

## Buying A New Guitar

There are countless styles of guitars available, and everyone has their own personalities and tastes. Above all, the instrument should inspire you, and make you want to practice more frequently. From deciding between types and styles, to deciding between which guitar sizes to buy, this guitar buying guide will help simplify the process of finding the best beginner guitar for you. One of the questions we get most often at School of Rock is which guitar parents should buy for their child who wants to start learning to play. Here are a couple of pointers to help you find out how to buy a guitar for a beginning musician. Once you've put a sweet guitar into your kid's hands, come to School of Rock for a tour and free trial lesson, and we'll help them love playing it. There are a few general categories of guitar that are very popular. These styles have very different sound and playability characteristics. Deciding the style of which guitar to buy in advance will help narrow down your choices considerably. Out of all the types of guitars, electric guitars are by far the most popular style used in modern music. Electrics produce only the faintest of sound on their own, but once connected to an amplifier they open up a world of potential for a variety of sounds. These guitars are primarily used in rock, metal, pop, blues, jazz, country, and R&B. Acoustic guitars are built to produce a rich sound with no electric amplification. Out of all types of guitars, they are most commonly used in genres like folk, singer-songwriter, country, and bluegrass, but are occasionally used in rock, blues, and R&B as well. A lot of parents ask about the difference between starting on acoustic guitar versus electric guitar. At the core, they are the same instrument, and concepts learned on one are immediately transferable to the other. However, an electric guitar may be the best beginner guitar for learning, as it is usually a little easier to play since the neck is narrower and the strings are easier to press down. If you feel like you need a guitar that combines the advantages of electric and acoustic, you may want to consider an acoustic-electric guitar. Since performers often use acoustic guitars in large venues, acoustic guitar makers produce models that have built-in microphones, or pickups. The advantage is that these guitars function and sound exactly like an acoustic guitar, but when needed, they can be plugged in and amplified through an amp or house sound system. Most acoustic-electric guitars have some level of tone control in the form of an on-board equalizer. The drawback is that because these guitars have electronic hardware not found in acoustic guitars, you can expect to pay more. But the cost may be comparable to an electric guitar, so depending on the style of music you want to play, an acoustic-electric may be an option. There's no way to poke and prod anything you buy online before it's at your door, so if you're shopping in person, here are a couple of things to watch out for. Important note about new instruments: One of the ways that guitar manufacturers save cost is by putting minimal labor into the final setup of the instrument. First, if the playing sounds terrible, odds are it's not the sales person (who is likely a decent guitar player), it's a difficult instrument to play. The second reason to have the instrument tuned up is to check the action. If the guitar has a bow or back bow, it can make playing the guitar more difficult, especially for beginners. If you're unsure of how to check your guitar's neck relief, ask a professional. They should be able to check and identify any potential problems with your guitar neck, and make corrections as needed. The action of a guitar or bass is how the strings relate to the fretboard. Check The action is something that can be adjusted pretty easily, but if the strings are super far from the neck at the point where the neck and body of the guitar meet or the neck is noticeably curved, it might be an instrument to pass up. If the guitar sounds all right and the action doesn't look way out of whack, see if you can comfortably reach the entire fretboard. Run your finger along each side of the neck to see whether you can feel any of the ends of the metal frets sticking out. If you feel some that aren't level with the wood, it doesn't mean the instrument is garbage or that brand or model are no good, but you can probably find another guitar or bass that doesn't already have that problem. Frets that aren't level with the wood can be fixed, but there's no reason to deal with that if you're buying a new instrument. If you're looking at an electric guitar, get it plugged into an amp and toggle all the switches and turn all the knobs a few times. If you hear any crackling sounds, it means some of the internal electronics may be a little dirty. Buying a used guitar can be a great way for a young player to move up to a pro-level instrument. High-end guitars will age well if cared for, and there are a lot of professional musicians using fifty to sixty year-old classic models from manufacturers like Fender and Gibson. These scaled down models are easier to play for young students because the neck is shorter, making them short scale guitars. Scale length is the measurement of the string length between the nut and saddle. Basically, this is the part of the string that vibrates when played. A scale length of 25 to 25.5 inches is considered long scale, which is standard on a full sized guitar. Anything between 24.5 and 21 inches is short scale. Because all scale lengths use the same strings, a shorter scale guitar will have less tension on the strings when tuned. This makes the strings easier to fret for a younger student. There are lots of great options for a first guitar that are inexpensive and totally decent. If cost is your main consideration, you can still give your budding musician a good starter guitar they'll feel good about bringing to band practice. If your kid is ready for something a little more serious, there are a lot of possibilities for which guitar to buy. Both brands have a range of options for first-time players, such as starter packs that include a guitar, amp, cable, and all the trimmings that will get your kid plugged in and ready to shred the classics for a couple hundred bucks and change. Both brands also have small scale options for younger students: Fender Squier, Fender Squier Mini, and Epiphone Junior. As a buyer, you may not want to purchase an expensive instrument for a beginner who is just learning the guitar, but if you take a step up the cost scale there are enough options to make your head spin. There are nicer Fenders and Gibsons, along with other more upscale brands such as PRS (Paul Reed Smith). Some lesser known brands, such as Gretsch and Schecter, also offer guitars with unique looks and sounds. All of these brands have good reputations for making quality instruments, but the most important thing is whether the guitar inspires the student and makes them want to play. We recommend that you go into a store with a small list of some professional guitar players or guitar songs you like. Even if you have no musical experience, the salesperson most likely does. They can get a sense of what kind of sound you like, and explain or demonstrate the differences in sound of the varieties of guitar to help you decide on an instrument. The last thing you want, once you've picked out the right guitar for your kid, is to have it sit untouched for the rest of her/his childhood. At School of Rock, we focus on teaching students to enjoy playing their instrument first and build the broader concepts of music on top of that foundation, using performance as the motivation and the payoff. **I recommend spending a few minutes playing song parts that you already know really well. This lets you focus on how the guitar plays instead of worrying about what the next note or chord should be.** One point thing to always keep in mind is whether the deal sounds too good to be true. There have been countless guitarists over the years who have been sucked into spending way too much money on either a fake guitar or a guitar with major issues. You can tell if a guitar is fake by learning as much as you can about what the real guitar should look like. Compare photos of real guitars and look for any discrepancies in the hardware used, logo position, or finish

quality. Buying a used guitar is a great way to save money while still getting a good quality guitar. If you know what to check, you can get yourself a high-quality guitar for a serious discount compared to a new guitar. Before you buy a guitar, you should know what type of guitar suits you best and why. Research different makes and models before you go to a guitar store so you know what other options you might want to consider. The best songs to play to test out a guitar are songs you know really well. Play songs that you have already memorized so you can focus your attention on how comfortable the guitar feels to play and how good it sounds. Testing the guitar is only one part of the buying process. Read this guide on buying a used guitar for more advice on where to look for used guitars, how to negotiate a better price, and how to avoid getting scammed. The very first thing you have to ask yourself is how much do you want to spend. Having this figured out early on will save you lots of time when searching your local guitar shop. A starter guitar can go for around \$50-60 and the prices after that point increase with things like the brand, materials, quality, and accessories such as a built in tuner or pickup. Strap locks are another straightforward and cheap modification you can make to your guitar, to ensure that your strap always stays put and your prized instrument stays safe while you play. The simplest upgrade you can make is to change the string trees. Simply unscrew the old one and screw the new one in. A good string tree will reduce friction on the string, allowing it to stay in tune, especially if you use the tremolo or bend strings a lot.

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