Bass Clef with 4-, 5-, and 6-Line Tab Staves: A Writing and Practice Guide

Original tasks 1, 2, 3 / complete keys

Task 1

A practice page contains one bass clef staff and two tab staves: one with four lines and one with six lines. Count the total number of horizontal lines.

Answer: 5 + 4 + 6 = 15 lines.

Reason: The bass clef staff has five lines. The four-line tab staff adds four, and the six-line tab staff adds six. Summing gives fifteen.

Check: Recount each staff separately and add again; confirm the sum is 15.

Task 2

You leave two gaps of 10 mm between three staves on a page. Each staff occupies 12 mm of height. Using hypothetical values, what vertical space do the staves and gaps use together?

Answer: 3 × 12 = 36 mm for staves; 2 × 10 = 20 mm for gaps; total = 56 mm.

Reason: Multiply staff height by the number of staves, multiply gap size by the number of gaps, then add the two products.

Check: Add 12 + 10 + 12 + 10 + 12 = 56 mm as a sequential check.

Task 3

A tab staff has six lines. The top line is tuned to the highest string and the bottom line to the lowest. If a fret number 3 is written on the second line from the top, which string does it refer to? Describe the string position without naming a specific tuning.

Answer: It refers to the second-highest string in the tuning shown beside the staff.

Reason: Each line represents one string, ordered from highest at the top to lowest at the bottom. The second line from the top is therefore the second-highest string.

Check: Count lines from the top: first line highest, second line second-highest; confirm the number is on that line.

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Original tasks 4 / complete keys

Task 4

You are checking a page with one bass clef staff, one four-line tab staff, one five-line tab staff, and one six-line tab staff. You count 19 lines. Is the count correct? Show the arithmetic.

Answer: No. The correct count is 5 + 4 + 5 + 6 = 20 lines.

Reason: Add the line counts of all four staves. The bass clef staff contributes five, and the tab staves contribute four, five, and six.

Check: Recount each staff and add in a different order, for example 6 + 5 + 4 + 5 = 20.

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Source rubric / reflection

- [ ] Line counts match the intended instruments: four, five, and six lines.
- [ ] Bass clef symbol is present at the start of the clef staff.
- [ ] Each tab staff has a clear TAB mark and a tuning label.
- [ ] Rhythm notation space is reserved above the clef staff and kept clear.
- [ ] X-height convention is baseline to midline and applied consistently; letter style may vary.
- [ ] Arithmetic for line counts and spacing is correct and uses consistent units.
- [ ] All numerical values are labelled as hypothetical examples or replaced by actual measurements.

Reflection: What did you check, what did you change, and what will you try next?