

Lesson 01: The Guitar

Three Types of Guitars

There are three types of guitars in general usage today: the acoustic guitar, the classical guitar (or Spanish guitar), and the electric guitar.

The acoustic guitar is a hollow-bodied, steel-stringed instrument that does not require amplification. It is often used for folk, pop, and country music styles. Due to the density of the steel strings, this instrument has a bright tone and is often played with a pick (plectrum).

The classical guitar (sometimes called the Spanish guitar) is a nylon-stringed instrument with a hollow body. It is used by trained classical musicians. The classical guitarist does not make use of a pick, and the widely-spaced, soft nylon strings facilitate the use of individual fingers to pluck the strings. Classical guitar players perform in a sitting position using a footstool or other device to support the instrument. The classical guitar has a softer, rounder tone than the steel-stringed acoustic guitar.

The electric guitar is a solid-body, steel-stringed instrument that is often used for rock, jazz, or other popular music styles. The electric guitar has no large resonating body (as does the acoustic and classical guitars), and thus it requires amplification. Electric guitars are sometimes found with semi-hollow, and even hollow-body designs.

Parts of the Guitar

The main parts of the guitar are:

1. back
2. body
3. body sides (or ribs)
4. bridge
5. bridge pins (on acoustic guitars)
6. fretboard (or fingerboard)
7. frets
8. headstock
9. heel (on acoustic guitars) or neck joint (on electric guitars)
10. machine heads (or tuning keys)
11. neck
12. nut
13. pick guard
14. pickups (on electric guitars)
15. position markers (not often found on classical guitars)
16. saddle
17. soundboard (on acoustic and classical guitars)
18. sound hole (on acoustic and classical guitars)
19. strap holders (not on classical guitars)
20. strings
21. truss rod

