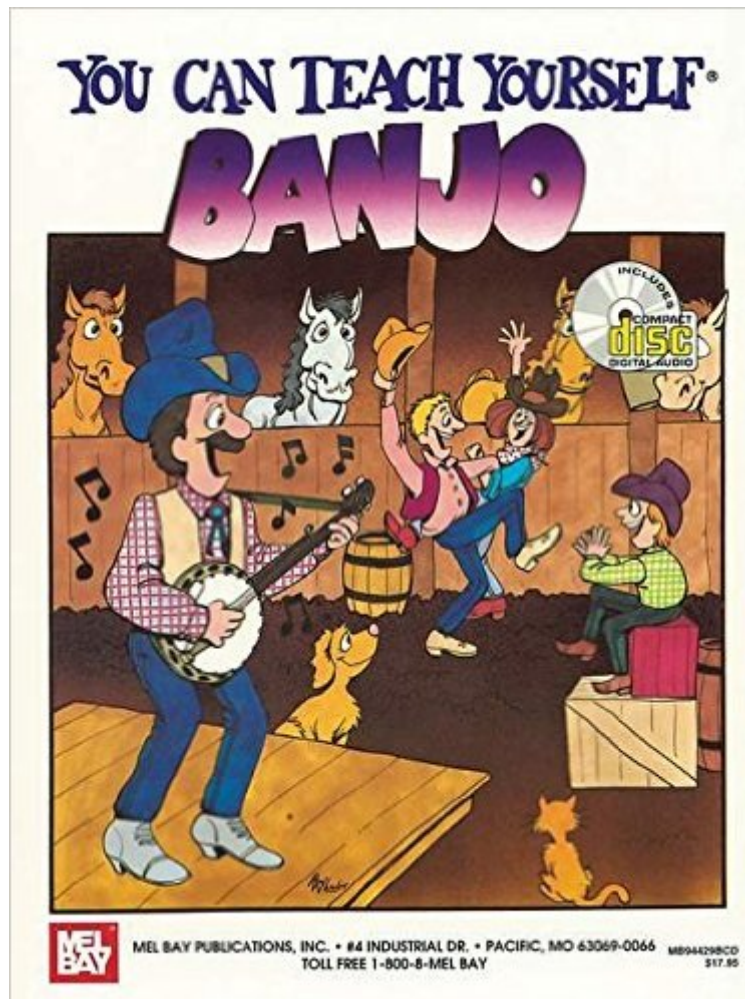


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You Can Teach Yourself Banjo (Book Only)



Synopsis

This is the ideal beginner's book, presenting the basics of playing the 5-string banjo in a way that is both fun and produces quick results. Janet Davis takes you on an extensive tour of this instrument's fundamental techniques as well as some intermediate possibilities including rolls, chords, bluegrass banjo techniques, playing up the neck, licks, endings, and other basic information needed to play bluegrass and melodic-style banjo. Thorough performance notes are provided from beginning to end revealing the secrets of this versatile traditional instrument.

Book Information

Library Binding: 116 pages

Publisher: Mel Bay Publications, Inc. (January 8, 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1562220012

ISBN-13: 978-1562220013

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 9.5 x 11.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (61 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I really like this book. In fact, I like it enough that this is the book I use with my banjo students. I particularly like how the lessons progress in a logical way. Each lesson seems to pick up from what you've just learned and then adds something to it. But what's probably even more important is that quite often there's a little bit of text reminding you what you've already learned. For example, in a piece of music there may be a notation that "this measure uses a forward roll". Then, "This measure uses a mixed roll". Or even, "This is a mixed roll but you've move one finger to a different string". That kind of teaching reinforces what you've already learned by reminding you later on as you use it in a slightly different way. I haven't found a need to use the CD, but I've been playing guitar, mandolin and banjo for quite a few years. However, it has helped some of my students to learn a tune when they can hear how it's suppose to sound. So I think the CD is a valuable addition. Yes, the cover's a bit goofy. If you're an adult student it can feel a bit silly to be working from what looks like a little kids

coloring book. But the material inside is really solid. This is very much a case where you shouldn't judge the book by its cover. It's a much better book than it appears to be.

This is a book that should be in every beginning bluegrass player's hands. The book is easy to understand and can help you easily learn the bluegrass banjo. Janet teaches various methods you can use on the 5 string banjo, including rolls, licks, hammer ons, pull offs, slides etc, but she also starts teaching melodic and up the neck-so that when you are finished this book you should be fairly comfortable with many different styles to playing the bluegrass banjo. I found that you really have to listen to the cd over and over again to really capture the point she is teaching. You have to train your ear to listen for the melody notes (very important in bluegrass) while looking at the text and the tab. Overall a great book to get started with. I also use Wayne Erbson (?) newer book of bluegrass for the complete ignoramus (published 2004 or so and not the early one put out in the early 90's). Wayne's NEW book along with Janet's will have you playing right along in no time at all. If you want to get 2 books to start learning to pick bluegrass make it these 2.

I started banjo about a year ago, and bought other books first- Peter Wernick's BlueGrass Banjo in the Oak Publications series, all of which books are great; Tony Triska's book and video, also very good; and Earl Scrugg's book, essential reading for bluegrass pickers. I just got this book yesterday and started looking it over. I now wish I had started with this one. Janet's teaching style is to progressively teach fundamentals and immediately apply them to repertoire, which is more fun, satisfying, and reinforcing than just reading about them and using them in a smaller number of songs. There are a lot of tunes in here! When you finish you will be able to play a number of tunes for yourself, family and friends, and with others. I can see progressing much more quickly with this book than the others because of that. There is enough material in here to keep a beginning student busy for at least 6 months to 1 year I think. You also get up the neck and melodic style introductions in addition to Scruggs style. And definitely get the CD at least-not only does it illustrate what these licks and songs are supposed to sound like, but contains teaching explanations, and it has both slow and fast speeds so you can judge your progress. The advantage of the CD is also motivational- you can listen to the lessons ahead of working them, and think "soon I'll be able to play that!"- and with practice you will be able. If you are lucky to find a guitar student or player to back you up, you will have loads of fun! Yes, it IS a beginner's book only- read the title- "You can teach yourself banjo". For more advanced techniques and material, you can and should look elsewhere. Forget the cover, and rip it off if you have to- there is good beginning fundamental

material in here in a friendly and workable approach!

Recently purchased a Banjo and it came with this book and DVD. Have been playing guitar for years but thought would like to have something different to play on occasion and always liked the sound of a banjo. Didn't want to buy a Banjo-guitar which uses guitar chords but wanted the "real" thing. And the "real" thing means I needed a good book to get me started. Have had the banjo for around 3 weeks now and it has really been a fun instrument. Janet's book was exactly what I needed. She makes it easy to understand and takes you through progressively more difficult activities as your skill improves. Also like the DVD that came with it as her style is very low key and encouraging as she explains the secrets of playing a banjo. Her demo's of the 4 types of rolls and explanation of your hand and finger positions is essential to getting you started correctly. She makes it sound simple and it is in concept, but getting your fingers to move correctly takes a lot of practice. I generally do not like the Mel Bay music books but this one I can strongly recommend for the beginning banjo player. Also read some reviews by others who thought the book was too simplified and easy but I would bet that none of them can play any of the songs in this book well. Sort of the same type of individuals who talk up a great golf game but when you see them actually play they can't play worth a darn. Yes the cover is rather dorky but then this is a great example of why you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. Buy it and have some fun with the 5 string banjo.

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