

Published on **MuseScore** (<http://musescore.org>)

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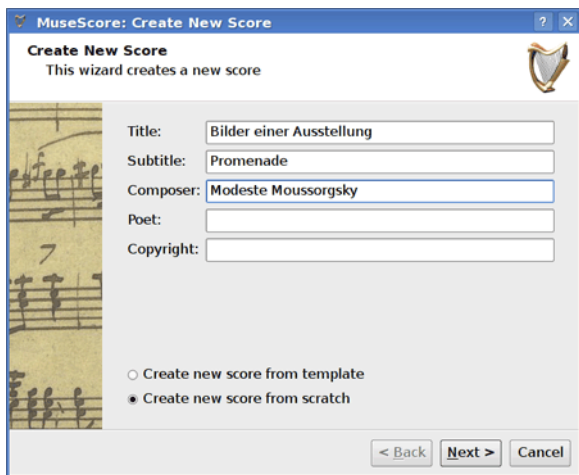
This handbook is for MuseScore version 0.9.2 and above. Login and apply to become a contributor to enhance or translate the handbook.

Getting started

Create new score

From the main menu choose **Score** ? **New**. This opens the new score wizard.

Title, composer and other information

The image shows a screenshot of the 'MuseScore: Create New Score' dialog box. The title bar says 'MuseScore: Create New Score'. Inside the dialog, the title is 'Bilder einer Ausstellung', the subtitle is 'Promenade', and the composer is 'Modeste Moussorgsky'. There are empty fields for 'Poet' and 'Copyright'. On the left side of the dialog, there is a small image of a harp and a snippet of musical notation. At the bottom, there are two radio buttons: 'Create new score from template' (which is unselected) and 'Create new score from scratch' (which is selected). At the very bottom, there are three buttons: '< Back', 'Next >', and 'Cancel'.

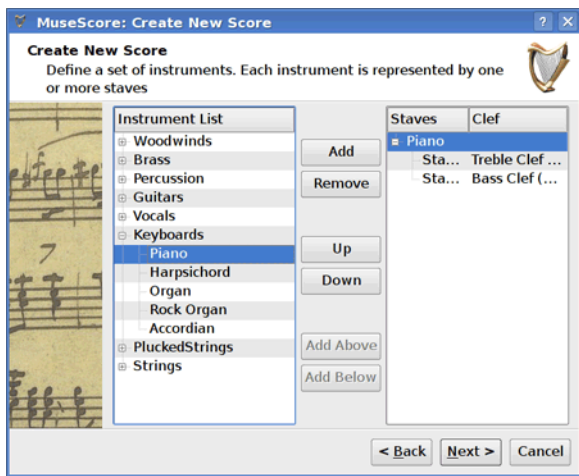
Enter the title, composer, or any other information as shown above. Notice the two options at the bottom:

- Create new score from template
- Create new score from scratch

The first option allows you to selected from ready-made scores in the next screen. The second option gives you the full choice of instruments in the next screen. Templates are discussed in more detail [below](#), but for now just leave it marked as "Create new score from scratch."

Click "Next" to continue.

Instruments and voice parts



The instrument window is divided into two columns. The first column lists instruments or voice parts to choose from. The second column is initially empty but will soon contain a list of the instruments for your new score.

The instrument list in the first column is categorized into instrument families. Double click a category to show the full list of instruments in each family. Select an instrument and click "Add". The instrument you selected now appears in the second column. You can add more instruments or voice parts if needed.

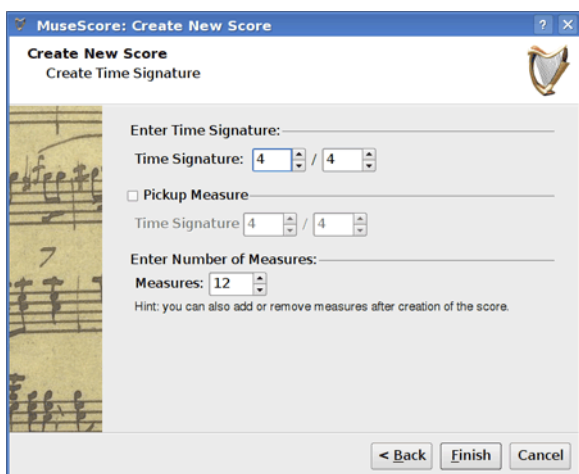
The order of the instruments in the second column determines the order they appear in the score. To change the order click on an instrument name and use the "Up" or "Down" buttons to move it higher or lower. When you are done click "Next".

Key signature

If you are using version 0.9.3 of MuseScore the wizard asks for a key signature. Select the key signature you need and click "Next" to continue.

If you are using version 0.9.2 or earlier the wizard does not ask for a [key signature](#) so you may ignore this step.

Time signature, pickup, and number of measures



Set the time signature to the numbers you want. If your piece begins with a pickup then mark the "Pickup measure" checkbox and adjust pickup time signature to indicate the actual duration of the first measure.

If you know approximately how many measures you need you can specify that here. Otherwise you can add or delete measure later.

Click "Finish" to create your new score.

Adjustments to score after creation

Anything that you set up in the new score wizard can be changed and any time.

- To add or delete measures or create a pickup see [Measure operations](#)
- To change any text see [Text editing](#). To add a missing Title (or other text item) use the menu **Create ? Text ? Title** (or other text item)
- To add, delete, or change the order of instruments use the menu **Create ? Instruments...**

See also: [Key signature](#), [time signature](#), [clef](#).

Templates

When you create a new score using the wizard there is an option to "Create new score from template" on the first screen (see [Title and other text](#) above for details). Select the template option and click "Next" to continue.

Select a template and click **Next** to continue with the new score wizard as usual.

The template files are normal MuseScore files stored in the template folder. You can create your own templates by saving MuseScore files to the template folder. On Windows the template folder is usually located at C:\Program Files\MuseScore 0.9\templates

Basics

In the "Getting started" chapter you learned how to [create a new score](#). The "Basics" chapter gives an overview of MuseScore and describes the general methods for interacting with the score.

Note entry

Notes are entered in **Note entry mode**. First select a note or rest as start position for note entry. When entering notes you are always replacing existing notes or rests. So the duration of a measure does not change.

- **N**: Enters **Note entry mode**.
- **Escape**: Leaves **Note entry mode**.

After entering **Note entry mode** you should select the duration of the note you want to enter by selecting a value from the note palette or by pressing:

- **Alt** + **1**: Quarter note (crochet)
- **Alt** + **2**: Eighth note (quaver)
- **Alt** + **3**: 1/16 note (semiquaver)
- **Alt** + **4**: 1/32 note (demi-semiquaver)
- **Alt** + **5**: 1/64 note (semi-demi-semiquaver)

- **Alt** + **6**: Whole note (semibreve)
- **Alt** + **7**: Half note (minim)

Notes are entered by typing: **C** **D** **E** **F** **G** **A** **B** **C**



Space creates a rest: C D **Space** E



Notes are added to chords by holding **Shift** and entering a note name: **C** **D** **Shift** + **F** **Shift** + **A** **E** **F**



Beams are created automatically: **Alt** + **1** **C** **D** **Alt** + **2** **E** **F** **G** **A**



MIDI keyboard

On Linux you can also insert pitches using a MIDI keyboard. However note entry via MIDI keyboard is not supported on Windows.

Copy and paste

Copy

- Click on an empty part of a measure to select the entire measure (a blue rectangle highlights the selection)
- **Shift** + **click** to extend the selection to additional measures
- From the menu choose **Edit** ? **Copy**

Paste

- Click on the empty part of the measure you want to paste into
- From the menu choose **Edit** ? **Paste**

You can copy-paste measures, but not individual notes.

Edit mode

Many elements in the score can be edited in **Edit Mode** :

- **Double Click**: Starts **Edit Mode**
- **Escape**: Ends **Edit Mode**

Some elements show handles in edit mode which can be moved by mouse dragging or keyboard commands.

[Slur](#) in **Edit Mode**:



Available keyboard commands:

- **Left**: Moves handle left one Space
- **Right**: Moves handle right one Space
- **Up**: Moves handle up one Space
- **Down**: Moves handle down one Space
- **Ctrl** + **Left**: Moves handle left 0.1 Space
- **Ctrl** + **Right**: Moves handle right 0.1 Space
- **Ctrl** + **Up**: Moves handle up 0.1 Space
- **Ctrl** + **Down**: Moves handle down 0.1 Space
- **Tab**: Goes to next handle

See also: [Text editing](#), [Slur](#), [Bracket](#), [Lines](#)

Measure operations

Append

To add a measure to the end of the piece press **Ctrl** + **B**. To add multiple measures use the menu **Create** ? **Measures** ? **Append Measures...**

Insert

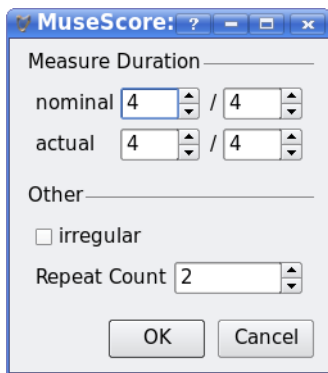
First select a measure then press **Ins** to insert a new empty measure before the selected one. To insert multiple measures use the menu **Create** ? **Measures** ? **Insert Measures...**

Delete

Complete measures can be deleted by first selecting them with **Ctrl** + **Click**. The measure is marked with a dotted line indicating that you selected a "piece of time". Press **Shift** + **Click** to extend the selection. Pressing **Del** removes the selected measures.

Properties

Measure Properties dialog To edit the properties of a measure right click on an empty part of the measure and select **Measure Properties...**



Duration

Normally the nominal and actual duration of a measure is identical. A pickup (upbeat) measure can have a different actual duration.

Irregular

An "irregular" measure is not counted in the measure numbering. Normally a pickup measure is marked as "irregular".

Repeat count

If the measure is the end of a [repeat](#) you can define how often the repeat should be played.

Palette

You can show or hide the palette using the menu **Display** ? **Palette**.

You can drag-and-drop palette symbols onto score elements.

Double clicking a palette symbol is equivalent to drag-and-dropping this symbol to all selected score elements.

For example you can easily put a tenuto on several notes at once:

- Select notes
- Double click on the tenuto symbol in the attributes palette

Undo and redo

MuseScore has unlimited undo/redo functions.

The standard shortcuts are:

- Undo **Ctrl** + **Z**
- Redo **Ctrl** + **Shift** + **Z**

Notation

In the "Basics" chapter you learned how [enter notes](#) and interact with the [palette](#). The "Notation" chapter describes the different types of notation in more detail including more advanced music notation.

Accidental

Accidentals can be set or changed by dragging an accidental symbol from the accidental palette to a note in the score.

If you only want to change the pitch of a note you can also select the note and press:

- **Up**: Increase the pitch of a note for one semitone.
- **Down**: Decrease the pitch of a note for one semitone.
- **Ctrl** + **Up**: Increase the pitch of a note for one octave.
- **Ctrl** + **Down**: Decrease the pitch of a note for one octave.

MuseScore automatically tries to set an appropriate accidental for the changed pitch. If you need to manually correct an accidental or place an cautionary accidental (editorial accidental), then drag an accidental from the accidental palette to the note. If you later change the pitch with cursor keys, manual settings to the accidental are removed.

The menu function **Notes** ? **Pitch spell** tries to guess the right accidentals for the whole score.

Arpeggio

Arpeggios are set by dragging an arpeggio symbol from the arpeggio palette to a note of a chord.



Bar line

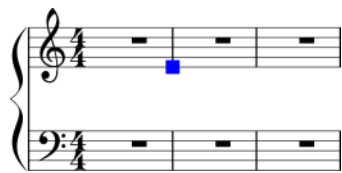
Change bar line type

Bar lines are changed by dragging a bar line symbol from the bar line palette to an bar line in the score.



Create grand staff

To extend bar lines over multiple staves double click on a bar line to edit it (see [Edit mode](#)).



Click and drag the blue square down to the next staff.

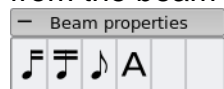
Display of all staff bar lines updates when you leave **edit mode**.



See also: [Measure operations](#)

Beam

Beams are set automatically but the automatic setting can be overridden manually. Drag a beam symbol from the beam palette to a note in order to change its beam behavior.



You can also first select a note and then double click the appropriate symbol in the beam palette.

- ☐ Start a beam at this note.
- ☐ Do not end a beam at this note.
- ☐ Do not beam this note.
- ☐ Start a second level beam at this note.

See also: [Cross staff beaming](#)

Bracket

Delete

Select the bracket and press **Del**

Add

Drag a bracket symbol from the bracket palette to an empty space in the first measure of a system.



Change

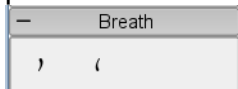
Drag a bracket symbol from the bracket palette to an bracket in the score.

Edit

Double click on a bracket to enter [edit mode](#). In **edit mode** you can drag the height of a bracket to span arbitrary staves of a system.

Breath

To place a **breath** symbol drag it from the breath palette to a note in the score. The breath symbol is placed before the note.



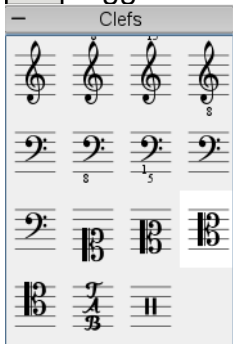
Breath symbol in score:



Clef

Clefs are created or changed by dragging a clef symbol from the clef palette to a measure or another clef.

F9 toggles the [palette](#) window.



Change

Drag a clef from the palette onto a clef in the score. You can also drag a clef from the score to another clef of the score by using **Shift** + **leftMouseButton** + **Drag**.

Add

Drag a clef from the palette onto an empty part of a measure. This creates a clef at the beginning of the measure. Drag a clef to a particular note to create a mid-measure clef. If the measure is not the first measure in the staff it is drawn smaller.

Remove

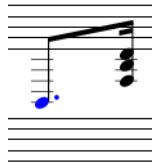
Select a clef and press **Del**.

Note that changing a clef does not change the pitch of any note. Instead the notes are moved.

Cross staff beaming

In piano scores it is common to use both staves (bass and treble clef) to write a musical phrase. This can be entered in MuseScore as follows:

First enter all notes in one staff:



Shift + **Ctrl** + **Down** moves the selected note or chord to the next staff



See also: [Bar line](#) for cross-staff bar lines (i.e. grand staff).

Drum notation

Example drum notation:



Grace note

Short grace notes (Acciaccatura) are painted as a small notes with a stroke through the stem. **Long grace notes** (Appoggiatura) have no stroke. Both are placed before the normal-sized main note.

Create a grace note by dragging a grace note symbol from the notes palette to a main note.


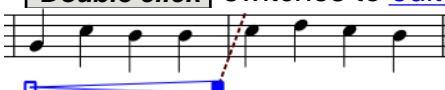

See also: [Grace note](#) at Wikipedia.

Hairpin

Hairpins are [line](#) objects. To create a hairpin first select a note to mark the start point.

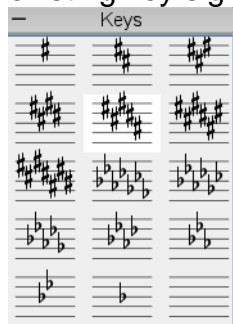
- **H**: Creates a crescendo hairpin
- **Shift** + **H**: Creates a diminuendo hairpin (decrescendo)

Hairpins could also be created by dragging a hairpin symbol from the line palette to a note head.

- **H** creates a crescendo hairpin:

- **Double click** switches to [edit mode](#):

- **Shift** + **Right** moves end anchor:


Key signature

Key signatures are created or changed by dragging a key symbol from the key palette to a measure or existing key signature.



F9 toggles the [palette](#) window.

Change

Drag a key from the palette onto a key in the score. You can also drag a key from the score to another key on the score by using **Shift** + **leftMouseButton** + Drag.

Add

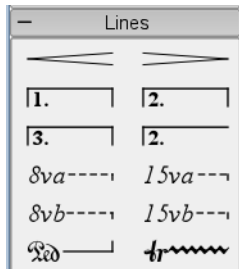
Drag a key from the palette onto an empty part of a measure. This creates a key at the beginning of the measure.

Remove

Select a key and press **Del**.

Lines

ToDo



See also: [Hairpins](#)

One-bar rest

When an entire measure is devoid of notes, a full measure (semibreve) rest is used.

A one-bar rest can be created by marking a measure and pressing **Del**.

All notes and rests on this measure are then replaced by a one-bar rest.

Repeat

The start and end of simple repeats can be defined by setting appropriate [bar lines](#).

In the last measure of a repeat you can set the [property](#) "Repeat Count" to define the number of played repeats.

See also: [Volta](#) for first and second endings.

Slur

Select first note:



S creates a slur in [Edit mode](#):



Shift + **Right** moves the slur end to the next note:



X flips the slur direction:



Escape ends **Edit mode**:



A slur can span several systems and pages. Slur start and end is anchored to a note/chord or rest. This means that if the notes move in a relayout, the slur moves to.

See also: [Tie](#), [Edit mode](#).

Tie

Select first note:



Shift + **S** creates a tie:

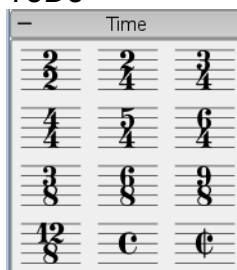


When in [note entry](#) mode you can press **+** before entering the first note to create a tie to the next note.

See also: [Slur](#).

Time signature

ToDo



Tremolo

Tremolo is the rapid repetition of one note or a rapid alternation between two or more notes. It is indicated by strokes through the stems of the notes. If the tremolo is between two or more notes, the bars are drawn between them.

There are separate symbols for one note and two note tremoli in the tremolo palette.

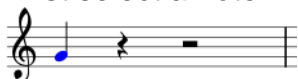
In a two note tremolo every note has the value of the whole tremolo duration. To enter a tremolo with the duration of a half note (minum) first enter two normal quarter notes (quavers). After dragging a tremolo symbol to the first note the note values automatically double to half notes.



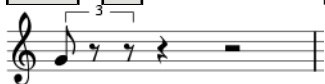
Tuplet

To create a **triplet** first create a note with a duration of the whole triplet. Then select the note and press **Ctrl** + **3** to change it to a triplet. Similarly **Ctrl** + **5** changes the note to a quintuplet.

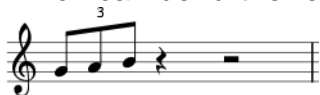
First select a note:



Ctrl + **3** creates a triplet:




which can be further edited





Voices

Note: The MuseScore implementation of voices is not yet complete and subject to change.

Enter multiple voices per staff:

- First start by entering the top voice (all the up-stem notes).
- When you enter the notes some may have down-stems. You can flip the stem direction by clicking the "Flip direction" button  on the toolbar or pressing **X** on the keyboard.



- Now select the first note to move your cursor back to the beginning of the line.
- Click on "Voice 2" button  and start entering the bottom voice (all the down-stem notes).
- Remember to flip the stems as to go along using **X** on the keyboard or the flip direction button .
- When you are done it should look like this:



When to use voices

- If you need stems pointing in opposite directions within a chord on a single staff
- If you need notes of different durations within a single staff, played simultaneously

Volta

Volta brackets are used to mark different endings in a repeat:



Volta brackets can be placed on the score by drag-and-dropping from the lines palette.

The brackets can span more than one measure. Double click the volta to enter **edit mode** and then move the handles with:

- one measure left **Shift** + **Right**
- one measure right **Shift** + **Left**

This commands move the "logical" start or end of the volta which determine the bracketed measures. Other commands in **edit mode** also move the handles but do not change how the repeat is played.

If you move the handles, a dashed line from the logical position to the actual position is shown



Properties

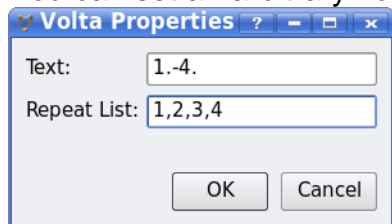
Repeat list

This list determines which repeat the volta should be played.

If the volta is played in more than one repeat all repeat numbers must be listed and separated by a comma (",").

Text

You can set an arbitrary volta text. Of course the text should correspond with the repeat list.




Sound and playback

MuseScore has "Sound and playback" capabilities built in. This chapter covers the playback controls and ways to extend the instrument sounds beyond the built-in piano sound.

Play mode

MuseScore has an integrated sequencer and synthesizer to play your score.

By pressing the Play  button you enter **Play mode**. In **Play mode** the following commands are available:

- Toggle stop/play **Space**
- Seek to previous chord **Left**
- Seek to next chord **Right**
- Seek to previous measure **Ctrl** + **Left**
- Seek to next measure **Ctrl** + **Right**
- Rewind to start of score **Home**
- Toggle show play panel **F11**

If you want to play instruments other than piano you have to change the MuseScore integrated [SoundFont](#) with a more capable one in **Edit** ? **Preferences...** ? **I/O** tab.

SoundFont

MuseScore comes with a piano sound for play back. For more sounds, such as a violin or percussion, you need a General MIDI SoundFont.

Overview

A SoundFont file can store any number of instrument sounds. Many SoundFonts are available on the web. Look for one that covers the 128 sounds of [General MIDI](#) (GM).

The file size and sound quality of SoundFonts available on the web is varied. Larger SoundFonts often sound better but may be too large to run on your computer. If you find MuseScore runs slowly after installing a large SoundFont or your computer can't keep up during play back then look for a smaller SoundFont. Below are three popular GM SoundFonts of different sizes.

- FluidR3_GM.sf2 (141 MB uncompressed), see [Fluid](#)
- MagicSF_ver2.sf2 (67.8 MB uncompressed), see [Big SoundFonts](#)
- Unison.sf2 (27.9 MB uncompressed), see [Big SoundFonts](#)

Compression

Since SoundFont files are large they often are compressed into a variety of formats including .zip, .sfArk, and .tar.gz. You need to decompress these files before they can be used.

- ZIP is standard compression format supported by most operating systems.
- sfArk is a compression format designed especially for compressing SoundFont files. Use the special [sfArk software](#) to decompress it.
- .tar.gz is a popular compression format for Linux. Windows users can use [7-zip](#) which supports a wide variety of compression formats. Note that you need apply decompression twice: once for GZip and once for TAR.

MuseScore settings

After finding and decompressing a SoundFont you need to set up MuseScore to use it.

Go to **Edit** ? **Preferences...** ? **I/O** tab.

The initial Sound Font setting is : /data/piano1.sf2. Replace this with the location of your new SoundFont (.sf2) file. Click on the Open icon to browse for the file and open it.

To apply changes click OK to exit the preferences panel. Quit and and reopen MuseScore for the changes to take affect

Troubleshooting

If the play panel disappears after changing the SoundFont go to **Edit** ? **Preferences...** ? **I/O** tab and click OK without making any changes, After restarting MuseScore the play panel should reappear. This is a [know bug](#).

Tempo

Play back tempo can be changed via the play panel or via tempo text in the score.

Play panel

- Display the play panel: **Display** ? **Play Panel**
- Change the Beats per Minute (bpm) using the Tempo (Tmp) slider

Tempo text

- Select a note to indicate where the tempo text should be created
- From the main menu: **Create** ? **Text...** ? **Tempo...**
- Select the desired tempo text and make adjustments to text or BPM if necessary
- Press **OK** to finish

Existing tempo text can be changed by double clicking the text to enter **edit mode**.

Beats per minute (BPM) on existing tempo text can be adjusted by right clicking on the text and selecting **Tempo Properties...**

Note: Tempo text in the score overrides a tempo setting in the play panel.

Text

The "Text" chapter covers lyrics, chord names, and other staff text. The previous chapter covers [text that affects playback tempo](#)

Text editing

Double click on text to enter **edit mode** :



In text **edit mode** the following commands are available:

- **Ctrl** + **B** toggles bold face
- **Ctrl** + **I** toggles italic
- **Ctrl** + **U** toggles underline
- **Up** start superscript or end subscript if in subscript mode
- **Down** start subscript or end superscript if in superscript mode
- move cursor: **Home** **End** **Left** **Right**
- **Backspace** remove character to the left of the cursor
- **Delete** remove character to the right of the cursor
- **Return** start new line
- **F2** Show text palette. The text palette can be used to enter special characters and symbols.

See also: [Chord name](#), [Lyrics](#)

Text style

Text elements are created from a **Text Style**. This style defines the initial properties of text.

Text properties:

- **Font family**: Name of the font such as "Times New Roman" or "Arial"
- **Point size**: the size of the font in points
- **Italic, bold, underline**: font properties
- **Anchor**: page, time, notehead, system, staff
- **Alignment**: horizontal: left, right, center; vertical: top, bottom, center
- **Offset**: an offset to the normal anchor position
- **Offset type**: mm, space, or percent of page size

Text types:

- **Title, subtitle, composer, poet**: anchored to page
- [Fingering](#): Fingerings are anchored to note heads.
- [Lyrics](#): Lyrics are anchored to a time position.
- [Chord name](#): Chord names are also anchored to a time position.

Chord name

Chord names can be entered by first selecting a note and then pressing **Ctrl** + **K**. This creates a chord name text object for the selected chord.

- Type **Space** to move to the next chord.
- **Shift** + **Space** moves to the previous chord.
- **Ctrl** + **Space** enters a space into the chord name text.

Chord names can be [edited](#) as normal text.

Fingering

Fingering can be added to notes by dragging a fingering character from the fingering palette to a note head in the score. Fingerings are normal text which can be [edited](#) like any other text.

Fingering					
0	1	2	3	4	5
p	i	m	a	c	

Lyrics

- First enter notes
- Select first note
- Type **Ctrl** + **L** and enter lyrics text for first note
- Type **Space** at end of word to go next note
- Type an hyphen **-** at end of syllable to go to next note. The syllables are connected with a dash
- **Shift** + **Space** moves to the previous note
- **Ctrl** + **Space** enters a space into the lyrics text
- **Ctrl** + **-** enters a hyphen (-) into the lyrics text



Syllables can be extended by an underline:



Entered with: soul, To **Esc**.

Lyrics can be [edited](#) as normal text.

See also: [Text](#), [Chord name](#).

Formatting

Break

Page breaks or **line breaks** (system breaks) can be applied by dragging a page break symbol or line break symbol from the breaks palette to an empty space of a measure in the score. The break happens after the marked measure. The green break symbols are visible on the screen but do not appear on printouts.



Frame

Frames provide empty space outside of normal measures. They can also contain text or pictures. MuseScore has two kinds of frames:

Horizontal

Horizontal frames break a system. The width is adjustable and the height equals the system height. Horizontal frames can be used to separate a coda.

Vertical

Vertical frames provide empty space between or before systems. The height is adjustable and the width equals the system width. Vertical frames are used to place title, subtitle or composer. If you create a title, a vertical frame is placed before the first measure automatically if it is not there already.

Create a frame

First select a measure. The command to insert a frame is found in the menu **Create** ? **Measures** . The frame is inserted before the selected measure.

Delete a frame

Select the frame and press **Del**.

Edit frame

Double click the frame to enter [edit mode](#). A handle appears which can be used to drag the size of the frame.

Title frame in [edit mode](#) :



Support

How to report bug or ask for support

Before posting your support request:

- PLEASE, try to find a solution in support forum. Use [search](#) function.
- Try to find solution in the [user handbook](#).
- If you are getting an error message, check list of common error messages.
- If you are posting error report, first try to reproduce the problem with [the latest release](#). You may also see the version history to check whether it has been fixed already.

When posting your request for support or reporting bug, please include as much of the following information as you know:

- Version of MuseScore you are using and what operating system you are running it on.
- Try to describe precise steps that lead to the problem (where do you click, what keys do you press, what do you see, etc.). If you are not able to reproduce the problem with the steps, it is probably not worth reporting it as the developers will not be able to reproduce it (and solve) either.

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