

Notation for Guitar

Guitar notation comes in two formats as shown below. The top is *traditional notation*, the lower is *guitar tablature*. At their most basic, they show the pitch (vertically) and duration (horizontally) of notes, breaking them up into small sections, called "bars".

Traditional Notation

The five lines are called the staff, and this symbol  is a treble clef. Each line and space represents a different note, as follows:

When playing notes that are outside these five lines (higher or lower), extra lines can be added, called ledger lines, as shown in top image - the final note is a C which has its own small line.

Note Names

There are 7 letters used for music notes:

A B C D E F G

After G the musical alphabet starts again with A.

Notes with the same letter name sound the same, only higher or lower

Guitar Tablature (TAB)

Tablature has six lines, representing the six strings on a standard guitar (highest at the top), and is marked at the start by the letters TAB.

The numbers indicate which fret to play on each string, and their position in the bar shows when, and for how long, each note should sound.

Bars and Bar Lines

The vertical lines are called bar lines and the space in between is the bar. A double bar line signifies the end of the piece or section of music.

Note Lengths

 semi-breve - whole note

 minim - $\frac{1}{2}$ note

 crotchet - $\frac{1}{4}$ note

 quaver - $\frac{1}{8}$ note

Notes with a dot afterwards are worth an extra $\frac{1}{2}$ their value:

 dotted-minim - $\frac{3}{4}$ note

 dotted-crotchet - $\frac{3}{8}$ note

Time Signatures

The top number shows the number of beats per bar,

The bottom number shows the type of note being counted.



4 $\frac{1}{4}$ notes (crotchets) per bar



12 $\frac{1}{8}$ notes (quavers) per bar

bar lines

double bar line