

# Music Notation

## For Guitar – Many Types!

When learning to read music for playing the guitar, there are several types of notation to consider. Some are for playing music, and others are for showing chords, scales, fret patterns, etc.

The traditional means of showing notes to be played is with a "five-line-staff" notation. For many instruments, this is the only type of notation that is needed, but for the guitar, other methods are often also used.

### Staff Notation

When using staff notation for the guitar it should be noted that, at times, there are different interpretations for the location of "middle c." The actual position of the middle c note is the first fret of the B string. But for practical reasons, it is often assigned to the third fret position of the A string – making the guitar sound an octave lower than the actual note.

Another example of this discrepancies for the location of middle c is when an adult male sings using treble staff notation. The voice is actually an octave lower than what is written. Technically this should be shown in the octave below middle c, using bass staff notation – but this is not always practical. The same goes for the guitar. Sometimes it is more practical to use notes written for treble staff, and playing them an octave lower.

### Tab Notation

Tab notation uses six lines that represents the six strings on the guitar. Numbers are used to show the fret positions that are to be played for each note. Sometimes music for guitar may consist of both staff and tab notation. The staff notation is used to show the rhythm of the notes being played. The tab notation is for showing what strings and frets are needed to play the notes.

### Chord Notation

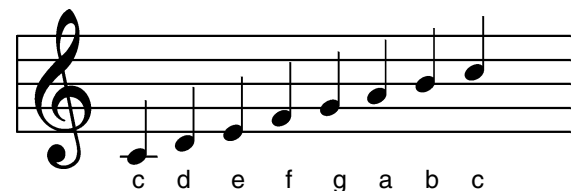
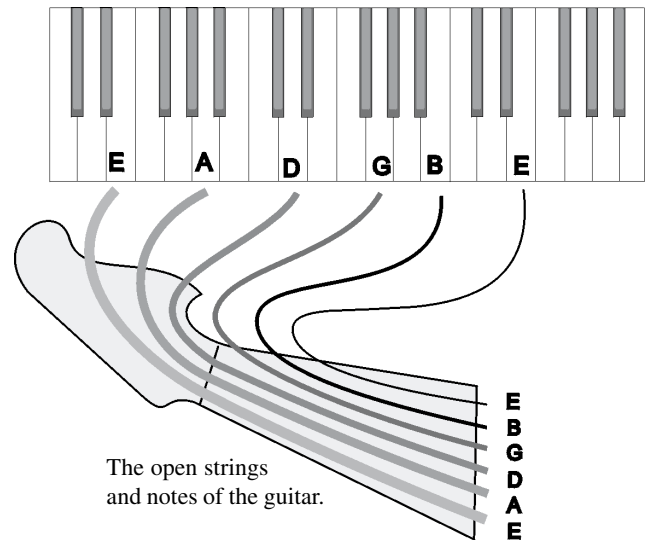
Chords are shown as a small chart that visually represents the strings and frets – in the same way that they appear on the guitar.

### Fret Board Notation

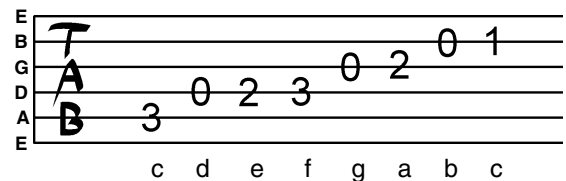
In the same way that chords are described as they appear on the guitar, patterns of notes and scales are often represented as charts showing strings and frets – as seen on the guitar.

### In Summary

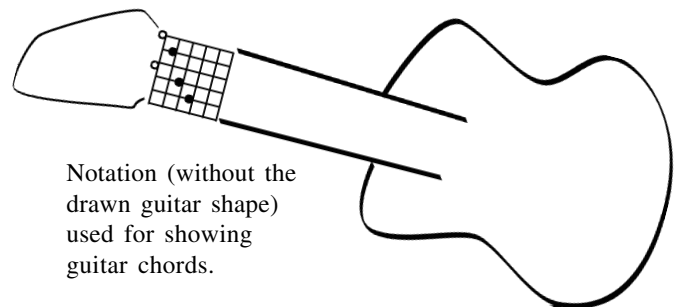
The point of introducing these different types of notions is not to confuse the process, but to acknowledge that – for the guitar – there are often different methods used for notating music, notes, scales, chords, etc. Each type has its own advantages.



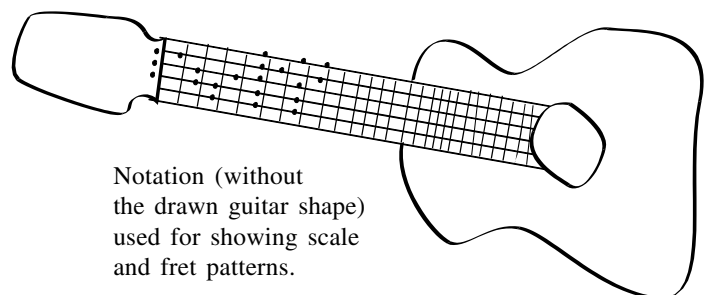
Staff notation -- with C major scale.



Tab notation -- with C major scale.



Notation (without the drawn guitar shape) used for showing guitar chords.



Notation (without the drawn guitar shape) used for showing scale and fret patterns.