

Lesson 1: The Musical Alphabet

Basic Music Theory for Guitar

What you will learn: the 7 note names used in all music, and how to find them on your guitar.

The 7 natural notes

Music uses only 7 letters:

A B C D E F G

After **G**, the letters start again from **A**:

A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A ...

When you reach the same letter again, the note sounds **higher**, but it has the same name. This distance is called an **octave**.

The open strings of the guitar

When you play a string without pressing any fret, it is called an **open string**. From the thickest string (6) to the thinnest string (1), the open strings are:

String	6	5	4	3	2	1
Note	E	A	D	G	B	E

A simple way to remember: **E**ddie **A**te **D**ynamite, **G**ood **B**ye **E**ddie.

The notes on string 6 (low E)

Here are the natural notes on string 6, from the open string to fret 12:

Fret	0	1	3	5	7	8	10	12
Note	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E

Look closely: most notes are **2 frets apart**, but **E to F** and **B to C** are only **1 fret apart**. This is very important, and you will learn why in Lesson 3.

At **fret 12**, you are back to **E**, one octave higher than the open string.

Practice

1. Say the musical alphabet out loud, forward: A B C D E F G A
2. Play string 6 from fret 0 to fret 12, and say each note name as you play it.
3. Do the same on string 5 (open A): A (0), B (2), C (3), D (5), E (7), F (8), G (10), A (12)

Next lesson: Sharps and Flats