


Final Cut Pro Interface Basics



- 1) Library** — The library is where all of your media (called “assets”) is stored. The library can be organized into folders, called “Bins.” Each open project will create another tab in the library.
- 2) Viewer** — The viewer is where media can be viewed before adding it to your project. The viewer is also where adjustments to media already in your project can be altered (for more detail, see **9**). Double-clicking any asset, whether it’s in the library or on the timeline, will open it in the viewer.
- 3) Canvas** — The canvas shows what’s on the timeline. This is where you’ll be viewing your project as you’re working on it. The turquoise lines in the canvas are title and action safe areas. Any action important to the frame should remain within the outer line. Any text should remain within the inner line.
- 4) Timeline** — The timeline is a graphical representation of your project. Most of your work will happen within the timeline. Each horizontal line on the timeline is called a track. Video tracks are placed above the center divider (and appear in blue or purple), while audio tracks are placed below the center divider (and appear in green).
- 5) Toolbox** — The toolbox contains icons for many of the editing tools in Final Cut. All of these tool icons correspond with keyboard shortcuts that can be found by mousing over them. For more information on the different tools available in Final Cut, check out the [Exploring Final Cut Pro](#) document in Final Cut’s “Help” menu.
- 6) Audio Meter** — The audio levels of your project are measured, in decibels (dB) on the audio meter. You should aim to keep all of the audio levels between -6 and -12 dB on the meter. If your audio ever peaks during the project, a red light will appear above the meter. The two meters represent the left and right channels, respectively, in a stereo recording.
- 7) Effects Tab** — The Effects tab contains all video and audio filters and transitions that can be added to an asset on your timeline. Simply drag the filter or transition from the Effects tab and onto the asset.
- 8) Sequences** — Every Final Cut project has at least one timeline, called a “sequence.” Multiple sequences can be open at one time (like tabs in an Internet browser), whether they are from one or multiple projects. You can switch between open sequences here.
- 9) Viewer Tabs** — The viewer isn’t just for viewing media. Many adjustments can be made by using the audio, filters, and motion tabs. You can change the volume, called “gain,” of a clip on the audio tab (called either “Mono” or “Stereo,” depending). Filters that have been applied to the clip can be adjusted in the filters tab. Attributes like scale, speed, rotation, and opacity can be altered in the motion tab.

- 10) Markers & Render Status** — The red icons on the timeline are markers. Markers are useful for marking important parts of your project, leaving notes for other editors, and more. Markers can be added by tapping the “M” key. Starting with Final Cut Pro 7, markers can be made several different colors. The colored line that runs across the top of the timeline indicates the render status of different parts of the project. The line directly beneath the top line indicates the audio render status of the project. For more information on rendering and render files see the [Setting Scratch Disks](#) tutorial.
- 11) Snap, Linking, and Marker Ripple** — Snap (right-most icon) makes the edges of assets in the timeline snap to one another. This is an easy way of ensuring that there aren’t accidental gaps in between assets in your project. Linking (center icon) enables or disables audio tracks from linking to their respective video tracks. Marker Ripple (left-most icon; Final Cut Pro 7 and higher only) makes markers attach to the asset they’re positioned above.
- 12) Generator Menu**  — Solid colors, text, bars & tone, and other computer-generated assets can be found and created through the Generator Menu.