

Guitars: The Kings of Rock



The guitarist stands in the spotlight, hands moving across the strings so fast they look like a blur. The crowd screams for more. In rock music, the guitar is king.

Guitar heroes like this performer usually play electric guitars. As the name suggests, electric guitars make their sounds with electricity. They use parts called pick-ups, which are placed under the strings. Pick-ups pick

up the vibrations from the strings and turn them into electrical signals. Then they send the signals to speakers.

Acoustic guitars work differently. In acoustic guitars, the sound gets louder when it bounces around inside the instrument. The wood deepens the sound. Like other string instruments, guitars make music when their strings vibrate.

Both acoustic and electric guitars have a long neck that usually holds between six and 12 strings. Small metal bars called frets are laid across the neck. The guitarist changes notes by pressing down on the strings

near the frets. The thickest and longest strings make the lowest sounds. That's because they vibrate more slowly. The thinnest and shortest strings make the highest sounds. That's because they vibrate more quickly.

Guitarists often use a pick. Picks are small pieces of material that are used to strum or pick the strings. Strumming makes many strings sound together, while picking makes individual strings sound. Some guitar players use their fingernails to strum or pick the strings, while others use wood, metal, or even coins!

Guitars are featured in music played around the world. It is one of the oldest instruments, with instruments somewhat like today's guitar appearing about 5,000 years ago. Guitars were probably created in Spain in the 1500s.

Electric guitars became popular 1950s when rock music became popular. Since then, many rock musicians have used electric guitars to play long guitar solos. Their sounds fill an arena as the crowd screams for more.



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Write all these words in the right places to complete this puzzle, which tells some things you learned about guitars. You can reread the article before you begin, but don't look back at it while you are working. After you've completed the puzzle, read it to someone.



electric	electricity	highest	longest	neck
acoustic	pressing	sounds	speakers	string

Did you know that there are two kinds of guitars? _____

guitars don't need to be plugged in. They make _____

when their _____ vibrate. The strings in

_____ guitars also vibrate, but pick-ups under the

strings send signals from these vibrations to _____. The

speakers make the sounds of the strings louder. As their name says, electric guitars

need _____ to make sounds.

There are many similarities between acoustic and electric guitars. Both have

a long _____ that holds the strings. Guitarists change

notes by _____ down on the strings. The thickest and

_____ strings make the lowest sounds. The thinnest and

shortest strings make the _____ sounds. Guitars are

popular in many types of music today.

Comprehension Response Activities

FYI for Kids — Level 5



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