Originally designed as a student guitar, the Mustang has become an iconic member of the original Fender lineup. With its adoption over the years by some well-known players, it has been elevated above its humble beginnings, and is today highly regarded.

The wiring on the guitar is simple, but very unique. As shown below, each pickup has a simple slide switch that controls it. In the center position the pickup is off, but slide the switch in either direction and it turns on that pickup. Additionally, there are master volume and tone controls.

When both switches are on, both pickups are on, and they’re connected in parallel. But they can be in-phase or out-of-phase, depending on the direction of the switches (phasing only applies when both pickups are on). In-phase is what you would normally hear when combining pickups on a Tele or Strat (the 2 & 4 positions on Strats are often erroneously referred to as out-of-phase, but they’re not).

Truly out-of-phase combinations sound thin and hollow, and unique. This was ground-breaking territory in the mid-1960s. No other Fender guitar had ever been offered with phase-reversing wiring, so the Mustang was blazing new trails. As Mustangs do.

It’s simple to see at a glance whether the pickups are in-phase or out-of-phase: If the switches face the same direction, the pickups are in-phase. If the switches face in opposite directions, the pickups are out-of-phase.