Bass Notation Legend

Bass music can be notated two different ways: on a musical staff, and in tablature.

**THE MUSICAL STAFF** shows pitches and rhythms and is divided by bar lines into measures. Pitches are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet.

**TABLATURE** graphically represents the bass fingerboard. Each horizontal line represents a string, and each number represents a fret.

**HAMMER-ON:** Strike the first (lower) note with one finger, then sound the higher note (on the same string) with another finger by fretting it without picking.

**PULL-OFF:** Place both fingers on the notes to be sounded. Strike the first note and without picking, pull the finger off to sound the second (lower) note.

**LEGATO SLIDE:** Strike the first note and then slide the same finger-hand finger up or down to the second note. The second note is not struck.

**SHIFT SLIDE:** Same as legato slide, except the second note is struck.

**TRULL:** Very rapidly alternate between the notes indicated by continuously hammering on and pulling off.

**TREMOLO PICKING:** The note is picked as rapidly and continuously as possible.

**VIBRATO:** The string is vibrated by rapidly bending and relaxing the note with the fretting hand.

**SHAKE:** Using one finger, rapidly alternate between two notes on one string by sliding either a half-step above or below.

**NATURAL HARMONIC:** Strike the note while the fret hand lightly touches the string directly over the fret indicated.

**MUFFLED STRINGS:** A percussive sound is produced by laying the fret hand across the string(s) without depressing them and striking them with the pick hand.

**BEND:** Strike the note and bend up the interval shown.

**BEND AND RELEASE:** Strike the note and bend up as indicated, then release back to the original note. Only the first note is struck.

**RIGHT-HAND TAP:** Hammer ("tap") the fret indicated with the "pick-hand" index or middle finger and pull off to the note fretted by the fret hand.

**LEFT-HAND TAP:** Hammer ("tap") the first indicated with the "fret-hand" index or middle finger.

**SLAP:** Strike ("slap") string with right-hand thumb.

**POP:** Snap ("pop") string with right-hand index or middle finger.

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**Additional Musical Definitions**

- **(accent)** • Accentuate note (play it louder)
- **(accent)** • Accentuate note with great intensity
- **(staccato)** • Play the note short
- **Downstroke**
- **Upstroke**

**D.C. al Fine** • Go back to the beginning of the song and play until the measure marked "Fine" (end).

**Bass Fig.** • Label used to recall a recurring pattern.

**Fill** • Label used to identify a brief pattern which is to be inserted into the arrangement.

**Facet** • Instrument is silent (drops out).

**Repeat measures between signs.**

**D.S. al Coda** • Go back to the sign ( & ), then play until the measure marked "Coda," then skip to the section labeled "Coda."

**Note:**

Tablature numbers in parentheses mean:

1. The note is being sustained over a system (note in standard notation is tied), or
2. The note is sustained, but a new articulation (such as a hammer-on, pull-off, slide or vibrato begins), or
3. The note is a barely audible "ghost" note (note in standard notation is also in parentheses).
4  Barbary Coast
9  Birdland
18  Black Market
29  Cannonball
34  Harlequin
40  Havona
51  Palladium
59  Port of Entry
67  Punk Jazz
74  A Remark You Made
78  River People
82  Slang
88  Speechless
92  Teen Town
95  Bass Notation Legend