

Dear Student and Fee Payer,

I would like to welcome you and hope you accomplish great things as I instruct you on how to learn to play and enjoy your instrument. Two mottos I live by are –

Practise – *the absorption, mastery and maintenance of skills – NOT playing a few songs and Practise does not make perfect - Perfect practise makes perfect.*

Many students just want to learn to play songs. **NOTE** -This will never teach you to play a guitar as quickly as learning what a song is, and dissecting it into its many components including -

Chords - Three or more different named notes played simultaneously.

Rhythms - Which beats we play and how hard we strum.

Melodies - The “Tune” sung by the vocalist or the “Solo” played by the Lead Guitarist

Lyrics - The words sung.

Tempo - the “speed” or pulse that we tap our feet to.

Arrangement - Sections of a song like the Intro, Verse, Chorus, Bridge and Outro etc.

Instrumentation - What instruments are used. We will concentrate on guitar, bass guitar and drums.

Your lesson time will cover the following topics -

Chords - 20% to learn about and be able to play them. An essential element of guitar playing.

Rhythms - 20% to understand and play rhythms (strumming). Also an essential element.

Techniques - 20% to use different ways to play. Essential for becoming an individual.

Theory - 20% to learn different musical principles. A “must have” element of guitar playing if you are to really learn your instrument and understand music.(Not just to play a song)

Misc - 20% studying associated ideas like composition, improvisation, song writing, music and the computer and other musical concepts. Necessary if you are to become a guitarist.

Prepare for lessons by bringing the following items with you at **every** lesson.

- A theory folder and song folder (cheap \$2 folders with clear sleeves are good)
- A memory stick (USB flash drive) with songs you LOVE on it. If not on the memory stick then at least on a phone, CD or MP3 player/Ipod. The songs studied are just one of your goals for the Term.
- A capo – available from reception at great rates if you haven’t got one already.
- Picks – also available at reception. Medium thin to medium gauge for beginners.
- Short fingernails at least on the left hand if right handed

Learning *how* to practice is essential. To get the most out of your investment (time and money) you must be open to the idea that proper practice skills will see you develop very quickly. It is my firm belief that a *minimum* of 20 minutes 5 days a week be maintained. Being organised gives better results sooner, so a practice roster is a good idea. Please read my article on the “Parents” page on the Learning Lounge web site -

<http://www.thelearninglounge.com.au/parents.htm> and then download the articles at the bottom of the page.

Note to parents – I am passionate about music and hope some of that will be passed on to every child I teach. Above all – Music must be fun! Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any concerns or to get a report on your child’s progress.

Yours sincerely

Mike Gordon

PS I do not push reading of music to students – only a select few. If you want to read then advise me early on in your lesson term.