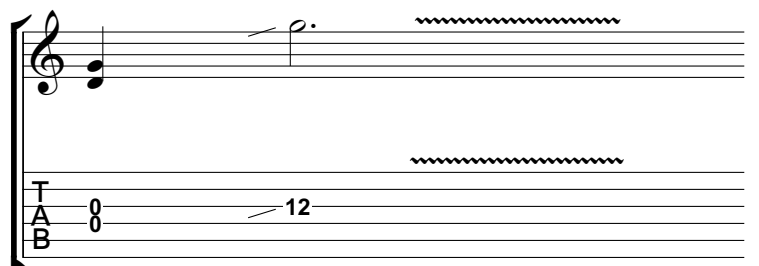


ON THE SLIDE

a slide guitar handbook

Al Summers
&
Ray Bradfield



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This is a new and expanded edition of *Slide Handbook* originally published in 1999 as part of the 'Theory Lessons in a Booklet' series. It sold out soon after publication

Introduction

No one knows when slide playing began. Most of us have heard early blues recordings as well as encounters with more recent slide usage in many guises and genres. But slide guitar has a far older history. Joseph Kekuku, a student in Hawaii in the mid-1890s, held his guitar flat on his lap and used a comb to play slide style. This new technique possibly found its way to the US via sailors. Knives, bones, wrenches and, of course, bottle necks were used and most blues players held the guitar sitting in the 'normal' position. There was no one correct way then...nor is there now...

Tuning

You can play slide using standard tuning but an 'open' tuning [i.e. to a chord] is more usual. There are two common 'dropped' tunings: D ['Vestapol' - there are many spelling variations of this]; and G ['Spanish' or 'Slack key']. This book centres on those. The two common 'raised' tunings are A and E. They are relatively the same as G and D, just a tone - 2 frets - higher. There are many more tunings, most of which can be found in a broadsheet by Ron Middleton called *Open Guitar Tuning*. Also see *Brad's Page of Steel* on the net.

Strings, action and slide

As a rule use heavier strings (this depends upon tuning) and a higher action (strings sit further from the fretboard; heavier strings may create this!) - you'll get a better tone.

The slide? Heavy enough for a good tone but not too heavy to control, at least as wide as the guitar neck. Shorter slides are used but this is a more advanced technique.

Where to wear the slide: try pinky [little finger] first. This is the most popular finger. Make sure it's not too tight, not too loose. Allow room, as the finger tends to swell as it warms up. Some wear it only as far as the second knuckle. Comfort is all important and your ability to control the slide easily should be at the forefront of your considerations. Don't let anyone tell you there is only one way to do this. Look at a number of excellent slide players and you'll see a number of different ways of wearing the slide, but the basic principles remain the same.

Basic principles are generally what this book deals with. It is outside the scope or ethos of this book to turn you into a particular type of slide player. The very nature of slide does not favour strict rule-based tuition. The instruction here aims to guide you. Keep your ears open: listening is a fundamental of a good approach to this quite simple yet vast subject.

ON THE SLIDE refers to a workshop-based slide education co-operation between the author of the original *Slide Handbook*, Al Summers, and slide player, singer/songwriter and tutor Ray Bradfield. This new edition has been co-written. We cover some blues here but do not assume that all players only wish to play blues. **Good tunes are good tunes: it's important with slide to play tunes you know well in order to listen carefully while you play. Once you have a good slide style and a good slide ear you will be able to play well in whatever genre you choose.**

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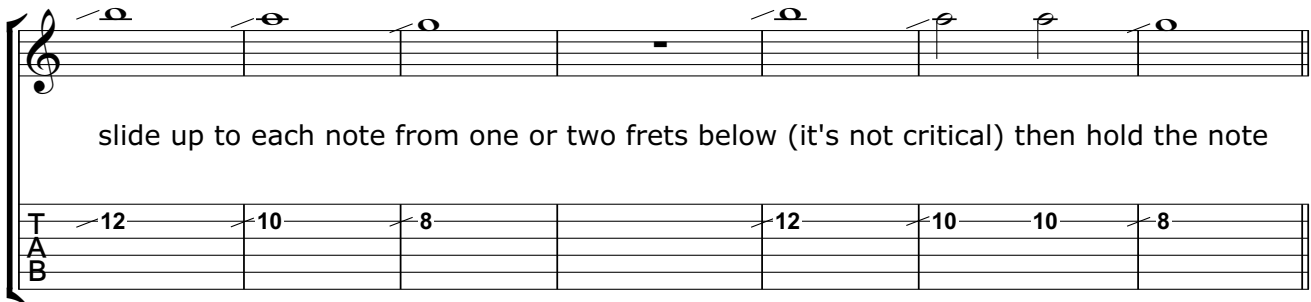
www.gandamusic.co.uk

*a brief guide to some TAB notation signs and meanings can be found on page 25
NB we are inconsistent with our use of symbols to denote the slide technique as there are several ways that publications represent slides; we have aimed to use some of them here so that you get used to seeing them. Our preferred default is explained on page 26.

Perhaps the trickiest aspect of playing slide is...

Intonation [basically, being in tune]

Frets are only there for your eye now! The slide cannot see the frets! Hold the slide over the fret, not behind in the space where you normally fret a note with the finger. Hold the slide at right angles to the neck, unless trying for an interval [the musical distance between two notes] greater or smaller than your tuning allows - and that's advanced stuff! Slide up to the desired note. Take your time. Never hurry slide playing.



The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It contains seven measures. The first measure has a whole note on the second line (F4). The second measure has a whole note on the second space (G4). The third measure has a whole note on the third line (A4). The fourth measure has a whole rest. The fifth measure has a whole note on the third space (B4). The sixth measure has a whole note on the fourth line (C5). The seventh measure has a whole note on the fourth space (D5). Slashes above each note indicate a slide. Below the staff, a tablature line shows fret numbers: 12, 10, 8, 12, 10, 10, 8. The letters T, A, and B are written vertically to the left of the tablature line.

slide up to each note from one or two frets below (it's not critical) then hold the note

You can try the sample above in any tuning. It should sound a little like *Three Blind Mice*. Playing really simple tunes that you know very well is a great way of starting to learn good slide technique. You can ensure that your intonation [your ability to play in tune] is good and you can easily assess the accuracy of your playing.

Slide Pressure

Too much pressure on the slide will cause clatter (against the frets) and the slide may actually 'properly' fret notes, thus losing its effect. Too little pressure will cause buzz and maybe the odd accidental open string sound. A heavier slide tends to help.

Damping - see also 'Picking Hand' over the page.

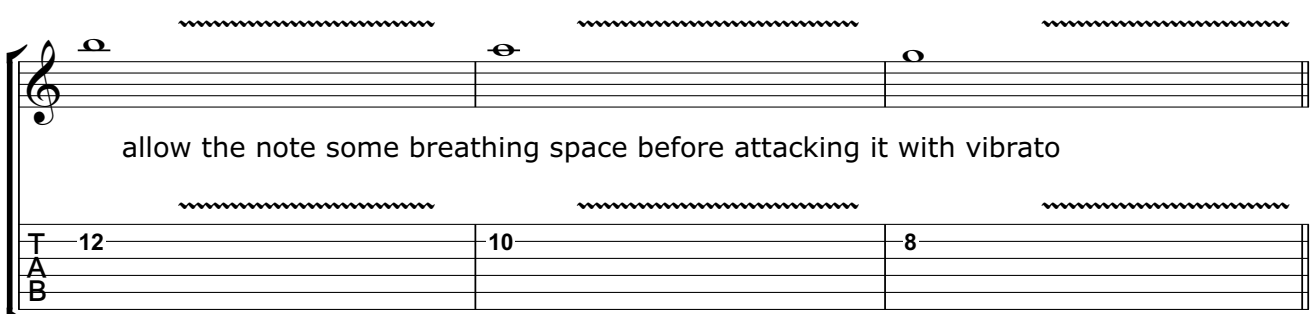
This is the most important aspect of clean playing. Get rid of unwanted noises. If you can sort out your damping, sometimes referred to as muting, technique then you'll be a good-sounding slide player, and able to communicate your musical ideas very clearly.

Some damp always behind the slide (with the index finger for instance, lightly held against the strings); others prefer to hear the extra overtones created by not damping at this point. Many use a mixture depending upon the style of the tune, song or solo. Experiment to find out what you like to hear.

Damping with your picking hand is altogether more important. Before we deal with this in more detail, try some vibrato. Vibrato is often shown with a sign like this:



It's a good idea not to start the vibrato too soon after hitting the note. Try it! You'll probably find the result is not in great taste...So: try not to hit on too strong a vibrato too soon into the note: it's usually better to build the vibrato strength as the note sustains. Frequency and depth is personal. Most good players (and some bad ones!) have instantly identifiable vibrato.



The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It contains three measures. The first measure has a whole note on the second line (F4). The second measure has a whole note on the second space (G4). The third measure has a whole note on the third line (A4). Wavy lines above each note indicate vibrato. Below the staff, a tablature line shows fret numbers: 12, 10, 8. The letters T, A, and B are written vertically to the left of the tablature line.

allow the note some breathing space before attacking it with vibrato

Vibrato Technique and Intonation

Most players use the wrist (*very relaxed*) and start after the initial sounding of the note. It can sound far too 'wobbly' otherwise, although sometimes you may want this effect of course. Try it and listen.

The main thing is to watch the intonation: going too sharp* is generally less forgiving than being too flat, which can sound quite bluesy and desirable. Try singing with your playing: good slide playing should 'sing'.

* *sharp* means that the slide has travelled beyond the fret, so the sound is higher than 'true'.

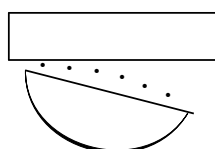
An exercise worth plenty of experimentation, for players of all abilities and at any stage of your development, is to slide very slowly up to a note and listen for where the intonation becomes 'sweet'. As you improve you realize that sometimes this is very slightly shy of the fret. Do this in relation to a chord; either one you have just sounded or have a friend play one or along with a recording. Make sure the note you aim for is a chord tone. For example: a C, E or G note for a C chord; G, B, D or F note for a G7 chord.

Picking Hand

Damp well to mute unwanted noises. This is vital to good slide technique. It is easier if you don't use a pick to begin with. Picking with fingers also produces a warmer sound. Using a pick makes damping awkward, although not impossible, but also gives a louder attack. Some players use a thumb pick with or without finger picks (sometimes useful on really heavy gauge strings).

Your picking hand needs to be able to mute out those strings that you don't want to sound, otherwise a messy collection of notes will build up.

Single string work is possible on the top or bottom strings by holding the slide at an angle to suit:



Remember to slide up to the note where possible, although there is no reminder here.

Damp all the strings, with your picking hand, except this top string. How? Turn the page...

Holding the slide at an angle can ensure that the slide only contacts the top string. The greater difficulty however lies in ensuring that other strings do not sound when they are not wanted. The picking hand can mute out these strings. For the exercise on the previous page try placing the picking hand thumb across the other strings or mute with the outside [little finger] edge of the palm.

It is possible to play any single string cleanly by use of good, effective and selective damping (muting). Picking hand fingers may play a role here. Try this next exercise, which is the same tune as the previous one, [it should sound like the opening of *Amazing Grace* but in a different key] by muting the lower string with either thumb or palm as described and place a picking hand finger on the top string. Little finger or ring finger would probably work best, leaving your index finger or middle finger to pick. The slide will have to be held at less of an angle, possibly straight against the strings, in order to contact the second string properly.



all other strings are muted by the picking hand

this is trickier than playing it on the top string...take your time, never rush it...

most people find it harder as the strings become thicker and further from the hand holding the slide...

The Dominant Note

It's worth all slide players [and any musician] knowing this. The Dominant note of a key is the **fifth**. So, if we're in the key of A, the Dominant note is E. It's easy to find on a guitar as it's always seven frets higher than the root.

This is the same note as sucking on hole 4 of a blues harp [with a harp in D for a blues in A] so, to get that 'train whistle blow' sound, this is the note to use.

You can use this note throughout a 12-bar blues:
 against the I chord it's the 5th;
 against the V chord it's the root;
 against the IV chord it's the 9th [a nice jazzy sound]
...so try playing a one-note solo!

Slide is a superb technique for making the best of very little. It will also really focus your intonation.

The 12-bar pattern

There is a fairly standard 'agreed' chord sequence used for blues. This is not the place to go into the history behind this format but its roots are African and chiefly vocal.

The structure is made of three 4-bar phrases, best described in numbers.

I I I I
IV IV I I
V IV I V

This represents one of the main traditional variations. In the key of A this would look like this:

A A A A
D D A A
E D A E

Minor and major tempering and 'blue' notes

The difference between major keys and minor keys is well-defined in most music. It is very blurred in blues and blues-influenced music. Again the roots of this are mainly African.

The note most affected by this is the third. Basically this means that you will sometimes find that you have placed your slide between two frets to get that 'right' sound. Don't worry about this: let your ears do your thinking: if it sounds right, it is right!

Harmony

Try playing in harmony by ear: take the *Three Blind Mice* three-note motive [see top of page 2] and imagine the next, higher, three-note motive. Now try to play it, slowly and carefully, ensuring your intonation is good. Both phrases fit together so, if you have a playing partner, you can now play some two-part slide harmony, where intonation becomes quite exacting!

Shuffle rhythm

There is a significant rhythm used in some forms of music, notably blues and jazz. 'Shuffle' is the word we usually use to describe this; say 'Humpty Dumpty' and you pretty much have this rhythm. It's a bit like the rhythm you'd get walking with a limp with tap shoes on...

Slide and Amps

A word about amplified slide playing: slide tends to reduce the signal a little. Distorted *sounding* slide playing is not usually very desirable, nor is it heard that often from professional players except where, as a special effect, it creates a particular atmosphere. Very distorted continuous slide playing can be tiring on the listener.

You will find that most players use more gain than they would playing non-slide however. This will help boost the signal (without adding unwanted distortion, if done in good taste) and provide for better sustain. So the EQ and gain set-up you normally use may almost certainly need adjusting when you plug in to play slide. Rather more 'middle' than you usually employ might help too, thickening the sound. Beware of overdoing anything: you (probably!) don't want to be too boomy or to have an ear-splittingly treble sound.

With most amps, playing two notes together will encourage a more distorted sound. Be aware of this; experiment. Try this example and then compare with the two-note ['double stop'] example at the foot of the page, whether you plug in or not.

Musical notation for a single-note slide example in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of notes: quarter note G4, eighth notes A4-B4 (triple), quarter note G4, eighth notes A4-B4 (triple), quarter note G4. The tablature below shows fret numbers: 0-5-0-3, 0, 0-5-0-3, 0.

The usual reminders are relevant here again:

slide up to notes:

the fret 5 notes in both cases will benefit from a 'grander' gesture;
the fret 3 notes are perhaps more awkward so a more subtle slide up to those is both technically easier and more effective, and it's uncanny how often this is the case

and

damp:

mute the unwanted strings with parts of your picking hand;
mute behind the slide with your 'fretting' hand if this is your taste;
if you can't mute in time and sense that the sound is untidy, practise muting after the event, as soon as you hear it, cleaning up the sound as you go.

Take your time, don't rush. Give yourself plenty of time to listen to and enjoy the sound. Hear how the double-stop version below sounds both similar and different to the single-note version above.

Musical notation for a double-stop slide example in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of notes: quarter note G4, eighth notes A4-B4 (triple), quarter note G4, eighth notes A4-B4 (triple), quarter note G4. The tablature below shows fret numbers: 0-5-0-3, 0, 0-5-0-3, 0.

Tunings

We'll use G and D to give examples of chords, scales and licks. A and E tunings are just one tone [2 frets] higher and therefore use the same relative frettings respectively.

Open G tuning has three strings dropped [loosened] by a tone:

these three notes have been dropped by a tone each

D G D G B D

TAB 0 0 0 0 0 0

The D [4th], G [3rd] and B [2nd] strings remain the same as standard.

When you play the open strings after tuning this way, you will be playing notes of a chord of G, but without having to fret any notes in order to make this sound. With the strings tuned to the notes of a chord, slide playing becomes easier. The slide, unlike your fingers, only has one shape: a straight line (like a perpetual barre).

A useful side-effect of this tuning is that the distance between each pair of strings [interval] is far more varied than in standard tuning giving more flexibility when skipping from string to string with the slide.

You can use a normal instrument tuner to help you arrive at this, or any other, altered tuning. Below is an ear-based method of getting to this tuning from standard.

By 'agree' we do not mean exactly the same sound but a compatible sound as, although these notes have the same name, they are an octave [8 notes] apart, so are simply higher or lower forms of the same basic note.

tune the top string down to 'agree' with the D [4th] string

tune the bottom string down to 'agree' with the D [4th] string


tune the A [5th] string down to 'agree' with the G [3rd] string

TAB 0 0 0 0 0 0

Open A

Open A is the same relative tuning as open G but with every note a tone [2 frets] higher. We are demonstrating in open G in this book; they will all be playable in open A; they will simply sound higher.

In order to tune to open A, raise the three strings you left alone for open G. So raise the D [4th], G [3rd] and B [2nd] strings so they become E, A and C sharp respectively.



these are the notes altered from standard tuning


T	0				
A		0			
B			0		

Open D Tuning

This is the other tuning we will be using in examples in this book.

It is, like open G, a tuning requiring the dropping of strings, and not quite so straightforward.

The two outer strings are dropped to Ds just as in open G. The D [4th] and A [5th] strings are not altered. The B [2nd] string is dropped to A, so 'agrees' with the A [5th] string. The G [3rd] string is dropped to F sharp. The best way to do this is to tune it to the 4th fret note on the D [4th] string.




these are the notes altered from standard tuning

T	0				
A		0			
B			0	(sounds like: 4)	
					D 0

Open E

Open E is the same relative tuning as open D but with every note a tone [2 frets] higher. We demonstrate open D in this book; this will be playable in open E; they will just sound higher.

In order to tune to open E, raise the third [G] string a semitone to make it G sharp. Raise the D [4th] to become E and A [5th] string so it becomes B. The 1st, 2nd and bottom [6th] E strings remain as standard.



these are the notes altered from standard tuning

T	0				
A		0			
B			0		

So, to summarize, here are the four most common tunings with the note names:

Open G:	
string	note
1	D
2	B
3	G
4	D
5	G
6	D

Open A:	
string	note
1	E
2	C#
3	A
4	E
5	A
6	E

Open D:	
string	note
1	D
2	A
3	F#
4	D
5	A
6	D

Open E:	
string	note
1	E
2	B
3	G#
4	E
5	B
6	E

As explained, we will use G and D to give examples of chords, scales and licks. A and E are just a tone higher and therefore use the same relative frettings respectively.

Get used to sliding up to a note: sometimes you may want to move the slide straight to the note or slide down from another but much of the slide character comes from approaching from a flatter [nearer the headstock] position, just as the voice often does. Where you begin to slide is a matter of taste; in this example the small note gives you an idea of where to start then, after picking, move slowly but decisively up to the intended note. Once there, some vibrato can be added gradually. Do this by moving the slide back and forward along the string but always to the established 'in tune' position, not beyond it. The second example bar gives a stylized idea of how this may feel.

Slide players tend not to be slavish about scale patterns. Slide playing is based more on chord tones but, since you might have a good sound picture of simple pentatonic scales, the next page gives you a few possibilities to practice clean picking and accurate sliding.

Listen while you play. Work on which notes you can use for the slide-up approach.

These familiar sounds should also help your intonation: the ability to play in tune is of fundamental importance to good slide playing. It's not easy at first for many people but learning to play and listen carefully will help.

A good clear tone can also be a tricky skill to acquire. Again, just ensure you play slowly enough to be able to listen well. Remember to enjoy your playing as well as listening critically!

Sample scale patterns

There are many more ways of playing these: you can use your ears to help find some of them. We have shown some fairly ergonomic ways of playing them here as examples.

Open G scales

G major pentatonic scales

G minor pentatonic scales

Open D scales

D major pentatonic scales

D minor pentatonic scales

This scale example has some alternative positions.
Don't play both notes! Choose the one you prefer,
by feel or sound.

The 'blues' scale is the minor pentatonic with a 'blue' note added. This note is often called the flat 5th as it is the 5th letter name of the scale, lowered by a semitone, the equivalent of one fret:

G 'blues' scale [Open G tuning]

D 'blues' scale [Open D tuning]

Diagram showing chord shapes for G, B \flat , C, D, F, and G in an open G tuning. The top staff shows the notes on a treble clef. The bottom staff shows the fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

CHORDS

Most slide playing is heavily chord-driven. KNOW your chord tones! Use notes that belong to the chords in any given sequence. Nuances and inflection, tone, vibrato, use of passing notes [the ones between the chord tones that acts as links], good use of double stops [two notes at once], damping and other subtleties will all help make your playing sing.

Your slide only has one chord shape - a straight line.

In open G and open A your home roots [Gs and As respectively] are on strings 3 & 5. It's easy to work out the chord names when you hold the slide across all the strings. Those fret numbers name the chord.

i.e. fret 5 on the 5th string [and 3rd] = C, so slide held across fret 3 makes a C chord.

NB in open G and A tunings the bottom [6th] string is often not used in chords as it is not the root; the root note appears, as stated, on strings 3 & 5 so string 5 makes a better bottom note generally. Some open G chord positions are given above.

The tuning key chord appears again at fret 12. This is where everything starts again, just as in standard tuning...

...this fret 12 octave [8 letter names higher - which will always bring you back to a higher version of the same note, since there are 7 letter names] in the musical alphabet] is very useful, particularly for embellishing and for solo moments.

Open D and open E: home roots [Ds and Es respectively] are on strings 6, 4 & 1. Working out chord names is on the same principle as other open tunings: those fret numbers name the chord. i.e. fret 3 on the 6th string [or 4th & 1st] = F, so with the slide held across fret 3 you make an F chord.

Diagram showing chord shapes for D, F, G, A, C, and D in an open D tuning. The top staff shows the notes on a treble clef. The bottom staff shows the fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

Fretted Chords

Other chords are available if you fret 'normally' [without slide]. We show some examples here. Learning about what notes make up a chord is not what this book is about but, if you learn this and the note names on your guitar, you can make up your own.

It is possible to fret chords unless your action is so high you cannot push the strings down with your fingers. Voicings tend to be rather 'unique'...the open tunings do not usually allow for chord voicings that sound exactly like a standard tuned guitar but part of the joy of this is that new sounds can be made, often quite moody...

Here are some fretted chords available in open G tuning:

Musical notation for fretted chords in open G tuning. The notation shows the chord name, the fretting hand positions for strings T, A, and B, and the fret number for the G string.

Chord	T	A	B	G
C/E	2	0	2	2
Cadd2/G	0	0	0	0
D7	0	1	0	0
D5	0	0	0	0
Dm	0	0	3	0
D	0	0	0	4

Remember there is no 'right' or 'wrong' here in a sense: let your ears tell you what does and doesn't work.

One person's howler can be another's delicious noise...

Experiment and find your own chord voicings.

Musical notation for fretted chords in open G tuning. The notation shows the chord name, the fretting hand positions for strings T, A, and B, and the fret number for the G string.

Chord	T	A	B	G
D9	2	1	2	0
F#/A	0	1	0	2
G6	0	0	0	0
G7	0	0	0	0
Am7	2	1	0	2
G7	0	0	0	3

Some are easy, some a little contorted perhaps. We encourage you to explore the guitar and make some of your own. Just experiment. Use and trust your ears. Listening and evaluating sounds are core skills for slide players after all. Just noodling through a few made-up chord shapes can add to your training as well as being fun.

It can also refresh tired ears. It's also useful if you feel you've become stuck in a rut with your standard guitar playing.

...and here are some fretted chords in open D:

Four fretted chords in open D tuning are shown. Each chord is represented by a treble clef staff with notes and a corresponding guitar tablature below. The chords are G/D, A⁷/E, A⁷, and A⁵.

Chord	Notes (Treble Clef)	Tablature
G/D	G4, B4, D5, G5	0 2 1 0 2 0
A ⁷ /E	A4, C#5, E5, G5, A5	2 0 1 2 2 2
A ⁷	A4, C#5, E5, G5, A5	2 0 1 2 0 2
A ⁵	A4, C#5, E5, G5, A5	2 0 3 0 0 0

Three fretted chords in open D tuning are shown. Each chord is represented by a treble clef staff with notes and a corresponding guitar tablature below. The chords are D⁷, D⁶, and D⁷.

Chord	Notes (Treble Clef)	Tablature
D ⁷	D4, F#4, A4, C#5, D5	0 3 0 0 0 0
D ⁶	D4, F#4, A4, C#5, D5	0 0 0 0 0 0
D ⁷	D4, F#4, A4, C#5, D5	0 0 0 0 3 0

Four fretted chords in open D tuning are shown. Each chord is represented by a treble clef staff with notes and a corresponding guitar tablature below. The chords are D^{sus4}, D⁹, D^m, and D^{m7}.

Chord	Notes (Treble Clef)	Tablature
D ^{sus4}	D4, G4, A4, D5	0 1 0 0 0 0
D ⁹	D4, F#4, A4, C#5, D5, G5	2 0 0 0 2 0
D ^m	D4, F4, A4, C5, D5	0 0 0 3 0 0
D ^{m7}	D4, F4, A4, C5, D5	0 0 0 3 3 0

To obtain a good personal sound it is important to begin with sounds you can hear well. Choosing tunes you know really well [nursery rhymes, Christmas carols, film themes, traditional melodies] will enable you to listen easily and know how well you're doing.

Amazing Grace in open G

The first system of musical notation for 'Amazing Grace in open G' consists of a treble clef staff in 3/4 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The treble staff contains a melody starting with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F#4. The tablature staff shows fret numbers: 0, 2, 5, 9, 7, 5, 9, 7, 5, 2, 0, 0, 2. Slurs are placed over the notes G4-A4-B4, B4-A4-G4, and F#4-G4. Slurs labeled 's' are placed over the notes G4, A4, and B4.

*the S suggests a possible slide up to a note [i.e. starting a fret or two lower] as you pick. The 'glissando' suggests a slide to the next note without re-picking.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody. The treble staff shows a slur over the notes G4-A4-B4-C5, followed by a slur over B4-A4-G4, and then a slur over F#4-G4. The tablature staff shows fret numbers: 5, 9, 7, 5, 9, 12, 12, 9, 12, 12, 9, 7, 5, 9, 9, 7. Slurs labeled 's' are placed over the notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4.

The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. The treble staff shows a slur over the notes G4-A4-B4, followed by a slur over B4-A4-G4, and then a slur over F#4-G4. The tablature staff shows fret numbers: 5, 2, 0, 0, 2, 5, 9, 7, 5, 9, 7, 5. Slurs labeled 's' are placed over the notes G4, A4, B4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4.

That fits on the top string in G. It also fits on the top string of open D of course.

It's a little more tricky in the key of D in D tuning perhaps, requiring use of the second string and therefore some extra skill in positioning the slide and possibly some damping.

Amazing Grace in open D

The first system of musical notation for 'Amazing Grace in open D' consists of a treble clef staff in 3/4 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The treble staff contains a melody starting with a quarter note D4, followed by a quarter note E4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a quarter note C#4. The tablature staff shows fret numbers: 0, 2, 0, 4, 2, 0, 4, 2, 0, 2, 0, 0, 2. Slurs are placed over the notes D4-E4-F#4, F#4-E4-D4, and C#4-D4. Slurs labeled 's' are placed over the notes D4, E4, and F#4.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody. The treble staff shows a slur over the notes D4-E4-F#4-G4, followed by a slur over F#4-E4-D4, and then a slur over C#4-D4. The tablature staff shows fret numbers: 0, 4, 2, 0, 4, 7, 7, 4, 7, 7, 4, 2, 0, 4, 4, 2. Slurs labeled 's' are placed over the notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4.

The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. The treble staff shows a slur over the notes D4-E4-F#4, followed by a slur over F#4-E4-D4, and then a slur over C#4-D4. The tablature staff shows fret numbers: 0, 2, 0, 0, 2, 0, 4, 2, 0, 4, 2, 0. Slurs labeled 's' are placed over the notes D4, E4, F#4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4, D4, E4, F#4, E4, D4.

Guess this tune!

It may seem a bit trite once you've worked it out but it wasn't always a nursery rhyme, pretty much everybody knows it in many countries, it has been around for centuries so has to score a lot of points for being 'catchy'...and a good slide player should be able to make any tune sound like good slide playing...

5 5 12 12 14 14 12 10 10 9 9 7 7 5

12 12 10 10 9 9 7 12 12 13 13 12 12 10

this phrase is the same as the last two bars but we've shown it in an alternative position

12 12 12 12 14 14 12 13 13 12 12 10 10 12

this is the same as the first bars again...but we've shown it in an alternative position

That was in G and for open G tuning.

The same tune in D [and for open D tuning] fits on the single top string.

Some tunes are easier in one tuning or key, some in another.

0 0 7 7 9 9 7 5 5 4 4 2 2 0 7 7 5 5 4 4 2

7 7 5 5 4 4 2 0 0 7 7 9 9 7 5 5 4 4 2 2 0

Auld Lang Syne

in open G

This has some chord suggestions.

G is open [or fret 12]; D fret 7; C fret 5.

Play it with a friend or try singing while playing the chords, sliding gently up to them.

You should by now have some idea of when *you* wish to slide up to notes in a melody.

G D G C

0 5 5 5 9 7 5 7 9 7 5 5 9 12 14 14

G D C G C

12 12 12 8 10 8 10 9 7 5 2 2 0 5 14

careful with that damping!

G D C G C

12 12 12 12 14 12 14 12 12 12 14 17

or use
fret 14
again

G D C G

12 9 9 5 7 5 7 9 7 5 5 5 3 5

Auld Lang Syne
in open D

Chords: D is open [or 12]; A is fret 7; G is fret 5.

slide tip:

Take your time & *listen*: if it doesn't sound right slow, it'll only sound worse fast!!

D A D G

TAB 0 5 0 0 4 2 0 2 4 2 0 0 4 7 9 9

this fret 5 note
is the same as the
next [open string]
note - the effect
can sound good.

D A G D G

TAB 7 4 4 0 2 0 2 4 2 0 2 2 0 0 9

D A G D G

TAB 7 4 4 0 2 0 2 9 7 9 9 7 9 12

D A G D

TAB 7 4 4 0 2 0 2 4 2 0 2 2 0 0

SILENT NIGHT

Here's a tricky one.
You may wish to combine slide and picking techniques here.

As usual: in open G; followed by open D.

The first system of music consists of a treble clef staff in 6/8 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The treble staff contains six measures of music. The guitar tablature staff shows the following fret numbers: Measure 1: 0-2-0-0; Measure 2: 0-2-0-0; Measure 3: 7-7-4; Measure 4: 5-5-0; Measure 5: 2-2-5-4-2; Measure 6: 0-2-0-0. Chord names G, D, G, C, and G are written above the corresponding measures.

The second system of music consists of a treble clef staff in 6/8 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The treble staff contains six measures of music. The guitar tablature staff shows the following fret numbers: Measure 1: 2-2-5-4-2; Measure 2: 0-2-0-0; Measure 3: 10-10-10-7; Measure 4: 8-12; Measure 5: 5-0-0-3-5-2; Measure 6: 0. Chord names C, G, D, G, G, D, and G are written above the corresponding measures.

The third system of music consists of a treble clef staff in 6/8 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The treble staff contains six measures of music. The guitar tablature staff shows the following fret numbers: Measure 1: 0-2-0-0; Measure 2: 0-2-0-0; Measure 3: 7-7-7; Measure 4: 0-0-0; Measure 5: 2-2-0-4-2; Measure 6: 0-2-0-0. Chord names D, A, D, G, and D are written above the corresponding measures.

The fourth system of music consists of a treble clef staff in 6/8 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The treble staff contains six measures of music. The guitar tablature staff shows the following fret numbers: Measure 1: 2-2-0-4-2; Measure 2: 0-2-0-0; Measure 3: 10-10-10-7-7; Measure 4: 0-4; Measure 5: 0-0-0-1-2; Measure 6: 0. Chord names G, D, A, D, D, A, and D are written above the corresponding measures. A note in measure 4 is marked with a sharp sign (#).

Chords & intervals [intervals = the distance between notes].

Knowing the intervals between the strings in your chosen tuning will enable you to use the whole neck. This is particularly handy knowledge for making effective double stops. In the open tunings we have explored we cannot play a dominant 7th chord with the slide, one of the most useful blues chord sounds. The 7th chord has four notes: root, 3rd, 5th & 7th. The distance between the first two notes is a major 3rd; between 3rd & 5th it's a minor third, as it is between 5th & 7th.

minor THIRD major THIRD FOURTH FIFTH FIFTH major SIXTH OCTAVE OCTAVE major TENTH FOURTH

The above is for open G tuning. The numbers simply tell you how many letter names are included between the pairs of notes, so their relationship is defined by that number. Each interval has a certain sound quality.

Some intervals have a minor or major quality to their sound so are further defined as such. Thirds and sixths are the main intervals so defined. The tenth is an interval of a third plus an octave...a big distance therefore!

Below are the intervals for open D tuning:

FOURTH minor THIRD major THIRD FOURTH FIFTH major SIXTH FIFTH major SIXTH OCTAVE OCTAVE major TENTH

Open tunings have many more different intervals than standard tuning: using them to the best advantage is both sensible and creative, making slide playing more flexible than it seems at first, as well as more fun...

For a primer we are getting into deep water here!

If you learn some of this you won't have to stick to the particular fret a given chord would normally dictate. You will also be able to make interesting sounds by embellishing chords, turning them into 7ths and 9ths ['extended voicings'] by adding to the plain chords. This will create a more bluesy or jazzier sound.

Adding an extra note can change the chord that is being played:

For example, playing an F note to a background of a simple G [major] chord turns the chord into G7, the F note being the 7th note above G. Playing F and A notes to a background G chord turns it into G9.

Here's a demonstration, with just *some* implications noted:

The diagram shows a treble clef staff with a G chord (open G) and its extensions. The notes are G (open), B (2), D (3), G (open), B (2), D (3). The fretboard below shows the positions for various chords implied by these voicings:

	0	3	5	8	12	10	7	10	3	5
T	0	3	5	8	12	10	7	10	3	5
A	0		5							
B	0		5							

Implications listed below the staff:

- G chord implies G7
- C chord implies C7 or Gm
- G implies G or Cmaj7
- G9 implies G or Dm
- D implies D or Bm7 or F#m
- D7 implies D7 or Am
- C9 implies C9 or Gm
- Am implies Am or Fmaj7
- D9 implies D9

Above are interval examples helping you to extend or imply more complex chords in open G.

Two-note chords are ambiguous. They can imply different sounds. It depends upon context and what else is being played at the time.

Below are a few in open D, with *some* descriptions of implied results.

Again, the tip here is to explore sounds. Play your two-note voicings very cleanly, ensuring your damping of unwanted noise is good and listen carefully to the result. If it sounds good, it *is* good!

The diagram shows a treble clef staff with a D chord (open D) and its extensions. The notes are D (open), F# (2), A (3), D (open), F# (2), A (3). The fretboard below shows the positions for various chords implied by these voicings:

	0	3	5	5	8	10	10	3
T	0	3	5	5	8	10	10	3
A	0		5					
B	0		5					

Implications listed below the staff:

- D implies D or Am
- D7 implies D7 or Am
- D6 implies D6 or E7
- G implies G
- G7 implies G7
- A7 implies A7 or Em
- D9 implies D9
- G9 implies G9

A Farmyard blues...

This age-old country blues has come down to us in more recent times in many versions via the likes of Muddy Waters and Bo Diddley [without slide] and has also been used by George Thorogood, Joe Walsh and Eric Clapton and so on, most famously adapted perhaps by The Rolling Stones.

This is in open G.

Remember to slide up to those two-note and three-note chords: slow and slinky! This has a shuffle feel, similar to jazz swing. Say 'Humpty Dumpty': that's shuffle rhythm.

0 5 3 | 0 12 | 0 5 3 | 0 12 | 0 5 3 | 0 12 | 0 5 3 | 0 12 | 0 5 3

5 | 3 5 | 5 | 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 5 3 | 0 12 | 0 5 3 | 5 | 3 5 | 5 | 8

0 0 0 0 0 | 0 5 3 | 0 12 | 0 5 3 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6

5 | 0 5 3 | 0 12 | 0 5 3 | 0 12 | 0 5 3 | 0

This version of the basic riff is older, sounding more barnyard-like maybe...

Use fingers.....then slide³

1 1 3 | 3 0 | 1 1 3

It's about time we Dusted that Room in open D

An old Robert Johnson lick, adapted by Elmore James into a version rather like this example, but used the world over, including by Jeremy Spencer in early Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac recordings.

After the main riff, the guitarist 'defaults' to what the other [rhythm] guitarist would have been doing at that point, had there been one. So this is like playing two parts, labelled here with the slide sections and the fingered sections.

You don't have to do both. It requires a good deal of slickness. Where it goes to the G chord and A chord you could just sit the slide on frets 5 and 7 respectively of course. The turnaround is worth learning for more general use.

D slide: slide up to each of these triplets of notes, keeping the rhythm steady

fingers

TAB: 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 | 12 12 0 0 0 0 0 0

slide

fingers

TAB: 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 | 12 12 0 0 0 0 0 0

G

TAB: 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

D slide

fingers

A

TAB: 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 | 12 12 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 7 7 9 9 7 7 9 0

G

D turnaround

A slide

TAB: 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 | 0 3 0 2 0 1 0 | 0 7 7 7 7 7 7

Here are some little licks & phrases.
 Slide lines and the little s marks here show you two common ways to help
 guide you to some of the notes to which it's possible to slide, but by now
 you probably have a pretty good idea of good taste in these matters...

Open G licks:

12 12 11 12 12 10 12 11 12

13 15 15 10 12 12 14 12 13 12 12

12 12 12 11 10 10 12

s s s s

0 7 0 7 0 5 0 5 3 2 0

Some open D licks:

Treble clef staff: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4 | D4, E4, F4, G4, A4
 Slurs: s s s s s | s s s s s
 TAB: 12 12 12 12 12 | 12 10 12 11 12

Treble clef staff: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4 | B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6
 Slurs: s s s s s | s s s s s
 TAB: 6 8 8 8 8 | 7 10 12

Treble clef staff: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4 | B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6
 Slurs: s s s s s | s s s s s
 TAB: 8 10 11 12 | 12 11 10 12

Treble clef staff: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4 | B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6
 Slurs: s s s s s | s s s s s
 TAB: 3 2 1 0 | 0 3 0 5

Treble clef staff: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4 | B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6
 Slurs: s s s s s | s s s s s | s s s s s
 TAB: 0 7 0 7 7 3 2 0 | 0 5 0 5 5 3 2 0 | 3 0 0 3

Slide playing is all about listening. Throw away that automatic tuner, if you have one. If you can't tune well by ear then your slide technique will always be less than adequate.

Listen to your own playing and to those who do it well. Here is a list of just a few excellent and interesting slide guitarists:

Blind Willie McTell
Sonny Landreth
Roy Rogers
Kokomo Arnold
Ry Cooder
Bonnie Raitt
Joe Walsh
Duane Allman
Mississippi Fred McDowell
Tampa Red
Chris Whitley
Alvin Youngblood Hart
Johnny Winter
Keb Mo
Kelly Joe Phelps
Robert Johnson
Lee Roy Parnell
Muddy Waters
Elmore James
Chris Rea
Rory Gallagher...

...and try to go to see and hear some more local players too.

On the UK circuit this might include the following excellent exponents of slide styles:

Martin Harley
Andrew Bazeley
Kevin Brown
Martin Froud
Michael Messer
Martin Simpson
and many more
...what is it about all those Martins...?!

There are many more, of course, particularly among the earlier recordings, and *nothing* beats witnessing some real live playing.

If you want more information about more advanced techniques, song transcriptions and so on there are plenty of resources, from the Dunlop slide book, DVDs [Lee Roy Parnell and Roy Rogers have made especially good tuition audio visual recordings] and information [like Brad's Page of Steel] on the net.

TAB notation:

again, there are many places where information about TAB notation can be found.

Here is a brief summary for those new to this.

It's a very old notation, used mainly by lute composers. It can be useful for slide playing as it shows where you play.

The [6] lines represent the strings. The bottom line represents the bottom [thickest] string [oddly perhaps, the one nearest to you as you play]. Each number shows which fret you are using, the zero indicating that an open [unfretted] string is played.

Notes played together are simply stacked up in a vertical pile.

Slide technique, where specified, is usually shown by a straight line between notes and/or by the letter *s* above the TAB notation. A line from 'nowhere' leaves the decision to you about where you begin your slide. Lines between notes generally mean you connect those notes with the slide, just as the term 'gliss' [short for glissando] usually indicates a definite slide between notes, the second note not being re-articulated.

The image shows a musical score with two staves. The top staff is a treble clef with notes on the first string. The bottom staff is a TAB staff with fret numbers 10, 5, 4, 5, 6, 5, 9, 10. A 's' is above the first note, and 'gliss.' is above the last note. A bracket connects the 5, 4, 5 notes, and another bracket connects the 9, 10 notes.

Above is an example of various ways some publications have used to slide technique.

Here are some explanations:

- A
an acciaccatura or 'crushing note': a very short note followed very quickly by a longer note.
- B
an indeterminate slide or glissando line, showing that the main note should be approached by a slide movement. Exactly where the slide movement begins is left to the player.
- C
a line between two notes, showing that the first note is played, then the slide moves to the next note, creating that note without the need to repick.
- D
a line after a note showing that the slide falls away towards the headstock. A more exact point for this is sometimes shown, but the amount of slide is often left to the player.
- E
an acciaccatura with a slide line: slide very quickly from the E note ['fret' 2] to F ['fret' 3].
- F
a line with an abbreviation of 'glissando', the Italian term for a slide *sound*. It is a musical rather than technical term and can be applied to any instrument; it is up to the player how the actual sound is articulated.

There are other signs and symbols.

Some of those attempting to show very exact slide movements can make the page look very cluttered and end up be self-defeating.

Since slide playing is very much about personal taste and, above all, listening, it makes the page look clearer and is less patronising to the player to show very simple indications of possibilities.

In the example below we have shown two 's' signs: a small s indicating that the player slides up the note from a fret or two below it, according to taste and sound; a large S between the notes indicates sliding from one note to another, repicking the second note not being compulsory but possibly deemed necessary by the player's taste.

NB the small 's' below a note would indicate falling away from the note at some time after sounding it. This example would sound the same as the one above. We hope it looks clearer and trusts the player a little more.

So far we've been inconsistent about how slide instructions are shown. For the rest of the book we prefer to use these player-driven symbols as suggestions.

Oh When the Saints - in G

The first system of music for 'Oh When the Saints - in G' consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff shows a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, G4, A4, B4, G4, A4, B4, G4, A4, B4, G4, A4, B4, G4. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 12, 12, 10, 12, 12, 12, 10, 12, 12, 12, 10, 12, 12, 12, 10. Slurs are placed over the first three notes and the last three notes in both staves.

The second system of music for 'Oh When the Saints - in G' consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff shows a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, G4, A4, B4, G4, A4, B4, G4, A4, B4, G4, A4, B4, G4. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 12, 12, 10, 12, 12, 12, 10, 12, 12, 12, 10, 12, 12, 10, 12. Slurs are placed over the first three notes and the last three notes in both staves.

Oh When the Saints - in D

The first system of music for 'Oh When the Saints - in D' consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff shows a melody of quarter notes: D4, E4, F#4, D4, E4, F#4, D4, E4, F#4, D4, E4, F#4, D4, E4, F#4, D4. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 0, 4, 5, 7, 0, 4, 5, 7, 0, 4, 5, 7, 4, 0, 4, 2. Slurs are placed over the first three notes and the last three notes in both staves.

The second system of music for 'Oh When the Saints - in D' consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff shows a melody of quarter notes: D4, E4, F#4, D4, E4, F#4, D4, E4, F#4, D4, E4, F#4, D4, E4, F#4, D4. The TAB staff shows the corresponding fret numbers: 4, 4, 2, 0, 4, 7, 7, 5, 4, 5, 7, 4, 5, 7, 0. Slurs are placed over the first three notes and the last three notes in both staves.

St James Infirmary/Gambling Bar Room Blues in A minor for open G tuning

St James Infirmary/Gambling Bar Room Blues in A minor for open D tuning

Will the Circle be Unbroken in G

0 2 5 5 12-10 12 12 9 7 5 5 5 5 2 0

0 2 5 5 9 S 12 12 12 9 S 12 12 12 8 10 12-10 12

3 5 5 5 12-10 12 12 9 7 5 5 5 5 2 0

3 5 5 5 9 S 12 12 12 9 S 12 12 9 8 9 10 12

Will the Circle be Unbroken in D

System 1: Treble clef, common time. Notes: quarter rest, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter rest, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4. TAB: 0-2, 0-0, 4-2, 0-4, 4-2, 0-0, 0-0, 2-0. Slurs 's' above G4, A4, B4.

System 2: Treble clef, common time. Notes: quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter rest, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4. TAB: 3-5, 5-5, 12-12, 12-12, 12-12, 12-12, 5-7, 4-2, 0. Slurs 'S' above G4, A4, B4, G4, G4, A4, B4, G4.

System 3: Treble clef, common time. Notes: quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter rest, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4. TAB: 0-2, 0-0, 4-2, 0-4, 4-2, 0-0, 0-0, 0-0, 2-0. Slurs 's' above G4, A4, B4, G4, G4, A4, B4, G4.

System 4: Treble clef, common time. Notes: quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter rest, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4. TAB: 3-5, 5-5, 12-12, 12-12. Slurs 'S' above G4, A4, B4, G4.

System 5: Treble clef, common time. Notes: quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter rest, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4, quarter A4, quarter B4, quarter G4. TAB: 4-7, 7-4, 0-4, 7-7, 0-0, 0. Slurs 's' above G4, A4, B4, G4, G4, A4, B4, G4.

Kum Ba Ya - in G

First system of musical notation for 'Kum Ba Ya - in G'. The top staff is a treble clef with a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes, with some notes marked with an 's' for slide. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers: 0 0 | 0 0 0 | 5 5 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 0 | 5 4.

Second system of musical notation for 'Kum Ba Ya - in G'. The top staff continues the melody with a slide on the first note. The bottom staff has fret numbers: 7 | 0 0 | 0 0 0 | 5 5.

Third system of musical notation for 'Kum Ba Ya - in G'. The top staff shows a sequence of notes, including a chord with a sharp sign. The bottom staff has fret numbers: 0 | 5 | 4 0 | 7 7 | 0 5 | 7 5 | 0 0.

Kum Ba Ya - in D

First system of musical notation for 'Kum Ba Ya - in D'. The top staff is a treble clef with a common time signature (C). The melody features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and includes notes marked with an 's' for slide. The bottom staff has fret numbers: 0 4 | 7 7 7 | 9 9 7 | 0 4 | 7 7 7 | 5 4.

Second system of musical notation for 'Kum Ba Ya - in D'. The top staff continues the melody with slides. The bottom staff has fret numbers: 7 | 12 12 | 12 12 12 | 9 9.

Third system of musical notation for 'Kum Ba Ya - in D'. The top staff shows a sequence of notes, including a chord with a sharp sign. The bottom staff has fret numbers: 7 | 5 | 4 0 | 7 7 | 5 | 7 5 | 0 0.

St James Infirmary - in G minor for Open G tuning

s s s s s s s s
 T 12 11 15 15 15 13 11 12 11 13 15 15 17 13 12 11 13
 A
 B

This is a slightly different version of the 8-bar blues often known as *St James Infirmary*. The tune has been used for many sets of words and other songs.

If you are tuned to one key it doesn't mean you can't play in others. Many slide players use a 'favourite' tuning and play easily in any key.

s S s s s s
 T 15 14 15 13 11 12 11 12 12 11 10 11 12
 A
 B

St James Infirmary - in G minor for Open D tuning

s s s s s s s s
 T 13 13 12 12 12 10 13 13 13 10 12 17 17 13 12 13 10
 A
 B

s s s s
 T 12 11 12 10 13 13 13 13 13 16 15 13 13
 A
 B

Goodnight Ladies/'Nice One Cyril' & Shortnin' Bread

- in G

These two tunes work well as a duet.

Keeping good intonation between two slide guitars is quite a challenge.

Try to hear which notes are best to slide up to and/or between...

Goodnight Ladies/'Nice One Cyril' & Shortnin' Bread

- in D

more licks in G

s s s s s s s s
 T 10 10 10 7 7 0 3 3 0 0 2 0 3 2 0 5 3 5 3
 A
 B

s s s s s s s s
 T 12 10 12 10 12 5 6 7 7 3 4 5 5
 A
 B

more licks in D

s s s s s s s s
 T 10 10 10 7 7 12 12 11 12 3 5 5 8 7 0 10 10 10 12 12
 A
 B

s s s s s s s s
 T 0 3 0 3 5 3 0 3 0 5 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 3 5 5 3 0
 A
 B

When the Roll is Called up Yonder - in D

...a great old hymn tune from 1893 [James Black], with some thumb picking bass

The first system of music consists of a treble clef staff with a common time signature (C). The melody is written in D major. Below the treble staff is a guitar tablature (TAB) with two staves labeled 'T' (treble) and 'A' (bass). The TAB includes fret numbers (0, 2, 4, 5) and slurs over the strings. The melody features a series of eighth and quarter notes, with a final measure containing a complex chordal structure.

*slurs [curved lines] have been used in this piece to suggest slide points. It can be played as a fingerstyle piece, without slide.

The second system continues the melody and includes a guitar tablature. The treble staff shows a slur over the first few notes. The TAB includes a 7-fret barre indicated by a '7' with a vertical line through it. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes, and the TAB provides corresponding fret numbers and slurs.

The third system features a treble staff with a slur over a group of notes. The guitar tablature includes a 7-fret barre and the instruction "use fingers here" written above the treble staff. The TAB shows fret numbers 7, 5, 4, 5, 7, 4, 4, 4 for the treble staff and 0, 5, 4, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0 for the bass staff.

The fourth system continues the melody with a treble staff and guitar tablature. The TAB includes fret numbers 4, 5, 5, 4, 2, 4, 5, 2, 4, 5, 4, 7, 7, 4, 2, 0. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes.

The fifth system is the final system on the page, showing the concluding notes of the melody. The treble staff has a slur over the final notes. The guitar tablature includes fret numbers 5, 5, 5, 2, 2, 4, 4, 0, 2, 7, 5, 4, 0.

time for... a roll and a tumble... - in G

s s s etc

This is a time-honoured riff in the style of Muddy Waters and Hambone Willie Newburn. No doubt they were inspired by the previous generations of slide guitarists just as they have inspired subsequent generations.

some more roll and tumble... - in D

System 1: Treble clef, common time. Tablature: C, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 0.

System 2: Treble clef. Tablature: 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 0, 3, 5, 5, 5.

System 3: Treble clef. Tablature: 5, 5, 5, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 7, 7, 0, 3, 2, 0, 3, 0.

System 4: Treble clef. Tablature: 5, 5, 0, 3, 2, 0, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0.

12-bar with blues 'bounce' in G

No slide here! But it's a useful format to know. Practise it with the slide on your hand.

Chord changes: G⁵ G⁶ G⁷ G⁶ etc G A B^b B

Fretting (A/B strings):
 Bar 1: 0 0 2 0 3 0 2 0
 Bar 2: 0 0 2 0 3 0 2 0
 Bar 3: 0 0 2 0 3 0 2 0
 Bar 4: 0 0 2 2 3 3 4 4

Place the first finger over both strings [a mini barre] to form the basis of the C and D chords. Then just 'bounce' a finger [third or little] on and off the other fret to give that familiar blues sound, first made famous by players such as Jimmy Reed, so much so that it is sometimes called 'doing the Jimmy Reed'.

We've shown it with an optional 7th for an extra blues feel. If you prefer not to use this, simply replace it with the '5' chord [all open strings in the case of the G here], keeping it simple but still effective.

This can form the basis of any blues 12-bar. Try it with the shuffle ['Humpty Dumpty'] feel or straight [even notes] for a more rocky sound. Try to listen to the form while you play: it should have an inevitability about it that soon gets inside you. You can then feel where the changes are rather than have to count.

Chord changes: C⁵ C⁶ C⁵ C⁶

Fretting (A/B strings):
 Bar 1: 5 5 7 5 5 7 5 5
 Bar 2: 5 5 7 5 5 7 5 5
 Bar 3: 0 0 2 0 3 0 2 0
 Bar 4: 0 0 2 0 3 0 2 0

Try adding some slide licks in place of some of the bars - keep the form however. Also remember to keep it simple. Good slide fills do not have to be complicated, in fact they are all the better if they are not. The singing in such a blues format normally [not always] takes places on bars 1 & 2, 5 & 6 and 9 & 10. Your slide fills could complement this.

When accompanying a singer there is little point playing a tasty slide lick while the singer sings: it won't be heard properly and your singer may find it irritating. Listen well and contribute to the song, filling musical 'holes'. If there is plenty of musical interest going on at certain points, then no more is needed. You've heard of 'less is more' and never is this truer than in music.

Chord changes: D⁵ D⁶

Fretting (A/B strings):
 Bar 1: 7 7 9 7 7 9 7 7
 Bar 2: 5 5 7 5 5 7 5 5
 Bar 3: 0 0 2 0 3 0 2 0
 Bar 4: 0 5 6 7 0

12-bar with blues 'bounce' in D

[see comments on previous page]

You'll notice an alternative voicing here at bar 9; such alternatives abound with guitar. There's no hard and fast rule: explore using your ear to find your own alternative ways to play chords, melodies, licks.

D⁵ D⁶ D⁷ D⁶ etc D⁵ E⁵ F⁵ F^{#5}

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

[see comments on previous page]

G⁵ G⁶ G⁵ G⁶

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

You'll notice an alternative voicing here at bar 9; such alternatives abound with guitar. There's no hard and fast rule: explore using your ear to find your own alternative ways to play chords, melodies, licks.

alternative:

T
A
B 7 7 9 7 7 7 9

A⁵ A⁶ A⁵ A⁶

T
A
B 0 0 2 0 0 0 2 0 5 5 7 5 5 5 7 5 0 0 2 0 3 0 2 0 0 5 6 7

Here's a mean old tune inspired by Arthur Crudup...

...and Little Walter; this sloppy but chunky, heavy feel also inspired Eric Clapton.

[in G]

G G

TAB 0 2 0 || 3 0 2 0 3 0 0 2 0

S

G G7

TAB 3 0 3 3 | 0 5 3

C7 C7

TAB 3 0 2 0 | 2 0 3 0 3 2

S

G G

TAB 0 4 5 | 0 0 0 0

S

D7 C7 G D7

TAB 7 7 7 7 | 5 4 5 | 0 3 3 | 0

and a growly version in open D...

D D

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

D D⁷

T
A
B 3 0 2 3 0 5 3

G⁷ G⁷

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

D D

T
A
B 0 4 5 0 0 0 0

A⁷ G⁷ D A⁷

T
A
B 7 7 7 7 5 4 5 0 2 3 0

in standard tuning:
If it hurts you, it hurts me...

...based on a much-covered 8-bar lick developed by Elmore James.
Take this quite slow, with a heavy shuffle feel & lots of sustain.

Be very careful with the damping on this one, as with all slide work undertaken in standard tuning. It can also be played in D, in open D tuning, to great effect - try doing this by ear. Any ear-study exercise is excellent training for your slide playing and your musicianship.

The first system of music consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff shows a melody with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). There are triplets over the 3rd and 6th measures. The guitar TAB staff shows fret numbers: 7-7-5, 7-7-5, 5, 7-5, 7, 5, 7-7-5-3, 0, 7-7. Chord symbols above the TAB are: s, B, B6, B, B6, B (etc), E, E.

The second system of music consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The treble staff shows a melody with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). There are triplets over the 3rd and 6th measures. The guitar TAB staff shows fret numbers: 11-11-7, 9, 11-7, 7, 7, 10-9-8, 7. Chord symbols above the TAB are: B, F#, B, F#.

and in open G...just to that it's sometimes a little awkward in an inappropriate tuning...
but not impossible!

The first system of music features a treble clef staff with a melodic line. The notes are G4, A4, B4, G4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, G4, F#4, G4. There are two triplet markings (3) over the G4-A4-B4 and G4-F#4-G4 groups. The guitar TAB staff below shows fret numbers: 9-9-7, 9, 9-9-7, 5, 7, 9-7-7. Chord symbols above the TAB are B, B6, B, B6, B (etc).

The second system of music features a treble clef staff with a melodic line. The notes are G4, A4, B4, G4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, G4, F#4, G4. There is a triplet marking (3) over the G4-A4-B4 group. The guitar TAB staff below shows fret numbers: 5, 4-4-2-0, 0, 7-9-9. Chord symbols above the TAB are E, E.

The third system of music features a treble clef staff with a melodic line. The notes are G4, A4, B4, G4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, G4, F#4, G4. There is a triplet marking (3) over the G4-A4-B4 group. The guitar TAB staff below shows fret numbers: 13, 13-13-9, 11, 13, 12-11, 12-10-9-8, 11. Chord symbols above the TAB are B, F#, B, F#.

Finale blues in G, using fingers with slide fills

The first system consists of a treble clef staff with a melody and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody starts with a G4 note, followed by a triplet of A4, B4, and C5, then a triplet of D5, E5, and F5, and finally a triplet of G5, A5, and B5. The tablature shows the corresponding fret numbers: 0, 3, 0, 3, 2, 0, 2, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 7, 0.

The second system continues the melody and tablature. The melody features a slide fill from G4 to A4. The tablature includes a slide instruction 'S' at the end of the second measure. The fret numbers are: 0, 1, 3, 1, 0, 2, 3, 2, 0, 0, 0, 5, 0, 2, 5, 3, 2.

The third system continues the melody and tablature. The melody features a triplet of G5, A5, and B5. The tablature includes a triplet instruction '3' at the end of the second measure. The fret numbers are: 5, 6, 5, 6, 5, 6, 5, 3, 2, 0, 1, 3, 1, 0, 1, 3, 3, 0, 3.

The fourth system continues the melody and tablature. The melody features a triplet of G5, A5, and B5. The tablature includes a triplet instruction '3' at the end of the second measure. The fret numbers are: 10, 9, 8, 7, 7, 6, 5, 0, 8, 7, 6, 5, 6, 5, 3, 0, 2, 3, 2, 0, 0, 0, 5, 0, 2, 3.

Finale blues in D, using fingers with slide fills

0 3 0 3 | 0 4 0 | 3 0 0 3 0 3 | 0 4 0 | 0 12 10 0 3 0 3

5 5 3 3 5 3 | 5 5 3 3 5 3 | 4 0 | 3 0 0 3 0 6

7 7 5 5 7 0 | 5 5 3 3 5 3 | 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 0 0 | 0 3 0 3 0 0