



“Student Worthy” Guitar Check List

There are a number of factors to consider when choosing a guitar for the student including: how old are you (the student) and how big? What type of music do you want to play? Do you want to play with other? Is the student a brand new beginner or have some experience?

With that in mind, here is a checklist run a potential guitar through that would make it student worthy:

- ☐ Is the size appropriate for the age and size of the student (see chart on next page)?
- ☐ Does the guitar have a reasonably low “action”, or height from the fret board? Strings will be easier to press down with a low action. Usually 1/8 to 3/16” is about right. Electric guitars generally have lower action than acoustic guitars.
- ☐ Do the strings buzz when played? Preferably by a competent guitarist (i.e. friend, teacher, etc.) The strings may buzz also because a student doesn’t have their fingers in quite the right place.
- ☐ Does the neck of the guitar straight or is it bowed badly? A very slight upward can be fine if it’s even across the neck. Back bow is not good.
- ☐ Do the tuning keys turn smoothly?
- ☐ Does it sound like the kind of music you want to play when played by a competent guitarist?
- ☐ Is the guitar of a sufficient quality to support learning and “inspire” the student to want to play more when they play something correctly?
- ☐ Is the guitar structurally made well enough to hold up over time?
- ☐ How does it feel when you hold it? How heavy is it? It is likely to be somewhat awkward because you are new, but compare it to other guitars.
- ☐ Do you like how it looks? Try to be honest. For some people this is very important and may decide if they will practice or not.
- ☐ Does the guitar have metal or nylon strings? How much pain are you willing to endure?

Guitar Student Size Chart

| Age | Height of Player | Size of Guitar |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 4-6 years old | 3'3" to 3'9" | 1/4-Size |
| 5-8 years old | 3'10" to 4'5" | 1/2-Size |
| 8-11 years old | 4'6" to 4'11" | 3/4-Size |
| 11-Adult | 5' or taller | 4/4-Size |

When a child is between a 3/4 and 4/4 guitar in terms of their age or height, I prefer they get the larger guitar. Children grow quickly. Why buy a smaller guitar if you'll need to buy a larger one in a few months.

That said, even though a child can learn to play on a guitar that's much too big for them, it will be much easier to get their fingers around the neck of the appropriate size guitar.