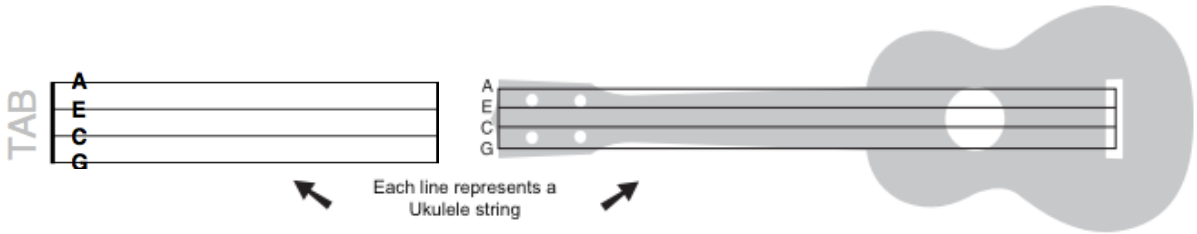
HOW TO READ UKULELE TAB

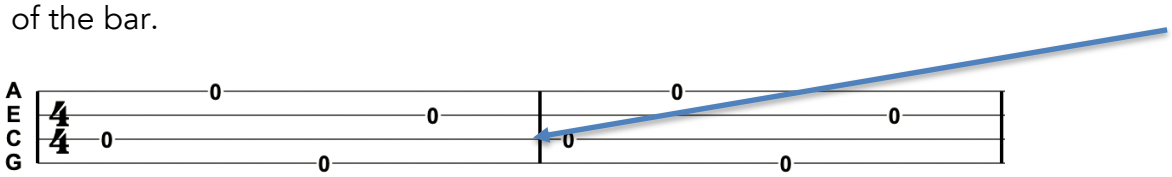
[AKA: TABLATURE]

Ukulele tablature is another way to play music on your ukulele and is illustrated by the four horizontal lines, each representing the strings of the ukulele as follows:

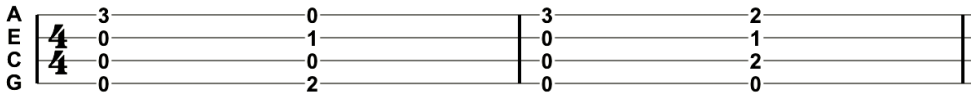


The "bottom" line of tab represents the "G" string ascending to C, E then A at the top. This can seem a bit topsy-turvy when starting off, because when you hold your ukulele in playing position, the G string appears to be the top string. It doesn't take too long to master tab so stick with it.

The numbers on each of the tab lines lets you know which note to fret. '0' numbers, as illustrated below, mean that you need to play that string open. The lines in between each 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:



EXERCISE: *See if you can work out what chords are played above.*

WHY TAB? The ability to read tablature will enable you to venture into playing melody, riffs and solos and with a bit of practice, you will be able to combine melody and chords which will make you sound like a pro, but playing by numbers is just the start. You also need to identify the length or each note in order to create the correct rhythmic effect.

Firstly, it is important to identify the "*TIME SIGNATURE*" of a song or melody. Music tab usually states the 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 often shows either of these symbols $\mathbf{C}$ or $\mathbf{¢}$. 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 60BPM *(slow)* – 180BPM *(very fast)* (*BPM = Beats per minute*).

UNDERSTANDING RHYTHM NOTATION

In addition to the tab lines, you will often find helpful notation above the tab sections that indicate the length of time you should play each note. Similarly, there are "REST" symbols representing durations of quite space when no notes are played.

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

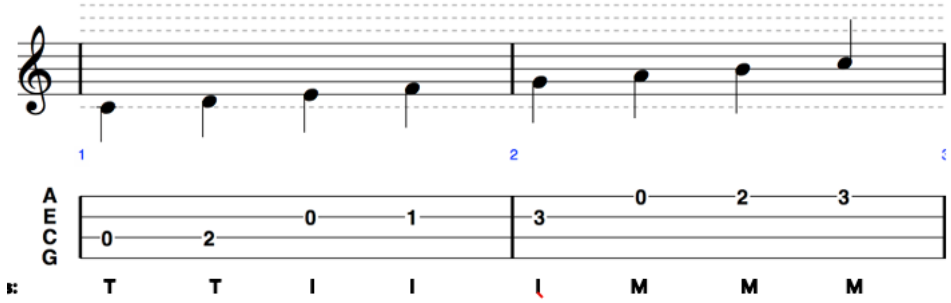
FORMAL NOTATION NAMES:

- Semibreve (Whole Note)
- Minim (Half Note)
- Crotchet (Quarter Note)
- Quaver (Eighth Note)
- Semiquaver (16th Note)

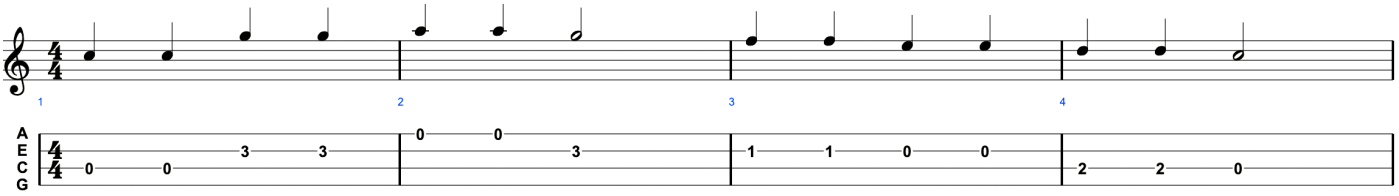
The notation and rest symbols above, provide a visual guide to help you understanding the timing and rhythm of the music, ensuring accurate and expressive performance. There are other notation markings to help define velocity, tempo, key etc, but for now try out the basics.

NB: *Watch out for dotted notation. When a dot is placed next to a note, it extends the notes duration by half of its original value. This means that a dotted note lasts for the value of the note itself, plus an additional half of that value.*

EXAMPLE: The C Major Scale, tabbed out as quarter notes (crotchets) looks like this:



EXERCISE: Now see if you can guess which song this melody line belongs too:



EXERCISE: Now have a go at this song section that combines both chords with the melody: