

Guitar Fundamentals Primer

by George Arvola
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revised in collaboration with Bruce Arbuckle in 2007

Foreword to all students, parents and teachers:

This book contains mostly melodious exercises specifically designed to help the beginner student in developing fundamental plectrum (pick-style) technique and the ability to read musical notation. Much of the music is totally original but many simple songs from public domain have been used to demonstrate that indeed, you are learning to play "real music" on the guitar. Young students often think that an exercise is simply a sequence of notes as compared to an actual piece of music. Near the back of the book is a small collection of other traditional tunes with some melodic variations. Teachers can make a judgement as to when a student may have reached a level where these tunes will not pose too many problems.

The music and text is presented in a large and uncluttered font. Experience has shown that it is best to not overburden the eyes of novice players by overwhelming them with visual information on any given page.

There is no hint of guitar tablature, as the tablature system in the opinions of the authors, leads nowhere. Only guitar students use tablature for deciphering music and rarely will they get to the point of reading tablature with any degree of speed. Another thing to consider is that if you plan to study music at a higher level, as at a college or university, it is unlikely that your music classes will be conducted using tablature. A tremendous wealth of musical information and documentation will be available to you when you have mastered the craft of reading musical notation. Musical notation is a truly universal language. (So is mathematics and these two things go hand in hand.) Admittedly, you might never have to read a note if your only goal is to play in a noisy garage band, but even then, being musically literate will not hurt you.

Some common chord diagrams are used as it will expedite the learning of at least the popular "campfire" chord fingerings. Beginner students often run into a road block in their skill development when they are required to read chord notation. A stack of three or more notes is unquestionably more difficult to read than just a single note. Chordal notation is examined in detail in Guitar Fundamentals, Books 1 to 5 which consist of a logical follow-up to the Guitar Fundamentals Primer.

Let's have fun playing the guitar!
George Arvola and Bruce Arbuckle

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