note. The second and third staves continue the melody with a mix of quarter and eighth notes.

Gus' Blues

Three staves of musical notation for the song "Gus' Blues". The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody features quarter and eighth notes, with a final whole note. The second and third staves continue the melody with a mix of quarter and eighth notes.

Notes on String 3

G
0
Open String
Not fingered

A
Fret 2
Finger 2

The diagram shows two guitar fretboard diagrams. The first is for the G chord, labeled 'G' with a '0' below it, indicating the open string. The second is for the A chord, labeled 'A' with 'Fret 2' and 'Finger 2' above it, showing the second finger on the second fret of the third string. To the right is a photograph of a hand performing this fretting action.

Just Three



Long, Long Ago



Three String Boogie



Aura Lee

The first piece, 'Aura Lee', is written in 4/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, with a final whole note. The second and third staves continue the melody with similar rhythmic patterns, ending with a double bar line.

Blow The Man Down

The second piece, 'Blow The Man Down', is written in 3/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, with a final dotted quarter note. The second and third staves continue the melody with similar rhythmic patterns, ending with a double bar line.

Au Clair De La Lune

The third piece, 'Au Clair De La Lune', is written in 4/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, with a final whole note. The second and third staves continue the melody with similar rhythmic patterns, ending with a double bar line.

Music Facts Review #1

1. What letters of the alphabet do we use to name notes? _____
2. What are the names of the five lines of treble clef? _____
3. What are the names of the four spaces of treble clef? _____
4. Draw a quarter note _____
5. How many counts does a quarter note last? _____
6. Draw a half note _____
7. How many counts does a half note last? _____
8. Draw a dotted half note _____
9. How many counts does a dotted half note last? _____
10. How does a dot change the value of a note?
11. Draw a whole note _____
12. How many counts does a whole note last? _____
13. Music is divided by bar lines. What is the portion of music between a pair of bar lines called?
14. In $\frac{3}{4}$ time, what does the 3 on top mean?
15. In $\frac{4}{4}$ time, what does the 4 on the bottom mean?

Tied Notes

When notes on the same line or space are *tied* by a curved line, only the first note is picked. The remaining note or notes are added to the value of the first without being picked.



A musical staff in 4/4 time showing tied notes. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. The first and second notes are tied, and the fifth and sixth notes are tied. An arrow labeled "tie" points to the first note. Below the staff is a count: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 1 2 3 4 1 - 2 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 3 - 4

The time signature for Mary Ann is **C** which means *common time*. Common time is the same as $\frac{4}{4}$ time.

Mary Ann



Three staves of music for 'Mary Ann' in common time. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. The first and second notes are tied, and the fifth and sixth notes are tied.

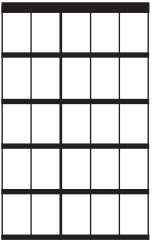
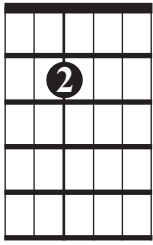

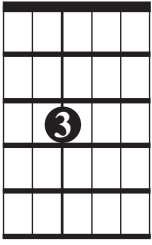




Plaisir d'Amour

Jean-Paul Martini



Three staves of music for 'Plaisir d'Amour' in 3/4 time. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. The first and second notes are tied, and the fifth and sixth notes are tied.

Notes on String 4

D 0	Open String Not fingered	E	Fret 2 Finger 2	F	Fret 3 Finger 3
					
					

Just Four



A single line of musical notation in treble clef, common time (C), containing a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4.

Peter Gray



A single line of musical notation in treble clef, common time (C), containing a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4.




A single line of musical notation in treble clef, common time (C), containing a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4.

Minor Waltz



A single line of musical notation in treble clef, 3/4 time, containing a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4.



A single line of musical notation in treble clef, 3/4 time, containing a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4.



A single line of musical notation in treble clef, 3/4 time, containing a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4.

Pick-up Notes

If a song begins with an incomplete measure the first note will be on a beat other than beat one. This happens if a song does not start on a strong, accented note. Count backwards from the first bar line to determine the beat the song starts on.

Usually if a song begins with an incomplete measure, it will also end with an incomplete measure. The beginning and ending incomplete measures will add together to form a complete measure.



Count: (1) 2 3 4



Count: (1) (2) 3

My Bonnie begins on the beat immediately before the first bar line. Since the last beat of a measure comes before a bar line, My Bonnie begins on beat three. Notice that the final measure only includes beats one and two. The first and last incomplete measures add together to form a complete three beat measure.

My Bonnie



When The Saints Go Marching In

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody consists of quarter and half notes, with some notes beamed together and others held over. The second and third staves continue the melody with similar note values and phrasing.

Rests

A rest is a period of silence. There are equivalent rests for all note values. Rests can also be dotted.



Quarter Rest



Half Rest



Whole Rest

Rests on guitar are usually performed by touching the part of the picking hand closest to the bridge to the strings. Rests can also be performed by touching the pick to a single, vibrating string.

On Top Of Old Smoky

Three staves of musical notation in 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody features quarter and dotted quarter notes, with some notes beamed together and others held over. The second and third staves continue the melody with similar note values and phrasing.

Chords

Chords are combinations of notes played at the same time. Chords can be used as an accompaniment to a melody, as a fill-in, or a note of the chord can be part of the melody. If the chord is part of a melody, the chord should be strummed in a way to emphasize the melody note.

In the exercise below, the C note on string two can be held down throughout.

Simple C Chord Exercise

The exercise is written in 3/4 time. The first staff shows a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second staff shows the corresponding C major chord (C4, E4, G4) for each note, with a double bar line at the end.

Shew! Fly, Don't Bother Me

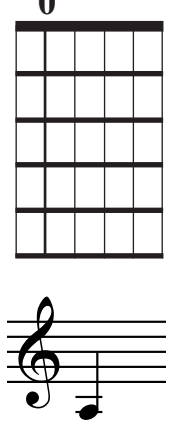
The exercise is written in common time (C). The first staff shows a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second staff shows the corresponding C major chord (C4, E4, G4) for each note, with a double bar line at the end.

C Rock

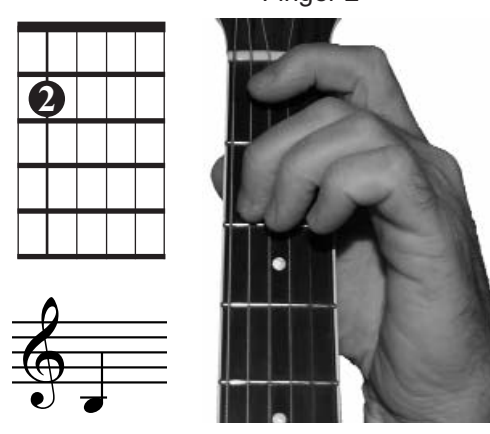
The exercise is written in common time (C). The first staff shows a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second staff shows the corresponding C major chord (C4, E4, G4) for each note, with a double bar line at the end.

Notes on String 5

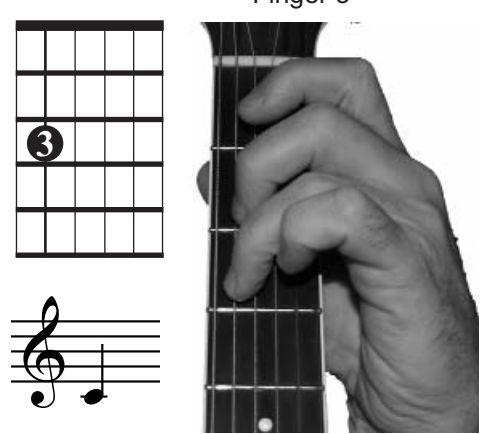
A 0 Open String Not fingered



B Fret 2 Finger 2

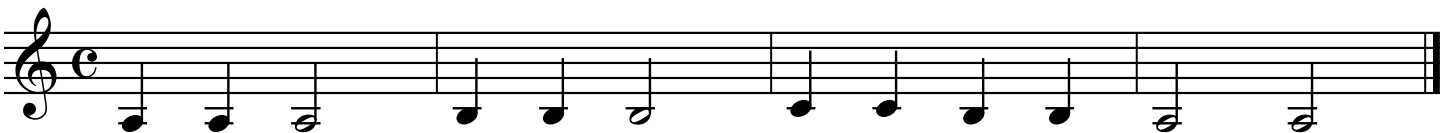


C Fret 3 Finger 3



Ledger lines are short, extra lines used to extend the range of the staff to include both lower and higher notes. As shown above, the note A is on the second ledger line below the staff, B is on the space below the first ledger line and C is on the first ledger line.

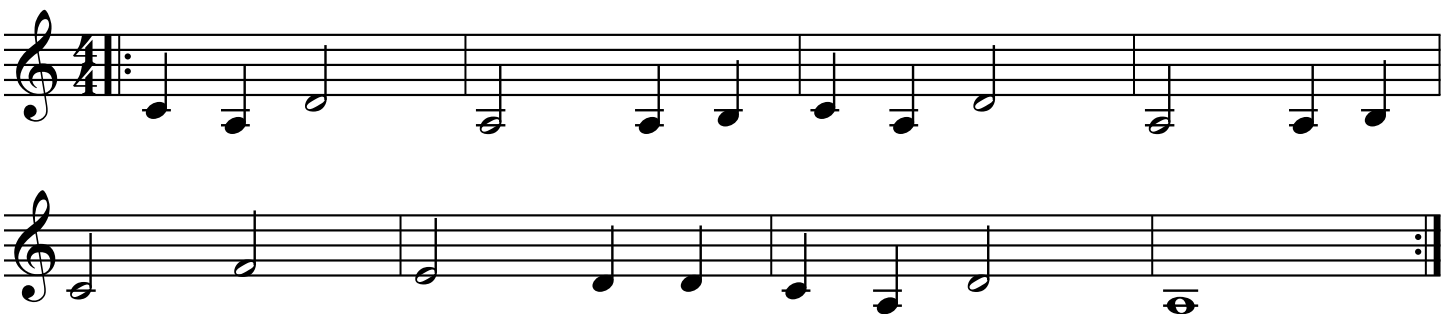
Just Five



Repeat signs are used to indicate that a section of music is to be repeated. A **begin repeat** consists of a double bar line with two dots placed to the right. An **end repeat** consists of a double bar line with two dots placed to the left. When you reach an end repeat, return to the begin repeat and play that section again.



Song Of The Volga Boatman



Reuben, Reuben

Two staves of musical notation for the piece "Reuben, Reuben". The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a repeat sign. The melody consists of a sequence of eighth and quarter notes. The second staff continues the melody, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Barbara Allen

Three staves of musical notation for the piece "Barbara Allen". The first staff starts with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The melody features a mix of quarter, eighth, and dotted notes, with a slur under the final two notes. The second and third staves continue the melody, with the third staff ending in a double bar line.

Strumthing Else

Two staves of musical notation for the piece "Strumthing Else". The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notation includes chords (represented by vertical lines with dots) and a melody of quarter notes. The second staff continues the piece, ending with a double bar line.

New Chord - G7

Musical notation for 'New Chord - G7' in 3/4 time. The first staff shows a melody with notes G4, A4, B4, G4, F4, E4. The second staff shows a bass line with chords G7, C, G7, C. The G7 chords are G-B-F, and the C chords are C-E-G.

Two Chord Boogie

Musical notation for 'Two Chord Boogie' in common time. The first staff shows a melody with notes C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second and third staves show a bass line with chords C and G7. The C chords are C-E-G, and the G7 chords are G-B-F.

Going Home

A. Dvorjak

Musical notation for 'Going Home' in 3/4 time. The first staff shows a melody with notes G4, A4, B4, G4, F4, E4. The second and third staves show a bass line with chords G7 and C. The G7 chords are G-B-F, and the C chords are C-E-G.

Notes on String 6

<p>E</p> <p>0</p> <p>Open String Not fingered</p>	<p>F</p> <p>1</p> <p>Fret 1 Finger 1</p>	<p>G</p> <p>3</p> <p>Fret 3 Finger 3</p>
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Just Six

Pick Six

Review Of First Position Notes

	String 6			String 5			String 4			String 3			String 2			String 1		
Finger	0	1	3	0	2	3	0	2	3	0	2		0	1	3	0	1	3

E F G A B C D E F G A B C D E F G

Try playing the first position notes by memory. Ascend and descend while saying or singing note names.

I Gave My Love A Cherry

Musical score for "I Gave My Love A Cherry" in common time (C). The score consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. The second and third staves continue the melody, with the third staff ending with a double bar line.


A *fermata* (◡) indicates the note or chord it affects is to be held longer than shown by the time value. The length of the fermata is at the discretion of the performer.

We Three Kings


Musical score for "We Three Kings" in 3/4 time. The score consists of five staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. The second and third staves continue the melody, with the third staff featuring two fermatas (◡) over notes. The fourth and fifth staves continue the melody, with the fifth staff ending with a double bar line.

Sing A Song Of Sixpence (Duet)

Guitar 1



Guitar 2



Gtr. 1



Gtr. 2




Gtr. 1



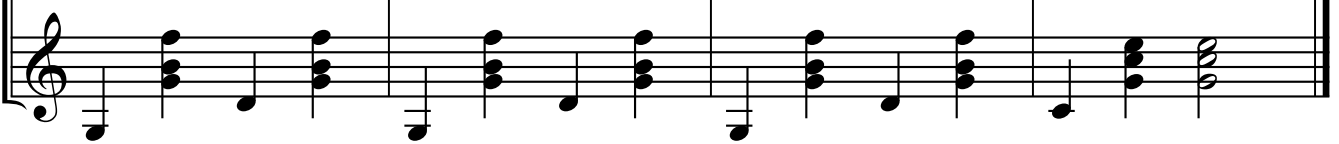
Gtr. 2



Gtr. 1



Gtr. 2



Eighth Notes

An eighth note consists of a note head, stem and single flag. It is called an eighth note because its time value is $\frac{1}{8}$ of a whole note. In time signatures where a quarter note gets one count, an eighth note gets $\frac{1}{2}$ count. When two or more eighth notes are in succession the individual flags can be replaced by a solid beam. There is also an eighth rest.



Eighth Note
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Count



Beamed Eighth Notes

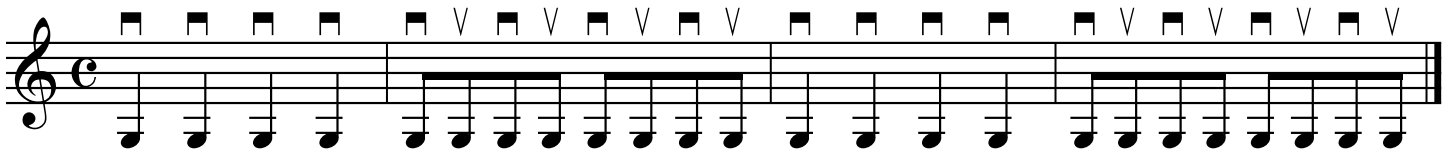


Eighth Rest

Since an eighth note gets $\frac{1}{2}$ count, it follows there would be two eighth notes on one beat. Successive eighth notes are counted in this manner: One-and-Two-and-Three-and...etc..

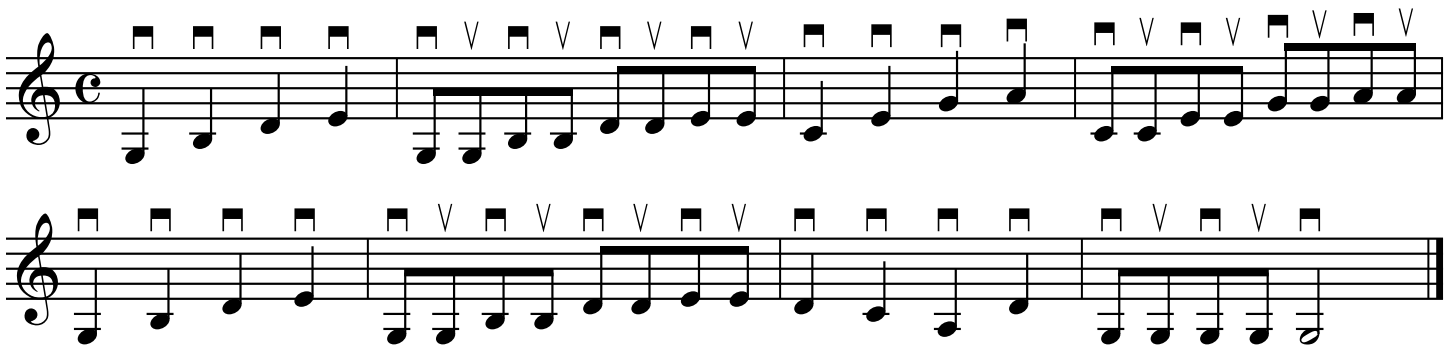
When using a pick, eighth notes are played with alternating downstrokes (▣) and upstrokes (∨). Downstrokes are usually played on the beat (one, two, three...etc.) and upstrokes are played on the "and" between beats.

Eighth Note Exercise



Count: 1 2 3 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 2 3 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Eighth Note Boogie



Suggestion: Count out loud as you play.

Amazing Grace

The first three staves of the musical score for 'Amazing Grace' are written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The first staff contains the first six measures, featuring a melody with eighth and quarter notes and a 'V' marking above the second measure. The second staff contains the next six measures, including a half note with a slur and a 'V' marking above the eighth measure. The third staff contains the final six measures, ending with a double bar line, and includes a 'V' marking above the second measure.

Frere Jacques

The first two staves of the musical score for 'Frere Jacques' are written in treble clef with a common time signature. The first staff contains the first six measures, which are a simple melody of quarter notes. The second staff contains the next six measures, featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'V' markings above the first two measures of each six-measure group.

Clementine

The first three staves of the musical score for 'Clementine' are written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The first staff contains the first six measures, featuring a melody with eighth notes and a 'V' marking above the first measure. The second staff contains the next six measures, continuing the eighth-note melody with 'V' markings above the first two measures. The third staff contains the final six measures, ending with a double bar line, and includes 'V' markings above the first two measures.

Tempo Signs

The tempo or speed a piece is to be performed at is indicated by the use of a tempo sign. Traditionally music has used Italian expressions such as *Largo*, *Andante*, *Moderato*, *Allegro* or *Presto* as tempo signs. Tempo can also be indicated by the native language of a country, for example Slowly, Moderate, or Fast. These tempo signs are not exact, but can be interpreted at the performers discretion. A more precise indication of tempo can be shown by the use of a suggested metronome setting for the note that receives one count such as ♩=100.

The “Three Gear Boogie” is to be played three times. Play it *Andante* (slowly, flowing) the first time, *Moderato* (moderately) the second time, and *Allegro* (fast, cheerfully) the third time.

Three Gear Boogie

The musical notation for "Three Gear Boogie" consists of three staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with a steady rhythmic pattern. The second and third staves continue the melody, with the third staff ending with a double bar line.

Scarborough Fair

Andante

The musical notation for "Scarborough Fair" consists of three staves of music in 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, with a slower, more flowing character. The second and third staves continue the melody, with the third staff ending with a double bar line.

At this point in your studies think of tempo signs only as suggestions. It is more important to perform pieces at a speed that enables you to play smoothly and accurately.

Monday, Moody Blues (Duet)

Moderato

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

The first system of music for 'Monday, Moody Blues' consists of two staves. The top staff, labeled 'Guitar 1', is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'Guitar 2', is in treble clef and contains a bass line with quarter notes. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'.

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

The second system of music continues the duet. The top staff, labeled 'Gtr. 1', shows a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'Gtr. 2', shows a bass line with quarter notes.

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

The third system of music concludes the piece. The top staff, labeled 'Gtr. 1', shows a melodic line with quarter and eighth notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'Gtr. 2', shows a bass line with quarter notes. The system ends with a double bar line.

Drunken Sailor

Allegro

The musical notation for 'Drunken Sailor' consists of two staves. Both staves are in treble clef and contain a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'.

Dynamic Marks

ppp pp p mp mf f ff fff

Dynamic marks are words, abbreviations and signs used to indicate how loud a section of music is to be played. The most commonly used from quietest to loudest are triple piano (*ppp*), pianissimo (*pp*), piano (*p*), mezzopiano (*mp*), mezzoforte (*mf*), forte (*f*), fortissimo (*ff*) and triple forte (*fff*). A crescendo (*cresc.*, \langle) indicates a gradual increase in volume. A decrescendo or diminuendo (*decr.*, *dim.*, \rangle) indicates a gradual decrease in volume.

A musical echo effect can be achieved by playing a section of music loud (*f*) and repeating it quietly (*p*). The music below, which is an excerpt from Antonio Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, is used to demonstrate the echo effect.

Vivaldi's Echo (theme from Spring)

A. Vivaldi

Allegro

The musical score consists of five staves of music in treble clef, common time (C). The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte). The second staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The third staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f*. The fourth staff begins with a dynamic marking of *p*. The fifth staff concludes the excerpt with a double bar line.

Dynamic Study

Andante

The first staff shows a melodic line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and ending with a forte (*f*) dynamic, connected by a crescendo hairpin. The second staff continues the melodic line with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a decrescendo hairpin. The third staff shows the melodic line with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a decrescendo hairpin, ending with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

Terrace Play

Andante

The first staff shows a melodic line with dynamic markings *f*, *mf*, and *p* in sequence. The second staff continues the melodic line with dynamic markings *mf* and *f* in sequence.

Sharps and Flats (Accidentals)

The Sharp

A sharp placed before a note raises its pitch ½ step or one fret.

A musical staff showing a sharp sign (#) placed before a note on the second line of the staff.

F sharp
Fret 2, Finger 2

The Flat b

A flat placed before a note lowers its pitch ½ step or one fret. An open note is flatted by playing it one string lower at fret 4 except for B \flat on string 3, which is played at fret 3.

A musical staff showing three notes with flat signs (b) placed before them. The first note is on the second line, the second on the second space, and the third on the second line.

G flat
Fret 2, Finger 2

E flat
Fret 4, Finger 4

B flat
Fret 3, Finger 3

F \sharp and G \flat on string one are *enharmonic*. They are different names for the same sounding note.

Chromatic Scale

A *chromatic scale* is formed by playing a succession of half steps through a distance of one octave. Below is an example of a chromatic scale. For convenience it is shown here using sharps for the ascending form and flats for the descending form. Uncircled numbers represent fingering. Circled numbers represent strings.

0 1 2 3 4 0 1 2 3 4 0 1 2

5 4 3

2 1 0 4 3 2 1 0 4 3 2 1 0

3 4 5

It can also be helpful to view a chromatic scale as a row of notes. Notice that the notes B and C as well as E and F have no sharp or flat between them.

A	A [#]	B	C	C [#]	D	D [#]	E	F	F [#]	G	G [#]	A
	B ^b			D ^b	E	E ^b		F	G ^b	G	A ^b	

A sharp or flat placed before a note also applies to all following notes on that same line or space until the end of the measure.

Chromatic Boogie

Moderato

Courtesy Accidental


Measure 9 of “Chromatic Boogie” uses a *courtesy accidental* (sharp or flat enclosed in parentheses) as a reminder that the sharp preceding the first F in the measure also applies to the last F in the measure.

Take Me Out To The Ball Game

Norworth/Von Tilzer

Allegro

Musical score for 'Take Me Out To The Ball Game' in 3/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written in a simple, rhythmic style with quarter and eighth notes. The second staff continues the melody with a sharp sign on the second measure. The third and fourth staves continue the melody with various note values and rests. The fifth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

The Natural  A natural is used to cancel a previous sharp or flat.

Natural Blues

Andante

Musical score for 'Natural Blues' in common time (C). The score consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody is written in a bluesy style with eighth and sixteenth notes, and includes a natural sign on the second measure. The second and third staves continue the melody with various note values and rests, ending with a double bar line.

Put Your Little Foot (Duet)

Moderato

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

First ending: Play first time only

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2


Chromatic Blues

Moderato

Major Scale

A major scale is a specific arrangement of whole steps (two fret distance between notes) and half steps (one fret distance between notes). Below is a C major scale showing the sequence of whole steps and half steps.

Root	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Root
------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	------



whole step	whole step	half step	whole step	whole step	whole step	half step
---------------	---------------	--------------	---------------	---------------	---------------	--------------

Thus, the formula for a major scale starting from its root is:

whole step - whole step - half step - whole step - whole step - whole step - half step

which can be summarized as two successive whole steps, one half step, three successive whole steps, and one half step (2W, 1H, 3W, 1H where W=whole step, H=half step).

The notes of a major scale can be figured by starting with the scale's root and applying the above formula to find the rest of the tones. It is important to note that all major scales proceed in a consecutive alphabetical manner. In other words, the next note of the scale must use the next letter of the alphabet. The choice of using a sharp or a flat to name a note will depend on what letter of the alphabet is next.

The following is an example of a G Major Scale and an F Major Scale:

G major scale



F major scale



Key Signature

A key signature is placed between the clef and the time signature. It is derived from its corresponding scale. Sharps or flats in the key signature affect any note with the same letter for the entire piece. Below are shown examples for the keys of C, G and F major.

Key of C
no sharps
no flats



Key of G
all F's sharped



Key of F
all B's flatted



Key of G
Sharp all F's

Danny Boy

Andante

The musical score for 'Danny Boy' is written in G major (one sharp) and common time. It consists of six staves of music. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The melody is characterized by a slow, steady pace with a mix of quarter and eighth notes, and some rests. The piece concludes with a final cadence on the sixth staff.

Key of F
Flat all B's

Down In The Valley

Moderato

The musical score for 'Down In The Valley' is written in F major (one flat) and 3/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The melody features a mix of quarter and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. The piece ends with a final cadence on the third staff.

In "Bach Bouree" below, the last measure contains an end repeat sign. When an end repeat occurs without a corresponding begin repeat, the performer is to repeat from the beginning of the piece.

Bach Bouree (Duet)

J.S. Bach

Allegro

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Red River Valley

Moderato

Four String Chords G,C and D7

A curved phrasing mark can be used for guitar to indicate that all notes beneath the mark are to be held down and allowed to ring together.

In “Four String Swing” below, finger 3 can be held down on the G note throughout the first four measures.

Four String Swing

The musical notation for "Four String Swing" consists of three staves in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a G chord and contains a melodic line with a curved phrasing mark over the first four measures. The second staff starts with a C chord, followed by a G chord in the fourth measure, with a curved phrasing mark over the first four measures. The third staff starts with a D7 chord, includes fingerings '2' and '3' on the first two notes, and features a curved phrasing mark over the first four measures. Chord changes to G, C, and G are indicated in the fifth, sixth, and seventh measures respectively.

Rockin' G

The musical notation for "Rockin' G" consists of three staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "Moderate Rock". The first staff has a G chord and a melodic line with a curved phrasing mark over the first four measures. The second staff has a C chord and a melodic line with a curved phrasing mark over the first four measures. The third staff has a D7 chord and a melodic line with a curved phrasing mark over the first four measures. Chord changes to C and G are indicated in the fifth and sixth measures respectively.

Polly Wolly Doodle

Allegro

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

Try using finger 4 for the G chord

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Gus' Stomp

Allegro

Musical score for 'Gus' Stomp' in treble clef, key of G major, and common time (C). The score consists of three staves. The first staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second and third staves contain a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

Syncopation

Syncopation occurs when an accent is placed on a part of the beat that is usually not accented. One way to achieve this is to use a rhythm where successive notes are on the second half or "and" of a beat. Below is an example of a syncopated rhythm.

Musical score illustrating syncopation in treble clef, common time. The score shows a single staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Vertical lines with 'V' above them indicate accents on the second half of each beat. Below the staff is the corresponding count: 1 & -(2) & 3 - 4 1 & -(2) & 3 - 4 1 2 3 & -(4) & 1 & -(2) & 3 - 4

Buffalo Gals

Allegro

Musical score for 'Buffalo Gals' in treble clef, key of G major, and common time (C). The score consists of four staves. The first staff contains a melodic line. The second and fourth staves contain a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The third staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and accents.

Tom Dooley

Moderato

Musical notation for the piece 'Tom Dooley'. It consists of two staves of music in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a 'Moderato' tempo marking. The music features a series of eighth and quarter notes, with some notes marked with a 'V' (pick) and a square symbol above them. The second staff continues the melody with similar rhythmic patterns, ending with a double bar line.

Syncopation Nation

Allegro

Musical notation for the piece 'Syncopation Nation'. It consists of three staves of music in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The tempo marking is 'Allegro'. The music is characterized by syncopated rhythms, with many notes marked with a 'V' (pick) and a square symbol above them. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

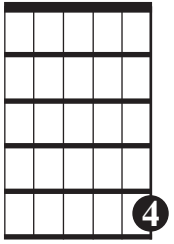
Carefully follow the counting and picking for "He's Got The Whole World In His Hands". Try counting out loud as you play. Notice the use of tied notes within the same measure.

He's Got The Whole World In His Hands

Allegro

Musical notation for the piece 'He's Got The Whole World In His Hands'. It consists of two staves of music in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a common time signature (C). The tempo marking is 'Allegro'. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with many notes marked with a 'V' (pick) and a square symbol above them. Below the first staff, the following counting sequence is provided: **Count : & 4 & 1 - 2 3 & -(4) 1 & -(2) & -(3) & 4 &**. The second staff continues the melody, with a final counting sequence below it: **Count : 1 2 3 &-(4) & --- 1-2 (3)**. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

A



String One
Fret Five
Finger Four

Ledger lines can also be used for notes above the staff. The note A on string one, fret five is on the first ledger line above the staff. Use finger four to play this note. Try to reach this note without changing the position of the left thumb so you may quickly return to the normal first position hand placement.



Exercise



Frog Went A-Courtin'

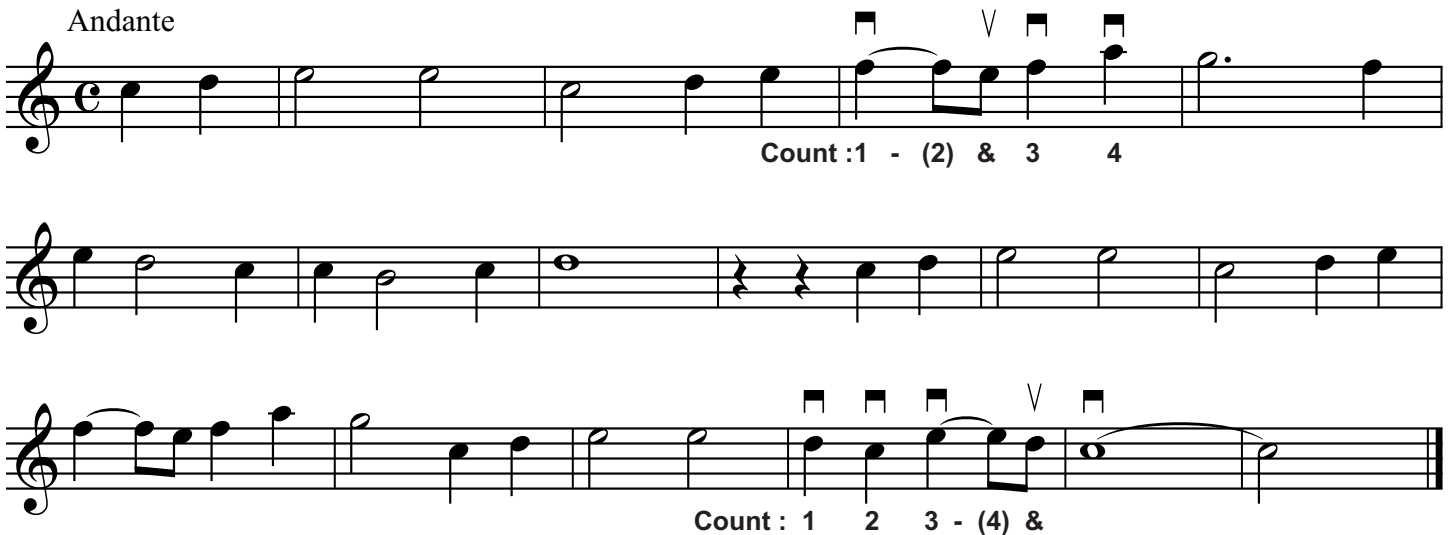
Moderato



My Old Kentucky Home

S. Foster

Andante



Dotted Quarter Notes

A dot increases value by $\frac{1}{2}$ of what precedes it. When placed after a quarter note the dot increases the notes value by $\frac{1}{2}$ of one count. Therefore, a dotted quarter note receives $1\frac{1}{2}$ counts. A dot can also be thought of as the equivalent of tying a note to a note of half its value.



A dot can also follow another dot, with the second dot adding $\frac{1}{2}$ the value added by the first dot.

The two measures of the example below sound exactly the same. Notice the eighth note following the dotted quarter note is picked with an upstroke since it is played between beats.

Two measures of music in 4/4 time are shown. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and another quarter note. The second measure contains a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, then a quarter note, and another quarter note. Both measures are counted as "1 - (2) & 3 4". The eighth note in the first measure is marked with an upstroke (V) above it, indicating it is played between beats.

Auld Lang Syne

Andante

The first three lines of the musical score for "Auld Lang Syne" are shown. The tempo is marked "Andante". The notation includes various note values, including dotted quarter notes and eighth notes, with upstrokes (V) above several notes to indicate they are played between beats.

Streets Of Laredo

Moderato

Musical notation for 'Streets Of Laredo' in 3/4 time, key of D major. The piece consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some dotted rhythms. The second and third staves continue the melody, ending with a double bar line.

Ode To Joy

Allegro

Musical notation for 'Ode To Joy' in C major, 4/4 time. The piece consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of no sharps or flats, and a common time signature (C). The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some dotted rhythms. The second and third staves continue the melody, ending with a double bar line.

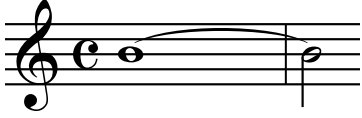
Greensleeves

Andante

Musical notation for 'Greensleeves' in 3/4 time, key of D major. The piece consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some dotted rhythms. The second and third staves continue the melody, ending with a double bar line.

Music Facts Review #2

1. What is the arcing line connecting the two notes below called? _____



How many counts does the above note last? _____

2. What does the **C** in the above example mean? _____

3. Draw a whole rest _____

How many counts does a whole rest last? _____

4. Draw a half rest _____

How many counts does a half rest last? _____

5. Draw a quarter rest _____

How many counts does a quarter rest last? _____

6. Draw an eighth note _____

How many counts does an eighth note last? _____

7. Draw an eighth rest _____

How many counts does an eighth rest last? _____

8. Draw a dotted-quarter note _____

How many counts does a dotted-quarter note last? _____

9. Draw a sharp _____ Draw a flat _____ Draw a natural _____

10. What does ***p*** (piano) mean? _____ What does ***f*** (forte) mean? _____

Four String F and Am Chords

The four string F chord uses finger 1 to play both strings one and two. This is accomplished by forming a *half bar* with finger 1. Collapse the last joint of finger 1 as you place it on strings one and two.

Musical notation for F and Am chords. The first staff shows a melodic line for F and Am with fingerings: F (3, 2, 1, 1) and Am (2, 3, 1, 0). The second staff shows the corresponding four-string chord voicings for F, Am, F, Am, C, and F.

Kumbaya

Moderato

Musical notation for the first system of "Kumbaya". It features two staves: Guitar 1 (melody) and Guitar 2 (chords). Chords are C, F, C, and Am.

Musical notation for the second system of "Kumbaya". It features two staves: Gtr. 1 (melody) and Gtr. 2 (chords). Chords are G, C, and F.

Musical notation for the third system of "Kumbaya". It features two staves: Gtr. 1 (melody) and Gtr. 2 (chords). Chords are C, F, C, G, and C.

Tomcat Blues

Moderate

Musical score for Tomcat Blues, consisting of three staves of music in C major, 4/4 time. The melody is primarily eighth-note based, with some quarter notes and rests. Chords are indicated by vertical lines with notes below the staff.

Wildwood Flower uses a three string F chord where indicated. It is to be played like the four string F chord without finger 3.

Wildwood Flower

Moderate

Musical score for Wildwood Flower, consisting of four staves of music in C major, 4/4 time. The melody is primarily quarter-note based. Chords are indicated by vertical lines with notes below the staff. A first ending bracket is present in the fourth staff, with a second ending marked with a fermata. A chord symbol 'F' is placed above the staff in the third measure of the third staff.

Old Joe Clark

Allegro

Musical score for 'Old Joe Clark' in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and A4. A repeat sign follows, with a first ending bracket over the final two measures (G4, A4) and a second ending bracket over the final two measures (B4, A4). The second staff continues the melody with quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and A4, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and A4. A first ending bracket covers the final two measures (G4, A4). The third staff continues with quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and A4, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and A4. A second ending bracket covers the final two measures (B4, A4). The fourth staff continues with quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and A4, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and A4. A first ending bracket covers the final two measures (G4, A4), and a second ending bracket covers the final two measures (B4, A4).

Brahms' Lullaby

J. Brahms

Peacefully

Musical score for 'Brahms' Lullaby' in F major, 3/4 time. The score consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (F), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes F4, G4, and A4. A repeat sign follows, with a first ending bracket over the final two measures (G4, A4) and a second ending bracket over the final two measures (B4, A4). The second staff continues the melody with quarter notes F4, G4, and A4, followed by quarter notes F4, G4, and A4. A first ending bracket covers the final two measures (G4, A4), and a second ending bracket covers the final two measures (B4, A4). The third staff continues with quarter notes F4, G4, and A4, followed by quarter notes F4, G4, and A4. A first ending bracket covers the final two measures (G4, A4), and a second ending bracket covers the final two measures (B4, A4).

Turkey In The Straw

Allegro

Musical score for 'Turkey In The Straw' in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first three staves contain the main melody and accompaniment. The fourth staff features a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The piece concludes with a final chord.

Shenandoah

Slowly

Musical score for 'Shenandoah' in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of three staves of music. The first two staves contain the main melody and accompaniment. The third staff features a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The piece concludes with a final chord. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 0, 1, 2, 3 below the notes.

The Entertainer (excerpt)

S. Joplin

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

The first system of musical notation for 'The Entertainer' features two guitar parts. Guitar 1 is in the treble clef, playing a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. Guitar 2 is in the bass clef, providing a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and quarter notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C).

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

The second system of musical notation continues the piece. It includes repeat signs (double bar lines with dots) at the beginning of both staves. Guitar 1 continues its melodic line, while Guitar 2 provides a steady accompaniment. The notation includes various note values and rests.

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

The third system of musical notation shows further development of the melody and accompaniment. Both staves feature a variety of note values and rests, maintaining the piece's characteristic rhythmic feel.

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

The fourth system of musical notation concludes the excerpt. It features a final melodic phrase in Guitar 1 and a corresponding accompaniment in Guitar 2. The notation includes a measure with a '4' and a '3' below it, possibly indicating a specific rhythmic pattern or a measure rest.

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

1. 2, 3. *Fine*

1. 2, 3. *Fine*

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The Gtr. 1 staff begins with a first ending (marked '1.') consisting of two measures, followed by a repeat sign and a second ending (marked '2, 3. Fine') consisting of three measures. The Gtr. 2 staff follows a similar structure, with a first ending of two measures and a second ending of three measures marked '2, 3. Fine'. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature.

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth staves of music. The Gtr. 1 staff continues with eighth-note patterns and some sixteenth-note runs. The Gtr. 2 staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The first ending of the first system concludes with a measure containing a 1-fingered note.

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Detailed description: This system contains the fifth and sixth staves of music. The Gtr. 1 staff features more complex melodic lines with sixteenth-note runs. The Gtr. 2 staff continues with chordal accompaniment. The first ending of the first system concludes with a measure containing a 4-fingered note.

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

1. 2.

1. 2.

D.S. al Fine

D.S. al Fine

Detailed description: This system contains the seventh and eighth staves of music. The Gtr. 1 staff has two endings: the first ending (marked '1.') leads back to the beginning of the system, and the second ending (marked '2.') concludes the piece. The Gtr. 2 staff also has two endings, with the first ending (marked '1.') leading back to the beginning and the second ending (marked '2.') concluding. The music ends with the instruction 'D.S. al Fine'.

D.S al Fine

D.S. is an abbreviation for “dal segno” which in Italian means “return to the S (§)”. *al Fine* means play until “Fine” (Italian for finish). At the completion of page two of “The Entertainer”, return to the § at the beginning of the second system on page one. Play until the third ending on page two where marked “Fine”.

In The Hall Of The Mountain King

E. Grieg

Moderato

Musical score for 'In The Hall Of The Mountain King' by E. Grieg, Moderato tempo. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of four staves of music. The first two staves are marked with repeat signs at the beginning and end. The third and fourth staves continue the melody. The fourth staff ends with a double bar line and a final chord with fingerings: 0, 0, 0, 2, 1, 0.

America The Beautiful

Andante

Musical score for 'America The Beautiful' by E. Grieg, Andante tempo. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of four staves of music. The first two staves are marked with repeat signs at the beginning and end. The third and fourth staves continue the melody. The fourth staff ends with a double bar line and a final chord with fingerings: 1, 2, 3, 0, 3, 4, 0, 2, 1.