

CAPOS

Nothing wrong with a capo.

Don't let the moaners tell you its cheating.

Once you know a whole rook of chords and can play in any key then you can throw your capo away. But until then, your capo is useful.

All music and tab comes in its own key which may not suit you if you want to sing along in your comfortable key. That may be made possible by using a capo to bring your instruments tuning up to your needs.

Also, traditionally , banjos played with fiddlers who were limited and often played solely in "A" or "D". So banjo players used capos to quickly change from G to A or C to D and could still use common chord shapes.

When using a capo it is necessary to separately adjust the short "G" string to suit whatever key you move to.

The most common method is to have "pegs" fitted professionally into the neck, usually at 3 settings along the 5th string.

Remember, with tab you can play the same chord sequences or notes when the capos are on and it will all work but in a different key.

Some tunes sound better in particular keys.

RESONATORS

Traditionally Clawhammer banjo is played on openback instruments.

I assure you that this is not essential.

I have seen many top class players using resonator banjos to play Clawhammer.

It gives a certain ring to the music and the resonators enable the range of musical genre to be extended(see Banjo Heroes...Bela Fleck).

Many professional players and studio session musicians use resonators, often with pickups fitted to enable clarity in recording and at large performance venues.

I admit to a preference for open backs which produce a more mellow sound.

However I quite often use a finger pick as my nails just dont last, and the combination of resonator and pick give the music a very "Bluegrass" flavour.

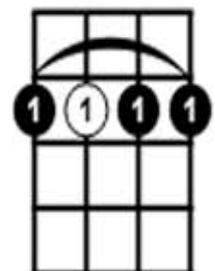
BARRE CHORDS

These are useful for beginners as it just uses a left hand finger to span the 4 strings and hold them down. This produces a full chord , higher than the open "G", depending on the fret you barre

Fret 1 gives Ab

Fret 2 gives A

Fret 3 gives Bb



And so on. Fret 5 is useful as an easy "C"

Remember not to play the short "G" string as it will not fit. You can continue on barring up the neck but you begin to lose resonance and a bit of tone.