


Chapter 25: Shape Designer

Shape Designer Menu

How to get there

Click the Expression Tool , and double-click a note or measure. Or, with the Text Tool highlight the handle of a text block and select custom frame from the Text Menu. Click Shape; Create; Select; Create. You arrive in the Shape Designer, and this menu appears at the top of the dialog box.

What it does

The Shape Designer Menu contains a number of commands that help you create your own custom musical shapes. For example, it lets you specify how thick a line is, what kind of shading should fill a rectangle, whether a line should be dashed or solid, and so on. It also contains commands for manipulating individual objects in your drawing—for grouping them together, rearranging their front-to-back order, and so on.



- **Show: Rulers • Grid • Origin • Staff Template.** Using this submenu, you can make Finale display or hide any of these helpful, nonprinting alignment aids. (A checked item means that it's being displayed; choose the item a second time to make the check mark—and that onscreen element—disappear.)

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The Rulers item makes rulers appear at the top and left side of the drawing area, whose units you specify using the [Rulers and Grid](#) command. The Grid is a series of individual points that may help you align objects and give you a sense of scale. The spacing and units used by the grid, too, are determined by your [Rulers and Grid](#) setting).

The origin is a small, white round handle that appears in the center of the drawing area. It anchors your shape, acts as the zero point for the rulers and positioning coordinates (see [SHAPE DESIGNER](#)), and indicates where your shape's handle will appear once you've placed it into the score.

The Staff Template displays a picture of the staff in the Shape Designer window which is helpful when designing a custom barline. See also [MEASURE TOOL](#).

- **Send to Back • Bring to Front.** If you've created objects that overlap each other, you can rearrange their front-to-back order by using these commands. Begin by clicking the Selection Tool, then clicking the object you want to manipulate. Choose Send to Back to place the selected object "behind" all other objects, so that it's covered up by them. Choose Bring to Front to place the selected object "in front" of all other objects, so that they're covered up by it.
- **Group • Ungroup.** Using the Selection Tool, you can shift-click to select any number of objects, and then choose the Group command to bind them together into a single, grouped object. A grouped object behaves just like any normal object: you can change its fill or line thickness, drag its corner handles to resize it, drag it by the middle to move it around on the screen, and so on. You can even group grouped objects into still other groups, creating nested groups.

Finale always keeps track of what objects were combined into grouped objects, and can ungroup them in sequence. Select a group by clicking, then choose Ungroup; you'll see by the appearance of many more corner handles that the grouped object has now been split back into its component single pieces. (Or, if you Ungroup a grouped object, it will split into its component grouped objects.)

- **Select Font.** If you're using the Text Tool to create or edit a text object, choose this command to display the Font dialog box, where you can change the font, size and style of the selected text (or, if your cursor is inside a text object, the text that follows the cursor). If no text object is selected, use this command to specify the font for the next text object you create. See [FONT DIALOG BOX](#).
- **Line Style: Solid • Dashed.** If you've selected an object composed of lines (a line, rectangle, polygon, and so on), this command determines whether its outline (or the line itself) is dashed or solid. If you choose Dashed, the Dashed Line dialog box appears, where you can specify the lengths of the dashes and the gaps between them (see [DASHED LINE DIALOG BOX](#)). If no object is selected, this command specifies the characteristics of the next line object you draw.
- **Line Thickness: None • Hairline • .5 pt • 1 pt • 1.5 pt • 2 pt • 5 pt • Other.** If you've selected an object composed of lines, this command determines the thickness of its outline (or the line itself). (One point is 1/72 inch, and a hairline is .25 points.)

If you choose Other, the Line Thickness dialog box appears, where you can specify a thickness not listed in the submenu (see [LINE THICKNESS DIALOG BOX](#)). If no object is selected, this command specifies the thickness of the next line object you draw.

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- **Arrowheads.** Choose this menu item to display the Arrowheads dialog box where you can add an arrowhead to your line or curve. See [ARROWHEADS DIALOG BOX](#).
- **Fill: None • White • 25% • 50% • 75% • Black • Other.** If you've selected an object that's an enclosed shape (a rectangle, ellipse, or polygon), this command determines the shading of the hollow (enclosed) inside area—none (transparent), black, white, or any shade of gray between.

If you choose Other, the Fill dialog box appears, where you can specify a degree of gray not listed in the submenu (see [FILL DIALOG BOX](#)). If no object is selected, this command specifies the shading of the next enclosed object you draw.

- **Bracket Style.** Using the Shape Designer's Bracket Tool, with a single click, you can add a bracket to a custom shape you're drawing. Choose this command to specify what bracket style you want. See [BRACKET STYLE DIALOG BOX](#).
- **Rulers and Grid.** Choose this command to display the Ruler and Grid dialog box, where you can specify the measurement units used by the grid, rulers, and the H: and V: text boxes. You can also specify how far apart the tick marks on the rulers and grid should be. See [RULER AND GRID DIALOG BOX](#).


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Shape Designer dialog box

How to get there

Click the Expression Tool , and double-click a note or measure. Click Shape. To create a new Shape Expression, click Create, Select, then Create (or, to edit an existing Shape Expression, click it and then click Edit, then Edit again). Enter zero in the Select text box and click Select, then click Create.

You can also enter the Shape Designer dialog box when you're choosing a multimeasure rest; a custom stem shape (Special Tools Tool); a Custom Frame for the Text Tool; an Executable Shape as part of the playback definition for an expression; custom barline; custom arrowheads for Smart Shapes, or articulation shapes.

What it does

The Shape Designer is Finale's built-in graphics designer. You might create, for example, a harp pedaling diagram, or a custom barline. You can also design rectangles to use as frames when you're creating Text Blocks, block rests to serve as multimeasure rests in extracted parts, and special shapes for use as custom stems. For an introduction to the Shape Designer, see *Installation & Tutorials*, or read [SHAPE DESIGNER](#).

There are a number of drawing tools at the top of the screen; to create a shape, you click the tool you want to use, then click or drag in the blank display area. Each time you do so, you create a separate, movable, resizable, reshapable object. Objects may be grouped together, sent behind or in front of other objects, copied or pasted.

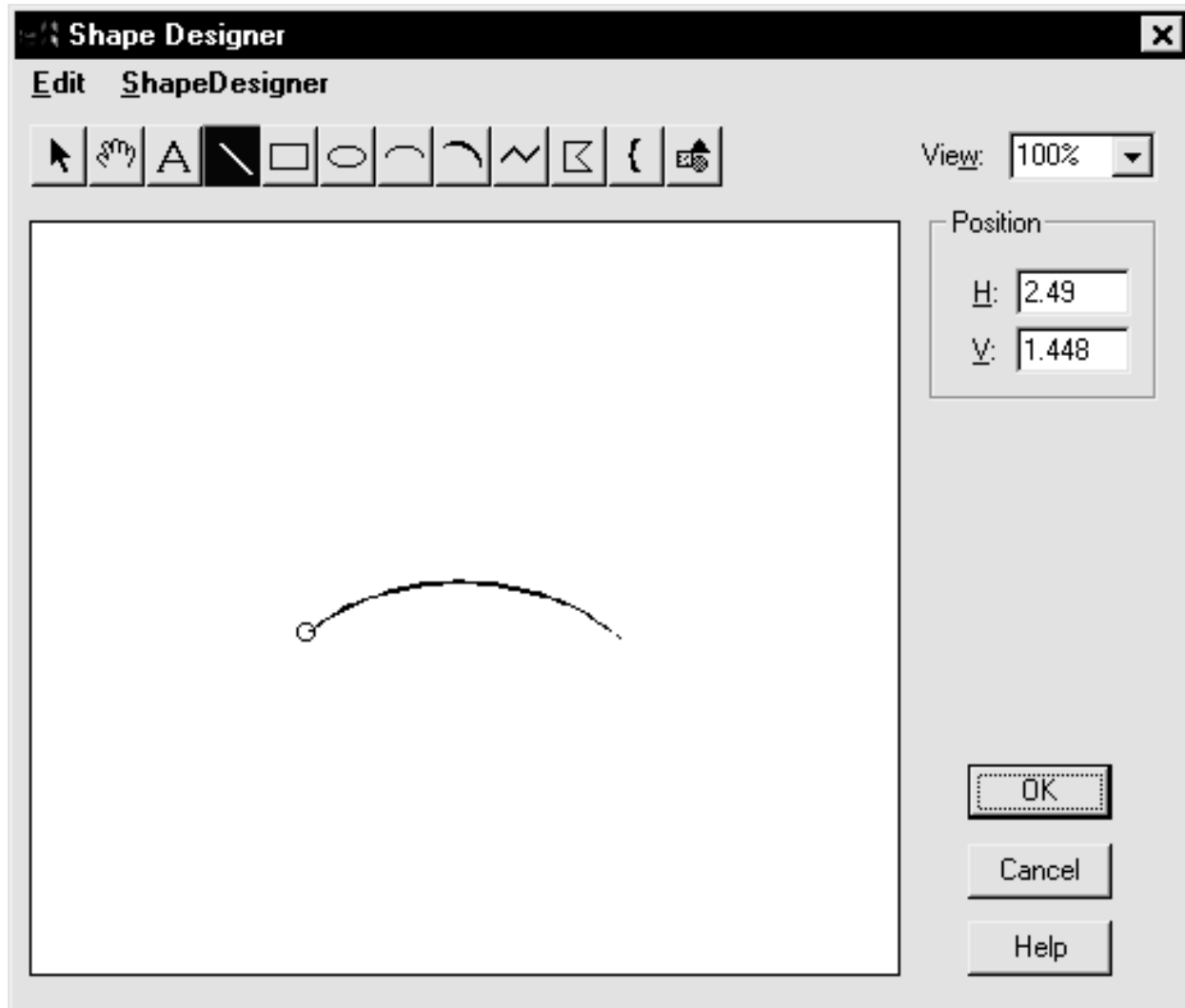
Using the Shape Designer Menu, you can display a background grid, change the shading and line thickness of objects, and specify type style for text objects; see [SHAPE DESIGNER MENU](#).

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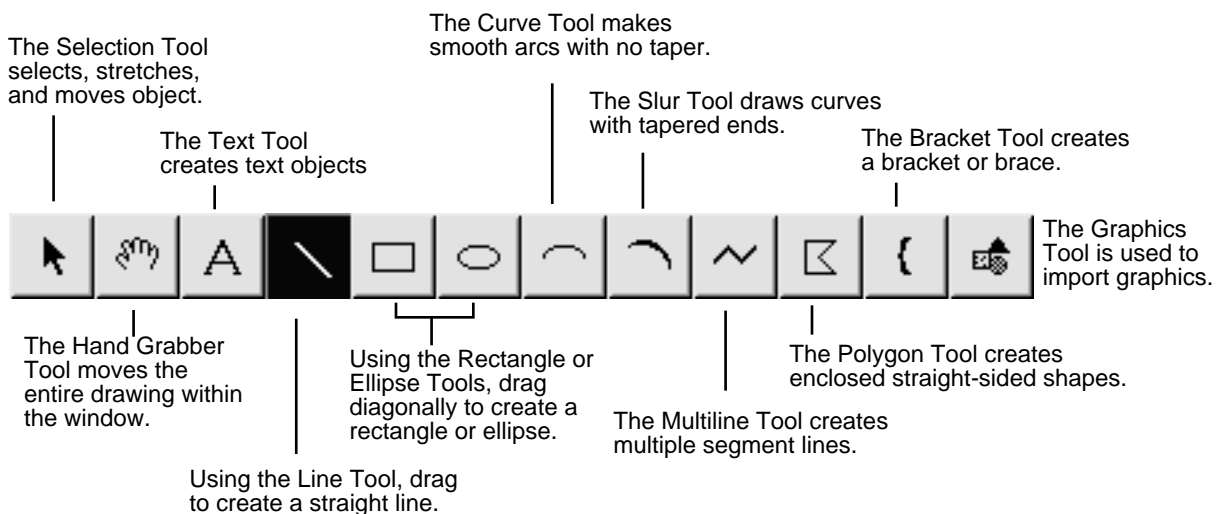
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

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To reshape an object, click it using the Selection Tool, so that its handles appear. Drag these handles to resize the object—or, if it's a curve, slur, bracket, multiline or polygon shape, double-click to reveal a number of individually-adjustable control point handles. For more precision, you can also select a single control point handle and reposition it by typing numbers into the H: and V: boxes. These numbers are like plane geometry coordinates (horizontal and vertical, respectively). (After entering a number, press tab to see the change reflected in the display.)

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At the top of the window are the drawing tools. Here's a summary:



- **Selection Tool** . Use this tool for selecting, re-shaping, and moving objects. Click an existing object to make its handles appear; shift-click to select multiple objects. Drag a handle to re-shape the object, drag the object to move it, or press delete to remove it. Double-click a polygon, multiline shape, curve, or bracket to display its control handles.
- **Hand Grabber Tool** . This tool works just like the Hand Grabber Tool in Finale's main tool palette; it lets you adjust the drawing's position in the window. Drag in the drawing area to shift the entire drawing in any direction.
- **Text Tool** . Use this tool to create and edit text blocks, or text objects. Click in the drawing area, and then type. You change the type style using the Select Font command in the Shape Designer Menu—either by first clicking in the text block just before the text you want to change, or by first selecting the entire text block with the Selection Tool. Click an existing text block to position it. Click the mouse to exit the text block. Text doesn't wrap automatically within a text object; as you type, therefore, you need to press enter to create a new line within a text block.
- **Line Tool** . Use this tool to draw single straight lines, anchored at the point of your first click, by dragging in the drawing area. Describe the line's thickness, shading, and dashed quality using the Shape Designer Menu, before creating it or when it's selected. Press shift while dragging to create a perfect horizontal, vertical, or 45-degree line.
- **Rectangle Tool** . To draw a square or rectangle anchored at the point of your first click, drag diagonally in the drawing area. Press shift while dragging to create a perfect square. Describe the rectangle's thickness, shading, and dashed quality using the Shape Designer Menu, before creating it or when it's selected.
- **Ellipse Tool** . Drag diagonally in the drawing area to draw an oval, anchored at the point of your first click. Press shift while dragging to create a perfect circle. Describe its thickness, and shading using the Shape Designer Menu, before creating it or when it's selected.

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- Curve Tool**  . Drag in a straight line to create a shallow Bézier, non-tapered (reshapable) curve, anchored at the point of your first click, that bows away from the imaginary line. You determine the direction of the arc by the direction you drag: drag to the right to produce an upward arc, drag upward to produce a leftward arc, and so on. Describe the curve's thickness and dashed quality using the Shape Designer Menu, before creating it or when it's selected. Using the Selection Tool, click a curve to see its bounding handles, which you can drag to resize the curve; double-click a shape to display its control points, which you can use to reshape the arc.
- Slur Tool**  . Drag in a straight line to create a shallow solid or dashed Bézier (reshapable) tapered slur, anchored at the point of your first click. As with the Curve Tool, you determine the direction of the arc by the direction you drag: drag to the right to produce an upward arc, drag upward to produce a leftward arc, and so on. The Shape Designer Menu's line settings don't affect a slur. Using the Selection Tool, click a slur to see its bounding handles, which you can drag to resize the curve; double-click a shape to display its control points, which you can use to reshape the arc. (see also [DOCUMENT OPTIONS-LINES AND CURVES](#))
- Multiline Tool**  . This tool creates shapes with more than one line segment. Drag to create the first line segment, and then click to specify each additional point (an additional line segment is drawn with each click). Describe the shape's thickness and dashed quality using the Shape Designer Menu, before creating it or when it's selected. Using the Selection Tool, click a multiline shape to see its bounding handles, which you can drag to resize the object; double-click a shape to display its control points, which you can use to reshape the individual segments.
- Polygon Tool**  . This tool lets you create fully-enclosed shapes composed of multiple line segments. Drag to create the first line segment, and then click to specify the next point. An additional line segment is drawn with each additional click. Double-click to close the shape (by drawing a final line back to the starting point). Describe the shape's thickness, shading, and dashed quality using the Shape Designer Menu, before creating it or when it's selected. Using the Selection Tool, click a polygon to see its bounding handles, which you can drag to resize the object; double-click the shape to display its control points, which you can use to reshape the sides of the shape.
- Bracket Tool**  . Select a bracket style by choosing Bracket Style from the Shape Designer Menu. To draw the bracket, click once in the drawing area; a full-fledged bracket appears. To resize it, click the Selection Tool; click the bracket and drag one of its bounding handles. Double-click it to display its control point handles, which you can drag to reshape a curly piano brace.
- Graphics Tool**  . This tool allows you to place and export graphics using Finale's Graphics Tool. (See [GRAPHICS TOOL](#).)

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- **View.** This drop-down list lets you select a percentage of actual size at which you want your shape displayed. Use it if you want to “zoom in” on a very small shape, or “zoom out” to see all of a very large shape. You can also specify a degree of magnification not listed in the drop-down list by typing a number directly into the text box. Press tab after typing the number in the text box to display the change immediately.
- **Positioning: H: • V:.** These text boxes display the horizontal and vertical coordinates, respectively, of your cursor as you move it around the screen. If you click a handle of an object, these boxes show the handle’s coordinates—which you can edit, and then when you press Delete, tab, or click outside the number box, the handle will jump to the new coordinates.
A positive number in the H: box indicates a position to the right of the origin (the small white circle that anchors your shape), and a negative number indicates a position to the left. A positive number in the V: box indicates a position above the origin, and a negative number indicates a position below it.
- **OK • Cancel.** When you’re finished creating the shape, click OK (or press enter) to return to the previous dialog box; your shape is now ready for use. Click Cancel to return to the previous dialog box without creating or editing a shape.

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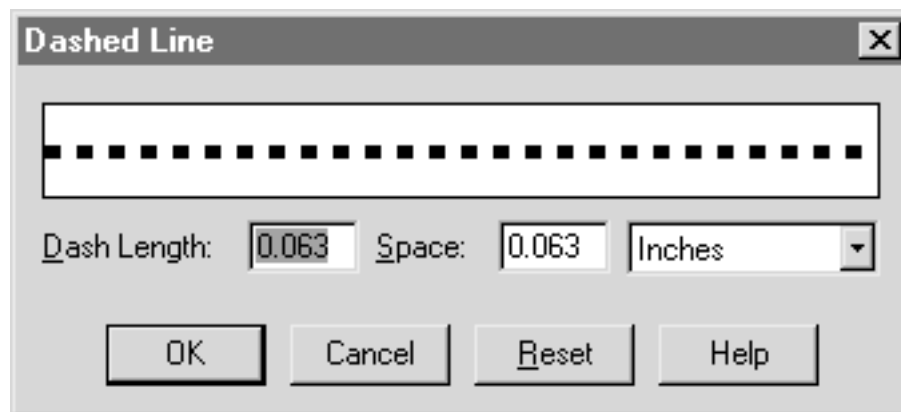
Dashed Line dialog box

How to get there

Enter the Shape Designer (see [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#)). Choose Dashed from the Line Style submenu of the Shape Designer Menu.

What it does

When you’re creating a shape in the Shape Designer, you can specify that a selected line (or one you’re about to draw, if no line is selected) is to be a dotted (dashed) line. When this dialog box appears, you can specify the lengths of the dashes as well as the lengths of the gaps between them.

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- **Dash Length.** The number in this text box specifies the length of each dash of the dashed line.
- **Space.** The number in this text box specifies the length of the gap between dashes of the dashed line.
- **Inches [etc.].** From this drop-down list, choose the units of measurement you want to work in within this dialog box.

- **Reset.** Click Reset to restore Finale's default dashed-line settings (.0625 inch dash, .0625 inch gap).
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm your specifications for a dashed line. If a line or shape was already selected, it now appears dashed. If nothing was selected, the next line you create (with the Line, Rectangle, Curve, Multiline, or Polygon Tools) will be a dashed line. All lines you draw will now be dashed, until you choose Solid from the Line Style submenu of the Shape Designer Menu. Click Cancel to return to the Shape Designer without selecting a dashed line style.

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Line Thickness dialog box

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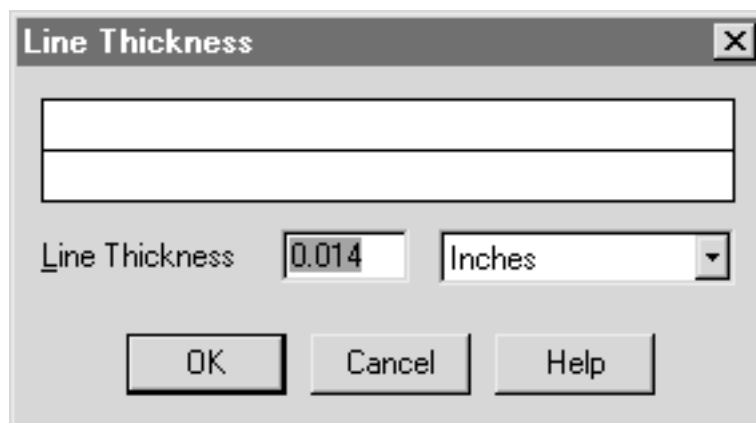
How to get there

Enter the Shape Designer (see [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#)). Choose Other from the Line Thickness submenu of the Shape Designer Menu.

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What it does

When you're creating a shape in the Shape Designer, you can specify that the next line you draw (dashed or solid) is to have a different thickness, using the Line Thickness command. Several common line thicknesses are already listed in the Line Thickness submenu, but the Other command lets you specify any thickness not listed in the submenu. When this dialog box appears, you can specify the thickness of the next line you draw (and all subsequent lines, until you reset the line thickness again).

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- **Line Thickness.** The number in this text box specifies the thickness of the selected line or object—or, if nothing is selected, the thickness of the next line you draw. The default thickness is one point, or 1/72 inch.
- **Inches [etc.].** From this drop-down list, choose the units of measurement you want to work in within this dialog box.

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- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm your line thickness specifications. If a line or shape was already selected, it now appears with the new line thickness. If nothing was selected, the next line (dashed or solid) you create (with the Line, Rectangle, Ellipse, Curve, Multiline, or Polygon Tools) will have the selected thickness. All lines (dashed or solid) you draw will have that thickness, until you choose a different thickness from the Line Thickness submenu of the Shape Designer Menu. Click Cancel to return to the Shape Designer without changing the line thickness.

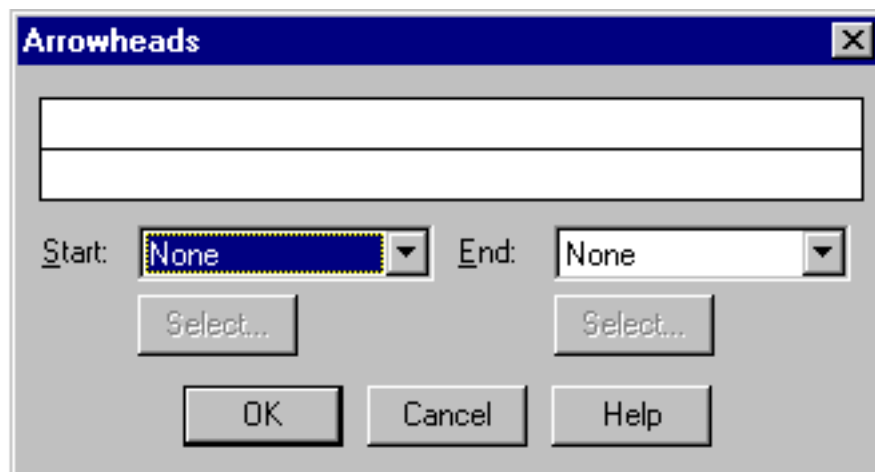
Arrowheads dialog box

How to get there

Enter the Shape Designer (see [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#)). Select Arrowheads from the Shape Designer Menu.

What it does

When you're creating a line or curve in the Shape Designer, you can add arrowheads to either end.



- **Start • End; None • Predefined Arrowhead • Custom Arrowhead; Select.** Choose the start and ending arrowhead type if desired, from either predefined arrowheads, or make your own. Depending on your choice, the Predefined Arrowhead Selection dialog box, or the Custom Arrowhead Selection dialog box appears where you can select the arrowhead required. See [CUSTOM ARROWHEAD SELECTION DIALOG BOX](#) for more information.
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm, or Cancel to discard, your specifications of an arrowhead setting and return to the Shape Designer.

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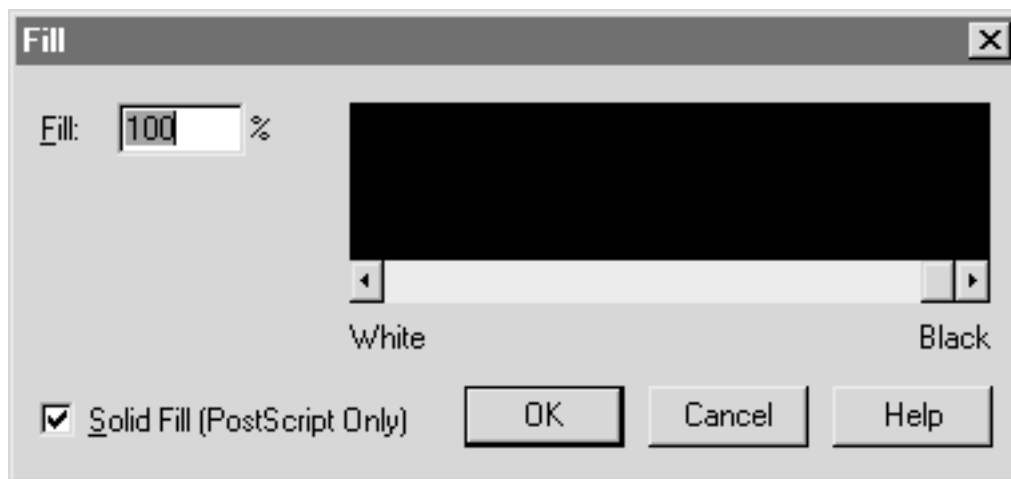
Fill dialog box

How to get there

Enter the Shape Designer (see [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#)). Select an enclosed-outline object in the drawing area and choose Other from the Fill submenu of the Shape Designer Menu.

What it does

When you're creating a shape in the Shape Designer, you can specify that any enclosed object (square, circle, polygon, and so on) be "colored in" with any shade of black or gray. If none of the shading choices in the Fill submenu is what you want, you can use this dialog box to specify any other degree of black or gray.



- **Fill • [Scroll bar].** In the text box, you can type in any number from zero (white) to 100 (black) to specify a shade of gray. If it's more convenient, you can use the scroll bar to change the number in the text box. As you change either of these controls, the area above the scroll bar changes to show you the gray shade you've specified, as it will appear on the screen. (The grays are smoother when printed on a PostScript printer.)
- **Solid Fill (PostScript Only).** Leave this technical option selected. If you don't, then shading applied to complex polygons with crisscrossing lines will only fill alternate spaces created by the crossing lines (for example, only the points of a 5-pointed star would be filled in).
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm, or Cancel to discard, your specifications of a Fill setting and return to the Shape Designer.

Bracket Style dialog box

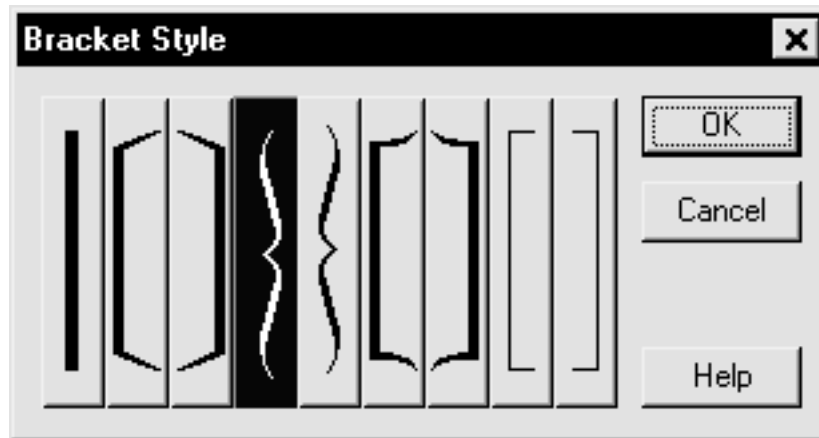
How to get there

Enter the Shape Designer (see [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#)). Choose Bracket Style from the Shape Designer Menu.

What it does

Using the Shape Designer's Bracket Tool, with a single click, you can add a bracket to a custom shape you're drawing. This dialog box lets you specify which of nine brackets you want to appear.

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- **[Nine pictured brackets].** Click the bracket style you want, then click OK (or simply double-click the bracket). You'll have the opportunity to resize or reshape it once it's part of your drawing.
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm, or Cancel to discard, your new bracket-style selection. When you exit the dialog box, click the Bracket Tool and then click in the drawing area. To reshape the bracket, click the Selection Tool, and double-click the new bracket to reveal its reshaping control handles.

Rulers and Grid dialog box

How to get there

Enter the Shape Designer (see [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#)). Choose Rulers and Grid from the Shape Designer Menu.

What it does

This command lets you establish the units of measurement you want to use while creating a graphic shape in the Shape Designer. It also lets you specify how frequently you want grid points to appear (when Grid is selected in the Show submenu of the Shape Designer Menu).

When this visual background grid is visible, you can use it for helping you draw straight lines, or for gauging the size of an object you're manipulating. The grid doesn't appear in printouts, and lines you draw don't "snap to" it; it's purely an on-screen visual aid.

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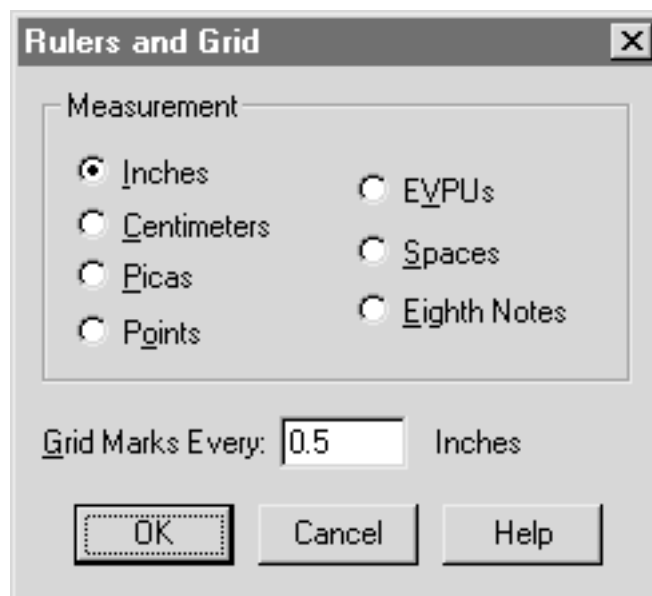
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- **Inches • Centimeters • Picas • Points • EVPU's • Eighth Notes.** Select the units of measurement you want Finale to use in displaying rulers and grids (and in displaying position coordinates in the H: and V: text boxes. (The Eighth Notes choice is primarily useful for creating Executable Shapes, for use in creating a playback effect.)
- **Grid Points Every ____.** Enter the distance you want between grid points in the visual grid.
If you're designing an Executable Shape, the imaginary horizontal gridlines don't represent a unit of spatial measurement. Instead, each time your Executable Shape crosses a horizontal gridline, it generates a new playback value, representing an increase or decrease in the playback variable's value (one beat per minute, one unit of MIDI velocity, and so on).
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm, or Cancel to undo, the changes you've made to the ruler and grid setup, and return to the Shape Designer window.

Shape Designer

You can create your own shapes and symbols in Finale using the built-in Shape Designer. You'll find this built-in graphics program as easy to use as any standard drawing program. In fact, the Shape Designer is even better, because shapes you create in it can be musically intelligent! They can stretch along with the score, affect playback, or appear in every staff at once.


You might create, for example, a harp pedaling diagram, or a custom barline. You can also design rectangles to use as text enclosures when you're creating Text Blocks, block rests to serve as multi-measure rests in extracted parts, and special shapes for use as custom stems.

Font changes are saved and read with Shape Libraries. As a result, fonts embedded in shapes created with special characters in the Shape Designer will maintain their appearance when imported into another file

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To create a shape for use as a marking in the score, you access the Shape Designer from the Expression Tool (see [EXPRESSIONS](#)). (Various other tools access the Shape Designer, too, as described at the end of “[To enter the Shape Designer](#).”

To enter the Shape Designer


- Click the Expression Tool .
- **Double-click on, above, or below the note or measure to which you want to attach the marking.** The Expression Selection dialog box appears. Verify that the setting for Note-attached you prefer is selected.
- **Proceeding through the dialog boxes, click as follows: Shape; Create; Select; Create.** You enter the Shape Designer. (There are various other ways to enter the Shape Designer. See [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#).)

To create a shape

- **Enter the Shape Designer.** See “[To enter the Shape Designer](#).”

You arrive at a graphics window with a number of drawing tools along the top edge of the screen, a menu at the top, and coordinate boxes at the right. See [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#) for details.

If the shape is to be very large or very small, you can “zoom in” (or out) by using the View drop-down list. Using the Shape Designer Menu, you can tell Finale to display rulers or a grid to help you draw precisely-sized objects.

- **Click the tool you want to draw with; then drag the mouse in the main drawing area.** The kind of line you draw is determined by the tool you click. For example, to draw a line, you click the Line Tool  and drag in the drawing area. When you release the mouse, the line is a distinct object whose length, thickness, and angle you can easily change at any time. See [SHAPE DESIGNER DIALOG BOX](#) for details.
- **Use the selection tool and click on the shape. Change the way the shape looks by dragging a position of a handle (or control point). Or, use the selection tool, click on the shape (so the control points appear) then click and drag the shape (but don't grab any of the control points) to reposition it relative to the origin. By editing the numbers in the H: and V: boxes you can also change the shape's position relative to the origin.** H: means the point's Horizontal position, relative to the origin (the small white circle); V: means its Vertical position. The units of measurement are whatever you select using the Rulers and Grid command in the Shape Designer Menu.

The origin is the small handle that appears in the center of the drawing area. It anchors your shape, acts as the zero point for the rulers and positioning coordinates, and indicates where your shape's handle will appear once you've placed it into the score.

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When you drag one of the eight bounding handles of a multiline object or polygon shape, you resize the object. To view the individual control points that define a multiline, polygon, or bracket shape, double-click the object. To edit a curve or slur, click once to see the three draggable shaping handles; double-click one of these handles to see the four control handles for even more control. (Use the arrow keys to nudge a selected handle by one EVPU [1/288th inch].)

- **Combine elements of your drawing, if you wish, by selecting them and choosing Group from the Shape Designer Menu.** To select several objects, click the Selection Tool. Then either shift-click the objects you want, or drag-enclose them. Or, if you want to select all the objects, choose Select All from the Edit Menu. Once grouped, the objects are locked in relation to each other, and may be moved or resized as a unit. You can create nested groups, too, by combining groups together using the same method. To ungroup, select a group and choose Ungroup from the menu.
- **Create layered effects using the Send to Back and Bring to Front commands.** See [SHAPE DESIGNER MENU](#) for more information.
- **To specify the shading for an enclosed object, click the object and select the fill amount from the Fill submenu (in the Shape Designer Menu).** You can specify Black, White, or any degree of gray.
- **Press enter twice.** If you're creating an Expression mark (as opposed to an Executable playback shape), you arrive at the Shape Expression Designer.

If you select Allow Horizontal Stretching, Finale will permit the shape to stretch out along with the music if the measures are widened. For example, you wouldn't want to Allow Horizontal Stretching for a fixed-shape symbol such as a harp pedaling diagram—but you would for slurs, crescendo hairpins, or glissando lines.

- **Click OK or Select in each dialog box until you return to the score.** Once the shape is in the score, you can adjust its position by dragging its handle. To stretch it, double-click the shape's handle; its eight bounding handles appear. To completely reshape the graphic, double-click a second time. Its control-point handles appear, which you can then drag exactly as you would in the Shape Designer.

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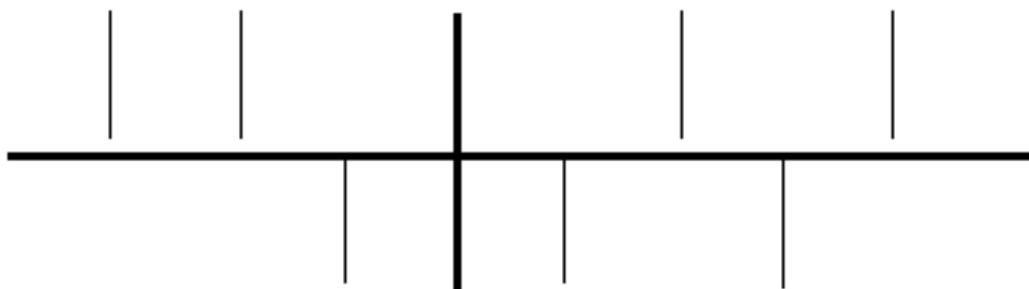
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Harp pedal diagrams

You can create a pedal diagram easily, using the Shape Designer. See also [HARP PEDALING](#) in the Finale Engraver Font.




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You'll save time, however, if you simply load the Harp Pedal Library provided with your Finale package.

- **Choose Open Library from the File Menu.** The Open Library dialog box appears.
- **Navigate to your Libraries folder, and double-click the Harp Pedal Library.** This library contains two shapes: the empty cross-shaped “skeleton,” and a single, vertical, pedal line.
- **Select the Expression Tool  and double-click anywhere on the score.**
- **Click Shape, Create, then Select.** The Harp diagrams are displayed.
- **Choose the harp diagrams to make available in the Expression Selection dialog boxes.**
- **Click OK until you return to the Expression Selection dialog box, then click Cancel to return to the score.**

It's important to place each harp-pedal shape into the score using Metatools. See [EXPRESSIONS—To create Expression Metatools](#). Otherwise, you won't be able to adjust the pedals independently on each diagram.

Finally, you place the diagram into the score in two steps. First, use the Expression Tool to place the Metatool empty cross-shaped “skeleton” into the score. Now add the other Expression—the one that represents the pedal. Once these pedal shapes are placed into the score, again using Metatools, you can drag their handles up or down to adjust the positions of the various pedals.

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