

GLOSSARY OF MUSICAL TERMS

Accidental — a sign used to show a temporary change in pitch of a note (i.e. sharp \sharp , flat \flat , double sharp \times , double flat $\flat\flat$, or natural \natural). The sharps or flats in a key signature are not regarded as accidentals.

Ad lib — to be played at the performer's own discretion.

Allegretto — moderately fast.

Allegro — fast and lively.

Anacrusis — a note or notes occurring before the first bar of music (also called 'lead-in' notes).

Andante — an easy walking pace.

Arpeggio — the playing of a chord in single note fashion.

Bar — a division of music occurring between two bar lines (also called a 'measure').

Bar chord — a chord played with one finger lying across all six strings.

Bar line — a vertical line drawn across the staff which divides the music into equal sections called bars.

Bass — the lower regions of pitch in general. On guitar, the 4th, 5th and 6th strings.

Capo — a device placed across the neck of a guitar to allow a key change without alteration of the chord shapes.

Chord — a combination of three or more different notes played together.

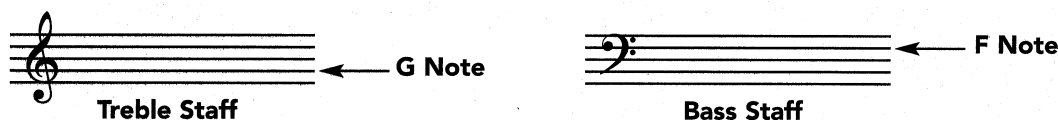
Chord progression — a series of chords played as a musical unit (e.g. as in a song).

Chromatic scale — a scale ascending and descending in semitones.

e.g. **C** chromatic scale:

ascending: C $C\sharp$ D $D\sharp$ E F $F\sharp$ G $G\sharp$ A $A\sharp$ B C
descending: C B $B\flat$ A $A\flat$ G $G\flat$ F E $E\flat$ D $D\flat$ C

Clef — a sign placed at the beginning of each staff of music which fixes the location of a particular note on the staff, and hence the location of all other notes, e.g.



Coda — an ending section of music, signified by the sign \oplus .

Common time — and indication of $\frac{4}{4}$ time — four quarter note beats per bar (also indicated by **C**)


D.C al fine — a repeat from the beginning to the word 'fine'.

Dot — a sign placed after a note indicating that its time value is extended by a half. e.g.



Duration — the time value of each note.


Dynamics — the varying degrees of softness (indicated by the term 'piano') and loudness (indicated by the term 'forte') in music.

Eighth note — a note with the value of half a beat in $\frac{4}{4}$ time, indicated thus  (also called a quaver).

The eighth note rest — indicating half a beat of silence, is written: 

Enharmonic — describes the difference in notation, but not in pitch, of two notes: e.g.





Fermata — a sign, , used to indicate that a note or chord is held to the player's own discretion (also called a 'pause sign').

First and second endings — signs used where two different endings occur. On the first time through ending one is played (indicated by the bracket **1**); then the progression is repeated and ending two is played (indicated **2**).

Flat — a sign, (\flat) used to lower the pitch of a note by one semitone.

Forte — loud. Indicated by the sign ***f***.

Half note — a note with the value of two beats in $\frac{4}{4}$ time, indicated thus:  (also called a minim). The half note rest, indicating two beats of silence, is written:  — third staff line.

Harmonics — a chime like sound created by lightly touching a vibrating string at certain points along the fret board.

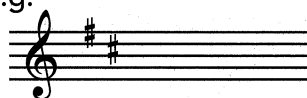
Harmony — the simultaneous sounding of two or more different notes.

Improvise — to perform spontaneously; i.e. not from memory or from a written copy.

Interval — the distance between any two notes of different pitches.

Key — describes the notes used in a composition in regards to the major or minor scale from which they are taken; e.g. a piece 'in the key of C major' describes the melody, chords, etc., as predominantly consisting of the notes, **C, D, E, F, G, A, and B** — i.e. from the **C** scale.

Key signature — a sign, placed at the beginning of each staff of music, directly after the clef, to indicate the key of a piece. The sign consists of a certain number of sharps or flats, which represent the sharps or flats found in the scale of the piece's key. e.g.



indicates a scale with **F#** and **C#**, which is **D** major; **D E F# G A B C# D**. Therefore the key is **D** major.

Lead-In — same as anacrusis (also called a pick-up).

Ledger lines — small horizontal lines upon which notes are written when their pitch is either above or below the range of the staff, e.g.




Legato — smoothly, well connected.

Lyric — words that accompany a melody.

Major scale — a series of eight notes in alphabetical order based on the interval sequence tone - tone - semitone - tone - tone - tone - semitone, giving the familiar sound **do re mi fa so la ti do**.

Melody — a succession of notes of varying pitch and duration, and having a recognizable musical shape.

Metronome — a device which indicates the number of beats per minute, and which can be adjusted in accordance to the desired tempo.

e.g. **MM** (Maelzel Metronome)  = 60 — indicates 60 quarter note beats per minute.

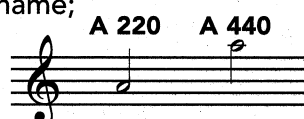
Moderato — at a moderate pace.

Natural — a sign (\natural) used to cancel out the effect of a sharp or flat. The word is also used to describe the notes **A, B, C, D, E, F** and **G**; e.g. 'the natural notes'.

Notation — the written representation of music, by means of symbols (music on a staff), letters (as in chord and note names) and diagrams (as in chord illustrations.)

Note — a single sound with a given pitch and duration.

Octave — the distance between any given note with a set frequency, and another note with exactly double that frequency. Both notes will have the same letter name;



Open chord — a chord that contains at least one open string.

Pitch — the sound produced by a note, determined by the frequency of the string vibrations. The pitch relates to a note being referred to as 'high' or 'low'.