

GUITAR

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Overview: Guitar I is a one-year course for beginner guitarists, dedicated to providing a musically enriching experience for students who wish to keep music in their lives. Students will learn to play guitar by ear and from music notation, while studying various musical styles and introductory music theory.

Course Objectives:

- o Develop appropriate sitting posture and hand positions.
- o Learn to play chords, accompaniment, and melodies.
- o Learn proper strumming, fingerstyle, and flat-picking techniques.
- o Learn to read standard music notation, chord diagrams, chord symbols, and tablature.
- o Learn to tune and care for the guitar.
- o Learn to play various musical genres, including flamenco, blues, rock, pop, and classical.

Required Materials:

- **Charged Chromebook** (or school-issued device) + **power cord**
- **Acoustic six-string guitar** (full-size recommended; $\frac{3}{4}$ size acceptable).
- **Chromatic tuner** (clip-on preferred; a reliable phone tuner app is acceptable).
- **Guitar picks** (6-10 total; assorted thicknesses **.46-.73 mm** in a small pick holder).
- **1"-1.5" binder** with **5 tab dividers**: Technique • Repertoire • Theory • Practice Log • Assessments.
- **Staff & TAB paper, pencils only**, large eraser, and two highlighters.
- **Wired headphones/earbuds** compatible with Chromebook
- **Essential Elements Beginner Guitar Book 1**

Grading Policy:

There are three categories that make up the Guitar grade:

60% Summative Assessments

20% Homework

20% Class Participation

Unit 1 - Foundations: Setup, Sound, and First Chords Overview

Students learn safe posture, hand positions, parts of the guitar, and tuning. They establish steady beat, read basic note/rest values, and strum first chords (C, G7) with downstroke patterns while singing entry-level songs. Diverse two-chord repertoire shows how shared harmonic vocabularies cross cultures. Students compare tuning methods for efficiency and accuracy.

Essential Questions:

How do posture and hand position affect tone, comfort, and progress?

Why is tuning the first musical decision each day?

How do simple chord progressions communicate across styles and cultures?

Note: Questions used to prompt learning in particular lessons will be more specific to content and skill development.

Learning Targets & Standards

Learning Targets should reflect goals for all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Identify guitar parts; demonstrate **rest/playing position** and left/right-hand setup.

Tune using clip-on/app and relative methods (6–1, 5th-fret).

Keep **steady beat**; read/perform **quarter, half, whole notes/rests** in 4/4.

Form and switch **C** and **G7** (3-string versions) cleanly; strum with a **steady downstroke**.

Sing and strum two-chord repertoire; describe lyric/message context from diverse sources.

Aligned Standards (NJSLS-VPA — Music: Harmonizing Instruments, HS-Proficient 1.3D):

- **Performing**

- • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4a • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4b • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4c
- • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5a • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5b • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5c
- • 1.3D.12prof.Pr6a

- **Responding**

- • 1.3D.12prof.Re7a • 1.3D.12prof.Re7b • 1.3D.12prof.Re8a

- **Connecting**

- • 1.3D.12prof.Cn10a • 1.3D.12prof.Cn11a

Assessments:

Formative: daily tuning checks; posture/hand audits; beat-keeping claps; two-chord change timing drills.

Summative:

- **Technique Check 1** (posture, hand shape, clean chord tone)
- **Two-Chord Song Performance** (C ↔ G7, steady pulse, lyrics) with short reflection on cultural origin.
- **Music Literacy Quiz 1** (symbols, counting, chord diagram reading)

Instructional Strategies & Unit Resources:

Gradual release: model → guided → independent strum; **call-and-response** counting.

“**Strum Builder 1**” style downstrokes; chord-prep silent fingering.

Repertoire examples (teacher-provided): “**He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands**” (African-American trad.), “**Water Come a Me Eye**” (Trinidad).

Tech: clip-on tuner or app; metronome app; class slide deck of chord diagrams.

Vocabulary

Tier 2: posture, position, steady, accuracy, context, reflect

Tier 3: headstock, tuning keys, nut, fret/fretboard, sound hole, **rest/playing position**, chord diagram, downstroke, 4/4, whole/half/quarter

(notes & rests)

Accommodations & Modifications

- Enlarged chord diagrams and color-coded strings
- Strap/footstool options; seating/posture supports
- Slower demo videos; chunked practice targets; extended time
- Peer coaching/buddy system; bilingual glossaries
- Alternate assessment via video submission
- **Extensions:** full C, bass-string targeting on G7

- [General Education](#)
- [IEP](#)
- [504](#)
- [Multilingual Learners](#)
- [Students at-risk](#)
- [Gifted and Talented](#)

Interdisciplinary Connections & 21st Century Themes & Skills

ELA (R4 vocabulary); Career Readiness 9.2.12.C.1; Tech & Collaboration 9.4.12.TL.3.

Unit 2 - Reading Single Notes & Core Repertoire Overview

Students begin single-note reading on strings 1-3, develop alternate picking, and add chords G, D7, Em with down-up strums. **They perform melodies, duets, and chord-song accompaniments, connecting notation to sound and texture.**

Essential Questions:

How does reading single notes change what and how we can play?

Which tone and articulation choices help a melody “speak”?

How does the same song feel different as melody, duet, or strummed accompaniment?

Note: [Questions](#) used to prompt learning in particular lessons will be more specific to content and skill development.

Learning Targets & Standards

Learning Targets should reflect goals for all levels of [Bloom’s Taxonomy](#).

Learning Targets — Students will:

- Read and perform **open/1st/3rd-fret** notes on strings **1-3** in treble clef.
- Use **alternate picking** for quarter/half/whole rhythms; **introduce eighths.**
- Strum **down-up** patterns; switch **G, D7, Em** in tempo.
- **Perform duets and chord songs (e.g., “Ode to Joy,” “Jambalaya”) and compare textures.**

Aligned Standards (NJSLS-VPA — 1.3D HS-Prof):

- **Performing**
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4a • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4b • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4c
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5a • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5b • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5c
- **Responding**

- • 1.3D.12prof.Re7a • 1.3D.12prof.Re7b • 1.3D.12prof.Re8a • 1.3D.12prof.Re9a

- **Connecting**

- • 1.3D.12prof.Cn10a • 1.3D.12prof.Cn11a

Assessments:

Formative: note-name drills; string-crossing etudes; chord-switch timers; duet rehearsals.

Summative:

- **Reading Check 1** (melody on strings 1–3)
- **Chord-Song Performance** (down–up strum, 2 changes/measure)
- **Ensemble Duet** + quick write on arranging/texture choices

Instructional Strategies & Unit Resources:

- “Single-String Thing” warmups;
- Back-and-Forth crossing drills;
- **Strum Builder 2** (down–up);
- listening comparisons across folk/rock/global tunes.
- Tech: notation/TAB handouts, slow-down audio.

Vocabulary

Tier 2: articulate, coordinate, balance, accuracy, tempo, texture

Tier 3: treble clef, ledger line, **alternate picking**, eighth note, duet, lead sheet, intro, articulation

Accommodations & Modifications

- Note-name overlays; temporary string tapes
- Simplified rhythms/melodies; reduced tempo tracks
- Peer buddies; small-group sectionals; extended time
- Bilingual glossaries; visual cue cards
- **Extensions:** add harmony notes to melody; sing-while-strum coordination
 - [General Education](#)
 - [IEP](#)
 - [504](#)
 - [Multilingual Learners](#)
 - [Students at-risk](#)
 - [Gifted and Talented](#)

Interdisciplinary Connections & 21st Century Themes & Skills

Math (fractions/subdivision); 9.4.12.CI.1–3 (problem-solving); 9.4.12.IML.1 (evaluate learning media, tabs vs. notation).

Unit 3 - Strumming Variations, Fingerpicking & Ensemble Skills Overview

Students extend reading to strings 4–5, add chords (full G, C; Am, Am7, D, A7, E), and develop syncopated strums, bass/strum accompaniment, and p-i-m-a fingerpicking. **The repertoire spans folk, Latin, pop, and classical excerpts for solo/duet/trio.**

Essential Questions:

How do syncopation, bass emphasis, or fingerpicking change groove and meaning?

How do culture and style shape accompaniment choices?

What rehearsal moves make a small ensemble tight and musical?

Note: [Questions](#) used to prompt learning in particular lessons will be more specific to content and skill development.

Learning Targets & Standards

Learning Targets should reflect goals for all levels of [Bloom's Taxonomy](#).

Learning Targets — Students will:

- Read/perform notes on **strings 4–5** with controlled tone and string-crossings.
- Perform **syncopated strums**; apply **bass/strum** with correct root strings; execute **p-i-m-a** fingerpicking on I-IV-V tunes.
- Switch among **Am/Am7/D/A7/E**, full **G/C**, **Em7** in tempo.
- Interpret pieces like “De Colores,” “Worried Man Blues,” “Scarborough Fair,” “Greensleeves,” “Minuet in G” in duet/trio.

Aligned Standards (NJSLS-VPA — 1.3D HS-Prof):

- **Performing**
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4a • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4b • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4c
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5a • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5b • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5c
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Pr6a
- **Responding**
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Re7a • 1.3D.12prof.Re7b • 1.3D.12prof.Re8a • 1.3D.12prof.Re9a
- **Connecting**
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Cn10a • 1.3D.12prof.Cn11a

Assessments:

Formative: bass-string targeting maps; right-hand pattern labs; small-group checkpoints.

Summative:

- **Accompaniment Study** (syncopated, bass/strum, or fingerpicking) + style-fit rationale
- **Reading Check 2** (melody on strings 1–5 with ties/D.C./D.S.)
- **Ensemble Performance** (duet/trio; balance, entrances, independence) + brief cultural note

Instructional Strategies & Unit Resources:

- “Syncopated Strum” misses and ghost strokes
- Groove layering
- **Bass/strum** root maps
- p-i-m-a patterns (thumb on bass, i-m-a on 3–2–1)
- Style labs: folk vs. pop fingerpicking; Latin strums; Baroque duet phrasing.

Vocabulary

Tier 2: emphasize, groove, interpret, independence, balance, ensemble

Tier 3: syncopation, tie, **D.C./D.S./Coda**, bass/strum, **p-i-m-a**, root (chord), inversion (open-position)

Accommodations & Modifications

- Progressive chord shapes (omit 5th/6th strings initially)
- Two-string fingerpicking before three; reduced pattern complexity
- Part-specific printouts (melody-only, chords-only)
- Sectional rehearsals; extended time; bilingual supports
- **Extensions:** add **Dm**, harmonics, ornaments on “Greensleeves”

- [General Education](#)
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- [Gifted and Talented](#)

Interdisciplinary Connections & 21st Century Themes & Skills

ELA (peer critique language, W.11-12.2); 9.4.12.TL.3 (rehearsal workflows), 9.4.12.Cl.2 (iterate on arrangement choices).

Unit 4 - Riffs, Blues, Power Chords & Performance Set Overview

Students gain eighth-note fluency, read TAB, learn power chords, and internalize shuffle feel within the 12-bar blues. They add E7, B7, F, Dm, apply fingerpicking/strumming in pop ballads, and assemble a 3-song mini-set with basic stage flow.

Essential Questions:

How do form (12-bar), groove (shuffle), and texture (power chords vs. open chords) define style?

Why have the blues and its descendants influenced so many genres?

What makes a short performance set cohesive for an audience?

Note: [Questions](#) used to prompt learning in particular lessons will be more specific to content and skill development.

Learning Targets & Standards

Learning Targets should reflect goals for all levels of [Bloom's Taxonomy](#).

Learning Targets — Students will:

- Read/play **eighth notes** with **alternate picking**; track **eighth rests**.
- Read basic **TAB**; execute **power-chord shuffle** (I-IV-V).
- Perform **12-bar blues** using **E7/A7/B7** or power chords; keep a steady shuffle.
- Add **F** and **Dm**; fingerpick/strum pop selections (e.g., “Rainbow Connection,” “Stand by Me”).

- Prepare a **3-song set** (blues/rock, folk/pop, student-choice) with cues/count-offs/dynamics.

Aligned Standards (NJSLS-VPA — 1.3D HS-Prof):

- **Performing**
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4a • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4b • 1.3D.12prof.Pr4c
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5a • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5b • 1.3D.12prof.Pr5c
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Pr6a
- **Responding**
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Re7a • 1.3D.12prof.Re7b • 1.3D.12prof.Re9a
- **Connecting**
 - • 1.3D.12prof.Cn10a • 1.3D.12prof.Cn11a

Assessments:

Formative: riff labs (You-Really-Got-Me style); 12-bar mapping; straight vs. shuffle clinic.

Summative:

- **Blues Performance** (power-chord shuffle or E7/A7/B7)
- **Riff Reading Check** (TAB + notation, rests accurate)
- **Final Mini-Set** (3 tunes; roles/cues/dynamics) + brief program note on blues lineage

Instructional Strategies & Unit Resources:

- Shuffle vs. straight comparative listening;
- metronome subdivision practice;

- TAB mini-lessons; **power-chord** ergonomics;
- set-building workshop (flow, keys, capo).
- Tech: simple recording for reflection.

Vocabulary

Tier 2: cohesion, contrast, dynamics, cue, arrange, evaluate

Tier 3: eighth note/rest, **shuffle/swing**, **TAB**, power chord (E5/A5/D5), **12-bar blues**, turnaround, set list, sound check

Accommodations & Modifications

- • Simplified two-string power chords; slower shuffle tempos
- • Role-based parts (riff, chords, bass line) to differentiate performance
- • Printed roadmaps (form charts, count-offs)
- • Extended time; peer modeling; bilingual supports
- • **Extensions:** B7 turnaround, intros/outros, minor pentatonic improv
- [General Education](#)
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Interdisciplinary Connections & 21st Century Themes & Skills

History/Culture (blues roots & migration); 9.4.12.CI.1–3 (creative problem-solving in set design), 9.4.12.TL.3 (evaluate rehearsal→recording workflow), 9.2.12.C.4 (connect interests to post-secondary music/audio paths).

Guitar I — Yearlong Pacing (180 days)

Summary by Unit (days & weeks)

- Unit 1: Foundations—Setup, Sound, First Chords — 30 days (Weeks 1-6)
Focus: posture, parts, tuning, beat/notation basics, C & G7, downstroke strums.
NJSLs-VPA anchor: 1.3D.12prof.Pr4-Pr6; Re7-Re8; Cn10-Cn11
- Unit 2: Reading Single Notes & Core Repertoire — 50 days (Weeks 7-16)
Focus: reading strings 1-3, alternate picking, eighths intro, G/D7/Em, down-up strums, duets.
NJSLs-VPA anchor: 1.3D.12prof.Pr4-Pr5; Re7-Re9; Cn10-Cn11
- Unit 3: Strumming Variations, Fingerpicking & Ensemble Skills — 50 days (Weeks 17-26)
Focus: reading strings 4-5, Am/Am7/D/A7/E + full G/C/Em7, syncopation, bass/strum, p-i-m-a.
NJSLs-VPA anchor: 1.3D.12prof.Pr4-Pr6; Re7-Re9; Cn10-Cn11
- Unit 4: Riffs, Blues, Power Chords & Performance Set — 50 days (Weeks 27-36)
Focus: eighth-note fluency, TAB, 12-bar blues (E7/A7/B7), shuffle feel, power chords, final mini-set.
NJSLs-VPA anchor: 1.3D.12prof.Pr4-Pr6; Re7/Re9; Cn10-Cn11

Daily Spiral (all year): 8-12 minutes—tune, technique (LH/RH), rhythm count/chant, quick read (notes or chords).

Week-by-Week Guide (36 weeks)

Weeks 1-6 (30 days) — Unit 1: Foundations

W1 Orientation: class norms, guitar parts, care/safety; rest/playing position; open-string names; pulse vs. rhythm.

W2 Tuning labs (clip-on/app + 5th-fret); quarter/half/whole (notes/rests) in 4/4; first chord C; downstroke strum.

W3 Add G7 (3-string); smooth changes (C↔G7); two-chord folk tune; practice log routine.

W4 Dynamics & simple symbols (repeat signs, tempo words); two-chord repertoire from multiple cultures; steady strum.

W5 Clean fretting & tone; chord prep “silent fingering”; mini-composition: 4-8 bars (two chords).

W6 Unit 1 Summative: Technique Check (posture, tone), Two-Chord Performance + brief cultural note; literacy quiz.

Weeks 7-16 (50 days) — Unit 2: Reading & Core Repertoire

W7 Treble staff basics; string 1 notes; single-string melodies; count & clap.

W8 Alternate picking (D on beat / U on &); string 2 notes; melody etudes; add G chord shape.

W9 String 3 notes; simple two-part duet; chord set G / D7 / Em; down-up strum intro.

W10 Combine melody + chords (texture swaps); steady tempo with metronome; eighth-note reading intro.

W11 Song study #1: folk/rock standard—lead-sheet reading (strum v. melody).

W12 “Back-and-Forth” string-crossing drills; clean transitions between reading & strumming.

W13 Reading Check 1 (strings 1-3, eighths present); duet balance clinic.

W14 Transcription mini-project: short melody (teacher-selected) → notate & perform.

W15 Class ensemble build: assign melody/duet/chords; rehearsal strategies.

W16 Unit 2 Summative: Reading solo, Chord-Song performance, Ensemble duet with quick arranging reflection.

Weeks 17-26 (50 days) — Unit 3: Strumming, Fingerpicking & Ensemble

W17 Reading string 4; tone control; add Am & Am7; groove awareness.

W18 Reading string 5; add D & A7; root awareness for bass strings.

W19 Syncopated strums (ghost/miss strokes); bass/strum mapping (roots on 6/5/4).

W20 p-i-m-a fingerpicking patterns on I-IV-V progressions; even tone across fingers.

W21 Style labs: folk vs. pop vs. Latin strum; choose best accompaniment per song.

W22 Form & road-map symbols (ties, D.C./D.S., Coda); apply to arrangements.

W23 Repertoire set #2 (e.g., “Scarborough Fair,” “De Colores,” “Minuet in G”)—solo/duet/trio roles.

W24 Reading Check 2 (melody across strings 1-5); part-specific rehearsals.

W25 Accompaniment Study submission (syncopated / bass-strum / fingerpick) + written style rationale.

W26 Unit 3 Summative: small-ensemble performance (duet/trio), accuracy & balance rubric; short cultural note.

Weeks 27-36 (50 days) — Unit 4: Riffs, Blues, Power Chords & Performance

W27 Eighth-note fluency & rests; feel clinic: straight vs. shuffle; TAB reading basics.

W28 12-bar blues form; open-chord E7 / A7 / B7 shuffle; turnaround concept.

W29 Power chords (E5/A5/D5 etc.); left-hand ergonomics; muting for clarity.

W30 Riff lab (classic rock motif); timing & articulation; compare TAB vs. notation.

W31 Add F and Dm; fingerpick/strum pop ballad; dynamic shaping & count-offs.

W32 Set-building workshop: choose 3 tunes (blues/rock, folk/pop, student choice); key flow, capo, roles.

W33 In-class Showcase #1 (trial run) → feedback & fixes; recording for self-critique.

W34 Dress rehearsals: stage plan, cues, MC script, quick line-check; refine transitions.

W35 Final Mini-Set Performance (class or community venue) + program note on blues lineage & influences.

W36 Post-performance reflection & portfolio: best take(s), practice log summary, growth goals; instrument care check.

Marking-Period Distribution (45 days each)

- MP1 (Days 1–45): Unit 1 (30) + Unit 2 start (15)
- MP2 (Days 46–90): Unit 2 finish (35) + Unit 3 start (10)
- MP3 (Days 91–135): Unit 3 finish (40) + Unit 4 start (5)
- MP4 (Days 136–180): Unit 4 finish (45) + final performance, reflection, and portfolio closure