

LESSON PLAN: Fret Numbers / Positioning

Objective:

Students will be able to associate fingers to frets and understand how to use the fret markers to gain quick access to different positions. This lesson lays an important foundation for understanding how to use their fingers on the fret board.

Resources:

Handout on fret numbers and finger numbers

Procedures:

- 1 Show students that frets are the metal lines that run vertically along the fret board which allow us to change notes on the same string. Using the first string show them how notes played using frets near the head stock sound lower than notes played on frets closer to the bridge.
- 2 Walk around the room showing them that playing on the first fret means placing your finger in the first “box”, 2nd fret in the 2nd box, etc. (thinking of the fret as a box where the finger plays can help them conceptually, while keeping them from putting their finger ON the fret which would result in a bad sounding or buzzing note)
- 3 Ask students to close their eyes and listen as you play low or high notes and to call out as a group whether the note you played was low or high.
- 4 Have students play low notes on their guitars using the 1st string, followed by high notes on the 1st string. Walk around the room or have students help each other with understanding what this means. Remind students that the thumb needs to be behind the fret board so the hand can feel grip motion that holds the note down easily.
- 5 Demonstrate using the 1st string what it means to be in “1st position” by playing the 1st fret with your 1st finger, 2nd fret with your 2nd finger, 3rd fret with your 3rd finger, and 4th fret with your 4th finger. Do the same thing in 2nd position, showing your 1st finger plays the 2nd fret, 2nd finger on the 3rd fret, etc.
- 6 Ask the students to look at their guitars and tell you what fret number the 1st fret marker is on. On typical nylon string student guitars this will be the dot located at the 5th fret. Play the notes on the 1st string in 5th position for them. Do the same thing for the 2nd fret marker, etc.
- 7 Have students play the notes in various positions you call out. Using a 6 or 12 side dice is a great way to do this. They can play each note one time or several times if you are combining this exercise with “alternate picking” or some other concept. Have student volunteers demonstrate to the class.



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Present: Perform expressively, with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context (NAfME). Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Pr5.1.H Rehearse, Evaluate, and Refine. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.6-8.3 Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks.

