

Avid Sibelius Comparison Guide

This table identifies differences in features and functionality between the three tiers of Sibelius on macOS and Windows: Sibelius | First, Sibelius, and Sibelius | Ultimate.

Features that are not currently available on iPad are called out in **bold**.

Sibelius | First A great introduction to working with the Sibelius software line. It supports up to four staves in a score and provides sufficient capabilities for most of your basic music notation needs. If you need more fully featured functionality, you can upgrade to Sibelius or Sibelius | Ultimate anytime through your Avid Master Account.

Sibelius Great for students and skilled amateurs. It supports up to 16 staves and provides all the tools you need to create professional looking scores for music of moderate complexity.

Sibelius | Ultimate A must for professionals and educators. It lets you create as many staves as the music demands, and it is extensively customizable, so you can make even the most complex music look perfect.

General	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Lets you...	Create simple scores with up to 4 staves—can open scores with more than 4 staves for review, but are read only	Create professional-quality scores and compose simple to moderate music—up to 16 staves; and can open scores with more than 16 staves for review, but they are read only	Compose, arrange, and publish professional-quality scores and parts of any size and complexity with as many staves as you need; create notation worksheets and exercises for education; and more
Availability	Register for free download	Subscribe monthly or annually, or purchase and own a perpetual license	Subscribe monthly or annually, purchase and own a perpetual license (educational discount available), trade-up from other notation software, or get network licensing
Number of computers a single copy can be installed on	N/A	2, but for use by one person only (so you can run a copy on your desktop and another on your laptop or surface). The iPad app can be run in addition to this.	
Software updates and support	Download the latest update as it becomes available	Access all new releases and Standard support through a subscription or renewable 1-Year Software Updates + Support Plan (included with a new perpetual license) Your Avid Master Account also unlocks features on iPad.	
AudioScore and PhotoScore (not available on iPad)	Includes Audio Score First and PhotoScore First	Includes AudioScore Lite and PhotoScore Lite	

Notation	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Accidentals	Normal and double only	Normal and double only bracketed	Normal, double, quarter-tones, bracketed
Metadata (not available on iPad)	Common ones only		Full set
Bar numbers	Limited		Full range of formats
Barline types	Single, double, repeat only		Single, double, repeat, dotted, early music
Bars, irregular	No	No, except pick-up bars	Yes
Cross-staff beams (keyboard music)	No		Yes (not available on iPad)
Beam/rest groupings	Fixed		Customizable
Brackets and braces	Fixed		Customizable
Change transposition of transposing instruments	No		Yes
Chord symbols appearance and MIDI/text input	Limited preset options		Fully customizable
Cues	No		Yes
Dotted notes: single, double, triple	Single dotted	Yes	
Guitar chord diagrams	Limited		Yes
Guitar scale diagrams	No		Yes
Guitar tab	Basic only		Full
Instruments (Common only on iPad for all tiers)	Common only	Common, jazz, and world instruments only, with fixed number of staves	Full customizable range
Jazz articulations: falls, scoops, doits, and plops	No	Yes	
Custom lines	No		Yes
Rhythmic note values: 512th note (7 beams) to double breve (4 times duration of whole note)	32nd note to breve (twice duration of whole note)	All	
Custom Noteheads	No		Yes
Ossia staves	No		Yes
Page numbers	Automatic		Customizable

Notation	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Special symbols	No		Yes
Split multirests in parts	No		Yes
Staves	Up to 4	Up to 16 per system	Unlimited
Stemlets (half-stems) and feathered beams	No		Yes
Tuplets	Duplets (2:3) to sextuplets (6:4)	Duplets (2:3) to nonuplets (9:8)	Any (such as 2, 7, 44:31, and even nested tuplets)

Playback	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Advanced notation interpretation	No		Yes
Edit MIDI data (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Includes Sibelius Sound Libraries (single 900 mb sound library for all tiers on iPad)	No	Sibelius Sounds (10 GB library) provides high-quality samples for most common instruments	Sibelius Ultimate Sounds (36 GB library) provides a full range of professional-quality orchestral, jazz, pop, marching band, and percussion
Loop playback (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Half-speed playback (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Espressivo 2.0 (not on iPad)	No	Presets only	Customizable rhythmic feel
Live Tempo (tap tempo) (not on iPad)	Limited—playback only		Record, edit, clear, and play back Live Tempo
Playback markings on specified repeats (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Playback of hairpins	Fixed		Adjustable (Fixed on iPad)
Playback of ritardandi and accelerandi	Fixed		Adjustable (Fixed on iPad)
Playback fermatas	Fixed		Adjustable (Fixed on iPad)
Words that affect playback (such as legato)	Fixed		Editable (Fixed on iPad)

Utilities	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Annotate (not on iPad)	Yes		
Arrange: automatic arranging and orchestration (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Comments (sticky notes)	Yes		
Compare different scores or versions (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Copy and paste to Word and other programs	No	Low resolution (96 dpi) only (text only on iPad)	Yes (text only not on iPad)
Display timecode (not on iPad)	No	Single format	Customizable format
Edit Dynamic Parts	No	Limited	Full
Edit word menus (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Export a log of changes to a score (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Export lyrics as text file (not on iPad)	No	Yes	
Filters for editing similar objects (not on iPad)	No	Quick filters only	Yes
Find (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Focus on staves	No		Yes
Graphics export (for creating worksheets and other content) (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Highlight music (not on iPad)	Yes		
Ideas Hub (not on iPad)	No	300 library ideas included and lets you capture your own ideas (editing not supported)	2,000+ library ideas included, and lets you capture and edit your own ideas and add to a score and/or the library
Import MusicXML files (not on iPad)	Yes		
Instrument changes	No		Yes

Utilities	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Join scores together (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Keyboard shortcuts	Fixed		Customizable (Fixed on iPad)
Lyric verses allowed	2	5	Unlimited
Lyrics from text file (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Note input options (not on iPad)	Fixed	Limited	Full
Panorama scroll view (not on iPad)	Yes		
Paper and desk textures (not on iPad)	40		Over 60
Part extraction (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Paste as Cue	No		Yes
Plug-ins (not on iPad)	None	38 included	Over 140 included
Inspector window to edit individual objects (not on iPad)	No		Full
Rehearsal marks	No	Default only	Fully customizable
Repeat structures	Fixed	Customizable	Fully customizable
Rulers (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Score Starter: (40 genre-specific templates) (not on iPad)	Yes		No
Slide notes and rests	No	Yes	
Special page breaks (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Timeline window (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Swap voice (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Versions (not on iPad)	Latest (head) version only	Save, view, and print only	Yes

Utilities	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Video, including timecode and hit points (not on iPad)	No	Add video, add/edit hit points	Yes
Viewing options for Magnetic Layout, page margins, note colors, full screen, and more (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Worksheet Creator (not on iPad)	No		Yes

Publishing	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Advanced layout features (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Auto Layout options (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Edit fonts (not on iPad)	No	Limited	Full
Edit staff types (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Edit text styles (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Engraving rules (hundreds to edit) (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Headers/footers	No	Yes	
House Style import/export (not on iPad)	No	Import only	Yes
Intelligent Rests	No	Yes	
Magnetic Layout	Fixed		Fully customizable (Fixed on iPad)
Manage Dynamic Parts (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Manuscript papers (preset score layouts)	Includes a few, but you cannot create your own		Includes many, and you can create your own (Fixed on iPad)
Multiple staff size (not on iPad)	Fixed		Fully customizable
Note spacing rules	Fixed		Fully customizable (Fixed on iPad)

Publishing	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Reset position/design of objects	Limited		Yes
Set default object positions (not on iPad)	No		Yes
Staff spacing	Fixed	Manual adjustment only	Yes

Export and Share	Sibelius First	Sibelius	Sibelius Ultimate
Audio recording export	N/A	WAV, AIFF, and MP3 (not available on iPad)	
Email score as .sib or .pdf	No	Yes	
Graphics file export (not available on iPad)	No	PDF export only	Standard bitmap and vector formats (SVG, PNG, JPG, BMP, TIFF, GIF, and PDF)
MIDI file export—Type 0 and Type 1 any device (not available on iPad)	No	Yes	
MusicXML file export (compressed or uncompressed) (not available on iPad)	No	Yes	
Previous version export (not available on iPad)	No	Yes	
Publish directly to ScoreExchange.com (not available on iPad)	No	Yes	
Share to YouTube, Facebook, SoundCloud (not available on iPad)	No	Yes	
Sibelius Cloud Sharing (not available on iPad)	10 scores	20 scores	Unlimited (up to 1 GB storage)
Video file (Export score as) (not available on iPad)	No	Yes	

Keypad in Sibelius | First, Sibelius, and Sibelius | Ultimate

Sibelius | First, Sibelius, and Sibelius | Ultimate each provide six Keypad layouts: Common notes (F7), More notes (F8), Beams/Tremolos (F9), Articulation (F10), Jazz articulations (F11), and Accidentals (F12). However, not all options available with Sibelius | Ultimate are available with Sibelius and Sibelius | First.

The Keypad also lets you select which voice in a staff you want to add or edit notes. While Sibelius and Sibelius | Ultimate let you work with up to four voices on a staff, you are limited to two voices with Sibelius | First.

Sibelius | First, Sibelius, and Sibelius | Ultimate and the Ribbon

The contents of the Ribbon differ between Sibelius | First, Sibelius, and Sibelius | Ultimate. For instance, the Parts tab is only available in Sibelius | Ultimate. Similarly, Sibelius | First and Sibelius provide fewer options in each tab than Sibelius | Ultimate.

On iPad, supported Ribbon commands are accessible using Command Search.