how to setup a mandolin bridge

Preparation:
Lay your mandolin on a smooth, flat surface so it is safe and secure. Study your bridge carefully and identify the size of the grooves. The thicker strings will go into the wider grooves and the thinner strings will go into the thinner grooves. Also, adjust the thumbscrews so that the bridge is in its lowest position. You will raise the strings later to dial-in the preferred string height once your bridge is in place.

Step 1:
Generously loosen the strings so that the bridge can sit upright under the strings without any excess string tension.

Step 2:
Gripping the bridge on either side, point the bridge so that the top is now facing the neck, instead of the strings. Place the bridge carefully underneath the strings (careful not to damage the finish).

Step 3:
Gently pull the strings upward and turn the bridge over so that it is now in its upright position. Center the bridge between the notches of each F hole. (If the mandolin has an oval shaped soundhole, place the bridge behind the soundhole, centered on the body.)

Step 4:
Check the nut at the headstock to make sure that the strings are in place. Tighten and tune the low G string to pitch, making sure it is resting in its appropriate groove at the bridge. Play the G string open, then fret it at the 12th fret. If the two notes are the same, the bridge is in the correct position. If the fretted note is flat, move the entire bridge (not just one side) slightly forward towards the neck. If it is sharp, move the bridge slightly back, towards the tailpiece.
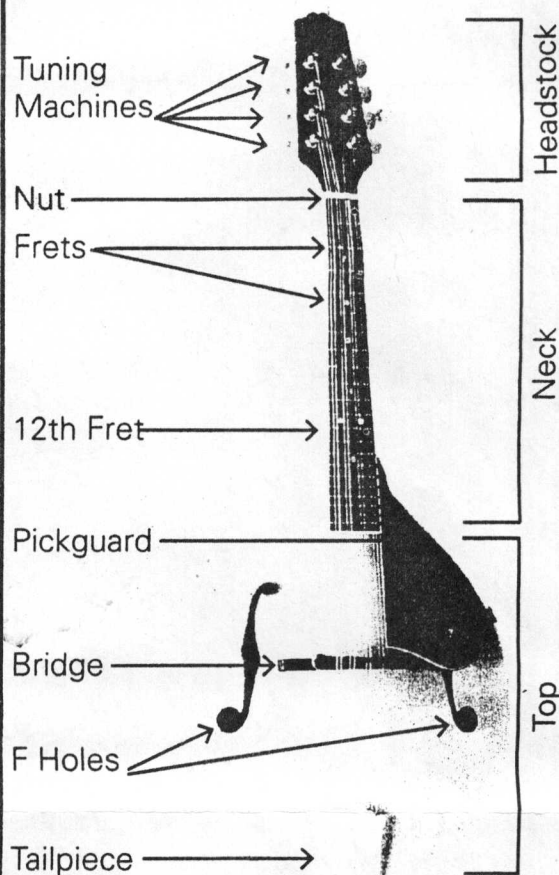
Step 5:
Use the thumbscrews to adjust your bridge for your preferred string height. Once you have made sure that the open G string and the G at the 12th fret are the same pitch, repeat the same step with the high E string.
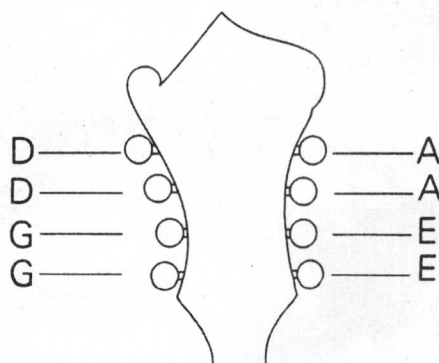
Step 6:
Now that the low G and high E are well-intonated, tune up the rest of the strings to pitch.

mandolin

Tuning Machines
Nut
Frets
12th Fret
Pickguard
Bridge
F Holes
Tailpiece
Headstock
Neck
Top

mandolin tunings

D————A
D————A
G————E
G————E

The mandolin is most commonly tuned in perfect fifths with 'G' as the lowest note and 'E' as the highest.