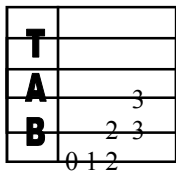


# Guitar Tablature Guide

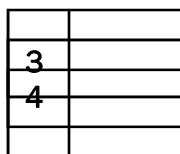
Nik Bull 2005

## Tab Notation:



The letters TAB down the side of a staff indicate that the notation is in the guitar tablature format. The six lines represent the six strings of the guitar with the bottom line representing the low pitch E-string through to the top line representing the high pitch E-String. The numbers then represent the fret that the note is to be played on, with a 0 representing an open string & further numbers indicating the fret counted from the headstock down towards the guitar body. Most guitars will have 22 frets with some more elaborate models having 24 frets or more. If numbers are vertically aligned with numbers on another string then these notes are to be played together with up to 6 simultaneous notes representing a chord.

## Beats Per Bar:



The 2 numbers appearing at the start of a tablature section indicate how many equal drum beats are contained in each bar of tablature. A bar is the section found in between two vertical lines. A 3/4 notation indicates that this section contains 3 equal length drum beats per bar (e.g. Bass, Snare, Snare) whereas a 4/4 notation would indicate 4 equal length drum beats per bar (e.g. Bass, Snare, Bass, Snare) Where I have neglected to place any beat notation it is safe to assume that the music is based on the more common 4 beats per bar.



**Whole Note:** This indicates a note that lasts 4 beats



**Half Note:** This indicates a note that lasts 2 beats



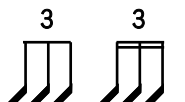
**Quarter Note:** This indicates a note that lasts 1 beat



**Eighth Notes:** A note that lasts half a beat. The tails are joined on consecutive eighth notes.



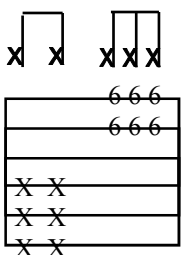
**Sixteenth Notes:** A note that lasts quarter of a beat. The tails are joined on consecutive sixteenth notes. Further tails indicate a note half that of its previous, i.e. notes with three tails indicate 32nd notes, four tails 64th notes and so on.



**Triplets:** A Triplet is a group of three notes that last for the equivalent of two notes of the same notation. i.e. a triplet with 1 tail lasts for the same time as two consecutive notes with one tail.



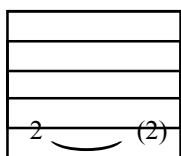
**Dotted Notes:** When a note is followed by a dot, the note length should be extended by half its original value. For example, a half note followed by a dot should be played for half a beat plus a quarter beat, a total note length of three quarters of a beat. A Quarter note followed by a dot should be played a quarter beat plus an eighth beat, giving a total note length of three eighths of a beat. Consecutive dots then add half of the length of the previous dot to the note length. For example, a half note followed by 2 dots should be held for a half beat plus a quarter beat plus an eighth beat, giving a total length of seven eighths of a beat, & quarter note followed by 2 dots should be held for a quarter beat plus an eighth beat plus a sixteenth beat. Giving a total note length of 7 sixteenths.



## Dead Notes & Harmonics:

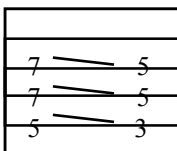
Dead notes are notes that are struck without depressing the fret position. Instead, simply mute the strings with the left hand by lightly touching them & strumming the indicated strings with the right hand. Where fret positions are indicated by numbers this will indicate the use of harmonic notes. To play a harmonic is tricky & requires you to briefly & lightly touch the string directly over the fret bar, when performed correctly this will give a atmospheric ringing sound, usually a much higher pitch than the associated fret would give via a conventional note. This is how those eighties rock bands get their squealing solos.

## Tablature Guide Continued.....



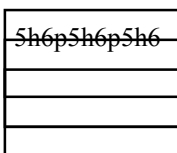
### Sustained Notes:

When two notes are connected with a curved line this indicates that the two note lengths are to be joined together & played as one note. In this example a note is played for 3 beats, by connecting a 2 beat & 1 beat note together. When a number in the tablature is enclosed in brackets, this signifies that the note is not to be strummed but simply held from the previous note.



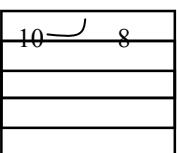
### Slide Notes:

When two notes are connected with an angled line this indicates that the first note should be slid down to the second note. As with sustained notes, if the second set of figures in the tablature are enclosed in brackets they should not be strummed. In this example is a chord slide where upon reaching the second chord, the strings should be strummed a second time.



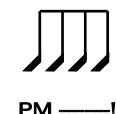
### Hammers & Pull Offs:

Hammers & Pull Offs are a widely used technique in playing lead. When two notes are connected with a h (hammer) or p (pull off) only the first note is strummed. In this example the first note is strummed, the second note is then played by slamming your left finger onto the new fret with sufficient force that the note is struck without the aid of strumming the string, this is called a hammer. The third note is then played by plucking the string with the left finger as it is removed from the previous note, this is called a pull off. Repeating this in quick succession can be tricky but is essential if you want to produce that 'wiggly wiggly' lead sound.



### Bending notes & Vibrato:

Bending notes & performing a vibrato effect can add great expression to music but due to the infinitely flexible nature of these notes they can only be noted with ad lib wobbly lines. In my notation I have used curves to signify simple bends, & Vibrato has been noted with a uniform wobbly line, each wobble being indicative of a wobble in the note. In some more extreme cases it may be necessary to use the tremolo arm (whammy bar) to pull off the desired bends.



PM —|

### Palm Muting:

Not long after the electric guitar was invented someone came up with the Palm Muting method. This is widely used in heavier rock bands to achieve a meatier crunchier chord. To perform this simply use the base of your right palm to suppress the strings while playing the music as otherwise indicated.



### Whole Rest:

A block underneath a stave line indicates no notes are to be played for four beats



### Half Rest:

A block above the line indicates no notes for 2 beats



### Quarter Rest:

No notes are played for 1 beat



### Eighth Rest:

No notes are to be played for half a beat

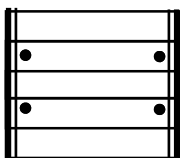


### Sixteenth Rest:

No notes are to be played for a quarter of a beat, successive additions of 'bobbles' indicates the rest is half the length of the previous symbol. i.e. three bobbles would indicate a rest for one eighth of a beat, four bobbles one sixteenth and so on

## Tablature Guide Continued.....

x8

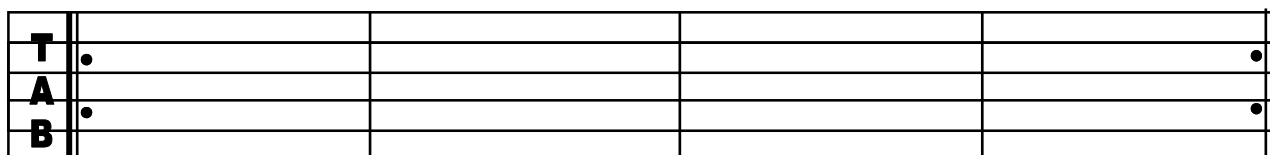


### Repeat Bars:

Repeat bars signify that the music between them should be repeated by the indicated quantity. If no quantity is stated then the passage is only to be repeated once, i.e. played twice.

1st time only

2nd time only



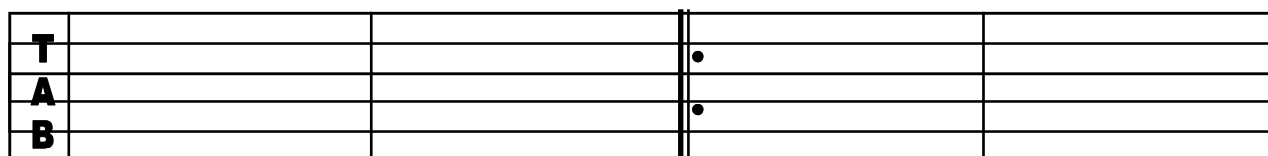
### Exclusive Passages:

Where a passage of music is to be repeated but with subtle variations, exclusive sections are marked in accordance. In the above example, when playing the first time, only the first three bars are played, and on the second time, only the first, second & fourth bars are played.

☆ Intro:

2nd time to coda ⚡

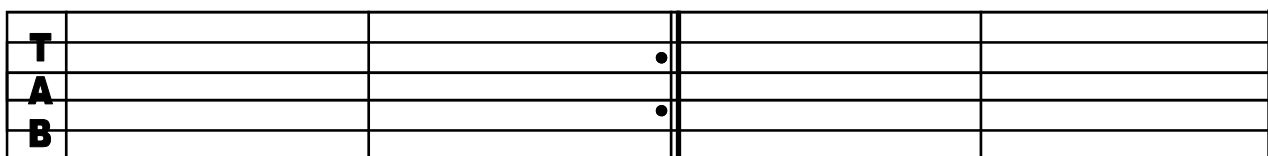
Verse:



2nd Chorus to coda ☆ ⚡

Outro:

Chorus:



### Coda's:

Perhaps the most complicated part of music notation is the use of coda's. These walk you through the passages of a piece of music in such a way as to minimise repetition of the tabulation. In the above example, you play the intro, then the verse & chorus, the second verse & chorus, then back to the intro, & finally jumping directly to the outro without a third verse or chorus. In more complicated music it may be necessary to read through the tablature while listening to the music so as to confirm the descriptions given next to each coda, they can often be vague leaving you unsure exactly when the jump is required.

### That's It!

If I come up with some more useful tips I will update this guide accordingly. If you would like me to add any more information I may have omitted then feel free to e-mail me & I'll do my best.