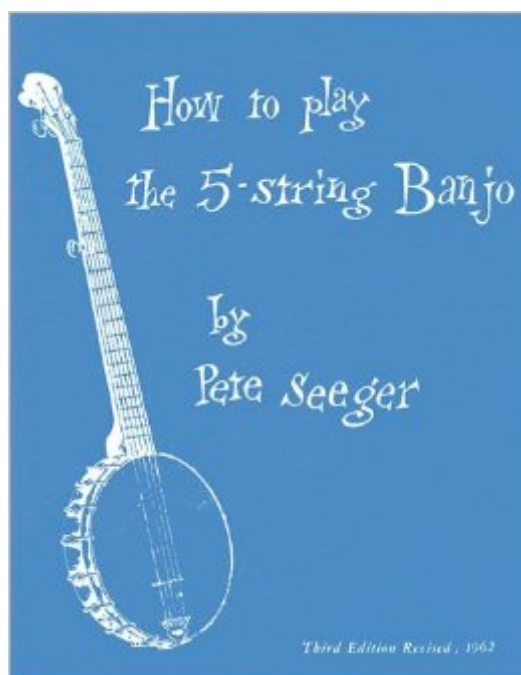


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# How To Play The 5-String Banjo (Music Sales America)



## Synopsis

(Music Sales America). This basic manual for banjo players includes melody line, lyrics and banjo accompaniment and solos notated in standard form and tablature. Chapters cover material such as: a basic strum, the fifth string, hammering on, pulling off, double thumbing, and much more.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (56 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Thirty-four years ago I started buying and using banjo instruction books. Today I have only one still in my possession, Pete Seeger's "How to Play the 5-String Banjo." In addition to his many other gifts, Seeger has mastered the difficult job of teaching a musical instrument on paper. His approach is to take the student step by step with clear explanations in the text to making music as quickly as possible. Even readers with absolutely no knowledge of musical notation will be able to grasp his explanations and his illustrations. His drawings of the fingerboard are not the most sophisticated graphics in the business, but they don't have to be. The book (which isn't very long) also teaches the student about traditional and home made music as it touches on many styles of banjo playing. Seeger clearly uses banjo instruction as another means to spread his lifelong gospel of the integrity, value and sheer joy of music that comes out of living rooms rather than loudspeakers. Despite its popularity, the three-finger bluegrass banjo style of playing gets only cursory treatment in the text, but that is not a slight. There are plenty of slick and heavily tabbed (for "tablature") music books focusing on the so-called Scruggs-style. Seeger's book acknowledges bluegrass, but gives the many other styles the due they receive nowhere else. I was at first frustrated, but later pleased at

his technique of giving the student the words and music for only the first verse of a traditional song, telling me that I can get the complete version elsewhere. He was saving valuable space for more songs and other styles, and forcing us to expand our horizons to the sources he cites in the text.

So, there I was. A thirty-something workaholic looking for a new hobby to unwind a bit, but with very little in the way of musical experience. Nonetheless, inspired by a local Allison Kraus concert, I found a hot deal on a great used banjo on E-bay and I was off and running! What fun! I'm hooked on the 5-string twang!! About 3 months or so at 30-minutes a day (give or take) and I can play well enough to entertain myself - and my wife and the cat can at least stay in the same room! Not many banjo instructors in New England, so I thought I'd go in for a few good teach-yourself manuals. I bought four. In order of usefulness they were - Revised Banjo Primer by Geoff Hohwald - First Lessons Banjo by Jack Hatfield - How to Play the 5-string Banjo by Pete Seeger - How to Play Banjo by Tim Jumper. The Banjo Primer was the best of the lot. I was able to make good progress with about 30 minutes practice each day. The instructions were clear and the tunes were fun to play (Cripple Creek, Boil 'em Cabbage Down, Worried Man Blues). It was VERY helpful that the book came with a CD. Some lessons I just couldn't get until I heard them played, then they came easily. Each lesson is played at three speeds, but I've pretty much given up EVER matching the insanely fast top speed. First Lessons was next best. It also came with a useful CD with multiple speeds and I think I've at least got a shot at the top speed. It also includes tracks with only the backup musicians so you can jam on your own (I haven't reached that point yet). The choice of music wasn't as good - the intro claims that well-known songs are easier to learn, but I found them to be cliché and boring (Tom Dooley, Old Time Religion, Good Night Ladies).

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