

Shaw Academy  
NOTES

Diploma in Guitar



shawacademy

# Lesson 1 Notes

## Introduction:

Lesson 1 begins with an introduction to Shaw Academy. I explain how to take full advantage of the live lessons. We look at the agenda for Lesson 1 and for the course. From there, I mention a wonderful opportunity for students to win Lifetime Membership to Shaw Academy. To be considered for this prize, students must attend 80% of the webinars live (4 out of the 5 webinars up to Lesson 6). The winner will be announced during Lesson 6 and will be chosen at random. I then mention where to find and what is included in the tool kits.

## Styles of Music:

We start with listing some of the most common styles of music. From Classical and Flamenco, to Rock and Pop, From Punk and Metal, to Country and Hip-hop, the guitar has become the most popular instrument in the world. The versatility of the guitar has enabled it to become one of the most important instruments in many styles of music. The skills that we will be learning in this Diploma in Guitar Course are applicable to all the different styles, and what you will learn in this course will set the strong foundation that you will need to be able to play at a much higher level.

## Speaking the Language of Music:

The next thing we do is develop our music vocabulary. Throughout the course and the UGP, I refer to certain terms, and we must all make sure that we understand each other. The following is a list of terms along with their definitions.

- In the Fretting Hand:
  - Index Finger is called the 1<sup>st</sup> Finger
  - Middle Finger is called the 2<sup>nd</sup> Finger
  - Ring Finger is called the 3<sup>rd</sup> Finger
  - Pinky Finger is called the 4<sup>th</sup> Finger
- In the Fingerpicking hand:
  - The Thumb is called the “P”
  - The Index Finger is called the “I”
  - The Middle Finger is called the “M”
  - The Ring Finger is called the “A”
- Guitar Picking – A Finger or Plectrum technique use to play a single note.
- Strumming – A technique used to play the guitar by sweeping the fingers or plectrum up or down across the strings.

- **Fretting** – The act of placing the fingers on the fretboard in such a way that the note played sounds clear and full.
- **The Body** – The largest part of the guitar. For an acoustic guitar, this is from where the sound emanates.
- **The Neck** – The piece of wood that extends from the body to the end of the headstock. The fretboard, frets, and headstock are all located on the neck.
- **The Fretboard** – Also known as the Fingerboard. It is a long and thin strip of wood that is laminated to the front of the neck. We press our fingers on the fretboard to play notes.
- **The Frets** – The frets are vertical metal strips inserted into each fretboard. The frets divide the neck into fixed segments. Each segment on a string is a different note.
- **The Headstock** – The part of the guitar that is furthest from the body. The headstock is normally where the tuning pegs are located.
- **The Tuning Pegs** – The devices that we turn to tighten or loosen the string, thereby making the pitch of the string higher or lower, respectively.
- **The Time Signature** – Indicates the number of beats per measure
- **The Measure or “Bar”** – A space in music with a certain number of beats. In written music, delineated by vertical lines (bars).
- **Standard Tuning** – Describes the most common way a guitar is tuned. Standard Tuning indicates the notes to which each open string is tuned.
  - **High E String** – the highest pitched string. Also the thinnest.
  - **B string**
  - **G string**
  - **D string**
  - **A string**
  - **Low E string** – the lowest pitched string. Also the thickest.
- **Notating Music** – A method of writing down the sounds that we hear.
- **Tablature Notation** – One way of notating music for the guitar using 6 parallel horizontal lines and numbers
  - **The Horizontal Lines** represent each open string (see the order above).
  - **The Numbers** represent the frets we are supposed to play on the string it appears.

- If a 0 (zero) appears on the lowest Line, we must play the open Low E string.
- If a 1 appears on the lowest line, we must press and play the first fret of the Low E string.
- If two or more numbers appear together and are vertically aligned, you are to play these notes in unison, usually by strumming.
- If two or more numbers appear in the same measure but are not vertically aligned, you must play each note on its designated beat.

### **Basic Techniques:**

After we learn our vocabulary, we learn the most essential techniques for a guitar player. The first essential necessity is knowing how to hold a guitar. The right-handed guitar player holds their guitar with the body of the guitar in front of his or her stomach/chest area. The neck extends out to the left. The left-handed guitar player similarly places the body of the guitar in front of his or her stomach/chest with the neck extending to the right.

We then learn how to pick a guitar by using a plectrum or by using the technique of fingerpicking. Right-handed guitar players pick with the fingers on their right hand, and left-handed guitar players pick with the fingers on their left hand.

If you use a plectrum, hold the plectrum in between your thumb and index finger. There is no hard and fast rule on how to exactly hold your plectrum. Many guitar players choose whatever is most comfortable for them. Holding it in between your thumb and index finger is a good place to start.

If you will be fingerpicking, you must know the proper technique and position. For a right-handed guitar player, hold your right arm out straight in front of you and give the thumbs up. Then turn your hand 90 degrees to the left so your thumbs up becomes a thumbs left (pointing horizontally to the left). Now place your thumb on the Low E string. As your thumb is resting on the Low E string, let the rest of your fingers naturally drop down and to the right of your thumb position. For Left handed guitar players, hold your left arm straight in front of you and give the thumbs up. For you, turn your hand 90 degrees to the right so your thumbs up becomes a thumbs right (point horizontally to the right). Now place your thumb on the Low E string. As your thumb is resting on the Low E string, let the rest of your fingers naturally drop down and to the left of your thumb position. This is the most technically correct position for your fingerpicking hand.

The last basic technique is to know how to press on the frets. In the beginning, we want to make sure that our fretting fingers (on the left hand for a right-handed player, and on the right hand for a left-handed player) press the string from as close to a perpendicular angle as possible. We want to be pressing from top down, as if we our fingers were coming from above the fretboard rather than

below the neck. It is important to curve the fingers so that the tops of the fingertips are pressing on the frets. The proper thumb position for your fretting hand is to be in the middle of the back of the neck. This adds more support to your fingers as you can now squeeze from both sides.

It is common for those starting out to build up callouses on their fretting fingers. Some even find the experience a bit painful. This is normal, and if you keep up the practicing, this pain quickly disappears.

### Lesson 1 Songs:

The first challenge for Lesson 1 is to be able to play the intro for Metallica's "Nothing Else Matters." This intro requires us to pick through only open strings in the pattern of

- Low E string
- G string
- B string
- High E string
- B string
- High E string

If we are fingerpicking, we are to use this following pattern for fingerpicking:

- P – I – M – A – M – I

If we are use a plectrum, we must pick every note (string) in the downward direction.

The third and last challenge for Lesson 1 is to play the intro lick to The White Stripes' "7 Nation Army."

- First we play the open A string twice, then we use our 3<sup>rd</sup> finger to press the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret of the A string. We play the open A string again, and then we use our 3<sup>rd</sup> finger to press on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret of the Low E string. We then use our first finger to press the 1<sup>st</sup> fret of the Low E string, and then finish by playing the open Low E string.

If you would like to participate on our weekly interaction, please post onto [www.facebook.com/shawacademy](http://www.facebook.com/shawacademy) what your favorite song is.

If, at any point, you need assistance or have any questions, please feel free to email me. This concludes the summary for Lesson 1.



THANK YOU

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