

# Chapter 12: Time Signature Tool

## Time Signature Tool

### What it does

Double-click a measure where you want to insert a meter change, or drag-enclose a number of measures and then double-click in the highlighted area; the Time Signature dialog box appears, from which you can create the new meter. See [TIME SIGNATURES](#) for more detail.

### Special mouse clicks

- **Drag-enclose an area** to select a region of music for Metatools, or for the Time Signature dialog box to affect.

### Metatools

You can create Time Signature Metatools—one-key equivalents for meter changes—that can save you time if you need to insert many meter changes into your score.

### To program a Time Signature Metatool

Click the Time Signature Tool. Press shift and a number key or a letter key. Finale displays the Time Signature dialog box; create the time signature you want to correspond to the number or letter you pressed. Click OK (or press enter).

### To use a Time Signature Metatool

Click the Time Signature Tool. Select a region of music. While pressing the number or letter corresponding to the Metatool you programmed, double-click a measure. Finale changes the meter over the region you have selected.

### Contextual menus

Contextual menus are reached by right mouse-clicking on the handle of an object. A contextual menu will be displayed where you can select various items.

### Time Signature Tool

Menu item	What it does
Edit Time Signature	Displays the Time Signature dialog box
2/2	Sets the selected measures to 2/2 or cut time
2/4	Sets the selected measures to 2/4
3/4	Sets the selected measures to 3/4
4/4	Sets the selected measures to 4/4 or common time
3/8	Sets the selected measures to 3/8 compound meter

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
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## Time Signature Tool

Menu item	What it does
6/8	Sets the selected measures to 6/8 compound meter
9/8	Sets the selected measures to 9/8 compound meter
12/8	Sets the selected measures to 12/8 compound meter

# Time Signature dialog box

## How to get there

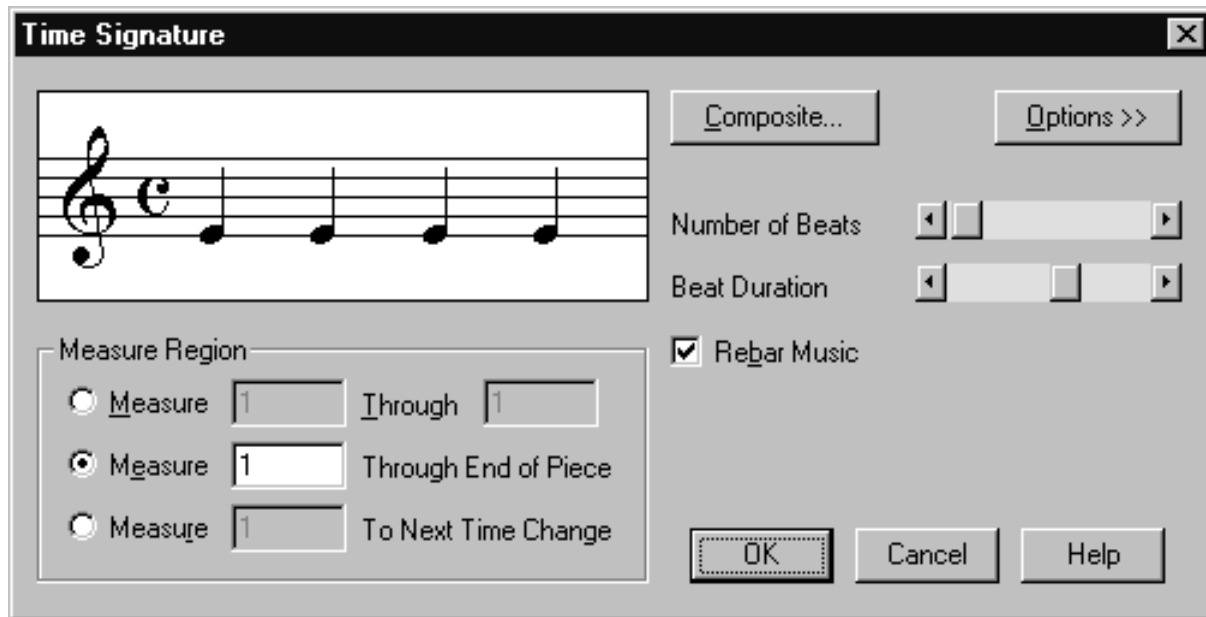
Click the Time Signature Tool , and double-click a measure.

## What it does

In this dialog box you can specify a new meter for the measure you clicked (and following measures), including composite meters (  $\frac{3+2+2}{8}$  , for example). You can also create one time signature that controls beaming of eighth notes, and a separate one that appears in the score.

The Time Signature dialog box contains an Options button which, when clicked, makes the dialog box expand so that it reveals some additional options.

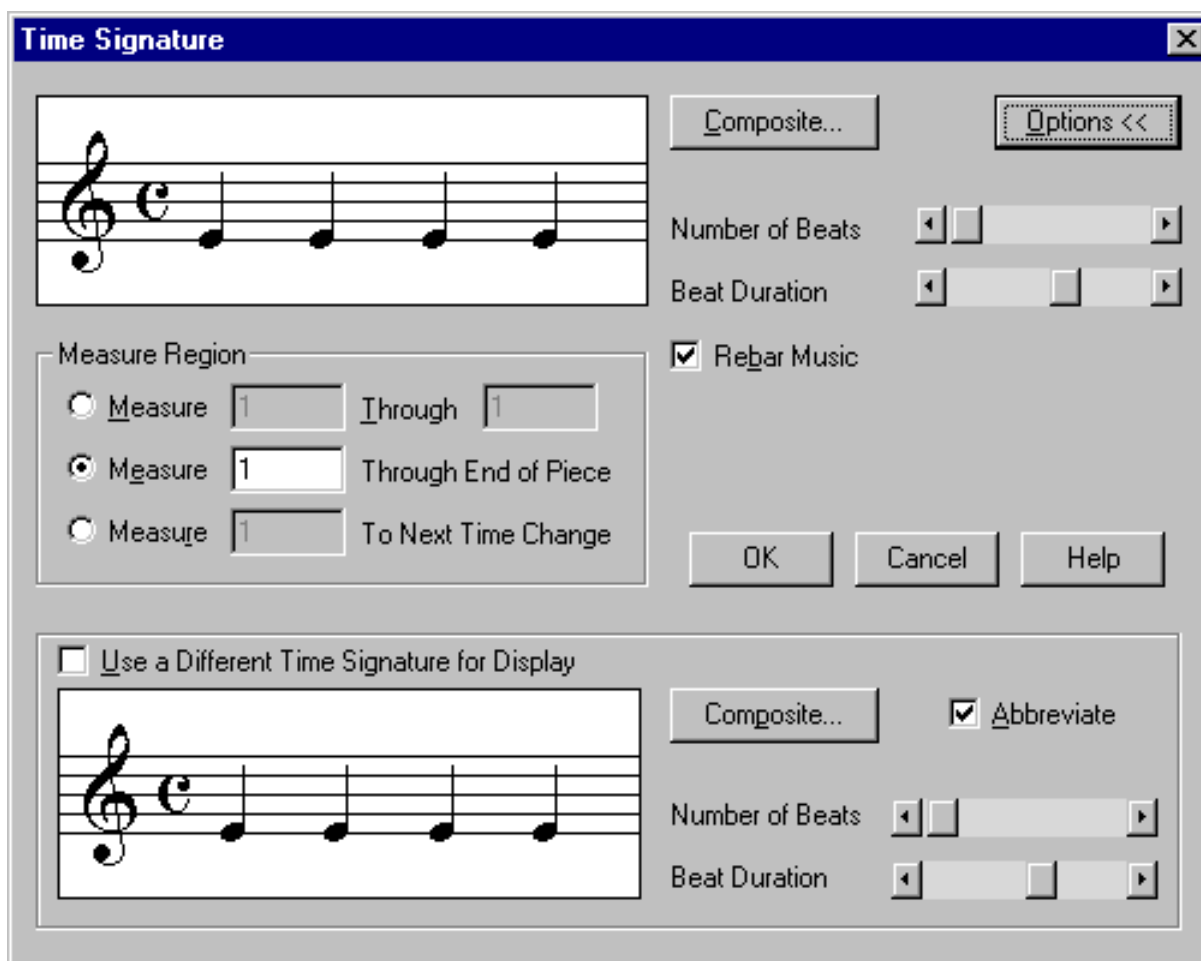
Finale will default to a time signature of  $\frac{4}{4}$  in the few cases where Finale needs a default setting.



- **Composite.** Click this button if you want to create a composite (complex) time signature, such as  $\frac{3+2+2}{8}$  . The Composite Time Signature dialog box appears; see [COMPOSITE TIME SIGNATURE DIALOG BOX](#).

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- **Options.** Click this button to make the dialog box expand, revealing a lower portion containing display options. At that point, click Options again to restore the dialog box to its compact form.



- **Number of Beats • Beat Duration.** Use the upper scroll bar to specify the upper number of the time signature—the number of beats in each measure. Use the lower scroll bar to specify the lower number of the time signature—the rhythmic value of each beat. For greatest control, click the right and left arrow buttons to change the number one increment at a time.

The way that you define your meter is very important, because it also governs beaming in the affected region. In the case of cut time, for example, you should set the scroll bars so that the display shows two half notes. This way, the eighth notes will be beamed together in groups of four.

Even if you want Finale to display a completely different time signature in the score (by using the options described below), you still need to create an appropriate time signature using these primary scroll bars to govern the beaming of your piece. See [BEAMING](#) for some examples.

- **Measure \_\_\_\_ Through \_\_\_\_.** Click this option, and then specify the range of measures you want to be affected by this new time signature by entering their numbers in these text boxes. Finale will display the measures numbers for any region you have drag-selected in these text boxes.

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- **Measure \_\_\_\_ Through End of Piece.** If you want the meter to be changed from the measure you clicked all the way to the end of the document, click this option. (In the text box, Finale proposes the measure you originally clicked.)
- **Measure \_\_\_\_ To Next Time Change.** If you want the meter to be changed from the measure you clicked until the next measure with a different time signature, click this option. (In the text box, Finale proposes the measure you originally clicked.)
- **OK • Cancel.** Click OK (or press enter) to exit this dialog box and change the time signature in the specified measures. Click Cancel to exit this dialog box without changing the meter.
- **Use a Different Time Signature for Display.** This option, which only appears after you click Options, gives you complete control over beaming. Here's how it works:

Using the primary time signature scroll bars (described above), create a meter that will produce the beaming pattern you want. For example, suppose you want a time signature of  $\frac{3}{4}$ , but you want eighth notes beamed together automatically in groups of three. In such a case, you could use the primary scroll bars to create a  $\frac{6}{8}$  time signature. But since you want  $\frac{3}{4}$  to appear in the printed score, click Use a Different Time Signature for Display, and set up the lower pair of scroll bars to display  $\frac{3}{4}$  time. See [DOCUMENT OPTIONS-TIME SIGNATURES](#).

For additional examples, see [BEAMING](#).

- **Composite • Number of Beats • Beat Duration.** These elements, which only appear after you click Options, duplicate the functions of the Composite, Number of Beats, and Beat Duration controls in the un-expanded dialog box. These, however, only affect the time signature that will appear in the score, and don't affect beaming.
- **Rebar Music.** Use the Rebar Music checkbox to control whether Finale rebars (rebeams) the music when changing the time signature. When selected, Finale rebars the music according to the time signature. When deselected, Finale leaves the beaming of the notes as it currently appears in the score.
- **Abbreviate.** Use the Abbreviate checkbox to specify whether to abbreviate (♩) or not ( $\frac{4}{4}$ ) in a particular occurrence of a time signature. The initial setting of the Abbreviate checkbox (checked if the time signature is abbreviated, unchecked if non-abbreviated) matches the global settings for Abbreviate common time and Abbreviate cut time in the Time Signature Options portion of the Document Options dialog box (under the Options Menu).

You can decide whether or not to use the symbols (♩ or ♪) each time a cut or common time signature appears in your music. This capability lets you easily mix ♩ and  $\frac{4}{4}$  (or ♪ and  $\frac{2}{2}$ ) in one piece. You use a simple option, the Abbreviate checkbox in the expanded Time Signature dialog box.

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Here's an example. Perhaps you normally use the symbols for common and cut time in a piece, but you occasionally need to use  $\frac{4}{4}$  or  $\frac{2}{2}$  in the same piece. First, make sure that you have chosen the Abbreviate cut time to and Abbreviate common time to options in Document Options-Time Signatures. (These global settings control the appearance of the time signatures in your piece.) Next, edit the time signatures in the measure where you want to change their appearance, and choose the appropriate option in the expanded Time Signature dialog box.


See [COMMON TIME](#) or [CUT TIME](#) for information on changing the common-time or cut-time displays respectively. Or, see [DOCUMENT OPTIONS-TIME SIGNATURES](#) for more information.

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## Composite Time Signature dialog box

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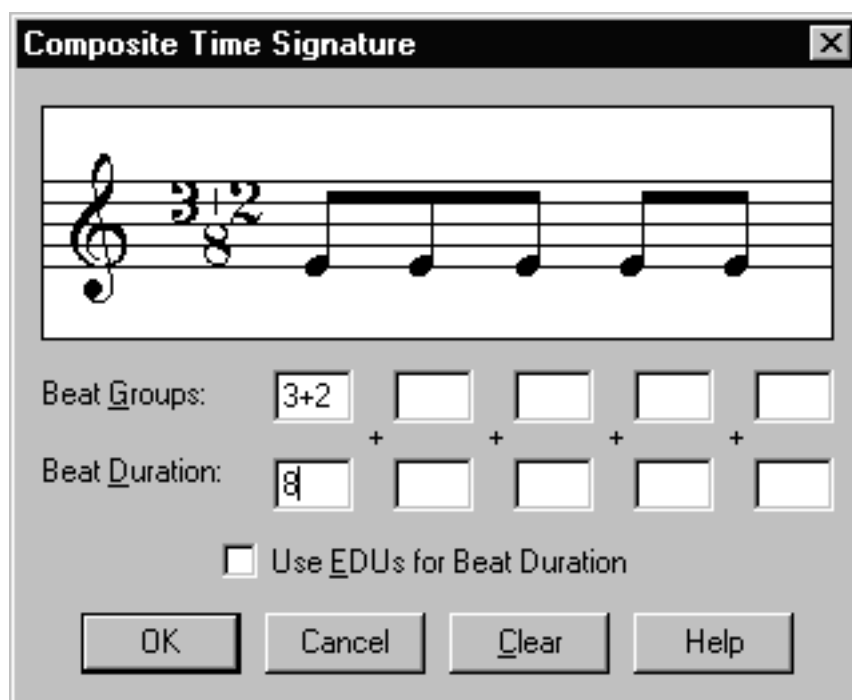
### How to get there

Click the Time Signature Tool , and double-click the measure in which you want to change the meter. The Time Signature dialog box appears. Click Composite. Or, click the Options button and select the composite button in the expanded options section of the Time Signature dialog box.

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### What it does

This dialog box allows you to create complex time signatures like  $\frac{3+2+2}{8}$ .


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
- **Beat Groups:** \_ + \_ + \_ + \_ + \_ . Enter up to five numbers that you want to appear as the upper half of the composite time signature, specifying the number of beats per measure. Finale treats each number and its corresponding Beat Duration as a separate component of the composite time signature. You can use + signs between numbers within a text box if you need time signatures such as  $\frac{3+2+2}{8}$  . You can also use decimals, such as .75.
- **Beat Duration:** \_ + \_ + \_ + \_ + \_ . Enter up to five numbers you want to appear as the lower half of a composite time signature. These numbers specify the rhythmic value of the beats in the measure. Each number appears below its corresponding Beat Group number. You can use + signs between numbers within the Beat duration text box.
- **Use EDUs for Beat Duration.** Select this checkbox if you need to enter beat durations for dotted notes. When this checkbox is selected, Finale uses the specified EDUs number for the beat duration. When this checkbox is not selected, Finale displays the number you enter in the lower half of the composite time signature. See [EQUIVALENTS](#) (in the appendix) for more information on using EDUs to specify duration.
- **OK • Cancel • Clear.** Click OK (or press enter) to save new settings and return to the score, or click Cancel to cancel any changes you made to the settings. Click Clear to remove the current composite time signature settings.

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## Time signatures

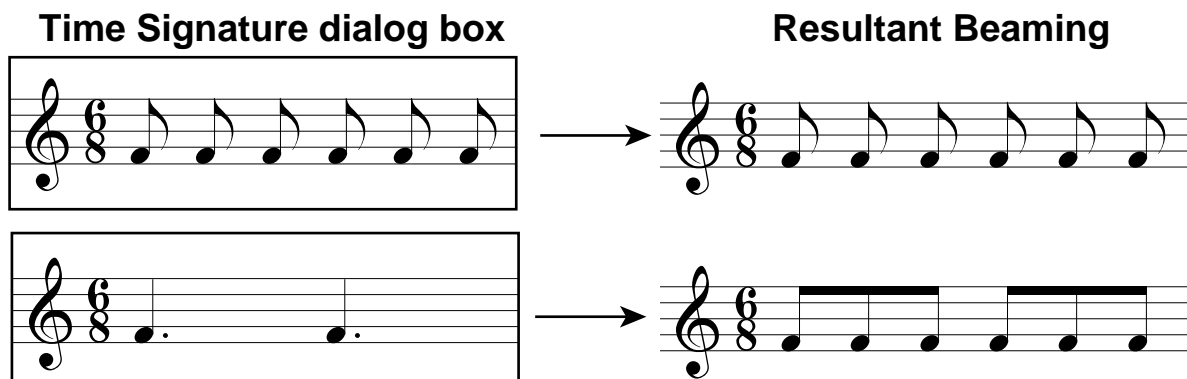
See also [HIDING TIME SIGNATURES](#); [CUT TIME](#); [COMPOUND METERS](#).

### To change the time signature

- **Click the Time Signature Tool** , and double-click the measure where the time will change. The Time Signature dialog box appears. See [DOCUMENT OPTIONS-TIME SIGNATURES](#) for more details.
- **Click the scroll bar arrows for the upper and lower numbers until the window displays the desired time signature.** The upper scroll bar governs the upper number (beats per measure) of the time signature; the lower one governs the bottom number (the basic rhythmic value) of the time signature.

The way you define your meter is important, because it also governs beaming. In the case of cut time, for example, you should set the scroll bars so that the display shows two half notes, meaning that the eighth notes will be beamed together in groups of four. This is particularly important when you're working in  $\frac{6}{8}$  time; if you "spell" the time signature as a string of six eighth notes, Finale won't perform any automatic eighth-note beaming, as shown below (top example). If you "spell" it as two dotted quarter notes, however, Finale will beam eighth notes in groups of three (bottom example).

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If you wish, you can tell Finale to beam according to one time signature, but to display a different signature in the score. Click Options to expand the Time Signature dialog box. Select Use a Different Time Signature for Display, and create the meter you want to appear in the score. See [BEAMING](#) for more important information on time signatures and beaming patterns.

Unless you tell it otherwise, (see [CUT TIME](#) and [COMMON TIME](#)) Finale displays the common-time symbol  $\text{C}$  instead of  $\frac{4}{4}$ , and the cut-time symbol  $\text{C}$  instead of  $\frac{2}{2}$ .

If you're building a composite meter, click the Composite button. A dialog box appears, where you can create a composite numerator (such as 3 + 2 + 2) or denominator (such as 4 + 8). For further details, see [COMPOSITE TIME SIGNATURE DIALOG BOX](#).

- **Specify the range of measures you want to be affected by the meter change.**
- **Click OK (or press enter).** You return to the score.

## Common time

Common time, also known as  $\frac{4}{4}$  time, is a meter with four quarter-note beats per measure. It's often symbolized by the common-time symbol:  $\text{C}$ . For general information on time signatures, see [TIME SIGNATURES](#). For details on Finale's automatic beaming patterns, see [BEAMING](#).

Tip: For large Time Signatures used for some scores, use the Engraver Time font.

### To change the common-time display ( $\frac{4}{4}$ , $\text{C}$ , or another symbol)

- **From the Options Menu, choose Document Options and select Time Signatures.**
- **Click Abbreviate Common Time to.** If there's an X in the checkbox, Finale will display the common-time symbol any time the meter is  $\frac{4}{4}$ . If not, Finale will display  $\frac{4}{4}$ . (You can also specify any other symbol you want Finale to use instead of the standard common-time symbol by clicking the Select button. You select a font for time signatures by choosing Fonts in the Document Options dialog box (under the Options Menu) and changing Time from the Notation drop-down list. See [DOCUMENT OPTIONS-FONTS](#)).
- **Click OK (or press enter).**

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# Cut time

Cut time, also known as  $\frac{2}{2}$  or alla breve, is a meter with two half-note beats per measure. It's often symbolized by the cut-time symbol: . For general information on time signatures, see [TIME SIGNATURES](#). For details on Finale's automatic beaming-pattern feature, see [BEAMING](#).



Tip: For large Time Signatures used for some scores, use the Engraver Time font.

## To change the cut-time display ( $\frac{2}{2}$ , , or another symbol)

- **From the Options Menu, choose Document Options and select Time Signatures.**
- **Click Abbreviate Cut Time To.** If there's an X in the checkbox, Finale will display the cut-time symbol. If not, Finale will display  $\frac{2}{2}$ . (You can also specify any other symbol you want by clicking the Select button.)
- **Click OK (or press enter).**

## To mix abbreviated and non-abbreviated cut and common time signatures

TIP: Before you begin, remember to set the global settings for common and cut time in the Time Signatures portion of the Document Options dialog box (under the Options menu).

- **Click the Time Signature Tool** .
- **Double-click on the first measure in which you want to change the appearance of the time signature.** The Time Signature dialog box appears.
- **Choose the measures you want affected.** By default, Finale selects the measure you clicked, or the area you drag-enclosed, so if that's the range you want, you don't need to enter anything. To specify a different range of measures, enter the numbers of the first and last measures making up the region. To change the measure you selected through the end of the piece, click Measure \_\_\_\_ Through End of Piece.
- **Click Options.** The Time Signature dialog box expands to show the display options.
- **Click Use a Different Time Signature for Display.** (If it's already selected, don't click it again). Set the time signature if necessary.
- **Use the Abbreviate checkbox to specify whether to abbreviate the cut or common time signature for this time change.** If you want to use the abbreviated symbol , simply click Abbreviate. On the other hand, if you want the time signature to appear as numbers  $\frac{4}{4}$ , just deselect Abbreviate by unchecking the checkbox.
- **Click OK (or press enter).** You return to the score, where the measure region you specified now shows the time signature in the format you chose.

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# Compound meters

See [COMPOSITE TIME SIGNATURES](#).

Compound meters, sometimes called triple meters, are time signatures whose rhythmic pulses occur in threes, such as  $\frac{6}{8}$ ,  $\frac{9}{8}$ , and so on. See [TIME SIGNATURES](#) for general instructions.

Note, however, that the way you define your triple meter is very important, because it also governs beaming in the region it affects. To beam eighth notes in groups of three, for example, the values of the notes in the Time Signature window for a  $\frac{6}{8}$  meter should be two dotted quarter notes, not six eighth notes; if it displayed six unbeamed eighth notes, you'd get no automatic beaming. In short: the lower buttons determine the rhythmic value of the pulse, including beaming groups; the upper buttons determine how many of that rhythmic value.

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## Courtesy time signatures

Under usual circumstances, the time signature appears only at the beginning of a piece or at a meter change. However, you can force the time signature to be displayed in any measure.

### To force the display of the time signature in a measure


- Click the Measure Tool , and then double-click barline handle of the measure in which you want the key signature to appear. The Measure Attributes dialog box appears.
- From the Time Signature drop-down list, choose **Always Show**. Click **OK**.

## Hiding time signatures

It's standard practice to display the time signature at the beginning of each system. You can, however, tell Finale not to display the time signature in a particular measure (in which the time signature would normally appear).

To hide all time signatures for a staff see [STAFF ATTRIBUTES DIALOG BOX](#).

### To hide the time signature in a measure

- Click the Measure Tool ; double-click the barline handle of the measure in which you want to hide the time signature. The Measure Attributes dialog box appears.
- From the Time Signature drop-down list, choose **Always Hide**. You can also force a time signature to appear in a measure where it would not normally appear by choosing **Always Show** (see [COURTESY TIME SIGNATURES](#)).
- Click **OK** (or press enter).

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# Multiple time signatures

With the following technique, you can create a score in which each staff has a different time signature. The staves won't play back in different meters, but the music in all staves will be spaced (and beamed) correctly.

## To create multiple time signatures

- **Click the Staff Tool** , and **double click the first staff whose time signature you want to make independent.** The Staff Attributes dialog box for the selected staff appears.
- **Under the heading Independent Elements, select Time Signature.** You have to click this checkbox for each staff that will be in an independent time. If you have several staves to prepare this way, don't exit the Staff Attributes dialog box; choose the next staff from the drop-down list at the top of the dialog box.
- **Click OK (or press enter).** You return to the score. If you now click the Time Signature Tool, a handle appears on every staff you've "enabled" to have an independent time signature. To change the time signature for an "independent time signature" staff, click the Time Signature Tool, and then click a measure of it. The Time Signature dialog box appears, so that you can set the time in the usual way.

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# Composite time signatures

Composite meters (  $\frac{3+2+2}{8}$  , for example) are not only valuable for creating unusual time signatures, but also for creating accurate beaming patterns. Finale uses the time signature to determine beaming patterns, you can create a meter such as  $\frac{3+2+2}{8}$  , and all music you enter will be automatically beamed in eighth-note groups of three, two, and two, for example. (Once you've created a custom "beaming signature" in this way, you can even select a time signature to appear in the score that's different from the underlying beaming signature; see [BEAMING—To create custom beaming patterns when changing the time signature.](#))

## To create a composite meter

- **Click the Time Signature Tool** . A handle appears on each barline.
- **Double-click the measure in which you want the new meter to begin.** The Time Signature dialog box appears.
- **Click Composite.** The Composite Time Signature dialog box appears. The composite time signature you create here will affect the beaming of notes in your music.
- **Enter the series of numbers for the top half of the time signature in the first Beat Group: text box.** If you want to create a  $\frac{3+2+2}{8}$  time signature, for example, simply type 3+2+2 in the first text box of the beat groups: section. You can enter a decimal value, such as 3.5, as well. If you want to create a  $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{2}{4}$  time signature type the 3 in the first text box and the 2 in the second text box.

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- **Press Tab to jump to the lower box. Enter the lower number of the time signature in the Beat Duration: text box.** Type the 8 for the lower half of the composite time signature (for the  $\frac{3+2+2}{8}$  example) in the first text box. If you are creating a  $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{2}{4}$  time signature, type a 4 in the first text box, and a 4 in the second text box to finish creating the time signature.

Finale will only accept standard denominator values. For example, there's no such thing as a "third note," so you can't enter a 3 into this text box; Finale will round off any such number to a legitimate value (1, 2, 4, 8, and so on).

- **Click OK (or press enter).** You return to the main Time Signature dialog box. If you wish, you can click Options, and then select Use a Different Time Signature for Display. In this expanded version of the Time Signature dialog Finale displays a second composite button which will take you to an identical Composite Time Signature dialog box. With this dialog box you have the opportunity to create a separate composite time signature for display purposes only (the composite time signature created in the upper section of the dialog will be used to decide how the music will be beamed). See [BEAMING](#) and [TIME SIGNATURES](#) for details.
- **Specify the range of measures to be affected by this meter change.** Enter the measure numbers in the Measure \_\_\_ Through \_\_\_ text boxes (or Through End of Piece).
- **Click OK (or press enter).**

### To remove a composite meter

- **Click the Time Signature Tool  ; then double-click the first measure in which the composite meter appears.** The Time Signature dialog box appears.
- **Click the Composite button.** The Composite Time Signature dialog box appears.
- **Click Clear, and click OK.** You return to the main Time Signature dialog box, where you can specify a replacement time signature.

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