

Lesson 1 - Slurs

DVD 1

In This Lesson: In this lesson you'll learn how to do hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides, oh my! This is where the cool kids come out to play and we learn the real “tricks” of lead guitar.

A slur is an umbrella term for any note that is not articulated (meaning not picked.) Slurs fall into 3 categories: *Hammer-Ons*, *Pull-Offs*, and *Slides*.

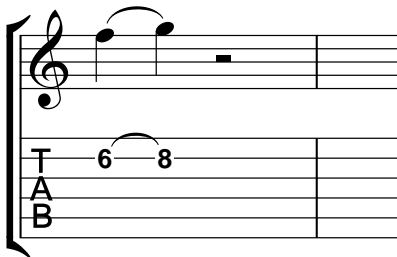
A slur is notated in the music with a small arc between the notes. If the notes were the same, we'd call this a tie. But since the notes are different, it is a slur.

Hammer-ons happen from one note to a note that is higher in pitch. Pull-offs happen from one note to another note that is lower in pitch. Slides can go either way, and are notated with a straight, sloping line between the notes in addition to the slur marking.

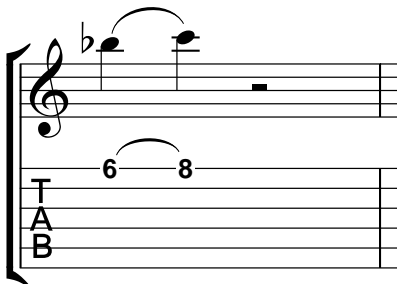
Let's take a look at a couple of hammer-on examples:

[Examples 1 - 4 are on CD1, Track 1]

Example 1



Example 2



Now, by contrast here are a couple of pull-off examples:

Example 3

Musical notation for Example 3. The top staff is a treble clef with a G-clef. It shows a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), and a whole rest. A slur is placed over the G4, A4, and Bb4 notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with a T, A, and B string indicator. It shows an 8th fret on the A string and a 6th fret on the B string, with a slur over both and a pull-off symbol (a diagonal line) between them.

Example 4

Musical notation for Example 4. The top staff is a treble clef with a G-clef. It shows a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), and a whole rest. A slur is placed over the G4, A4, and B4 notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with a T, A, and B string indicator. It shows an 8th fret on the A string and a 6th fret on the B string, with a slur over both and a pull-off symbol (a diagonal line) between them.

Some slides up:

[Examples 5-8 are on CD1, Track 2]

Example 5

Musical notation for Example 5. The top staff is a treble clef with a G-clef. It shows a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), and a whole rest. A slur is placed over the G4, A4, and B4 notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with a T, A, and B string indicator. It shows a 6th fret on the A string and an 8th fret on the B string, with a slur over both and a slide-up symbol (a diagonal line with an arrow) between them.

Example 6

Example 6 shows a musical phrase in a treble clef staff with a flat key signature. The melody consists of a quarter note G4 (with a flat), a quarter note A4, and a quarter rest. A slur is placed over the G4 and A4 notes. Below the staff is a guitar tab with fret numbers 6 and 8, with a diagonal line indicating a slide from fret 6 to fret 8.

And some slides down:

Example 7

Example 7 shows a musical phrase in a treble clef staff with a flat key signature. The melody consists of a quarter note G4 (with a flat), a quarter note A4, and a quarter rest. A slur is placed over the G4 and A4 notes. Below the staff is a guitar tab with fret numbers 8 and 6, with a diagonal line indicating a slide from fret 8 to fret 6.

Example 8

Example 8 shows a musical phrase in a treble clef staff with a flat key signature. The melody consists of a quarter note G4 (with a flat), a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4 (with a flat). A slur is placed over the G4, A4, and B4 notes. Below the staff is a guitar tab with fret numbers 8 and 6, with a diagonal line indicating a slide from fret 8 to fret 6.

Usually, when you use a hammer-on or pull-off, it is used in a combination. So here is a hammer-on used with another note, followed by a pull-off/extra note combination.

Example 9 on CD1, Track 3

Musical notation for Example 9. The top staff is a treble clef with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, an eighth note Bb4, and a quarter rest. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers 6, 8, and 6. The letters T, A, and B are written vertically on the left side of the TAB staff.

Example 10 on CD1, Track 4

Musical notation for Example 10. The top staff is a treble clef with an eighth note G4, an eighth note A4, an eighth note Bb4, and a quarter rest. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers 8, 6, and 8. The letters T, A, and B are written vertically on the left side of the TAB staff.

If we put a hammer-on and pull-off together in a quick succession, we get what I call a Tweedly And yes, that's the scientific, theoretical term for it :)

Example 11 on CD1, Track 5

Musical notation for Example 11. The top staff is a treble clef with a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, an eighth note Bb4, and a quarter rest. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers 6, 8, and 6. The letters T, A, and B are written vertically on the left side of the TAB staff.

Example 12 on CD1, Track 6

And again, usually tweedlies are combined with other notes to form cool licks:

Example 13 on CD1, Track 7

Example 14 on CD1, Track 8

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON: Make sure you are comfortable playing along with the recordings of these licks, either on the CD or the DVD, whatever works for you.

One of the best ways to practice these little licks and phrases is just sitting around in front of the TV. When the commercials come on, just mute the sound and play a lick for a while.

Or while you're waiting on something to cook, someone to get ready, or you just have a few minutes before you have to go somewhere. 3 minutes of noodling on one of these little licks will pay off big time as the weeks progress.