GUITAR.LEARNTOPLAY.IM

Standard tuning

E2, A2, D3, G3, B3 and E4 — with string 1 at the top.

Georgia State University's HyperPhysics pages give a widely used modern standard. It is not treated here as the same thing as the Met's four-course historic example.

String	Pitch (HyperPhysics)	Interval to the next string up
6	E2	a fourth, to A2
5	A2	a fourth, to D3
4	D3	a fourth, to G3
3	G3	a major third, to B3
2	B3	a fourth, to E4
1	E4	the high E; this is string 1

The same fact, in a sentence

"The strings of a six-string guitar are tuned to E, A, D, G, B, E, a fourth apart except for the major third interval between B and G." The pitches above "refer to the equal tempered set of notes based on A440Hz," and "are usually numbered in the descending order (i.e., the E4 is called string 1)."

At the 12th fret, the speaking length is halved and the frequency doubles — one octave up. Frets "are placed by the fret rule 'one-eighteenth the remaining length of the string'," making them a semitone apart. "There are typically 19 frets on classical guitars."

A short quiz

1. What pitch does HyperPhysics give for string 1?
2. Between which two strings is the interval a major third, not a fourth?
3. What happens, according to HyperPhysics, if you hold a string at the 12th fret?

Answers. 1. E4 — the high E. 2. Between strings 2 and 3 (B3 and G3). 3. The speaking length is halved and the frequency doubles: one octave up.

Wording from HyperPhysics, Georgia State University, "Acoustic Guitar" and "Tuning the 6-String Guitar," C. R. Nave, checked 17 November 2026. The 1911 Britannica's "tuned as shown" is not treated as these letter names. Practise chords and timing at helpmelearnguitar.com.