

Tablature

The first method of writing guitar music is the oldest of the bunch, tablature, or tab for short.

Tab has been used since the earliest written music for guitar and lute, though we often associate it with more modern writing styles.

When reading tab, you see six strings, the bottom line is the low E string and the top line is the high E string.

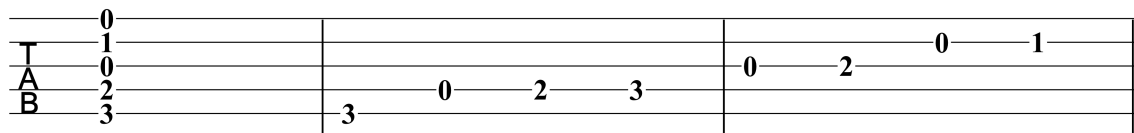
So, the order, from lowest line to highest, is EADGBE, the open strings of the guitar.

From there, when you see a number, that's the fret you play on that string.

Here's an example of a chord and single notes written in tab.

For the first bar, you place fingers on the fretted notes, 3-2-1, and leave the others open, 0.

In the next two bars, you play one note at a time, playing the 3rd fret on the A string, then the open D string, etc. for those measures.



To make tab more complete, some publications and composers add rhythms to the tab numbers.

Here's an example of tab with rhythms. It's not as easy to read the rhythms as notation, but it's better than no rhythms in the tab.

