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guitar tablature explained

Guitar music can be notated three different ways: on a musical stave, in tablature, and in rhythm slashes.

**RHYTHM SLASHES** are written above the stave. Strum chords in the rhythm indicated. Round noteheads indicate single notes.

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

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

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**Definitions for Special Guitar Notation**

**Semi-Tone Bend:** Strike the note and bend up a semi-tone (1/2 step).

**Whole-Tone Bend:** Strike the note and bend up a whole-tone (whole step).

**Grace Note Bend:** Strike the note and bend as indicated. Play the first note as quickly as possible.

**Quarter-Tone Bend:** Strike the note and bend up 1/4 step.

**Bend & Release:** Strike the note and bend up as indicated, then release back to the original note.

**Compound Bend & Release:** Strike the note and bend up and down in the rhythm indicated.

**Pre-Bend:** Bend the note as indicated, then strike it.

**Pre-Bend & Release:** Bend the note as indicated. Strike it and release the note back to the original pitch.

**Unison Bend:** Strike the two notes simultaneously and bend the lower note up to the pitch of the higher.

**Bend & RESTRIKE:** Strike the note and bend as indicated then restrick the string where the symbol occurs.

**Bend, Hold And Release:** Same as bend and release but hold the bend for the duration of the tie.

**Bend and Tap:** Bend the note as indicated and tap the higher fret while still holding the bend.

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

**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 (Gliss):** Strike the first note and then slide the same fret-hand finger up or down to the second note. The second note is not struck.

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*Note:* The speed of any bend is indicated by the music notation and tempo.