Unit 1: Guitar Basics

Content Area: **Music**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **2 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This unit covers the holding, tuning, and general maintenance of the instrument. Students will learn the basics of how to play the guitar in a supportive group setting and will gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the instrument on music throughout its history. Additionally, students will develop foundational right- and left-hand techniques, learn the specific anatomy of the guitar, and begin basic strumming and finger exercises to build muscle memory, rhythmic accuracy, and musical fluency.

Revised: August 2026

Standards

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.3D.12nov.Cr1a	Create melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas for simple melodies as well as chordal accompaniments for given melodies.
1.3D.12nov.Cr2a	Use standard notation or audio/video recording to document melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas for drafts of simple melodies as well as chordal accompaniments for given melodies.
1.3D.12nov.Cr3a	Apply teacher or student-provided criteria to critique, improve and refine drafts of simple melodies as well as chordal accompaniments for given melodies.
1.3D.12nov.Cr3b	Share final versions of simple melodies and chordal accompaniments for given melodies, demonstrating an understanding of how to develop and organize personal musical ideas.
1.3D.12nov.Pr4a	Describe and demonstrate how a varied collection of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces, and chordal accompaniments is selected, based on personal interest, music reading skills, technical skill, and the performance context.
1.3D.12nov.Pr4b	Identify prominent melodic and harmonic characteristics in a varied collection of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces and chordal accompaniments selected for performance, including some based on reading standard notation.
1.3D.12nov.Pr4c	Demonstrate and describe an understanding of the context and expressive intent in a

	varied collection of music selected for performance that includes melodies, repertoire pieces and chordal accompaniments.
1.3D.12nov.Pr5a	Apply teacher or student-provided criteria to critique individual performances of a varied collection of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces and chordal accompaniments selected for performance. Apply practice strategies to address performance challenges and refine the performances.
1.3D.12nov.Pr6a	Perform with expression and technical accuracy a varied collection of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces and chordal accompaniments, while demonstrating an understanding of the audience and the context.
1.3D.12nov.Re7a	Identify reasons for selecting music based on characteristics found in the music, connection to interest and purpose or context.
1.3D.12nov.Re7b	Identify and describe how interest, experiences and contexts (e.g., personal, social) effect the evaluation of music.
1.3D.12nov.Re8a	Identify interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical selections, referring to the elements of music, context (e.g., personal, social), and the setting of the text (when appropriate).
1.3D.12nov.Re9a	Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities and contrasts inform the response to music.
1.3C.12nov.Cn10a	Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.
1.3C.12nov.Cn11a	Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts and daily life.

Objectives

- Appreciate the intricacies of performing on the guitar.
- Continue playing the guitar in social settings.
- Recognize how the guitar's design and playing styles have evolved to reflect various historical and cultural movements.
- Tune and care for a guitar.

Essential Questions

- ● How do I take care of my instrument so that it plays properly and maximizes longevity?
- ● How is the instrument tuned and why is standard tuning important?
- ● Why is it important to balance the instrument when playing?
- ● How has the guitar culturally influenced popular music over time?
- ● What are the specific parts of the guitar, and how do they function together to create sound?

Enduring Understandings

- ● Playing position is important and affects their ability to perform.
- ● Taking care of the instrument will help them perform better and will help the instrument last longer.

- The guitar often represents through its music the culture and time in history.
- There are several methods for tuning the instrument, including using electronic tuners, digital apps, and relative tuning by ear.

Students Will Know

- How the instrument has changed over the years.
- That it takes time and repetition to develop the ability to balance the instrument properly.
- What pitches the strings are tuned to (Standard Tuning: E-A-D-G-B-E) and which way to turn the pegs to adjust the tuning.
- Parts of the instrument by name and their function. (such as the headstock, tuning pegs, nut, fretboard, neck, body, soundhole, and bridge.)

Students Will Be Skilled At

- Basic strumming, using a medium gauge pick in a steady rhythm.
- Cleaning and caring for the instrument.
- Holding the instrument properly (left hand, balanced)
- Making adjustments to the instrument.
- Performing basic finger exercises.
- Tuning the instrument.
- Identifying and labeling the anatomical parts of the acoustic guitar.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

- Criteria for these tasks will be visual and aural. All tasks will be evaluated for accuracy.
- Students will be able to self-assess and assess their classmates for accuracy.
- The student will be required to perform a basic finger exercise while holding the instrument properly.
- The student will change the strings of the instrument.
- The student will properly adjust parts of the instrument.
- The student will tune the strings of the instrument.
- The student will complete a brief quiz or exit ticket labeling the parts of the guitar and matching the strings to their correct standard tuning pitches.
- The student will perform a short, basic strumming pattern to demonstrate right-hand rhythmic accuracy.

Learning Plan

- Students will be pre-assessed as to their familiarity and skill on the guitar so that course materials and individualized plans can be created to challenge individuals.

- ● Teacher will demonstrate and set student position for holding the guitar
- ● Teacher will demonstrate and set student right hand-strumming position.
- ● Teacher will design exercises to practice right hand strumming.
- ● Teacher will monitor student progress in an on-going manner designing strategies to promote student independence and ability to self-assess.
- ● Teacher will set left hand and design left hand finger exercises to coordinate left and right hand movement on instrument.
- ● Teacher will introduce the anatomy of the guitar, providing diagrams for students to study.

Materials

- Acoustic Guitar
- Clip-on digital tuners or tuning applications.
- Footstools or guitar straps to aid in proper balancing and posture.
- Light Gauge Strings
- Medium Gauge Picks
- Visual aids (such as chord charts, string pitch posters, and diagrams of guitar anatomy).

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

- ● Extra time will be allowed for students to master the tasks if needed.
- ● Gifted students will be given more advanced exercises for performance.
- ● More one-on-one with the teacher during regular class time.
- ● Offer alternate, simplified strumming patterns or open tunings for students who struggle with fine motor coordination.
- ● Provide color-coded stickers for the fretboard or strings to assist visual learners and students with learning disabilities.