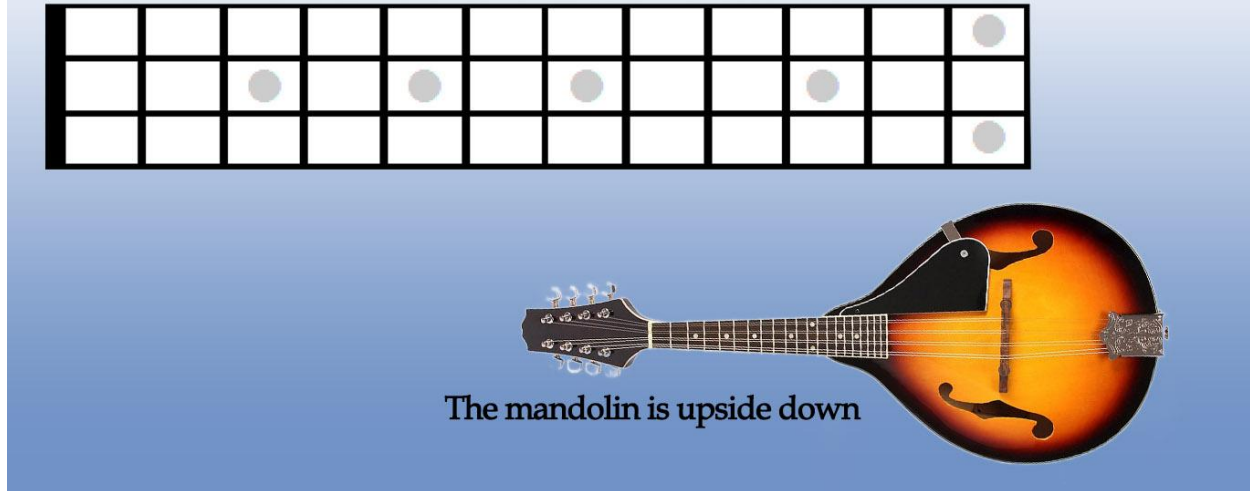


The Fretboard Chart

What It Is and How to Read It

How to Read a Fretboard Chart (Diagram)



What the Chart Represents

Figure 1

In **figure 1**, notice the thick, black line at the left side of the white chart. That thick black line represents the nut on your mandolin.

The nut is the part near the headstock that has grooves for holding the strings. In **figure 1**, there is a mandolin shown beneath the fretboard chart with a white-colored nut at the end of the fretboard near the headstock. It is this nut that is represented by the thick black vertical line on the left side of the chart.

The rest of the chart consists of a *rectangular “box”* made up of four (4) long, horizontal lines and numerous vertical lines spaced evenly across the chart.

The four horizontal lines represent the four pairs of mandolin strings. The vertical lines represent frets. The bottom horizontal line represents the lowest-sounding “G” string pair, while the top horizontal line represents the highest-sounding “E” string pair.

How Frets and Note Locations Are Shown

The frets are numbered from left to right. You can see in **figure 2** that the nut can be considered a zero (0) fret, followed by frets 1, 2, 3, and so on.

The fretboard chart then becomes a grid to guide you as to where to find certain notes on the mandolin, by marking locations with a dot on a “string” between “frets” as they are indicated by the chart.

How to visualize open notes on your mandolin

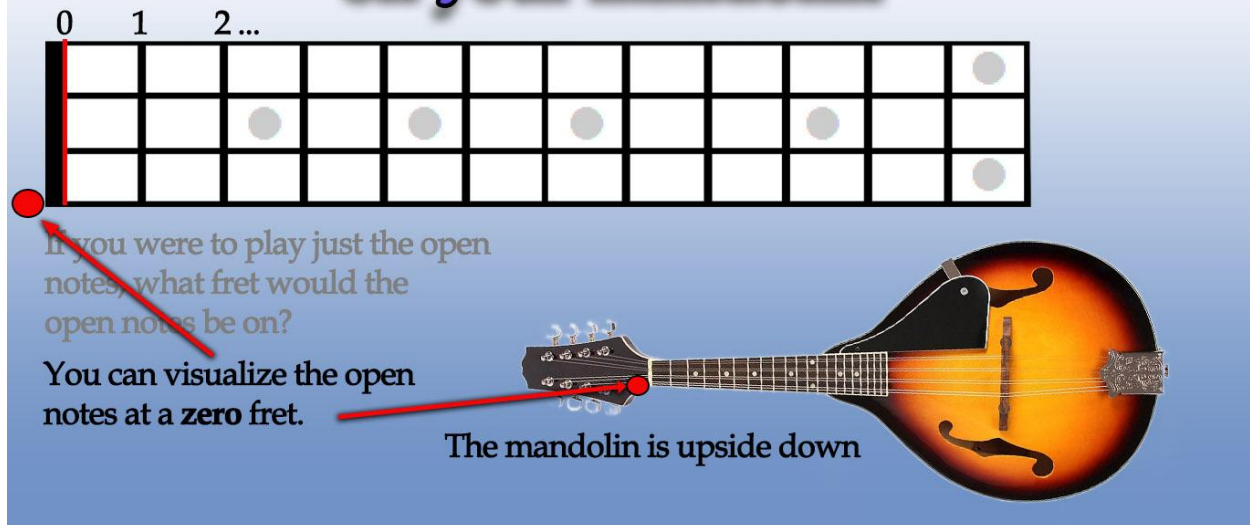


Figure 2

Figures 3 and 4 use small, red dots to show note locations on the chart and where those same notes appear on the mandolin fretboard.

Reading the Chart Orientation

How to Read a Fretboard Chart (Diagram)

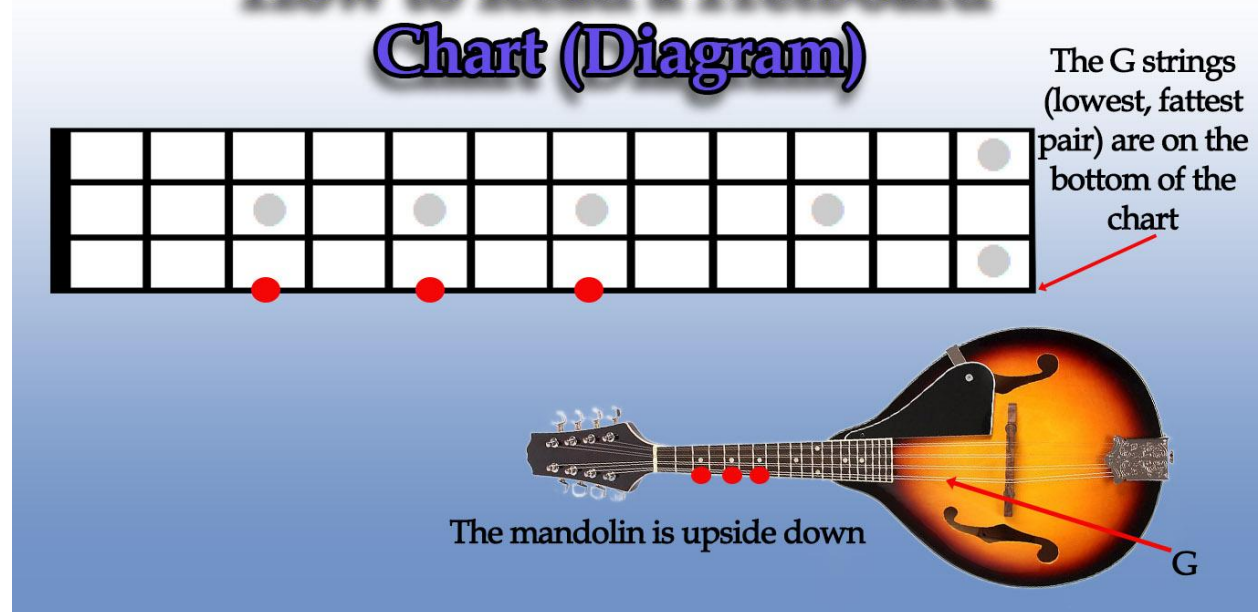


Figure 3

How to Read a Fretboard Chart (Diagram)

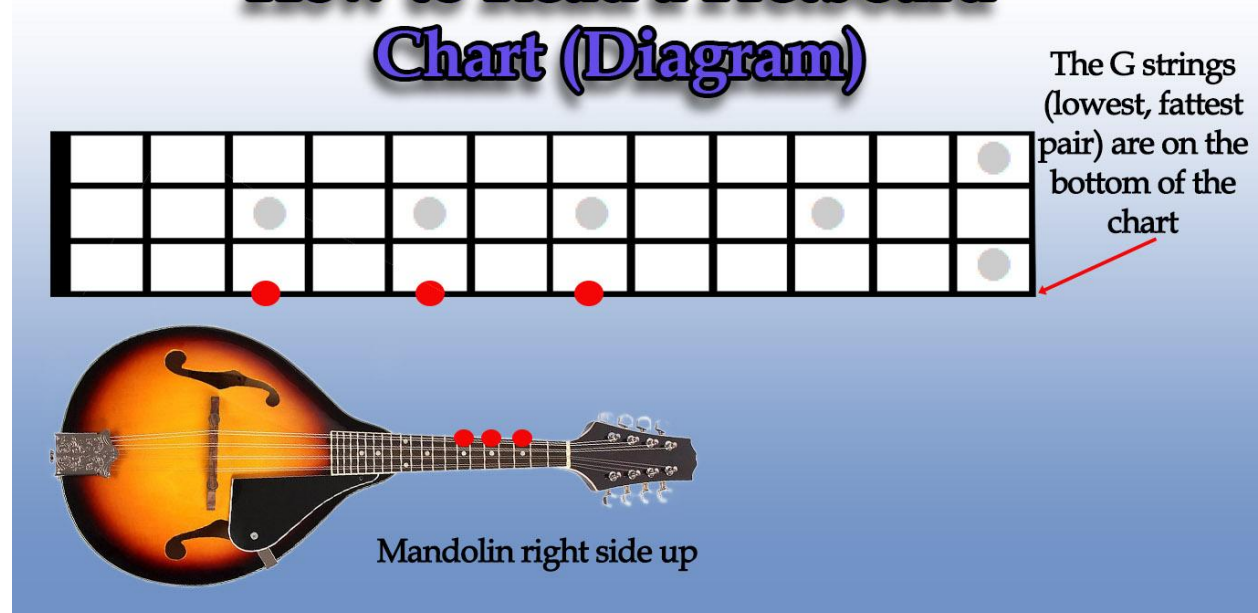


Figure 4

Read the chart from the bottom left. Starting at the bottom, the chart shows the “G” string, then the “D” string, then the “A” string, and finally the “E” string at the top.

The mandolin in **figures 1-3** is presented “upside-down” in the images because the fretboard chart is easily comprehended when comparing it to the actual mandolin fretboard in that position.

In **figure 3** the mandolin appears upside down, while in **figure 4** it appears right side up. These two views show that the chart orientation does not change: the “G” string is always the bottom line of the chart.

This bottom-to-top order—G, D, A, E—is the key reference point for reading every fretboard chart that follows.

Once this orientation is clear, the chart becomes a simple map for locating notes and scale patterns on the mandolin.

The next page gives an even more simplified explanation.

Let’s **move on** to reading the first chart in our series, which will be the Major Scale Pattern 1.

Remember, you can always ask questions through the contact form at www.theamateurmandolinist.com

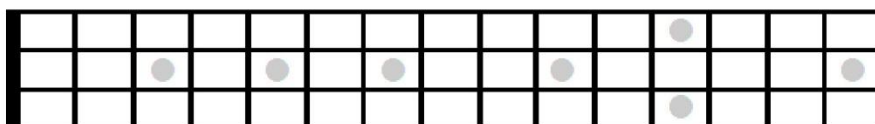
Reading a fretboard diagram

1. Hold mandolin in lap, as though to play
2. Lift up and tilt toward you, like this:



Reading a fretboard diagram

3. The diagram represents a fretboard in same position.



The thick, black line on left is the nut.

The line on bottom is the fattest, G strings.

The line at top is the thinnest, E strings

The vertical lines are the frets

A dot would show where your fingers go.

Figure 5