

**MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
COURSE OF STUDY**

COURSE TITLE: Guitar -Beginning

COURSE NUMBER: 4740

CBEDS NUMBER: 2325

DEPARTMENT: Visual and Performing Arts

LENGTH OF COURSE: One Year

CREDITS PER SEMESTER: 5

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9-12

REQUIRED OR ELECTIVE: Elective

PREREQUISITES: None

Required -

Recommended -

BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTION:

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Beginning Guitar promotes academic achievement by introducing students to the beginning study of guitar performance and exploring the instrument's prominent role in Western culture and music history. Students will build a strong basic technique, playing with accuracy, confidence, and good tone in both solo and group contexts. Students will develop creativity and self-expression through incremental mastery of guitar performance. The course will explore various career opportunities in the field of music, and will prepare the students for more advanced training and performance on their instrument.

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COURSE OUTLINE:

UNIT ONE - Introductory Material: Students are given an introduction to the guitar and the various class procedures. They learn proper playing posture, care of the instrument, an introduction to the different styles of playing (strumming, finger-picking, melody/lead, bass line, percussive effects, and ensemble playing) as well as basic music terminology. Students will also receive an outline of the course's key assignments and classroom procedures. Students begin their Practice Journal Key Assignment. Unit 1 culminates in a Composition Key Assignment, where students compose a simple eight-bar melody using the notes they've learned to play and notate in class.

Specific topics explored in the text include:

- Getting Started - Playing Position, Tuning, Guitar types, Left and Right Hand Position, Guitar Terminology
- Basic Tuning
- Intro to Chords and Chord diagrams (Em, C, G7)
- Notation and Literacy - intro (rhythmic value - whole, half, quarter note values), staff, line & space notes, bar lines, time signatures
- Melodic Skills - notes on the first string - E, F and G

UNIT TWO: As the student continues to build a basic familiarity with the instrument, the student begins to learn some of the cultural background of different guitar performance traditions. The student is introduced to Woody Guthrie and the American folk/protest song tradition, as well as Hank Williams and country music. Students sing simple melodies while accompanying themselves and/or each other with strummed chords. The first Music Notation/Theory Quiz is given. Students continue their Practice Journal Key Assignment, which continues through all instructional units. A more extensive Composition Key Assignment is given as a culminating assignment of this unit where students compose 8 bars of melody in C major using all elements of music learned to date. Students in pairs alternate playing their melodies while their partner experiments with chords that fit well with the melody. Students listen to, analyze and evaluate different chord/melody combinations. Specific topics explored in the text include:

- Cultural/historical background - country ballads ("Jambalaya"), American folk songs ("This Land is Your Land")
- Notation and literacy - Introduction of $\frac{3}{4}$ time, eighth notes, C major scale, strumming slash marks, song intros
- Chords - G and D7
- Melodic Skills - notes on the second string - B, C, and D, string alternation

UNIT THREE: Students learn about the blues, and the history of early rock and roll. Choosing from among the guitar traditions explored in the textbook so far, students write their first History Paper Key Assignment. With increased confidence strumming chords and playing melodies on the top three strings, students begin their first Improvisation and Class Performance Key Assignments. Students have their first experience with ensemble/duet playing in this unit.

- Cultural/historical - history of the blues, early rock and roll ("Sweet Home Chicago" and "Hound Dog")

- Notation, theory and literacy - 12-bar blues form, straight vs. swung 8th notes, reading 3-string chords, chord progression/changes
- Chords - strumming, up & down strokes, five string C chord, six string G chord
- Melodic - 3rd string notes (G and A), and alternation with 1st and 2nd strings
- Ensemble playing - “Au Claire De La Lune” and “Can You Feel the Love Tonight” 2-part ensembles.

UNIT FOUR - (Winter Concert): Course work during Unit 4 is dominated by preparations for the culminating performance. Students will give a public concert featuring music played as a large group, and featuring smaller ensembles and solos as appropriate. Opportunities for connections with various school traditions and performing with other ensembles may be explored during the holiday season. Preparations will include the Class Performance Key Assignment. Students will attend a local concert and complete the Concert/Recital Review Key Assignment. After the performance, students will complete the Performance Reflection and Final Exam Key Assignments.

- Culture historical - Holiday religious & secular observances and music (“Jingle Bells”)
- Notation, theory and literacy - Bass/Strum Technique
- Chords - improvising strum accompaniments for Christmas carols and other holiday music
- Melodic - 4th string notes (D, E and F)
- Students choose, prepare, and perform 2- and 3-part ensembles for public performance

UNIT FIVE: Students learn to use a greater range of notes (up to five strings now), new chords, and melodies to a greater degree of complexity, and demonstrate their acquisition of music theory learning objectives with another Music Notation/Theory Quiz. Improvisation and composition are explored with the expanded melodic and harmonic tools through another Composition Key Assignment and Improvisation Key Assignment. More guitar performance traditions are introduced and explored:

- Cultural/historical - Mexican folk music (“De Colores”), 1960s rock and The Beatles (“American Pie,” “All My Loving”), African-American Spirituals (“Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho” and “Sinner Man”)
- Notation/theory/literacy - leger lines, tied rhythmic values, melodic pickup notes, capos to change keys
- Chords - Am, Em7, 2-beat strums, syncopated strum
- Melodic - Introduction of accidentals, G major scale, notes on the 5th string (A, B, and C)
- Ensemble - duet (“All My Loving”), 3- and 4-part rounds and canons

UNIT SIX: Finger-picking style is the most notable technical development during Unit 6 where right-hand finger and thumb notation is introduced along with right-hand technique and position. Tablature notation is introduced as well as the first notes learned out of first position. The second Concert/Recital Review Key Assignment may be assigned and completed at any time during Units 6-8.

- Cultural/historical - Cowboy ballads (“The Red River Valley”), Irish folk music (“Danny Boy”)
- Notation/theory/literacy - Half and whole steps, key signatures
- Chords - Am7, Dm, Bass note/strum alternation, syncopated 2-beat strum
- Melodic -, F# in melodic contexts, high A and B
- Ensemble - duet (“Danny Boy”)

UNIT SEVEN: Students continue to learn new chords and techniques as the emphasis begins to shift to consolidation of their basic technique and learning more songs with accompaniment. Students begin to accompany songs (played on another guitar or sung) using strumming patterns, as well as arpeggiated textures. Students complete a Composition Key Assignment and an Improvisation Key Assignment in A minor. Students will complete their second History Paper Key Assignment, focusing on a different guitar performance tradition than was chosen for the first semester History Paper.

- Cultural/historical - sea shanties (“Sea Shanty”), Irish folk music (“Danny Boy”), The Rolling Stones (“Time is On My Side”)
- Notation/theory/literacy - Eighth rest, D.S. al Fine and D.S. al Coda, minor keys
- Chords - A, D, E, arpeggios in finger-picking style
- Ensemble - 3- and 4- part canon (“Frere Jacques”)

UNIT EIGHT - (Spring Concert): Students begin to play classical music in duet texture and explore and improvise with 12-bar blues. Students will give a public concert featuring music played as a large group, and featuring smaller ensembles and soloists as appropriate. Opportunities for connections with various school traditions and performing with other ensembles may be explored during the spring concert season. Preparations will include the Class Performance Key Assignment. After the culminating performance the students will complete the Performance Reflection and Final Exam Key Assignments.

- Cultural/historical - Classical (Bach’s “Minuet in G,” and “Rondeau”), 12-bar blues (“Blues in A” and “Move It On Over”)
- Notation/theory/literacy - Chords with no 3rd, the shuffle, number tablature, D.C. al Coda
- Chords - power chords (E5, A5, and D5), B7, E7
- Melodic - C#
- Ensemble - “Minuet in G,” “Simple Gifts,” and “Rondeau”. Students choose, prepare, and perform 2-, 3- and 4-part ensembles for public performance

KEY ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments in Beginning Guitar will follow a logical progression designed to increase mastery of the instrument and develop habits of mind that connect the course material with other studies such as mathematics, language arts, and history. A significant portion of class time will be devoted to closely monitored Class Practice so that students master the basic performing skills. Periodic Class Performances will provide opportunities for self and peer assessment, develop students’ capacities for critical analysis and aesthetic valuing, and prepare students for real performance

experiences. Students will keep a Practice Journal in order to develop their own creative ideas, record thoughts about music and its role in their lives, and organize their practice time. Students will attend at least one guitar concert in their local community and write a reflective Concert Review which demonstrates an ability to analyze various elements of a public performance and make well-reasoned and supported value judgments about different aesthetic factors. Students learn the historical context surrounding the development of the instrument and the music-making traditions associated with it. For a culminating Public Performance at the end of each semester the students will perform “literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, and articulation” as stipulated in the California music standards framework for Creative Expression.

CLASS PRACTICE: A substantial portion of class time will be devoted to the practice and application of newly-acquired skills and repertoire. The purpose of Class Practice is to support students in the development of their guitar skills. Close monitoring of student practice time will ensure an outcome of accurate and consistent performance of new techniques as students progress through the course. Class Practice Key Assignment will be used in all units of instruction.

COMPOSITION KEY ASSIGNMENT: Students will explore musical ideas to create a composition and/or improvisation that exhibit originality, unity and variety. The Composition Key Assignments are short excerpts that challenge students to come up with original melodies and accompaniments of a specific line, alone and with partners, sometimes using digital tools and resources. The nature of the specific assignments will evolve as students’ technique develops. Most instructional units will culminate in a Composition Key Assignment.

IMPROVISATION KEY ASSIGNMENT: Students are given a chord progression (or will compose one), and using a partner or a digital recording of the chord progression, learn to improvise melodies that go along with the chord progression. After experimentation, students write down an improvised melody that fits the chord progression.

CLASS PERFORMANCES: Students will prepare music for informal performances during class time, as soloists, duets, and other small group ensembles. This key assignment will be used in Units 4 and 8 to prepare students for the Public Performance Key Assignments.

PRACTICE JOURNAL: On a weekly or daily basis, students will organize, focus, and document their practice time with the use of a practice journal. Included in the journal will be notes taken on lecture presentations of guitar technique, music theory and notation. In addition, there will be other information, practice in writing music notation, and periodic self-assessment exercises.

CONCERT/RECITAL REVIEW: Local community colleges and universities offer a number of student recitals of guitarists that are free of charge. Students in Beginning

Guitar will attend one concert or recital of a live guitar performance each semester and write a critical review of the performance. Students will identify different elements of guitar performance practice and will write an aptly reflective critical review of the performance. Students will write a two to three page paper exploring the repertoire choices, the development of any theme in the concert programming, any historical information presented, as well as detailing the students' subjective response to the performance.

HISTORY PAPER: During Units 3 and 7, students will choose one non-American performance or compositional tradition where guitar playing is prominent, and will write a 3-5 page paper connecting the historical and cultural context of the music to the specific elements of the performance practice. The paper should include links to online videos of representative performances. In addition to a narrative description of the history of the performance tradition, the students will comment on how the chosen guitar tradition reflects other contemporaneous aesthetic or historical movements and trends.

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES: The students' work each semester will culminate in Units 4 and 8, with a public performance by the entire class of repertoire carefully chosen for its pedagogic and musical attributes. Students will be encouraged, but not required, to extend their course learning by preparing solos, duos, trios, or other ensemble repertoire to perform. Opportunities for collaboration with other performing arts groups on campus and in the community at large are also pursued and encouraged. Students will write a reflective self-assessment of their performances.

PERFORMANCE REFLECTION: Students will write a paper reflecting on their experience performing. Students will identify strengths and weaknesses in their technique as revealed by their performance and will identify areas of improvement.

FINAL EXAM: Students will take a cumulative, comprehensive final exam covering all material presented in the course. Student acquisition of learning goals will be assessed in the area of theory and notation, historical/cultural background, and playing styles. The final exam will include performance skill excerpts from the textbook and prepared repertoire selections in solo or ensemble settings.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS and/or STRATEGIES:

- **Direct instruction:** A predominant instructional strategy in Beginning Guitar will be direct instruction with instructor modeling. Students will be provided ample time to imitate the instructor in order to develop incremental mastery and fluency on the instrument. Guitarists develop “muscle memory” by careful repetition of the correct technique, as demonstrated by the instructor. Rudimentary scales, exercises, and basic-level tunes will be demonstrated and practiced during class time.
- **Guided practice of repertoire:** Most days will include time for students to practice course material individually. The instructor will closely monitor their practice and provide relevant feedback to assure the students are practicing with correct technique.

- **Use of video:** Extensive video clips will be shown of great guitar performances to develop an awareness and appreciation for guitar mastery across diverse genres and styles. Informal critiquing of videos will help prepare students to complete their Concert Review key assignments.
- **Think-pair-share and small group strategies:** Think-pair-share and other small group strategies will be utilized to help the students develop individual ideas about lesson content and share ideas with other students.
- **Self and peer critiques:** To help students develop analytical skills about their own playing, and the playing of others, and related these ideas to performance practice concepts taught in class.
- **Critical listening of live performances:** Utilized specifically in the Concert/Recital Review Key Assignment, this strategy will be enhanced and reinforced by critical listening of live music that features guitar playing.
- **Research:** Students will use the library and internet as research resources for the History Paper Key Assignment.
- **Supplemental video:** Supplemental YouTube videos will be used primarily to show exemplary guitar performances.
- **Cornell note-taking strategies:** Utilized in the Practice Journal and where appropriate to retain information presented in class.

ASSESSMENTS INCLUDING METHODS and/or TOOLS:

CLOSE MONITORING: Authentic assessment of student progress will be accomplished by the close monitoring of daily practice during class time.

MUSIC NOTATION/THEORY QUIZZES: Students will take periodic quizzes on music notation and theory fundamentals, including rhythmic and melodic notation, key signatures, meter, clefs, note names, scales, articulations, dynamics, diacritical markings, intonation, as well as guitar-specific information such as the names of the parts of the guitar, frets, tunings, alternative tunings, and the use of capos.

WRITTEN SELF-ASSESSMENTS: Students will record a performance of a prepared piece and write a critical review of the performance. The performance and the review will be presented to the class for further commentary and peer assessment opportunities.

CONCERT/RECITAL REVIEW: Local community colleges and universities all have a number of student recitals of guitarists that are free of charge. Students in Beginning Guitar will attend one concert or recital of a live guitar performance each semester and write a critical review of the performance. Students will be assessed on the use of appropriate analytical strategies, critical thinking and content vocabulary.

PUBLIC CONCERTS: Students will prepare music to be performed at a culminating event at the end of each semester. Students will be assessed on their proper performance technique, concert deportment, and collaborative efforts within the group.

FINAL EXAM: A comprehensive final examination will be given at the end of each semester to assess acquisition of historical knowledge, music theory and notation, as well as basic musicianship skills.

For VAPA Courses Only:

ARTISTIC PERCEPTION:

Beginning Guitar provides many opportunities for students to listen to and analyze masterworks of guitar literature. A variety of assignments and teaching strategies encourage students to investigate and reflect on their own reactions to guitar performances and to utilize those performances as models and ideals for their own pursuits. The assignments include in-depth analysis of the distinction between the differing roles played by the composition and the performer in the making of a great performance. Students will begin to form original ideas about authentic performance practice based on the cultural and historical context of the original composition, as well as bringing their own creative sensibilities to a performance.

Artistic Perception Content Standards 1.1 and 1.3 are explicitly satisfied by Beginning Guitar in that sight-reading of written music notation is continually taught and reinforced in the daily lessons. Further, a number of key assignments (Class Performances, Practice Journals, Concert/Recital Review, and History Paper) call on students to listen to, analyze, and describe the use of musical elements and expressive devices in aural examples. In turn, these critical capacities are both formally and informally assessed via the Written Self Assessments, Concert/Recital Reviews, and Final Exams.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION:

Beginning guitar provides many opportunities to express and showcase students' creative abilities. The students explore a wide variety of musical genres and are encouraged to develop their own creative capacities and self-expression informed by their studies.

Beginning Guitar satisfies specific Content Standards pertaining to applied instrumental skills:

Creative Expression Standard 2.4 calls for students to “perform on an instrument a repertoire of instrumental literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, and articulation, by oneself and in ensembles.” The Class Practice key assignment satisfies this requirement by reinforcing the technical abilities to perform on the guitar at this level by oneself.

Standard 2.5 requires students to “perform on an instrument in small ensembles, with one performer for each part.” The Class Performance and

Public Performance key assignments provide opportunities for students to explore creative expression in a group setting.

HISTORICAL and CULTURAL CONTEXT:

The guitar has remained widely popular throughout the world for nearly a millennium, prominently represented in the music-making of diverse nations and peoples. In many ways the story of the guitar parallels the development of Western music. The Beginning Guitar class builds a foundation of knowledge on the history of the guitar and its role in classical and folk music traditions. In learning about the role of the guitar in the development of music in the United States, students build an understanding of the diverse genres and folk traditions in American music. Repertoire is chosen so students may explore and perform music of various cultures and time periods. Students research guitar traditions and report their findings in the History Paper key assignments.

ASTHETIC VALUING:

Standard 4.1 requires students to “develop specific criteria for making informed critical evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations and apply this criteria in personal participation in music.” This standard is explored in several key assignments. In the Class Performances and Concert/Recital Review assignments, students make informed critical evaluations about the performances of others. In the Class Practice, Class Performances, and Practice Journal key assignments, the students make informed aesthetic evaluations that connect their studies and their analysis of other performances to their own playing.

Aesthetic Valuing Standard 4.3 (Derive Meaning) requires students to explain how people in a particular culture use and respond to specific musical work from that culture. By writing an expository research paper on the role of the guitar in a different culture (key assignment: History Paper), students gain understanding of that culture and how it responds to its own music-making. Students derive meaning from this relationship and exhibit their understanding in their writing.

CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, and APPLICATIONS:

The study of guitar specifically parallels and reinforces many of the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice. Guitar students regularly make sense of problems (musical exercises and assignments) and persevere in solving and/or mastering them. The study of music notation and theory develops the ability to reason abstractly and quantitatively. By learning how the concept of aesthetic valuing and artistic perception applies to musical performance, students learn to construct viable arguments and critique the aesthetic judgment and performances of others. In learning a variety of guitar performance techniques and resources - strumming, fingerpicking, hammer-ons, soloing, playing bass lines, using capos to adjust key signatures, reading conventional notation and tablature, and playing by ear - students learn to use tools appropriately and strategically. In learning and practicing meticulous techniques, guitar students attend to precision.

Language arts standards (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2) require students to write informative/explanatory texts through effective organization and analysis of content. Beginning Guitar supports this with several Key Assignments that develop the students' ability to analyze works of music and performances of music separately and concurrently, and to construct valid arguments in critiquing the various features of the works and musical cultures studied.

The study of guitar encourages collaboration and connection with many other disciplines on campus. Guitar students become naturally involved in a wide variety of informal and formal performance opportunities, accompanying soloists at school cultural events and rallies, talent shows, community events, and musical theater productions. The popularity and portability of the guitar encourages a high level of creative collaboration; guitar students often form their own groups, and develop entrepreneurial skills as they promote their performances, songs, and YouTube videos.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

The textbook for Beginning Guitar will be Essential Elements for Guitar Book 1 by William Schmid and Bob Morris (ISBN 0-634-05434-1), or a comparable class method book. Examples given are from this book; similar repertoire may be chosen for Key Assignments when other method books are used.

Committee Members:

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2. Geoffry Carter, Oak Grove Middle School
3. Steve Nixon, Assistant Principal College Park High School