

Unit Plan: Guitar I (State College Area High School)

Unit I: Introduction to the Guitar

SWBAT goals for overall unit:

- SWBAT accurately tune their own guitar strings with a tuner.
- SWBAT identify and memorize the different parts of the guitar and the note names of the strings.
- SWBAT demonstrate the correct way to hold the guitar and play with a pick.
- SWBAT demonstrate the reading and performing of basic strumming patterns.
- SWBAT accurately read a chord chart and play a given chord on their own guitars.
- SWBAT play basic chords (Em, C, G, G7, D, and A) accurately and by memory.
- SWBAT play along with simple songs by switching chords at the right time and maintaining a steady tempo.

National and PA standards referenced for the unit:

- National Standards:
 - MU:Pr6.1.H.5a: Perform with expression and technical accuracy in individual performances of a varied repertoire of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces, and chordal accompaniments, demonstrating understanding of the audience and the context.
 - MU:Pr5.3.E.5a: Use self-reflection and peer feedback to refine individual and ensemble performances of a varied repertoire of music.
- PA Standards:
 - 9.1.12.B: Demonstrate the ability to independently create, recreate, rehearse, and perform musical works and explain why this is important.

Example Lesson Plan #1: [Parts of the Guitar](#)

Example Lesson Plan #2: [Beginning Chords & Accompaniment](#)

Example Lesson Plan #3: [Ascending Chromatic Scale](#)

Student work samples:

- [Individual Song Project](#)
- [Chord Chart](#)

Assessment strategies:

- [Guitar Parts/Strings Quiz](#)
- [Individual Song Project](#)

- String & Chord Identification Game
 - Divide the students in half and line them up with their team members. Quiz the front students of the two lines, asking them to either point to the guitar part, pluck the string name/number, or strum the chord being announced as quickly as they can. The faster student gets to rejoin their team's line at the back, while the slower student is out for the round. Start with a practice round to get warmed up, then play for a prize. The last student standing wins!
 - Summative assessment: During this review game, students demonstrate understanding and memorization of the functions/parts of the guitar, including the note names of the strings and basic chord fingerings. Students demonstrate fluency in these areas by identifying the correct answer quickly and intuitively. When prompted to pluck individual strings or strum chords, the sound is strong, clear, and accurate, with a comfortable but firm pick grip.

Differentiation strategies:

- Small versions of chords (ex: only top three strings)
- Advanced versions of chords (ex: bar chords, inverted chords)
- Adjusted strumming patterns
- Flexible group performance assessments
- Student-choice song assignments
- Peer mentoring
- Auditory, visual, and tactile music learning

Technology samples:

- [Guitar songs slideshow](#)
- [Daily agendas \(Canva slideshow\)](#)

Additional materials generated (worksheets, assessments, templates, etc.):

- Individual [guitars binders](#) with all songs we play in class
- Bright yellow [chord chart](#) with all chords we learn in class

Unit Reflection:

- As an orchestra teacher with limited guitar experience, I was initially nervous to teach this class and worried about the level of guidance I would be able to offer the students. However, teaching Guitar I allowed me to develop crucial scaffolding skills that have contributed to my goal of becoming a well-rounded educator. Learning how to break down music concepts for students that have never encountered music theory challenged my assumptions about what prior knowledge students bring into the classroom and pushed me to rethink how I introduce foundational skills. Basic concepts such as rhythm and pitch, which always felt instinctive to me, were suddenly foreign and complicated. I

found myself taking a step back and re-learning these fundamentals from a beginner's perspective in order to teach them more effectively and intentionally. Teaching this guitar unit even benefited my orchestra ensembles, which experienced more intentional, scaffolded instruction that better supported students of all skill levels and strengthened their overall musical understanding. If I ever have the opportunity to teach this unit again, I will spend even more time on ear-training and aural skills to develop the students' ability to listen critically and internalize musical concepts. Strengthening these skills will help students become more independent musicians and grant them the freedom to express themselves through other musical avenues.