

# Microsoft Visio – Working with Stencils



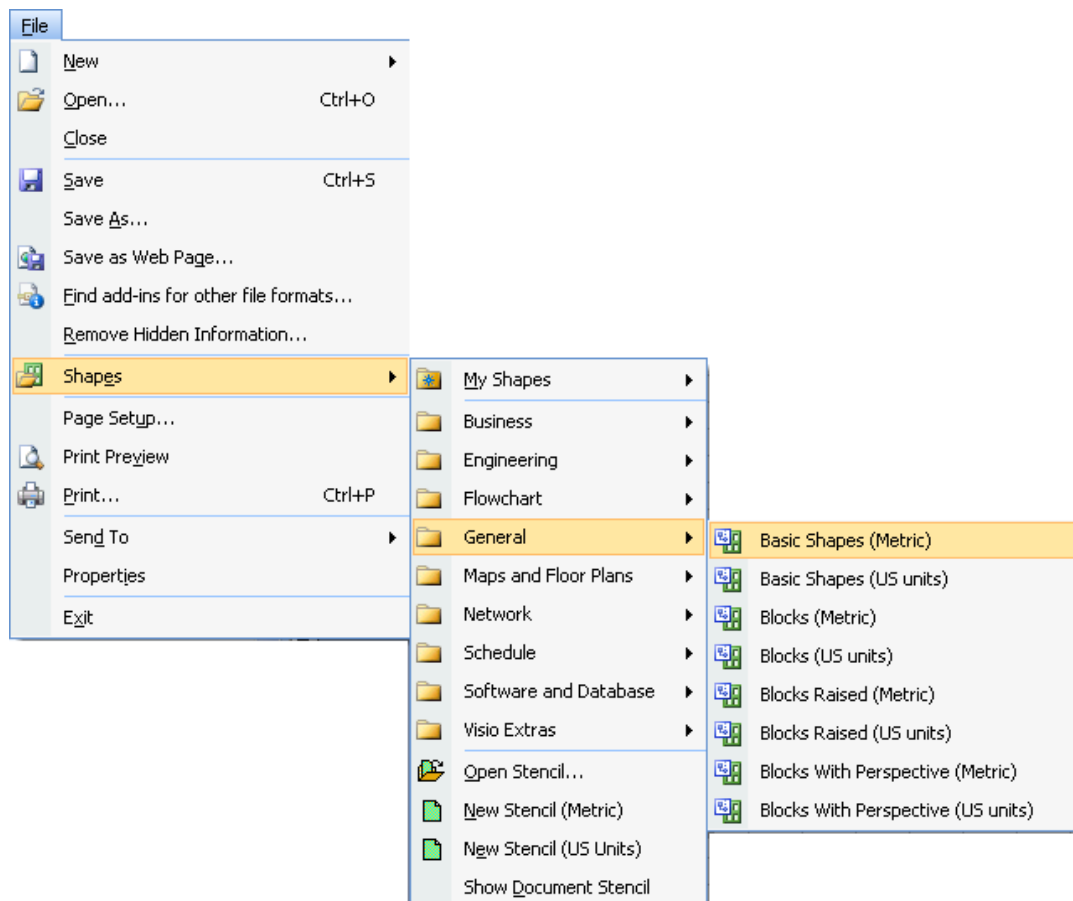
## Working with Visio Stencils

A stencil is a collection of master shapes that are associated with a particular drawing type. Stencils are stored in stencil files (with a .vss extension). When you create a new drawing based on a template, the template opens stencils that are related to the drawing type. By default, stencils appear docked on the left side of the drawing window. You can also open a stencil independently of a template.

### Opening more stencils

Although templates will automatically open particular related stencils, other stencils can also be opened for use with a drawing.

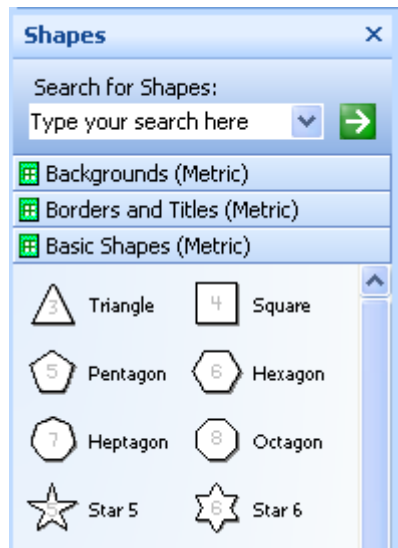
- From the **File** menu, choose **Shapes**, and then choose a stencil from one of the Category folders listed:




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- The stencil opens docked, with the title bars of the other open stencils cascaded behind it:

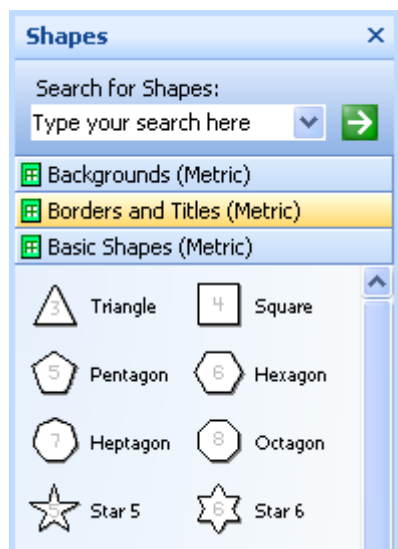


**OR**

- Click **Shapes**  on the standard toolbar, the stencil Category folders will appear.

## Moving between Stencils

- Click on the name of the stencil you wish to use, that stencil will appear at the front of the stencil column:

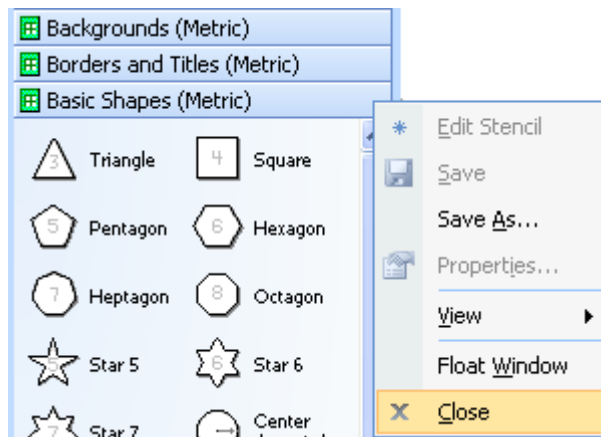


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## Closing stencils

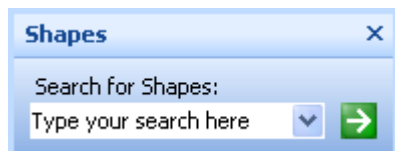
- Click with your right mouse button on the name of the stencil you wish to close, a pop up menu will appear:



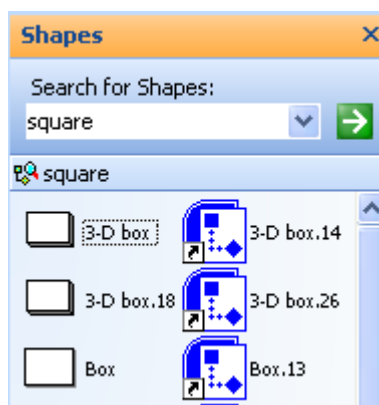
- Click on **Close** with your left mouse button.

## Searching for a Shape on a Stencil

If you are unsure which stencil contains the shape you require, then a search can be performed from the top part of the **Shapes** window.



- Enter the word or phrase in the **Search for Shapes:** box and click the arrow to start the search.
- The results will appear in a temporary stencil:



- When a new search is performed, these results will be replaced by those of the new search.

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- The results stencil can be closed at any time in the normal way.
- You can make some adjustment to the Search setting by going to the **Tools** menu, **Options** and selecting the **Shape Search** tab.

