

Upper Intermediate Guitar

Lesson Plan for 8-week Course

Prepared by Alex Van Valen

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In this class, we will be reviewing basic chord structures, improvisation and melody, ear training, and each student will provide a list of five of their favorite songs they want to learn to play and sing.

The individual student's unique style and artistry will be prioritized, as will ear training with an emphasis on melody. Each student will learn to sing melodies that fit in the key and to navigate the guitar fretboard by ear. Scales will also be incorporated, but will be secondary in improvisation to learning to play melodic lines.

The instructor incorporates a patient and nondirectional approach that allows each student to steer teaching towards their own interests. No student will be forced to learn material that causes them to resent the process or the instrument. They will be encouraged to experiment, jam, and find things that feel right for them.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

1. Student will be encouraged to put in daily practice time between sessions
2. The acceleration of learning is dependent on the degree of outside practice

OBJECTIVES

1. Student will gain an understanding of individual notes and chords over the entire fretboard of the guitar.
2. Student will begin to gain an understanding of how to replicate melodies they hear onto the guitar.
3. Student will learn to play their five songs of choice all the way through, and identify the individual song elements (chords, hook, melody).

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. The student must have their own acoustic or electric guitar.
2. The student must have their own guitar picks if they choose to use one.

VERIFICATION

Steps to check for student understanding

1. On the last week of classes, students will perform the pieces they've learned.
2. A before-and-after audio recording will be taken to assess skill growth.
3. Students will receive a chord and note knowledge quiz.

ACTIVITY

What will reinforce the lesson

One-hour daily of individual practice will keep a student on track for each subsequent lesson. Beginning each lesson with a warm up and a proper hand stretch will optimize practice productivity and prevent injury.

Lesson 1: Basics, Mechanics, and Skills Assessment

OVERVIEW

In this lesson we will go over the absolute basics: how to hold the guitar, how to hold a pick if the student decides to use a pick, how to warm-up and how to stretch your hands properly.

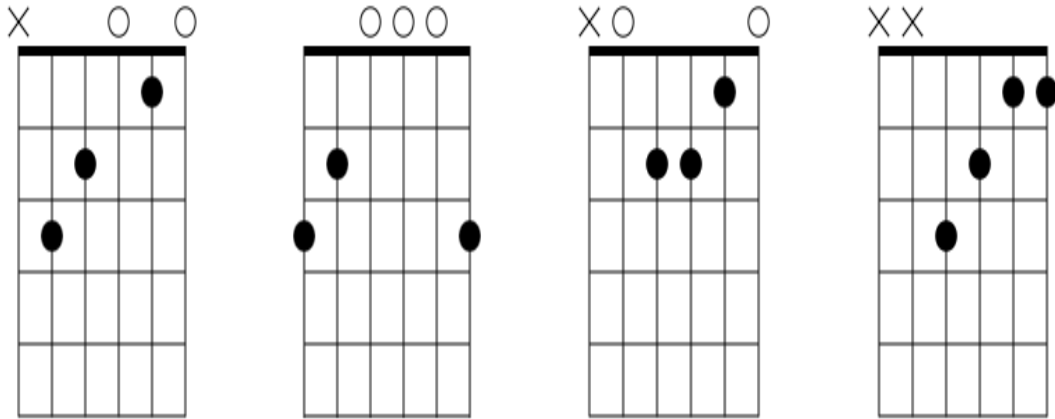
Warm Up #1: Spider Walks

Spider walks are non-musical dexterity exercises that warm up the hand. We will simply play 4 notes up the neck at a time on each string.

Warm Up #2: The 4-Chord Song

The 4-chord song is a name given to the progression that shows up most commonly in pop music. By going over these chords to begin, the student will be able to play several popular songs.

This is made up of chord degrees I-V-vi-IV, here is our example progression in the key of C, that we will stick with for our first 3 lessons:



Lesson 2: Chords, Notes, and How to find them

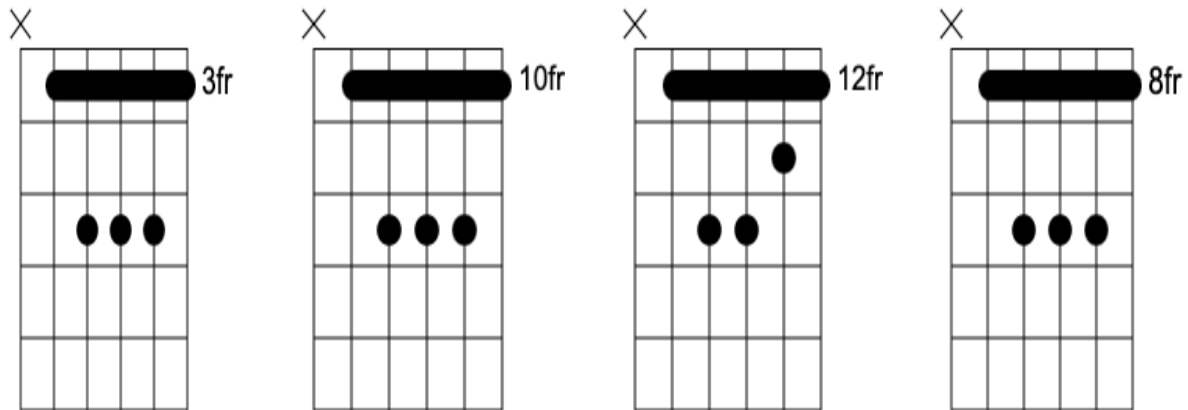
OVERVIEW

In this section, we will begin to familiarize ourselves with notes on the neck, and how to find them using common chords from Lesson 1 and open-string notes as a reference.

We will review the most common barre chords that can be found on the E and A string, and expand our knowledge of the fretboard.

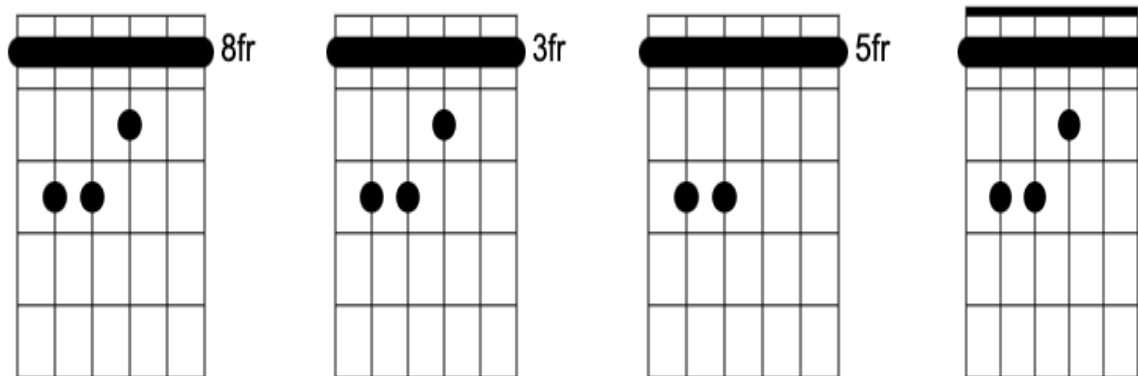
Barre Chords for Last Lesson's Song

A-Shape



What do we notice about the last chord? It is the same exact shape as our open-Am, but 12 frets higher. Keep that in mind!

E-Shape



Let's notice two more things:

- 1) What makes the minor different than the major in A and E shapes (and in all shapes)?
- 2) In the E shape, why do you think the second, third, and fourth chords are each 2 frets away from each other?

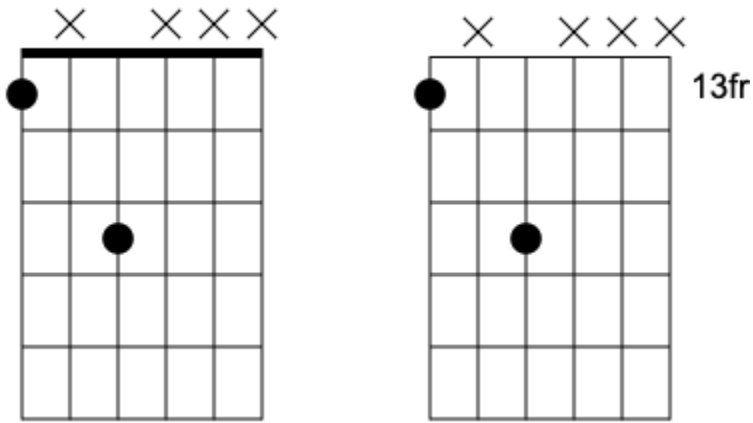
We'll go over these answers together.

Locating Individual Notes

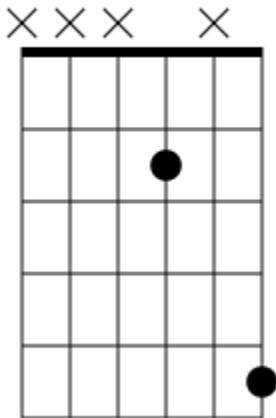
Once you have knowledge of the common A and E shapes, you will immediately know where the same note lives on several other frets, using a few straightforward shortcuts

Here are a few shortcuts:

- 1) When tuning your guitar, you know that the fifth fret on each string is the same as the next open string, except for the G-string, where the next open string is a B, so it is the same on the fourth fret.
- 2) Remember how that Am chord was the same shape, but 12 frets higher? That works for every note as well!
- 3) This next shortcut needs an illustration:



These notes are all an F, and you can locate most notes by going two strings over and two frets up. The exception to this is the G-string! Here is an example of an F on the G-string and on the E-string.



Remember, moving 12 frets higher will produce an octave of any note.

Homework

Keep practicing all of these chord shapes over the next week, and find at least 3 places on the fretboard to play each note for the progression.

Reminder: you can go 12 frets up (or down) to find the same note, or 2 strings over and 2 frets up (unless you are starting on the G-string), you can use open strings (E, A, D, G, B, E), or you can use the first note of the open chords.