



Reading Ukulele Tablature / Tab

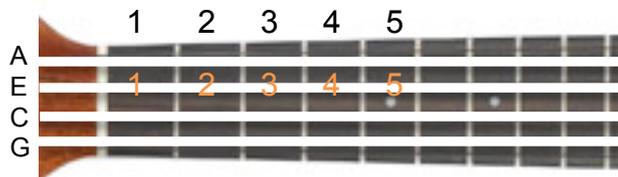
Sometimes ukulele songs (and those of other stringed instruments) are shown in tablature. In ukulele tablature, the four lines each represent one of the ukulele's strings:

-A-----
 -E-----
 -C-----
 -G-----

Note that the 'bottom' string is the "G" string. You can remember the tuning of the ukulele as "Green Cats Eat Anchovies".

For many folks tablature seems a bit 'backwards' at first, in relation to where you'd guess the notes to be. It sometimes helps to think of holding up your ukulele to the tablature so you can 'see' where the strings/ notes are in relation to the lines:

-A-----
 -E—1—2—3—4—5-----
 -C-----
 -G-----



The numbers on the line tell you what fret you need to press the string down on, whilst the lines represent the strings. If there's a '0' it means you should pluck it as an open string (no fingers on any of the frets).

Knowing how to read tablature allows you to venture further into melody, not simply chords. You can also learn to play chord-melody styles which blend playing melody with strumming chords – it's pretty impressive sounding and not as difficult as it sounds.

Try it for yourself; pluck only the notes shown:

e.g. 'Bar 3' Bar lines show you where each bar ends

Here's how to translate it:

Bar 1: for the first two notes, hold down the second string (E string) at the first fret. For the second two notes, hold down the first string (A string) at the third fret.

Bar 2: for bars 2 and 3 all the notes are on the first string (A string). The first two notes hold down the first string at the fifth fret. The third and final note in the bar is on the first string, third fret – hold it for twice as long as the others.

Bar 3: the first two notes are on the first fret on the first string. The second two notes are 'open' (no fingers) on that string.

Bar 4: this bar is played on the second (E) string. The first two notes are on the third fret; the last note is on the first fret – hold it for twice as long as the others.

Here's the rest of the music. I have written the standard (western classical) notation above so you can see the rhythms more clearly and how the notes relate to standard notation. Some people learn to read Tab first and memorise the notes that the tabs relate to, allowing them to read music from any instrumental score.



Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

“Ah! vous dirais-je, Maman” – Trad French melody, arr. Mozart!

A

5

B

9

C

To make the music more interesting we often use devices like playing the melody with chords or 'double stopping' (playing two notes at once). Try the exercise below for two examples of the same melody played using these different techniques:



“Frere Jaques” – Trad. French Melody. Arr. B. Farmer

“Are You Sleeping?”, “Brother John”, “I Hear Thunder” or “Brother Peter”

A melody with chords

Chords: F F F C F C

Measures 5-8. Chords: C F C F F F

B Double stopping

Measures 9-12. Chords: F C F F C F F C7 F F C7 F

Measures 13-16. Chords: F C F F C F F F

Killing me Softly



Charles Fox with lyrics by Norman Gimbel arr. B. Farmer

Musical notation for the first system, including a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers (0, 1, 3, 3, 2, 2, 3, 0, 0, 3, 1).

Musical notation for the second system, including a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers (0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 1, 1, 3, 0, 3, 3, 0, 0, 2, 3, 2, 2, 0, 3).

Musical notation for the third system, including a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers (0, 0, 1, 3, 3, 0, 1, 0, 2, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 2).

Musical notation for the fourth system, including a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers (3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 0, 0, 0, 3, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 3, 2).

Musical notation for the fifth system, including a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers (2, 5, 5, 5, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 0, 0, 0, 3, 0, 0, 0, 3, 3, 3, 0, 3).

Musical notation for the sixth system, including a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers (3, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 2, 2, 2, 2, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0, 1, 2).