

French Curves and Splines

DT Workshop Equipment Reference — D&T / STEM resource for school workshops | Design & Documentation



Photo: Central Intelligence Agency from Washington, D.C. — Public domain — via Wikimedia Commons (Spline_“Whale”_Weight_(30245414823).jpg)

French curves are shaped templates used to draw smooth curved lines through plotted points, while splines are flexible strips that bend through fixed points to draw fair curves. Both produce natural flowing curves in technical and design drawing.

Key Features

- Sets of 3-6 curve shapes
- Metric and imperial markings
- Flexible splines with weights or pins
- Clear acrylic or plastic
- Ruled edges on some

Typical Uses in the Workshop

- Draw smooth fair curves through points
- Construct ellipse and arc segments
- Design product and automotive curves
- Draw graphs and technical curves

Safe Operation

1. Plot the points along the curve
2. Select the curve that matches the run
3. Align the curve edge through three points
4. Draw the section, then move along
5. Blend the joins carefully

SAFETY NOTES

- Keep the edges sharp and clean
- Do not use curves as cutting guides
- Store flat away from heat
- Protect from scratches
- Keep them with the drawing sets

Maintenance & Consumables

- Wipe the templates clean
- Check for cracks and chips
- Store flat in the drawing kit
- Replace warped curves
- Keep the spline weights complete

Specification & Buying Notes

A set of French curves in clear acrylic with a flexible spline and weights covers most drawing rooms. Quality acrylic stays flat and transparent.