Guitar Sight-Reading

Introduction

Music for the guitar is written using two forms of notation.

The first is called STANDARD MUSICAL NOTATION, and the second is called TABLATURE, or TAB for short.

Standard musical notation uses a staff of five lines. Music for the guitar is written in the TREBLE CLEF, which is used to write music for instruments with a higher range. Notes can either be placed on the staff lines, or in the space between the lines. Each line and space represets one note.

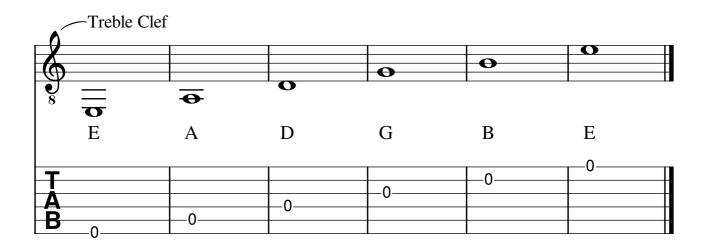
Tablature uses six lines. Each line represents a string of the guitar.

The highest line represents String 1, which is the thinnest string, tuned to high E. The lowest line represents String 6, which is the thickest string, tuned to low E.

When a number is written on a line, it means that string is to be plucked, with a finger pressing at the fret indicated by the number.

0 (zero) means the string is to be plucked with no finger, which is called "open."

Below are the six open stings of the guitar, written in standard musical notation and Tab. Play each note, and count 4 beats.

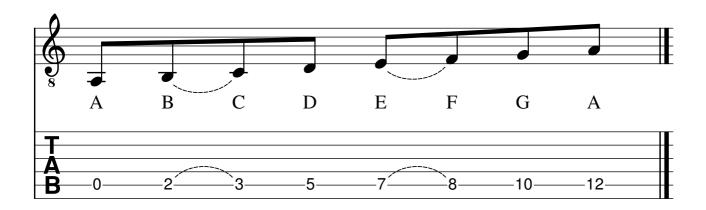


The notes A B C D E F G are called the MUSICAL ALPHABET.

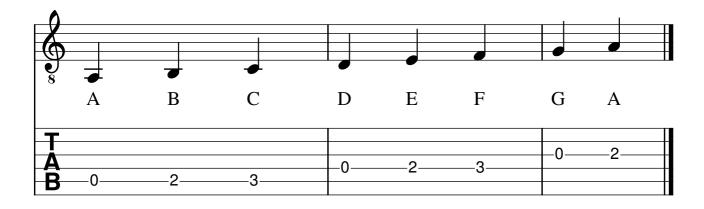
We can play the notes of the musical alphabet by moving up the 5th string.

The note after G is another A. Open A and 12th fret A sound similar, but open A is deeper, while 12th fret A is higher.

Notice that there are two frets between every note except B to C and E to F, which are only one fret apart.



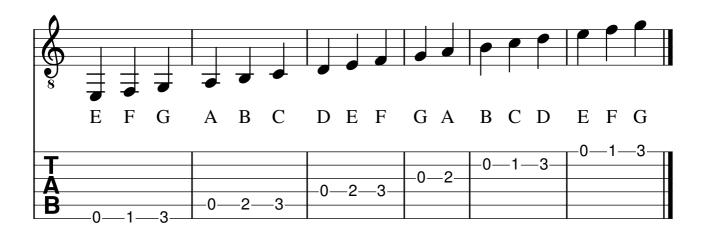
The tuning of the guitar means that we can play the notes of the musical alphabet without going higher than the 3rd fret. We do this by switching strings.



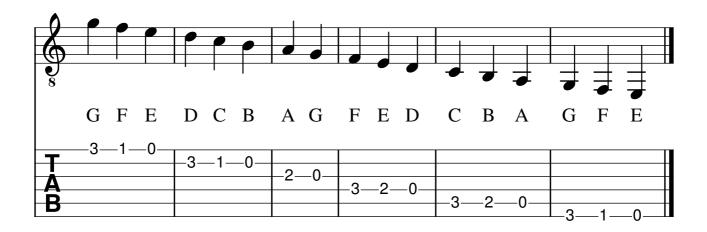
The notes of the musical alphabet are also called NATURAL NOTES. We can play all of the natural notes below the 3rd fret by switching strings.

Notice that after playing E F G on the sixth string, we go through the musical alphabet twice.

Say the note names as you play through all the notes from low to high.

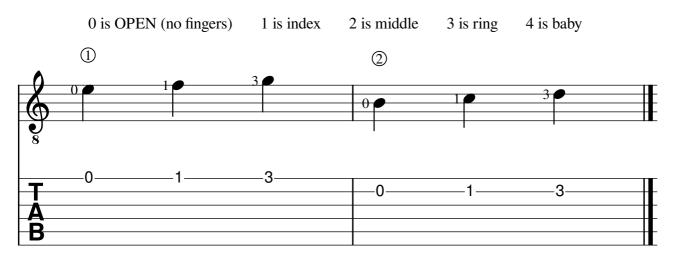


Say the note names as you play through all the notes from high to low.

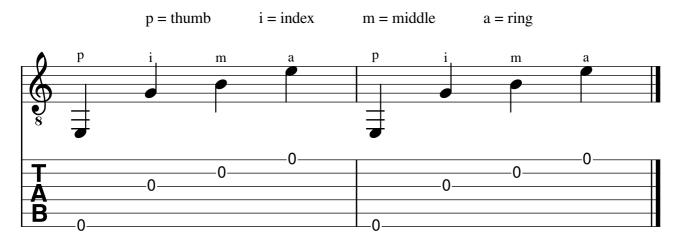


Numbers in circles indicate on which string notes are to be played.

Small numbers beside notes indicate fretting hand fingering:



When fingerpicking, the letters p i m and a indicate picking hand fingers.



When using a flat pick, picking direction is indicated by the following symbols:

