

# OWENS SYSTEM OF BRAILLE TABLATURE

(May 8, 2025 Revision)

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## Purpose

This code for reproducing tablature in braille was developed so blind and visually impaired musicians can have the same access to notational choices as their sighted peers. Although the system borrows some signs and transcription and formatting conventions from the *Braille Music Code 2015*, the Owens System is not intended to replace it. Braille music has clear advantages for pieces of great length or complexity. Tablature is best suited for those seeking an alternative to braille music or as a supplement to learning by ear.

## Background

Although there have been past attempts to create a system for reproducing tablature in braille, few if any were completed. The concept of braille tablature was considered impractical, and many suggested that any blind person wishing to learn notes should do so using the *Braille Music Code*, even if the learner did not express interest in becoming musically literate. Regardless of the merits of staff notation, there are sighted and blind musicians who prefer to use tablature, and the ability to choose this reading method should be available to anyone who wants it.

In 2020, a group of transcribers, educators, and readers began collaborating with the goal of producing a viable braille version of tablature. The result is a multi-line code that allows musicians to focus on various aspects of a song depending on their needs, with pitch/fingering on one line, and rhythm on another. Every effort has been made to streamline the system and to minimize the number of signs a reader must learn in order to become proficient at using it.

## Editions of This Rulebook

This document is available in print (PDF) and braille (BRF) editions.

The tables in the print edition include separate columns displaying facsimile braille dots for all signs. This information is not reproduced in the braille edition.

Simulated braille examples in the print edition include highlighting to aid the reader. This highlighting is not reproduced in the braille edition. Some print samples are described in a Transcriber's Note in the braille edition.

The braille edition is transcribed with 40 characters per line. Readers using single-line refreshable displays with fewer than 40 cells may experience some difficulty with the tables and the vertical alignment of information within examples of tablature.

In the braille edition, the dot locator (dots 46, 123456) precedes all signs in the tables. It is not used or simulated in the print edition.

## TABLATURE TABLE I: Strings, Frets, Fingers and Rests (in the Pitch Line)

**Table I:1: Strings**

(see Section 1.1)

String Number	Dot Numbers (ASCII)	Braille
1	1 a	⠠
2	12 b	⠠⠠
3	14 c	⠠⠠
4	145 d	⠠⠠
5	15 e	⠠⠠
6	124 f	⠠⠠
7	1245 g	⠠⠠
8	125 h	⠠⠠

**Table I:2: Frets**

(see Sections 1.1 and 1.3)

Fret Number	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille	Fret Number	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
Dampen	123456 =	⠠⠠⠠	Rest	1356 z	⠠⠠
Open	36 -	⠠⠠			
1	13 k	⠠⠠	11	16 *	⠠⠠
2	123 l	⠠⠠	12	126 <	⠠⠠
3	134 m	⠠⠠	13	146 %	⠠⠠
4	1345 n	⠠⠠	14	1456 ?	⠠⠠
5	135 o	⠠⠠	15	156 :	⠠⠠
6	1234 p	⠠⠠	16	1246 \$	⠠⠠
7	12345 q	⠠⠠	17	12456 ]	⠠⠠
8	1235 r	⠠⠠	18	1256 \	⠠⠠
9	234 s	⠠⠠	19	246 [	⠠⠠
10	2345 t	⠠⠠	20	2456 w	⠠⠠
			21*	4, 13 @k	⠠⠠⠠

\* For frets beyond 20, the cycle starts over with fret signs preceded by dot 4.

**Table I:3: Fingering**

(see Section 1.1.3)

Finger Number/Name (left hand)	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille	Finger Name/Number (right hand) *2	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
1 (index)	2 1	⠠	Index (indice)	6, 2 1	⠠⠠
2 (middle)	23 2	⠡	Middle (medio)	6, 23 2	⠠⠡
3 (ring)	25 3	⠢	Ring (anular)	6, 25 3	⠠⠢
4 (pinkie)	256 4	⠣	Little/Pinkie (chico)	6, 256 4	⠠⠣
Thumb *1	356 0	⠤	Thumb (pulgar)	6, 356 0	⠠⠤

\*1 Left hand thumb occasionally used to finger large chords not manageable with the usual four fingers.

\*2 Used in classical guitar to indicate which fingers of the right hand are to pluck the strings.

**TABLATURE TABLE II: Rhythm Indicators**

(see Section 1.2)

Note/Rest Value	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
Whole	13456 y	⠠
Half	1345 n	⠡
Quarter	1456 ?	⠢
Eighth	145 d	⠣
Sixteenth	12346 &	⠤
Thirty-second	1234 p	⠥
Sixty-fourth	1246 \$	⠦
One hundred-twenty-eighth	124 f	⠧

**TABLATURE TABLE III: Chords and In-Accords**

(see Sections 1.1.1, 1.2, 2 and 9.5)

Sign Name	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
Chord enclosure, Begin	12356 (	⠠
Chord enclosure, End	23456 )	⠡
Swept/raked chord, Begin	1236 v	⠢
Swept/raked chord, End	3456 #	⠣
Full measure in-accord *1	456, 34 _/	⠠⠠
Partial-measure in-accord *1	5, 2 "1	⠠⠡
Division sign <sup>2</sup>	46, 13 .k	⠠⠤

\*1 In-accords are aligned in the pitch and rhythm lines.

\*2 Separates partial-measure in-accord from rest of the measure.

## TABLATURE TABLE IV: Measure/Section Division and Repetition

**Table IV:1: Bar Lines, Time Signatures, Repeats, and Voltas (from print)**

(see Sections 1.2.1 and 4)

Print Sign	Braille Dots	(ASCII)	Braille
Common time *	46, 14	.c	⠠⠠⠠
Cut time *	456, 14	_c	⠠⠠⠠
Three-four time *	3456, 14, 256	#c4	⠠⠠⠠⠠
Twelve-eight time *	3456, 1, 12, 236	#ab8	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
Measure bar line	123		⠠
Dotted measure bar line	13	k	⠠
Sectional bar line	126, 13, 3	<k'	⠠⠠⠠
Ending (double) bar	126, 13	<k	⠠⠠
Begin (print forward) repeat	126, 2356	<7	⠠⠠
End (print backward) repeat	126, 23	<2	⠠⠠
Volta (prima)	3456, 2	#1	⠠⠠⠠
Volta (seconda)	3456, 23	#2	⠠⠠⠠
Segno	346	+	⠠
Coda	346, 123	+l	⠠⠠
Da capo	345, 145, 14	>dc	⠠⠠⠠
Dal segno	345, 145, 234	>ds	⠠⠠⠠

\* This list of time signatures is not complete. For signatures other than common or cut time, use upper- or lower-cell numbers as needed, including for two-digit numerals.

**Table IV:2: Repetition Indicators (in braille only)**

(see Sections 6 and 11.2)

Braille only repeats	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
Repeat note or chord *1	2356 7	⠠
Repeat note 4X *2	2356, 3456, 256 7#4	⠠⠠⠠
Repeat measure *3	2356 7	⠠
Repeat measure 2 or more times *2, *3	2356, 3456, 12 7#b	⠠⠠⠠
Section/beat repeat (begin/end)	35 9	⠠
Repeat section/beat 2X (begin)	35, 35 99	⠠⠠
Repeat section/beat 3 or more times *2	3456, 14, 35 #c9	⠠⠠⠠
Repeat a previous measure *2	3456, 26 #5	⠠⠠
Repeat a previous measure group *2	3456, 26, 36, 35 #5-9	⠠⠠⠠⠠
Repeat lyric word/phrase (begin/end)	35 9	⠠
Repeat lyric word/phrase 2X (begin)	35, 35 99	⠠⠠
Repeat lyric word/phrase 3 or more times *2	3456, 14, 35 #c9	⠠⠠⠠

\*1 Limited to 3 unspaced note repetitions.

\*2 Number as needed.

\*3 Only used to indicate repetitions of the immediately preceding measure.

## TABLATURE TABLE V: Arcs, Slides, Shifts, and Bends

(see Sections 5 and 9.1)

Sign	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
Arc between single rhythm values (tie)	14        c	⠠⠠
Slide (first note plucked)	4, 14     @c	⠠⠠⠠
Slide (both notes plucked)	46, 14    .c	⠠⠠⠠
Slide out of note	45, 14    ^c	⠠⠠⠠
Slide into note	56, 14    ;c	⠠⠠⠠
Shift indicator (pitch line)	4, 1346   @x	⠠⠠⠠
Glissando (pitch line)	46, 1346  .x	⠠⠠⠠
¼ bend *1	16        *	⠠
½ bend *1	126       <	⠠
Full bend *1	146       %	⠠
1½ bend *1	146, 126  %<	⠠⠠
Pre-bend & release (reverse bend) *1	5, 146    "%	⠠⠠
Bend & release in time (whole step bend) Begin/End *2	146, 146  %%	⠠⠠

\*1 Bends are placed before the affected rhythm indicator and cannot be doubled, (see note 2 exception).

\*2 Doubled before first affected rhythm indicator, terminated with single occurrence of sign.

## TABLATURE TABLE VI: Harmonics and Other Effects

(see Section 9)

Sign *1	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
Plectrum upstroke	126, 3 <'	⠠⠠⠠
Plectrum downstroke	126, 12 <b	⠠⠠⠠
Natural harmonic	13 k	⠠⠠
Artificial harmonic	123 l	⠠⠠
Hammer-on or pull-off	6, 14 ,c	⠠⠠⠠
Tap (bass)	45 ^	⠠⠠
Pop with index finger (bass)	46 .	⠠⠠
Pop with middle finger (bass)	456 _	⠠⠠
Tremolo prefix	46 .	⠠⠠
Tremolo in eighths *3	46, 12 .b	⠠⠠⠠
Tremolo in sixteenths *3	46, 123 .l	⠠⠠⠠
Tremolo in thirty-seconds *3	46, 2 .`	⠠⠠⠠
Tremolo in sixty-fourths *3	46, 1 .a	⠠⠠⠠
Tremolo in one-twenty-eighths *3	46, 3 .'	⠠⠠⠠
Mute with palm *2	345, 1234, 134 >pm	⠠⠠⠠⠠
Mute with fret hand *2	345, 124, 134 >fm	⠠⠠⠠⠠
Pick scrape *2	345, 1234, 234 >ps	⠠⠠⠠⠠
Vibrato *2	345, 1236, 12 >vb	⠠⠠⠠⠠
Crescendo *4	345, 14, 3 >c'	⠠⠠⠠⠠
Decrescendo/Diminuendo *4	345, 145, ' >d'	⠠⠠⠠⠠

\*1 Harmonics and tremolos follow the rhythm indicator. All other signs in this table are placed before the rhythm indicator of the affected pitch or pitches.

\*2 If effect is employed for more than one note the initial effect sign is immediately followed by two dot 3's, and the effect terminator sign is used after the final pitch to be played using the desired technique (see Table IX).

\*3 Tremolos are transcribed between the affected notes.

\*4 These signs are used in braille regardless of how they appear in print (e.g., as words, abbreviations, or hairpins).

## TABLATURE TABLE VII: Irregular Groupings, Ornaments, and Articulation

(see Section 9.1)

Sign *1	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
Triplet *2	456, 25, 3     _3'	⠠⠠⠠
Play arpeggio upward (downstroke) *3	345, 13         >k	⠠⠠⠠
Play arpeggio downward (upstroke) *3	345, 13, 13     >kk	⠠⠠⠠
Let ring	345, 123, 1235   >lr	⠠⠠⠠
Trill	235               6	⠠⠠
Turn between notes	256               4	⠠⠠
Turn above/below note	6, 256           ,4	⠠⠠
Inverted turn between notes	256, 123         4l	⠠⠠
Inverted turn above/below note	6, 256, 123     ,4l	⠠⠠⠠
Accent (thin wedge)	46, 236           .8	⠠⠠
Staccato (dot)	236               8	⠠
Staccatissimo (solid vertical wedge)	6, 236           ,8	⠠⠠
Tenuto (short line)	456, 236         _8	⠠⠠
Mezzo-staccato (dot and short line)	5, 236           "8	⠠⠠
Fermata on note or rest *4	126, 123         <l	⠠⠠
Fermata between notes/rests *4	5, 126, 123     "<l	⠠⠠⠠
Fermata on bar line *4	456, 126, 123   _<l	⠠⠠⠠
Fermata on double bar *4	126, 13, 3, 126, 123 <k'<l	⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠
Prefix for short appoggiatura (grace note)	26               5	⠠
Prefix for long appoggiatura (grace note)	5, 26           "5	⠠⠠

\*1 All signs appear in rhythm line only.

\*2 Use lower-cell numbers in second cell of sign as appropriate for other groupings such as duplets or quintuplets.

\*3 Pitches within chords are always transcribed from highest to lowest regardless of the direction in which they are to be played.

\*4 Rhythm line only



## TABLATURE TABLE IX: Miscellaneous and Transcriber Defined Symbols

(see Sections 1.3, 7, 8.1, 8.2, 9.3, 10, and 12)

Sign	Braille Dots (ASCII)	Braille
Print page turn indicator	5, 25      "3	⠠⠠
Music hyphen (followed by a space)	5              "	⠠
Word sign indicator (in rhythm line)	345           >	⠠
Music parentheses (open/close)	6, 3           ,'	⠠⠠
Special parentheses (open/close)	2356          7	⠠⠠
Asterisk (at beginning of affected measure)	5, 35          "9	⠠⠠
Transcriber added note within music	6, 2345, 6, 1345 ,t,n	⠠⠠⠠⠠
Comment separator (before/after text of comment)	25, 25, 25    333	⠠⠠⠠
1 <sup>st</sup> continuation indicator	3, 3            "	⠠⠠
2 <sup>nd</sup> continuation indicator	36, 36        --	⠠⠠
1 <sup>st</sup> continuation terminator	345, 3        >'	⠠⠠
2 <sup>nd</sup> continuation terminator	345, 36       >-'	⠠⠠
Entering tablature	23              2	⠠
Return to literary code	56              ;	⠠
Punctuation indicator	456	⠠
Literary comma in tablature	6               ,	⠠
1st transcriber defined symbol	356, 356, 3    00'	⠠⠠⠠
2nd transcriber defined symbol	45, 12, 3      ^b'	⠠⠠⠠
3rd transcriber defined symbol	456, 123, 3     l'	⠠⠠⠠

# RULES FOR TRANSCRIBING IN THE OWENS SYSTEM OF BRAILLE TABLATURE

## 1 Principles of Tablature Line-by-Line Format

The Owens System for transcribing tablature is a variation of the Line-by-Line format used in braille music. In its most basic form, each parallel includes two lines:

- Line 1: The pitch line (indicating string and fret numbers, fingering, and chords, or in-accords); and
- Line 2: The rhythm line (indicating note and rest values, nuances, dynamics, ornaments, in-accords, and irregular groupings).

A new string indicator is required at the beginning of each parallel, at the beginning of every measure, and after any type of measure division.

Measures are separated by the braille bar line (dots 123). Bar lines must be transcribed in both the pitch and rhythm lines of the parallel and must be vertically aligned. They must be preceded and followed by a blank space to avoid confusion with the 2nd fret indicator. A bar line is not needed following the last measure of a parallel.

**Exception:** When there is a change of time signature or a page change indicator between measures, the new time signature or page change indicator replaces the braille bar line and must appear, vertically aligned, in both lines of the parallel. If the change occurs mid-measure, a music hyphen (dot 5) appears, unspaced, at the place where the change occurs. Time signatures and page indicators are aligned and spaced following the hyphen as usual. A measure bar line must be placed after the transcription of the remaining beats of the interrupted measure if a new measure begins in the same parallel.

Note values smaller than eighths may not be grouped as in *Braille Music Code*.

Measure numbers are shown at the margin of the pitch line in each parallel followed by a space. When a new parallel begins with a measure that is being continued from the previous parallel, the marginal measure number is followed by dot 3. This dot 3 replaces the blank space that usually separates the measure number from the beginning of the pitch line.

Rehearsal numbers or letters are transcribed beginning in cell 3 on a free line above the pitch line and are enclosed in word signs (dots 345).

The placement of symbols on lines or in spaces of print tablature has no bearing on the braille transcription. Arcs, nuances, articulations, and other aspects of printed notation that vary in style and/or presentation are also reproduced in braille without regard for those differences. No transcriber's note is required to explain these changes.

The location of chord symbols in the braille transcription depends on whether lyrics are present or not. Refer to Sections 3 and 11 for specific details about the placement of chord symbols and lyrics in relation to braille tablature.

## 1.1 The Pitch Line

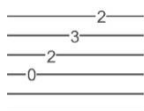
(see Tables I:1-I:3)

String numbers 1 through 8 are indicated using the letters a-h and should be sufficient for most tablature. If more strings are required, transcribers should use the letters i-j for the ninth and tenth strings and should follow the principles for creating numbers greater than ten, omitting the number sign for any additional strings (aa for string 11, ab for string 12, etc.).

Fret numbers are indicated by adding dot 3 to the upper cell numbers 1-0 for frets 1-10, and by adding dot 6 to the upper cell numbers 1-0 for frets 11-20. For notes beyond fret 20, the cycle begins again with a dot 4 preceding the fret (so that, for instance, fret 24 would be dots 4, 1345).

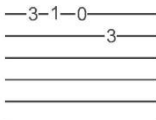
In passages consisting of single notes, a string indicator must always be followed by a fret indicator, an open/dampen string indicator, or a rest indicator.

Example 1.1A:



A string indicator remains in effect until a change to a different string is shown by the insertion of a new string indicator.

Example 1.1B:



### 1.1.1 Chords in the Pitch Line

(see Table III)

For the purposes of this system, a chord consists of two or more pitches played simultaneously with the same rhythm. Notes of a chord are transcribed within chord enclosures.

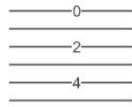
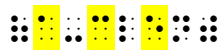
When chord strings are consecutive, only the initial string is shown, and all subsequent strings are accounted for by fret indicators. Chords are always transcribed with the strings in ascending numerical order following the generally accepted practices for numbering specific to each instrument (e.g., string 1 is the high E string on a guitar or the G string on a bass).

Example 1.1.1A:



In chords containing skipped strings, string indicators are added to show which strings are to be played.

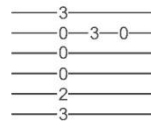
Example 1.1.1B



An end chord enclosure must always be followed by one of the items listed below:

- A string indicator;
- A new begin chord enclosure;
- A repeat indicator;
- A rest;
- A space (if it is the last measure in a parallel);
- A space followed by a bar line (if another measure follows on the same braille line); or
- A sectional double bar, a backward repeat, or an ending double bar.

Example 1.1.1C:



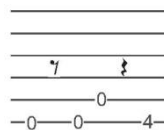
### 1.1.2 Rests

(see Table I:2)

When rests are present, they are indicated in the pitch line by the z symbol (dots 1356). The value of the rest will appear aligned directly beneath this in the rhythm line (see Section 1.2). Multiple rest indicators must be used if there are consecutive rests shown in print, with a one-to-one correlation between rest indicators and rhythm indicators.

A new string indicator is used after a rest only if the string has changed or a new measure or chord begins.

Example 1.1.2A (pitch only):

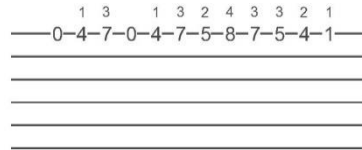


### 1.1.3 Fingerings

(see Table I:3)

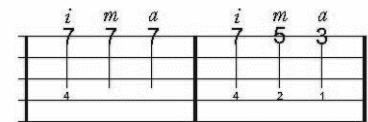
Fingerings for the left hand are shown using finger indicators and appear, unspaced, after the fret to which they apply. Example 1.1.3A shows a passage to be played entirely on the first string of the guitar.

Example 1.1.3A:

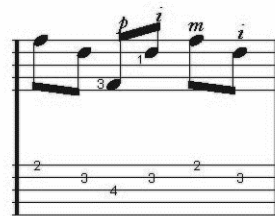
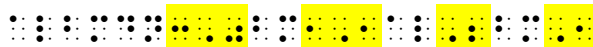


For classical guitar transcriptions where right hand fingerings are present, these are transcribed, unspaced, after the left hand fingering. Right hand fingerings with their English and Spanish names must be listed on the Special Symbols page. Fingering is shown regardless of print format appearance.

Example 1.1.3B:



Example 1.1.3C:

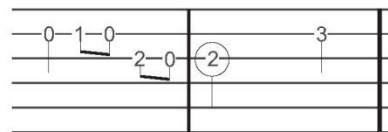


### 1.2 The Rhythm Line

(see Table II)

Rhythm values appear in the second line of the parallel and are vertically aligned with the fret indicator or rest to which they apply.

Example 1.2A:



Example 1.2B:

In chords, the rhythm value is aligned with the first fret indicator of the chord.

Example 1.2C:

### 1.2.1 Time Signatures and Measure Bar Lines

(see Table IV:1)

Time signatures are used to show the number of beats per measure and the rhythmic value that represents a single unit or beat. Time signatures are transcribed, centered, on a separate line above the tablature. With the exception of the signatures for common time and cut time, the upper number of a time signature is brailled in the upper portion of the cell (using dots 1, 2, 4, and 5), while the lower number of the time signature is brailled in the lower portion of the cell (using dots 2, 3, 5, and 6).

Measures are separated by the braille bar line, vertically aligned, in the pitch and rhythm lines of the parallel to avoid confusion with the 2nd fret indicator and/or simultaneous spaces in both lines of the parallel.

Example 1.2.1A:

Whenever vertical alignment causes 6 or more blank cells to appear in the pitch or rhythm lines, a series of four or more successive dot 3's are used as "trackers." Tracker dots must have a blank cell before and after them, and they must lead to something specific. They should not be used simply to fill blank space at the ends of lines or pages.

Example 1.2.1B:

Example 1.2.1B displays musical notation for guitar. On the left, Braille notation is shown with two lines of a parallel. The first line contains a series of Braille characters representing notes and rests, with some characters highlighted in yellow. The second line contains a series of Braille characters representing fret numbers, with some characters highlighted in yellow. On the right, a guitar staff is shown with two lines. The first line contains a series of fret numbers (4, 2, 2, 4) and the second line contains a series of fret numbers (0, 2, 2, 0). A circled '2' is shown above the second line, indicating a specific fret number.

**Exception:** Tracker dots are not used between chord symbols on the third line of the parallel (see Section 3.1).

### 1.2.2 Dotted Notes

When notes are followed by dots or double dots in print to indicate a lengthening of the value, rhythm indicators are followed, unspaced, by dot 3. A single dot increases the rhythm indicator's value by fifty percent; a double dot increases its value by seventy-five percent.

Example 1.2.2A (dotted notes, rhythm line only):

Example 1.2.2A displays musical notation for dotted notes. The Braille notation consists of two lines of a parallel. The first line contains a series of Braille characters representing notes and rests, with some characters highlighted in yellow. The second line contains a series of Braille characters representing fret numbers, with some characters highlighted in yellow.

Example 1.2.2B (double-dotted notes, rhythm line only):

Example 1.2.2B displays musical notation for double-dotted notes. The Braille notation consists of two lines of a parallel. The first line contains a series of Braille characters representing notes and rests, with some characters highlighted in yellow. The second line contains a series of Braille characters representing fret numbers, with some characters highlighted in yellow.

### 1.3 Print Page Changes

(see Table IX)

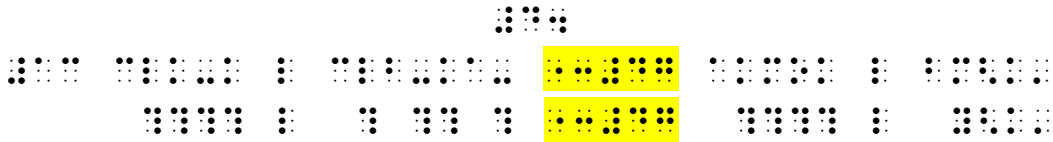
When a print page change occurs, the page change indicator (dots 5, 35) is placed, vertically aligned, in both lines of the parallel, and the page turn indicator replaces the bar line indicator. For shorter transcriptions (e.g., single songs with less than three pages), no page number is included with the turn indicator.

Example 1.3A:

Example 1.3A displays musical notation for guitar with page changes. On the left, Braille notation is shown with two lines of a parallel. The first line contains a series of Braille characters representing notes and rests, with some characters highlighted in yellow. The second line contains a series of Braille characters representing fret numbers, with some characters highlighted in yellow. On the right, a guitar staff is shown with two lines. The first line contains a series of fret numbers (3, 4, 4, 4, 2) and the second line contains a series of fret numbers (0, 0, 4, 2). A circled '2' is shown above the second line, indicating a specific fret number. The page number '7' is shown above the first line. The second line of the guitar staff contains a series of fret numbers (3, 3, 2) and the page number '8' is shown above the first line.

Page turn indicators must include specific print page numbers if a single braille page covers three or more print pages, (2 or more page turn indicators).

Example 1.3B:



Print page numbers are placed on line 1 at the left margin followed by a minimum of 3 blank cells. The braille page number is placed at the right margin preceded by a minimum of 3 blank cells. The running head is centered between the print and braille page numbers.

In transcriptions where a single braille page includes material from multiple print pages, a page change indicator is placed in cell 1 of line 1 and is followed, unspaced, by the range of page numbers included on that braille page. Beginning and ending print page numbers are separated by a hyphen, with no numeric indicator before the second number in the sequence. Braille page numbers follow the running head at the right margin. There must always be a minimum of 3 blank cells preceding and following a running head.

Example 1.3C:



## 2 In-Accords

(see Table III)

In-Accords are used when two simultaneous parts cannot be written as chords. They are written in succession and joined without any space between them. In-accords are always transcribed with the highest part shown first. A string indicator must be used after any measure division.

### 2.1 Full-Measure In-Accords

Full-Measure in-accords are used when:

- A measure consists of a series of two-note intervals with the same rhythm; or
- A measure has two separate parts of differing rhythms being performed at the same time.

The in-accord sign is placed in both lines of the parallel and must be vertically aligned.

Example 2.1A:

Example 2.1A illustrates a full-measure in-accord. On the left, the Braille notation shows a series of notes with a vertical in-accord sign (a 2-dot cell) placed between the two staves. On the right, the staff notation shows a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff contains a sequence of notes: G4 (0), A4 (1), G4 (0), and F#4 (3). The lower staff contains a sequence of notes: D4 (4), E4 (2), D4 (0), and C#4 (3-2). The in-accord sign is placed vertically between the two staves, indicating that the two parts are performed simultaneously.

Example 2.1B:

Example 2.1B illustrates a partial-measure in-accord. On the left, the Braille notation shows a series of notes with a vertical in-accord sign (a 2-dot cell) placed between the two staves. On the right, the staff notation shows a 2/4 time signature. The upper staff contains a sequence of notes: G4 (0), A4 (1), and G4 (1). The lower staff contains a sequence of notes: D4 (3) and C#4 (3). The in-accord sign is placed vertically between the two staves, indicating that the two parts are performed simultaneously.

### 2.2 Partial-Measure In-Accords

Partial-Measure in-accords are used when only a portion of the measure has separate parts with different rhythms being performed at the same time. The division sign is placed before or after the partial-measure in-accord depending on where the divided parts begin or end. The in-accord and division signs are placed in both lines of the parallel and must be vertically aligned.

Example 2.2A:

The image displays a musical example with two parts. On the left is a Braille representation of a musical phrase. It consists of three measures. The first measure contains a full in-chord (a 4-note chord) represented by a 2-dot cell followed by three 3-dot cells. The second measure contains a partial in-chord (a 3-note chord) represented by a 2-dot cell followed by two 3-dot cells. The third measure contains a full in-chord represented by a 2-dot cell followed by three 3-dot cells. The partial in-chord in the second measure is highlighted with a yellow background. On the right is a staff notation representation of the same phrase. It is in 4/4 time. The first measure contains a full in-chord (a 4-note chord) represented by a 2-dot cell followed by three 3-dot cells. The second measure contains a partial in-chord (a 3-note chord) represented by a 2-dot cell followed by two 3-dot cells. The third measure contains a full in-chord represented by a 2-dot cell followed by three 3-dot cells. The partial in-chord in the second measure is highlighted with a yellow background.

If a partial in-chord would take up significantly more space than a full in-chord, the full in-chord should be used even if several pitches and values would be repeated on both sides.

### 3 Chord Symbols

(see Table VIII.)

#### 3.1 Chord Symbols in Tablature Without Lyrics

Chord symbols are transcribed below the rhythm line, vertically aligned, so that the parallel would encompass three lines (pitch, rhythm, chords). The Transcriber's Notes page must include an explanation of chord symbol placement in relation to rhythm indicators. Tracker dots and bar lines are not used in the chord line.

The capital indicator of the chord is aligned with the rhythm indicator of the note on which the chord is played.

Example 3.1A:

Example 3.1A shows Braille notation for chords D, A, Bm, and F#m. The Braille is arranged in two rows. The first row contains the Braille for D (two dots), A (three dots), Bm (four dots), and F#m (five dots). The second row contains the Braille for D (two dots), A (three dots), Bm (four dots), and F#m (five dots). A yellow highlight is under the first two Braille cells in the second row. To the right is a guitar tablature in 4/4 time. The first measure has a D chord (2-0) and an A chord (3-2). The second measure has a Bm chord (3-2) and an F#m chord (3-2). The time signature is 4/4.

If the chord is played after a note or rest has begun, a literary hyphen (dots 36) will precede the chord. The hyphen will be aligned with the rhythm indicator.

Example 3.1B:

Example 3.1B shows Braille notation for chords C, C7, Bb, and F. The Braille is arranged in two rows. The first row contains the Braille for C (two dots), C7 (three dots), Bb (four dots), and F (five dots). The second row contains the Braille for C (two dots), C7 (three dots), Bb (four dots), and F (five dots). A yellow highlight is under the first two Braille cells in the second row. To the right is a guitar tablature in 4/4 time. The first measure has a C chord (3-3) and a C7 chord (0-3). The second measure has a Bb chord (3-3) and an F chord (1-1). The time signature is 4/4.

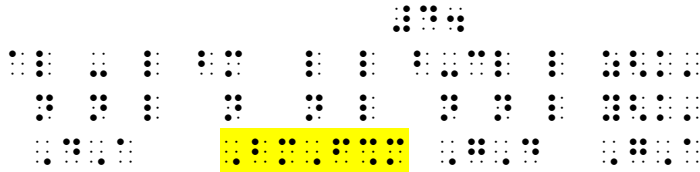
When rhythm indicators are preceded by articulation, accents, or ornaments, the capital indicator or hyphen of the chord symbol is aligned with the last cell of the sign that is in direct contact with the rhythm indicator.

Example 3.1C:

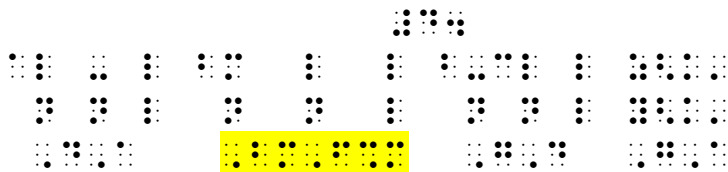
Example 3.1C shows Braille notation for chords Am, E7, and Am. The Braille is arranged in two rows. The first row contains the Braille for Am (three dots), E7 (four dots), and Am (three dots). The second row contains the Braille for Am (three dots), E7 (four dots), and Am (three dots). A yellow highlight is under the first two Braille cells in the second row. To the right is a guitar tablature in 4/4 time. The first measure has an Am chord (2-2) and an E7 chord (1-0). The second measure has an Am chord (2-2) and an E7 chord (1-0). The time signature is 4/4.

A chord symbol cannot pass the measure bar line, though it can end at the bar line. This may require an extra space preceding the bar line. There should always be a division of at least 2 blank spaces between the ending chord of one measure and the beginning chord of the next measure. Compare Examples 3.1D(a) and 3.1D(b).

Example 3.1D(a) (incorrect):



Example 3.1D(b) (correct):



### 3.2 Chord Symbols with Lyrics

(See Section 11 for further guidance on the transcription of lyrics.)

If both lyrics and chord symbols are present in a song, the chord symbols are transcribed with the lyrics rather than as a third line in each parallel of the tablature, regardless of their location in print.

No contractions are used in lyrics when chord symbols are present.

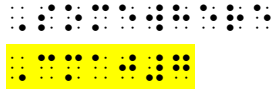
Chords are aligned depending on whether they are sounded before, with, or after syllables are begun as follows:

- a) When a chord is sounded with the syllable, the capital indicator is aligned with the first letter (or capital indicator) of the syllable; see Example 3.2A.
- b) If the chord is sounded before the syllable is begun, the capital indicator of the chord is placed 2 cells before (to the left) of the letter or capital indicator of the syllable; see Example 3.2B.
- c) If the chord is sounded after the syllable has begun, the chord is preceded by the literary hyphen, and the hyphen is used to align the chord instead of the capital indicator; see Example 3.2C.
- d) If the chord is sounded after the syllable is over, the capital indicator is placed after the last letter of the syllable; see Example 3.2D.

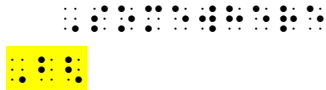
An explanation of chord and lyric alignment must be included on the Transcriber's Notes page. The four statements above (omitting references to examples) are considered sufficient for this purpose.

A word that must be divided to accommodate chord placement requires a literary hyphen. A series of hyphens are used to fill in any gaps in the word line exceeding 3 spaces (excluding the initial hyphen).

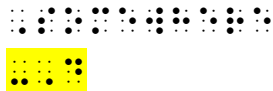
Example 3.2A (with syllable):



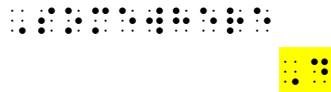
Example 3.2B (before syllable):



Example 3.2C (after syllable has begun):

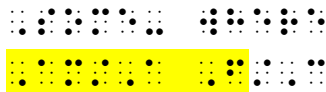


Example 3.2D (after syllable has ended):

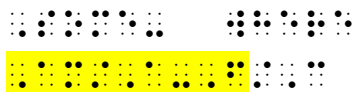


A chord that has 2 or more capital letters that are note names must be followed by a space before the next chord can be transcribed. However, if the next chord is preceded by a hyphen, no space is required.

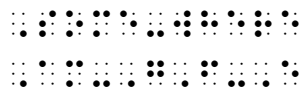
Example 3.2E:



Example 3.2F (chord change within syllable):



Example 3.2G:

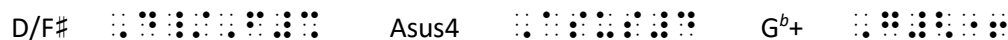


### 3.3 Transcription of Chord Diagrams

Some printed tablature includes chord diagrams. The transcriber should present these on a preliminary page supplementary to the text. The information should be brailled in a table form with the name of the chord in the left-hand column and the tablature for the chord, enclosed in beginning and ending chord enclosures, in the right-hand column. (See Example 3.3B.)

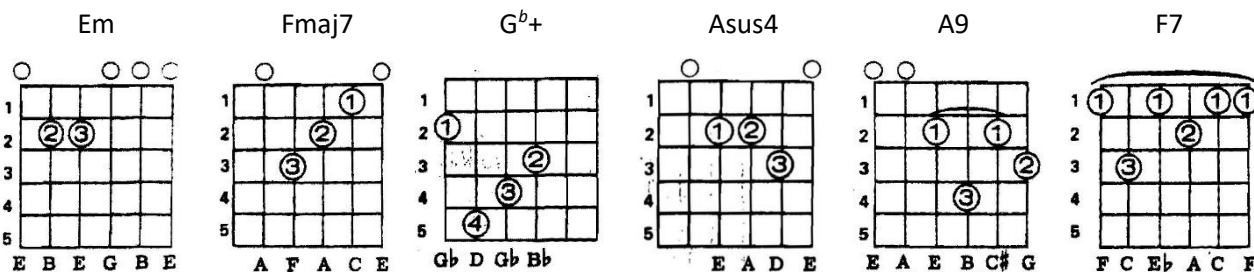
The chord name should be transcribed following Unified English Braille (UEB) practices regarding numbers, slashes, and accidentals.

Example 3.3A:



When chord diagrams include a full or half barre, the symbols for these are placed immediately before the 1st fret of the barre and the following finger indicators should define the extent of the barre.

Example 3.3B (for guitar):



Chord Name/Symbol	Played (Strings/Frets)
Em	0 2 2 0 0 0
Fmaj7	0 2 3 1 0 0
Asus4	0 2 3 0 0 0
A9	0 2 3 0 0 2
F7	1 1 1 1 2 3
	0 2 3 0 0 0
	0 2 3 0 0 0

## 4 Print Repeats

(see Table IV:1)

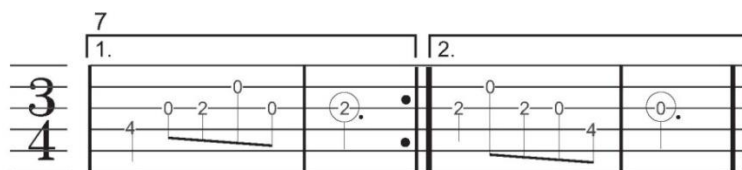
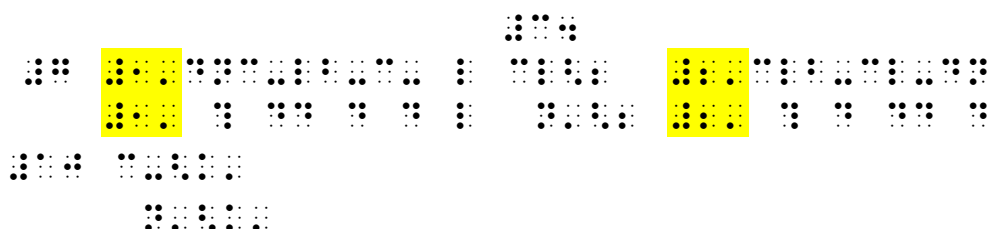
Print repeats are generally shown as in print using the appropriate braille symbols.

Sectional bars, end bars, repeats, and voltas are shown in both lines of the parallel.

Forward repeat bars, measure bars, and volta numbers must be vertically aligned. Volta numbers are always followed by a dot 3.

Repeat bars and volta numbers make the use of the measure bar line unnecessary.

Example 4A:



When the directions or signs for segno, da capo, dal segno, to coda, coda, and fine appear, they are placed in the pitch line and spaced as appropriate. The segno and coda are placed between the measure number and the first sign of the pitch line. The dal segno, da capo, to coda, and fine follow the end of the measure in the pitch line. If there is not room, the measure should be divided as needed to accommodate the directions.

## 5 Arcs, Slides, and Shifts

(see Table V)

Arcs and slides appear in the rhythm line.

### 5.1 Arcs

Arcs are used in print to represent any of the following:

- Ties
- Slurs (slides between pitches)
- Shifts
- Hammer-ons or pull-offs (see section 9.2)

The signs for each type of arc should make it clear how the affected notes are to be played.

Example 5.1A (tie):

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef. The first measure contains a note on the first line (F4) with a circled '0' below it. An arc connects this note to the second measure, which contains a note on the second line (G4) with a circled '0' below it. A second arc connects the second measure to the third measure, which contains a note on the third line (A4) with a circled '2' below it. A third arc connects the third measure to the fourth measure, which contains a note on the fourth line (B4) with a circled '3' below it. To the left of the staff is a Braille representation of the notes, with the first two notes highlighted in yellow.

When an arc represents a tie, the transcriber must add the appropriate fret or, in the case of a new measure, string and fret indicators even if they are not shown in the print copy. Rhythm values must be properly aligned under any fret indicators. This change does not have to be mentioned in any transcriber's notes.

Example 5.1B:

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef. The first measure contains a chord with notes on the first line (F4) and second line (G4), with a circled '3' below the first line. An arc connects this chord to the second measure, which contains a chord with notes on the fourth line (B4) and first line (F4), with a circled '1' below the first line. To the left of the staff is a Braille representation of the chords, with the first two chords highlighted in yellow.

When there is an arc between chords, the dot 14 tie sign applies to all notes. However, if a chord includes notes with and without ties, then an in-accord must be used. (See section 2 In-Accords.)

If one note of a chord is tied and another is shown as a slide, a hammer-on, or a pull-off, both signs are placed after the rhythm indicator with the tie sign being shown first.

If the last note of a measure is tied but there is not room on the current braille line for the following measure, the continuation of the tie must be restated by placing a tie sign (dots 14) before the first rhythm indicator of the new parallel.

Example 5.1C:

Example 5.1C shows musical notation for a sequence of notes. The notation includes Braille and a staff with a 2/4 time signature. The sequence consists of six measures: 0, 3, 6, 3, 0, 6, 3, 0, 4, 5, 4, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 2, 5. The notes are connected by a slur, and the time signature is 2/4.

## 5.2 Slides

The four symbols used for slides indicate:

- Whether a player plucks only the first note or both notes; and
- Whether a player slides into or out of a note.

Any fingering is shown in the pitch line with a finger number indicator following the first pitch of the slide. Notice that the slide into note is placed *before* the affected note.

Example 5.2A (only 1st note plucked):

Example 5.2A shows Braille notation for a slide into a note where only the first note is plucked. The first note is highlighted in yellow.

Example 5.2A shows musical notation for a slide into a note where only the first note is plucked. The first note is highlighted in yellow.

Example 5.2B (both notes plucked):

Example 5.2B shows Braille notation for a slide between two notes where both notes are plucked. The first note is highlighted in yellow.

Example 5.2B shows musical notation for a slide between two notes where both notes are plucked. The first note is highlighted in yellow.

Usual print sign

Example 5.2B shows musical notation for a slide between two notes where both notes are plucked. The first note is highlighted in yellow.

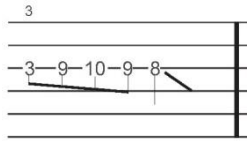
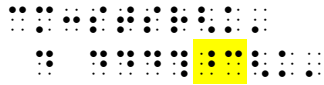
Variation

Example 5.2C (slide into note):

Example 5.2C shows Braille notation for a slide into a note. The first note is highlighted in yellow.

Example 5.2C shows musical notation for a slide into a note. The first note is highlighted in yellow.

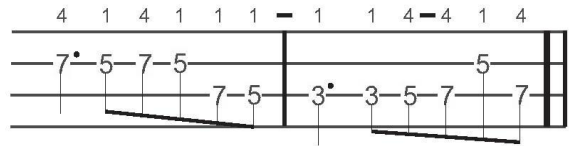
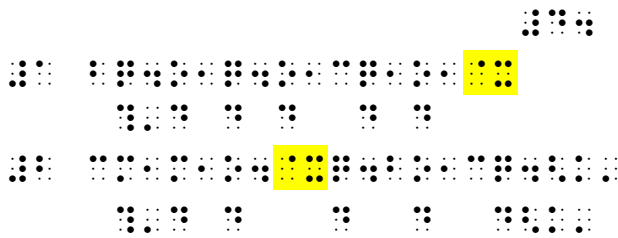
Example 5.2D (slide out of note):



### 5.3 Shifts

When there is a position shift, it is placed in the pitch line, between the fret or finger indicator and the next string or fret indicator.

Example 5.3 (from a bass tab):



## 6 Braille Repeats

(see Table IV:2)

All repeats must appear, vertically aligned, in both the pitch and rhythm lines. (See the exception for repeated chords noted in Section 6.2.)

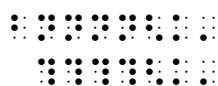
### 6.1 Repeating Single Notes

A sequence of consecutive notes on the same string whose fret and rhythmic values are the same may be written out in full or by using a repetition device. The primary goal of the transcriber should always be to provide the clearest transcription possible. Therefore, repeat devices, especially those showing multiple repetitions as described below, should only be used when significant space will be saved.

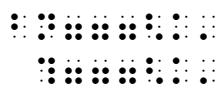
For instance, four quarter notes without dots would take the same 4 cells as a note and the braille repeat device (see Examples 6.1A and 6.1B).

The repeat designates how many *more* times to play the original. A repeat 3 times means that the sequence will be played a total of 4 times.

Example 6.1A (preferable for clarity):

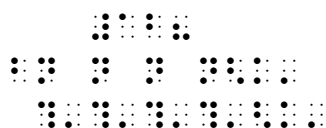


Example 6.1B (repeat signs do not save any space):

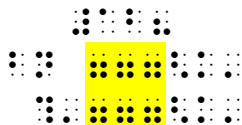


On the other hand, 4 dotted quarter notes would take up 8 cells in the rhythm line if written out (see Example 6.1C). By transcribing the first note and using the braille repeat device for three repetitions, only 5 cells would be used (see Example 6.1D).

Example 6.1C:



Example 6.1D:

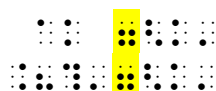


Using the note repeat for a 1st string, 1st fret, dotted quarter note value that is accented would save only 3 cells (compare Examples 6.1E and 6.1F). However, in this case, a reader has fewer signs to decode when the repeat device is employed.

Example 6.1E:



Example 6.1F:

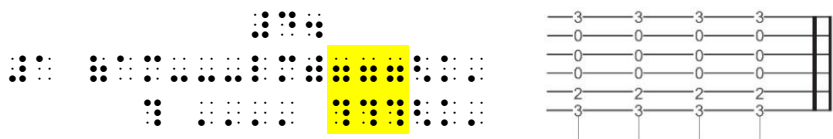


*Do not use repeat indicators just because you can. Ask yourself: Am I saving usable space? Are there fewer signs to decode? A clear transcription is always preferable!*

## 6.2 Repeating Chords

For repetitions of chords, the end chord enclosure sign is followed, unspaced, by the repeat indicator (dots 2356). The rhythm of any repetitions must be written out, with a repeat indicator vertically aligned in the pitch line corresponding to each rhythm indicator in the rhythm line.

Example 6.2A:



Example 6.2B:

Example 6.2B shows a musical phrase in Braille and guitar tablature. The Braille notation consists of two lines of music. The first line contains a sequence of notes, with a group of notes highlighted in yellow. The second line contains a sequence of notes, also with a group highlighted in yellow. The guitar tablature shows a six-string guitar with fret numbers 3, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0 on the top line and 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2 on the bottom line. The notes are connected by a slur, and there are repeat signs at the end of the phrase.

### 6.3 Repeating Beats or Symbol Sequences

Beats or symbol sequences can be repeated as many times as necessary if they consist of the same string, fret, value and articulation. Only the beginning of each beat or beat sequence must be vertically aligned. In Example 6.3A, the beat sequence is played three times (the original plus 2 repetitions). In Example 6.3B, the symbol sequence is repeated even though it crosses the beat. In Example 6.3C the sequence is repeated three times, shown by the repeat indicator preceded by the appropriate number.

Example 6.3A:

Example 6.3A shows a musical phrase in Braille and guitar tablature. The Braille notation consists of two lines of music. The first line contains a sequence of notes, with a group of notes highlighted in yellow. The second line contains a sequence of notes, also with a group highlighted in yellow. The guitar tablature shows a six-string guitar with fret numbers 3, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0 on the top line and 4, 0, 4, 0, 4, 0 on the bottom line. The notes are connected by a slur, and there are repeat signs at the end of the phrase.

Example 6.3B:

Example 6.3B shows a musical phrase in Braille and guitar tablature. The Braille notation consists of two lines of music. The first line contains a sequence of notes, with a group of notes highlighted in yellow. The second line contains a sequence of notes, also with a group highlighted in yellow. The guitar tablature shows a six-string guitar with fret numbers 3, 2, 0, 3, 2, 0 on the top line and 2, 0, 0 on the bottom line. The notes are connected by a slur, and there are repeat signs at the end of the phrase.



The dots 2356 measure repeat can only be used for the immediately preceding measure. If there is not enough space for the measure repeat in the same parallel as the original measure, the measure repeat symbol may be used as the first symbol on the next parallel provided it is on the same braille page.

Example 6.4B:

Example 6.4B shows a musical phrase in Braille and staff notation. The Braille notation consists of two lines. The first line contains a measure repeat symbol (dots 2356) followed by a series of notes. The second line contains a measure repeat symbol (dots 2356) followed by a series of notes. A yellow highlight is placed under the first measure repeat symbol in the second line. Below the Braille is a staff notation with four measures. The first two measures are identical and contain a sequence of notes with fingerings 5, 3, 0, 5, 3, 1, 0. The third measure contains a sequence of notes with fingerings 0, 1, 0, 3, 2, 0, 2, 4, 6. The fourth measure contains a single note with a circled 2 and a fermata.

If the same measure is repeated again elsewhere in the piece, measure number repeats should be used. (See Section 6.5 below.)

If a measure is repeated two or more times, the repeat sign is followed, unspaced, by a numeric indicator and the number of repetitions to be played. In Example 6.4C, the measure is played three times (written out once, repeated two more times).

Example 6.4C:

Example 6.4C shows a musical phrase in Braille and staff notation. The Braille notation consists of two lines. The first line contains a measure repeat symbol (dots 2356) followed by a series of notes. The second line contains a measure repeat symbol (dots 2356) followed by a series of notes. A yellow highlight is placed under the second measure repeat symbol in the second line. Below the Braille is a staff notation with four measures. The first three measures are identical and contain a sequence of notes with fingerings 3-2-3, 0-2, 3-2-3, 0-2, 3-2-3, 0-2. The fourth measure contains a sequence of notes with fingerings 3, 1, 0.

## 6.5 Measure Number Repeats

This device should only be used when the measure to be repeated is at least one measure away. Repetitions of an immediately preceding measure should be shown using a measure repeat indicator (dots 2356).

Repetitions of previous measures not shown using dots 2356 should be transcribed using a measure number repeat. Measure numbers used in repetition indications must be lower-cell numerals.

When only one measure is repeated, the original measure number is given, preceded and followed by measure bar lines.

If two or more measures are repeated, the beginning and ending measure numbers of the passage to be repeated are given, joined by a literary hyphen. The original measure or sequence of measures to be repeated should always be at the beginning of a parallel and on the same page as any measure number repeats so readers can locate the material easily.

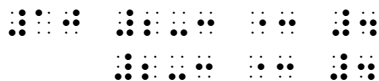
A measure number repeat will always follow a measure bar and space in both lines of the parallel. Any chords associated with the original measure are implied in the numeral repeat and do not need to be restated.

*Exception 1:* If the music begins with an incomplete measure (considered measure number 0), repetitions of measure 1 can be shown as lower-cell numerals even though measure 1 does not appear at the margin.

*Exception 2:* A repeat may refer back to a previous page if a measure or group of measures is repeated frequently throughout the song, or if the measures are very long and a significant amount of space will be saved.

A print page change indicator is used when there is a page turn within a multiple-measure repeat. Measure bar lines are not needed. The following example shows a repetition of measures 2-4 at measures 10-12 with a print page turn occurring after measure 11. In this instance measure 4 is not required to be at the margin as it is part of a sequential group.

Example 6.5A:



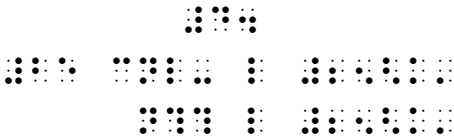
Any type of measure repeat may be used following a volta number.

Example 6.5B:

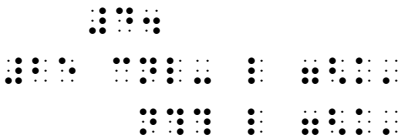
Example 6.5B shows musical notation with Braille and a staff. The Braille notation at the top consists of several groups of cells, with a measure bar (⠠⠨⠠⠨) and a space before the final group. A yellow highlight is under the last two groups of Braille cells. Below the Braille is a musical staff with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. The staff contains two measures of music. The first measure is marked with a '6' above it and contains four eighth notes, each with a '2' above it. The second measure is marked with a '3' above it and contains four eighth notes, each with a '3' above it. Below the staff is a first ending bracket labeled '1.' containing four eighth notes, each with a '2' above it.

A measure number repeat cannot refer back to a measure that is already repeated (i.e., uses a measure repeat of dots 2356 or a measure number repeat).

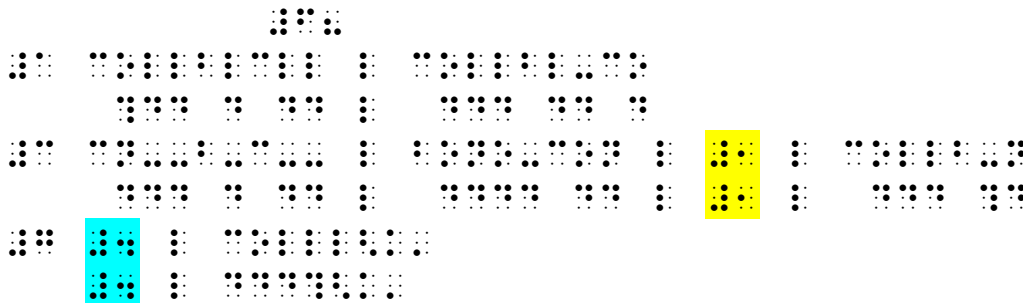
Example 6.5C (incorrect, immediately preceding measure):



Example 6.5D (correct):



Example 6.5E (first measure number repeat is correct, second repeat is incorrect):



Example 6.5F (first measure number repeat is correct, second repeat is incorrect):





## 8 Asterisk and Comment Separation Line

(see Table IX)

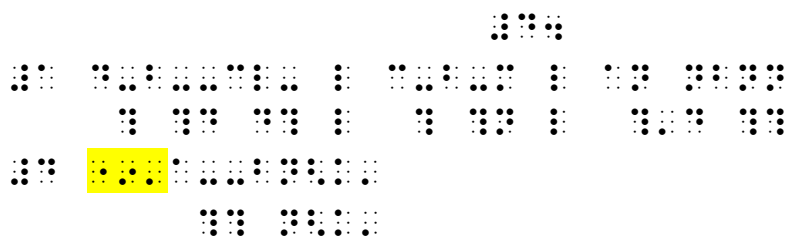
### 8.1 Asterisk

When asterisks or other reference marks are included in the print tablature, a braille asterisk is transcribed in the pitch line immediately before the measure where the print symbol appears. A consistent placement of the braille asterisk is preferable to an exact rendering of the print because it allows a reader to easily search for starred material by scanning only one line of each parallel. Any corresponding explanatory text will clarify whether the mark refers to pitch or rhythm.

The asterisk *must always* be followed by a dot 3.

When there is more than one comment in a parallel, letters are placed after each asterisk, and the required dot 3 follows the letter.

Example 8.1:



When the same footnote applies to multiple measures, place the footnote, between comment separators, after the first occurrence. The text of the footnote should be followed, in a new 5-3 paragraph, by a transcriber's note listing the other measures to which the footnote applies and identifying the footnote with the TN symbol from Table IX. Subsequent occurrences of the same footnote are transcribed in the pitch line with an asterisk at the beginning of affected measures but without repeating the explanatory text.

If there is more than one explanatory footnote in the parallel, follow the asterisk with an appropriate letter, beginning with a lowercase a and proceeding in sequence, using as many letters as needed.

### 8.2 Comment Separation Line

Explanatory text is placed between comment separation lines (hereinafter referred to as opening and closing comment separators) immediately following the parallel. Comment separators are a series of dots 25 across the width of the braille page. The comment is placed in cell 1 with run-overs in cell 3. Additional paragraphs are in a 5-3 format.

When an asterisk is added by the transcriber to clarify a measure, the explanation is preceded by the asterisk, a blank cell, the initials TN, and another blank cell.



## 8.4 Copyright Information

In collections that include music from multiple copyright holders, copyright information is transcribed at the end of each piece in a 3-1 format preceded by a blank line. If the copyright information is too long to fit on the same page, it can run over onto the next page, as long as the blank line precedes the start of the copyright information. In all other instances the copyright is placed on the title page immediately followed by the ISBN or ISMN (if present).

As set forth in *Braille Formats, 2016, Section 2.3.6e(1) (Jan. 23, 2020 Addendum)*, the above information must be followed by the statement:

**Any further reproduction or distribution other than in an accessible format is an infringement.**

*(See the sample title page included at the end of this document.)*

## 8.5 Special Symbols and Transcriber's Notes

When preparing Special Symbols and Transcriber's Notes pages, transcribers should follow the principles set forth in the rules for UEB transcription. Contractions are used in the literary text of the Special Symbols and Transcriber's Notes pages.

### 8.5.1 Special Symbols Page

Generally, the Special Symbols page should be limited to less frequently used or unfamiliar symbols and should not be a complete listing of every symbol that appears in the tablature.

Symbols from UEB (such as dot locator, required punctuation, and/or typeface indicators) should appear first under the cell 5 heading "Unified English Braille." If the lyrics or tablature contains modifiers for foreign language text, these should also be included in this section.

Less-common symbols encountered in tablature that may not be readily inferred by the reader should be listed next under the cell 5 heading "Tablature." Items to include in this section are as follows:

- Braille repeats (see Table IV:2)
- Bends (see Table V)
- Harmonics (see Table VI)
- Instructions for special effects that appear in print as abbreviations (such as "ph" for pinch harmonic or "nm" for "natural harmonic") that employ a word sign followed by groups of letters (see Table VI)
- Arpeggio downward/upward (see Table VII)
- Turns (see Table VII)
- Shift indicator (see Table V)
- Glissando (in facsimile transcriptions only) (see Table V)
- Enter tablature (see Table IX)
- Return to literary code (see Table IX)
- Punctuation indicator (see Table IX)
- Transcriber defined symbols (see Table IX)

### 8.5.2 Transcriber's Notes Page

Follow basic UEB rules for formatting and content.

This page should begin with a paragraph about the use of the tablature system.

Example 8.5.2A:

“This non-facsimile transcription is produced according to the *Owens System of Braille Tablature* \_\_\_\_  
(*date/edition*).”

Contractions are used in all literary text.

The use of contractions in lyric sections is governed by the presence or absence of chord symbols. Contractions are used in lyric sections only when no chord symbols are present. Example 8.4.2B shows a partial Transcriber’s notes page illustrating the preceding point:

Example 8.5.2B:

Contractions are used in all literary text outside of lyrics. Lyrics are transcribed in uncontracted braille to facilitate correct chord placement.

### **8.5.3 Foreign Text**

UEB modifiers are used for all foreign text regardless of whether they are directions, lyrics, or explanatory statements. The modifiers must be identified on the Special Symbols page following UEB rules and using standard wording for their descriptions.

## 9 Ornaments and Nuances

(see Tables VI and VII)

### 9.1 Ornament and Nuance Placement

Ornaments and nuances (except the shift and glissando) are placed in the rhythm line preceding or following the rhythm indicator as appropriate.

When the first rhythm indicator of a parallel has a sign of expression or articulation, the pitch line should be shifted to the right as needed to preserve vertical alignment of frets and rhythm values. If the pitch line is shifted so that there are 6 or more blank spaces between the measure number and the first symbol of the pitch line, tracker dots should be used.

When a glissando is present in the print, the shift indicator is used regardless of how it is written in print (e.g., “gliss” or “glissando”) unless a facsimile transcription has been requested. The glissando sign (dots 46, 1346) should only be used to show the wavy line between pitches when a facsimile transcription has been requested.

The following symbols all appear before rhythm indicators:

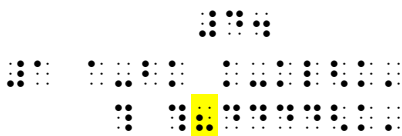
- Staccato/Staccatissimo/Mezzo-Staccato
- Tenuto
- Accent
- Arpeggios
- Turns
- Mordents

Harmonics and fermatas appear after the affected rhythm indicator.

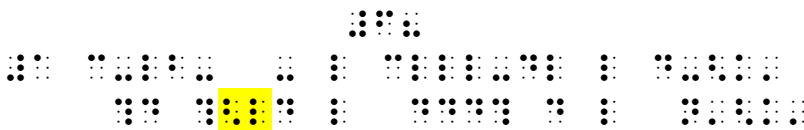
Tremolos appear between the affected rhythm indicators.

The shift indicator always appears in the pitch line.

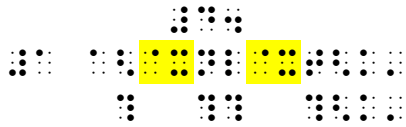
Example 9.1A (staccato):



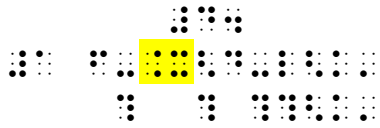
Example 9.1B (fermata):



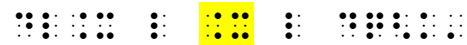
Example 9.1C (shift):



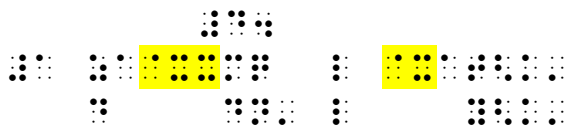
Example 9.1D (glissando):



Example 9.1E (glissando through a blank measure, pitch line only):

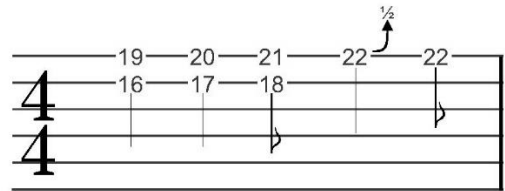
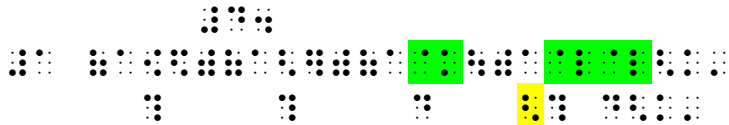


Example 9.1F (glissando through 3 notes; 2nd cell of sign is doubled):

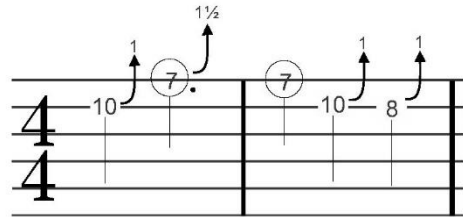
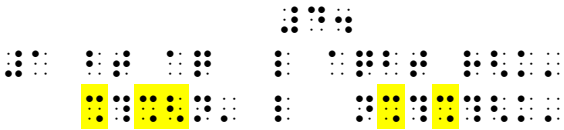


Example 9.1G (quarter bend; also includes time changes):

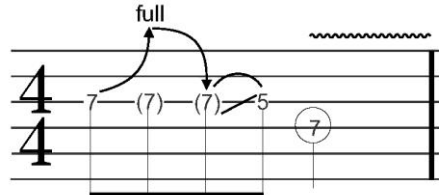
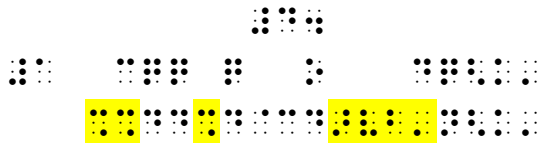
Example 9.1H (half bend; also includes frets 21 and 22):



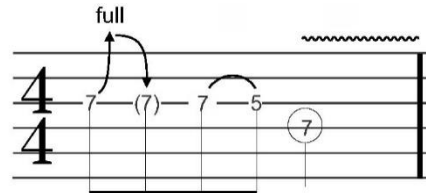
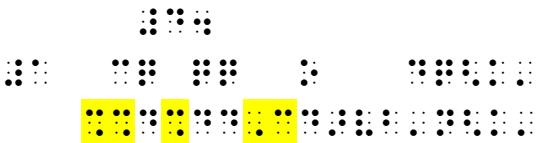
Example 9.1I (full bend and 1-1/2 bend):



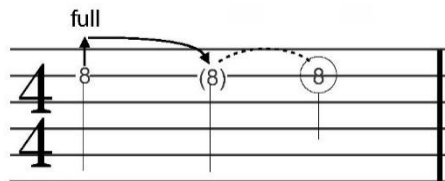
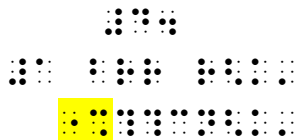
Example 9.1J (whole-step bend and release in time; also includes vibrato):



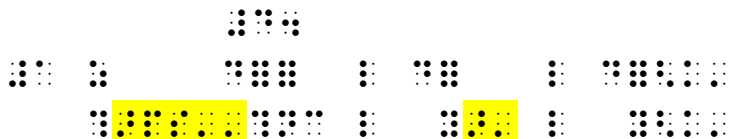
Example 9.1K (whole-step bend with pull-off):



Example 9.1L (pre-bend and release, also known as “reverse bend”):



Example 9.1M (pick scrape with continuation):



## 9.2 Hammer-Ons and Pull-Offs

A hammer-on occurs when the melody moves from a lower fret to a higher one; a pull-off occurs when the melody moves from a higher fret to a lower one. The same braille sign is used in both instances and is placed between the rhythm indicators of the two affected pitches.

Example 9.2A (hammer-on with triplet):

Example 9.2B (pull-off with triplet):

Example 9.2C (hammer-on and pull-off):

## 9.3 Use of Continuation Indicators

(see Table IX)

If an effect is employed for more than one note, the initial effect sign is immediately followed by two dot 3's. The effect terminator sign is used after the final rhythm indicator of the pitch to be played using the desired technique.

For situations where two effects are being applied simultaneously to a series of notes, continuation or termination of the second effect sign is indicated using dots 36 to avoid confusion, especially if one effect stops earlier than the other. *Note the doubled triplets (see section 9.4) and the use of the partial barre and position in the following examples.*



Example 9.3C

Example 9.3C shows musical notation for a piece. On the left is a Braille transcription of the notes. On the right is a staff notation in 4/4 time. The staff shows a whole note chord consisting of two notes, both marked with a circled '5' (representing the fifth finger). A bracket above the staff spans both notes and is labeled 'vibrato'.

Example 9.3D

Example 9.3D shows musical notation for a piece. On the left is a Braille transcription of the notes, with several groups of notes highlighted in yellow. On the right is a staff notation in 2/4 time. The staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings: 0-3-6-3-0-6-3-0, 4-5-4-1-0-1-0, and 0-0-2-5. The first measure is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic, and the second measure is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. A slur is placed over the second measure.

## 9.4 Doubling

If four or more consecutive notes in the print are marked with the same articulation, doubling may be used. The articulation symbol is transcribed twice before the first corresponding rhythm indicator of the series and once more before the final rhythm indicator of the series.

Harmonics and irregular groupings can be doubled in the same way.

Doubling continues through measure and part measure repeats assuming the doubling continues after the repeat.

Example 9.4A (doubling of staccato):

Example 9.4A shows a Braille transcription of musical notation. The notes are arranged in a series, and two groups of notes are highlighted in yellow to illustrate the doubling of articulation symbols.

Example 9.4B (doubling of triplets):

Braille musical notation for Example 9.4B. The notation consists of two staves. The first staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff contains a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The triplets are indicated by a '3' in a box above the notes. The notes are represented by Braille characters for pitch and rhythm.

Example 9.4C (doubling of natural harmonics):

Braille musical notation for Example 9.4C. The notation consists of two staves. The first staff contains a natural harmonic, followed by a natural harmonic, and then a natural harmonic. The second staff contains a natural harmonic, followed by a natural harmonic, and then a natural harmonic. The natural harmonics are indicated by a 'h' in a box above the notes. The notes are represented by Braille characters for pitch and rhythm.

## 9.5 Sweep or Rake Picking

(see Tables III & VI)

Sweep picking or raking occurs when single notes on consecutive strings are played with a "sweeping" motion of the pick while the fret hand produces a specific series of notes that are fast and fluid in sound. Both hands perform in unison to achieve the effect.

Sweeping or raking is indicated in the pitch line by enclosing the affected notes. The series of notes are preceded by dots 1236 and followed by dots 3456. The rhythm values for each note are aligned vertically with their corresponding fret. The direction of the sweep or rake is indicated in the rhythm line by the plectrum downstroke or upstroke indicator.

Example 9.5:

Braille musical notation for Example 9.5. The notation consists of two staves. The first staff contains a sweep or rake picking, followed by a sweep or rake picking, and then a sweep or rake picking. The second staff contains a sweep or rake picking, followed by a sweep or rake picking, and then a sweep or rake picking. The sweep or rake picking is indicated by a 'V' in a box above the notes. The notes are represented by Braille characters for pitch and rhythm.

Standard musical notation for Example 9.5. The notation consists of two staves. The first staff contains a sweep or rake picking, followed by a sweep or rake picking, and then a sweep or rake picking. The second staff contains a sweep or rake picking, followed by a sweep or rake picking, and then a sweep or rake picking. The sweep or rake picking is indicated by a 'V' in a box above the notes. The notes are represented by standard musical notation for pitch and rhythm.

## 10 Transcriber Defined Symbols

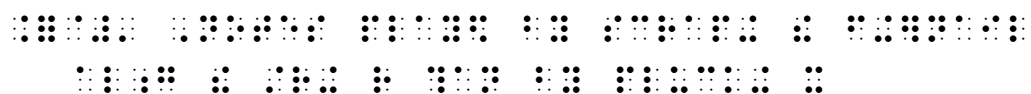
(see Table IX)

These symbols must be defined on the Special Symbols page and, if necessary, explained on the Transcriber's Notes page if they are used more than once in a transcription. If they are used only once the transcriber may include a TN immediately before the usage explaining the symbols' intent.

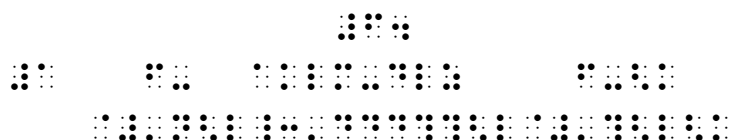
The symbols are placed immediately before/after the affected rhythm indicators as appropriate and are used to define notes played in ways not covered by symbols already set forth within this rulebook.

Other symbols may be defined as needed as long as their meaning is made clear on the Special Symbols page and/or the Transcriber's Notes page.

Example 10A(1) (sample entry on Special Symbols page):



Example 10A(2) (tablature for guitar including transcriber defined symbol):



## 11 Lyrics

When lyrics are present, they are transcribed in their own section before the tablature regardless of where they occur in the print.

Lyrics are transcribed in a 1-3 format under the centered heading LYRICS. The tablature is then transcribed in its own section, under the centered heading TABLATURE.

### **11.1 Format**

Lyrics are transcribed in contracted braille unless chord symbols are present (see Sections 3 and 8.4.2).

**Exception:** The lower group sign contraction for “in” may not be used at the beginning or end of a word regardless of contraction usage as it could be confused with a repetition indicator.

Print headings (such as Verse, Chorus, or Refrain) are placed at the margin fully capitalized and followed by a colon regardless of their presentation in print.

If a chorus or refrain repeats throughout a song, the word “CHORUS” or “REFRAIN” should be added when appropriate to indicate repeated sections of lyrics even if the lyrics are written out in print. The repeated lyrics are not transcribed, having been replaced with “CHORUS” or “REFRAIN”).

The word REFRAIN is used if there is no other marking such as "chorus" (or something similar) shown in print.

For sections without lyrics, the italicized notation “*no words*” is transcribed at the margin followed by the number of measures that are to be played without singing.

A new line, beginning with a measure number at the margin, must follow any section without lyrics.

Example 11.1A:

The example shows a centered heading in Braille: LYRICS. Below it is a line of lyrics in contracted Braille. The first two words are highlighted in yellow. Below the lyrics is a line of tablature in Braille. The first two measures of the tablature are also highlighted in yellow. The example demonstrates the 1-3 format for transcribing lyrics and tablature.



Example 11.2C:



... merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.

*See section 3 for lyrics that include chords.*

## 12 Tablature in Literary Context

(see Table IX)

When tablature appears in a literary context, the “Enter Tablature” symbol (dots 23) is used to signal the beginning of tablature code. The symbol must be separated from the preceding text by a blank space, but no space should separate it from the tablature code that follows.

The “Return to Literary” symbol (dots 56) appears, unspaced, at the end of the tablature. A blank space must always separate the symbol from any literary text that follows.

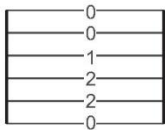
The punctuation indicator appears between any tablature and literary punctuation and is not separated by blank spaces from the signs on either side of it. The use of the punctuation indicator signals the return to literary code, so that the dots 56 symbol is not required.

When a literary comma appears within tablature a special comma (dot 6) is used without the punctuation indicator and tablature continues without interruption. (see Example 12B)

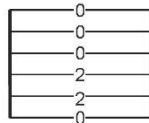
Example 12A:

Written (in print):

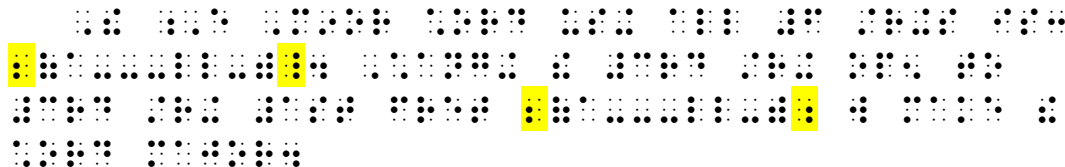
The E Minor chord using all 6 strings is:



will make the chord major.




. Changing the 3<sup>rd</sup> string open to 3<sup>rd</sup> string 1<sup>st</sup> fret



When a tablature example shown within literary text would result in the use of one or more braille parallels, a single blank braille line before and after the tablature is used to separate it from the literary text, and therefore, no other code change indicators are needed.

Example 12B:

A straight line or a straight line with an arc between 2 notes, , indicates which notes are to be plucked.

Braille musical notation for Example 12B, consisting of three lines of notes. The first line contains 12 notes, the second line contains 10 notes, and the third line contains 12 notes. The notes are arranged in a sequence that corresponds to the musical notation above, with some notes grouped together to represent chords or specific fingerings.

## Sample Braille Title Page

Title (1-3)

Brl pg #

Words and/or Music by \_\_\_\_\_

Transcriber/Arranger (of print Tablature) \_\_\_\_\_

Medium (Guitar, Ukulele, etc.)

Transcribed under the terms of the Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act

Printed by

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For \_\_\_\_\_

In \_\_\_\_\_ Volume(s)

Volume # (If more than 1 volume)

Brl pgs

Print pgs

## References

*Rules of Unified English Braille, Second Edition, 2013*

Available for download as PDF or BRF files from the International Council on English Braille (ICEB)

<https://iceb.org/ueb.html>

*Music Braille Code 2015*

For more information and resources, visit

[www.brailleauthority.org](http://www.brailleauthority.org)

*Braille Formats Principles of Print-to-Braille Transcription, 2016*

Available for download or as an online searchable document from the Braille Authority of North America (BANA):

<https://www.brailleauthority.org/formats/formats2016.html>