

The "FLAT" Sign (\flat)

The "flat" is the opposite to a "sharp." In other words, it lowers the following note by one fret which in musical terms is a distance of a "half tone" or "semi-tone." Usually, the flat causes no great problem if it is used on a note that is a fingered note.

For example, the note "G flat" is at the 2nd fret on the first string because the note "G" is at the 3rd fret. Similarly, "D flat" is at the 2nd fret of the second string. The note "A flat" is at the 1st fret of the thirds string.

A musical staff in treble clef showing six notes. Above the staff, circled numbers 1, 2, and 3 indicate string numbers. A line labeled "string number" points to these numbers. Below the staff, the notes and their fret positions are listed:

Note	Fret	String
G	3rd	1
G flat	2nd	1
D	3rd	2
D flat	2nd	2
A	2nd	3
A flat	1st	3

An interesting problem arises when the flat sign is in front of a note which normally would be an open string. Because the open string is the lowest note that can be played on that particular string, the flat sign now moves the note to the next lower pitched string. If you remember the tuning procedure of the guitar, this should pose no real difficulty.

A musical staff in treble clef showing six notes. Above the staff, circled numbers 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, and 4 indicate string numbers. A line labeled "String Numbers" points to these numbers. Below the staff, the notes and their fret positions are listed:

Note	Fret	String
E	open	1
E flat	4th fret	2
B	open	2
B flat	3rd fret	3
G	open	3
G flat	4th fret	4

Because the note E could also be played at the 5th fret of the 2nd string, the note E flat is on the 4th fret of the 2nd string.

The note B can be played at the 4th fret of the 3rd string so the note B flat is located at the 3rd fret of the 3rd string.

The note G can be played at the 5th fret of the 4th string so the note G flat ends up at the 4th fret of the 4th string.

The above explanation may seem confusing at first but take some time to think about it and things should become clear. This is related to the subject of tuning the guitar.

Progress Report: _____

