

**LibreOffice**  
The Document Foundation

Draw Guide

*Chapter 2*  
*Drawing Basic Shapes*

## Copyright

---

This document is Copyright © 2005–2012 by its contributors as listed below. You may distribute it and/or modify it under the terms of either the GNU General Public License (<http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>), version 3 or later, or the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>), version 3.0 or later.

All trademarks within this guide belong to their legitimate owners.

## Contributors

John Cleland  
Martin Fox  
Jean Hollis Weber  
John A Smith

## Feedback

Please direct any comments or suggestions about this document to:  
[documentation@global.libreoffice.org](mailto:documentation@global.libreoffice.org)

## Acknowledgments

This chapter is based on an original French document written for OpenOffice.org 1.x by Michel Piquier (translated into English by Alex Thurgood) and previous content revised by Jim Taylor. The chapter was revised for OpenOffice.org 2.0 by Linda Worthington, Daniel Carrera, Jean Hollis Weber, and Agnes Belzunce, and later translated into German by Wolfgang Uhlig. The German revisions were then translated into English and updated for OpenOffice.org 3.3 by Martin Fox. Other contributors included Hazel Russman, Gary Schnabl, and Claire Wood.

## Publication date and software version

Published 10 April 2011. Based on LibreOffice 3.4.6.

## Note for Mac users

---

Some keystrokes and menu items are different on a Mac from those used in Windows and Linux. The table below gives some common substitutions for the instructions in this chapter. For a more detailed list, see the application Help.

<i>Windows or Linux</i>	<i>Mac equivalent</i>	<i>Effect</i>
<b>Tools &gt; Options</b> menu selection	<b>LibreOffice &gt; Preferences</b>	Access setup options
<i>Right-click</i>	<i>Control+click</i>	Opens a context menu
<i>Ctrl (Control)</i>	<i>⌘ (Command)</i>	Used with other keys
<i>F5</i>	<i>Shift+⌘+F5</i>	Opens the Navigator
<i>F11</i>	<i>⌘+T</i>	Opens the Styles and Formatting window

# Contents

---

<b>Copyright</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Note for Mac users</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Creating simple drawings</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Custom shapes</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Drawing basic shapes</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Drawing a straight line.....	5
Drawing an arrow.....	6
Drawing lines and arrows.....	6
Drawing a rectangle or square.....	7
Drawing ellipses (ovals) and circles.....	8
Adding ellipse and arc tools to the Drawing toolbar.....	8
Drawing elliptical and circular arcs.....	9
Curves.....	10
<b>Gluepoints and connectors (basics)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Gluepoints.....	11
Connectors.....	11
<b>Drawing geometric shapes</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Basic shapes.....	13
Symbol shapes.....	13
Block arrows.....	13
Flowcharts.....	13
Callouts.....	13
Stars and banners.....	13
<b>Adding text to objects</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Using dynamic text frames.....	14
Using text elements in Draw objects.....	15
Adding text to an object.....	15

## Creating simple drawings

---

You can create 2D and 3D objects in Draw. This chapter shows how to draw simple 2D objects. The following chapters describe how to work with and edit such objects.

All shapes, whether they are lines, rectangles, or more complicated shapes, are called *objects*. This is common notation in vector drawing software.

The drawing tools are found on the Drawing toolbar. Figures 1 and 14 show parts of the standard form of the toolbar, as installed with Draw.

As described in Chapter 1, Introducing Draw, the Drawing toolbar is normally located at the bottom of the window. If you do not see it, you can activate it from the **View > Toolbars** menu. As in all components of LibreOffice, you can place the toolbar on the Draw window wherever you wish, and you can configure toolbars as you wish by adding, moving, hiding, or deleting toolbar icons.

## Custom shapes

---

Draw 3 offers the ability to create *custom shapes*. These correspond to *autoshapes* in Microsoft Office.

The two types of shapes differ in their properties and are dealt with separately in the relevant chapter of this guide. The main differences relate to the behavior of 3D objects and text handling. Beginners can safely ignore both for the present.

Text frames in Draw 3 have their own geometric format.

## Drawing basic shapes

---

Basic shapes include:

- Lines
- Arrows
- Rectangles and squares
- Ellipses and circles
- Curves and polygons
- Connectors
- Lines and arrows

### Note

When you draw a basic shape or select one for editing, the *Information* field in the status bar changes to reflect the action taken or in progress: Line created, Text frame xxyy selected, TextEdit: Paragraph 1, Row 1, Column 8 and so on.


Figure 1 shows part of the Drawing toolbar with the icons needed in the following sections. The *Text* icon is also included.



Figure 1: Part of the Drawing toolbar

## Drawing a straight line

We begin with the drawing of the simplest element—a straight line.

Click on the **Line** icon  on the Drawing toolbar and place the mouse pointer at the point where you want to start the line (see Figure 2). Drag the mouse while keeping the mouse button pressed. Release the mouse button at the point where you want to end the line. A blue selection handle appears at each end of the line, showing that this is the currently selected object.

Holding down the *Shift* key while you draw a line restricts the angle of the line to a multiple of 45 degrees (0, 45, 90, 135, and so on).

### Caution



This is the default behavior of the *Shift* key. However, if you have used **Tools > Options > LibreOffice Draw > Grid** to set **Snap position** to **When creating or moving objects**, the action of the *Shift* key is the opposite: lines will always be at a multiple of 45 degrees *unless* the *Shift* key is pressed.

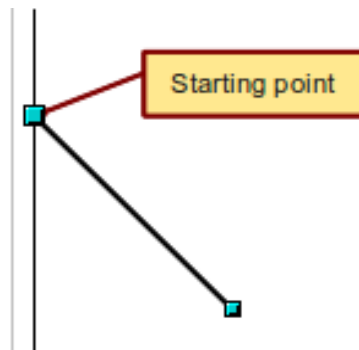


Figure 2: Drawing a straight line

Keeping the *Ctrl* key pressed while drawing a line enables the end of the line to snap to the nearest grid point.

### Caution



The effect of the *Ctrl* key depends on the settings of the **Snap to Grid** option on the **View->Grid** menu:

**Snap to Grid on:** *Ctrl* deactivates the snap option for this activity.

**Snap to Grid off:** *Ctrl* activates the snap option for this activity.

The spacing (resolution) of the grid points can be adjusted under **Tools > Options > LibreOffice-Draw > Grid**. See also Chapter 8, Tips and Tricks.

Holding down the *Alt* key while drawing a line results in the line extending outwards symmetrically in both directions from the start point. This lets you draw lines by starting from the middle of the line.

The line just drawn has all the standard line attributes, such as color and line style. To change any of these properties, select the line by clicking on it, then *right-click* and select **Line**.

While you are working with a line (or any other element), you can use the information field on the Status bar to monitor the activity. A description of the current activity or selection is shown when you are working with elements. Figure 3 shows two examples.

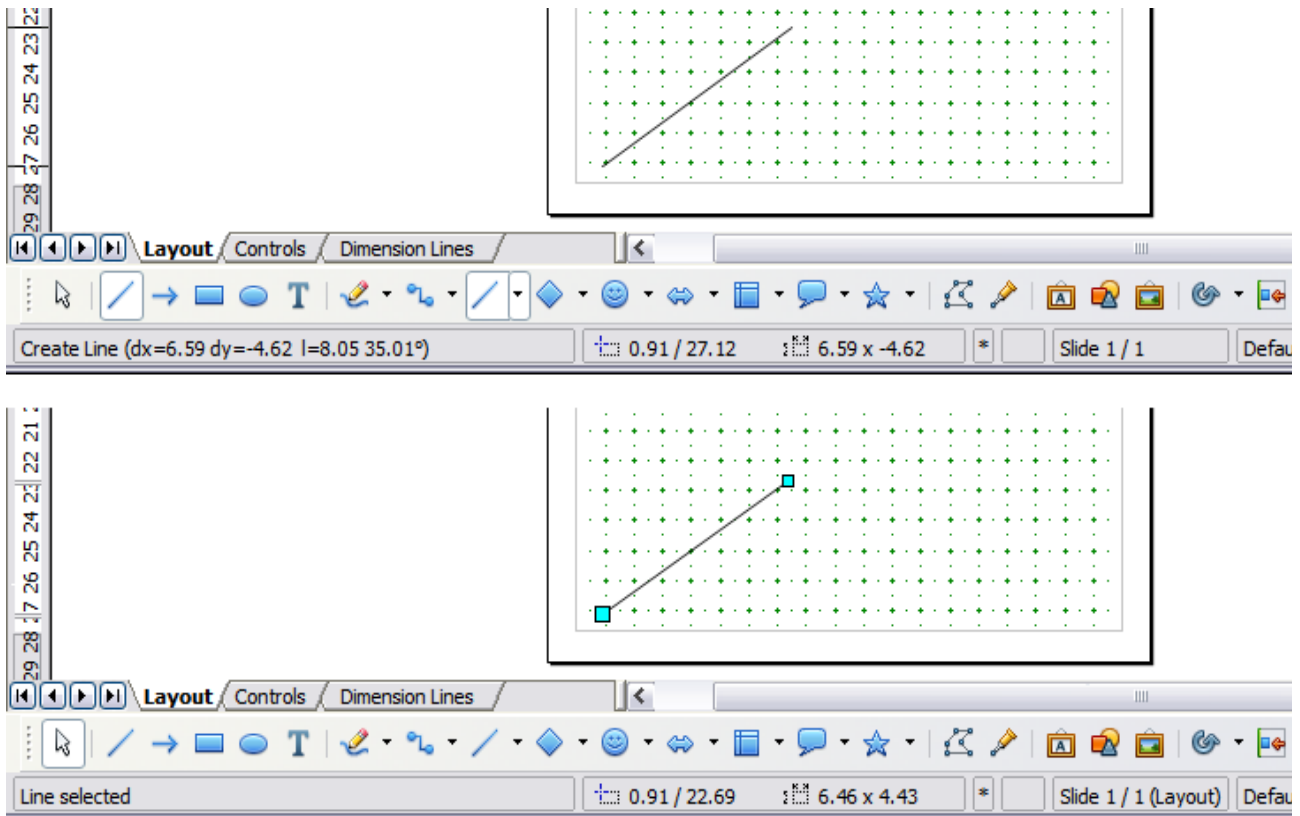



Figure 3: The information area in the status bar

## Drawing an arrow

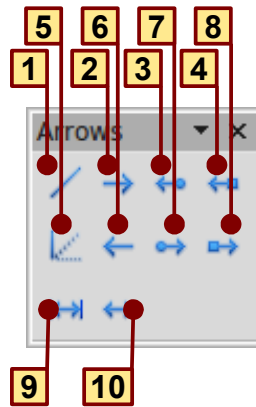
Arrows are drawn like lines. Draw classifies *arrows* as a subgroup of lines: lines with arrowheads. The information field on the status bar shows them only as lines. Click on the **Line Ends with**

**Arrow** icon  to draw an arrow.

## Drawing lines and arrows

If you added the lines and arrows toolbar to the main Drawing toolbar you can click on the small black triangle on the **Lines and Arrows**  icon on the Drawing toolbar to open a toolbar with ten tools for drawing lines and arrows (Figure 4). (Alternatively **View > Toolbars > Arrows** opens the toolbar as a floating toolbar.) In both cases, the last-used command will be stored on the toolbar to make it quicker to call it up again: click directly on the symbol to repeat the last used command chosen from this toolbar.


After drawing the line, you can change the arrow style by clicking on the **Arrow** button in the **Line and Filling** toolbar and choose from the arrow start and end options.



- |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Line                   | 5 Line (45°)             | 8 Line with square/arrow |
| 2 Line Ends with Arrow   | 6 Line starts with arrow | 9 Dimension line         |
| 3 Line with arrow/circle | 7 Line with circle/arrow | 10 Line with arrows      |
| 4 Line with arrow/square |                          |                          |

Figure 4: Arrows toolbar

## Drawing a rectangle or square

Drawing a rectangle is similar to drawing a straight line, except that you click on the **Rectangle** icon  on the Drawing toolbar, and the (imaginary) line drawn by the mouse corresponds to a diagonal of the rectangle. In addition, the outline of the future rectangle changes shape as you drag the mouse around. The outline may be shown as a dashed line until you release the mouse button.

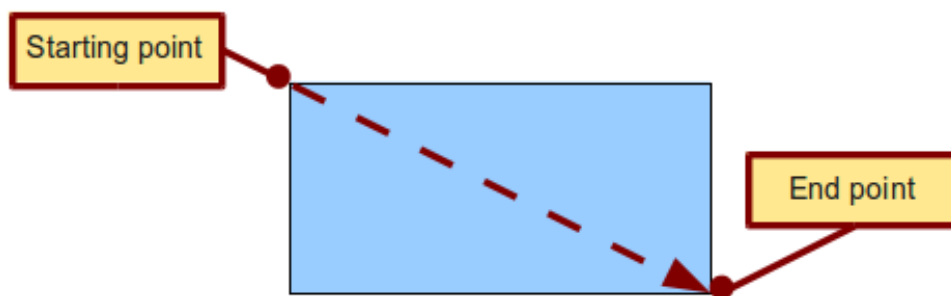



Figure 5: Drawing a rectangle

Draw considers squares to be rectangles with sides of equal length. Hold down the *Shift* key to draw a square. Hold down the *Alt* key while dragging with the mouse to create a rectangle with its center (rather than a corner) at the start point (where you first clicked the mouse).

### Note

Blue or green selection handles appear around an object made up of more than 2 points, showing that this is the currently selected object. The colors depend on the standard selection mode—green with a normal selection or blue if you are in the point edit mode. This effect is easily seen if both **Simple Handles** and **Large Handles** are switched on in the Options toolbar. See Chapter 3 for more details on points.

## Drawing ellipses (ovals) and circles

To draw an ellipse (also called an oval) or a circle, click on the **Ellipse** icon  on the main Drawing toolbar. (A circle is simply an ellipse with both axes the same length.) The ellipse drawn is the largest ellipse that fits within the (imaginary) rectangle drawn by the mouse (Figure 6).

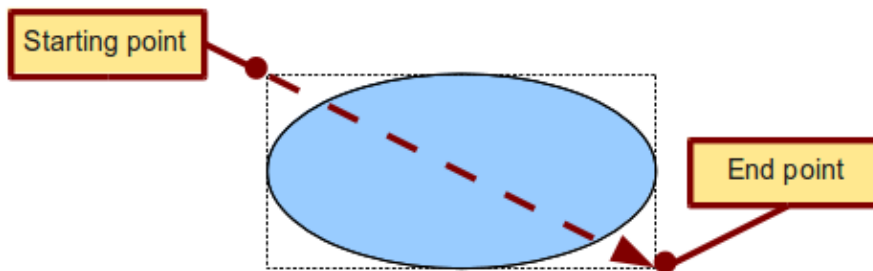


Figure 6: Drawing an ellipse

There are three ways to draw an ellipse or a circle:

- Holding down the *Shift* key while dragging with the mouse draws a circle.
- Holding down the *Alt* key (together with the *Shift* key) draws a symmetrical ellipse (a circle) with the starting point at the center.
- Holding down the *Ctrl* key while dragging with the mouse draws an ellipse or circle that snaps to the nearest grid points.

### Note

If you first press and hold the *Ctrl* key down and then click on one of the icons for Line, Rectangle, Ellipse or Text, a standard sized object is drawn automatically in the work area: the size, shape, and color are all standard values. These attributes can be changed later, if desired. This only works if the icon has no associated toolbar—no arrow on the right side of the icon.

## Adding ellipse and arc tools to the Drawing toolbar

In previous versions of Draw, a long-click on the ellipse button opened a new toolbar that contained tools for drawing elliptical and circular arcs. This function is not directly available in Version 3.

If you really need this tool, you can add an *Ellipse* toolbar to the Drawing toolbar:

- 1) Click on the arrow on the right-hand end of the Drawing toolbar and select **Customize Toolbar**.
- 2) On the **Toolbars** page of the Customize dialog, select **Drawing** in the *Toolbar* field and click **Add**.
- 3) In the Add Commands dialog (Figure 7), select **Drawing** in the *Category* list, select the *first Ellipse* command in the *Commands* list, click **Add**, and then click **Close**.



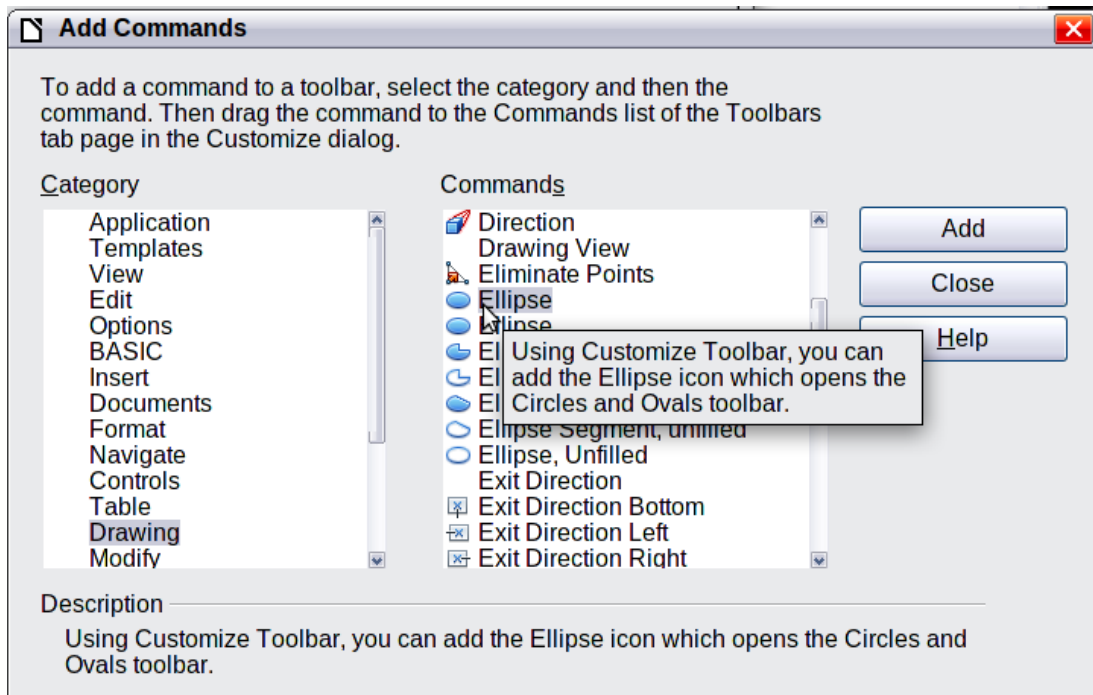



Figure 7: Adding the extended Ellipse toolbar

- 4) On the Customize dialog, ensure that the checkbox by the new **Ellipse** command is selected, and then use the up and down arrow buttons to move it to the desired position on the toolbar.
- 5) To remove the simple **Ellipse** icon from the Drawing toolbar, click to highlight it in the Customize dialog, and press the *Delete* key (or click the **Modify** button and choose **Delete** from the drop-down menu).
- 6) Click **OK** to complete the process.

You should now see this **Ellipse** icon  on the Drawing toolbar. If you use this icon instead of the standard **Ellipse** icon, all the extended ellipse functions are available. Clicking on the black arrow by the icon opens the floating **Circles and Ovals** toolbar (Figure 9).

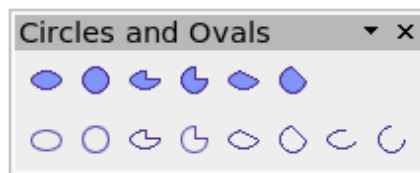
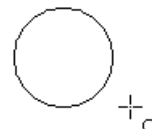


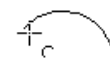
Figure 8: Circles and Ovals toolbar

## Drawing elliptical and circular arcs

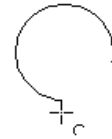
To draw an arc, choose the appropriate **Arc** symbol in the *Circles and Ovals* toolbar. Drag with the mouse to create a guide circle or ellipse.




Release the mouse button and move the cursor to the position where you want the arc to start. In the status bar, you can measure the actual angle in degrees. Single-click this point; the circle (or ellipse) disappears and moving the mouse creates the arc. Again, the status bar shows the current angle.



When you have drawn the arc to the length you want, click once more. The drawing of the arc is complete.

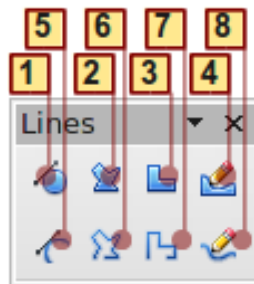


## Curves

The tools for drawing curves or polygons are on the toolbar that appears when you click the **Curve** icon  on the Drawing toolbar. This toolbar contains eight tools (Figure 8).

### Note

Hovering the mouse pointer over this icon gives a tooltip of *Curve*. If you convert the icon to a floating toolbar, however, the title is *Lines*, as shown in Figure 8.



- |                         |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Curve, filled         | 4 Freeform line, Filled | 7 Polygon (45°) |
| 2 Polygon, filled       | 5 Curve                 | 8 Freeform line |
| 3 Polygon (45°), filled | 6 Polygon               |                 |

Figure 9: Curves toolbar (incorrectly titled "Lines")


If you move the mouse cursor over one of the icons, a tooltip pops up with a description of the function. For a more detailed description of the handling of Bézier curves (curves and filled curves), see Chapter 10, Advanced Draw Techniques.

- **Polygons:** Draw the first line from the start point with the left mouse button held down. As soon as you release the mouse button, a first corner point is drawn; move the mouse to see how subsequent lines will look. Every mouse click sets another corner point. A double-click ends the drawing. A filled polygon automatically joins the last point to the first point to close off the figure and fills it with the current standard fill color. A polygon without filling will not be closed at the end of the drawing.
- **Polygon 45°:** Like ordinary polygons, these are formed from lines but with angles of only 45 or 90 degrees between them.
- **Freeform Line:** With this tool you can draw just like with a pencil. Press and hold the left mouse button and drag the mouse. It is not necessary to end the drawing with a double-click. Just release the mouse button and the drawing is completed. If you have selected *Freeform Line, Filled*, the end point is joined automatically to the start point and the object is filled with the appropriate color.

## Gluepoints and connectors (basics)

---

### Gluepoints

All Draw objects have associated invisible *gluepoints*, which become visible when you choose any of the connectors under the **Connectors** icon  on the Drawing toolbar and then move the mouse pointer over the object.

Most objects have four gluepoints, as shown in Figure 10. You can add more gluepoints, and customize gluepoints, using the toolbar of the same name (Figure 11).

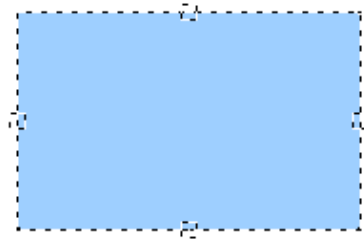


Figure 10: Four gluepoints



Figure 11: Gluepoints toolbar

Gluepoints are not the same as the little blue or green “handles” of an object. The handles are for moving or changing the shape of an object, as described in Chapter 3, Working with Objects and Object Points, but the gluepoints are used to “glue” a connector to an object.

For a more detailed description of the use of gluepoints, see Chapter 9, Organization Charts, Flow Diagrams, and More.

### Connectors

Connectors are lines or arrows whose ends automatically dock to a gluepoint of an object. Connectors are especially useful in drawing organization charts, flow diagrams, and mind-maps. Even when objects are moved or reordered, the connectors remain attached.

Figure 12 shows two Draw objects and a connector.

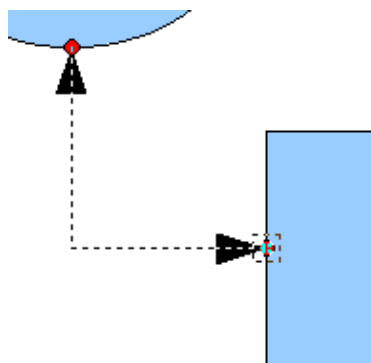



Figure 12: A connector between two objects

Draw offers a range of different connectors and connector functions. Open the floating Connectors toolbar by clicking on the arrow next to the **Connector** icon  (Figure 13).

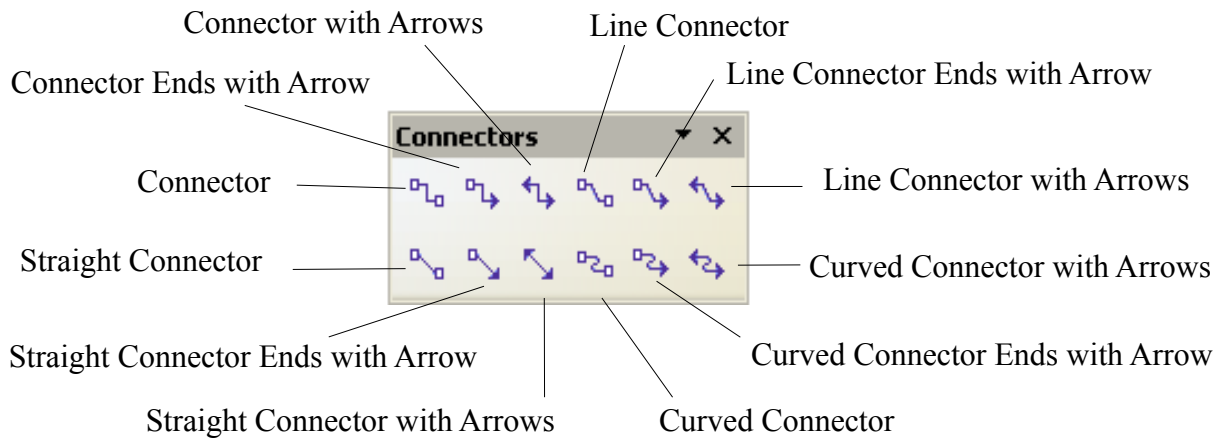


Figure 13: The Connectors toolbar

For a more detailed description of the use of connectors, see Chapter 9, Organization Charts, Flow Diagrams, and More.

## Drawing geometric shapes

Geometric shapes include:

- Basic shapes
- Symbol shapes
- Block arrows
- Flowcharts
- Callouts
- Stars

### Note

If you select shapes for editing, the information field in the toolbar shows the type of shape selected and, if more than one object is selected, the total number.

Figure 14 shows part of the Drawing toolbar with the icons referred to in the following sections. Clicking on the arrow next to the icon opens a floating toolbar with the relevant work tools.




Figure 14: Part of the main Drawing toolbar

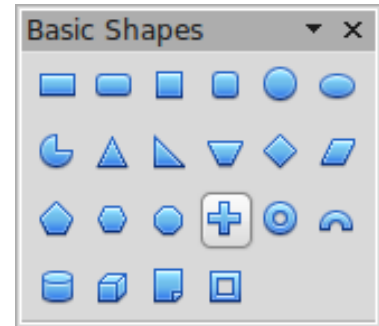
### Tip

The use of all these tools is similar to that of the Rectangle tool, even though they produce different geometric shapes.

## Basic shapes

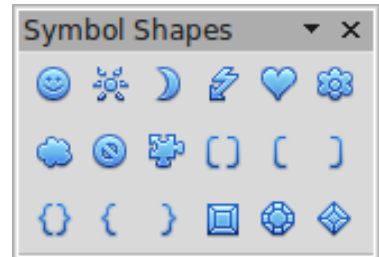
The **Basic Shapes** icon  makes available a range of tools for drawing basic shapes, including a rectangle tool identical to the one on the main toolbar.

The only differences you will see are in the information field in the status bar (in this case “Shape selected” rather than “Rectangle selected”).



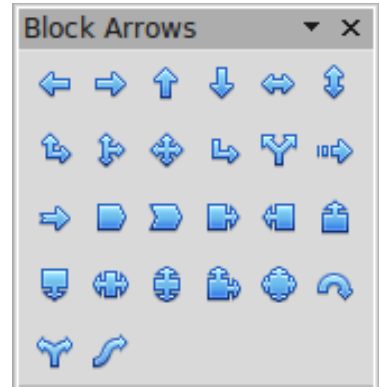
## Symbol shapes

The **Symbol Shapes** icon  gives you an array of tools for drawing various symbols.




## Block arrows

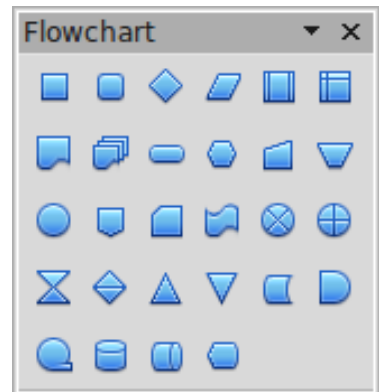
The **Block Arrows** icon  opens the Block Arrows toolbar.




## Flowcharts

The tools for drawing flowcharts are accessed by clicking on the **Flowcharts** icon .

The creation of flowcharts, organization charts, and similar planning tools are described in Chapter 9, Organization Charts, Flow Diagrams, and More.




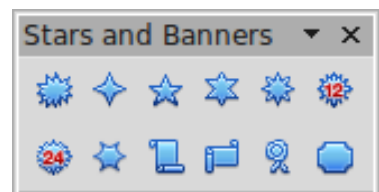
## Callouts

Use the **Callouts** icon , to open the Callouts toolbar.

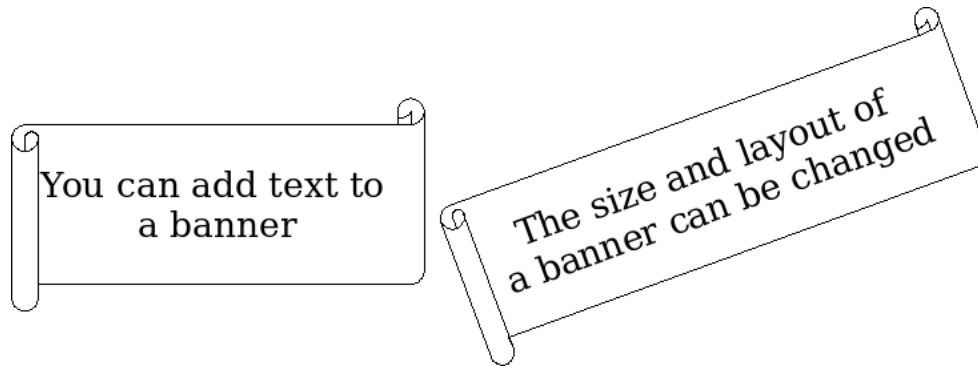


## Stars and banners

These tools are associated with the **Stars** icon .





You can add text to all these shapes. See “Using text elements in Draw objects” on page 15.



## Adding text to objects

Draw offers two ways to add text to a drawing: in a dynamic text frame as an independent Draw object or as text contained within a previously drawn object. In the latter case, the text is integrated with the object.

## Using dynamic text frames

The text tool is activated by clicking on the **Text** icon  for horizontal text or the **Vertical Text** icon  for vertical script (to be able to see the icon and use this latter option, you must check *Enabled for Asian languages* under **Tools > Options > Language Settings > Languages**). If you still do not see the Vertical Text icon, enable it on the Drawing toolbar by clicking the arrow on the right hand side of the toolbar, select Visible Buttons, and click on Vertical Text to make this icon show on the toolbar.

Text frames can be moved and rotated like all draw objects. For more details on text input, see Chapter 10, Advanced Draw Techniques.

After activating Text command mode, click at the location where you want to position the text. A small text frame appears. It contains only the cursor. You can move the frame, if desired. The Text Formatting toolbar appears (Figure 15), and you can choose the font type, font size, and other text properties and begin to type in your text.

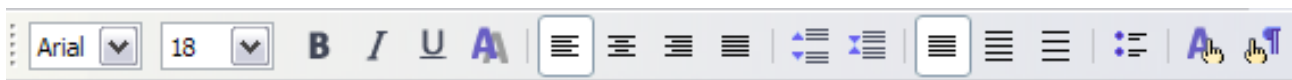


Figure 15: Text Formatting toolbar

The text frame grows with the text. You can insert a line break with the *Shift+Enter* key combination. The *Enter* key begins a new paragraph. Neither line breaks nor new paragraphs terminate the text frame.

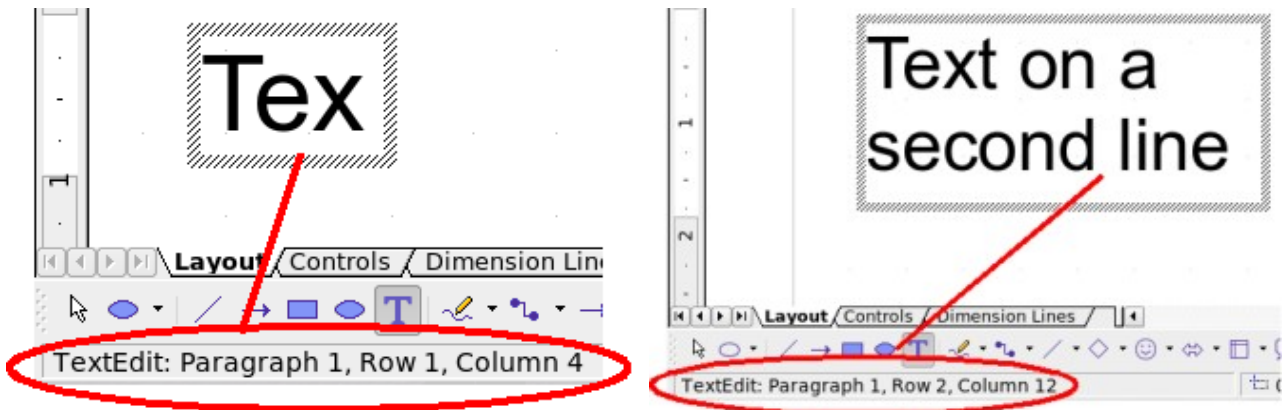


Figure 16: Text input in a dynamic text frame

Observe the information field in the status bar: it shows that you are editing text and also provides details about the current cursor location—paragraph, line, and column numbers.

Text properties can also be changed during text input. Any changes will be reflected from the cursor position onwards (Figure 17).

## Text input – *properties changed*

Figure 17: Changing text properties

After choosing the **Text** icon, you can also draw a frame with the mouse to contain future text. You can move the frame only after typing some text in it. Line breaks are inserted automatically at the right edge of the frame when the text fills the frame width (Figure 18). However, you can—just as when editing any other text—insert your own line breaks, begin new paragraphs, or change any of the text properties.

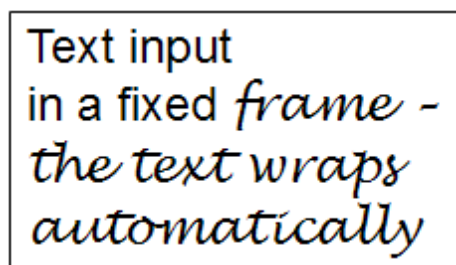


Figure 18: Text frame


## Using text elements in Draw objects

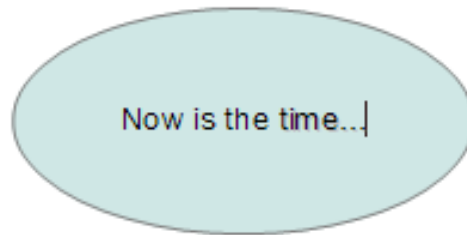
A text element is associated with most Draw objects. By means of these elements, text can be added to an object (see Figure 19).

The exceptions to this are control elements like buttons or list boxes, as well as 3D scenes and their associated elements and groups.

### Adding text to an object

To add text to an object you must first select it. You can then start typing your text. The status bar shows “Text Edit” at the left side and the initial insertion point of the text. This information will update when you start a new line (or paragraph) or move the mouse cursor. Clicking the mouse cursor at any point in the text will indicate the position of the cursor in the status bar.

If the **Double-click to edit Text** icon  on the Options toolbar is active, you can start editing an object by double-clicking on it without first selecting it



*Figure 19: Adding text to an object.*