

## Harmonics

BL

Definition: A single partial in the overtone series that is generated by the fundamental of a pitch performed on a musical instrument.

A harmonic on the guitar is a high pitch similar to a bell. It's created by doing the following:

1. Gently touch a string over the 12<sup>th</sup> fret. Do not press down on the string at all, merely touch it.
2. Pluck the string, ideally behind the sound hole near the bridge
3. Lift your left hand finger after hearing the note sound

Harmonics are possible on all six strings and are strongest at the 12<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> frets, in that order. They're typically easier on the bass strings than the treble strings.

### Harmonics raise the pitch of the string in the following ways:

12<sup>th</sup> fret harmonic: one octave

7<sup>th</sup> fret harmonic: one octave + a perfect fifth

5<sup>th</sup> fret harmonic: two octaves

More advanced harmonics:

4<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> fret harmonic: two octaves + a major third

3.25 fret harmonic: two octaves + a perfect fifth

2.75 fret harmonic: two octaves + a minor 7<sup>th</sup>

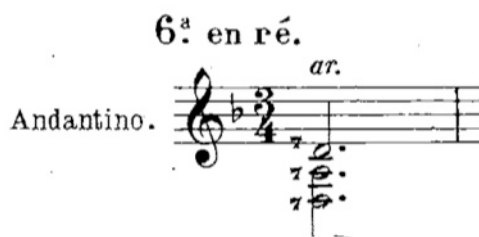
2.25 fret harmonic: three octaves

### Reading harmonics in tab:

e: ---<12>---<7>---<5>---      = Play the 12, 7, and 5  
B: -----  
G: -----  
D: -----  
A: -----  
E: -----  
harmonic on the high E string

### Reading harmonics in standard notation

There's no standard way of notating guitar harmonics in music notation, but the most common method is to write an open string pitch with a number next to it, with the indication "armonico" or simply: "ar."



This notation indicates to play the three bass strings with a 7<sup>th</sup> fret harmonic. Note that the "6ª en ré" tells the player to tune the sixth string to D (dropped-D tuning).