

Composition Assignment

Lets get creative!



This week we are going to be composing your own piece of music. This is going to be a great exercise and a fun thing to do because you will end up with something that only you have created!

If you have never done this before don't worry because it's going to be super easy and step by step. Likewise if you are an intermediate to advanced player and composed before then we can try out some new ways to refine your composition skills.

You can choose to compose any one of these types of music.

1. A pop/rock riff

Typically a short repeated phrase that commonly features at the beginning but also at other points in a song

2. A melody

The tune of a song. This could be an instrumental or vocal melody in a song (we will be playing this on the bass)

3. A chord progression

The order of chords that are played in a song that sit under the melody or riff.

4. An arpeggiated riff or piece

Picking out different strings in combination of using chord shapes

Once you have chosen the kind of thing you would like to compose scroll down to the lesson you need. There will also be a video lesson to go along with each of these 4 lessons.

It's a good idea to watch the video a few times and do stop the video if you need to practice something or rewind any bits so that you understand.

To all of our young players as mum and dad to help you and that will make it even more fun!

You will need to write down your piece of music as you compose it. You can find a blank piece of tab paper to write this at the end of the lesson. Or you can simply find a blank piece of paper at home and draw 6 vertical lines for the strings across the page and then make 4 bars by adding horizontal bar lines. It would look something like this.

1. Compose a Pop/Rock Riff

It's worth explaining the difference between a riff and a melody. A riff is a repeated catchy phrase that you will usually hear at the beginning of a song and it will appear in other places later on in the song too. It is these memorable riffs that stick in your head. An example of a riff might be Smoke on the Water by Deep Purple which is probably the number one riff that a beginning guitarist will play.

A Melody is the 'tune' in the song that is either sung by the singer or played by an instrument if the song does not have words. The melody will have some different sections like a verse and chorus and will feature for most of the song. Compare this to a riff which you will only usually hear a handful of times.

1. Choose a scale to use with your composition. There are some one string scales below but you can use any one that you already play.
2. Practice your scale until you only have to look at your guitar and not the music.
3. Experiment with the first few notes in the scale playing them in different orders.
4. Decide on a short phrase (or tune) and write this down on tab paper. This should be a very short phrase and then keep practicing this until you have learnt it off by heart.
5. Now you have a 1 or 2 bar phrase what we need to do is make it a little longer. We also want to make it a little different so we are going to create what we call a variation. This means it's going to be similar but also slightly different in some ways.

I. Add more notes

II. Take away one or more notes

III. Change the rhythm

IV. Try a different technique. Try adding in a technique like slides, pull offs, hammer ons or vibrato or two hand tapping!

6. Adding in Arpeggios. If you want to (and you don't have to!) As well as using the notes of the scale we can also try having Arpeggios played in with the riff. (look at the last page for these).
7. If decide you want to change anything then go back and correct that on your music. When you are happy then practice practice practice! You need to learn this off by heart and practice every day until it gets smoother and possibly faster if you want it that way. Remember we are going to record this so you need to play it to your best ability.

Here are some simple one string scales you could use on the bass. You can play them on any string for higher or lower sounds (or keys).

E Pentatonic Major

	0	2	4	7	9	12
T	4					
A	4					
B	4					

E Major

	0	2	4	5	7	9	11	12
T	2				3			
A								
B								

E Pentatonic Minor

	0	3	5	7	10	12
T	4				5	
A						
B						

E Minor

	0	2	3	5	7	8	10	12
T	6				7			
A								
B								

E Blues

	0	3	5	6	7	10	12
T	8				9		
A							
B							

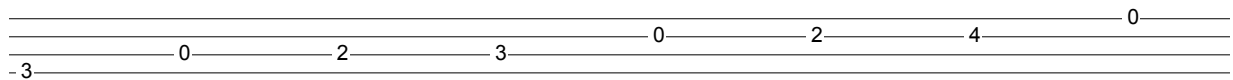
2. Compose a Melody

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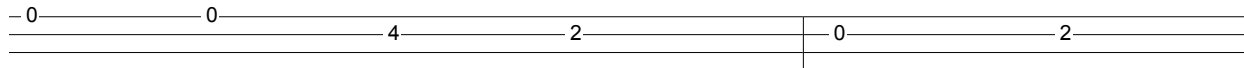
1. Choose a scale to use with your composition. You can use the one string scales from the last lesson or any of the open or moveable scales that you have in your folder. Here is an example of a g major scale.

G major scale



2. Practice your scale until you only have to look at your guitar and not the music.
3. Experiment with the first few notes in the scale.
4. Decide on a short phrase (or tune) and write this down on tab paper. This should be a very short phrase and then keep practicing this until you have learnt it off by heart.

It might look something like this.



5. Now you have a 1 or 2 bar phrase what we need to do is make it a little longer.
We also want to make it a little different so we are going to create what we call a variation. This means its going to be similar but also slightly different in some ways. After you have done this you should have 8 bars of music written on your tab.
 - I. Add more notes
 - II. Take away one or more notes
 - III. Change the rhythm
 - IV. Try a different technique. Try adding in a technique like slides, pull offs, hammer ons or vibrato or two hand tapping!
6. If decide you want to change anything then go back and correct that on your music.
When you are happy then practice practice practice! You need to learn this off by heart and practice every day until it get smoother and possibly faster if you want it that way.
Remember we are going to record this so you need to play it to your best ability.

3. Compose a Chord Progression

A chord progression is simply the sequence of chords that are played in a song. We are going to choose a set of chords to play and then think about how to play them and anything else you might like to add. It's less common that you will play chord on a bass and more likely that you will use notes of the scale or arpeggio.

1. Choose a starting chord, this is going to be your home chord that you start your song with. What ever chord you choose will determine what other chords we are going to add or in other words what 'key' we are playing in.
2. When you have chosen a 'home' chord then you should practice the shapes of the other chords in that key. If you don't know what these are then please refer to the chart. Find your chord on the left hand side and then all those chords listen on the page are the other chords you can also add to your song.
3. Choose one or two more chords to add to your home chord. For example G, Em, C. Then write down your chords in a 4 bar sequence, so something like this. Notice its fine to repeat chords.

G / Em / C / C.

4. Practice your chord changes and do one note every bar. You can basically play the root note i.e. a G note for the G chord. If you know where the 3rd and fifth is in the scale use those note to embellish the bassline.
5. Now lets explore some different rhythms that we can use for our chords. Choose one rhythm patterns to use on all of the chords and practice this over and over.

Strumming Patterns - 4/4 time

The image displays ten musical staves, each representing a different strumming pattern in 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The patterns are numbered 1 through 10. Above the notes, square symbols indicate downstrokes, and 'V' symbols indicate upstrokes. Numbers 1 through 4 are placed below the staff to denote the measure. Some measures contain rests, indicated by an ampersand (&). Patterns 6, 7, 8, and 9 include triplets, marked with a '3' in parentheses. Pattern 6 also includes a measure marked '(4)'.

1
1 2 3 & 4

2
1 2 & 3 & 4

3
1 2 3 4 &

4
1 & 2 3 4 &

5
1 2 & 3 & 4 &

6
1 2 & 3 (4)

7
1 2 & (3) & 4

8
1 2 & (3) & 4 &

9
1 & (2) & 3 & 4

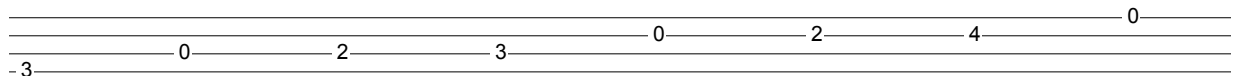
10
1 & 2 & (3) & 4

6. Now you have 4 bars done and now we need to write another 4 bars after that. Follow step 3 to 5 (you do not have to start with the home chord this time). When you are finished you should have written something that looks like this.

G / Em / C / C
Am / C / D / D

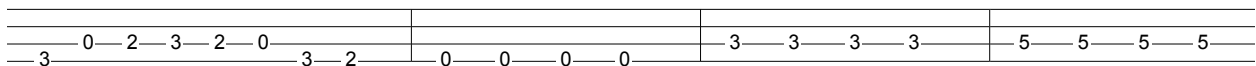
7. If you want to and (again you don't have to!) you can also add in some note from the scale in between the notes we have already and this will make your chord progression sound even more interesting. The way we do this is look at the home chord and choose an appropriate scale to use. For example if our home chord is G major then you should use a G Major scale or G Pentatonic Major.

G major scale



You can use as little or as many notes as you want to its all up to you. You might decide to play a short phrase to start and then play the rest of the chords

Phrase / Em / C / D



or you might decide to play a phrase before every chord

Phrase / Em / Phrase / C

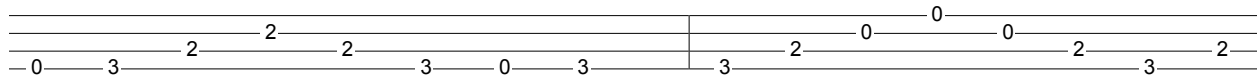
8. Lastly practice practice practice! Practice until its smooth and at the speed you want.

4. Compose an Arpeggio Riff/Piece

Arpeggios are notes of a chord played one at a time rather than strumming all of them together. Many songs use arpeggios in the Bassline such as Message in A Bottle by The Police and Californication by The Red Hot Chili's.

1. Choose which key (or scale) you are going to use and practice that arpeggio up and down until you memorise roughly where all the correct notes are.
2. Now experiment with playing one of these notes in the arpeggio in a certain pattern of strings. When you have found a pattern that you like practice this and write down 1 or 2 bars on the tab paper.

You might create something like this. Bar 1 uses the open E-min arpeggio and bar 2 the G Major Arpeggio. Notice how the shape of the whole riff stays the same although we are changing arpeggio patterns.

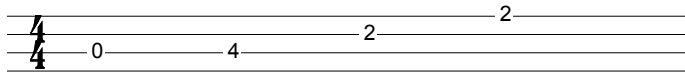


Keep experimenting and writing it down until you have 8 bars of music or more.

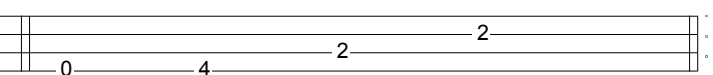
3. You can also experiment with dynamics. See how it sounds when you play the string lightly or louder in certain sections. Maybe see if you can add in any techniques? Also you can strum some of these strings if you want to in between picking.
4. When you have 8 bars practice it every day so that you learn it off by heart.

Bass Arpeggios

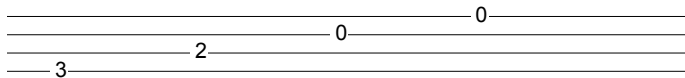
A Major



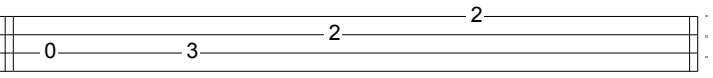
E Major



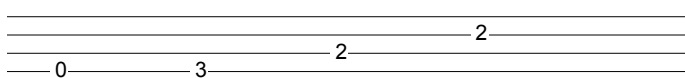
G Major



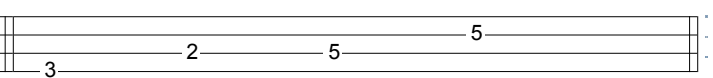
A Minor



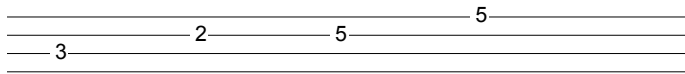
E Minor



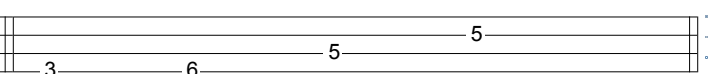
G Major



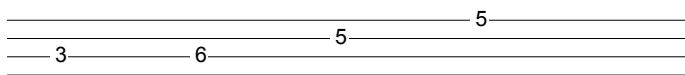
C Major



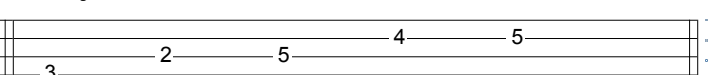
G Minor



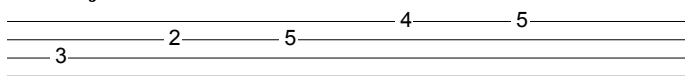
C Minor



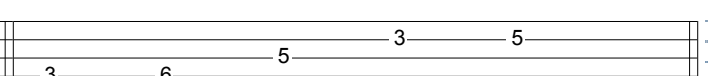
G Major 7



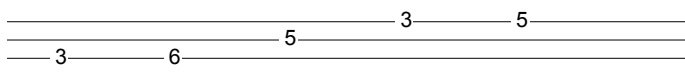
C Major 7



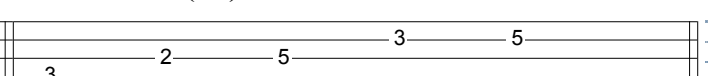
G Minor 7



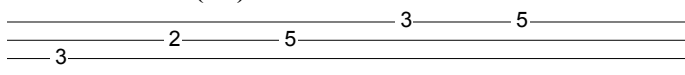
C Minor 7



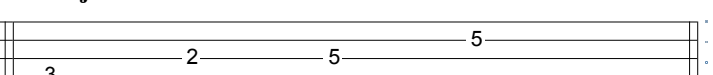
G Dominant 7 (G7)



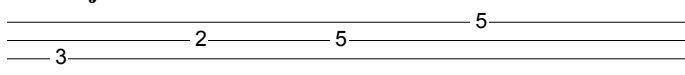
C Dominant 7 (C7)



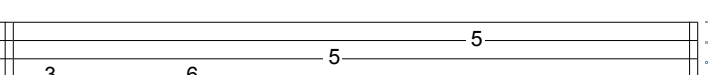
G Major



C Major



G Minor



C Minor

