

Lesson 1: Quarter notes and quarter rests

Before starting with the first lesson you should read the chapter "Fundamentals" on the website. There you will find information on how to properly fret and pluck the strings, i.e. the correct left and right hand technique. In this lesson you will learn how to read sheet music on a basic level.

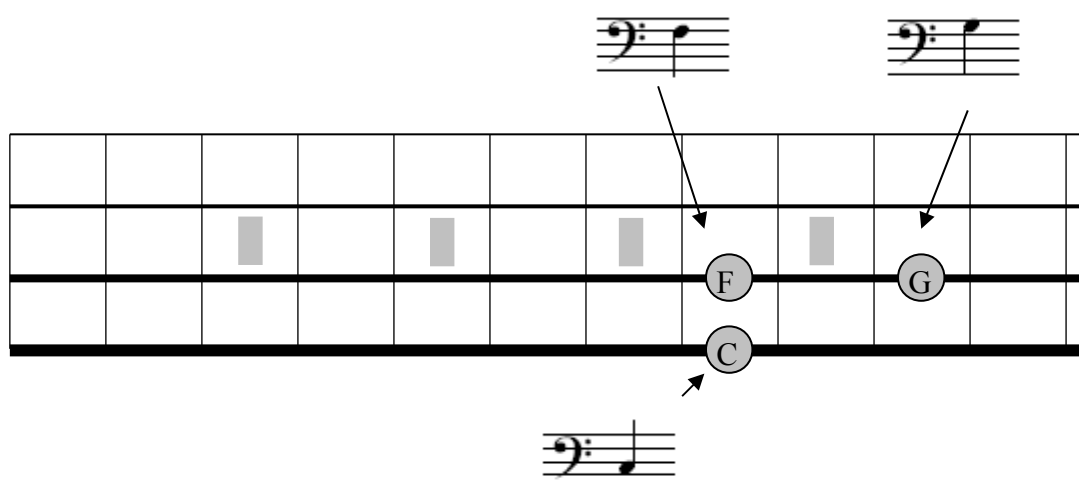
For the first lesson you will need but 3 notes. In the diagram below you can see

- how the notes are called (C, G and F),
- how they are written in the **staff** which is used for musical notation and consists of 5 lines and
- where you have to place the fingers of your left hand on the fretboard to play these notes

The strings of the fretboard are represented as horizontal lines, the fattest and lowest string (E-string) at the bottom. The metal strips inserted into the fingerboard are called frets and are represented as vertical lines. Most bass guitars have marks at the 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th fret. These marks are also displayed in the diagram below.

So you can see that in order to play the note F (which is in the staff on the 4th line from the bottom) you have to play the 8th fret on the second lowest string, the A-string. G is played two frets higher on the same string. C is on the same fret as F but on the lowest string.

The exercises are played in the 3rd position which means that C and F are fretted with the 1st finger (= index finger) and G with the 3rd finger (= ring finger).



All notes in this lesson are **quarter notes**. Besides the notes you will also find the following symbol:



It is called a **quarter rest** and means that you have to pause then.

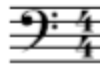
Every 4 notes or rests are grouped together into a **bar** with a vertical line called **bar-line**.



The first and the last bar-line is doubled and has two dots. This is called a **repeat sign** and means that every exercise has to be played twice.



In front of every staff you see the following symbol:



It means that you are playing the bass clef and have a four-four time (four quarter notes per bar).

From the chapter "Fundamentals" you already know that while playing the bass guitar you should steadily tap your foot. These taps mark the four beats of every bar. Because we only play quarter notes respectively quarter rests every note or rest occurs simultaneously with a tap of the foot:

- When you play a quarter note you pluck a string and at the same time tap your foot
- When you play a quarter rest you tap your foot without plucking a string

Listen to the audio files while reading the exercise sheets, then the idea will become clear. In the audio files the taps of the foot are the clicks of the metronome.

I'm well aware that, for a beginner, all this is not so easy at first. You have to watch your right hand, your left hand and at the same time tap your foot. So don't despair when it doesn't work out right away. Don't give up but keep practicing playing slowly! You will see that after a few hours the whole thing becomes more natural to you. And after a few weeks you will hardly remember how difficult it was in the beginning.

Exercise 1

a)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a double bar line and repeat dots. The first staff contains four measures: G4 quarter, A4 quarter, B4 quarter, C5 quarter. The second staff contains four measures: D4 quarter, E4 quarter, F4 quarter, G4 quarter. The third staff contains four measures: A3 quarter, B3 quarter, C4 quarter, D4 quarter. All notes are quarter notes.

b)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a double bar line and repeat dots. The first staff contains four measures: G4 quarter, A4 quarter, B4 quarter, C5 quarter. The second staff contains four measures: D4 quarter, E4 quarter, F4 quarter, G4 quarter. The third staff contains four measures: A3 quarter, B3 quarter, C4 quarter, D4 quarter. All notes are quarter notes.

c)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a double bar line and repeat dots. The first staff contains four measures: G4 quarter, A4 quarter, B4 quarter, C5 quarter. The second staff contains four measures: D4 quarter, E4 quarter, F4 quarter, G4 quarter. The third staff contains four measures: A3 quarter, B3 quarter, C4 quarter, D4 quarter. All notes are quarter notes.

d)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a double bar line and repeat dots. The first staff contains four measures: G4 quarter, A4 quarter, B4 quarter, C5 quarter. The second staff contains four measures: D4 quarter, E4 quarter, F4 quarter, G4 quarter. The third staff contains four measures: A3 quarter, B3 quarter, C4 quarter, D4 quarter. All notes are quarter notes.

Exercise 2

a)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each starting with a repeat sign. The first staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The second staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The third staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

b)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each starting with a repeat sign. The first staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The second staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The third staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

c)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each starting with a repeat sign. The first staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The second staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The third staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

d)

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each starting with a repeat sign. The first staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The second staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The third staff contains: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.