Clinical Guitar Workshop:
A Song-learning Process for Modern Music Therapists

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Purpose:

Learn accompaniment strategies for multiple styles.

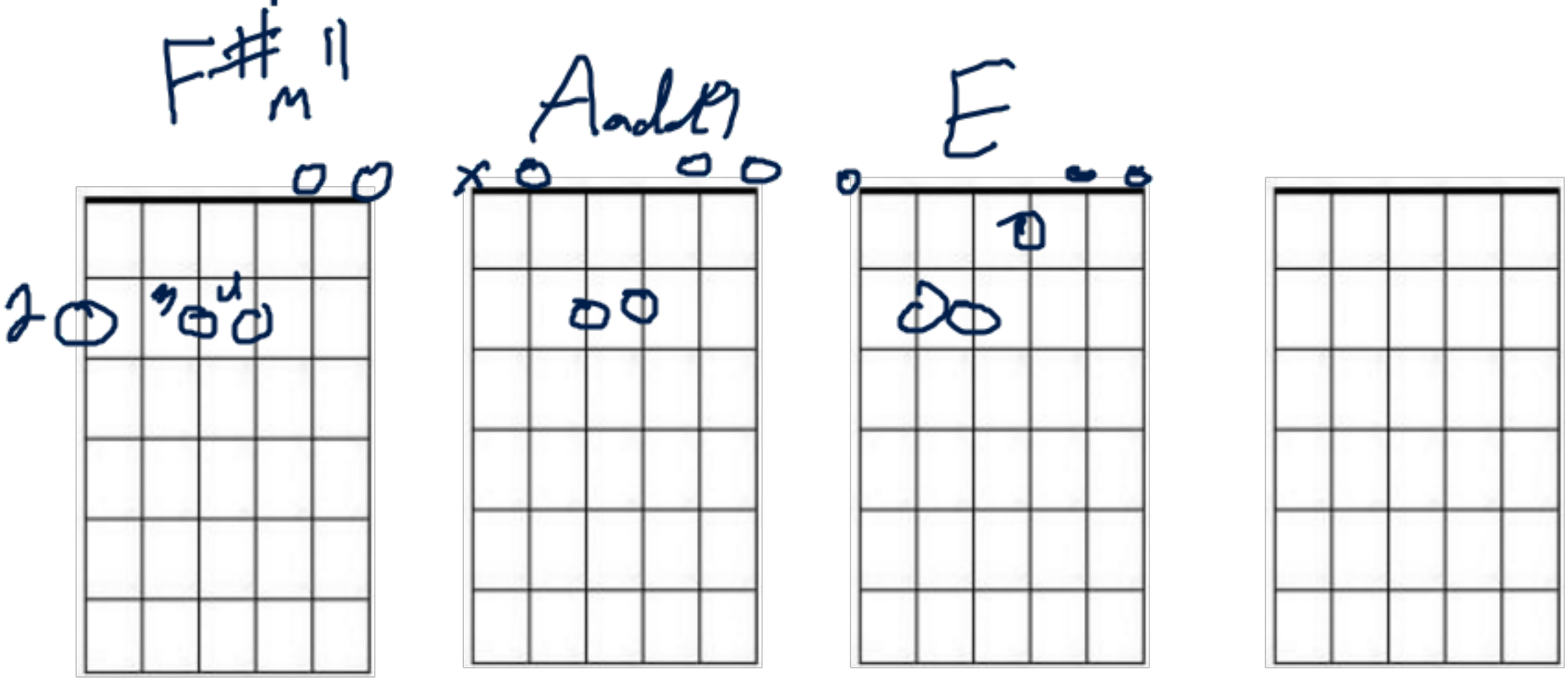
Develop a process for learning new songs on guitar.

Steps for Learning New Songs

1. Listen to the original or most popular version. There may be one or more popular recordings. Try to find out which one your client is most familiar with.
2. Learn basic vocal melody and harmonic accompaniment. If you need to, learn these separately before putting them together.
3. Listen to the drums and underlying rhythmic patterns. What beats are accented?
4. Play along with the recording for practice, if possible.

5. Transpose to an appropriate key if necessary.
6. Practice song in a couple different styles. For example, how would you play it if you were trying to help your client relax? How would you play it if you were facilitating a group singing intervention for a large group?
7. Explore opportunities for harmonic or melodic embellishment.

Example 1: Shake It Off

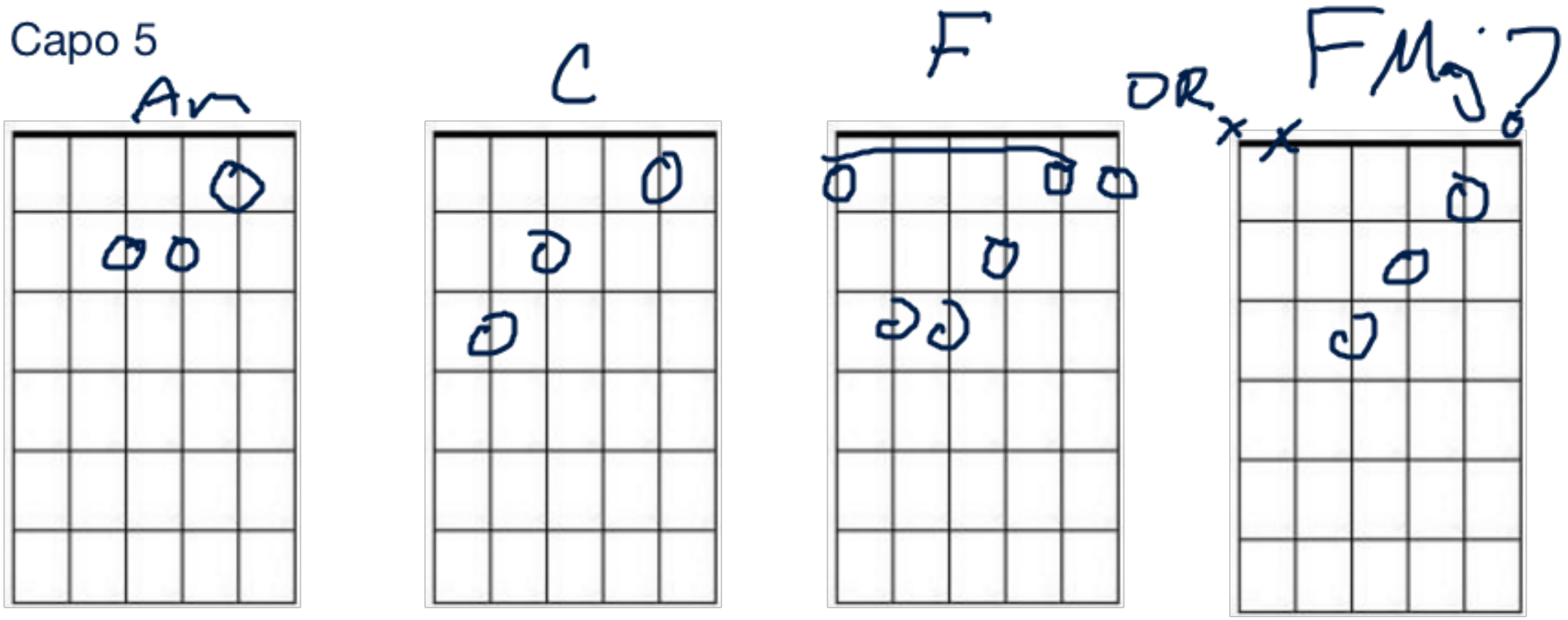


Original:
Am C G
ii IV I

Transposed into E:
F#m A E

Example 2: Happier

Capo 5

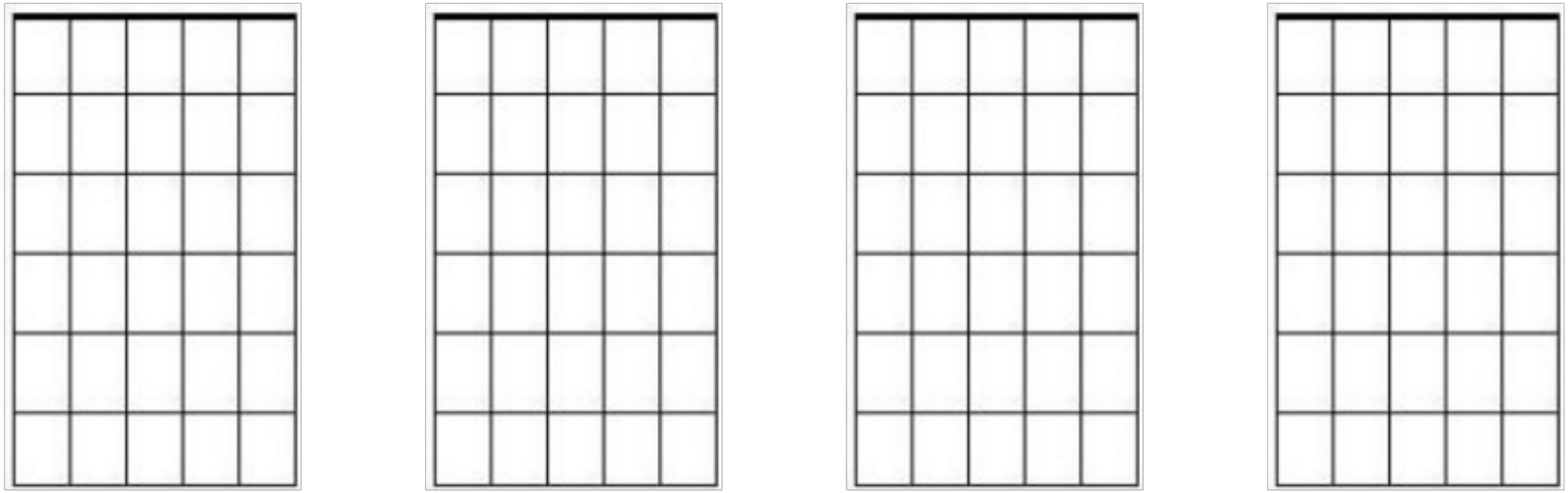
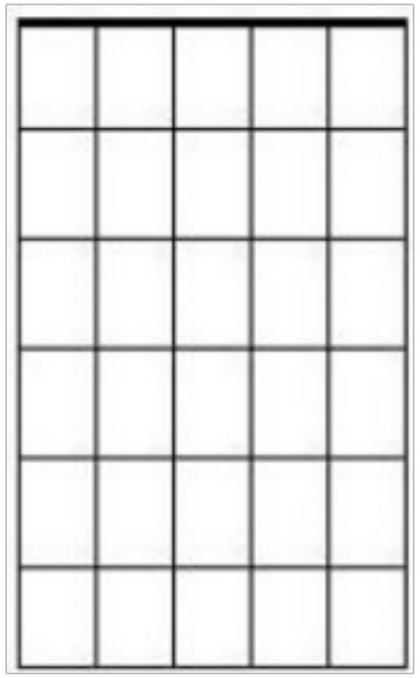
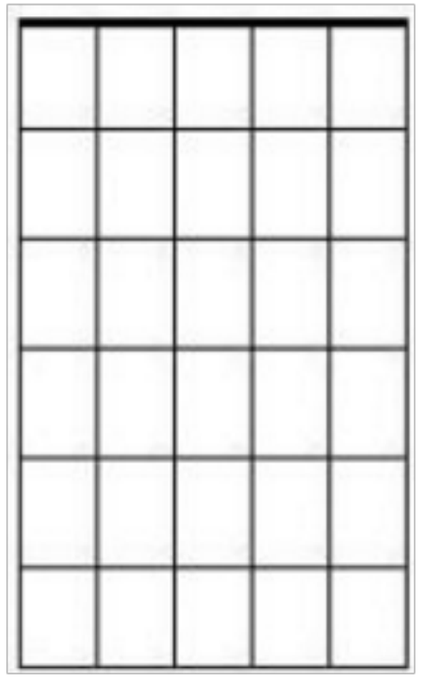
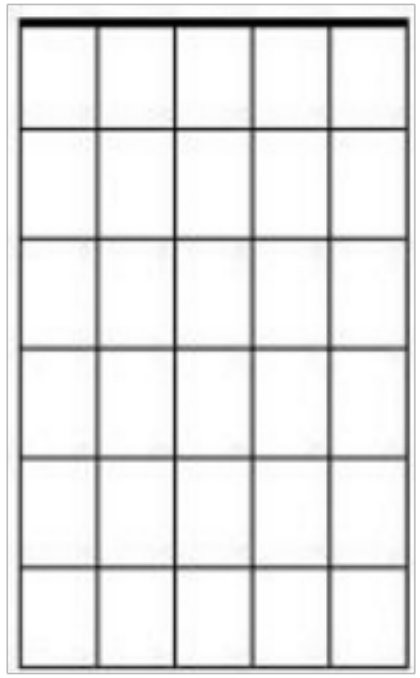
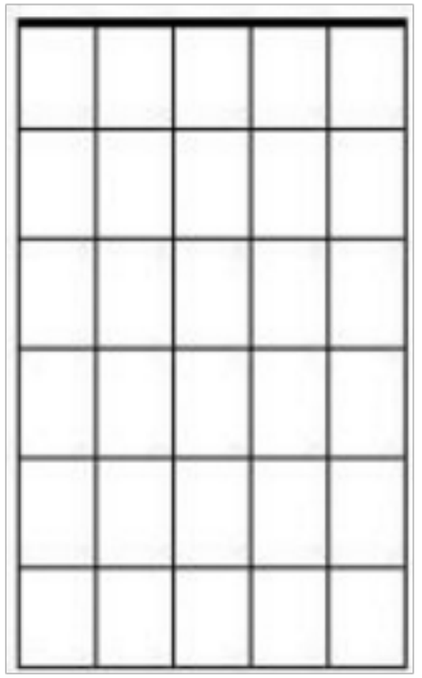
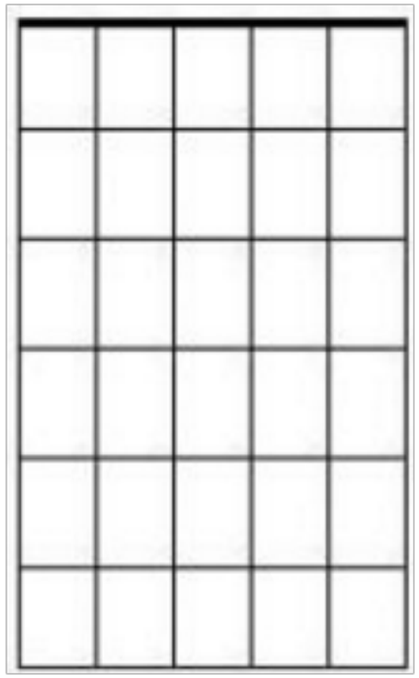
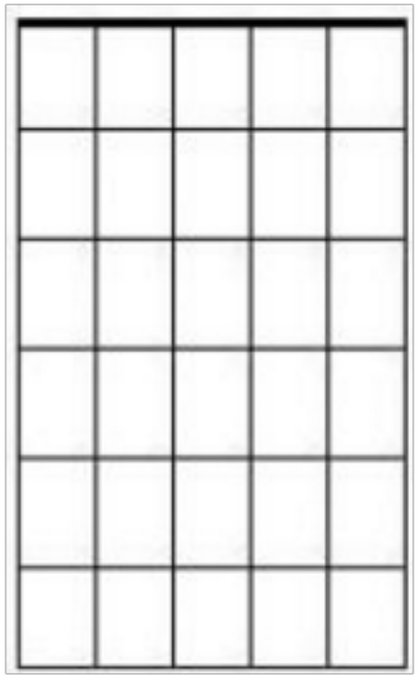
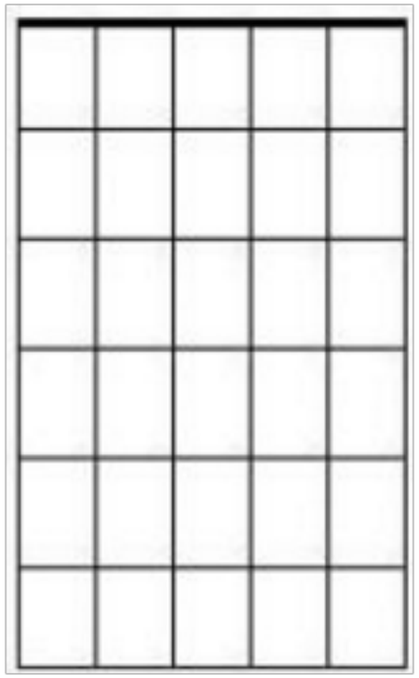
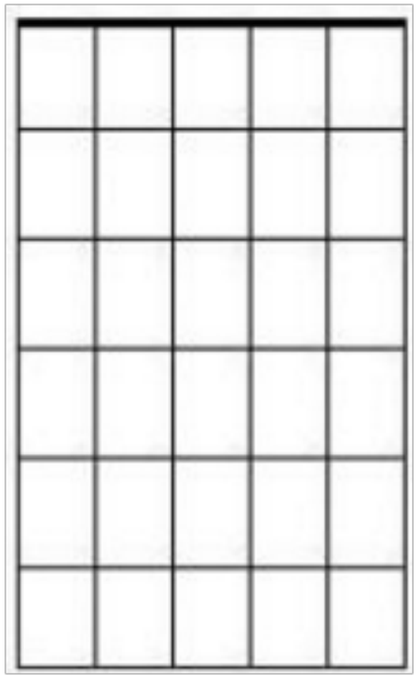
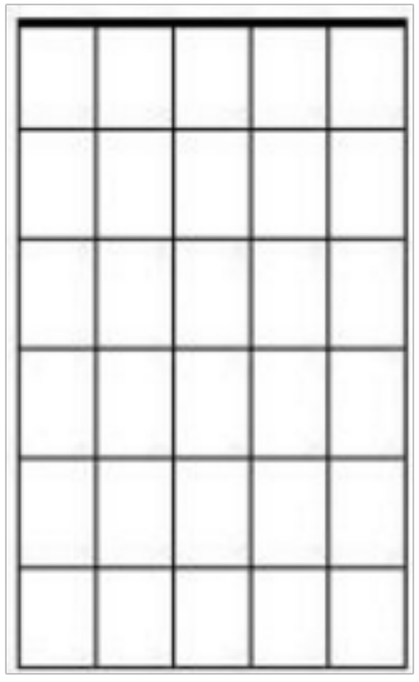
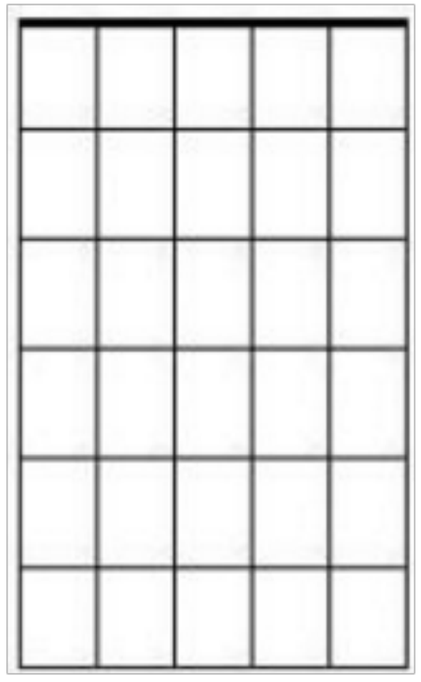
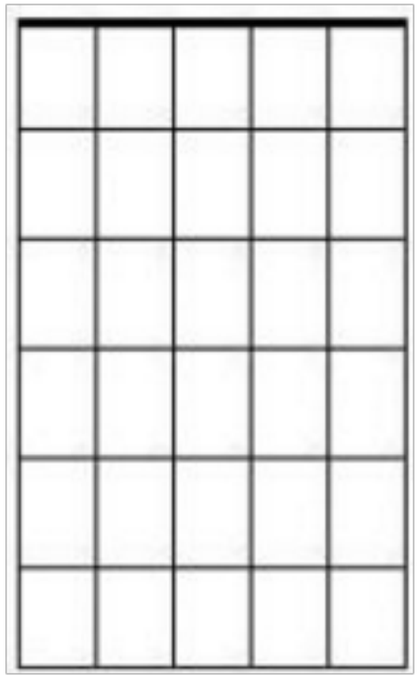
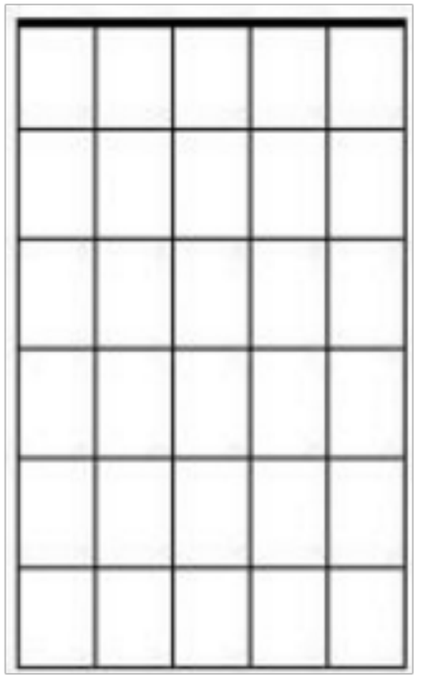
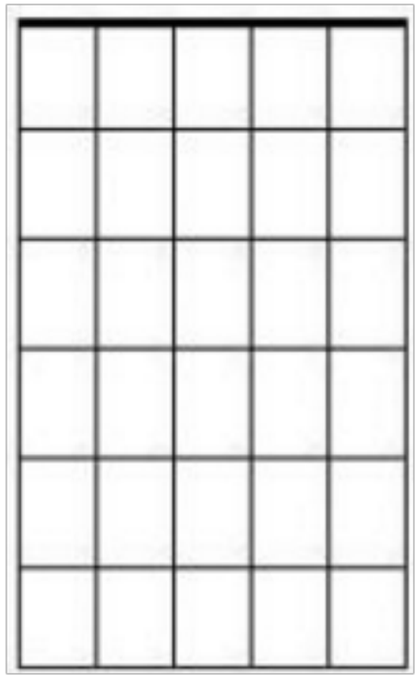
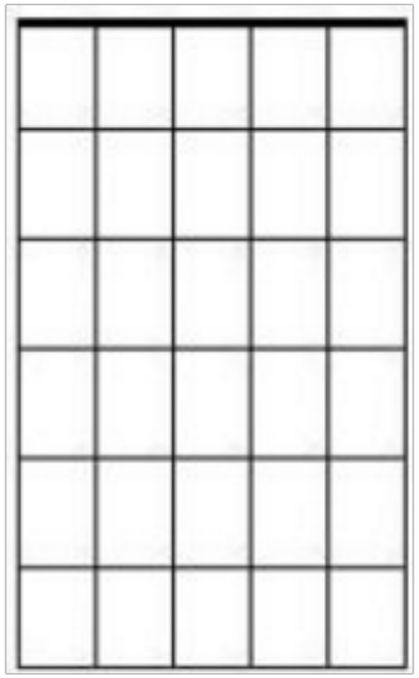
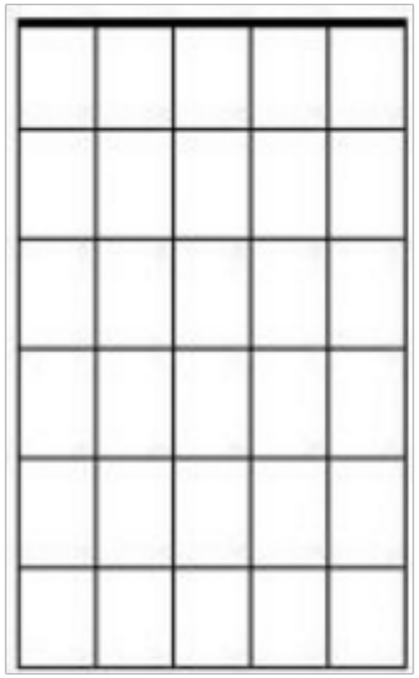
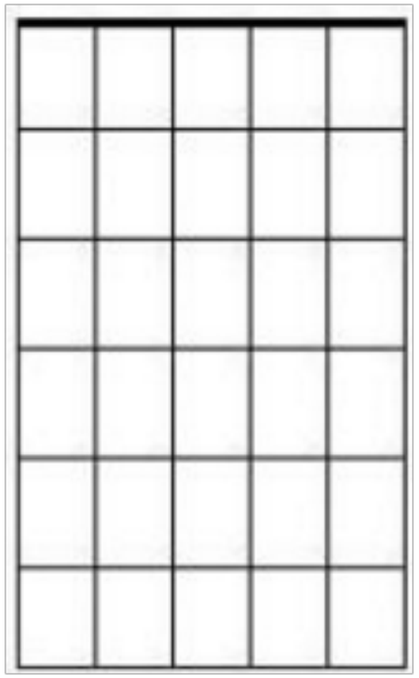


Key: F
Chords:

Dm	F	Bb
vi	I	IV

Note: It changes in the bridge. Give it a listen - it's all still within the key! You got this.

Example 3: High Hopes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