
Music/Guitar Writing Sample
Keyword: buying your first guitar

Before Buying Your First Guitar, Four Questions You Must Answer

If you're a beginner and have the insatiable itch to play and buy your first guitar, welcome to the club! But before you spend your hard-earned cash, there are a few important questions to answer. Seems like most articles I've seen about buying your first guitar focus on the price, brands, and models. In this post, let's follow a different approach.

In my 30+ years of playing, I've been asked many times, "what kind of guitar should I get?" Here are the first four questions I ask that will help you get the perfect first guitar.



Question 1: What kind of music do you love?

Notice right from the start that you shouldn't think about the price of a new guitar, but the most important thing about all this: **THE MUSIC!**

So my first question to newbies is what kind of music do you love or love to listen to? Even if you love all kinds, you're still drawn to one or two styles more than others. Focusing on the music you love will lead you to the kind of music you want to play, which is actually my second question...

Question 2: What kind of music do you want to play?

Here I'm still trying to dig deep to learn about the music that is attractive to you.

Sometimes the music you love can be different than the music you actually want to play.

I'm sure at times you've gone off on listening tangents to discover and explore other interesting musical styles. This is healthy and encouraged. Yet, there will always be a common thread in the music you love and truly want to play. It's the music you find yourself going back to time and time again, like an old friend or your favorite pair of jeans.

Question 3: Who do you want to play like?

When answering Questions 1 and 2, there's a reason you're attracted to that particular kind of music. It might be the sound and style, but it's probably because you heard an amazing artist playing it.

Your ears lit up.

So who's that artist for you? What's exciting about their sound and style?

Knowing who you want to play like is *not* being a copycat or unoriginal. Even the best artists get inspiration and influence from others. There will be plenty of time for you to develop your own sound and style over the years. For now, there is no shame in modeling your favorite player(s).



One huge benefit of studying your favorite guitarist is that you can also learn about the equipment and guitar they use. If they're at the top of their game, sure, they're probably using the best, most expensive gear. But it's still a great way to point you in the right direction.

For example, if you love the blues and your fave guitarist plays an expensive [Fender Strat](#), check what else [Fender](#) has to offer in your price range.

Which leads to the last question...

Question 4: How much do you want to spend?

This is usually my last question before recommending reviews, shops, websites, or brands to check out. Notice how this is the first time I've asked about money, yet it's the last question!

Don't forget, the most important questions about buying your first guitar should be about music, not money.

So how much should you spend when buying your first guitar?

Some say don't spend too much until you have a couple years of experience under your belt.

Some say don't spend too much just in case you don't love playing (yeah right!).

Some say rent a guitar first (this is what I did when I first started).

And yet others say to borrow one from a friend or try out a bunch at your local guitar shop.

It's all good advice and if any of it resonates with you, try it out.



But when it comes time to actually lay out cold hard cash for your first guitar, my advice is to ***get the best guitar you can afford right now.***

There are many benefits to this:

- If your guitar is higher quality, you'll experience an "ease of playing" that's sometimes missing in cheaper guitars. It will be a joy to play and you won't have to "fight" the instrument
- Because it will be a joy to play, you won't get discouraged as often and you'll play more (which means you'll get better, faster)
- Higher-quality guitars generally sound better
- You'll have a performance-ready instrument if you want to start playing live in front of audiences (do this!)
- Higher-quality guitars tend to have better resale value should you want to upgrade in the future. (Pro tip: don't sell a great guitar if you can help it! You'll regret it. Speaking from experience here...)

Here's the good news: technology and manufacturing innovations have made it possible that even some beginner guitars feel and sound pretty impressive. So do your research!

Conclusion

So those are the best four questions to ask yourself before buying your first guitar. The answers will give deep insight and will lead you to what really matters: getting the absolute best first guitar so you can play the music you are hearing in your head and heart.

Now answer those questions, do your research, then buy your first guitar. And at that point, your only job will be to follow the advice of the late, great Frank Zappa: "[Shut Up 'n Play Yer Guitar](#)".

