

Points of Order

When the Beatles formed, it was decided (probably by John Lennon, yeah?) that Paul McCartney would play the bass because George Harrison was better at playing the guitar. Word is that Paul wasn't too keen on the idea at first because playing bass was considered to be a yawn. But Paul McCartney decided to EXPLODE that stereotype and to play the bass as if it were a guitar. We'll get to that, but let's start playing the bass as if it were a bass.

First see what fun sounds we can make before we dig in and learn about scales, arpeggios and grooves.

Several Points of Order:

(1) You won't be learning to read music. You won't use it. If you ever do need it, say if you wind up playing in jazz ensembles or orchestra pits, you can learn it then. Remember, I'm figuring on the folk-rock-country-praise musician, not the jazz guy.

In this book, the notes you'll play will be shown in **Tablature (Tab)** and **Fretboard Diagrams**, which are pretty easy to interpret. My main concern here is to get you playing. Starting with "the clefs and the dots and the beams" would bring things to a grinding halt.

(2) You WILL need to learn the names of the notes on the neck of the bass; well, you'll start by memorizing the locations of some of the most useful notes, such as the **A** note at the 5th fret of the **E** string, and then you'll be able to fill in the rest, such as the **A-sharp** note at the 6th fret. But this is a critical skill to develop.

(3) You are welcome to play either pickstyle or fingerstyle. Most other bass books I've seen emphasize playing fingerstyle right away, which is fine, but it has a pretty steep learning curve, especially if you intend to use the commonly accepted technique, where you try to alternate your Index and Middle fingers in striking the strings. Of course, the great Rhythm & Blues bassist, James Jamerson, used only his Index finger, and the first electric bass players in the Fifties played with their thumbs.

Pickstyle playing is more commonly used in rock and folk music because it gives a better punch, more articulation. Besides, most recreational guitarists already know how to use a pick to perform simple Downstrokes and Upstrokes.

First let's focus more on the concerns of the left hand, which are to learn to finger the notes and scales and riffs and licks, and less on the mechanics of the right hand.

BTW, if you do use a pick, make it a heavier gauge.