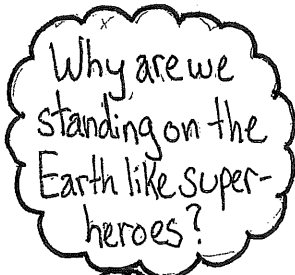


**MT  
MS**  
6TH GRADE  
GENERAL  
MUSIC  
MR. SCHNEIDER

# LEARN TO PLAY <sup>THE</sup> UKULELE

...and Read Music with Mr. Schneider & Dixie

"It's like normal worksheets pretending to be a comic book!"



## Learn

### Awesome Things Like:



Treble Clef

Time Signatures



Notes & Rests



Strumming Chords



Plucking Melodies

Tuning & More!



**Name:**

**Team:**

**Ukulele #:**

We're going to deal with a lot of words... Some of them old & familiar, while others are new. Let's make sure we're on the same page when they come up.



We won't do them all at once, so keep this page handy so you can come back to it!

**NOTE TERMS**

Beat

Pitch

Tempo

Accidental

Measure

Chord

**UKULELE TERMS**

**SONG TERMS**

Strum

Melody

Pluck/Pick

Accompaniment

Tab/Tablature

A Glossary for all of these worksheets

# UKULELE 101



So you're about to get your ukuleles! But first... Let's get to know your ukuleles!

Ukuleles (or "Ukes" for short) are definitely Hawaiian, but they owe their existence to Portugal!

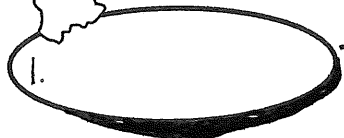
When Portuguese explorers found Hawaii, they brought their instrument called the "Machete," which had 8 strings and looked like a guitar.

They made a smaller version using local trees and only 4 strings that the locals called the "ukulele" (ooh-koo-lay-lay) which translates to "jumping flea."

Aloha!

HAWAII

## LABEL THAT UKE!



- Responsible for Tuning



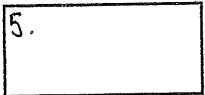
Used to tighten/loosen strings and keep things in tune.



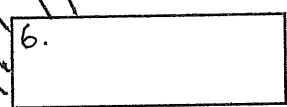
Holds the strings in place so they run parallel down the neck.



- Responsible for Changing Notes



Raised bars that strings are bent over to change pitch.



Where you push down the string to change the pitch.

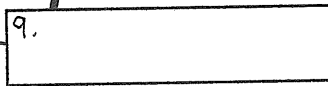
Out of tune ukes make me want to howl!



- Responsible for Making Sound



Where sound enters the body of the instrument to resonate.



Raises the strings off the uke to keep them at an even height.

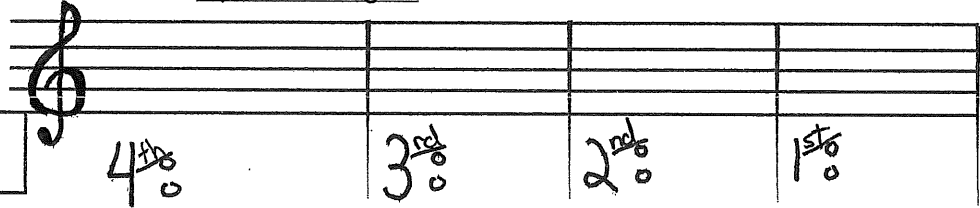


Attaches the strings to the body.

Don't stop now! We're forgetting something!

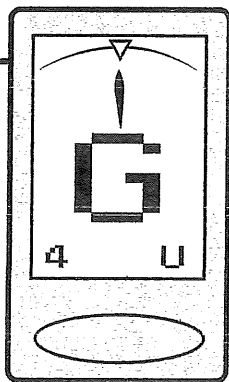
# THE STRINGS & TUNING

The Open Strings\* of the ukulele are tuned to :



\*Open Strings refers to plucking/strumming the strings without holding down on any fret.

## YOUR TUNER



Tuning Indicator Line - Tells you if you're sharp (too high) or flat (too low) or... PERFECT!

Current pitch - Tells what note you're closest to right now.

Instrument mode - Can say any of the following:

- C =
- G =
- B =
- F =
- U =

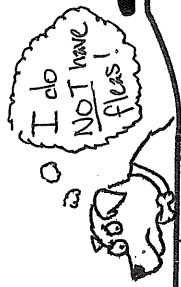
## 6 EASY STEPS TO GETTING IN TUNE


### Some last tips....

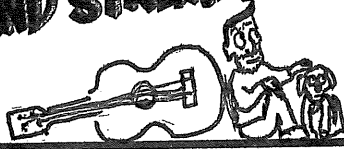
- \* Make sure you're turning the right peg for the string you want to tune!
- \* Always turn the peg slowly! Don't wrench it!
- \* Pluck the string while you turn the peg!
- \* Check with your friends and neighbors to see if you're close!
- \* ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT!!!!



UKE TUNING PHRASE:  
 G C E A  
 "My Dog Has Fleas!"



# TIME SIGNATURES AND STRUMMING



When writing out rhythms, we depend on Time Signatures to give us a LOT of information.



4 This top number tells us the # of beats in each measure

4 This bottom number tells us what kind of note counts as a beat.

The Time Signature 4/4 is also called "Common Time" because it is used so often.

4 Beats per measure

Quarter note gets a beat  
In traditional/classical music, beats 1 & 3 are the "Strong Beats"

In some modern music (like Rock & Roll), you'll get an emphasis on beats 2 & 4



Only certain numbers can be this bottom number.

3/4 Time often feels like a Waltz, where beat 1 is the "Strong" beat and then 2 & 3 just bring you back.

3 Beats per measure

Quarter note gets a beat

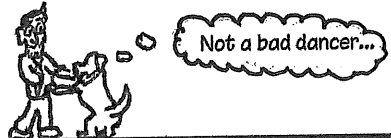
6/8 feels very similar to 3/4, but uses two groups of eighth notes to give us our beats.

6 Beats per measure

Eighth note gets a beat

DON'T BE FOOLED! We are grouping eighth notes in groups of 3 which is different than you're used to seeing them.

In modern music, you'll hear 3/4 used a lot in slow songs & ballads.



On ukulele, you're going to be strumming by moving your hand up and down over the strings to play rhythms and chords. Most of these can be accomplished with your index finger (and, if you want, your thumb can help).

## Symbols

⌋ A Downstrum is when you drag your index fingernail down across the strings. Typically, this is your "stronger"-sounding strum.

∨ An Upstrum is when you strum with the fleshy part of your index finger up across the strings.

Or you can do what Mr. Schneider does and use your thumb to strum up!

× A Chunk (Yes, it's a real thing) is when you strum down, but you let your hand rest on the strings to create a percussive sound.

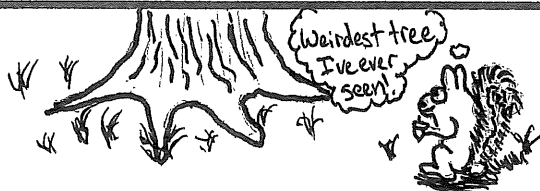
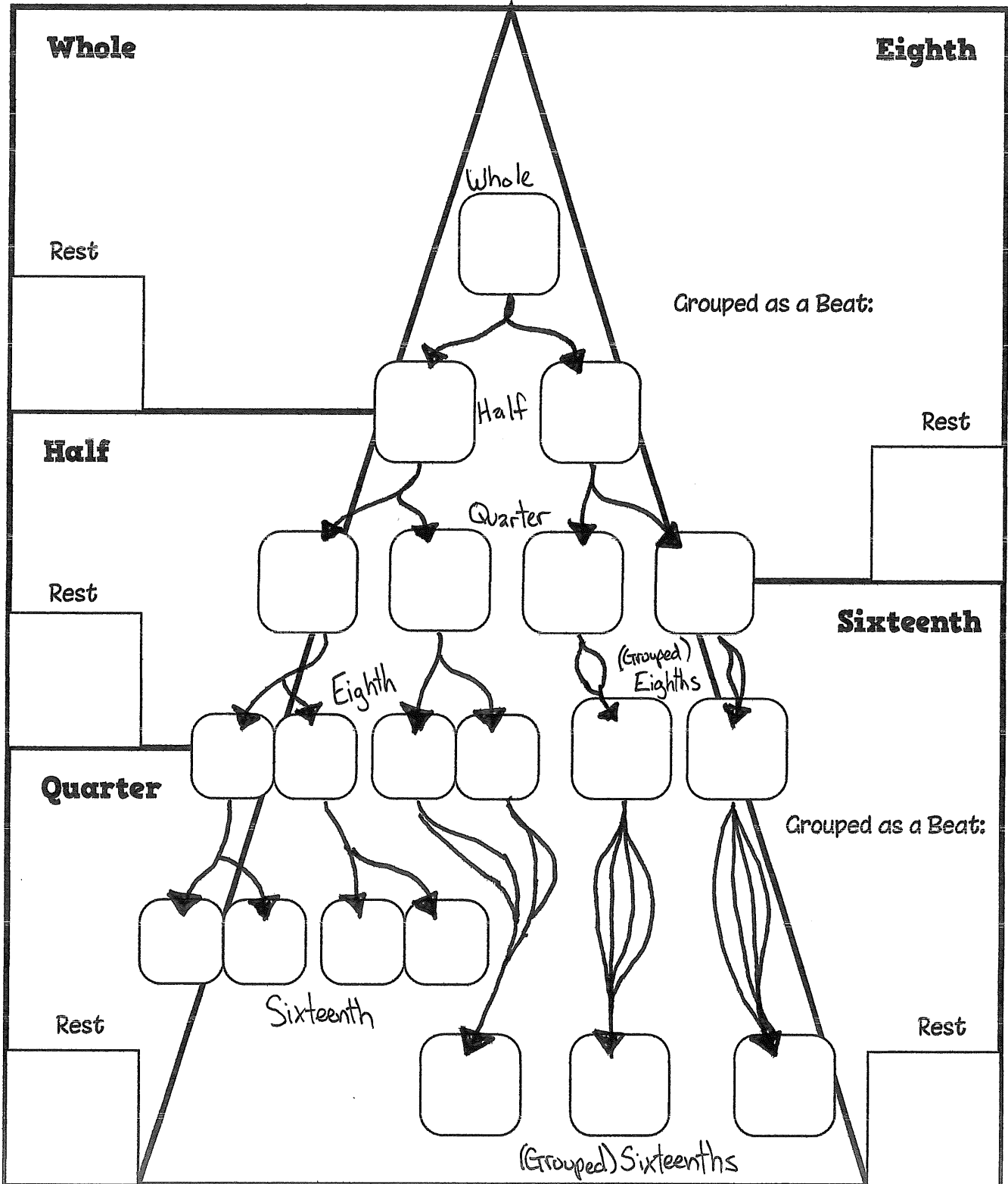


Combining strumming and an understanding of Time Signatures will help you come up with cool strumming patterns for all of your songs.

# A TREE OF NOTES

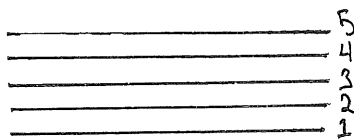
Name:

Team:



# READING NOTES ON THE TREBLE STAFF

In music, we write music on 5 lines called **The Staff**.



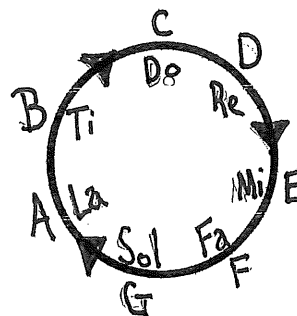
The Staff

Notes written **higher** in the staff sound higher and notes **lower** in the staff sound lower.

Makes sense!



We use letters to represent the pitches of Solfege. Since there are 7 pitches, we use the first 7 letters of the alphabet:



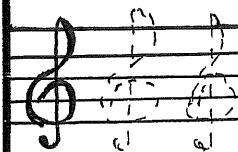
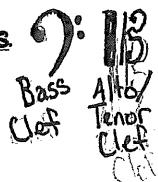
If you run out of letters, just start over at A!

We assign these letters

to places on the staff using **clefs**.

On ukulele, we use the **Treble Clef**

which tells us where the letter "C" belongs.

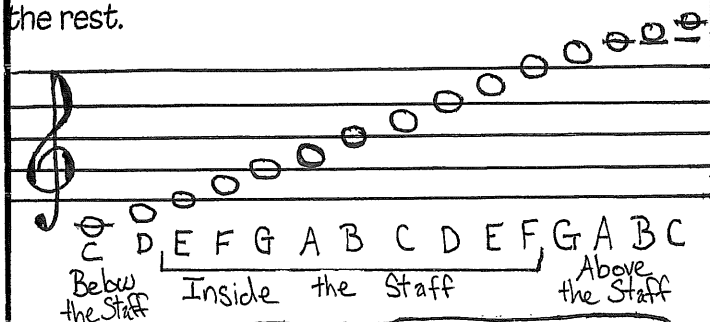


When drawn correctly, the clef swirls around the 2nd line showing us where "C" is in the staff.

Nice drawing skills!



When you assign the rest of the letters, you'll see that they just follow alphabetical order as you fill in the rest.



See that note on the left with a **ledger line\*** through it? That's called **"Middle C"** and it's the lowest note you can play on your ukulele!

\*A **ledger line** helps us keep track of lines and spaces when we leave the staff.



The notes in the **spaces** spell

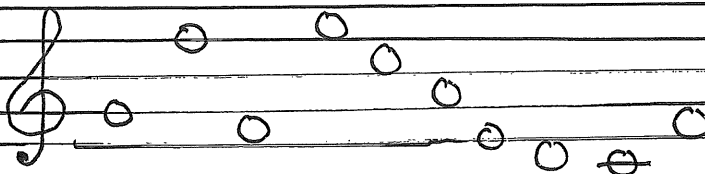
**F-A-C-E** which is easy to remember:



The notes on the **lines** spell **E-G-B-D-F** (which isn't a word), so instead we have sayings like:



OK, so let's see you practice labeling some notes! Write the letter name under the following notes:






Nice Job!

Uh Oh... There's a Back?!

Need more practice? Of course you do.. Check out the back of this page!!!

Label these notes (HINT: It's the same as on the front of the page)

When we're drawing notes with stems like half notes (  ), quarter notes (  ), eighth notes (  ), and so on... We need to pay attention to where they are on the staff.

If the note is below the middle line, the stem goes up on the right... (Like you're used to seeing them)

...But if it is on the middle line or above, the stem goes down on the left. (Like they're upside down)

Draw the following notes with half notes:

Draw the following notes with quarter notes:

Draw the following notes and rests with whatever you like, but make sure you only have 4 beats in each measure (Cross them out as you finish each one):

- C  
Middle C
- G
- F  
G (Above the staff)
- D
- E
- B  
D (Below the staff)
- A
- Quarter Rest  
A (Above the staff)
- Half Rest

Draw your own measures/barlines!!!



## READING NOTES AND USING TABLATURE

or "Tab," for short!

So far we have worked on playing chords on our ukuleles, which is playing multiple notes at once to build back-up harmonies for our songs.

Now we're going to work on playing melodies, which means we're going to play notes one at a time. This requires some extra accuracy and focus, but don't worry! There's a helpful system to figure out where each note is on the instrument.

We will often write melodies on a Treble Staff, but string instruments also can use **Tablature** (or **Tab**) to show you where the notes are on your instrument.

### What's a melody?

Picture the last song you sang along with. Maybe it was rap, rock, pop, or country, but no matter what genre, you were probably singing the melody. The melody is the main part of the song that sticks out, what gets stuck in your head, and is supported by the harmonies of the other instruments. When we play melodies on our instrument, we're working on playing these individual notes that you would sing.



Ever play a video game? Then you probably have seen tutorials that teach you how to do things like "run" and "jump." Picture that tab is your tutorial on how to play the notes!

The four lines of Tab are your 4 ukulele strings.

The bottom line is G (4th), then Middle C (3rd), then E (2nd), and the top is your A (1st).

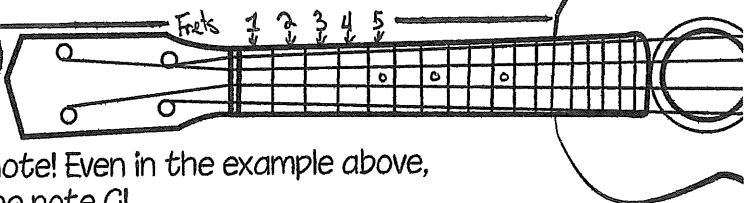


Under each note of the melody on the Treble Staff, there is a number on the tablature staff.

The number is placed on the line for the string you will pluck. The value of the number tells you which fret to hold down on that string.

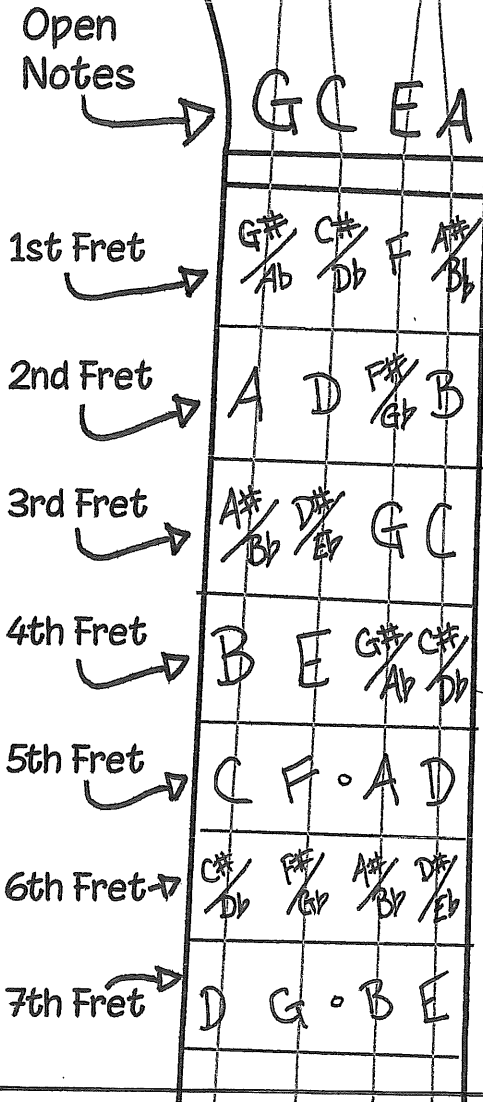
- "0" (Zero) means pluck the open string.
- Any other number tells you where to press the string to change its pitch to match the note on the Treble Staff.

### Three quick things to pay attention to when playing with TAB



- ① There's often more than one way to play a note! Even in the example above, there are two different ways to play the note G!
- ② On many tabs, you will still need to look at the actual notes for rhythms.
- ③ Tablature is only supposed to help speed up the playing process, but it is not meant to replace note reading! Try to know what note you're playing, not just the number!

# THE NOTES ON YOUR UKULELE



This diagram will help you figure out what note you are playing when you hold down a string on the ukulele.

Remember that the "Open Notes" are what the strings are tuned to, but when you hold down a string (bend it over a fret) you are shortening that string. This makes the string play a higher note.

Each fret increases the pitch by a half step.

Looking at this diagram, it might look like some frets are playing two different notes like A<sup>#</sup> and B<sup>b</sup>, but these sound the same.

They are known as enharmonics, which means they are just two different names for the same note.

Deciding which name to use depends on the key, the melody, or the chords being used in your song.



## The Chromatic Scale

The Chromatic scale refers to playing every possible note between two notes. In the case below, we're going from the lowest note you can play on your ukulele (Middle C) up an octave and then back down.

Tablature: T (0-1-2-3), A (0-1-2-3-4), B (0-1-2-3-4-3-2-1-0, 4-3-2-1-0, 3-2-1-0)

Practicing the Chromatic scale is a GREAT finger exercise!

You don't have fingers, Dixie!

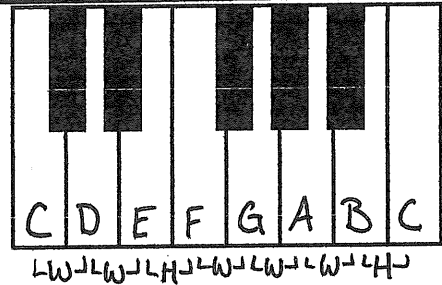
# THE C MAJOR SCALE

Now that we've learned tab and a bit about note reading, let's combine it to play a simple "C Major Scale"

**What's a major scale?** Let's start by figuring out what a scale is...

A musical scale is any set of musical notes played in order from low to high, or high to low, or back up and down.

A MAJOR SCALE is specifically a pattern of whole steps and half steps that take you from one note up to the same note an octave higher. We can look at the piano and see the C Major Scale uses the white keys, and you can easily spot the pattern: Whole - Whole - Half - Whole - Whole - Whole - Half



## So why C Major?

To be honest... It's easier! It doesn't use any sharps or flats, and C is the lowest note on our ukuleles! If you really wanted, you can start on a different note and do the major scale pattern and figure it out in a different key!

## The C Major Scale (also known as the "Uke Scaly" Playing Check)

T							
A	0	2	0	1	3	0	2
B						3	

### How to master this (using tab as your guide):

- 1) Trust your ears. You're playing Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Ti-Do.
- 2) The tab underneath each note is your instruction on how to play that pitch.
  - The numbers tell you where to hold down on the string. 0 = Open, 1 = First Fret, etc.
  - If the number is on the same line, you stay on the same string!
  - If the number changes lines, you change which string you pluck!
- 3) Slow & Steady. Make sure each note sounds clearly. Try using different fingers for different frets.

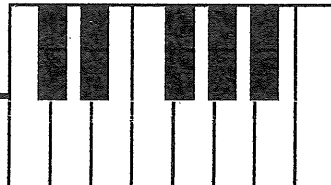
Too easy? Try playing it forwards and backwards. Still too easy? Try this scale exercise:

T																										
A	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	3	0	1	3	0	1	3	0	2	3	0	2	3	5	2	3	5	2	3
B																										

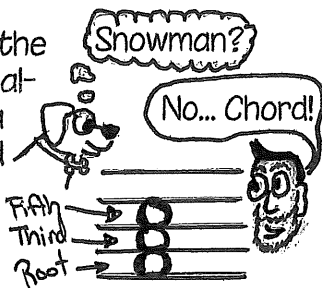
# MAJOR AND MINOR CHORDS

One of the first things we're going to do on a ukulele is learn to play chords. Chords are the harmonic bones of most of the music we listen to, and they are what most beginning ukulele players focus on learning.

As we learn about chord types, we'll be talking about intervals, or distances between notes. Looking at the keyboard helps us visualize these distances because each key is a half step from the next one.



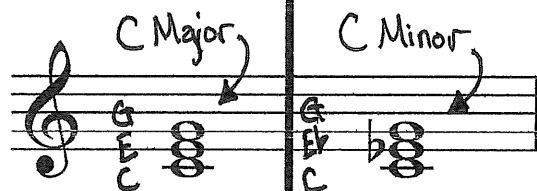
Building Chords always starts with the "Root," which is the note that the chord is based on. Typically after that we have a "third" and a "fifth" and the distance between these notes help determine what kind of chord we are dealing with.



## Major Chords

are built starting with the root and then the third is 4 half steps higher. The fifth is then 3 steps above that.

This C Major chord has a root of C, third of E, and then G is the fifth!



## Important note about Chords on the Ukulele

Because of how the 4 strings of the Ukulele are tuned, often times we will play these chords using the correct note names, but not necessarily in the same order as you would on a piano or guitar.

Playing the correct notes of a chord, but in a different order is called an "inversion."

Minor Chords are built similar to major chords, except the third is only 3 steps higher than the root. The fifth is then 4 steps higher (so it should be the same note as the major chord).

C Minor has Eb as it's third, giving it a different sound than C Major.

## MAJOR VS MINOR & THE HAPPY-SAD DEBATE

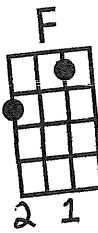
It is not uncommon to hear someone say "Major sounds Happy and Minor sounds Sad." In some cases, this is totally true... but it isn't guaranteed. Sometimes the most energetic song you hear will be in Minor, or the slow ballad that makes you cry everytime is written in Major.

Instead of Major/Minor being Happy/Sad, you can describe Major as "brighter" and Minor as "darker." You might even find your own adjectives you like depending on the song!

Most importantly, these types of chords will often work together to make a song and then the mood is up to the artist, the lyrics, and the listener to decide what really sounds "Happy" or "Sad"

# READING CHORD DIAGRAMS

Chord Diagrams show us where to hold down on the strings to get them to play the harmonies we want when we strum. The diagram is labeled with the chord name & shows us the top section of the neck.



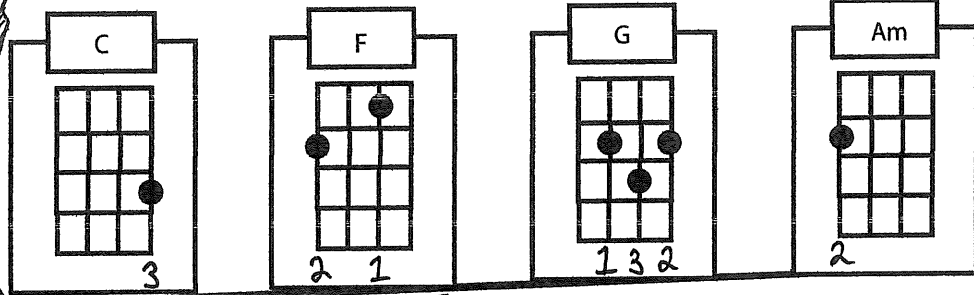
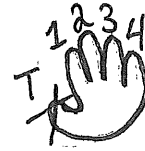
The vertical lines are the strings and the dots show where on the strings to hold down. Sometimes you'll see numbers near the dots telling you which finger you should use to hold the string.

The top of the box is the nut, and then the other horizontal lines are frets. Note how the dots DONT touch the actual fret. Instead they're in the space between.

## MR. SCHNEIDER'S (FAMOUSLY BAD) DRAWING OF A HAND



It's not THAT bad..  
Right?

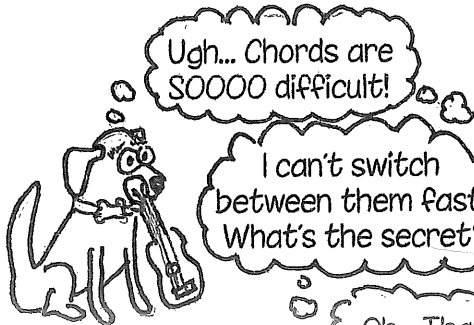


## YOUR FIRST LIKE CHORDS

The first 4 chords we will teach you on your ukulele are:  
C Major / F Major / G Major / A minor

When playing in the Key of C Major, these chords make up the harmony of hundreds of songs.

Once you have them under your fingers, try strumming a steady beat and switching around between them and you'll see that they sound very familiar!



Oh... Thanks.

What's giving you a hard time, Dixie?

Well, practicing them. That's really the "secret."  
Also, not being a dog helps. You know...  
Like not having to hold ukulele in your mouth  
because you don't have fingers...



# A Basic 12-Bar Blues

Using 3 of your new chords, we can play one of the classic song forms: The Blues! This only uses your C, F, & G chord (we'll use the Am soon).

Each time the chord name appears below, you will play that chord for 4 beats. Try a variety of strumming patterns to practice and add some style to your blues!

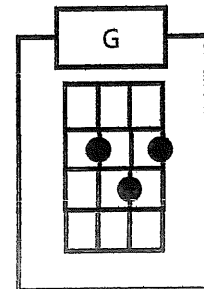
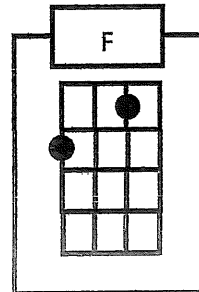
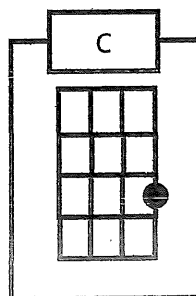


<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>



## C Blues Scale

This scale sounds great over the blues chords, no matter what note you play.



# Schmazy Blues

Find a friend to play the chords while you play this melody. You can use the notes from the Blues Scale to improvise and add to the melody.

S. Schneider

Ukulele

C C C C

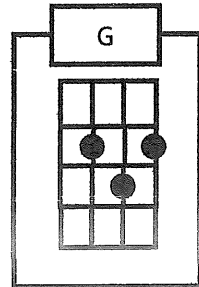
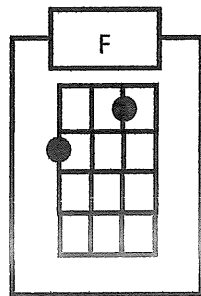
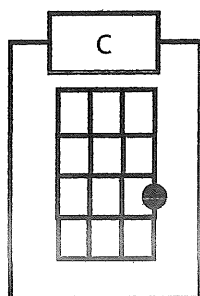
3-3-1-1 3-1 3-3-1-1 3 3-3-1-1 3-1 0-3 1-2-1 3-0

F F C C

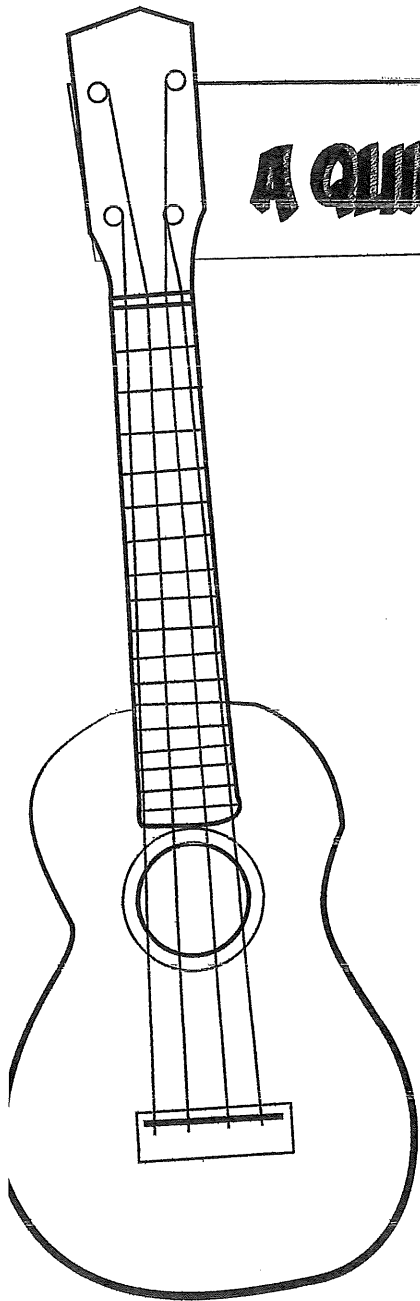
3-3-1-1 3-1 3-3-1-1 3 3-3-1-1 3-1 1-2-1 3-0

G F C C

3-3-3-1-3-3 1 3-1 3-1 3-3-1-1 3-1 0-3 1-2-1 3-0



# A QUICK CHORD REFERENCE CHART



	<b>Major (Bright)</b>	<b>Minor (Dark)</b>	<b>7th (Bluesy)</b>	<b>Major 7th (Jazzy)</b>
<b>C</b>				
<b>D</b>				
<b>E</b>				
<b>F</b>				
<b>G</b>				
<b>A</b>				
<b>Bb</b>				
<b>B</b>				

There are alternate ways to play these chords and hundreds more out there, but this should be enough to get you started!

