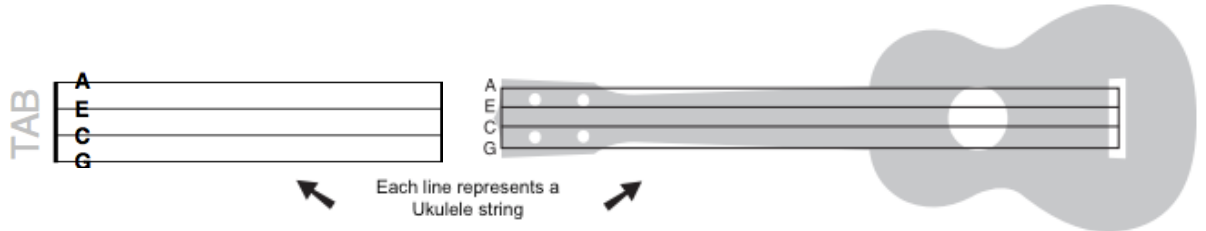# HOW TO READ UKULELE TAB
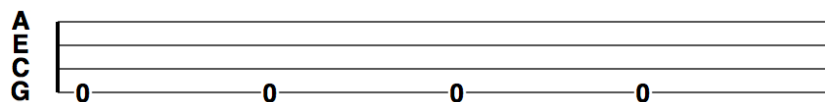## [AKA: TABLATURE]

Ukulele tablature is illustrated by the four lines, each representing the strings of the ukulele as follows:
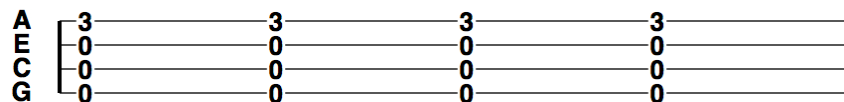

Each line represents a Ukulele string

Note that the "bottom" line on tab represents the "G" string. This can seem a bit topsy-turvy when starting off, because when you hold your ukulele in playing position, the G string appears to be the top string, but this is actually, the 'bottom' string on tab.

The numbers on each of the tab lines lets you know which fret you need to press down. Lines with '0' numbers, as illustrated below, mean that you need to play that string open so no fretting fingers necessary here. *The line at the end of the tab section means that this is the end of the bar.*

When numbers are piled on top of one another, this represents a full chord and you should strum all strings together using the correct finger positions for each fret, for example:

Each of the chords tabbed above are C major chords.

Knowing how to read tablature allows you to venture into melody, riffs, solos and in time will enable you to combine melody and chords together which can be quite effective when you get the hang of it but it is also very important to understand what rhythm the notes or chords are to be played in and how much space to leave between them so let's have a look at how rhythm is identified. First of all, it is important to identify what "**TIME SIGNATURE**" the song or melody is in. Music tab will usually state what time signature the song is in by displaying two numbers on top of one another at the start of the piece of music, like this: $\frac{4}{4}$ This time signature means that there are 4 beats to each bar and is also known as "**COMMON TIME**" and can sometimes have either of these symbols instead of the numbers: $\mathbf{C}$ or $\mathbf{\mathbb{C}}$. Other time signatures you may come across are $\frac{3}{4}$ otherwise known as "**WALTZ TIME**" and $\frac{2}{4}$ otherwise known as "**MARCH TIME**". Most popular songs tend to be written in $\frac{4}{4}$ time and have tempos that range between **70BPM** *(slow)* – **180BPM** *(very fast)* (**BPM = Beats per minute**).

UNDERSTANDING RHYTHM NOTATION

Along with the tab lines, there is often notation above the tab sections to help you define how long to play each note for. Below is a list are some of the basic notation for the duration of notes as well as the "REST" symbols for the same durations. These are used when no notes are played but there is quiet space as follows:

Name	Note	Rest	Length
Whole Note	𝅝	▬	4 beats
Half Note	𝅗𝅥	▬	2 beats
Quarter Note	𝅘𝅥	𝄾	1 beat
Eighth Note	𝅘𝅥𝅮	𝄿	1/2 beat
Sixteenth Note	𝅘𝅥𝅯	𝅀	1/4 beat

FORMAL NOTATION NAMES:

- Semibreve (Whole Note)

- Minim (Half Note)

- Crotchet (Quarter Note)

- Quaver (Eighth Note)

- Semiquaver (16th Note)

Here is an example of the notation that goes with the 4 open G string notes we previously looked at. This is a very straight forward rhythm where the notes are simply played on each beat as quarter notes:

Have a go at this rhythmic two bar section which combines quarter notes with eighth notes and a half note:

There are also dotted notes that add a half of the value to each of the notes, for example:

In this instance, the last note with the dot next to it now lasts for 3 beats instead of 2 because, it's note value of 2 beats plus a half of its value (1 beat) equals 3, so the note rings out for 3 beats. Play all four bars above together and see if you can work out which song this opening melody is from.