



garner **GUITAR**
TAKE YOUR PLAYING TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

GUITAR GEOGRAPHY

A GUIDE TO LEARNING THE FRETBOARD.

SAMPLED FROM UPCOMING GARNER GUITAR BOOK
BEGINNER GUITAR LESSONS FOR ALL AGES



LANE GARNER



THE MUSICAL ALPHABET BEGINNING MUSIC THEORY

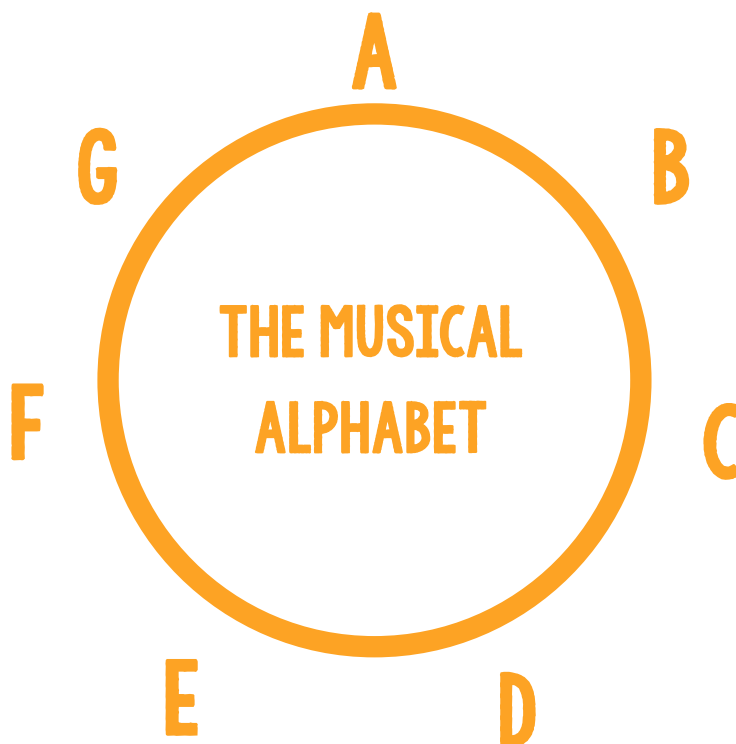
Music theory doesn't need to be a frightening term.

Understanding the basics of music will help you to take your playing to the next level.

Music is a language, and while it is possible to speak a language through emersion, it is often beneficial to study grammar. We can think of music theory as the grammar of music. The musical alphabet contains the first seven letters of the English alphabet:

A B C D E F G

After G we return to A. It can also be helpful to think of the musical alphabet as a circle:





STRING NAMES

We will eventually learn where all the notes on the guitar are located, but for now let's concentrate on the open strings. To play an open string simply pluck the string with your right hand without your left hand on the guitar. The strings have letter and number names. The thinnest string is called the first string while the thickest string is called the sixth string.

Starting with the sixth string (thickest) and going to the first string (thinnest) we can remember the letter name of each string with the mnemonic device:

EDDIE ATE DYNAMITE GOOD BYE EDDIE

6 5 4 3 2 1

E A D G B E

“

“MUSIC IS A HIGHER REVELATION THAN ALL WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY.”

- LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN



TUNING

Always tune your guitar before playing to ensure that what you are playing will sound right.

It is not uncommon to tune your guitar many times while playing, even sometimes in the middle of a song or between songs when playing live.

There are two main methods for tuning your guitar:

- a) **Tune with an electronic tuner**
- b) **Tune the guitar to itself**
(with or without a reference pitch)

THREE STEPS FOR TUNING WITH AN ELECTRONIC TUNER

- 1) Play note and look at tuner to determine if the note needs to be tuned up or down.
- 2) Play note repeatedly to keep constant sound for tuner.
- 3) While playing note and looking at tuner, turn tuning peg to tune string.

-If note is “flat” it must be tuned up to pitch.

-If note is “sharp” it must be tuned down to pitch.*

*It is always best to tune up to pitch so tuning will hold.

If note is sharp: tune below pitch then back up.

BASS STRINGS:

Counter-clockwise to tune up
Clockwise to tune down

TREBLE STRINGS:**

Clockwise to tune up
Counter-clockwise to tune down

**Fender-style guitars with six tuners per side will use bass string tuning for all six strings.



To tune a guitar to itself it is often helpful to use a reference pitch. A reference pitch may be available from another guitar, a piano or keyboard, or another instrument. It is not always possible to get a reference pitch such as when picking up a neglected dusty guitar at a friend or relative's house. In this case it is acceptable to approximate the sixth string (E) and tune the rest of the guitar using this reference pitch. If playing with another musician make sure that both instruments are tuned to the same reference pitch. Next, play the 5th fret on the sixth string and tune the open fifth string to match this pitch.

Follow the guide below to tune the remaining strings.

HOW TO TUNE THE GUITAR TO ITSELF

5th fret of low E string is the note A, same as open fifth string

5th fret of A string is the note D, same as open fourth string

5th fret of D string is the note G, same as open third string

4th fret of G string is the note B, same as open second string

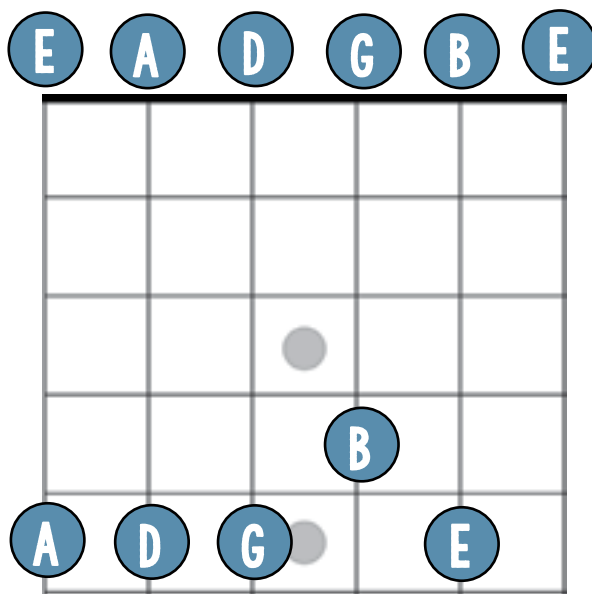
5th fret of B string is the note E, same as open first string



“SOMETIMES YOU WANT TO GIVE UP THE GUITAR, YOU’LL HATE THE GUITAR.

BUT IF YOU STICK WITH IT, YOU’RE GONNA BE REWARDED.”

- JIMI HENDRIX





Learning the names of the notes all over the guitar neck is an important step in understanding the instrument as a whole.

The distance from one note to the next is called an **“interval”**. The first two intervals we will learn are the half-step and the whole-step.

HALF-STEP: ONE FRET

WHOLE-STEP: TWO FRETS

A half-step is one fret.

For instance: from an open string to the first fret, or from the first fret to the second fret.

A whole-step is two frets.

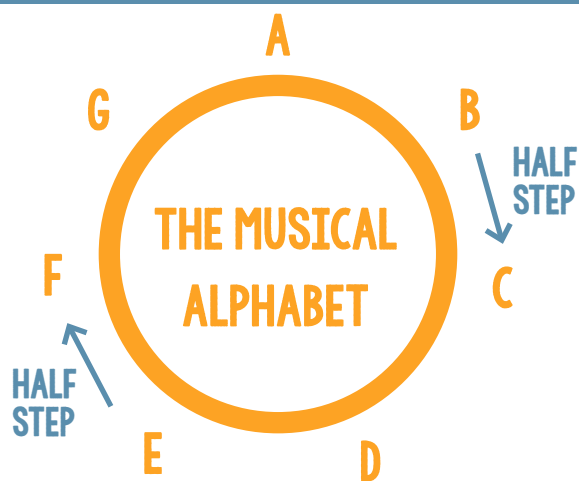
For instance: from the first fret to the third fret, or from the third fret to the fifth fret.

Between most notes we have an interval of a whole-step.

For instance, A to B is a whole step.

There are two special cases of notes that have half steps: E to F and B to C.

AN EASY WAY TO REMEMBER THESE HALF STEPS IS BY RECALLING THE NAMES OF THE FIRST AND SECOND OPEN STRINGS (E AND B).



A TO B : WHOLE-STEP
B TO C : HALF-STEP
C TO D : WHOLE-STEP
D TO E : WHOLE-STEP
E TO F : HALF-STEP
F TO G : WHOLE-STEP
G TO A : WHOLE-STEP

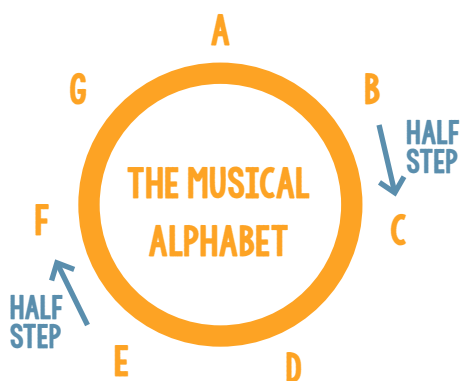
We have already learned our open strings (EADGBE). This will help us to learn the natural notes (no sharps or flats) up and down each string. Simply begin with your open string letter and continue around the musical alphabet.



Begin with the open strings we have already learned.

E A D G B E

Follow around the musical alphabet remembering that there are half-steps (one fret) between E to F and B to C.

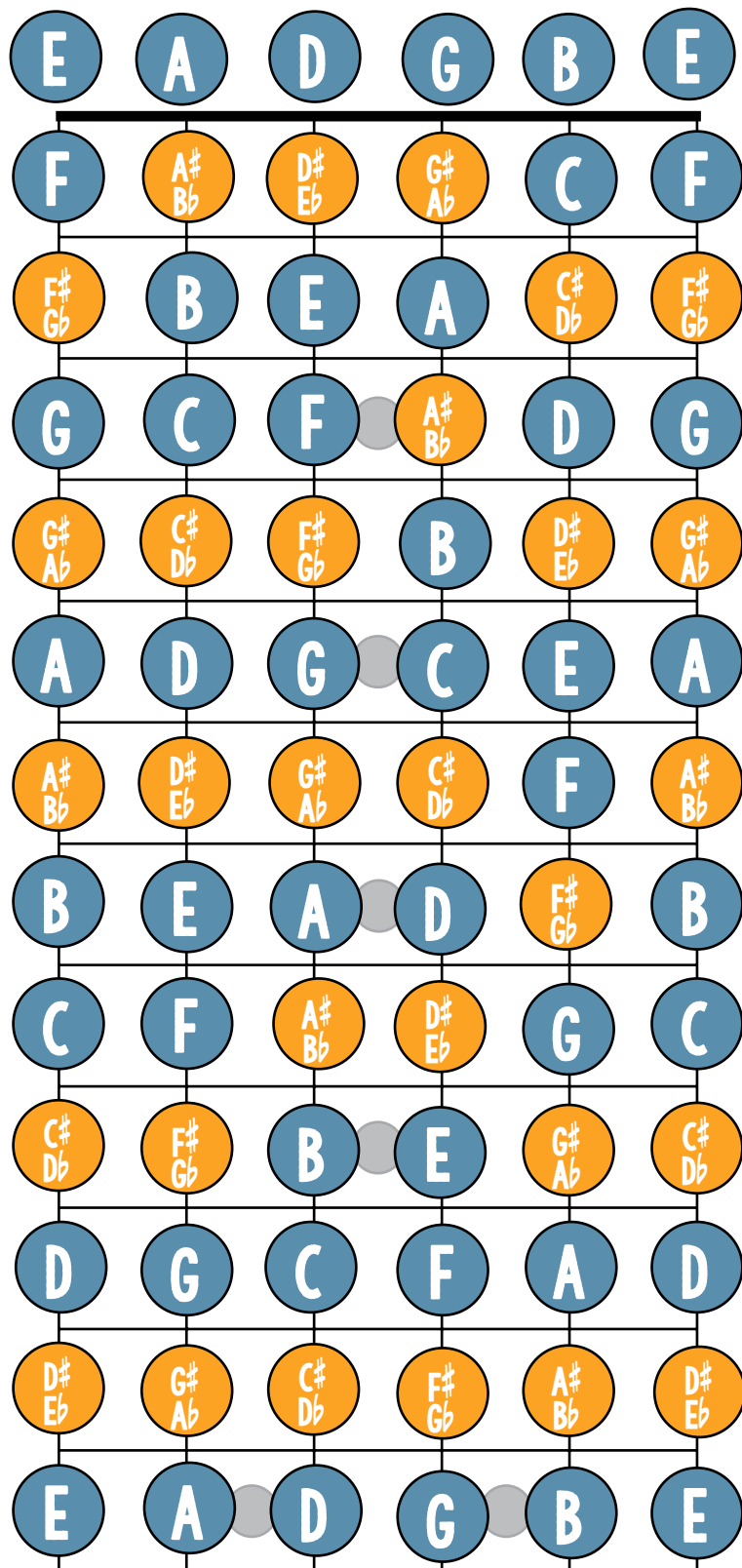


All other notes will be whole-steps (two frets).

Use your guitar's fret markers to help keep track of which fret you are on.

Notice that the 12th fret of each string is the same letter as that open string. Going through the entire musical alphabet will bring you back to the original note again.

This interval is called an "octave."



The notes we have learned so far are referred to as “natural notes.”

There are two ways to alter a natural note:

- A) RAISE THE NOTE 1/2 STEP
- B) LOWER THE NOTE 1/2 STEP

SHARP

Raise the note 1/2 step (one fret)

b FLAT

Lower the note 1/2 step (one fret)

PRACTICE TIPS

Practice playing and saying the names of the natural notes up and down each string.

Once you feel comfortable with natural notes try adding sharps and flats.

Put your finger down randomly on the fretboard and determine which note you are playing.



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