

Chapter 36: Guitar Notation

As of Finale 2003, there have been a number of improvements dedicated to notation of fretted instruments. These enhancements have been designed primarily for entering tablature notation quickly and intuitively and include the ability to add Guitar Bends easily as Smart Shapes. You can now even enter music directly into a tablature staff with a MIDI guitar.

In the past, the Automatic Tablature plug-in was the solution for creating TAB notation. This plug-in would translate music from a standard notation staff into corresponding fret numbers in six evenly spaced single-line staves representing a TAB staff. Fret numbers could then be modified with the NoteMover Tool.

The procedure for creating and editing tablature has changed entirely. Tablature notation is now a “legitimate” alternative notation style. You can now configure any staff specifically for TAB notation in the staff attributes, or even more easily, have the Setup Wizard do it for you. You will be able to enter and edit fret numbers directly in the score with Simple Entry, or copy music between standard and tablature staves using the Mass Edit Tool. Use a MIDI guitar for entry into a TAB or standard staff. Finale will even accurately record the correct string you play. You will find the flexibility to define TAB for diatonic fretboard instruments (such as dulcimer), TAB that uses letters instead of fret numbers, TAB with stems entirely above/below the staff and much more.

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Tablature

Tablature is a special kind of notation for plectrum instruments, that usually consists of two staves; the top staff displays the notes in standard notation, and the bottom staff has a staff line for each string of the instrument and displays small numbers instead of noteheads (to indicate fret numbers).



A tablature score usually appears as an upper, notation staff and a lower staff whose lines correspond to the strings of the plectrum instrument.

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
The instructions for creating tablature notation from scratch show you how to construct and use a tablature staff. Keep in mind, however, that you can easily begin a new TAB document by selecting a fretted instrument and corresponding TAB staff with the Document Setup Wizard. See [SETUP WIZARD](#) for details. For instructions on how to edit your guitar tablature, see [TO EDIT GUITAR TABLATURE](#).

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In the instructions below, the term notation staff refers to the upper staff, and tablature staff refers to the lower “staff.”

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To create tablature notation

- **Notate the instrument's music on a normal staff (the notation staff) in the normal way.**
- **Click the Staff Tool  and choose New Staves.** In the future, you may want to choose New Staves (with Setup Wizard), and choose a pre-defined tablature staff.
- **In the New Staves dialog box, leave Number of Staves at "1" and click OK.** A standard notation staff should appear below the existing staff.
- **Double click the staff you just created to open the Staff Attributes dialog box.**
- **Click the drop down list next to Notation Style and choose Tablature.**
- **Click the Select button (to the right of Notation Style).** You should now see the Tablature Staff Attributes dialog box. Here you can choose or define a fretted instrument, lowest fret, as well as other parameters specific to TAB staves. See [TABLATURE STAFF ATTRIBUTES DIALOG BOX](#) for details.
- **Check On "OK", Reset Staff Attributes To Tablature Defaults.** This will tell Finale to configure the Staff Attributes for TAB staff settings.
- **Click OK.** Notice items such as rests and ties are deactivated in the Items to Display subsection as they are not needed in TAB notation.
- **Click OK.** You should now see the tablature staff beneath the standard staff.
- **Click the Mass Edit Tool  and select all of the measures of the notation staff.** See [SELECTING MUSIC](#) for some region-selecting shortcuts.
- **Click and drag the highlighted region down to the tablature staff.** You should see the Lowest Fret dialog box. For now, we'll leave these settings alone.
- **Click OK.** The music will translate into corresponding fret numbers in the tablature staff. To copy a portion of your music into a tablature staff, simply highlight a smaller region of the standard staff before drag-copying it down. You can also use the Mass Edit Tool to copy music from a tablature staff into a standard staff and Finale will translate the fret numbers into notes accordingly.


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To change the lowest fret of a region

- **Click the Mass Edit Tool  and select a region of the standard staff.** See [SELECTING MUSIC](#) for some region-selecting shortcuts.
- **Click and drag the highlighted region down to the tablature staff (over existing tablature is fine).** You will see the Lowest Fret dialog box.
- **For Specify Lowest Fret, enter 5.** This will tell Finale to place all fret numbers on the fifth fret or above. You can choose any fret number in this dialog box.
- **Click OK.** Finale recalculates the fret numbers and places them on appropriate strings, all on the fifth fret or above. You can also use the Mass Edit Tool to change the lowest fret. See [CHANGE LOWEST FRET DIALOG BOX](#).



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To edit guitar tablature


- **To move fret numbers to a different string, click the Simple Entry Tool** .
- **Ctrl-Click a fret number and drag to the appropriate string.** You can also use the up and down arrows to move selected fret numbers between strings. If the fret number turns orange, it is outside the range of the string. Either change the string, fret number, number of frets, or string tuning so that the fret number is in the range of the string. For information on customizing the string tuning, see the [FRETBOARD INSTRUMENT DEFINITION DIALOG BOX](#).
- **To edit the fret number, click the Simple Entry Tool** .
- **Ctrl-Click a fret number to select it.** The fret number will change color indicating it is selected.
- **Type a fret number.** You can enter any one or two digit number. Press the right and left arrows to move horizontally between fret numbers.

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To enter directly into a tablature staff

- **Click the Simple Entry Tool** . The simple menu appears.
- **From the Simple Menu, choose Select Tablature Notes on Entry.**
- **Choose a rhythmic value from the Simple Entry Palette.**
- **Click in the tablature staff.** You will see a “0” on the line you clicked (or the number of the default lowest fret specified in the Tablature Staff Attributes). It should already be selected.
- **Type the fret number.** To change the font, size or placement of fret numbers, see the [TABLATURE STAFF ATTRIBUTES DIALOG BOX](#).

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Guitar bends

- **Click the Smart Shape Tool**  **in the Main Tool palette.** The Smart Shape Palette and Smart Shape Menu appear.
- **Click on the Guitar Bend Tool**  **in the Smart Shape palette.**
- **Double-click the first of two fret numbers.** Finale extends the bend or release, with the appropriate bend text, over the next fret number. By default the second fret number of a bend will be hidden. By default, the second fret number of a release will be parenthesized. To indicate a 1/4 bend, Ctrl-double-click any note.

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To change the font, size or style of the guitar bend text or to hide it entirely see the [GUITAR BEND OPTIONS DIALOG BOX](#).

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To copy bends

See [TO COPY SMART SHAPE SLURS](#).

To enter hammer-ons and pull-offs

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- **Click the Smart Shape Tool**  **in the Main Tool palette.**

- **Click the Slur Tool** .
- **Double click the first fret number.** A slur will extend from the first fret number to the second.
- **Hold down the Ctrl key and click the Custom Shape Tool** . You should now see the Smart Line Style Selection dialog box.
- **Scroll down and select the “H” custom line for a Hammer On, or the P custom line for a Hammer Off.**
- **Click the Select button.**
- **Double-click the first fret number and drag to the second.** You will see the H or P appear above the fret number. You will see two handles below the hammer-on or pull-off. Click and drag the one on the right to position the H or P accordingly.

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To enter tab slides


- See [TAB SLIDES](#).

To add stems and beams to tablature

- **Click the Staff Tool** .
- **Double click a tablature staff.** The Staff Attributes dialog box opens.
- **In the Items to Display section, check Stems.**
- **Click OK.** You return to the score with default beams and stems on the tablature staff. You can adjust the vertical or horizontal stem offsets or stem direction in the Staff Stem Settings dialog box. For more information on customizing stems, see the [STAFF STEM SETTINGS DIALOG BOX](#).

Time signatures on tablature staves

Generally, a time signature is only used on a tablature staff if it is not accompanied by a notation staff. By default, Finale leaves time signatures off of tablature staves. If you are creating a document with a tablature staff only, you might want to add a time signature to the tab staff. Here's how:

- **Click the Staff Tool** .
- **Double click a tablature staff.** The Staff Attributes dialog box opens.
- **In the Items to Display section, check Time Signatures.**
- **Click OK.** You return to the score. Notice the time signature is a bit small and not centered on the tab staff, so it will need to be adjusted.
- **From the Options menu, choose Document Options and select Time Signatures.** The Time Signature options appear.
- **After Units:, click the drop-down menu and choose EVPUs.** We'll use EVPUs as our measurement units.

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- **In the Vertical Adjustment section, for Abbreviated Symbol, enter “-20”, Top Symbol, “-16” and Bottom Symbol, “-20”.**
- **Click Apply.**
- **Click the Fonts category on the left side of the Document Options dialog box.** The Fonts options appear.
- **Click the drop-down menu for Notation and choose Time.**
- **Click the Set Font button for Notation.** The Font dialog box appears.
- **Set the Size to 36.**
- **Click OK to return to the Fonts options and OK to return to the score.** Your time signature is now enlarged and centered on the staff. Make further adjustments to the placement and size by entering your own values in the Time Signature and Font options as needed. For example, if you want to place the time signature between the second and fourth tab line, in the Time Signature options, for Top Symbol, use -28 and Bottom Symbol, -10. Then in the Fonts options, set the font for Time to 26.

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To use a MIDI guitar for entry

There are two components necessary for entry with a MIDI guitar, the MIDI guitar itself, and a guitar to MIDI interface. The guitar to MIDI interface translates pitches from the guitar into MIDI signals to be sent to the computer. Consult the instruction manual that came with your guitar to MIDI interface to insure it is connected properly to the computer. Then in Finale, go to the MIDI setup dialog box (under the MIDI menu) and choose the appropriate MIDI IN driver. For more information on MIDI setup, see the *Finale Installation and Tutorials*.

There might be a slight delay from the time the string is plucked to the time the MIDI information reaches Finale. To compensate for this, you may need to adjust the MIDI Latency setting:

- **From the MIDI Menu, choose MIDI Setup.**
- **In the MIDI Latency text box, enter “25” ms.** This is just a first guess. Getting this value to match the precise delay may require some trial and error. You may need up to 150ms to compensate for the delay. The ideal amount of latency will depend on your hardware configuration.
- **Coordinate MIDI channels for your guitar strings. From the MIDI menu, choose Tablature MIDI Channels.** The MIDI Channels for Tablature dialog box appears. The MIDI data for each string on a MIDI guitar reaches Finale on its own MIDI channel. In order to properly organize this information, you need to tell Finale the MIDI channel assigned to each string. In this dialog box, enter the channel for each string as defined on your guitar to MIDI interface. Consult your interface’s instruction manual for information on assigning strings to MIDI channels, or viewing the currently selected MIDI channel for each string. See [MIDI CHANNELS FOR TABLATURE DIALOG BOX](#).

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Once you have hooked up the MIDI guitar and set the latency and string MIDI channels, follow instructions for [RECORDING WITH HYPERSCRIBE](#) on either a notation or tablature staff. The principals for using HyperScribe for entry with a MIDI guitar are the same as entry with a MIDI keyboard.

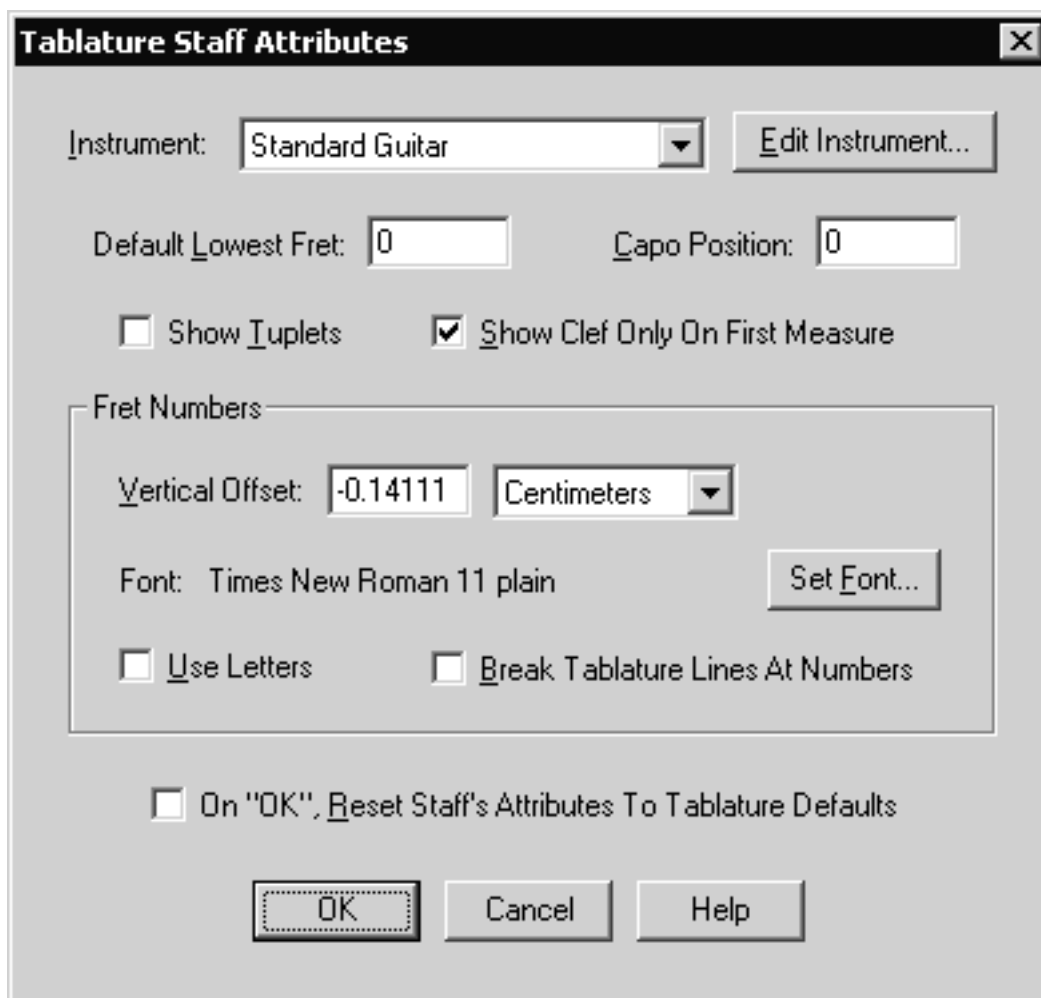
Tablature Staff Attributes

How to get there

Click the Staff Tool , and double-click any staff. From the Notation Style drop-down list choose Tablature, then click Select.

What it does

Use this dialog box to make custom settings for a TAB staff including string tuning. You can use Finale to create tablature notation (for guitar or banjo, for example), where small numbers appear on a special “staff” to indicate fret numbers. See [TABLATURE](#) for step-by-step instructions.



- **Instrument; Edit Instrument.** Select the type of tablature staff you want to create from this drop-down list. Click the Edit Instrument button to define a different fretboard instrument. See [FRETBOARD INSTRUMENT DEFINITION DIALOG BOX](#).
- **Default Lowest Fret.** Type in this text box to indicate the lowest fret to use in the staff by default.
- **Capo Position.** Type a fret number in this text box to indicate the location of a capo.

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- **Show Tuplets.** Check this box to display tuplet brackets and numbers in the TAB staff.
- **Show Clef Only On First Measure.** Check this box to display the TAB clef on the first measure only, and not at the beginning of subsequent systems.
- **Vertical Offset.** Use this field to specify the vertical offset for the positioning of fret numbers on the strings of the staff. Click the drop-down list to specify a different measurement unit.
- **Font; Set Font.** Indicates the current fret number font. To change the font, size and style, click the Set Font button. The Font dialog box appears. See [FONT DIALOG BOX](#) for more information.
- **Use Letters.** Check this box to use fret letters in the TAB staff instead of numbers.
- **Break Tablature Lines At Numbers.** Select this option to break the tablature lines behind tablature numbers.
- **On “OK”, Reset Staff’s Attributes To Tablature Defaults.** Check this box to have Finale configure the rest of the staff’s attributes for TAB. For example, the number of staff lines will be set to match the number of strings in the selected fretboard instrument.
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm, or Cancel to discard, your tablature settings. You return to the Staff Attributes dialog box. If you clicked OK, Tablature will be selected in the Notation Style drop-down list.

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Fretboard Instrument Definition dialog box

How to get there

Click the Staff Tool , and double-click any staff. From the Notation Style drop-down list choose Tablature, click Select, then click Edit Instrument.

What it does

In this dialog box, configure a custom fretted instrument. Here, you can specify the number of strings, string tuning and variation of pitch between frets.

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String	Pitch
1	64
2	59
3	55
4	50
5	45
6	40


- **Name.** Edit this text box to change the name of the fretboard instrument. Click the drop-down list to choose one of Finale's default instruments, or a custom instrument you have already defined.
- **Number of Strings • Number of Frets.** In these text boxes specify the number of strings and frets on your custom fretboard instrument. You can specify up to 24 strings and 63 frets.
- **Diatonic; Define.** Some fretted instruments, such as dulcimer, have varying pitches between frets. Click the Define button to define a non-chromatic fretboard. See [DIATONIC INSTRUMENT DEFINITION DIALOG BOX](#).
- **Listen for String • String • Pitch.** Define the open string pitch for up to 24 strings. Either type the MIDI note number of a string into the text box, or, if you don't know the MIDI note number, Finale can translate it for you. Click in the text box of the string you want to define and click the Listen For String # button to bring up the Listen dialog box. Play the note on your MIDI instrument for the specified string. Finale will enter the MIDI note number for you. Click the bar between the string number and MIDI pitch number to playback the pitch.
- **Play All.** Click this button to playback the open strings as they are defined in this dialog box.
- **New • Duplicate • Delete • Set as Default.** Click New to begin a new fretboard instrument definition, Duplicate to create a copy of the current definition or Delete to delete the current definition. Click Set As Default to use the current fretboard definition automatically in any TAB staff you create in this document.
- **Speedy Clef.** Click this button to open the [CLEF SELECTION DIALOG BOX](#) where you can choose a clef to use when editing TAB staves, which use this instrument, as standard notation in Speedy Entry.

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- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm, or Cancel to discard, your tablature settings and return to the Tablature Staff Attributes dialog box.

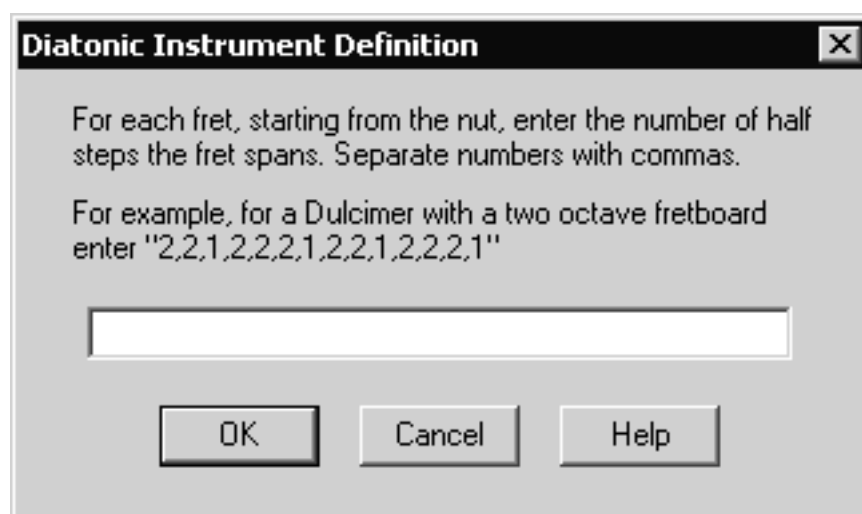
Diatonic Instrument Definition dialog box

How to get there

Click the Staff Tool , and double-click any staff. From the Notation Style drop-down list choose Tablature, click Select, then click the Edit Instrument button. Click the Define button.

What it does

In this dialog box, specify the pitch variation, in half steps, for a diatonic fretted instrument.



In the text box, enter “1” to specify a pitch variation of a half step from the previous (lower) fret or from the nut. Enter a “2” to specify a pitch variation of a whole step from the previous (lower) fret or from the nut. You can enter “3” to specify an interval of a minor third, “4” for major third and so on. Separate each entry in this text box with a comma.

- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to confirm, or Cancel to discard, your fret settings and return to the Fretboard Instrument Definition dialog box.

Guitar parts

See also [SLASHES](#), [TABLATURE](#), [FRETBOARD DIAGRAMS](#).

Guitar parts are often more complex than other parts, because they often combine regular notation with slashes, or hash marks, representing chordal rhythms. There are three ways to accomplish this combination, depending on the kind of part you want to create.

If there’s a passage where you want to indicate ad lib comping, you can let Finale fill in the measures automatically with either stemless, evenly-spaced slashes, or beamed, stemmed rhythmic slashes. See [SLASHES](#).

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
If the part calls for a combination of notes and pitchless slashes, you can enter the melodic parts in one Finale layer, and add the slashes in another. See [“To combine notes with pitchless slashes on one staff,”](#) below.

If there are only a few slashes that must fall on specific pitches, you can notate the entire part in one layer, temporarily notating the slashes as standard noteheads. Once that’s done, you can change the appropriate noteheads to slashes with the Special Tools Tool. See [“To create pitched slashes \(note-by-note method\),”](#) below.

To combine notes with rhythmic notation slashes on one staff

- **Choose Layer 2 from layer buttons in the lower-left corner of the screen, and click the Speedy Entry Tool** . You’re going to notate the parts that are to display normal noteheads. See [SPEEDY ENTRY](#) for instructions in using the Speedy Entry Tool.
- **Click a measure, and enter the notes. For each beat where you’ll want a slash, enter any pitch; we’ll convert them to slashes next so what counts are the rhythms.**
- **From the Edit Menu, choose Select Partial Measures.**
- **Click the Staff Tool** , and select the notes that will contain slashes. See [SELECTING MUSIC - TO SELECT PART OF A MEASURE](#) for more information.
- **From the Staff Menu, choose Apply Staff Styles.** The Apply Staff Styles dialog box appears.
- **Select Rhythmic Notation, and click OK.** See [STAFF STYLES DIALOG BOX](#) for more information.

To create pitched slashes (note-by-note method)

- **Create the part on a single staff.** For each note that’s going to be a slash, enter a normal note.
- **Click the Special Tools Tool** , and click the first measure you want to contain slashes.
- **Click the Note Shape Tool** . Double-click the handle of the first notehead you want to be a slash. Finale displays a palette containing every symbol in the Maestro music font.
- **Double-click the slash.** You actually have a choice of two slashes; the smaller one (slot #33) usually looks best. (The larger one is slot #243.) You return to the score, where the note now has a slash instead of a notehead.
- **Repeat the process with the other slashed notes.**

If the stems don’t connect with the notehead correctly, this can be adjusted for each character you use as a notehead. See [STEM CONNECTIONS DIALOG BOX](#) for details.

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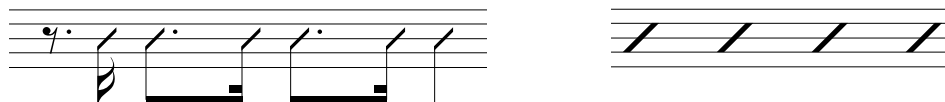
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Slashes

There are two kinds of slashes, or hash marks, used to indicate improvised chording or comping. If you want to indicate ad lib comping, but you don't require a specific rhythm, you can let Finale fill the measures with stemless slashes, spaced according to the time signature (four slashes in a $\frac{4}{4}$ measure, for example, at right in the figure below). If you want to indicate a specific rhythm of comping, Finale can turn the noteheads of any passage into slashes, still beamed and stemmed (at left in the figure below).



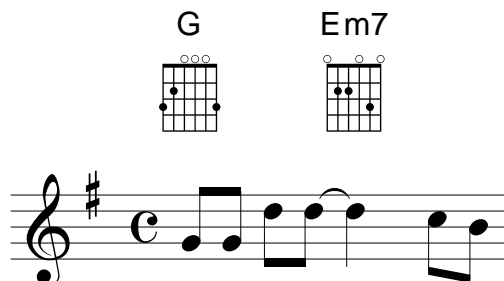
You can also create a passage of mixed normal notation and slash notation, and you can also turn any individual notehead into a slash. See [GUITAR PARTS](#).

To create 'comping' slashes


- Click the Staff Tool , and select the measures in which you want slashes to appear. See [SELECTING MUSIC](#) for some region-selecting shortcuts.
- From the Staff Menu, choose **Apply Staff Styles**. The Apply Staff Styles dialog box appears.
- Select **Rhythmic or Slash Notation** and click **OK**. Slash Notation hides all the music and replaces it with evenly-spaced hash marks. The number of hash marks is determined by the bottom number of the time signature. Rhythmic Notation turns the music into beamed and stemmed slashes, all on the middle line of the staff. See [STAFF STYLES DIALOG BOX](#) for more information.
- Click **OK (or press enter)**. Any music that was in the selected region is now hidden; to restore it, choose the measures again, choose **Clear Staff Styles** from the Staff Menu.

Fretboard diagrams

Creating guitar-fretboard chord diagrams is easy in Finale; they're intelligent, too, because they transpose automatically when the music is transposed.


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To create or show fretboard diagrams globally

- **Click the Chord Tool** . The Chord Menu appears.
- **From the Chord Menu, choose Show Fretboards.** If you have already added chord symbols to your piece, the guitar diagrams now appear. Individual chords with Show Fretboards unchecked in the Chord Definition box will not have fretboards. See [CHORD SYMBOLS](#) for instructions.

If you haven't yet added chord symbols, add them as described in Chord symbols; as you add each chord, its fretboard diagram will also appear.

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To create custom fretboard diagrams

See [CUSTOM FRETBOARDS](#).

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To show and hide fretboards for a region


Fretboards must be set to display globally to allow regional fretboards. See To create or show fretboard diagrams globally above. See [CHANGE CHORD ASSIGNMENT DIALOG BOX](#) under the Mass Edit Menu.

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To show and hide fretboards on individual chords (Manual Input)

To show fretboards on all chords, choose Show Guitar Fretboards from the Chord Menu. When selected, fretboards will appear on all chords in the score, except for those chords where you specifically hide the fretboard. Note: This hides the fretboard for all occurrences of that chord.

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- **Click the Chord Tool** . The Chord Menu appears.
- **From the Chord Menu, choose Manual Input.**
- **Click on the note containing the chord you want to edit.**
- **Double-click the handle of the chord.** The Chord Definition dialog box appears.
- **Under Show, uncheck Fretboard. Click OK.** You return to the score, where the fretboard no longer appears for that chord. (If you later decide you want the fretboard to appear, check the Show Fretboard box.)


To remove all fretboard diagrams

- **Click the Chord Tool** . The Chord Menu appears.
- **From the Chord Menu, choose Show Fretboards.** The diagrams disappear, and there should no longer be a checkmark next to Show Fretboards in the Chord Menu.

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To move the fretboard diagrams up or down

- **Click the Chord Tool** . The Chord Menu appears, and four small triangles appear at the left edge of the screen. These control the baseline of the chords (against which the bottom edges of the symbols line up).
- **From the Chord Menu, choose Position Fretboards.** You've just told Finale that the triangles should adjust the baseline for the diagrams instead of the textual chord symbols.

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- **Drag the triangle handles up or down.** Drag the leftmost triangle to set the baseline for the entire piece. As you drag it, the other three triangles move with it.

Drag the second triangle up or down to set the baseline for this staff, all the way through the piece. As you drag it, the two triangles to its right move with it.

Drag the third triangle up or down to set the baseline for this staff, this system only. As you drag it, the rightmost triangle moves with it. Use this third triangle only in Page View (so you can see the system you're affecting).

The rightmost triangle has no effect on fretboard diagrams.

To change Fretboard Style or capo settings in a region

See [CHANGE CHORD ASSIGNMENT DIALOG BOX](#) under the Mass Edit Menu.

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