

Chapter 2

Musical facts, terms, and symbols

Musical notes are given letter names, and are arranged in alphabetical order on each string of the guitar.

The musical alphabet only goes up to the letter G. After G, it starts over with A again.

STEPS:

One WHOLE STEP is the distance of 2 frets. One HALF STEP is the distance of 1 fret.

= SHARP: Moved up one half step ♭ = FLAT: Moved down one half step

Most "natural" notes (not sharps or flats) are a WHOLE STEP apart, with the sharp or flat in between. However, B & C, and E & F are right next to each other (a HALF STEP apart).

FORMS:

There are five main forms of most chords and scales on the guitar. For instance, this book has already introduced the five basic open-position chord forms: A, D, E, G, & C.

Chord and scale forms that do not use any open strings are "movable"; they retain their quality when played at various frets. Chapter 2 introduces movable forms.

The "first form" and "fourth form" are especially important. First form chords and scales have their root on the 6th string (i.e., they are named by the note the first or second finger plays on the 6th string). In the fourth form, the root is on the 5th string.

NOTES ON THE 6th STRING (the low E string):

NOTES:	F	F# G♭	G	G# A♭	A	A# B♭	B	C	C# D♭	D	D# E♭	E
FRETS:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

NOTES ON THE 5th STRING (the A string):

NOTES:	A# B♭	B	C	C# D♭	D	D# E♭	E	F	F# G♭	G	G# A♭	A
FRETS:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

- "F#" and "G♭" are 2 ways of saying the same thing. This is also true of G#/A♭; A#/B♭; C#/D♭; D#/E♭.
- The 12th fret has the same name as the open string (both E's). The distance of 12 half steps, from one note to another note of the same name, is called an octave. The open string and the 12th fret are an octave apart.
- Everything after the 12th fret is a repeat of the first 12 frets. (The 13th fret is F, etc.)

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All the information on this page is crucial to understanding the guitar. These concepts will be applied to chord forms and scale forms throughout the rest of this book.