First Position: Every Natural Note, Strings 6 to 1

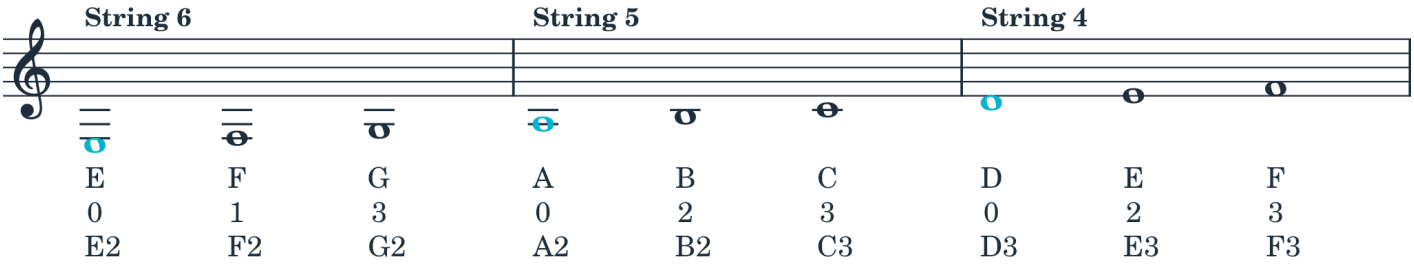
On frets 0 to 3 the guitar has **17 natural notes**, each in exactly one place. Read them on the staff, find them on the strings.

1 · THE MAP: FRETS 0 TO 3

First position: one finger per fret. Finger 1 (index) plays fret 1, finger 2 (middle) fret 2, finger 3 (ring) fret 3; 0 is the open string (in cyan). Some teachers use finger 4 (little finger) on fret 3 of strings 1 and 2: follow your teacher. Guitar music is **written an octave higher than it sounds**: written E3, below the staff, sounds E2, the lowest open string.

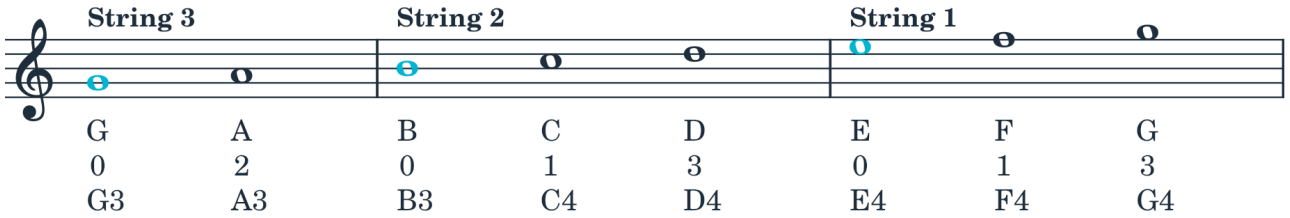
Strings 6, 5, 4: the low strings, mostly below the staff

under each note: letter · fret = finger · the pitch it sounds



Strings 3, 2, 1: recap of the treble strings (Handout 403, Exercise 96)

written G4 to G5, sounding G3 to G4



2 · BELOW THE STAFF: COUNT THE LEDGER LINES



Most notes of strings 4, 5 and 6 hang below the staff. Under each note: its letter and its ledger lines.

- **On a ledger line** (C, A, F): count the lines down to it: 1, 2, 3.
- **Under a ledger line** (B, G, E): same count as the line above it: 1, 2, 3.
- **D** sits in the space just under the staff: no ledger line.

Written C4 is where a pianist reads middle C; on guitar it sounds C3 (string 5, fret 3).

3 · READ TWO TUNES

Original tunes, 4/4, quarter = 60. Say the letters, find each note on the map, then play slowly.

Tune 1 · strings 6, 5, 4



Tune 2 · strings 3, 2, 1



Try it

Write the string and fret for the first four notes of tune 1.

Answer (written notes): E = string 6, open; F = string 6, fret 1; G = string 6, fret 3; A = string 5, open. · Practice: Exercise 209. · Listen: scan or visit tissimo.co/worksheets/guitar-first-position-notes (quarter = 60, one bar of clicks first): each string group as it sounds, then both tunes; a synthesized pitch-and-rhythm model.

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