

# Guitar Notation Explained

**THE MUSICAL STAVE** shows pitches and rhythms and is divided by lines into bars. Pitches are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet.

**TABLATURE** graphically represents the guitar fingerboard. Each horizontal line represents a string and each number represents a fret.

Notes: F D B G A E

Strings: E B G D A E

Chords: D, Am, F

Fourth string, 2<sup>nd</sup> fret    Open D chord    Rhythm notation with suggested fingering    Solos and *Cont. sim.* sections are shown in slash notation

## Definitions For Special Guitar Notation

**HAMMER-ON:** Pick the lower note, then sound the higher note by fretting it without picking.

**PULL-OFF:** Pick the higher note then sound the lower note by lifting the finger without picking.

**SLIDE:** Pick the first note and slide to the next. If the line connects (as below) the second note is *not* repicked.

**GLISSANDO:** Slide off of a note at the end of its rhythmic value. The note that follows is repicked.

**STRING BENDS:** Pick the first note then bend (or release the bend) to the pitch indicated in brackets.

**VIBRATO:** Vibrate the note by bending and releasing the string smoothly and continuously.

**TRILL:** Rapidly alternate between the two bracketed notes by hammering on and pulling off.

**NATURAL HARMONICS:** Lightly touch the string above the indicated fret then pick to sound a harmonic.

**PINCHED HARMONICS:** Bring the thumb of the picking hand into contact with the string immediately after the pick.

**PICK-HAND TAP:** Strike the indicated note with a finger from the picking hand. Usually followed by a pull-off.

**FRET-HAND TAP:** As pick-hand tap, but use fretting hand. Usually followed by a pull-off or hammer-on.

**QUARTER-TONE BEND:** Pick the note indicated and bend the string up by a quarter tone.

**PRE-BENDS:** Before picking the note, bend the string from the fret indicated between the staves, to the equivalent pitch indicated in brackets in the TAB.

**WHAMMY BAR BEND:** Use the whammy bar to bend notes to the pitches indicated in brackets in the TAB.

**D.%. al Coda**

**D.C. al Fine**

Go back to the sign (§), then play until the bar marked **To Coda** then skip to the section marked **Coda**.

Go back to the beginning of the song and play until the bar marked **Fine** (end).

Repeat the bars between the repeat signs.

When a repeated section has different endings, play the first ending only the first time and the second ending only the second time.