

# Student Strummers

By Ben Porter



An introduction to playing the guitar and reading music

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**Holding the guitar** - the curved part of the guitar should rest comfortably on your right leg, and your right elbow should rest opposite your leg on the side of the guitar. **Do not let your elbow hang in front of the guitar.** If the guitar feels as though it is slipping away off your leg, either cross your right leg over your left, or use a footstand (books, cans, trays) under your right foot to make the guitar more stable. **This is why we are using the small chairs.**



Correct



Incorrect

Playing with the right hand - it is most important that your hand **does not** touch the wooden part of the guitar. To play simply **place** your relaxed thumb on the correct note and let it **fall** through the string and come to **rest** on the next string. Keep your fingers tucked away in a relaxed fist the whole time. This is called a **Rest Stroke**.



Correct



Incorrect

To start off we will look at the 3 notes which are played by the 3 highest sounding open strings. There are six strings on a guitar Number 1 is the highest sounding but closest to the floor, number six is the largest, lowest sounding, and closest to your face. These notes **do not** require your left hand.

③                    ②                    ①

G                    B                    E  
3rd                    2nd                    1st  
String                    string                    string

Guitar Note Finder - High Open Strings

The image shows musical notation for three high open strings on a guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with a single eighth note for each string. Above the notes are circled numbers: 3 for G, 2 for B, and 1 for E. Below the treble staff is a TAB staff with the letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' stacked vertically on the left. The TAB staff shows '0' for each string, indicating open strings. The notes G, B, and E are printed below the treble staff, with a vertical line connecting each note to its corresponding '0' in the TAB staff.



Make sure you know how many beats are in each measure. Practice reading along as the teacher plays.  
The more you get used to reading music the easier it gets.

1

G B

E G

Make sure that your right thumb is 'falling' onto the string underneath the one you are playing (rest stroke).  
**Don't let your thumb move past the next string.** Don't support your right hand by resting your fingers on the guitar.

2

When reading music look for repetition. Look ahead of the beat whenever possible as it gives your fingers more time to know what to do!

Guitar Note Finder - High Open Strings

Musical notation for high open strings. The top staff is a treble clef with three notes: G (circled 3), B (circled 2), and E (circled 1). The bottom staff is a TAB staff with fret numbers: 0 for G, 0 for B, and 0 for E.



Keep your eyes on the music, do not look at your thumb while you play. You will need your eyes later for the left hand. Try to challenge yourself by not looking. You will get the hang of it.

3

G B E B G B E

G B E B E B G B E

Reading Music is easier with a little planning. Look at the first line in example 4 which of our three notes is missing? Do you play that note in the 2nd line? Do any parts of the song repeat? Can you see any patterns?

4

In the next example you will notice that the rhythm gets more complicated. Simply use your RHYTHM SYLLABLES and play the rhythm with your right hand as you say it to yourself.

5

TIP. Most of these songs can be performed as canons or rounds. Try them and see what they sound like.

Guitar Note Finder - High Open Strings

The image displays musical notation for guitar high open strings. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a TAB staff. The treble clef staff shows three notes: G (circled 3), B (circled 2), and E (circled 1). The TAB staff shows the corresponding fretting positions: 0 for G, 0 for B, and 0 for E. The notes are connected by a horizontal line, indicating a sequence or a single melodic line.

String	3	2	1
Treble Clef	G	B	E
TAB	0	0	0

Be sure to check the time signature - how many beats in each measure?

6

7

Subdividing - using an artificial 'micro' beat to accurately reproduce the rhythm of a song.  
 Each dotted 1/4 note (tam) gets **3 microbeats**.  
 Each 1/8 note (ti) gets **1 microbeat**.

8

123 456 1 2 3 456 1 2 3 456 1 2 3 456  
 tam tam ti ti ti tam ti ti ti tam ti ti ti tam

123 456 1 2 3 456 1 2 3 456 1 2 3 456  
 tam tam ti ti ti tam ti ti ti tam ti ti ti tam



Guitar Note Finder - High Open Strings

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a guitar tablature staff below it. The staff contains three notes: G, B, and E. Above each note is a circled number: ③ for G, ② for B, and ① for E. Below each note is a vertical line with a '0' underneath it, indicating an open string. The tablature staff is labeled 'TAB' on the left side.



In 6-8 meter, the 1/4 note (ta) gets 2 microbeats.

**9**

1 2 3 4 5 6 123 456 1 2 3 4 5 6 123  
 ti ti ti ti ti ti tam tam ti ti ti ti ti ti tam

12 3 45 6 123 456 12 3 45 6 123  
 ta ti ta ti tam tam ta ti ta ti tam

**10**

123 456 12 3 456 1 2 3 45 6 1 2 3 456  
 tam tam ta ti tam ti ti ti ta ti ti ti ti tam

12 3 45 6 1 2 3 45 6 1 2 3 456 12 3 456  
 ta ti ta ti ti ti ti ta ti ti ti ti tan ta ti tam

Be careful when counting the rhythm. Always remember to look through a piece before you play it for the first time. With practice you'll know what it sounds like before you start playing.

**11**

The numbers inside the circles tell you which string to use to play the note.

The image displays a musical staff with a treble clef and a corresponding TAB staff. The notes G, B, D, and E are shown on the staff, with circled numbers 3, 2, and 1 above them indicating the string to be used. The TAB staff shows the fret numbers 0, 0, 3, and 0 for each note respectively. The letters T, A, and B are written vertically on the left side of the TAB staff.

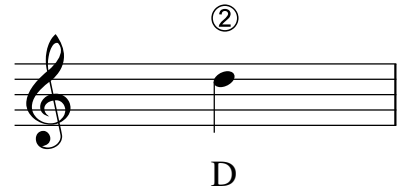
Note	String	Fret
G	3	0
B	2	0
D	2	3
E	1	0

the TAB notation underneath the staff is specific to the guitar. Each line represents a string, and the numbers tell you where to place your fingers on the frets.

D is played on the 3rd Fret of the 2nd String, hence the 3 on the 2nd line.

## Using the Left Hand

**D** is played on the **3rd Fret** of the 2nd String



The left hand is tricky, and most students develop bad habits easily. Follow my steps closely and there will be less frustration as we move forward. We need to be able to do 3 things at once (right hand, left hand, and reading the music) so proceed carefully.

Let's begin by holding a pencil between the tip of your middle finger and your thumb. Notice how easily you can control the pencil in this position.



**D is played by using both hands.** Your left hand will gently squeeze with the thumb and finger on the 3rd fret of the 2nd string. Once your left hand is holding the note, pluck the second string with your right hand. Using both hands together is what makes the guitar difficult to play. Timing will come with practice.

The thumb works directly behind the finger to help gently squeeze the string at the correct fret. Just like the pencil exercise.

It is easy to get wrong as we tend to want to hang our arm from the guitar neck. Incorrect technique makes it harder for our finger to find the note, but notice how it also takes the other fingers away from the strings.



Correct



Incorrect

The numbers inside the circles tell you which string to use to play the note.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a guitar TAB staff below it. The notes G, B, D, and E are written on the staff. Above each note is a circled number: 3 for G, 2 for B, 1 for D, and 1 for E. Below the notes are vertical lines indicating fret positions: 0 for G, 0 for B, 3 for D, and 0 for E. The TAB staff has five lines, with the numbers 0, 0, 3, and 0 written on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th lines respectively. The letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' are written vertically on the left side of the TAB staff.

the TAB notation underneath the staff is specific to the guitar. Each line represents a string, and the numbers tell you where to place your fingers on the frets.

D is played on the 3rd Fret of the 2nd String, hence the 3 on the 2nd line.



Make sure you hold onto the note in the same way you held the pencil. Stick to this now and playing will be much easier later on.

12

Musical notation for measures 12 and 13. Measure 12 consists of four measures of music. Measure 13 consists of four measures of music. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat.

13

Musical notation for measures 13 and 14. Measure 13 consists of four measures of music. Measure 14 consists of four measures of music. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat.

14

Musical notation for measures 14 and 15. Measure 14 is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures of music. Measure 15 consists of four measures of music. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat.

**I See the Moon**

15

Musical notation for measures 15 and 16. Measure 15 is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures of music with the lyrics "I see the moon and the moon sees me". Measure 16 consists of four measures of music with the lyrics "God bless the moon and God bless me". The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat.

I see the moon and the moon sees me

God bless the moon and God bless me

The numbers inside the circles tell you which string to use to play the note.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a guitar tablature staff below it. The notes G, B, D, and E are written on the staff. Above each note is a circled number indicating the string to use: 3 for G, 2 for B, 1 for D, and 1 for E. The tablature staff shows the fret numbers for each note: 0 for G, 0 for B, 3 for D, and 0 for E. The letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' are written vertically on the left side of the tablature staff.

the TAB notation underneath the staff is specific to the guitar. Each line represents a string, and the numbers tell you where to place your fingers on the frets.

D is played on the 3rd Fret of the 2nd String, hence the 3 on the 2nd line.



16

Musical notation for exercise 16, measures 1-4. The first staff shows a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). The second staff continues: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter).

If you are careful with your left hand, you should be able to play an open E without having to move your finger away from the D on the 2nd string. If you do have to move it, do not take your finger too far away from the fretboard.

17

Musical notation for exercise 17, measures 1-4. The first staff shows: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). The second staff continues: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter).

**Mouse Mousie**

18

Musical notation for exercise 18, measures 1-4. The first staff shows: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). The second staff continues: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter).



The numbers inside the circles tell you which string to use to play the note.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a corresponding TAB staff. Above the staff, circled numbers indicate the string used for each note: 3 for G, 2 for B, and 1 for E. The notes G, A, B, D, and E are written on the staff. Below the staff, the TAB notation shows fret numbers: 0 for G, 2 for A, 0 for B, 3 for D, and 0 for E. The letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' are stacked vertically on the left side of the TAB staff.

the TAB notation underneath the staff is specific to the guitar. Each line represents a string, and the numbers tell you where to place your fingers on the frets.

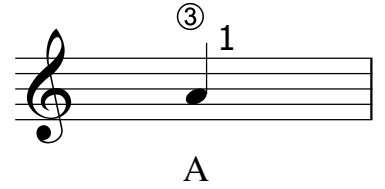
A is played on the 2nd fret of the 3rd string, hence the number 2 is placed on the 3rd line.



Playing "A" is similar to playing D only the fret and string location is different. Try using your first finger for "A" and so you use a different finger than when you play a "D". Remember to use the pencil technique.

Can you figure out where we will play our new note, A?

Remember that the circled number tells you which string to play, and the other number tells you which finger. It doesn't tell you which fret to use however. Use the note finder on the opposite page to help you located the correct position.



19

Let us Chase the Squirrel

20

Great Big House in New Orleans

21

The numbers inside the circles tell you which string to use to play the note.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a TAB staff below it. The notes G, A, B, D, and E are written on the staff. Above each note is a circled number indicating the string to use: 3 for G, 2 for A, 1 for B, and 1 for E. The TAB staff shows the fret numbers for each note: 0 for G, 2 for A, 0 for B, 3 for D, and 0 for E. Vertical lines connect the notes to their corresponding fret numbers on the TAB staff.

the TAB notation underneath the staff is specific to the guitar. Each line represents a string, and the numbers tell you where to place your fingers on the frets.

A is played on the 2nd fret of the 3rd string, hence the number 2 is placed on the 3rd line.



Playing "A" is similar to playing D only the fret and string location is different. Try using your first finger for "A" and so you use a different finger than when you play a "D". Remember to use the pencil technique.

22

Musical notation for measures 22-25, consisting of four staves in 2/4 time. The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes.

Rocky Mountain

23

Musical notation for measures 23-26, consisting of four staves in 2/4 time. The melody is accompanied by guitar chords: G, Em, D, and G. Each chord is accompanied by a diagram showing the fretting pattern on the guitar strings.

The numbers inside the circles tell you which string to use to play the note.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and five notes: G, A, B, D, and E. Above the notes are circled numbers 3, 2, and 1, indicating the string to use. Below the notes are TAB lines with fret numbers: G (0), A (2), B (0), D (3), and E (0).

the TAB notation underneath the staff is specific to the guitar. Each line represents a string, and the numbers tell you where to place your fingers on the frets.

A is played on the 2nd fret of the 3rd string, hence the number 2 is placed on the 3rd line.

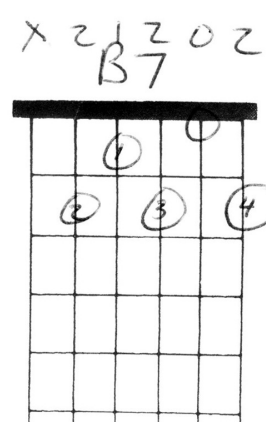
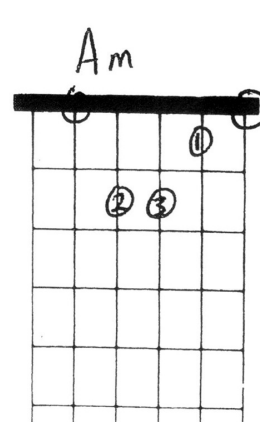
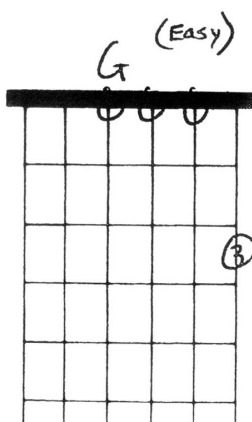
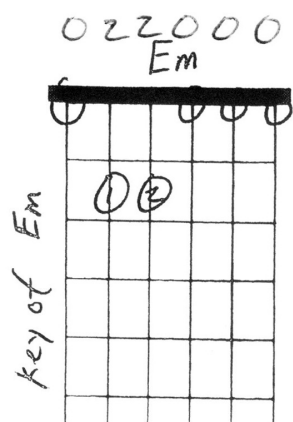
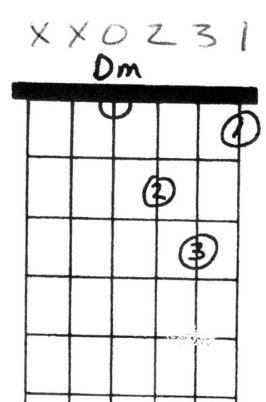
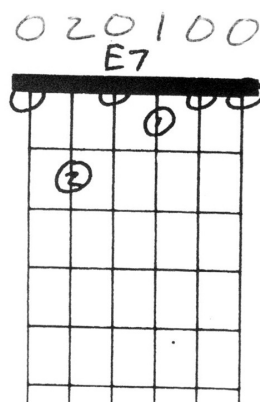
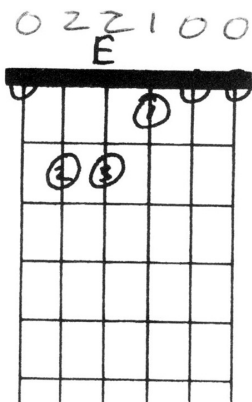
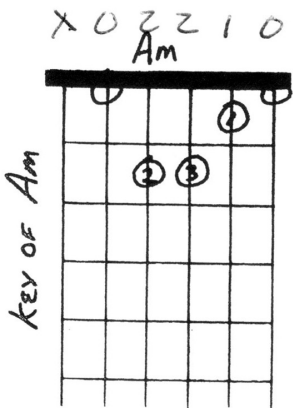
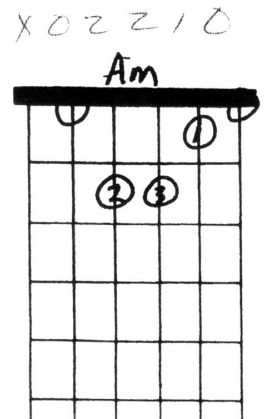
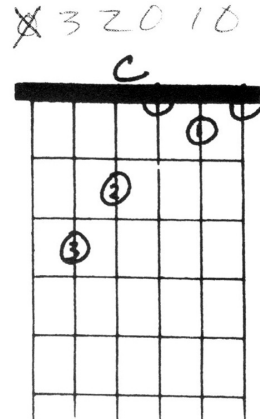
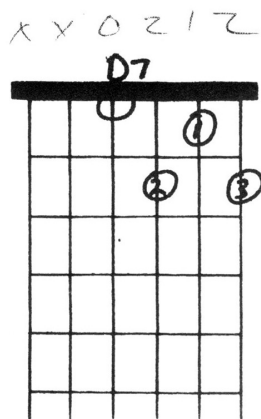
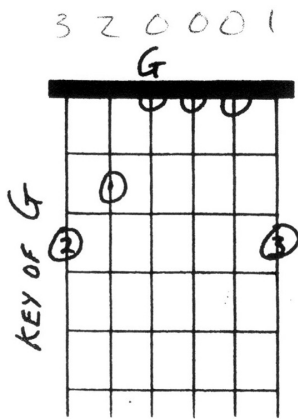
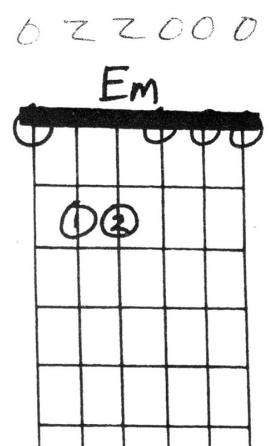
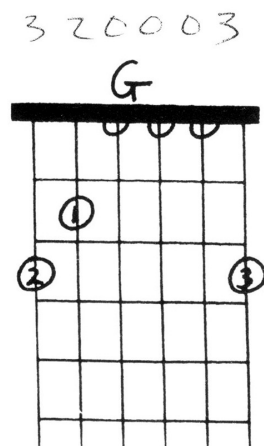
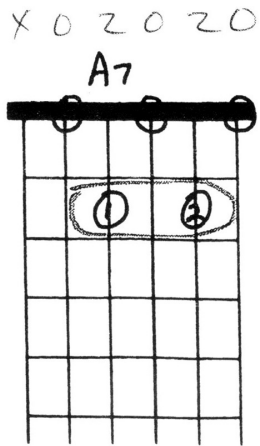
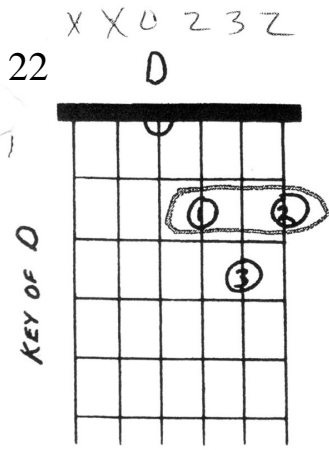


Playing "A" is similar to playing D only the fret and string location is different. Try using your first finger for "A" and so you use a different finger than when you play a "D". Remember to use the pencil technique.

24

This example uses an advanced form of the repeat sign. "D.C. al fine" means to go back to the beginning of the song and play until you reach the word "fine". When you first come across the word "fine" in a score, ignore it until you have done the repeat.

25

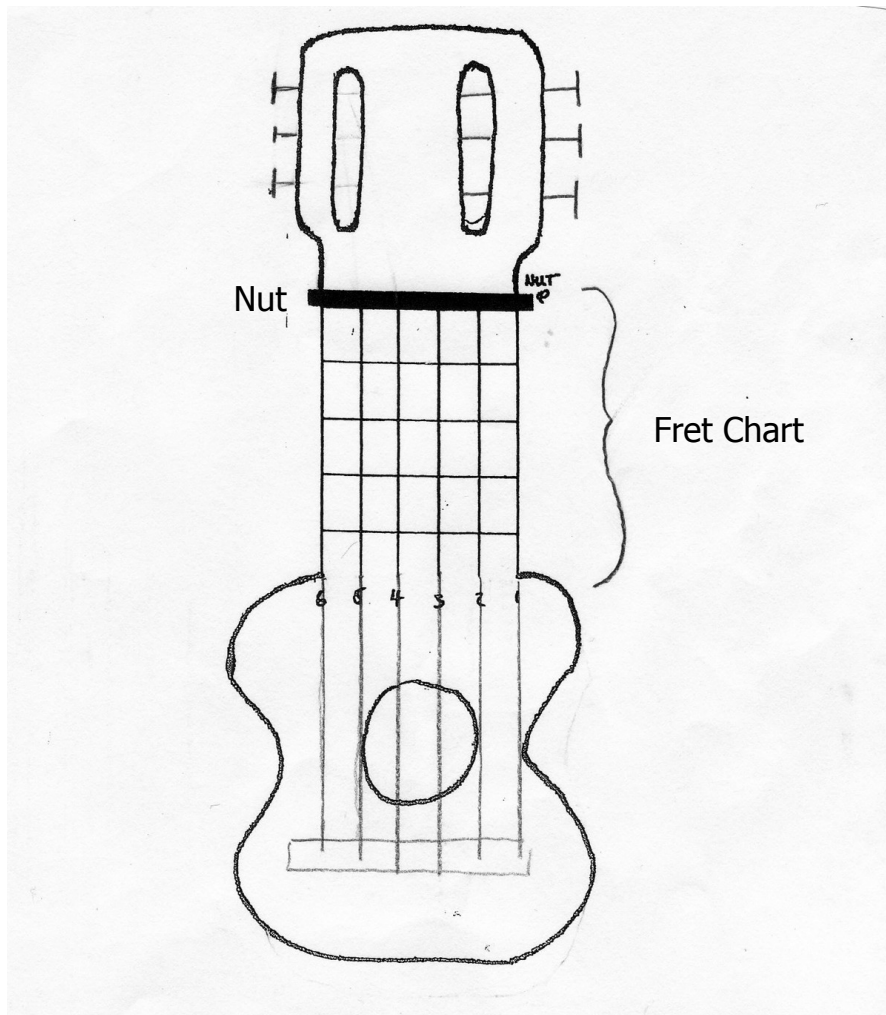


# Guitar Chords and Fret Charts

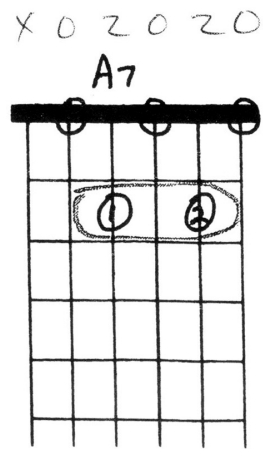
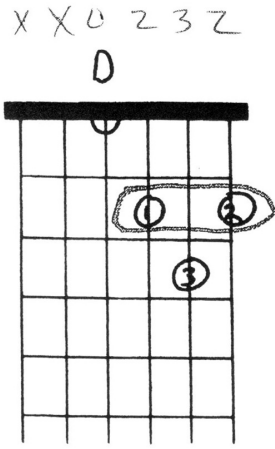
The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef. The melody consists of quarter notes: I, see, the, moon, and, the, moon, sees, me. Above the staff, four guitar chord diagrams are shown: G (open G), Em (open E minor), G (open G), and D (open D). Each diagram shows the fretboard with dots for finger positions and 'x' for muted strings.

Earlier in the book you might have noticed chord charts above the music. These represent The **Harmony** or accompaniment for the tune. Reading guitar chords from standard musical notation is very uncommon except in classical guitar, and so this system was developed to make reading the chord easier (I know it seems confusing at the moment).

Look at the chart below. I have added the other parts of the guitar to help you see how the chart is supposed to be read. We will practice reading these together and with a little practice you'll be able to read chord charts from any book of guitar music.







Correct



Correct



Incorrect



Incorrect

# Deep in the Heart of Texas



The stars at night are big and bright



deep in the heart of Tex - as \_\_\_\_\_ The

10

prair - ie sky is wide and high

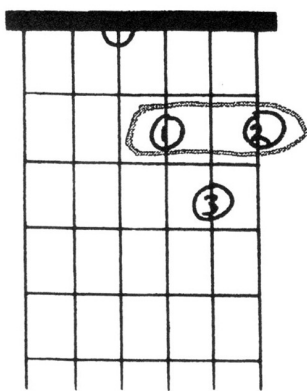


deep in the heart of Tex - as \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. The sage in bloom is like perfume... Reminds me of the one I love...
- 3. The coyotes wail along the trail... The rabbits rush around the brush...
- 4. The cowboys cry, kee-yippie-i... the doggies bawl, and bawl, and bawl...

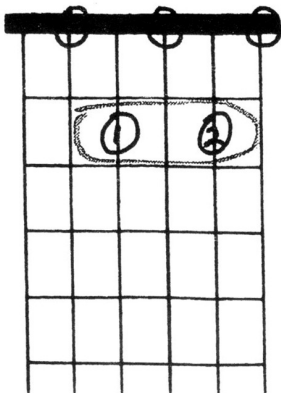
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D



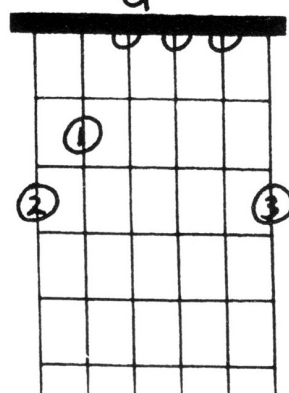
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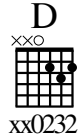


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G

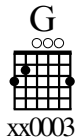


# The Long, Tall Texan

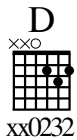


Well I'm the Long, Tall, Tex - an I ride a big white

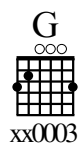
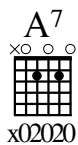
horse. He rides from Tex - as on his big white\_ horse. Well I'm the



long, tall tex - an I ride a big white



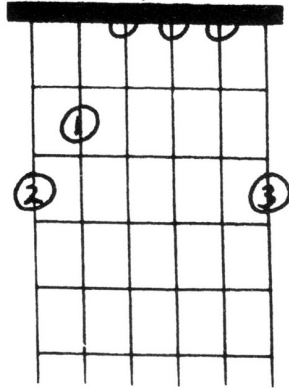
horse. He rides from Tex - as on his big white\_ horse. And when I



ride\_ in-to town they say. Oh Roy, oh Roy, is that your\_ horse?

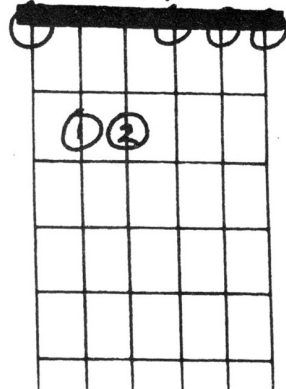
3 2 0 0 0 3

G



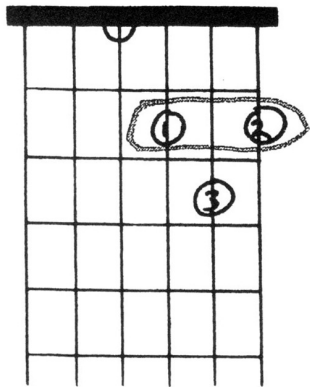
0 2 2 0 0 0

Em



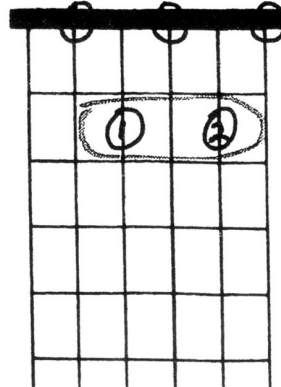
x x 0 2 3 2

D





x 0 2 0 2 0

A7





# Chicken on a Fencepost

G




Chick - en on a fence - post can't dance jos - ey

D



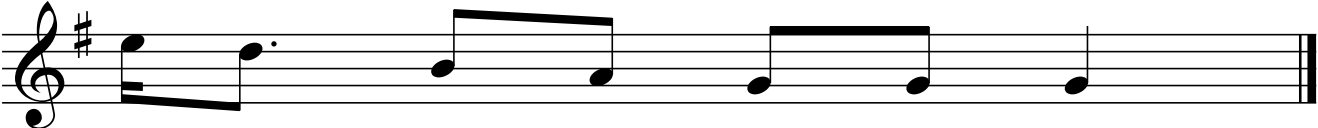
chick - en on a fence - post can't dance jos - ey

G Em

chick - en on a fence post can't dance jos - ey

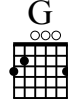
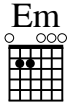
D G

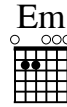
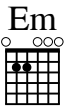
hel - lo sus - an brown - e - o

2. Shoe string's broke and I can't dance Josey
3. Chew my gum while I dance Josey
4. Hair in the butter and I can dance Josey

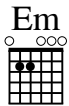
# Pat Works on the Railway



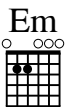
In Eight-*een* hun-dred and for - ty one I put me cour-droy britch - es on. I



5 put me cour - droy britch - es on to work up - on the rail - way.



9 fil - li - me-ooh - re - ooh - re - ay fil - li - me-ooh - re - ooh - re ay



13 fil - li - me-ooh - re - ooh - re - ay to work up - on the rail - way

# I See the Moon

G1

G Em G D

4/4

I see the moon and the moon sees me

G2

Detailed description: This system contains the first four measures of the song. The G1 staff (treble clef) has a 4/4 time signature and contains the melody: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (half), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). The G2 staff (treble clef) contains the accompaniment: G3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), B3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), B3 (quarter), G3 (half), G3 (half). Chord diagrams are shown above the G1 staff: G (x00033), Em (020000), G (x00033), and D (xx0232).

5

G Em C G

God bless the moon and God bless me

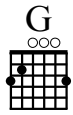
Detailed description: This system contains the next four measures of the song. The G1 staff (treble clef) has a 4/4 time signature and contains the melody: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (half), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half), G4 (half). The G2 staff (treble clef) contains the accompaniment: G3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), B3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), B3 (quarter), G3 (half), G3 (half). Chord diagrams are shown above the G1 staff: G (x00033), Em (020000), C (x0232), and G (x00033).



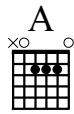
# Blues in D



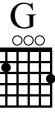
Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. A sequence of eighth notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. A circled '4' is below the first note.



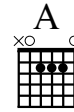
Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. A sequence of eighth notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. A circled '3' is below the first note, and a circled '4' is below the eighth note.



10



Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. A sequence of eighth notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. A circled '5' is below the first note, a circled '3' is below the fifth note, a circled '4' is below the eighth note, and a circled '5' is below the eleventh note. The staff ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

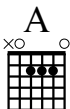


Repeat 3 x

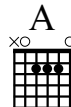


Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. A sequence of eighth notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. A circled '4' is below the first note. The staff ends with a double bar line.

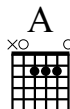
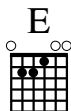
# Blues in A



Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth notes: A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2. A circled '5' is positioned below the first note. Above the staff is the A major chord diagram.



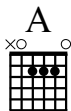
Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth notes: A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2. A circled '4' is below the first note, and a circled '5' is below the 10th note. Above the staff are the D major and A major chord diagrams.



10

Repeat 3 x

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth notes: A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2. A circled '6' is below the first note, a circled '4' is below the 5th note, a circled '5' is below the 10th note, and a circled '6' is below the 15th note. Above the staff are the E major, D major, A major, and E major chord diagrams. The staff ends with a repeat sign.



Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a sequence of eighth notes: A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2, A2. Above the staff is the A major chord diagram. The staff ends with a double bar line.

# Songs With TAB Notation Only

1

A three-line guitar tablature system with fret markers above. The top line (T) contains the sequence: 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 3-3-3-3. The middle line (A) contains: 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 3-3-3-3. The bottom line (B) is empty.

A three-line guitar tablature system with fret markers above. The top line (T) contains: 1-1-1-1 | 0-0-0-0 | 2-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0. The middle line (A) contains: 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0. The bottom line (B) contains: 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0. The piece ends with a double bar line.

2

A three-line guitar tablature system with fret markers above. The top line (T) contains: 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 3-3-3-3. The middle line (A) contains: 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 3-3-3-3. The bottom line (B) is empty.

3

A three-line guitar tablature system with fret markers above. The top line (T) contains: 3-0-0-3 | 0-0-2-2 | 0-0-2-2 | 0-0-0-0. The middle line (A) contains: 0-0-2-2 | 0-0-2-2 | 0-0-2-2 | 0-0-0-0. The bottom line (B) contains: 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0. The piece ends with a double bar line.

4

A three-line guitar tablature system with fret markers above. The top line (T) contains: 0-1-3-2 | 3-0-2-3 | 2-0-3-1 | 0-2-0-0. The middle line (A) contains: 0-2-0-1 | 3-0-2-3 | 2-0-3-1 | 0-2-0-0. The bottom line (B) contains: 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0 | 0-0-0-0. The piece ends with a double bar line.

5

T  
A  
B

6

T  
A  
B

T  
A  
B

7

T  
A  
B

T  
A  
B