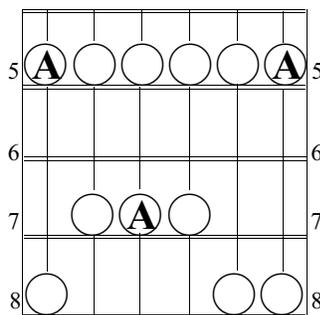


Phrasing/Root Notes

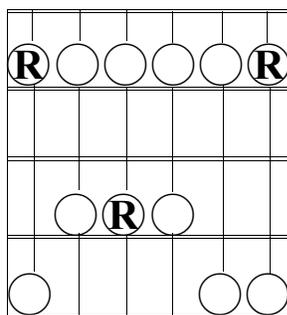
After learning a few standard Blues riffs, the next step will be to focus on *phrasing* these riffs. If a riff can be compared to a ‘musical sentence’, then phrasing is how ‘punctuation’ can be applied to a guitar solo. Without phrasing, a guitar solo will sound rambling and disorganized, in very much 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

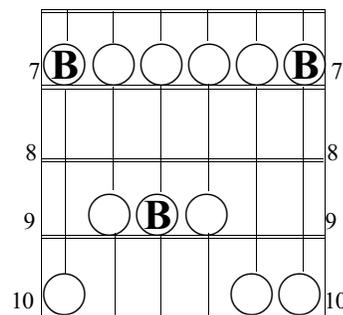
In the Key of ‘A’ Blues, ‘A’ would be considered the *root note* of that key. Within the standard ‘A’ Pentatonic Minor box pattern, there are three ‘A’ root notes located on the first, fourth, and sixth strings (*below left*). These fundamental root note positions on the first, fourth, and sixth strings (*below center*) remain the same for any key. In the Key of ‘B’ Blues 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’ Blues (*below right*).



‘A’ Root Notes
(Pentatonic Minor Scale)



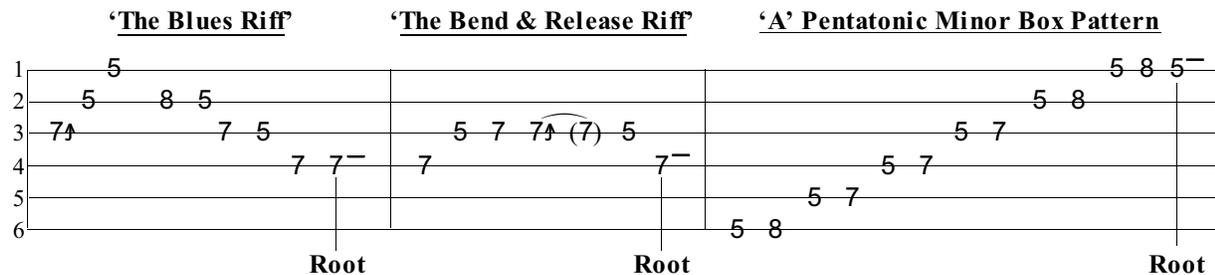
Root/Octave Pattern
(Any Fret Position)



‘B’ Root Notes
(Pentatonic Minor Scale)

Root Note Focus - Standard Blues Riffs

A *root note focus* establishes the mood or tone of a scale. Both the ‘Blues Riff in A’ and the ‘Bend & Release Riff in A’ each have a root note focus, with an ‘A’ root note being the last sustained note played in each riff (*below*). The ascending and descending riffs using the ‘A’ Pentatonic Minor box pattern (*Blues/Rock Soloing -1*) also begin and end on ‘A’ root notes. When combining these riffs, sustaining the root notes provides more space between riffs, which is essential to developing phrasing technique.



Summary

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

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