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Guitar Lessons – Tabs: How to Read Guitar Tablature

TAB or tablature is the most common method of writing out music for the guitar. It is different from classical music notation in that; TAB uses ordinary numbers and keyboard characters as opposed to standard musical notation which uses symbols. Because of this format, anyone with a computer can write or read TAB making it the most user friendly way to read and communicate guitar music. Also TAB relates directly to the fret board of your guitar meaning that you may easily see where you put your fingers.

In the full version of Jamorama, both standard musical notation and tablature are used. But for this six day course we will only use TAB. The reason for this is that tablature is very easy to read and you should have no problems learning TAB in a few short minutes of reading.

TAB has some weak points, the worst of which is that rhythm can't be easily indicated. This shouldn't pose a problem though, as I will indicate the rhythm for each exercise using the strum indicators that were introduced in lesson one.

OK. To start I want you to look at your guitar and you will clearly see that it has six strings going from thickest to thinnest. On a TAB diagram, the thinnest string, (or 1st string as its most commonly called) is at the top - The thickest (or 6th string) is at the bottom. This is clearly demonstrated in the 1st example below.

The following diagram shows you how tablature relates to the guitar fret board:



Some of you may notice that this guitar seems upside down in relation to how you play. This

is simply the way that guitar music is generally written. Now if you transfer this same model to a written format you will get TAB, which can be seen below.

Tablature score:

	1
T	2
A	3
B	4
	5
	6

So the lines above indicate the strings on a guitar. The top line of the TAB being the thinnest string of the guitar, and the bottom line on the TAB chart indicating the thickest string of the guitar. Now if you look at your guitar you will see metal bars that raise up from the neck of the guitar called frets. TAB uses numbers to show you which one of these frets to press down and play.

For example, look at the tab diagram to the right and you can see that the 1st string (thinnest string) is being played. The number refers to the fret that you should press down. In this case the number zero is displayed. This means that you shouldn't press down anything.

	0
T	
A	
B	

So if you were to play the above piece of TAB on your guitar, you would pick the thinnest string once with your plucking hand and do nothing with your fret hand.

Tip: If you are having trouble with this concept, you can download a video or audio example of the above exercise to see and hear it for yourself. The download links are below (right click on the link and select "save as"):

Dial Up

[QuickTime](#)

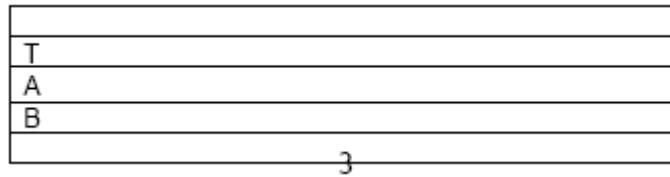
[WindowsMediaPlayer](#)

Broadband

[QuickTime](#)

[WindowsMediaPlayer](#)

Now let's see if we can start pushing down some strings. Look at the next example below and try and play the note that the TAB chart displays.



If you pressed down the thickest string at the 3rd fret then you played the exercise correctly. If you are still unsure whether you are doing the right thing or not, refer to the video below.

Tip: The download links are below (right click on the link and select "save as"):

Dial Up

[QuickTime](#)

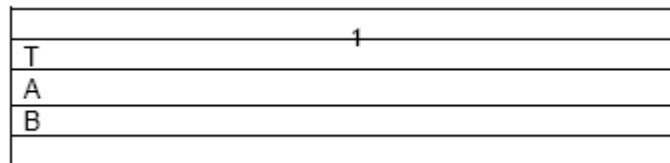
[WindowsMediaPlayer](#)

Broadband

[QuickTime](#)

[WindowsMediaPlayer](#)

Let's try another one. Play the following piece of TAB:



This TAB diagram above indicates the 2nd string (second thinnest) and you should be pressing down on the first fret.

Tip: Once again, there is video available for this example. The download links are below (right click on the link and select "save as"):

Dial Up

[QuickTime](#)

[WindowsMediaPlayer](#)

Broadband

[QuickTime](#)

[WindowsMediaPlayer](#)

Things become a little more complicated when you are required to play chords, however the basic principals I have already outlined still apply. The only difference is that you will be required to play more strings and hold down more strings with your fingers. In this next example I will show you how to play the chord 'A'.

A Major Chord

	0
T	2
A	2
B	2
	0

The first and fifth strings are played open while the second, third and fourth strings are played at the second fret. The sixth string is not played in the A Major Chord and this is indicated by an X.

If you have read the TAB correctly your fingers should look like this:



Tip: You can download a video or audio example of the above exercise to see and hear it for yourself. The download links are below (right click on the link and select "save as"):

Dial Up

[QuickTime](#)

[WindowsMediaPlayer](#)

Broadband

[QuickTime](#)

[WindowsMediaPlayer](#)

So now you know how to use basic tablature as it applies to notes and full chords. In this introductory set of lessons you will use TAB to learn different chords and by lesson six you will be able to play the full song, 'Rivers of Babylon'.

Time to take a break. Well done, you've just completed the first part of this newsletter. Next you are about to learn about notes on the first string.

Don't forget, for the ultimate guitar learning kit which includes step-by-step written lessons, video lessons, audio lessons and sophisticated software games, visit Jamorama.com

Notes on the First String

Knowledge of the notes that are on each string is necessary for understanding guitar theory. The first string is also known as the high E string. The main notes in the first position on the first string are E (open), F (1st fret) and G (3rd fret). The first position refers to the first 4 frets of the guitar.



We will use these notes in the following exercise to introduce to you the concept of note picking.

guitar tends to have a characteristic sound to it. Sure there is a style of playing that characterizes blues guitar, in fact we cover this style in the Jamorama course thoroughly. There are blues Jam tracks and blues songs, the course will teach you HOW to play the blues guitar, but a question that often pops up is 'Once I know how to play the STYLE, how do I get that 'sound' out of my amp?'.

Ok, firstly let's look at the aspects of a guitarist's set up that have an effect on the final sound.

- Ability of player to play that style.
- Choice of guitar (i.e. Electric or acoustic?? Solid body or semi-acoustic, single coil pickups or humbucking pickups??)
- Choice of amplifier
- Settings on the guitar
- Settings on the amplifier
- Other miscellaneous items (e.g. strings, effects pedals e.t.c)

So, from this list we can see that there is simply no ONE aspect that will directly change the sound, it's the use of all of these things that point to the final outcome. A nice way of looking at it is to treat all of these aspects as ingredients to the sound recipe. By changing the ingredients or amount of, or order in which they are used you end up changing the final product. Obviously one of the most important of the ingredients is the ability of the player themselves. There is no point in having all of the ingredients to play blues guitar if the player can't actually play blues style guitar... make sense?

Let's start with the guitar itself, the best choice of guitar would be a solid body electric guitar such as a Fender Stratocaster, or a Gibson Les Paul, pretty much any solid body electric guitar will do. Once you have selected the guitar let's look at the settings that are to be used on the guitar itself. You will want to select the neck pickup (the pickup that is closest to the neck of the guitar). This pickup gives a more rounded natural sound, often called the rhythm pickup. The on board controls of the guitar (the volume and tone knobs) are also very useful. To achieve a bluesy sound you should slightly roll off some of the tone knob, roll it back to about 7 or 8.

Ok once you have this set up, look at the amplifier. Blues guitarists have a slightly overdriven or distorted sound. To achieve this I want you to make sure that you are plugging the guitar into the 'Hi-gain' input of your amplifier (if you only have one input then use that one. What

you need to do next is to turn up your amp gain to a point where the sound coming out is slightly distorted (on most amps this would be just after halfway). If your guitar amp doesn't distort or overdrive then there are other alternatives, you could purchase and use a distortion effect pedal.

Ok, the amplifier's EQ settings??? What do I do with those? Basically I want you to leave all the 'EQ' knobs in the middle (i.e. don't boost or drop any of them). The bluesy sound really comes from having selected the neck pick up and by having the amp slightly distorting. Follow these tips, and I guarantee you that your next blues solo will now actually SOUND like a blues solo. Get into it! See you in the next newsletter.

Do you wish you knew how to read music like you know how to read English?

Would you like to be able to play music from straight off the page?

Let me tell you about my fantastic new music theory learning game Jayde Musica. Jayde Musica takes the bore out of learning how to read music. It is an exciting and challenging new game, and best of all, **it's FREE!**

Introducing Jayde Musica, **the most fun way of learning how to read music.**

Developed by myself and the team here at [Jamorama](#), Jayde Musica brings enjoyment to the otherwise monotonous task of learning how to read music. Watch as musical notes fly across the screen and do your best to identify them! This game goes from beginner to advanced levels, complete with a high scores table.

Jayde Musica is so easy to set up and use that you'll be having fun learning how to read music in seconds.

I think you will find this to be **the easiest, most effective way to learn how to read music.** You will be amazed at how quickly you will enjoy using Jayde Musica.



Only a Screen Shot

"I've just been using your music note game this morning and i have to say i'm loving it. I'm going to pass it on to my friends. It really is a big help."

- Chris Danaskis, via Email

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Features and benefits of Jayde Musica:

- Easy, Medium and Hard difficulty modes included. Clefs include treble, bass, alto and tenor. You have the option of turning on/off various clefs, so that you can isolate a specific area of music theory that you wish to work on. **Fast Learning.** Jayde Musica is a great way to accelerate your learning. It will have you self-correcting and trying really hard to remember the various notes displayed, so that you can progress further and gain a record score or even clock the game! **It's free.** That's right, you can keep on using this program and it won't expire. Unlimited use. You can use Jayde Musica as many times as you want for free and it won't expire.
- Simplicity. No flashy gimmicks, so **easy to play** that you won't feel like you have to learn a whole new game. In fact it has the familiar game play of space invaders.

It's as easy as 1,2,3. Just play the game, start making mistakes and learn from them! As you get higher and higher scores, you'll be surprised at how dramatically quick your music

reading proficiency level will improve.

This program is **so simple to use, all it takes is 10mins a day!**

"I just wanted to let you know that i'm really enjoying Jayde Musica. After searching for ages, i have finally found some music training software that is actually fun to use. Thanks a bunch!"

- Janine Soulli, Hobart, Australia

Jayde Musica is available via instant download and if you download it before **today**, it's yours Free! As a show of good will and to maintain our reputation for quality products, I'm giving you Jayde Musica for absolutely nothing.

[Click Here](#) to download Jayde Musica Now for Free! (Approx. 1.4 mb in size).

So download Jayde Musica now and learn to **fluently read all the musical notes on all the staves in just a matter of days!** Jayde Musica will never expire - you can use it all you like! Privacy information: There is no spy-ware contained in this program, we do not monitor your actions or email. When you register this program, we will not give your email address or personal details to anyone. Runs on all Windows and Macintosh operating systems. P.S. How else will you ever learn all those musical notes and be able to sight read them with ease?

[This FREE course is brought to you by Jamorama - The Ultimate Guitar Learning Kit](#)

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