

To create contours for an entire theme

For a grid or TIN theme

- 1 Activate the grid or TIN theme from which to create the contours in a view or 3D scene.
- 2 From the Surface menu, choose Create Contours.
- 3 Enter the contour interval in the Contour interval type-in box.
- 4 Specify the contour value to start contours at in the Base contour type-in box. Contours will be created above and below the base contour. Press OK.

For a point or multipoint theme

- 1 Activate the point or multipoint theme from which to create the contours in a view or 3D scene.
- 2 From the Surface menu, choose Create Contours.
- 3 If the view's analysis properties haven't been set to a specific value, or if the points were activated in a 3D scene, then you'll be prompted to set the extent and cell size for the output grid theme. Do so in the Surface Grid Specification dialog and press OK. For more information on setting the analysis extent and cell size using this dialog, see [Output Grid Specification \(Dialog box\)](#).
- 4 Specify the interpolation parameters necessary to create the temporary surface that contours will be created from, and press OK. For more information on setting the interpolation parameters using the Interpolate Surface dialog, see [Interpolate Surface \(Dialog box\)](#).
- 5 Enter the contour interval in the Contour interval type-in box.
- 6 Specify the contour value to start contours at in the Base contour type-in box. Contours will be created above and below the base contour. Press OK.

Smaller contour intervals create more contours. The optimum contour interval is a matter of the elevation change in the input grid or TIN theme, the amount of area covered by the theme, the analysis to follow, and the desired aesthetics of the output line theme.

Create Contours works off of the selected set if the active theme is a point or multipoint theme. If the active theme does not have a selected set, then all points in the theme are used. For more information on selecting features, see [Selecting features on a view](#).

Create Contours produces an output line theme. The shapefile associated with the output theme is written to the project's working directory, with the name "ctourX.shp" with X denoting a unique number. Use Properties in the Theme menu to find out which data set is associated with which theme. Use Properties in the Project menu to change the project's working directory.