

Creating 3D surfaces and features

To display a theme in perspective, a 3D scene requires height information. TINs, grids representing surfaces (if created with an interpolation method), and 3D-feature themes already have this information, so you don't need to do anything special to view them in perspective. All other theme types are 2D and don't carry height values with them, so a default height of 0.0 is assigned. You can change the default behavior through the 3D Properties dialog for all types of 2D themes or by converting a 2D theme (with the exception of grid themes) to a 3D-feature theme, which permanently stores the height information.

You don't have to create 3D shapes just for the sake of perspective viewing if you have an attribute or a surface that provides height information for them. With the 3D Properties dialog, you can temporarily convert 2D features to 3D on the fly. On the other hand, if you want to view your features in 3D without relying on a surface model or attribute field (for performance reasons or because you're distributing them without surface data), it makes sense to create 3D shapes.

How do you want to create 3D features?

- [»» Producing 3D on the fly information for 2D data](#)
- [»» Converting 2D themes into 3D](#)
- [»» Interactively creating 3D point, line, and polygon features](#)
- [»» Creating and modifying triangulated surfaces \(TINs\)](#)