

GUITAR / MUSIC THEORY GLOSSARY

Accelerando

Is a term used for gradually accelerating or getting faster as you play a piece of music.

Acoustic Guitar

A type of guitar that does not use an amplifier but rather “sound holes” to resonate sound from the strings. Acoustic guitars can use steel or nylon strings. There are many shapes, colors, and types of acoustic guitars – some have built in “jacks” and “pickups” so you can plug them into an amplifier.

Action

Action refers to how “high or low” the guitar strings are “above” the fret board (the actual height of the strings above the fret board). The lower the action, the easier it is to press down on the strings (easier to play) – the higher the action, the harder it is to press down on the strings (harder to play). The action on a guitar can be adjusted, but it is best to let an expert make the adjustment.

Active Electronics

In Guitars it usually refers to the type of Pickup in the guitar. Active electronics require a source of power (usually a battery) to boost the audio signal – such as crossovers, etc.

Alternating Bass

A playing style where the pick hand will alternate between two or more strings. Example could be picking the bass notes then strumming the chord.

Alternate Picking

Involves the pick hand – The first note is picked down, the second note up, the third note down, the fourth note up, and so on... (also called “down – up – down – up” picking). One of the most important fundamentals that need to be learned and practiced (alternating picking helps improve speed).

Amplifier (Guitar / Bass Amps)

Amplifiers simply increase the sound level of the instrument plugged into it. There are many types of guitar and bass amplifiers (stage amps, practice amps, headphone amps, etc). Amplifiers are measured in wattage (50 – 150 watts are common wattages for guitar amplifiers). Most amplifiers have volume knobs, low and high gain knobs, equalizer knobs (low, mid, high), both input and output jacks, and effects (with the standard effect being “Reverb”). Technology has given us more variety and more “powerful” tools with amplifiers such as “modeling technology” and “multi-effects” attachments, etc.

Archtop

Also referred to as “Carved” top. Is simply a guitar body that has an arched (carved) top, and usually has sound holes (called “F” holes). Archtops are known for their “looks” and for their distinctive sound.

Arpeggio

A chord that is played one note at a time (instead of strumming the chord, the notes are played as single notes). The Arpeggio is frequently used in advanced lead playing (rock, metal, jazz, etc).

Arrangement

The arrangement refers to a song and how the instruments are structured and organized (according to the arranger). Example: Any song could be played by an orchestra, but it would need to be “arranged” for the different types of instruments, etc.

Artificial Harmonic

A guitar technique used to produce and extend harmonics to different areas of the fret board. A note is held with the fret hand, and a pick hand finger lightly touches a string further down the fret board to produce the harmonic.

Bar

A sub division of time in music (one measure of a piece of music).

Bar Line

A line (vertical) which divides measures (bars) of music (shows the beginning and end of each measure).

Beat

The “Beat” can be described formally as a subdivision of musical time that is felt as the pulse within a piece of music (a basic unit of length in musical time).

Bends (bending)

Pushing or Pulling up or down on a string to raise the pitch of a note by a half step / full step (or more). Bending is an essential guitar skill used in lead playing (used in all types of music).

Barre Chord

Barre chords are best known from the function of the 1st finger of the “fret” hand (the 1st finger works as a "bar" across the fret board, pressing down on all six strings at once). The action of the 1st finger replicates the “Nut” or better stated “acts as a capo” (so you can move open chords up and down on the fret board).

Bridge

The bridge is located at the lower area of the guitar – and “transfers” sound from the strings to the body of the guitar. The bridge is adjustable, but should only be adjusted by an experienced guitar technician.

Bridge Pin

Bridge pins are slotted plugs that help hold the guitar strings in place on some acoustic guitars.

Body

The body is simply the main part of a guitar (also called the Face), where the bridge, pickups, tremolo bar, tone controls, and pick guards are located. The guitar body design is usually either solid or hollow (hence the terms “solid body guitar” and “hollow body guitar”).

BPM (beats per minute - bpm)

On a metronome it refers to the "clicking speed."

Capo

The CAPO is a simple mechanical device that fits (clamps) over a fret and neck area of the guitar to help make it easier to play songs in different "keys" (without having to change to more difficult chord fingerings). Newer types of Capo's snap on to the guitar neck very easily.

Chicken Picking

Used mainly in Country music – Chicken picking is when a guitarist uses a combination of the pick and fingers at the same time (combining picking using a pick, and finger picking with the other fingers on the pick hand).

Chicken Scratching

A technique where the strings are being strummed (scratched) with a pick, while at the same time the fret hand is "damping" the strings. Damping implies touching the strings very lightly.

Chords

A combination of two or more notes sounded simultaneously (played at the same time). There are regular and barre chords (major, minor, diminished, augmented, minor 7th, minor 9th, to name a few).

Chord Progression

A group of chords played in sequence (in a defined order).

Ex: G /// C /// G /// D /// C /// G /// (is a chord progression in the Key of G)

Chorus

The part of a song that the verse and bridge usually builds to, and is the main melody that is repeated over and over (the "hook" of the song).

Chromatics

Sharps, Flats, Rests, etc. Usually refers to the 12-notes that make up a scale using all the semitones of the octave (notes 1 – 12).

Chromatic Scale

Refers to the 12 notes that make up a scale using all the semitones of the octave (notes 1 – 12). Chromatic scales are easy to play – all you have to do is start on a note, and play every fret until you get to the note's octave (all half steps).

Example: F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F (you actually play 13 notes if you count the last "F" note, but there are only 12 different notes in the Chromatic Scale).

Clef

The symbol at the very beginning of a piece of music (first symbol that appears on the staff). The "Treble" clef (or "G" clef) is generally used to notate notes which are higher in pitch, and the "Bass" clef is used to notate the lower notes.

Cutaway

An area where the neck and body join together that has been removed (cut out) so that easier access to the upper frets is obtained (lead players have easier access to the higher frets without having to twist or bend their fret hand to reach the notes).

Double Bar Line

Two vertical lines (double bars) located at the end of a section or piece of music that indicate the “end” of the section (or piece of music).

Down Stroke / Down Pick

Refers to the pick hand strumming or picking from top to bottom (downward).

Dreadnought

Describes a particular shape of a traditional acoustic guitar. The Dreadnought body style is larger and fuller, (which plays a large part of the “bigger” sound of the guitar).

Drop “D” Tuning

One of the many “special” tunings that guitarists use. Drop “D” tuning is when you tune down the low “E” string to “D.” So instead of the normal tuning of E – A – D – G – B – E, the top “E” string is tuned down to “D” making the new tuning D – A – D – G – B – E (used a lot with power chords to get a heavier sound).

Dotted Half Notes

When a dot is placed after a half note (or any note) it increases the notes value by one half. A dotted half note is equal to three beats (the half note equals two beats – the dot equals one beat).

Effects Pedals

Effects Pedals alter the sound of a guitar. Flangers, digital delays, tremolo, chorus, and distortion pedals are among the most popular. There are also effects pedals that “model” other instruments. Example: There are effects pedals that model acoustic guitar sounds, you just step on the pedal and your electric guitar can sound like an acoustic guitar.

Eighth Note / Eighth Beat

Is a beat that is “half” that of a “quarter note” beat (two eighth notes equal one quarter note).

Eighth Rest

The eighth note rest symbol will indicate silence for one half of a beat.

Electric Acoustic

Acoustic guitars that have built in pickups (usually a piezo type pickup), just plug the guitar into an amplifier (some guitars also have a few tone / volume controls built in also).

Electric Guitar

Refers to a guitar that is be “electrically” amplified (requires the use of an amplifier to be heard). The sound is produced by the vibration of the strings through pick ups, and then amplified by a guitar amplifier. Most electric guitars usually have a solid body.

Face

This refers to the "front" of the guitar (the main surface area).

F-hole

The name for the "F" shaped sound hole on some hollow bodied acoustic guitars.

Fingerstyle Picking

A picking technique that entails using some or all of your fret hand fingers (without the use of picks).

Finger Picks

These are types of picks that fit over a finger (you don't have to hold the pick, it fits over the finger firmly). Finger picks are used mainly for steel-string instruments (such as the banjo).

Flat

Lowers a note or chord one half-step in pitch (on the guitar, lowering one fret equals a half-step).

Flat Pick

The flat pick is used to "pluck" or for "strumming" guitar strings. Usually come in triangular or teardrop shape, and are made out of nylon or plastic. Available in a huge variety of sizes, shapes, and thicknesses (Thin, Medium, and Heavy are a few popular thicknesses).

Four / Four Time

Also called "Common Time" – Four / Four time is a time signature that indicates that there are four beats per measure, and that each quarter note will receive one beat.

Fret

A strip of metal (vertical metal bars) that are placed on the neck (fretboard). The term usually refers to the space between two of the metal bars (or the nut and the first metal bar for the 1st fret) on the fret board that indicates locations of notes on the guitar.

Fretboard

The formal name for the piece of wood that is on the "top" side of the neck. The Frets, Position Markers (or inlays) are fastened onto the fretboard.

Fretting

The term used for placing a finger (or fingers) on a fret (between two metal bars on the guitar neck).

Fret Markers

Markings on the fretboard that assist a guitar player to quickly locate a fret position. Fret markers are usually found at frets 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 15, 17, 19, and 21 – the twelfth fret is usually marked with two dots or symbols (octave fret – twelve frets from the open E). Certain guitars have smaller dots (fret markers) on the upper side of the neck (as another reference point to locate frets quickly).

Gauge (String Gauge)

Indicates the thickness of guitar strings. The heavier gauge strings will be thicker, and the lighter gauge strings will be thinner. The thicker strings are harder on the fingers, but have a better tone. The thinner strings are easier on the fingers, but will have tone considerations.

Guitar Case

A case that holds (stores / transports) a guitar. There are different types, and the cases can be made from different materials, etc. Some examples are: Hard Shell cases, Flight cases, Gig bags, Molded cases, etc.

Gig Bag

A cheap alternative to a regular guitar or bass guitar case. Gig bags are padded, and made out of a softer material. Gig bags are more convenient, but most will not protect your guitar as well as a hard shell case, etc. Use caution.

Half Note / Half Beat

The Half note is two beats long (twice that of a quarter beat).

Half Rest

The half note rest symbol will indicate silence for two beats.

Half Step

Is equal to one fret on the guitar or bass guitar (notes right next to each other).

Hammer-On

Occurs when you pick the first note, and then sound the second note by striking it with your finger (hammer down on the second note – sounding the second note from the hammering action).

Hardshell Case

Hardshell cases are more durable and provide extra protection for your guitar against physical damages or moisture.

Harmonize

Can refer to vocals, guitar leads, etc – Harmonizing is when two or more notes are sung or played together (in unison).

Harmony

Two or more notes sounded together (in unison).

Harmonic Tones

Are secondary notes that can be produced by lightly touching the string above the 5th, 7th, or 12th fret (directly over the fret wire). Although harmonic tones can be produced at the 5th, 7th, and 12th frets – there are other ways to produce harmonic tones also. Harmonic tones are also used for tuning the guitar (works well because there is no bending of the strings).

Headstock

The very top part of a guitar (at the very end of the neck) which has the tuning pegs attached (and most of the time the Manufacturers Name on it).

Heel

A block of wood that helps attach the neck to the body of a guitar.

Hexatonic Scale

A scale that consists of six notes per octave.

Hollow Body

A type of electric guitar with a body style similar to an acoustic guitar.

Humbucker (Pickup)

A type of guitar pickup - designed with a noise canceling twin coil pickup that cancels out magnetic and electronic noise.

Inlay

Any material that is embedded into the neck, body, or headstock of a guitar. The Inlay can be a decorative pattern, symbol, or just a plain dot or square. Other than looking good the inlay is similar to that of a position marker in that it assists players to find their way around the neck quickly

Interval

Best described as the distance between two notes.

Intonation

The ability of the guitar to play in tune at numerous areas (positions) up and down the fret board. along the neck. The intonation can usually be adjusted by a professional guitar technician.

Key

The key of a song or piece of music tells a musician what scales, chords, or notes that can be used. The easiest way to find what key a song is in is by looking at the key signature (which is found right after the clef sign on a piece of music).

Key Signature

The key signature indicates if there are any sharps or flats in the piece of music (which will identify the key). There are twelve different key signatures, and each key signature will have a major key and a minor key.

Lead Guitar

Lead guitar playing is basically playing single notes over the top of a rhythm guitar part (playing lead takes a lot of practice to master). The “Lead Part” of a song is called the “solo” (which is made up of melodies, sequences, bends, tapping, and so on).

Ledger Lines

When notes are placed above or below the musical staff – these “extra” lines are called ledger lines.

Legato

The Legato technique usually requires playing notes (mostly using hammer-ons and pull-offs) that are close to each other and are on the same string. Basically the opposite of the Staccato technique.

Major Chord

A major chord consists of the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes of a major scale.

Modulation

Refers to changing “keys” within a piece of music.

Machine Heads

Also known as the “tuning pegs” – “tuning keys” – “tuning heads” are used for tuning the strings, and are located on the “Headstock” of a guitar.

Melody

Usually the most recognizable part of the song (the part and described as a succession of musical notes played one after another).

Modeling Amplifiers

Modeling amplifiers are the newest technology that is becoming more and more popular these days. A typical modeling amplifier has over 25 (or more) of the most popular amplifiers and speaker cabinet sounds programmed into the amplifier. All you do is dial up the amplifier you want to use (such as a Marshall, Fender Twin, Gibson, etc) and there it is. The sound is incredible, and I recommend that all guitarists go to a music store and test any of the modeling amplifiers available.

Natural

When the Natural symbol is placed next to a note it means to “cancel” any sharps or flats within that bar of music (restores a note to its original position).

Neck

The neck is the part of the guitar that extends out from the body to the headstock (and contains the fretboard area).

Note

Notes can have three parts – the Head, Stem, and Flag. When a note is placed on the staff, the note takes on the name of the line or space they are placed on. Once placed on the staff the note will then indicate the duration and the pitched sound of the note.

Nut

A slotted bar used to elevate the strings. It is located at the upper end of the fretboard (right near where the neck attaches to the head stock).

Nylon Strings

Strings used on an Acoustic guitar (usually has 3 nylon, and 3 steel strings in the package). A typical specification for a set of Nylon guitar strings could be .027, .031, .039, .030, .035, and .043 (just one of many sizes that are available).

Octave

Two notes with the same name, but at a different location on the fretboard. One example of an octave would be using the notes C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C (a C scale); these notes form an octave from one C note to another C note. On a guitar or bass, a good example of an octave in “E” would be to play the top “E” string open, then play each note of an “E” until you reach the 12th fret (E).

Open String

Refers to a string that is played without fretting a note.

Open String Chord

Chords that contain open strings.

Open Tunings

There are many different “Open Tunings” used by guitarists, and can be described as the result of changing the tuning of one or more strings from the standard E-A-D-G-B-E tuning.

Outro

The last few measures of a song, usually made up of four or eight bars of the chorus.

Out of Tune

Anytime the strings do not match their “tuned” frequency, they are considered out of tune.

Palm mute

Palm muting is when your right hand palm (your pick hand) is placed on a string (or strings) and mutes the strings(s). Also called “damping.”

Passive

Can describe pickups, crossovers, etc. Passive pickups (or crossovers) do not require a source of power to operate (as do active pickups or crossovers).

Pentatonic Scale

A scale that consists of five notes per octave – a very popular rock scale.

Pick

A pick is basically any object (plastic, metal, fingers, etc) that is used to strike the strings to cause sound. Regular plastic picks are called “flat picks” and sometimes referred to as a “plectrum.”

Picking

Striking or Plucking to produce sounds on the guitar (using picks, fingers, etc).

Pick Guard

Usually made of plastic, can be plain or have fancy overlays on them, but the main purpose of a pick guard is to protect the body of the guitar from getting scratched or damaged.

Pickups

A device (electromagnet) located under the strings on an electric guitar that converts the acoustic sound (string vibration) into an electrical signal so the signal can be processed through an amplifier.

Pinch Harmonic

A pinch harmonic is basically created by having the thumb slightly strike a string right after the string has been picked – this creates a high pitched harmonic sound (also known as artificial harmonics).

Pitch

Any sound (frequency) generated by vibrating a string (the high or low of a sound). For example on some analog tuners the center position pitch (frequency) is 440Hz (usually shown as A = 440).

Plectrum

Is just another name for a regular pick (flat pick).

Position Markers

The small dots on the neck of your guitar that help a guitar player locate frets (fret locations) while playing the guitar (located on the top side of the neck area).

Potentiometer (Pot)

These are the knobs that are used to control the volume and tone on your guitar, amplifier, effect pedals, etc.

Power Chord

Typically used in rock music – a chord consisting of the first (root), fifth and eighth degree (octave) of a scale (does not contain a third).

Pre-bend

A pre-bend is when a note is bent up before it is picked. Pre-bends can be tricky because you have to make sure the note is bent up to the correct pitch (without hearing it).

Pull-Off

A pull-off is explained in most TAB books as – picking of the first note, and pulling off (pull on the string) to sound a second note on the same string (without picking the second note).

Quarter Note / Quarter Beat

The Quarter note (beat) is one beat long (in four / four time, there would be 4 quarter notes and each would receive one beat).

Quarter Rest

The quarter note rest symbol will indicate silence for one beat.

Refretting

Refers to changing out the frets on a guitar (called a fret job). The metal bars that the frets are made of will wear down after time (especially if the guitar is used a lot), and will need to be replaced.

Relative Key

A relative minor key (scale) is built upon the sixth note of a major key (scale). Every major key will have a relative minor key.

Relative Pitch

Best described as the “comparison” of one pitch to another pitch (example would be tuning a string so that it matches the pitch of another string).

Repeat Sign

The repeat sign is shown by placing two dots before a double line at the beginning and end of a section of music (this will indicate that this section of music is to be repeated).

Rest

A symbol that is placed on the musical staff that indicates a silence (depending on the rest symbol shown). See eighth rest, half rest, quarter rest, and whole rest.

Rhythm

The rhythm drives the music, and controls the movement (timing).

Rhythm Guitar

The Rhythm Guitar part of a song is the strumming of the chords. The Rhythm Guitar part is very important for backing a lead guitar player, singer, or ensemble.

Ritardando

Describes the act of gradually delaying or slowing down the tempo of a piece of music.

Root (Root Note)

The “root” is the first note of a scale and can indicate the “key.” Chords can be named for their root note, but the root note does not necessarily have to be played.

Saddle

The saddle is described as a “slotted” bar that raises the strings above the bridge (keeping the strings in position). Both the “saddle” and the “nut” work jointly to keep the action of the guitar at the proper playing level. These adjustments are best done by a qualified guitar technician.

Scale

Basically a scale is a series of notes in an ascending or descending order. There are many different Modes of scales – such as the Major, Ionian, Dorian, Lydian (and more...). The main scale used in rock music is the “minor pentatonic” scale (a 5-note scale).

Sharp

Raises a note or chord one half-step in pitch (on the guitar, raising a note one fret equals a half-step).

Single Coil Pickup

This is a pickup designed with a single coil of wire wrapped around a magnet.

Six String

Slang for guitars that have six strings. The majority of acoustic and electric guitars have six strings, but there are also twelve string guitars (new designs are the 7-string, and 8-string guitars).

Slide

A device that is placed on the fret hand that slides over the strings to “fret” notes. Usually made out of glass or metal.

Slur

Often used with the Legato technique – means to smoothly glide over a series of notes, without a break.

Solid Body Guitar

Refers to an electric guitar with a solid body (no sound holes).

Sound

Can be described as any “sound” made by a noise or a tone.

Sound Hole

Can be described as any “intentional” opening in the body of an acoustic guitar that allows sound to escape and project (otherwise the sound of the acoustic guitar would be muffled). The F-Hole is a type of Sound Hole.

Split Coil Pickup

A Split Coil Pickup is smaller than a standard two-coil pickup – the main feature is that the coils work with a different strings (1 coil is used for one group of strings, and 1 coil of the pickup is used for another group of strings). The Split Coil pickup has very good high frequency response, but less hum canceling.

Staccato

A technique using only alternating picking.

Staff

Consists of five lines and four spaces – notes are placed on these lines and spaces to represent notes.

Standard Tuning

The standard tuning for a guitar is E-A-D-G-B-E (low string to high string).

Steel String Guitar

Basically an acoustic guitar which uses all steel strings.

Stem

A vertical line that appears above or below a note.

Strap

Attaches to the guitar or bass and allows the guitar to be held while in a standing position.

Strap Pin (Strap Lock)

Usually a small metal button that secures a guitar strap to the guitar (preventing the strap from coming off the guitar).

Strings

Guitar strings come in different types and sizes. There are steel, nylon, coated strings, etc. Any guitarist or bass player must use a string that sounds good, and feels good to them. A typical set of rock guitar strings come in .09 (which are lighter, and feel faster), and .10 (which are a little heavier, but have better tone). Steel strings produce tones that are considered brighter than other types.

String Winder

A small device that assists with the removal and installation of guitar strings. These devices have a handle and a fixture that fits over the tuning keys.

Strumming

Strumming can be achieved by using a pick, or using fingers. The act of striking (brushing across) two or more strings simultaneously using up or down strokes (or a combination of up and down strokes).

Sustain

Is the length of time (the duration) that a guitar or bass string vibrates. The longer a note can be heard, the longer the sustain.

Sweep Picking

This is a picking technique where the pick is swept across the strings in a downward or upward motion (a gliding motion, without picking). Mainly used with arpeggios.

Syncopate

To purposely play a rhythm off-beat (also stressing or accenting a weak beat).

Tablature (TAB)

An easier way of reading and writing music. The majority of guitar and bass guitar music books these days are written in TAB – all guitarists and bass players should be familiar with reading tablature. The major difference between Reading music and Tablature is that with Reading music you are actually reading notes, and with Tablature you are reading numbers that indicate frets (notes) on the guitar or bass.

Tailpiece

Strings are usually anchored to a tailpiece (on guitars that do not have bridge pins). The tailpiece normally mounts to the end block, and pulls the strings downward after passing across the bridge.

Tapping

Is the use of a pick hand finger (or fingers) to fret notes on the fretboard. Most guitarists use the middle finger (so the pick can still be held), but some use other fingers as well.

Tempo

Best described as the “speed” (or rate of speed) of a piece of music.

Three / Four Time

Three / Four time is a time signature that indicates that there are three beats per measure, and that each quarter note will receive one beat.

Tie

Is a curved line that joins (connects) two notes of the same pitch – these notes are played as “one” using the time value of both notes.

Timbre

A term used to define the “quality” of a tone.

Time Signature

The fraction looking symbol (or sign) at the beginning of a piece of music (right after the clef sign) that indicates how many beats in per measure (top number), and how long each beat will last (bottom number). See Four/Four, Three/Four Time.

Tone

The combination of pitch, duration, dynamics, and sound character (quality) produced by any instrument or equipment used by the instrument. Tone can be defined as a sound produced by “regular” vibrations.

Transcribe (Transcription)

Refers to the breakdown (dissection) of a piece of recorded music, and writing it down (usually note for note).

Transpose (Transposing)

Is best described as changing the “key” of a piece of music (to a different key).

Truss Rod

A rigid, metal bar which runs thru the center of most guitar and bass guitar necks. The rod helps to stiffen the neck and prevent “bowing” caused by string tension. The truss bar can be adjusted and can affect the action on a guitar

Tremolo

A technique that uses a very rapid down-up movement of the pick. Also a term used for whammy bar, tremolo arm, and vibrato.

Triad

Basically a “three note” chord.

Triplets

In Music Theory triplets can be described as 3 notes played in the time of two notes. Lead guitar players use triplets as a three note “lick” or “fill” when playing solo’s.

Tube (Electron Tube)

A hermetically sealed glass or metal envelope in which conduction of electrons takes place through a vacuum or gas. Many amplifier manufacturers used electron tubes in amplifiers for the distinct tone and crunch. The tube sound is now being “replicated” and “modeled” using solid state (digital) technology.

Tuning

Tuning is simply adjusting the tuning keys on each guitar or bass string until the string “vibrates” at the correct frequency (to accurately reach the correct notes).

Tuner

An electronic device used for tuning a guitar or bass guitar. Usually battery powered.

Tuning Key (tuning knob, tuning peg, machine head)

The tuning key (knob, peg) is located on the headstock of the guitar, and used to tighten or loosen a string for the purpose of tuning.

Up Stroke / Up Pick

Refers to the pick hand strumming or picking from bottom to top (upward).

Verse

The part of a song (or piece of music) that comes after the intro and leads up to the chorus (the part of the song that tells the story).

Vibrato

Bending the string up and down (slowly or very rapidly).

Voicing

The arrangement of notes of a chord. Also the arrangement (or placement) of a melody or bass line within a harmonic progression.

Whole Note / Whole Beat

The Whole note is four beats long (twice that of a half note / beat). Also described as one beat that lasts for a whole measure (bar) with a time signature of Four/Four.

Whole Rest

The Whole note rest symbol will indicate silence for four beats.

Whole Step

A whole step is equal to two frets on the guitar or bass guitar. For example: An “F” note is one whole step away from a “G” note.

Whammy Bar (Tremolo Bar)

Also called a “Tremolo” bar – a mechanical arm that attaches to the bridge of a guitar that alters the pitch of the strings (notes or chords) that are played.

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