

Four Examples of Playing Backup

In the next section, I am going to present four examples of playing backup that are used often. Learning these techniques of playing backup will go a long way in making you more versatile and ready to back up most types of bluegrass songs.

Backup Example For Verse and Chorus

Start by learning a backup part that would be used when you are backing up a verse and chorus which is like many of the bluegrass songs you will be playing. Keep in mind, as always, you are learning a technique to play backup, not a song. Study what you are doing and how it relates to filling spaces, complimenting the singer, and supporting the music being played.

Song Example for Verse and Chorus Backup



Sheet music for a banjo backup part, consisting of four systems of notation. Each system shows a five-line staff with fret numbers (0-5) and rhythmic markings (T, I, >). Chord symbols G, C, and D are placed above the staff. The notation includes various techniques such as slurs, accents, and specific fretting patterns.

System 1: Chord G, C. Fretting: 0, 2, 4, 2, 5, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 4, 0, 0, 1, 2, 1, 0.

System 2: Chord G, D. Fretting: 2, 2, 0, 0, 2, 2, 5, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 2, 4, 2.

System 3: Chord G, C. Fretting: 3, 2, 4, 2, 4, 0, 0, 3, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 1, 2, 0, 1, 0, 2, 0.

System 4: Fretting: 1, 1, 2, 0, 0, 2.