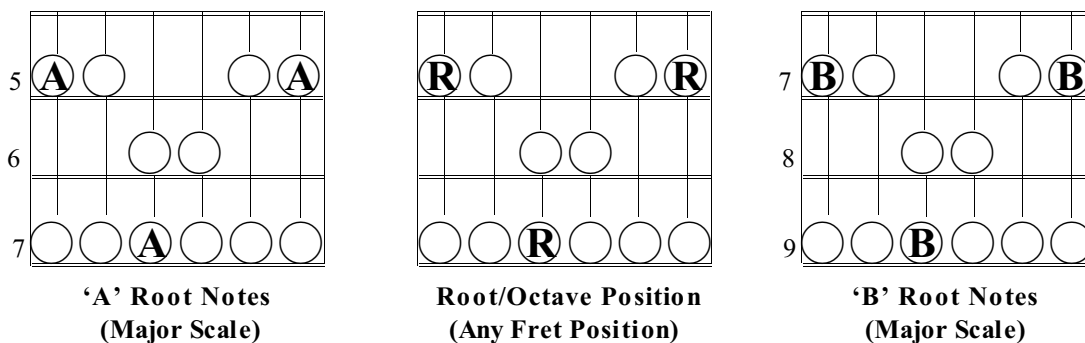


Phrasing/Root Notes

After learning a few standard riffs, the next step will be to focus on *phrasing* these riffs. If a riff can be compared to a ‘musical sentence’, then phrasing is how ‘punctuation’ can be applied to a guitar solo. Without phrasing, a guitar solo will sound rambling and disorganized in very much the same way as a ‘run-on sentence’ does with language. This lesson will focus on the foundation of phrasing technique: the *root note*.

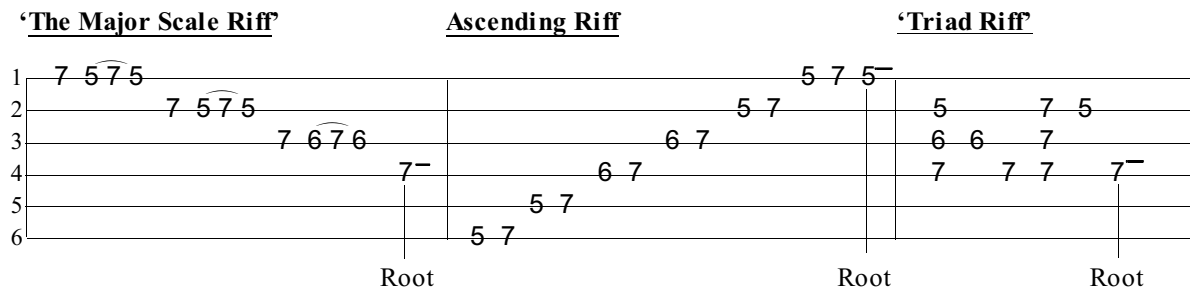
Root Notes

In the Key of ‘A’ Major, ‘A’ would be considered the *root note* of that key. Within the standard ‘A’ Major Scale box pattern, there are three ‘A’ root notes located on the first, fourth, and sixth strings (*below left*). These *fundamental root note positions* on the first, fourth, and sixth strings remain the same for any key (*below center*). In the Key of ‘B’ Major for example, the three ‘B’ root notes would be located in the same root note positions, only two frets higher from the Key of ‘A’ Major (*below right*).



Root Note Focus - Standard Riffs

A *root note focus* establishes the mood or tone of a scale. All riffs covered so far have a root note focus, with an ‘A’ root note being the last sustained note played in each riff (*see below*). The basic ascending and descending riffs using the ‘A’ Major box pattern (*Major Scale -1*) also begin and end on an ‘A’ root note. When practicing and combining these riffs, sustaining the root notes provides more space or ‘breathing room’ between riffs, which is essential to developing phrasing technique.



Summary

So far, the foundation of building a music vocabulary for improvisation has been set by learning some standard riffs (*‘musical sentences’*), knowing how to phrase these riffs (*‘musical punctuation’*), and then combining these riffs (*‘musical paragraphs’*).

Riffs	=	‘Sentences’
Root Notes	=	‘Punctuation’
Combined Riffs	=	‘Paragraphs’