

The Guitar Ninja

# Grading Syllabus

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Master the guitar

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# Grading Explained

## **Introduction**

Whilst the student learns what is required to become a guitar ninja of their own, they are expected to develop a range of skills and not just how to play a few songs. As with all martial arts, you do not become a master by simply knowing how to punch. You must kick, block, dodge and even run at times, and more importantly know where and how to make to use your skills for maximum impact to your opponent with minimal impact to yourself.

This is the same with the guitar. If we wish to become a master we must learn more than just how to play the odd song but instead understand the guitar, the music, the passion, and more importantly know how to appeal to an audience with maximum impact. Only then can we truly master the guitar.

## **About the senseis**

It is a sensei's job to teach the student in a professional yet fun manor. To encourage passion and confidence as well as skill. To grow each student beyond just playing the guitar. To write, to perform and to grow as an artist, and possibly even inspire them to become a sensei of their own.

All sensei's will have the required checks for the country and area they work in. for instance, Rorz UK - Our Sensei from Northampton, England has a fully enhanced DBS (originally called a CRB check) to ensure he can teach all ages with peace of mind as required in the UK.

## **Why straps?**

As a guitar ninja, the grading syllabus is based on any other martial art. So we use our guitar straps in the same way they use their belts to represent their grade. This grading system gives a clear visible representation of your skills and a clear set of tasks for the student to reach the next grade.

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## How is the grading performed?

The grading can be booked to run after or before a club session or during a private lesson.

The grading take the following structure:

- 1) Previous grading questions
- 2) Knowledge section
- 3) Technique section
- 4) Ability section
- 5) Reading tab
- 6) Presenting of the strap with photograph

Section 1 relates to Yellow strap and above. A student is expected to retain their previous abilities when moving through the grades. This means that they are expected to be able to answer questions and perform techniques relating to earlier grades.

Sections 2 and 3 are completed face to face with your sensei.

Section 4 takes the following aspects into mind.

- a) Correct notes played
- b) Quantity of dead notes or fret buzz
- c) Thumb and finger position
- d) (later grades only) Stage presence and visual confidence

Section 5 is covered in just the first half of the belts, hower is an important part of learning to play the guitar. As guitarists we only focus on the reading of guitar tab and not full musical score. If a student wishes to learn score we will see what we can arrange for them on a personal level.

Section 6 is split into 2 parts. The student will be awarded their grade at the grading itself. They will then be awarded the grade more officially at the performance ceremony in front of their family, friends and fellow students. These events are held at least twice a year.

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## **What is required to pass a grade?**

The student is required to demonstrate a level of knowledge, ability and Technique (KAT) as listed in this syllabus to acquire any specific strap. The earlier grades have an extra section for reading and can be abbreviated to KATR. a student is expected to hold their strap for a minimum of three months before progressing onto the next grade. This is to ensure you have the experience and have put in the practice time, as well as the know how.

Students who have been learning for a while and not graded before may run through the entire syllabus until they reach their current grade level. However, every grade must be fully passed with no exceptions for mistakes or missed information.

Please refer to the following sections of this booklet, there is a section explaining what is required for each belt.

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# White strap

White strap requirements are very simple. This grade is usually completed between 5-10 lessons in and is a great confidence booster. It shows that the student is both able and interested in learning to play.

## **KATR**

### K - Knowledge

Name the three main parts of the guitar  
Finger, Fret and string numbers

### A - Ability/performance

Perform the white strap section of the Guitar Ninja anthem

### T - Technique

Hold the guitar correctly  
Down pick with a plectrum using a good grip technique

### R - Reading

Read some basic TAB

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# Yellow strap

Yellow strap shows an intention to learn and an ability to play in time with music.

## **KATR**

### K - Knowledge

Name all the parts of the guitar

Name all 12 notes of music

Explain Standard Tuning (What notes are the strings tuned to?)

### A - Ability/performance

Perform a full song along to the music.

Perform along to the guitar ninja anthem (doubles only)

Perform a minor pentatonic scale run from memory over 6 strings

### T - Technique

Demonstrate correct wrist angle on fretting hand

Demonstrate correct thumb positioning for lead

Demonstrate 1 finger per fret

Perform muted notes "x" notes

### R - Reading

Read 6 string tab with numbers and muted notes

Demonstrate alternate picking

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# Orange strap

Orange strap represents the knowledge of chords and the majority of the basics required to develop from.

## **KATR**

### K - Knowledge

Explain the meaning for: Pitch, Note, Chord, Interval, Semitone, Tone

Find a note (picked by the sensei) on every string of the guitar

### A - Ability/performance

Perform the 5 string minor pentatonic scale shape

Perform 1 full song from start to finish using Power chords,

riffs or strumming patterns with more than quarter notes.

Perform the Powerchord Section of the Ninja anthem (with 8th notes)

### T - Technique

Perform a slide from a specific fret to another

Demonstrate a bend

Perform a scratch (scratch slide)

### R - Reading

Read power chords in TAB

Read slides in tab

Reach bends in tab



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# Green strap

The green strap = Genre strap. A student with a green strap understands the basics of genre and can perform in both Major and minor keys.

## **KATR**

### K - Knowledge

- Explain the meanings: Scale, Root Note, Octave

- Explain how to tune the guitar by ear (Showing the right principles)

- The difference in sound between Major and minor

### A - Ability to Perform

- Connecting the 6 string and 5 string pentatonics together

- Improvise over a backing track

- Perform a song that cover 4 full chords

- Perform the slide section to The Guitar Ninja Anthem

### T - Technique

- Perform a hammer on from both an open string and from another fret

- Perform a Pull off to both an open string and to another fret

- Demonstrate Muting unwanted strings when playing chords

### R - Reading

- Read chords in TAB

- Read a chord graph

- Read hammer ons and pull offs in TAB

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# Blue strap

The blue strap shows the deeper understanding of how music works. The student is required to improvise using the scales they have learnt throughout the earlier straps.

## **KAT**

### K - Knowledge

Explain how we can use the minor pentatonic scale over a Major backing track

### A - Ability to perform

Perform songs that show at least 6 full chords in total

Perform the main hook in the guitar ninja anthem

Improvise over both a minor and major backing track (use the 4 main techniques)

### T - Technique

Perform the chords: A, C, D, E, G, Am, Dm, Em

Demonstrate Palm Muting

### R - Reading

Read a chord graph which you haven't learned before

What does P.M and a wavy line mean above the TAB?

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# Purple strap

The performing strap. The purple strap shows a sign of stage readiness. An ability to perform beyond staring at their guitar and to write their own material.

## **KAT**

### K - Knowledge

Recite the intervals of the Major scale and work out the notes from 2 root notes  
Explain the meaning of Key and what it does (include M,m,m,M,M,m,dim)

### A - Ability/performance

Perform a song as though you are playing to an audience  
Standing up, looking away from the guitar at times, moving,  
Perform all of the sections of the guitar ninja anthem  
Play a Major scale over all 6 strings

### T - Technique

Perform the 4 main barre chord shapes  
Perform a natural harmonic

### Reading

Read a barre chord in a chord graph  
Read a barre chord in guitar TAB

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# Brown strap

The semi-expert strap. This demonstrates a deeper knowledge of music, the guitar, and how to interact with a crowd. This is only acquired by those willing to perform to an audience.

## **KAT**

K - Knowledge

Write a short piece of music and explain what Key it is in and how you can add to it

A - Ability/performance

Perform your short piece of music

Perform a guitar solo to a song

T - Technique

Double hammer ons and double pull offs

2 hand/3 finger tapping

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# Black belt - 1st Dan

Now accepted as a guitar pro. And though the journey may feel complete, it has only just begun. To continue into the Dan grades requires commitment and character. they now have what they need to succeed. It is now time to put it into practice. Pass entertainment and passion as an artist on the stage, or pass the love and knowledge though becoming a sensei. The choice is theirs.

## **KAT**

### K - Knowledge

- Write a complete song (Intro, Verse, Chorus, Bridge etc)

- Explain what key it is in, how you wrote it and what else you could do with it

- Recite the intervals of the Natural minor scale and work out the notes from 2 roots

### A - Ability/performance

- Improvise using the Major scale

- Improvise using the minor scale

- Perform your entire song from start to finish

### T - Technique

- Demonstrate the 5 string arpeggio runs for both Major and minor chords

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# Dan Grading Requirements

Learn Sweep patterns (major, minor, diminished)

Major key arpeggios

Understand what the following chords are made from: M7, m7, 7, 6, sus2, sus4, augmented, diminished, +9, m+9

Chord building workshop: Laying out chords on the fretboard

Play the following chords: M7, m7, 7, sus2, sus4, augmented, diminished, +9, m+9

Understand Mode theory (the 7 different shapes and how they compare)

Understand the 3 minor scales (melodic, harmonic, natural)

Rearranging scales for maximum speed