

Learning To Accompany

What do we mean when we 'accompany' someone or something? Well, first we have to understand the basic two types of guitar playing, which will be very redundant to most of you. However, I simply MUST cover it to make sure we all know about them:

1. Rhythm Guitar - Rhythm guitar is the use of a guitar to provide rhythmic chordal accompaniment for a singer or other instruments in a musical ensemble. In ensembles or "bands" playing within the acoustic, country, blues, rock or metal genres (among others), a guitarist playing the rhythm part of a composition supports the melodic lines and solos played on the lead instrument or instruments, be they string, brass, wind, keyboard or even percussion instruments, or simply the human voice. In the most commercially available and consumed genres, electric guitars tend to dominate their acoustic cousins in both the recording studio and the live venue. However the acoustic guitar remains a popular choice in country, western and especially bluegrass music, and is used almost exclusively in folk music.

Rhythm guitarists usually aim to generate a stronger rhythmic and chordal sound, in contrast to the lead guitarists' goal of producing a sustained, high-pitched melody line that can be heard over top of the band. As a result, rhythm and lead players may use different guitars and amplifiers. Rhythm guitarists may employ an electric acoustic guitar or a humbucker-equipped electric guitar for a richer and fatter output. Also, rhythm guitarists may use strings of a larger gauge than those used by lead guitarists. However, while these may be practices, they are not necessarily the rule and is subject to the style of the song and the preference of the individual guitarist.

2. Lead Guitar - Lead guitar refers to the use of a guitar to perform melody lines, instrumental fill passages, and guitar solos within a song structure. To create lead guitar lines, guitarist use scales, modes, arpeggios, licks, and riffs that are performed using a variety of techniques. In rock, heavy metal, blues, jazz and fusion bands and some pop contexts as well as others, lead guitar lines often employ alternate picking, sweep picking, economy picking and legato (e.g., hammer ons, pull offs), which are used to maximize the speed of their solos or riffs. Such "tricks" can employ the picking hand used in the fret area (such as tapping) and even be augmented and embellished with devices such as bows or separate electronic devices such as an EBow. Some like to play with even their teeth or feet or other bodily appendages or the like. In a blues context as well as others, lead guitar lines are created using call and response-style riffs that are embellished with string bending, vibrato and slides.

So Which One Are You?

My hope is that you either *are currently* or WILL eventually be both! That's the key to learning anything on the guitar, regardless of what it may be. We need to be more well-rounded. Even the best musicians in the world will always find that they need improvement. All of this being said, I will first focus on the rhythm guitar as the foundation so that we can apply a basic accompaniment to chords being presented.

In music, ***accompaniment*** is the art of playing along with a soloist or ensemble, often known as the lead, in a supporting manner as well as the music thus played.

One very important thing to understand is that it isn't always necessary when accompanying yourself or other guitarists that you make it 'difficult.' Some of the best accompaniment in the world can actually be easier on the lead guitar player than the rhythm guitarist. That's of course not always the case, but many times there is more complexity in rhythmic strumming than playing lead lines. If any of this is beginning to scare you, don't let it. Everything I present to you in this category will be playable by even the most basic of guitar player.

Let's Begin!

The Rules of Accompanying

The three rules of accompaniment are:

- 1) Stay in compas.
- 2) Stay in compas.
- 3) Stay in compas.

Compas is Spanish for 1) rhythm, generally, 2) measure -- a coherent unit of rhythm, 3) the characteristic rhythm of a particular form. Thus, "he has good compas" means he has a good sense of rhythm. "The introduction is 4 compas long" means something like (but not exactly) "it's four measures long." "I play this in the compas of tientos" means I play it with the same rhythm you'd hear in tientos.

Flamenco Guitar

Strictly, flamenco guitar is an accompaniment to singing and dancing in the traditional Flamenco forms. Those in English-speaking countries outside the Flamenco community often use it to mean vaguely Spanish-sounding guitar playing which utilises some of the techniques listed below, especially rasgueado. Although Flamenco guitarists are now often accompanied by orchestras, flutes, percussion and other accompaniments, when Flamenco first started the guitarist would be playing all by himself. This led to a development in guitar music to make one guitar sound like more than one instrument and forced guitarists to develop techniques to make them sound louder. Those techniques affected the music they're producing to be a bit aggressive.

The backbone of all forms in flamenco that have compas at all (some of the lyrical songs don't) is the compas. Hopefully, you will play the right notes or chords at the right time, but mistakes of that kind are quickly history.

Singers and dancers will forgive you many many sour notes, and terrible tone. Unfortunately, they can't work with you at all if you provide them a hesitant, uneven, or false rhythmic basis. For accompaniment, compas is King. It's also the Achilles heel of many classical guitarists coming into flamenco, unless they do lots of ensemble work, or are blessed at birth with excellent compas. Classical guitar practice is typically solitary, and tempts one to always go back and fix things. You can't do that when accompanying.

It's easy to show that you can provide minimal accompaniment without pitch at all (much less fine tone), but not without good compas: simply damp all the strings with the left hand, and play accurate percussive rhythm with the right hand for a singer doing bulerias. S/he'll do just fine. On the other hand, if you play all the chords perfectly but add or drop just one beat, the song (or dance) will falter towards chaos, and s/he'll be ready to strangle you.

Why Mention All Of This?

The answer is simple. Music is all about rhythm. Period. The same applies to dancing or even singing. A dancer must know the on and off beats, especially in tap, and the singer must know when he or she is to 'come in' and sing or pause for a given period of time. This is the same concept when learning to accompany a guitarist. These rules about staying in compas will ALWAYS hold true.

As promised, I will begin with the rhythm so that we can add accompaniment to it.

The Rhythm Guitar

Here is the rhythm guitar that we are applying lead or accompaniment to:

♩ = 75

G C

T	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
B	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3								

D G

T	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
B									5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
B									3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Notice in the first measure above that there is nothing being played. This spot has been reserved for the lead guitar as an intro. Everything else is easy. We're playing all basic chords, with the G and Am chord being played as barre chords. Everything above is played using eighth notes.

D Am

T	2	3	2	3	2	5	5	5	5	5
A			2	3	2		5	5	5	5
B					0	2			7	7

E

T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
A	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
B	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
B	2	2	2	2								0
B	2	2	2	2								
B	0	0	0	0								

is the first slide in the first measure above. That is a slide from 'nowhere' or 'from below' which means that you hit the string that is needed to slide, but you barely lift off the fretboard right before that actual slide. So, you're not actually sliding FROM the "11" as it appears. Moreso, you're technically sliding from an open note. Practice it a little and you'll get it down fine. The other slide, appearing in the second measure above is just another shift slide. You can play this. The last slide that appears is in the third measure. This is a 'legato slide' which means that you slide from the current note to the next without picking the string. This is VERY easy to do, so you should have no trouble with it.

Musical notation for D and Am chords. The top staff shows the melody in treble clef. The guitar tablature below shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. Slide markings 'sl' are placed under the tablature. The first measure is for D major, and the second is for Am. The tablature includes notes like 10, 12, 10-7, 5, 7, 5, 5, 7-9, 7, 5, 5, 7, 5.

Musical notation for E chord. The top staff shows the melody in treble clef. The guitar tablature below shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The tablature includes notes like 0, 2, 4, 2, 0, 2, 4, 5, 5, 2, 4, 2, 2, 0, 2, 4.

This series of lead work is pretty easy. It is a little faster at parts than the other passage, but the techniques that are applied are nothing you haven't already played before.

1 + 1 = 2

What do I mean by this? Well, long story short is that you've seen the rhythm and you've seen the lead, but now we have to see how they fit together.

Part I

$\text{♩} = 75$

G C

Gtr I

T	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
A	4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
B	5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Gtr II

T	10 11-12	10 12 12 10 10 10	5
A	12	12 10 12 12 10 10 10	5
B	12	12	5-7 5 7 5 7 5
			7

sl. sl. sl. H H

Rundown:

Now you can see where the lead comes in before any other guitar does.

The rhythm plays a G (barred) and a C chord (open) using all eighth notes.

The lead begins with all quarter notes, but the slide hides one of the quarter notes.

The lead plays all eighth notes when the rhythm begins. It then slides into the next measure with a shift slide to the 5th fret. Once you get to the hammer ons, play those with 16th notes. End the lead passage for the above measure by playing the 5th fret on the D string as a quarter note with vibrato.

Part II

Breakdown:

Don't let this lead part scare you. It's not as hard as it may look. All of the lead in the above first measure is played with 16th notes, but when you try to play it, you'll see it is rather easy. End the first lead measure with a little vibrato.

The lead for the G barre chord looks tricky, but it isn't too bad. There's that triplet. Remember how to play that using the (1) trip-(2) uh- (3) let. End with a basic N.H. (natural harmonic) at the end. The squiggly line pointing up means that you are to arpeggiate the N.H. but chances are you will do this naturally, or should I say 'by accident.' I've always found it funny that tablature includes the up or down arpeggio with a N.H. because I've almost always played N.H.'s automatically either up or down.

Part III

The image shows a guitar fingerstyle accompaniment score. It is divided into two systems, one for the D major chord and one for the Am chord. Each system consists of a treble clef staff with a melodic line and three bass clef staves labeled T (Treble), A (Acoustic), and B (Bass). The D system has two measures. The Am system has two measures. The Am system ends with a wavy line and a 'H' marking.

Breakdown:

This part is MUCH easier as well. The lead basically plays notes on the D Major scale. That's always a good idea when trying to accompany someone. When in doubt - play the scale associated with the chord being played. It works every time. The same applies to the Am rhythm with the lead. The Am lead pattern is really just playing notes built off of the chord itself. Look closely and you'll see what I mean. Just watch closely for the eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and the quarter note at the end.

Part IV

E

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2

T 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 3

A 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2

B 2 2 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

p p

0 2 4 2 0 2 4 5

T 0 2 4 2 0 2 4 5

A 2 4 2 2

B 0 2 4 2 0 2 4

Breakdown:

This part is all based on the E Major scale for the open E chord in the lead guitar. All of the notes you find on the lead part are all part of the E Major scale. Nothing to it!

Putting It Together

Here is the lead part slowed down a bit with an added slow motion video behind it.

Let's take a look again so that I can explain how we put all of this together.

Part I

♩ = 75

G C

Gtr I

T 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

A 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

B 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Gtr II

T 10 11 12 10 12 12 10 10 10 5

A 12 12 10 12 12 10 10 10 5

B 10 11 12 12 5-7 5 7 5 7 5

12 12 7

sl sl sl H H

Rundown:

As mentioned before, I think it is almost always a good idea to allow the lead or accompanying piece to come in before anything else does. Of course this doesn't always need to be done, but I like doing it because it almost guarantees you and the other guitarist will be on the same page so to speak when you begin playing together. Anyway, I started the lead guitar so that it will drive the song from the beginning using higher notes that are relevant to the chord being played. When the open C chord comes in, I create a bit of lead by playing a basic scale pattern, but I intentionally repeat quite a few notes. That keeps the song from going into a "Yngwie" style thrash on the guitar. Regardless of it being acoustic or electric, learning to play passages like this with your fingers instead of a plectrum will definitely add a considerable change to the sound of the song itself. I also added some 16th notes for the lead because if we were just playing eighth notes along with the chords (which IS fine...but) it would sound rather dull.

Part II

D								G							
T	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
								3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

T								3						{[12]}
A	0	10	12	0	8	9	0		4	4				{[12]}
B														{[12]}

H H P H H P H H P H H P H H

Breakdown:

To really drive this song, the lead here plays all 16th notes while the rhythm is playing all eighth notes. It creates a double time feel to the lead and really adds spice to the song itself. I also started the next measure with a triplet so that it starts to bounce a little. I LOVE triplets and think that they should be used by lead or accompanying guitarists quite often due to their gallop effect when another guitarist is playing basic rhythm. The N.H. was added to create more of a sparse effect, hinting that the lead may start to taper off.

Part III

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system is for a D major chord and an Am barre chord. The second system continues the piece with more complex arpeggios. The score includes a treble clef staff with notes and accidentals, and three guitar staves (T, A, B) with fret numbers and techniques like slurs and slurs.

Breakdown:

I added the arpeggios for the rhythm guitar so that you could hear the difference between accompanying a guitarist using basic rhythm and playing lead over a picked out pattern. It isn't always easy, but generally it ties together nicely. Again, the lead guitar part here is basically just built off of the notes found within the chord provided. The same applies to the Am barre chord. Notice that most of the notes are actually the same notes found in the Am barre chord.

Part IV

E

T 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2

T 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 3

A 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2

B 2 2 2 2 0

0 0 0 0 p p

T 0 2 4 2 0 2 4 5

T 0 2 4 2 0 2 4 5

A 2 4 2 2

B 0 2 4 2 0 2 4

Breakdown:

The last part here I literally just threw in because without it, the song didn't feel complete. I just thought... 'Hmm... what would work after the Am chord? An E! Yeah!'

So, I took the E Major scale, as explained earlier, and applied the notes to it.

In Conclusion

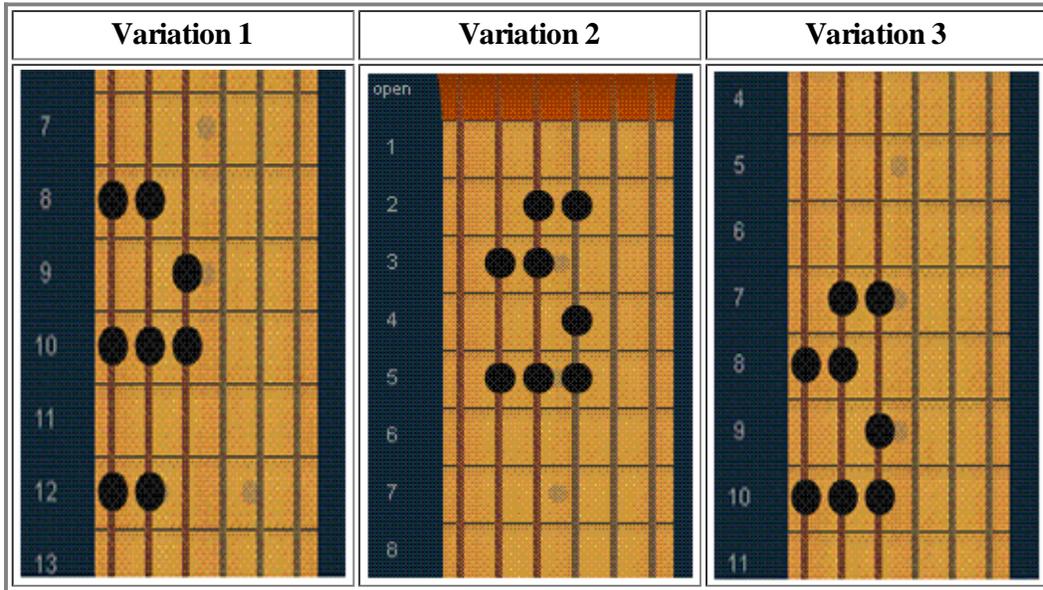
As you can see, it doesn't necessarily take a rocket scientist to accompany a fellow guitar player. All you really need is some basic chord progressions and a few Major and Minor scale patterns (if you choose to do it that way) and you can accompany at any time. You just did using a really basic chord progression!

But Wait!

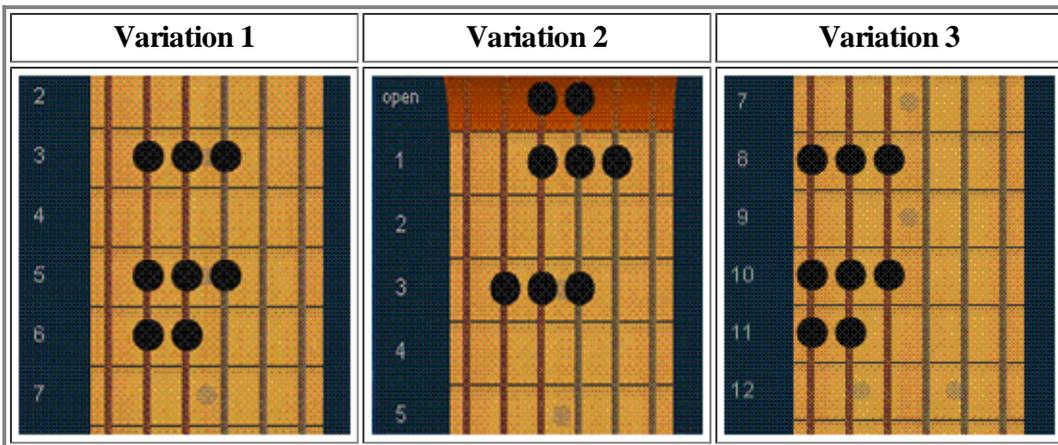
That's not all there is to accompanying a guitar player is it? NO. NO. NO. However, this will serve as a great guideline to get you started. Below is a quick series of images of many of the Major and Minor scale patterns that you can use to create your own accompanying patterns. If you choose to do it and are familiar with how the PTB program works, feel free to create your own song, complete with accompanying, and I'll post it! I do NOT have time to explain to you how to use the PTB Editor, but there is plenty of help online if you get confused, as well as a built-in tutorial within the program. I would love to see what you come up with!

All of the images below come from a program from www.chordbook.com. There are COUNTLESS scale generators on the web, and this is usually the easiest way if you can't quite remember every note on every scale. I do it all the time. It saves time and effort searching for all those patterns. Each image below is just a basic screenshot of options to play along with a given chord progression or key. Of course, there are more patterns you can work with, but this should work for now.

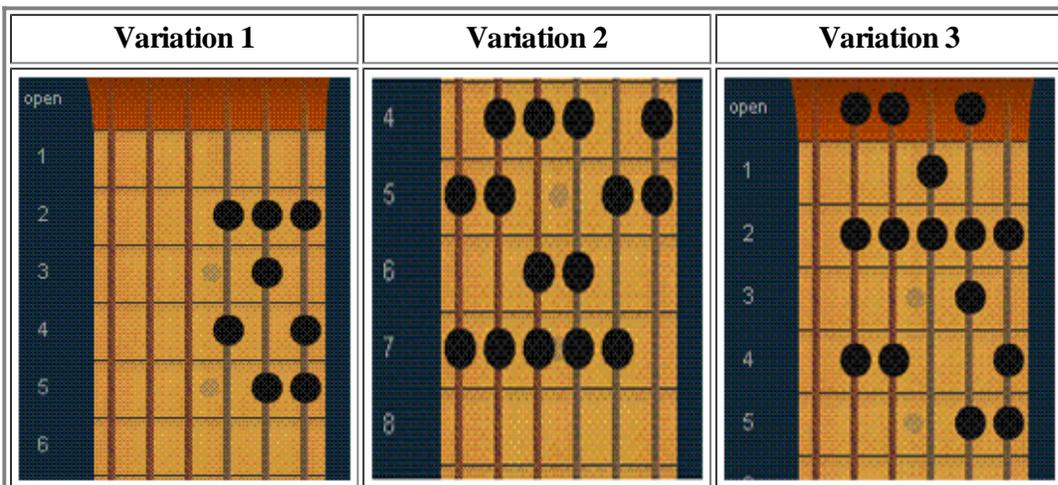
Fingerstyle - Accompanying C Major Variation



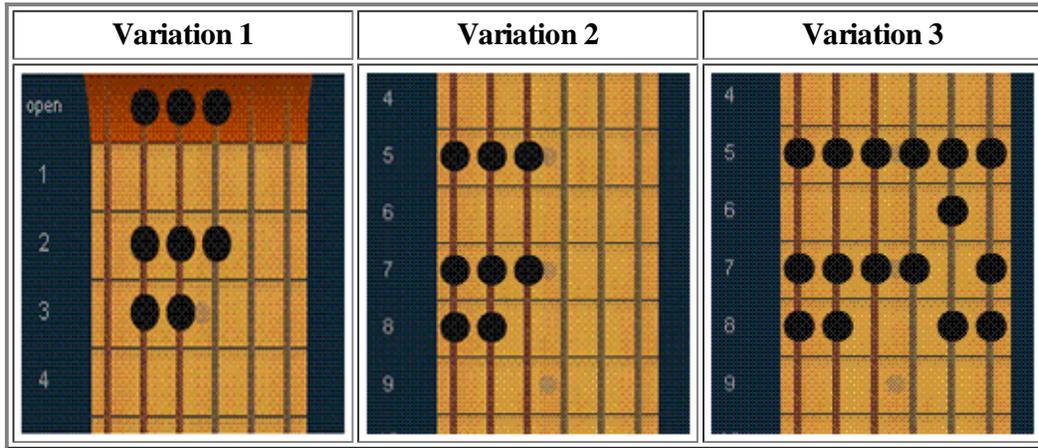
C Minor Variation



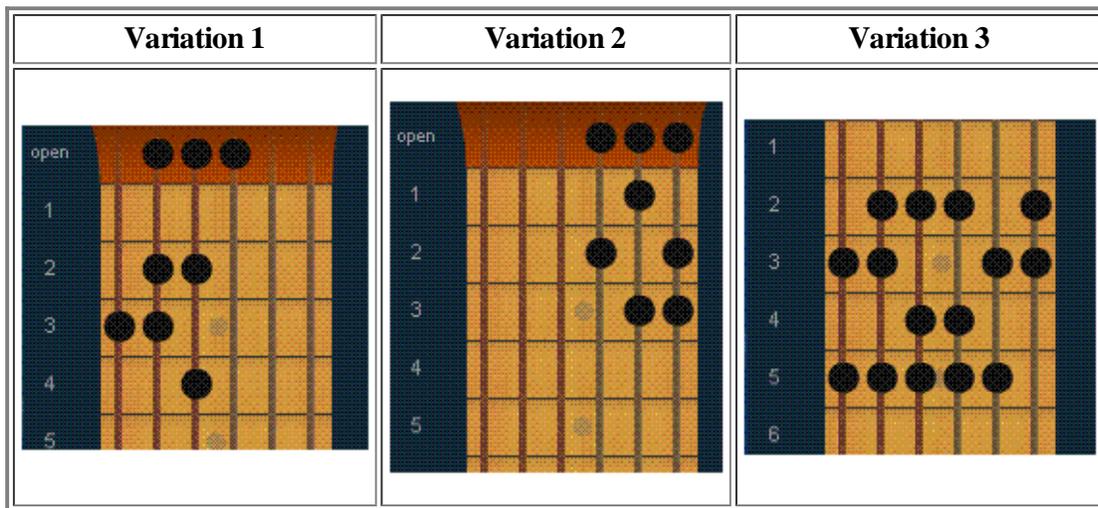
A Major Variation



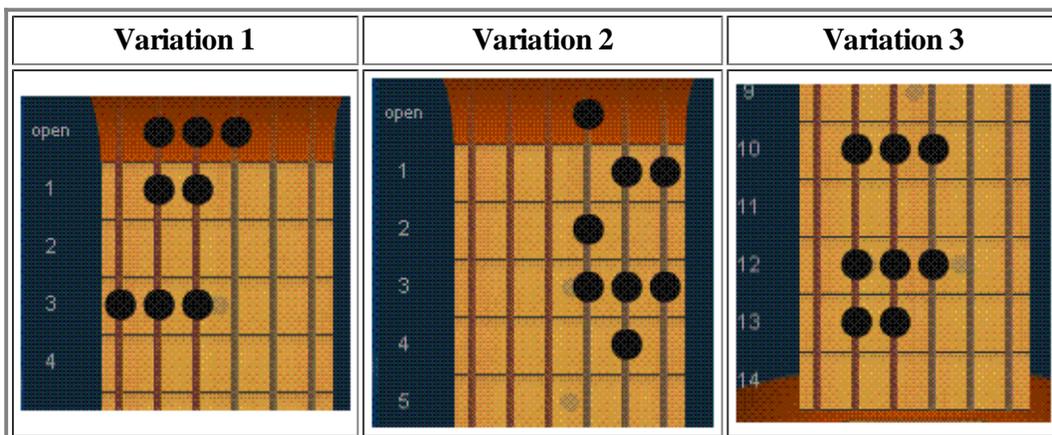
A Minor Variation



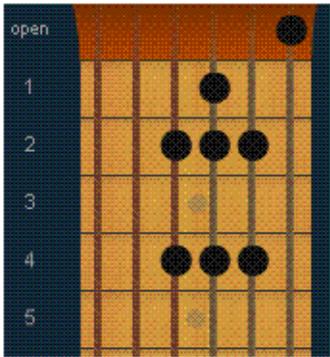
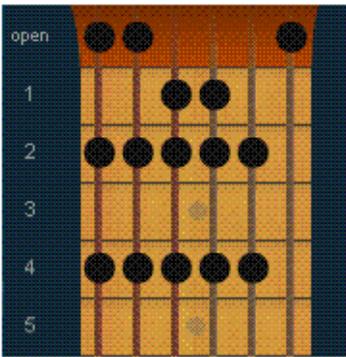
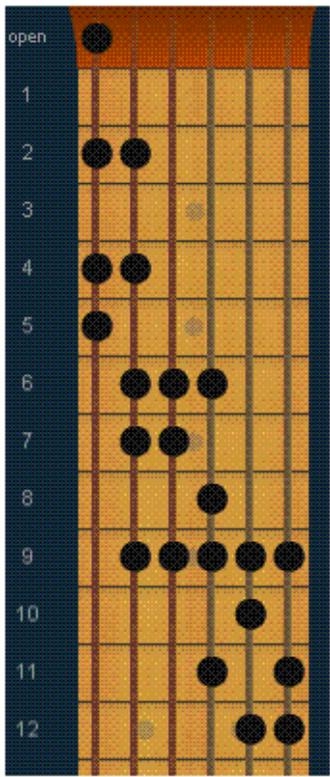
G Major Variation



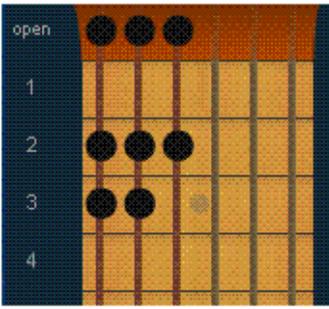
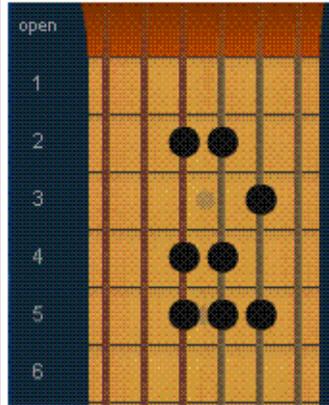
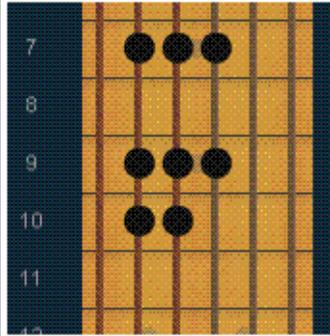
G Minor Variation

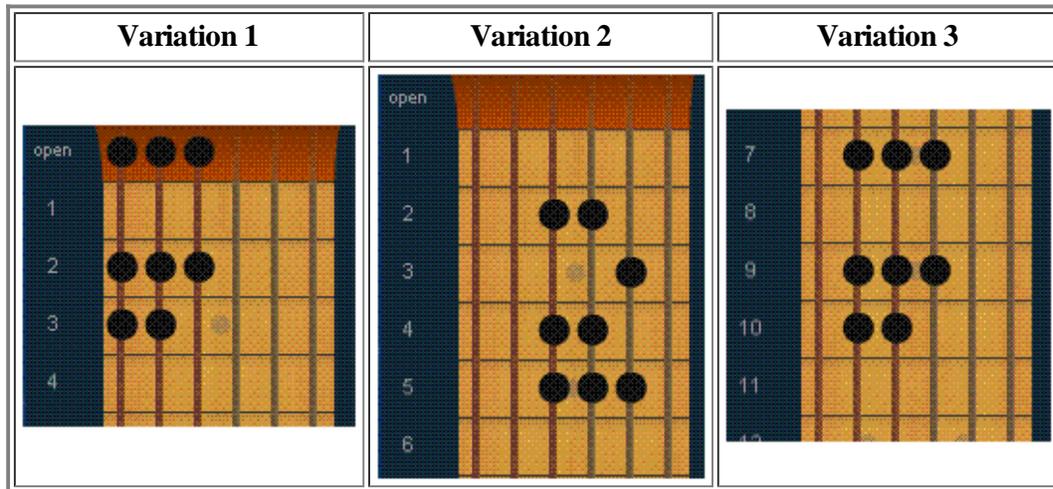
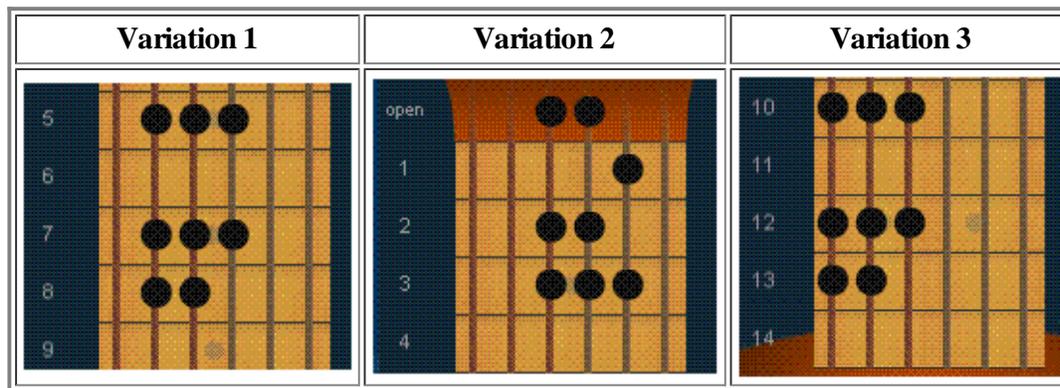


E Major

Variation 1	Variation 2	Variation 3
 <p>Fretboard diagram for E Major Variation 1. The strings are numbered 1 to 5 on the left. The 6th string is labeled 'open'. Frets 1-5 are shown. Fingering: 6th string (open), 5th string (1st fret, 2nd finger), 4th string (2nd fret, 3rd finger), 3rd string (3rd fret, 4th finger), 2nd string (4th fret, 1st finger), 1st string (5th fret, 2nd finger).</p>	 <p>Fretboard diagram for E Major Variation 2. The strings are numbered 1 to 5 on the left. The 6th string is labeled 'open'. Frets 1-5 are shown. Fingering: 6th string (open), 5th string (1st fret, 1st finger), 4th string (2nd fret, 2nd finger), 3rd string (3rd fret, 3rd finger), 2nd string (4th fret, 4th finger), 1st string (5th fret, 1st finger).</p>	 <p>Fretboard diagram for E Major Variation 3. The strings are numbered 1 to 12 on the left. The 6th string is labeled 'open'. Frets 1-12 are shown. Fingering: 6th string (open), 5th string (1st fret, 1st finger), 4th string (2nd fret, 2nd finger), 3rd string (3rd fret, 3rd finger), 2nd string (4th fret, 4th finger), 1st string (5th fret, 1st finger), 9th fret (1st string, 2nd finger), 11th fret (1st string, 3rd finger), 12th fret (1st string, 4th finger).</p>

E Minor Variation

Variation 1	Variation 2	Variation 3
 <p>Fretboard diagram for E Minor Variation 1. The strings are numbered 1 to 4 on the left. The 6th string is labeled 'open'. Frets 1-4 are shown. Fingering: 6th string (open), 5th string (1st fret, 1st finger), 4th string (2nd fret, 2nd finger), 3rd string (3rd fret, 3rd finger), 2nd string (4th fret, 4th finger).</p>	 <p>Fretboard diagram for E Minor Variation 2. The strings are numbered 1 to 6 on the left. The 6th string is labeled 'open'. Frets 1-6 are shown. Fingering: 6th string (open), 5th string (1st fret, 1st finger), 4th string (2nd fret, 2nd finger), 3rd string (3rd fret, 3rd finger), 2nd string (4th fret, 4th finger), 1st string (5th fret, 1st finger).</p>	 <p>Fretboard diagram for E Minor Variation 3. The strings are numbered 7 to 12 on the left. Frets 7-12 are shown. Fingering: 7th string (7th fret, 1st finger), 8th string (8th fret, 2nd finger), 9th string (9th fret, 3rd finger), 10th string (10th fret, 4th finger), 11th string (11th fret, 1st finger), 12th string (12th fret, 2nd finger).</p>

**D Minor Variation**

That concludes our first category on learning to accompany. We of course will be adding MUCH more content to this topic as we progress through the course.

Learning To Accompany (2)

I understand that many of you find it hard to accompany another musician or piece of music because often you are playing alone. Don't worry. I've got a solution for you.

There are two versions of accompaniment I would like to show you.

The first version deals with taking common chords and applying fingerstyle to them as an added guitar part so that you can accompany a given series of chord progressions.

The second version will be taking the already completed 'Version 1' and converting it to ONE guitar part so that you can play this fingerstyle harmony alone by mixing the two parts together.

Version 1

Basic chord progressions get...well boring...hence the word 'basic'. So let's take a chord progression and add some fingerstyle accompaniment to it. Again, this lesson will be based on more the structure in how to do so, as opposed to an exercise-based lesson.

If you have become tired of using chords that provide a 'pretty' flow in fingerstyle guitar, there is a solution that adds more of an edge to a series of chords. I will show one of the simplest (and most common) way that a songs chord vocabulary is extended, is simply by adding the major chords from the keys parallel minor scale (adding the minor chords from minor key can also be, used, but the result is often pretty weak sounding, but we'll go into some instances of this later). This is called modal interchange. These chords are the IIIbmaj, VIIbmaj and IVbmaj, but you don't have to worry too much about theory in this example.

Here's an example using: C#, B, A, E, A, E, A, E at 80 bpm:

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system contains four measures with chords C#, B, A, and E. The second system contains four measures with chords A, E, A, and E. Each measure includes a staff with notes and a guitar tablature staff below it. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80 bpm.

Now, that's pretty boring, but there IS potential right? It's a simple eighth note run using common chords. Let's spice it up with a view note value changes, maybe something like this:

$\text{♩} = 80$

C | B | A | E

Gtr I

T
A
B

A | E | A | E

T
A
B

Notice that all I did was add 'tied notes' and change the note value of two chords, both being at the beginning and the end of the passage (and to round out the strange progression, I've added an 8th rest at the end). Let's take a look at the new version with added fingerstyle accompaniment. All I have done here is pull up the following scale information from each series of chords.

For the C# I am playing: C#/Db Pentatonic Major- C Scale Pattern

C Scale Pattern

T
A
B

1 4 1 4 1 3 1 3 2 4 1 4

C|

Gtr I

Gtr II

For the B I am playing : B Pentatonic Major - A Scale Pattern

A Scale Pattern

B

For the **FIRST** A I am playing: B Pentatonic Major - A Scale Pattern

A Scale Pattern

Musical notation for the A Scale Pattern on strings T, A, and B. The notes are: T (open), A (open), B (2), A (2), G (1), F# (1), E (2), D (2), C (2), B (4). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 4 above the notes.

A

Musical notation for the A chord and A scale pattern on strings 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. The chord diagram shows the A chord (x02020). The scale pattern is shown on strings 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 with fingerings 2, 4, 2, 4, 1, 4, 2, 4, 1, 4.

For the **FIRST** E I am playing Natural Harmonics:

E

Musical notation for the E chord and E scale pattern on strings 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. The chord diagram shows the E chord (02210). The scale pattern is shown on strings 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 with fingerings 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1.

For the **SECOND** and **THIRD** A I am playing: Pentatonic A Major - A Scale Pattern

A Scale Pattern

A scale pattern diagram for guitar. The strings are labeled T (Top), A (Second), and B (Third). The pattern consists of notes on the T, A, and B strings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers: 12, 14, 11, 14, 12, 14, 12, 14.

(2)

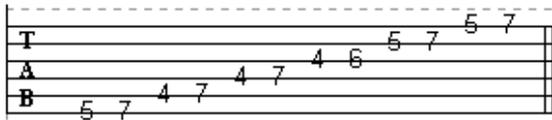
Musical notation for guitar accompaniment (2). It includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notation shows four chords in the treble clef and four chords in the bass clef. Below the bass clef, a scale pattern is shown with fingerings: 12, 14, 11, 14, 11, 14, 12, 14.

(3)

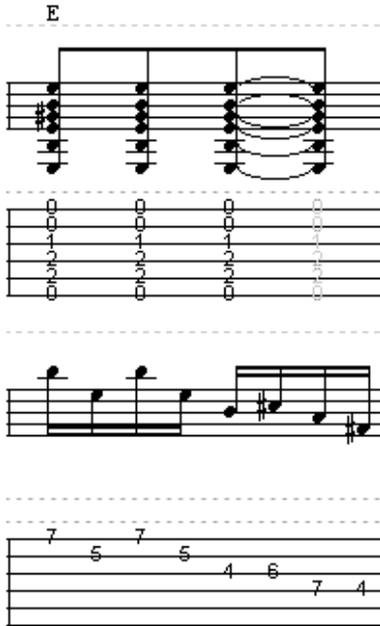
Musical notation for guitar accompaniment (3). It includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notation shows four chords in the treble clef and four chords in the bass clef. Below the bass clef, a scale pattern is shown with fingerings: 12, 14, 11, 12, 14, 14.

For the **SECOND** E I am playing: Pentatonic E Major - E Scale Pattern (Last E is a NH)

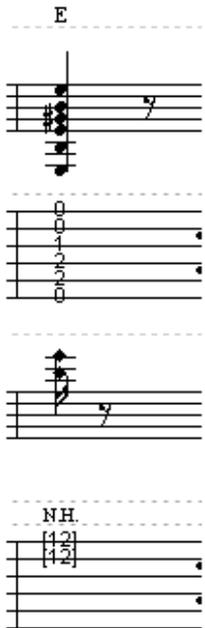
E Scale Pattern



(2)



(3)



BUT...What if you wanted to play the first series as fingerstyle guitar and not even USE the variation on guitar 2? Let's say you are playing this one solo, and need to not just play standard chords. It's easy. All you have to do is find relative notes by adding/omitting notes. Check this out:

