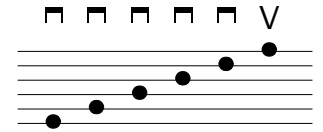


How To Read Tablature

Tablature was used by Gypsies as a kind of musical shorthand. Although this might look like notation, it is different from notation in a few ways. First, six lines represent the guitar strings, not the pitch. To see this better, hold the guitar face up and look straight down onto the fretboard. The 1st string should be on top for right and left handed guitars.

For most of this book dots are used to show which strings are played; fret numbers, rhythmic notations and time signatures are left out. To the right is an example of the tablature used in this book. Play each open string one at a time starting with the 6th. Each '▣' indicates a downstroke, and '∨' indicates an up-stroke.



Tablature normally uses fret numbers. Where there is a 3, fret the string at the 3rd fret. Likewise, 7 tells the musician to fret the 7th fret, and 0 (zero) represents an open string (unfretted). Single bar lines divide tablature into measures, just like notation. Double bar lines indicate the end of a piece of music. Example #1 can be played as eighth notes.

Example #1

The time signature and rhythmic notations have been included in example #2. Double bar lines with double dots facing to the left form a repeat sign which can also serve to show the end of the music. Repeat everything once before ending.

Example #2

Two repeat signs can be used together to isolate a section of music; first with the dots facing to the right, then with the dots facing to the left. These tell the musician to repeat everything in-between before going on.

The rhythmic notations in modern tablature are similar to those in notation. Circles, stems and flags are added to each fret number to give it a time value. A dot next to a note increases its duration by half. Time values can also be written above the staff itself. Time signatures show the number of beats in each measure (top #), and which note gets one full beat (bottom #). Common time signatures often include 4/4, 3/4, 6/8, 8/12 and 2/4 time.

An eighth note (♩) has a stem and a flag



A single line is used for quarter notes (♩)



A half note (♩) has a circle and stem



Just a circle is used for a whole note (♩)



A dotted quarter note (♩.) = 3 eighth notes



3/4 time has three beats per measure, where each quarter note gets one full beat.



Tempo (how fast the music is played) is indicated with a 'note = number' and followed with an 'M.M.' (e.g. 'Maelzel's Metronome', after Johann Maelzel).

For example: ♩ = 96 M.M. means the metronome is set to 96 and the 8th note gets one beat (or click).