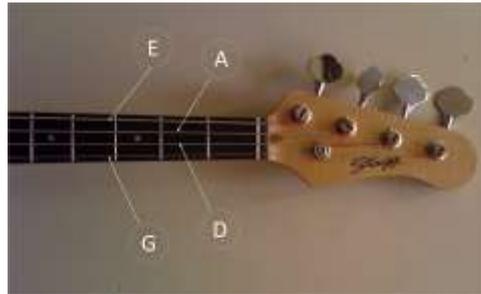


Lesson 1

Strings and basic hand technique...

Grab your Bass! As you look down at the instrument you can see it has four strings:

- The nearest (thickest) is E, then we have A, D and G.
- We refer to the E string as the bottom string and the G as the top string – this is because the E sounds the lowest and the G sounds the highest even though the E is at the ‘top’ of the instrument.



Activity One – ‘Walking’ Fingers on the E and A

We are going to practise a right-hand ‘finger style’ technique playing the ‘open’ strings to start. Playing a string ‘open’ means plucking the strings without using the left hand to fret any notes.

Rest your thumb on the pickup when plucking the E string as shown.



When playing the A, D and G strings rest your thumb on the E string.



This is the E and A notes on the staff and in tablature.

- Play the crotchet beats with all down strokes.
- Alternate your right hand index and middle fingers using a ‘walking’ action.
- Count 1,2,3,4 in your head as you play the 4 bars of music.

Exercise 1

The exercise consists of four bars of music in 4/4 time. The notes are: Bar 1 (E, E, E, E), Bar 2 (A, A, A, A), Bar 3 (E, E, E, E), and Bar 4 (E, E, E, E). The tablature below the staff shows the string numbers: 0 for open strings and 5 for the A string.

Tip!
Use the same finger when moving from A to E string for ease – this is called ‘raking’.

Activity Two – Adding the D and G

Now let's add the open D string. This is a higher pitched string than the E and A so is the highest up the staff in the following example – middle of the 3rd line. Remember to alternate index and middle fingers and to use the raking technique when playing descending notes.

Take the time to absorb the new notes and their position on the staff as you progress through the lessons. Make sure you are happy with reading the open strings before we move on and begin to fill in the gaps with fretted notes.

Exercise 2 a

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Exercise 2 a. The first system consists of a bass staff and a guitar staff. The bass staff is in 4/4 time and contains a sequence of notes: four E's (quarter notes), four A's (quarter notes), four D's (quarter notes), and four A's (quarter notes). The guitar staff shows the corresponding open strings: E, A, D, and A. The second system starts with a '5' above the staff, indicating the fifth measure. It continues the sequence with four A's (quarter notes), four D's (quarter notes), and a final note, a semi-breve G, which is positioned in the top space of the staff.

○ = 4 beats

The last note in the tune looks different? This is a semi-breve and lasts for 4 beats. The last string left to play is the 'G', which is the highest pitched open string. This note is also the highest on the staff in the following exercise - sitting in the top space.

Exercise 2 b

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Exercise 2 b. The first system consists of a bass staff and a guitar staff. The bass staff is in 4/4 time and contains a sequence of notes: four E's (quarter notes), four A's (quarter notes), four D's (quarter notes), and four G's (quarter notes). The guitar staff shows the corresponding open strings: E, A, D, and G. The second system starts with a '5' above the staff, indicating the fifth measure. It continues the sequence with four A's (quarter notes), four D's (quarter notes), and two final notes, minims G, which are positioned in the top space of the staff.

♪ = 4 beats

Last 2 notes look different again? These are minims and last for 2 beats.

Tip!

Use your left hand to mute strings that are not being played, you've just learned to play your first 4 notes on the bass guitar!

Activity Three – fretted notes F and G

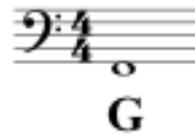
So far we have learnt how to play the open strings E, A, D and G. We are now going to add left hand fretted notes F and G on the E string.

Be economical - use your 4 left hand fingers to cover 4 frets – avoid sliding 1 finger between notes (unless that effect is required) so.....

- F is played placing the first finger behind the first fret.
- G is using the third finger behind the third fret.
- Keep the left hand thumb in the middle of the back of the neck roughly opposite fingers one and two.



1st fret



3rd fret



- This exercise mostly uses 'E', 'F' and 'G' notes but look out for open strings 'A' and 'D' too.
- First, read through the notes saying them aloud – get used to recognising the different positions on the staff.
- The tune also uses a mixture of crotchets, minims and semi-breves.
- Have fun and remember you are playing the coolest instrument in the band!

Exercise 3



Exercise 3 consists of four staves of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff contains 12 notes: E (open), F (1st fret), G (3rd fret), A (open), B (2nd fret), C (3rd fret), D (open), E (open), F (1st fret), G (3rd fret), A (open), B (2nd fret). The second staff starts at measure 5 with notes: C (3rd fret), D (open), E (open), F (1st fret), G (3rd fret), A (open), B (2nd fret), C (3rd fret). The third staff starts at measure 9 with notes: D (open), E (open), F (1st fret), G (3rd fret), A (open), B (2nd fret), C (3rd fret), D (open). The fourth staff starts at measure 13 with notes: E (open), F (1st fret), G (3rd fret), A (open), B (2nd fret), C (3rd fret), D (open), E (open).

Activity Four – putting it all together

It's time to put everything we have learnt so far into practice and play along with our first tune "A New Beginning"!

Listening is really important when playing music – make sure you can hear the pulse from the drums and the sounds from the other instruments to ensure your part fits.

- Try playing it through at your own pace and then when you are ready, have a go with the CD.
- Listen for the 4 'clicks' at the beginning of the track and go for it.
- If you get a little lost don't worry, try again.
- If there are any areas that seem a little difficult - zone in on them and practice those a little more.
- Most important of all - Good Luck!

Activity Four – a little bit more!

Try playing at your normal volume where it says '*f*' and at a lower volume where you see '*p*'

Tip!
Try to 'push through' the string and not 'pull' – apply more pressure for loud notes and less for quiet ones.