

Guitar + Bass: Tab Guide

This is a basic guide on how to read different forms of tabs. The general downfall of this method of notation is that it lacks any rhythmic markings, and relies on the performers' recognition of the original source of music. Certain tabs may provide time frames for when a piece of music may occur within a song, but outside of that it is up to the performer to regulate their tempo and rhythm within the confines of the songs original performance. For the purpose of transcribing the music theory that was explained mostly through a piano perspective a list of the notes of the guitar has been provided below. The first set of notes on the far left reflect the note of the guitar when the strings are left open. Each vertical line represents a different fret and each horizontal line represents a strings. The bottom string is the string that is closest to the player (on a right handed guitar) and the top string should be the string furthest from the player. The basic method of performing on the guitar requires a variety of these frets to be plucked individually or together in a certain rhythm.

GUITAR SHARP NOTES

E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	1
B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	2
G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	3
D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	4
A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	5
E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	6

Source: http://musiced.about.com/od/lessonsandtips/ss/fingeringcharts_3.htm

In order to notate this - rather than using complex sheet music a tabulation system has been invented. This system uses the 6 strings of the guitar (or in the case of a bass it uses the 4 strings, in the case of 7 string guitar it uses 7 etc.). Each number on the lines represents a different fret for the player to use, 0 represents an open string, X represents a muted string 1 represents pressing down on the 1st fret 2 represents the 2nd fret etc. A typical example of a tab is demonstrated below.

```

E|-----|-----|-----|-----|
B|-----|-----|3---3--0---|1---1---|
G|0-2--0---|0-2-0---|-----|-----0---|
D|-----2---|-----2---|-----|-----|
A|-----|-----|-----|-----|
E|-----|-----|-----|-----|
  Silent night, Holy night. All is calm, all is bright.
  
```

```

E|-----|-----|-----|-----|
B|-----|1-0---|-----|-----|
G|2---2---|---2--|0-2---0-|-----|
D|-----|-----|-----|2---|
A|-----|-----|-----|-----|
E|-----|-----|-----|-----|
  Round young virgin, mother and Child,
  
```

```

E|-----|-----|-----|-----|
B|-----|1-0---|-----|-----|
G|2-2---|---2--|0-2---0-|-----|
D|-----|-----|-----|2---|
A|-----|-----|-----|-----|
E|-----|-----|-----|-----|
  Holy infant so tender and mild.
  
```

```

E|-----|1-----|---0--|-----|-----|
B|3---3---|---3--0-|1---|1---|-----|
G|-----|-----|-----|0---|0---|-----|
D|-----|-----|-----|2---|3--0-|-----|
A|-----|-----|-----|-----|2---|
E|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
  Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.
  
```

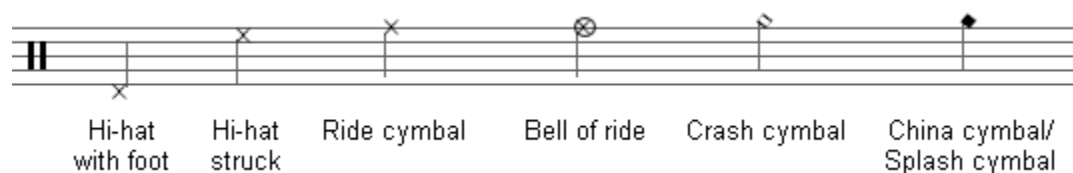
Source: <http://www.learntoplayguitartips.net/learn-guitar-songs-using-different-methods/>

A legend of some of the different symbols used in tab music can be seen below. There is a multitude of YouTube videos on how to perform different techniques and how to read tabs so feel free to explore them.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration Legend • ----- • W - whole • H - half • Q - quarter • E - 8th • S - 16th • T - 32nd • X - 64th • . - note dotted • -n- - n-tuplets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • b - bend • br - bendRelease • pb - preBend • pbr - preBendRelease • brb - bendReleaseBend • \n/ - tremolo bar dip • \n - tremolo bar dive • -/n - tremolo bar Release up • /n\ - tremolo bar inverted dip • /n - tremolo bar return • -\n - tremolo bar Release down • S - shift slide • s - legato slide • / - slide into from below or out of upwards • \ - slide into from above or out of downwards • ~ - vibrato • W - wide vibrato • tr - trill • TP - tremolo picking • T - tapping • S - slap • P - pop • < - fade in • ^ - brush up • v - brush down |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tablature Legend • ----- • L - tied note • x - dead note • g - grace note • (n) - ghost note • > - accentuated note • NH - natural harmonic • AH - artificial harmonic • TH - tapped harmonic • SH - semi harmonic • PH - pitch harmonic • h - hammer on • p - pull off | |

Source: <http://www.howtoreadguitartabs.net/>

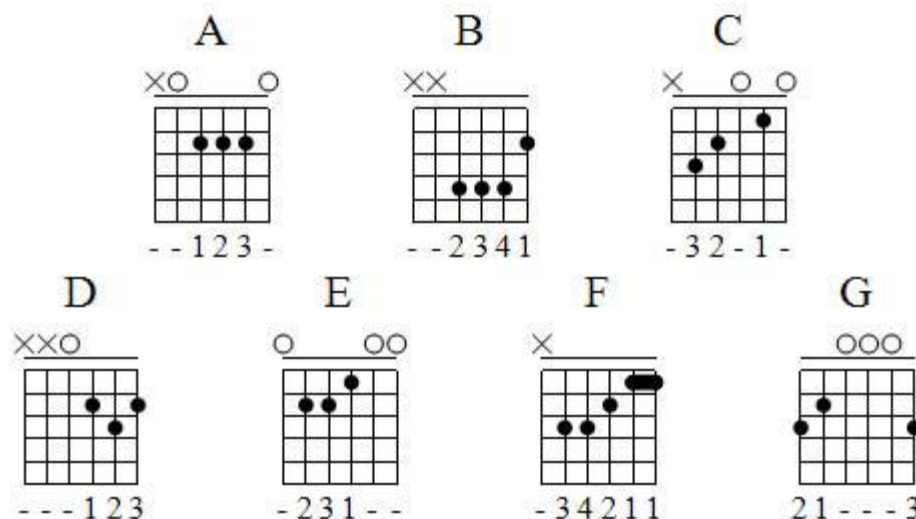
Also worth mentioning is the adaptation of TABs for drummers. A sample of the kind of notation they use is provided below. While this is shown on a staff, a similar system has been adapted for TAB use.





Source: http://www.drumsoloartist.com/wiki/drum_techniques/reading_drum_tabs/

There are a variety of what are entitled open chords. These chords feature some unfretted strings during their performance. Below is a list of some of the most basic open chords. The Xs above the frets mean that the strings should not be played (or muted) whereas the strings with an O above them should be let vibrate without any muting. The numbers below the strings represent the fingers that should be used on the frets. The index finger is indicated by 1, middle finger 2, ring finger 3, and little finger 4.

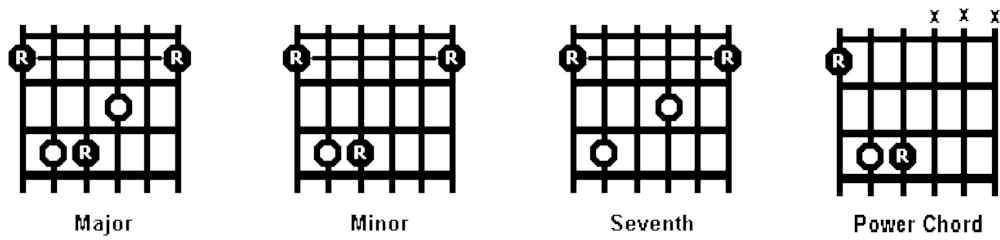


Source: <http://www.cmasite.info/guitar-chord-chart.html>

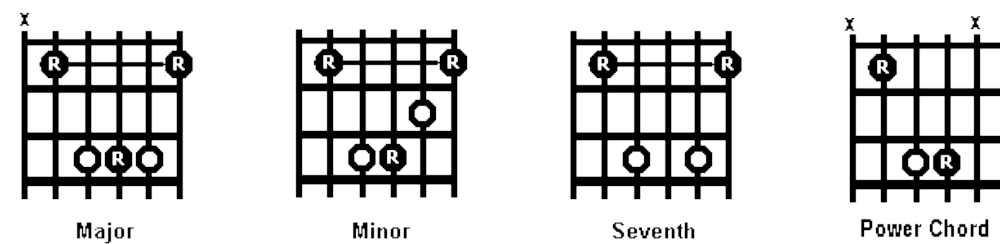
As can be seen some of the open chords use more than three notes. This contrasts the standard definition of a chord containing a tonic, third and fifth. Guitarists tend to double up on some of these notes to make fuller sounding chords. In order to make fuller sounding chords (compared to these open chords) guitarists also use Barre and Power chords.. Due to the semitone relationship between frets on a guitar these chords allow for easy method learning of a large variety of chords. By learning a simple hand shape and shifting it on different frets of the guitar the player can control a large variety of chords. This also makes learning scales a lot easier for the guitarist as well. Below is an example of the hand structures for a variety of Major, Minor, Seventh and Power Chords. Depending on fret positions these shapes facilitate a variety of different chords.

Six basic barre chord shapes

'E' shaped chords (rooted on 6th string):



'A' shaped chords (rooted on 5th string):



Source: <http://www.teachguitar.com/content/tmbasicbarrechords.htm>