

Understanding Guitar Notation

THREE TYPES OF GUITAR NOTATION

As a guitarist you might need to read three different types of notation.

1. Traditional or Treble Clef
2. Tablature
3. Chord Chart or Fretboard Diagram

1. Traditional or Treble Clef

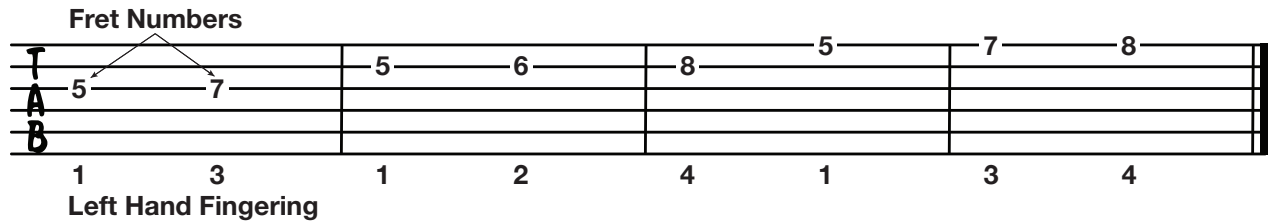


In the Treble Clef example above:

- The Key Signature contains 3 sharps (this spells the sound of A Major or F# minor).
- The Time Signature is 4/4.
 - The top number, 4, tells how many beats per measure. In this example there are 4 beats per measure.
 - The bottom number gives the value of each beat. In this example each beat is worth a quarter note beat. Simply say “Four quarter beats per measure.”
- There are 4 measures.
- Each measure is separated by a bar line.
- Each measure contains a whole rest.
- The range of the Treble Clef is extended “higher” and “lower” with the use of Ledger lines.

2. Tablature

The treble clef is frequently accompanied by tablature.



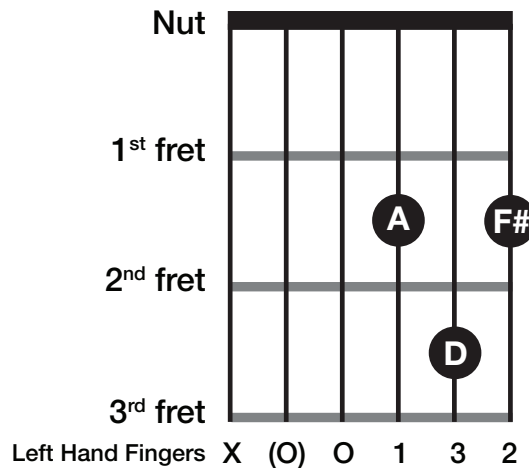
In the Tablature example above:

- The horizontal lines represent the 6 strings of the guitar. The top line is the 1st string.
- The numbers on the lines are fret numbers.
- The numbers below the bottom line are the right hand fingerings.

3. Chord Chart or Fretboard Diagram



The D-chord.



X = don't play O = open string (O) = optional

HERE'S HOW TO READ THIS CHORD CHART

- The vertical lines represent the guitar strings looking at the neck upright and head-on.
- The horizontal lines represent the frets.
- The thicker black line at the top of the chart is the nut.
- The black circles are where you place your fingers.
- The O's and X's on the bottom of the chart show whether or not you play a string and which fingers to use.