

Alfred's

How to Write Guitar TAB

Essential instruction • 54 pages with 5 staves of manuscript in standard notation and TAB

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Alfred Music
P.O. Box 10003
Van Nuys, CA 91410-0003
alfred.com

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RHYTHM IN STANDARD MUSIC NOTATION AND TAB

Rhythm is the organization of music in time into long and short sounds and silences.

Tablature on its own does not show rhythmic values, but symbols found in *standard music notation* are commonly used with TAB to help notate rhythm. Standard music notation is a system of notation that uses symbols and a five-line staff to visually represent music.

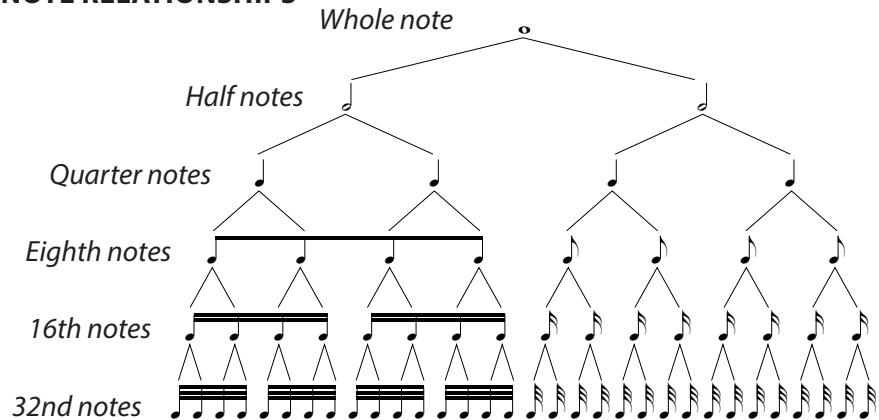
Note Values

In standard music notation, music is written with *notes*, and each different type of note has a specific duration measured in *beats*. A beat is a basic unit of musical time. When you tap your foot while listening to music, you are likely tapping the beats. Below are the different kinds of notes and their durations.

NOTES

- whole note = Four beats
- ♪ half note = Two beats
- ♪ quarter note = One beat
- ♪ eighth note = Half a beat
- ♪ 16th note = Quarter beat
- ♪ 32nd note = Eighth beat

NOTE RELATIONSHIPS



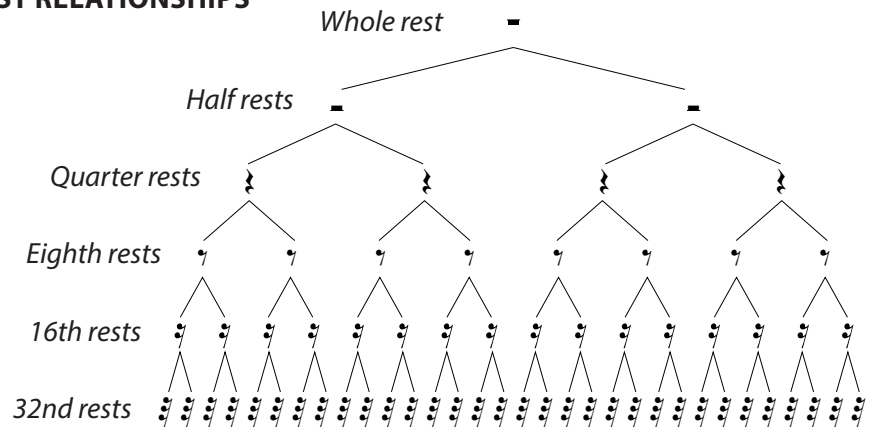
Rest Values

For every note value in standard music notation, there is an equal rest value. A rest indicates silence.

RESTS

- whole rest = Four beats
- half rest = Two beats
- ⌋ quarter rest = One beat
- γ eighth rest = Half a beat
- γ 16th rest = Quarter beat
- γ 32nd rest = Eighth beat

REST RELATIONSHIPS



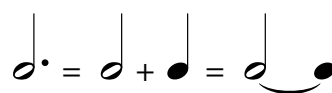
Ties and Dots

A *tie* (—) is a curved line that joins two or more notes of the same *pitch* (highness or lowness of a sound) that last the duration of the combined note values. Only the first note in a tie is struck.



In TAB, tied notes are indicated using parentheses.

When you see a *dot* (•) to the right of a note, it increases the duration of that note by one half. For instance, a dotted half note is a half note plus a quarter note (half of a half note) or a half note tied to a quarter note.

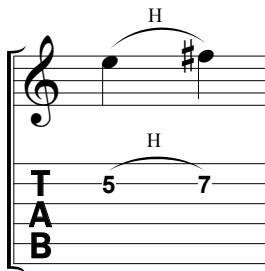


For more on music notation, refer to *Alfred's Teach Yourself to Read Music for Guitar* (23217).

GUITAR TECHNIQUES IN TAB

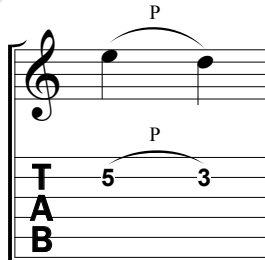
There are many guitar techniques that can be notated in TAB. The following are the most common techniques you will need to write. See page 1 for information on how to access the accompanying videos.

Hammer-On



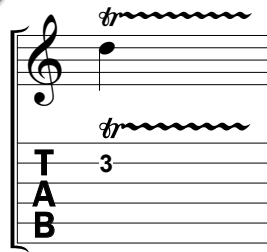
Use a *slur* (curved line over, or under, two or more notes to indicate they are to be smoothly connected) with an H above it to write a *hammer-on*. Pick the first note, then tap down the next note with another finger. Pick only the first note. The notes of a hammer-on are always ascending (low to high) and played on the same string.

Pull-Off



Write a slur with a P above it to indicate a *pull-off*. Place your fret-hand fingers on the two notes to be played. Pick the first note, then pull the finger off the string while keeping the lower note fretted. Pick only the first note. The notes of a pull-off are always descending (high to low) and played on the same string.

Trill

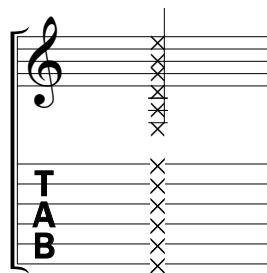


To show a *trill*, write the main, anchor note with the symbol *tr* combined with a wavy line above the staff. To play a trill, quickly alternate between two notes (the main one and a note above it) by using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Muting

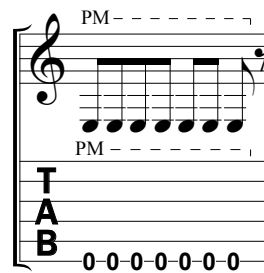
There are many techniques used to *mute* the strings that keep them from ringing out freely. Sometimes mutes completely deaden the strings, so you can't tell what notes are being played. Other mutes are partial, and their notes can be heard.

MUFFLE (DAMPEN)



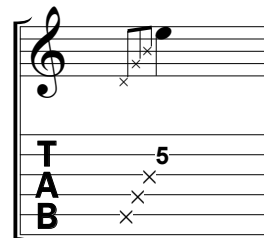
Write *x* shapes on the TAB lines to show a *muffled* percussive sound—a chop, or chuck—that is played by laying the fret hand across the strings lightly so the notes aren't heard. Then, quickly strum the strings with the pick hand.

PALM MUTE



Write PM above the TAB to show a *palm mute*. When playing a palm mute, notes are partially muted by the pick hand through lightly touching the string, or strings, just before the bridge. You can use a dashed bracket to show how long the palm mute continues.

RAKE

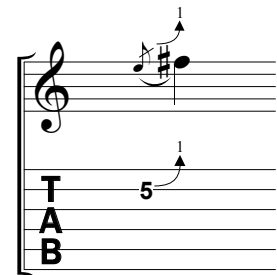


To show a *rake*, which is a quick series of muted individual notes played in succession, write a series of *x* symbols on adjacent TAB lines.

Bending

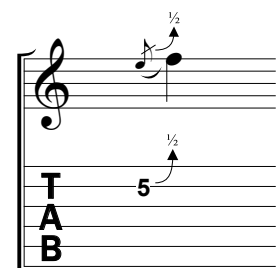
When you play a *bend* by pushing or pulling the string up or down across the fretboard with a fret-hand finger, it is written as a curved line with an arrow and number connected to the TAB fret number. Some guitarists do not add an arrow to the curved line.

WHOLE-STEP BEND



Use a bend arrow pointing up and the number "1" (or the word "full") to show a *whole-step bend*. A whole step is the same as two frets. Start on the fret indicated and bend the string so it sounds the same as the note two frets higher.

HALF-STEP BEND



To show a *half-step bend*, write a bend arrow pointing up with the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$. A half step is the same as one fret. Start on the fret indicated and bend the string so it sounds the same as the note one fret higher.