

Guitars: The Kings of Rock

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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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