

One Guitar Phrase, Two Notations

Read the string and fret in TAB. Read pitch and duration on the aligned guitar staff.

1 · SIX LINES, SIX STRINGS

The **top TAB line is string 1**, the high E string. The bottom is string 6, low E.

0 = open string. Other digits give frets, not finger numbers. Each fret raises the open-string pitch by one half step. E-F and B-C are one fret apart; other neighboring natural-note letters are two frets apart.

On string 1: open E4 → fret 1 F4 → fret 3 G4. Read from left to right.

Standard tuning, no capo. **C4 = middle C** (MIDI 60). In the usual guitar notation used here, staff notes are written one octave above their sound.

String top → bottom	Open sound	Written
1	E4	E5
2	B3	B4
3	G3	G4
4	D3	D4
5	A2	A3
6	E2	E3

2 · ONE PHRASE, TWO ALIGNED READINGS



Sound: E4-F4-G4 · B3-C4-D4. Written: E5-F5-G5 · B4-C5-D5.

Use the paired staff for duration here: quarter = 1 beat; half = 2 beats in 4/4. Some TAB also shows rhythmic stems. Audio 1: phrase at 80 BPM. Audio 2: 60 BPM with a high click on each beat.

3 · A STACK MEANS TOGETHER

E minor (Em): three notes together



The same pitches one after another



Vertical digits share one attack. Digits at later positions start later. The stack lasts 4 beats; the separate notes last 1 + 1 + 2 beats.

Try it

In section 2, find string 2, fret 1. Name its sounding and written pitches. How many beats does it last?

Check: C4 sounding; C5 written; 1 beat (quarter note).

Listen: tissimo.co/worksheets/guitar-tab-and-staff
Numbered in-house MIDI/MP3 pitch and rhythm models.

