

A Guide to the Electric Guitar

There are many different kinds of Electric Guitars, some with a few different elements or altered configurations, but for the most part, they all contain the pieces listed here, usually in more or less the same positions.

Electric Bases also contain almost all of the same elements in generally the same positions, with the notable exception that they usually have 4 strings rather than 6, tuned the same as the first 4 strings of the guitar: E A D G (only an Octave lower).

The **Tuning Posts** are where the Strings attach at the top of the guitar. The **Tuning Pegs** adjust the tension of the Strings, changing their Pitch accordingly.

The **Nut** is not a Fret, but a bar which holds the Strings in place.

The **Frets** change the pitch of the Strings. Each Fret is equal to one Half-Step, ascending from the Head towards the Body of the guitar. Most guitars have single dots marking the third, fifth, seventh, and ninth Frets, with two dots marking the twelfth Fret, or one Octave.

A **Pickup** is what turns the vibration of the Strings into an electrical signal, usually through the use of magnets (essentially just like a microphone). Most guitars have two or three Pickups, though some have only one, or, very occasionally, more than three. On guitars with multiple Pickups, the one closest to the Neck tends to produce a dark or bass-heavy sound, while the one closest to the Bridge tends to produce a brighter, more treble-heavy sound, with the Middle Pickup (if there is one) producing a mixture of the two.

Most electric guitars and bases have a collection of switches and knobs that can be very confusing at first glance, but these tend to control the same functions on most instruments and are usually oriented in more or less the same way. Usually there is a single switch, called a **Pickup Selector**. This allows you to choose which Pickup or combination of Pickups is active. The orientation of the switch indicates which Pickup is selected. If it is in the bottom position, the Bridge Pickup is selected, if in the middle position, the Middle Pickup is active, and if in the top position, the Neck Pickup is in use. Some switches also have in-between positions, allowing you to activate two Pickups at the same time.

The **Bridge** is where the Strings attach at the bottom of the guitar.

The **Output Jack** is where an instrument cable can be plugged in, allowing the signal generated by the vibration of the Strings through the Pickups to be transmitted to an Amplifier.

There are also usually at least two knobs, though sometimes as many as four or five. Of these, the top one is usually a **Volume Knob**, controlling the volume of the whole instrument, while any others are usually either **Tone Knobs**, controlling the tone of each Pickup, or separate Volume Knobs for each Pickup.

