



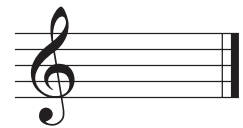
Reading for Ukulele - Note Recognition

Once you understand the basic concept of reading, it's time to get down to the development of the skills. We know our goal is to read music as well as we read words. Now, how do we get there?

Note Recognition

If you can't recognize the notes on the staff, you certainly can't read them. For anyone who is past this step, great! But in many cases, the recognition of notes on the staff is not as good as it should be. If you can't read music, this skill doesn't exist at all.

The ukulele uses the treble or G clef exclusively. This simplifies things considerably since other instruments often use multiple clefs. Piano as an example, uses both the treble and the bass clef.



The lines and spaces on the treble clef represent notes with simple alphabetical letters. These notes are represented by seven letters - **A B C D E F** and **G**. We're going to organize the notes into four categories.

- 1) notes on the lines and spaces
- 2) notes above or below the lines and spaces
- 3) notes on or between upper and lower ledger lines
- 4) notes with sharps or flats

Adapted for Ukulele from Chuck Anderson's
Reading for Guitar

Chuck Anderson is an internationally acclaimed jazz,
guitarist, author and educator.

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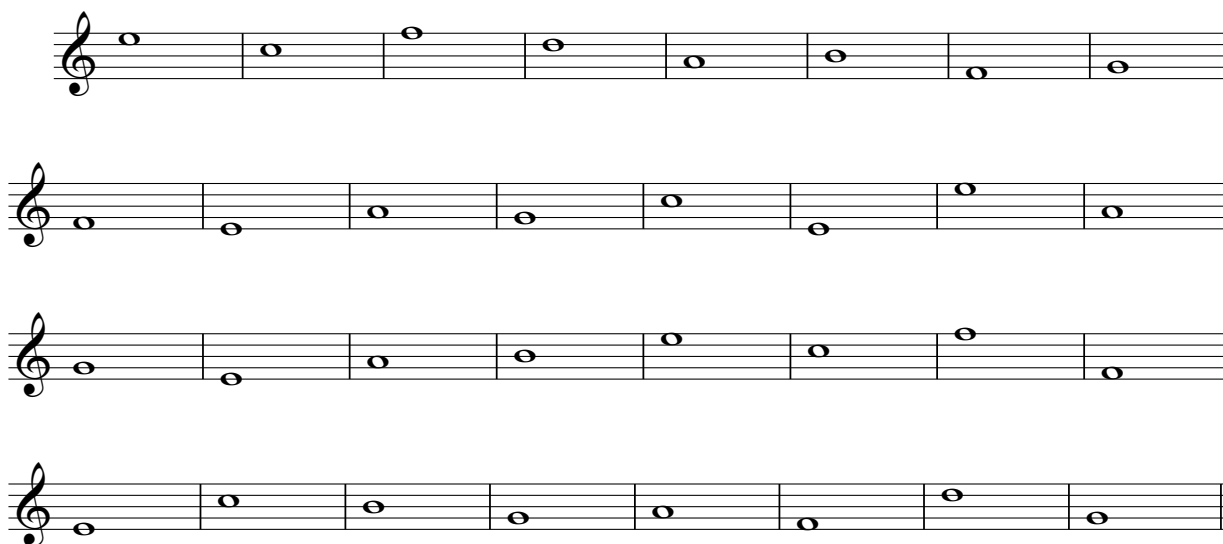
Notes on lines and spaces

Starting on the bottom line and working our way up the staff, we have E, G, B, D and F. This is the traditional Every Good Boy Does Fine memory device. Knowing the names in this way is a start but you do need to know them without resorting to this memory device.



Starting on the bottom space (the area between each two lines), we have F, A, C and E. Memory device : FACE

Practice naming the notes in the following exercise as rapidly as you can.



To get more variety and practice, take blank music paper and write these same nine notes in random orders. The more you write, the better. It is a much neglected secret of reading that writing can improve your reading as much if not more than reading itself.

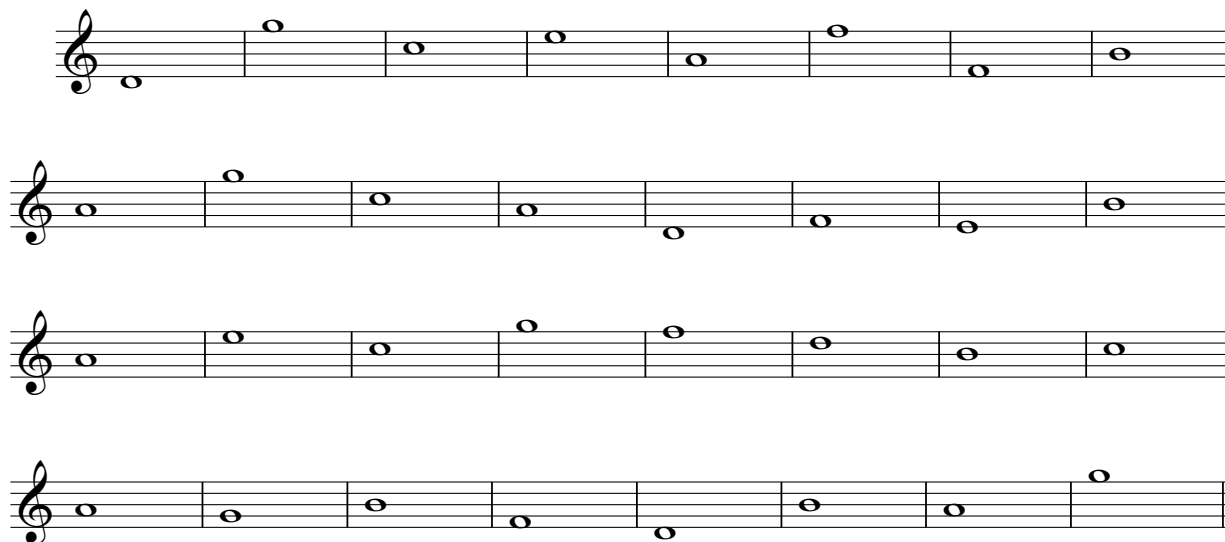
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There are only two notes that fall into this next category - D below and G above.



Try the following exercise including the notes on the lines and spaces and the new notes D and G.

Don't forget to write all of these notes yourself in random orders - the more the better!

Sharps and Flats

The next category is the variations on the notes ie sharps and flats. Just read the note as always but add the word sharp or flat to the name. For example, F# or Bb. Don't worry about where to play the note on the ukulele. Just concentrate on being able to recognize the name of the note at sight. Note that the sharp(#) and flat(b) symbol are always to the left of the note itself.

Continue to write note combinations using all of the notes that you've learned so far.

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Ledger Lines

Ledger lines are small lines used above or below the staff to extend the range of notes. These ledger lines add additional lines and spaces beyond the standard five line and four space staff. Without these, we would be limited to the eleven notes we've seen so far.

Lower Ledger Lines with sharps and flats

These lines extend the range of notes downward. The ukulele only uses two ledger lines below the staff if using the low G, string four tuning. One line below the staff is C, the lowest note for the standard C tuning with a high G string four. Below that line is B. Two lines below the staff is A. Below that is G the lowest note in a low G, C tuning. Three lines below the staff is F. Below that line is E. E is the lowest note on the guitar in standard tuning (E A D G B E).

As always, practice the following exercise, naming the notes as rapidly as possible. Also, don't forget to write your own notes.



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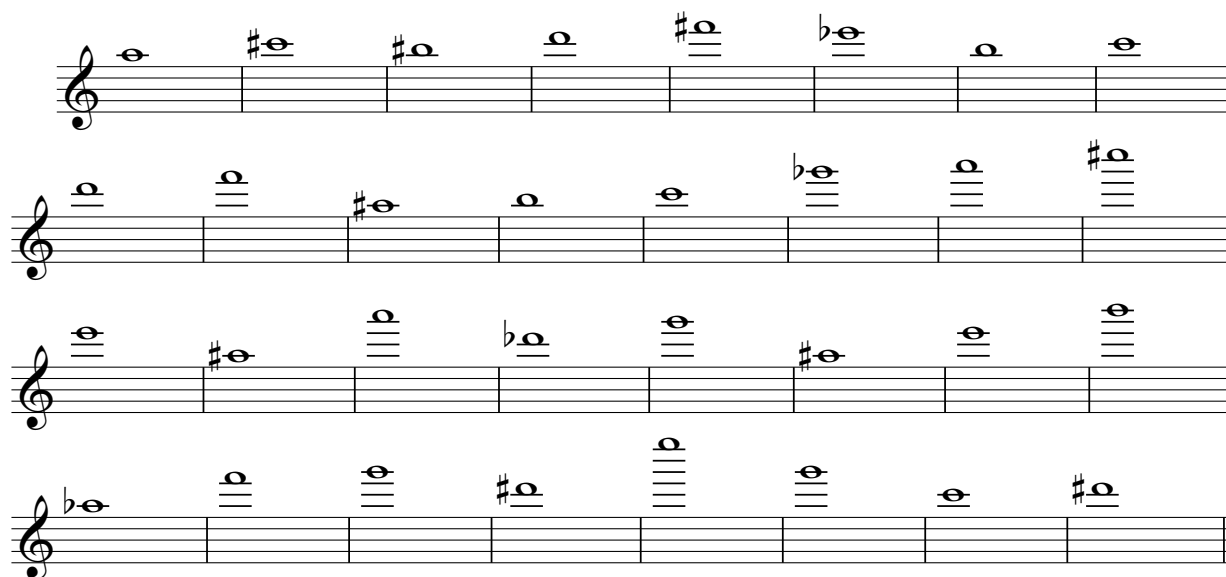




Upper Ledger Lines with sharps and flats

These lines extend the range of notes upward. One line above the staff is A. Above that line is B. Two lines above the staff is C. Above that line is D. Three lines above the staff is E. Above that line is F. Four lines above the staff is G. Above that line is A. Five lines above the staff is B. Above that line is C.

Depending on whether you have a soprano, concert or tenor ukulele the functional reading range typically does not go beyond the 12 to 15th fret of string one. If it does, keep adding upper ledger lines as before.



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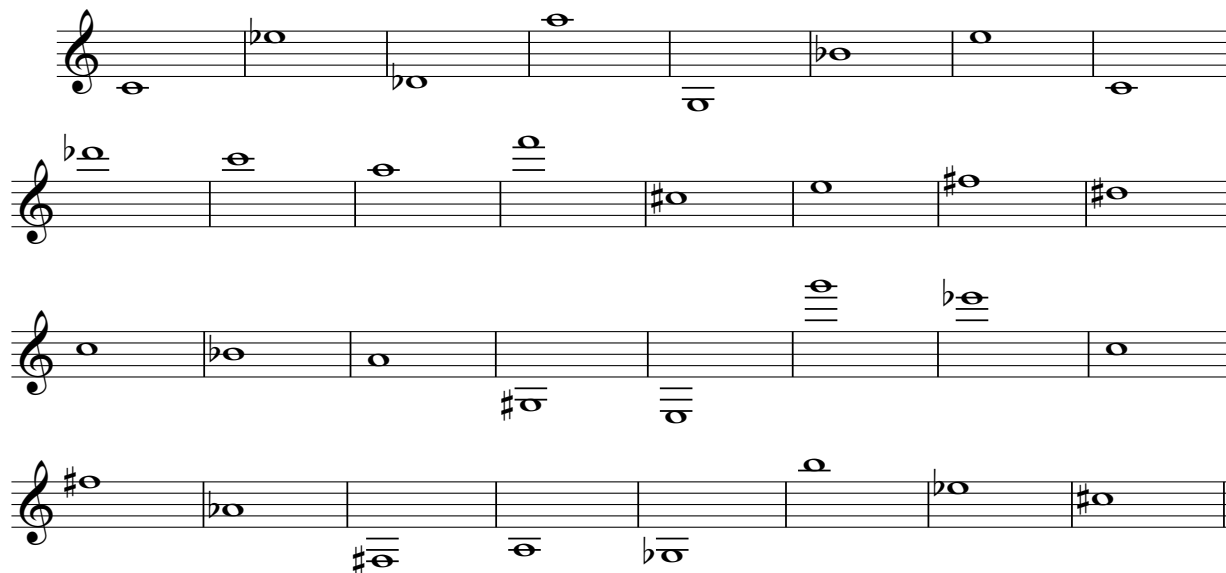
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All Notes with Sharps and Flats

Here is an exercise that includes all the notes that we've learned so far. How well you recognize the notes is measured by the speed and accuracy with which you can identify notes on the staff.



Remember, this lesson is not a blueprint for locating the notes on the ukulele. Our only goal is identify the name of the notes on the staff. That is the first step to reading - *recognizing and knowing a note*.

The ability read the notes, regardless whether they are playable on the ukulele is a valuable skill for reading music written for other G clef instruments.

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