DRX · ORDERFLUX

The OrderFlux Guide

How to read the footprint in MetaTrader 5, from the first bar to the setup assistant. Free, for every OrderFlux user.



Version 1.36 · English · free guide

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Welcome

A normal chart shows you where the price went. OrderFlux shows you how it got there. Inside every candle it draws the volume that was traded at each price, split into buyers who hit the ask and sellers who hit the bid. With that, a candle stops being four numbers and becomes a small story: who pushed, who gave up, and where the market simply refused to move.

This guide takes you from the first look at the chart to the setup assistant. It is free and it is written for the people who write to us most often:

- **Traders who are new to order flow.** You do not need any background. Every term is explained when it first appears, and the glossary at the end collects them.
- **Traders who already know the footprint** and only want to know how OrderFlux does it in MetaTrader 5: what each mark means exactly, where the switches are, and which data you are really looking at.

How to use this guide

Read the first two chapters once, in order. They take about twenty minutes and answer the question we hear most: "How do I use this?" After that, use the guide the way you use a manual. Every chapter stands on its own, and every switch and key has a place in the reference chapters at the end.

If you are **new to order flow**, follow this path: Quick start, Know your data, One bar row by row, Imbalance and absorption, The eight styles, then the worked examples. Leave levels, profiles and Big Trades for the second week.

If you **already read footprints**, skim the Quick start, read Know your data (it explains what Forex and CFD volume can and cannot tell you), then jump to the chapters you need. Use the settings and key chapters as a reference.

> TIP Keep the chart open next to the guide. Many chapters have short "Try it" boxes. Doing them takes less time than reading about them.

What you see in this guide

Keys are shown like this: `F` for the focus mode, `1` to `8` for the eight styles. Names of buttons and settings are written as they appear on screen, for example **SET** or **Volume highlight**. A path such as *SET, Marks, Absorption* means: open the settings with `S`, go to the page called Marks, and find the switch called Absorption.

Boxes mark the things worth remembering:

> KEY IDEA The one thing to take from a section.
>
> **Try it** A short exercise on your own chart.
>
> **Honest note** A limit of the data or of the tool, said plainly. We mark these so you never have to guess what the numbers can and cannot tell you.

A word about honesty

OrderFlux measures. It does not predict. It never says buy or sell, it does not place trades, and the setup assistant only lists facts that lined up on closed bars, together with the price where the idea would be wrong. Trading carries risk, and nothing in this guide is financial advice. The examples show how to read the chart, not what to trade.

OrderFlux also tells you what kind of volume you are looking at. On Forex and CFDs the numbers are tick activity, not contracts. That is still useful, and the second chapter explains why. The chip at the top of the chart always shows which kind you have.

Versions

This guide describes **version 1.36**. Anything that is only available from a certain version is marked. Big Trades is new in 1.36.

PART 1

Getting started

CHAPTER 1

Quick start in ten minutes

This chapter gets you from an empty chart to reading your first bar. Do it with the chart open.

1. Put it on a chart

Attach OrderFlux to a chart like any indicator: from the Navigator, drag it onto the chart. Choose a liquid symbol and a short timeframe to start, for example XAUUSD, EURUSD or a stock index on **M1 to M15**. The indicator reads the ticks of the visible bars from your broker, so the very first load can take a moment. Later loads are fast, because finished bars are cached.

The indicator takes over the whole chart window. The native candles and axes are hidden, because OrderFlux draws its own price axis and time axis.

> HONEST NOTE OrderFlux needs the tick history your broker provides. If a bar is empty or looks synthetic, the broker has no ticks for that period, and a clear warning appears at the top of the chart. Chapter 15 explains what to do.

2. The first-start card and the tour

On the first start you are asked what you want to see. Pick **Basic** for a calm chart, **Plus** for the full set of marks and strips, or **Full** for everything. You can change this at any time, and every single switch stays adjustable.

A short tour follows. It starts with three things to know:

1. **Every row is a price.** Left is volume sold at the bid, right is volume bought at the ask.
2. **Know what your data is.** Forex and CFD brokers report tick activity, futures feeds report real contracts. The chip at the top tells you which.
3. **You choose what you see.** Pick a style with the keys `1` to `8` and a view under SET.

Then arrows guide you through the styles, the layers, one bar, the top strip, the buttons at the top right, the settings window and the side panel. You can skip the tour, and you can replay it at any time with the **?** button next to SET.

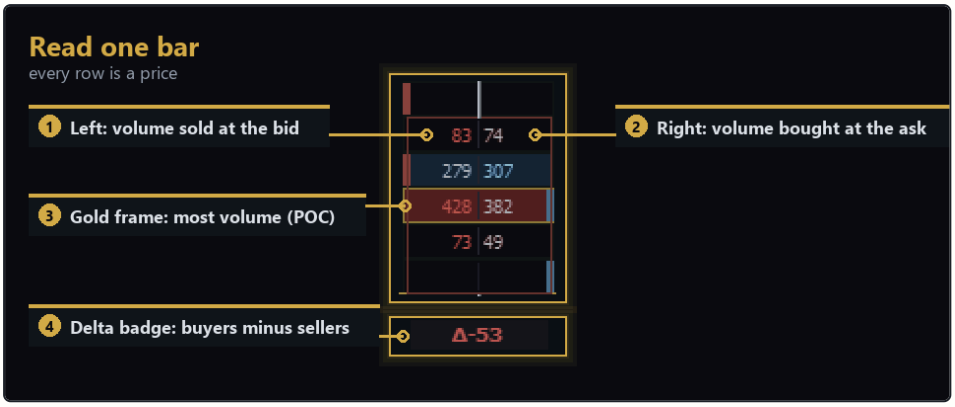
3. The window at a glance



The OrderFlux window. The numbers are explained in the table below.

	Area	What it is
1	**Top strip**	Symbol, timeframe, price, spread and the data chip (Tick volume or Real volume). Also the next economic event, the ping to your broker, the three trading sessions and your clock.
2	**Left rail**	Styles (keys 1 to 8), layers you can switch on and off, and the panels. Point at any button for a short explanation.
3	**The footprint**	One column per candle. Each row is a price, with the volume sold on the left and bought on the right.
4	**Levels**	Support and resistance bands with a tag, and the zone bands for stacked imbalance and absorption.
5	**Delta badges**	Buyers minus sellers for the whole bar, under each column.
6	**Volume strip**	Volume of each bar, split into buying and selling, with the average line.
7	**CVD strip**	Cumulative delta as columns, with the price as a gold line on top.
8	**Volume profile**	Where the visible bars traded their volume, with POC, VAH and VAL.
9	**Price axis**	OrderFlux's own price scale, with the live bid and ask.
10	**Top-right buttons**	**CAL** (calendar), **FLOW** (side panel), **FOCUS**, **SET** (settings) and **?** (legend and tour).
11	**Side panel**	Tabs FLOW, DOM and LADDER: absorption and pressure, traded volume per price, and the live bar row by row.
12	**Readings**	Average volume per bar and the running delta now.

4. Read one bar



> One footprint bar. Each row is a price. Left: sold at the bid. Right: bought at the ask. The gold frame marks the price with the most volume (POC). The badge underneath is the delta.

Look at the bar in the picture. Each row is a price. The **left number** is the volume sold at that price, by sellers who hit the bid. The **right number** is the volume bought, by buyers who lifted the ask. The row with the most volume carries a **gold frame**: the point of control, or POC. Under the bar sits the **delta badge**: buyers minus sellers over the whole bar. A positive delta means buyers were more aggressive, a negative one means sellers were.

That is the whole alphabet. Everything else in this guide is a combination of these four things.

5. The two zooms: learn these first

> KEY IDEA **Mouse wheel** zooms the **candles**: fewer and wider, or more and narrower. `Ctrl` + **mouse wheel** zooms the **footprint**: it changes the height of the price rows, so the ladder inside the candles gets finer or coarser. The keys `+` and `-` do the same as the wheel, and `[` and `]` do the same as `Ctrl` + wheel.

You will use these two all the time. Zoom the candles until you see about 12 to 25 bars, then use `Ctrl` + wheel until the numbers in the cells are readable. Press `0` to reset both.

6. Five things to try

> TRY IT Spend a few minutes on each.

1. **Switch the style.** Press `1`, `2` and `3`. The same data, drawn three ways: numbers, colour, and candle plus volume bars. Chapter 5 explains all eight.
2. **Point at things.** Hover over a button on the left rail for its explanation. Hover over a diamond, if there is one, for the explanation card of a setup.

3. **Zoom.** Turn the mouse wheel to zoom the candles. Hold `Ctrl` and turn it to zoom the footprint (the price rows). Drag the chart to go back in time, and press `End` or click **>> LIVE** to return.
4. **Calm it down.** Press `F` for the focus mode, which hides everything except the footprint. Press it again to return.
5. **Open the settings.** Press `S`. Every row has one sentence that says what it does. Try **View**: Basic, Plus, Full.

7. What to look at first

When you are new, do not try to read the whole chart. Look for three things, in this order:

1. **Where is the volume?** Find the gold-framed POC rows and the volume bars with an amber frame. That is where the market was busy.
2. **Who won each bar?** Read the delta badges. Then look at where the candle closed. Do they agree?
3. **Is something unusual?** Rings and dots (absorption), thick side bars with B3 or S4 (stacked imbalance) and thin gold lines at the extremes (unfinished auctions) mark places worth a second look. Chapter 4 explains each one.

Then read the next chapter, which explains what your volume numbers really are.

CHAPTER 2

Know your data

Before you read a single number, know what it counts. Everything OrderFlux draws depends on the data your broker delivers, and brokers deliver three different kinds. The chip at the top of the chart tells you which one you have.

The three kinds of data

Tick volume is what Forex and CFD brokers (indices, gold, crypto CFDs) deliver. Every price update counts as one tick. A tick is not a contract. Ten ticks do not mean ten lots, they mean the price was updated ten times. The footprint then shows **relative activity**: where and when the market was busy, and where it was quiet. The chip says **Tick volume**.

Real volume is what futures feeds and exchange feeds deliver. Every trade is reported with its size and, in most cases, with the side of the aggressor. The numbers are real contracts. The chip says **Real volume**.

Market depth (Level 2) is the order book: the limit orders waiting at each price. It exists only if your broker sends it, which is typical for futures and rare for Forex and CFDs. OrderFlux never invents an order book. If your feed has none, the order book card says so.

	Tick volume	Real volume
Typical instruments	Forex, CFD indices, gold, crypto CFDs	Futures, exchange-traded products
A number means	Price updates	Contracts traded
Aggressor side	Estimated from the quote	Reported or taken from the trade price
Order book	Not available	Only if the broker sends Level 2
Good for	Relative activity, ratios, delta direction, absorption, imbalance	Everything on the left, plus absolute size

How OrderFlux decides buyer or seller

Every tick must be assigned to the buyers' or the sellers' side. OrderFlux uses the first rule that applies:

1. If the tick carries a **buy or sell flag** from the feed, that flag decides.
2. Otherwise, if the tick is a **trade at or above the ask**, it is a buy. At or below the bid, it is a sell.
3. Otherwise OrderFlux looks at the **direction of the mid price**: up since the last tick is a buy, down is a sell, and if nothing changed the previous direction continues.

The third rule is the common one on Forex and CFDs, because a quote feed contains prices but no trades. It is a well-known estimate, not a certainty. That is why the numbers on these feeds are called relative.

> KEY IDEA On a quote feed the footprint answers "where was the market busy, and in which direction was the pressure?" It does not answer "how many contracts changed hands?".

What tick volume can and cannot do

It can show you where the activity was, which bar was busier than its neighbours, which side was pushing, and whether the push achieved anything. All the ratio-based ideas in this guide work on tick volume: delta direction, imbalance (one side several times the other), absorption (a lot of activity without progress), and the comparison of a bar with the average.

It cannot give you the size of a single order, the absolute number of contracts, or a comparison with another broker. Two brokers deliver two different tick streams for the same symbol, so their numbers differ. That is normal and not an error.

> HONEST NOTE We say this at every opportunity because it matters: on Forex and CFDs, every volume number in OrderFlux is tick activity. The setups and marks are built on ratios, so they remain meaningful, but they are not the same thing as exchange volume.

The data card

Click the data chip in the top strip. A card explains in plain words what your feed delivers: tick volume or real trades, and whether market depth is available. If you are unsure, this card is the final answer for your broker and symbol.

When the broker has no ticks

If the broker delivers no tick history for a period, OrderFlux cannot build real bars for it. It then falls back to a synthetic distribution so the chart does not stay empty, and it shows a clear warning at the top. Treat synthetic bars as a drawing, not as data. The strategy tester often has this situation, which is why the warning also appears there.

The demo depth

If you would like to see how the order book features look but your broker sends no Level 2, press <kbd>L</kbd>. OrderFlux then shows a **synthetic order book**, clearly labelled as demo. It exists only to let you look at the features. It is not real data and you should never read it as such.

> **TRY IT** Click the data chip and read the card. Then open *SET, Feed and demo* and read the sentence about your feed.

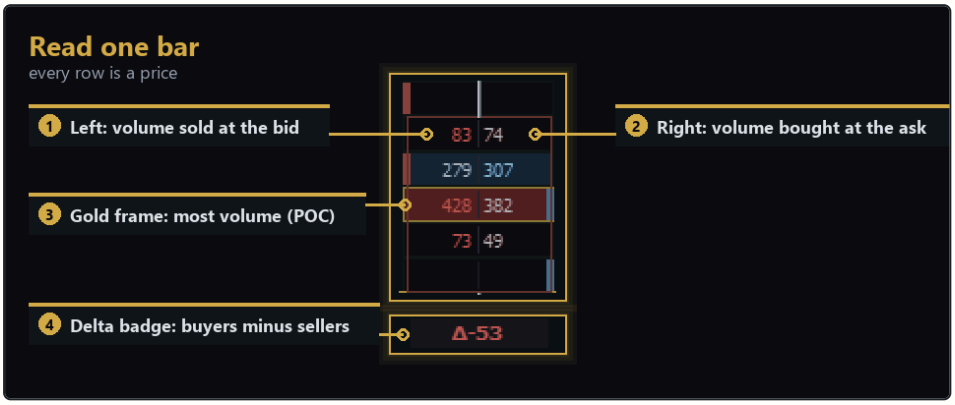
PART 2

Reading the footprint

CHAPTER 3

One bar, row by row

A footprint bar opens the candle. Instead of four numbers (open, high, low, close) you see every price the candle traded at, and what happened there. This chapter takes one bar apart.



One bar, taken apart. Left: sold at the bid. Right: bought at the ask. Gold frame: the price with the most volume. Under the bar: the delta.

The rows

Each row is one price level. The size of a level, in price, depends on the zoom. At high zoom it is one tick, at lower zoom several ticks are grouped to keep the chart readable. You change this with `Ctrl` and the mouse wheel, or with `[` and `]`.

- **Left number: sold at the bid.** Aggressive sellers, who sell with a market order into the buyers' limit orders ("hitting the bid").
- **Right number: bought at the ask.** Aggressive buyers, who buy with a market order from the sellers' limit orders ("lifting the offer").

A bigger number means more business at that price. In the default view the colour of a cell follows the volume: the busier the row, the stronger the colour. With the key `K` you can colour by **delta** instead (the difference between the right and the left number), which shows who dominated each row.

Delta

Delta is buyers minus sellers. For a row, it is the right number minus the left number. For the whole bar it is the sum over all rows, and it is shown in the **delta badge** under the bar.

- A **positive delta** (blue) means buying was more aggressive.
- A **negative delta** (red) means selling was more aggressive.

Delta says who pushed harder. It does not say who won. That is why you always read it together with the candle.

When candle and delta disagree

A candle that closed up but has a clearly negative delta (or the other way round) is interesting: the side that pushed harder did not get the price to move its way. OrderFlux marks this with a **thin gold edge** at the left side of the delta badge. It does not mean "reverse now". It means "look at this bar".

The point of control

The row with the most volume in the bar carries a **gold frame**. It is the **point of control (POC)** of that bar: the price the market spent the most business at. Where the POC sits tells you something about the bar:

- A POC **near the high** of a rising bar means most of the business happened at the top, which is what a strong push usually looks like.
- A POC **near the low** of a rising bar means the business was done early and the price then moved away from it.
- A POC in the **middle** means the bar rotated around a fair price.

Body, wicks and the candle frame

OrderFlux draws a thin outline around the **body** of the candle (open to close), in the colour of the bar direction, and the wicks as a thin line through the centre of the column. You can switch the outline off in *SET, Bars and strips, Candle frame*. In *SET, Marks* the **Open and close** switch adds a thin gold line at the open and a dashed blue line at the close.

Rows that lie only in the wick, where the price touched but the body did not, show their numbers more quietly. **Ghost numbers** (*SET, Marks*) makes them as bright as the others.

Under the bar

Three small things sit under each column:

1. The **delta badge**, as above.
2. The **volume** of the bar.
3. The **change** of the bar in percent. On quiet intraday bars the change is tiny, so OrderFlux shows two decimals when all visible moves are small.

Too many numbers?

If the cells are crowded, use the **Number filter** (*SET, Numbers and colours*). It hides the small numbers below a share of the bar maximum, so the big ones stand out. You can also change the number format between 1234 and 1.2K, and the **Contrast** of the volume colours.

> TRY IT Pick one bar with a gold-framed POC. Read the delta badge. Then answer three questions: where is the volume, who was more aggressive, and where did the candle close? Do that for five bars in a row. After that you have read a hundred footprints' worth of the idea.
>
> **Key idea** A footprint bar answers three questions at once: where was the business done, who was aggressive, and did that aggression achieve anything? Everything else is built on that.

CHAPTER 4

Imbalance, absorption and the other marks

The marks are small signs that OrderFlux adds to the bars so that you do not have to scan every number. They work in **every footprint style** and you can switch each one on or off in *SET, Marks*. This chapter explains what each mark means, exactly how it is found, and what it is good for.



Absorption: the bar at 23:45 has a ring with a red dot on the right at its high, and the zone band "Buyers absorbed" with its price range runs far to the right (not in the cut-out).

Imbalance

An **imbalance** means that one side clearly dominated a price. OrderFlux compares each price with the neighbouring price on the **diagonal**, which is the standard method:

- A **buy imbalance** at a price: the volume bought there is at least three times the volume sold one price **below**.
- A **sell imbalance** at a price: the volume sold there is at least three times the volume bought one price **above**.

Why the diagonal? The best ask always sits one level above the best bid. Comparing a price on the ask side with the bid side one level below compares the two sides as they faced each other in the order book at that moment.

A buy imbalance is drawn as a **thin blue bar at the right edge** of the cell, a sell imbalance as a **thin red bar at the left edge**. The ratio of three is the default and you change it in *SET, Numbers and colours, Imbalance ratio*.

Stacked imbalance: B3, S4

When the same kind of imbalance appears on **three or more rows in a row**, it is a **stacked imbalance**. OrderFlux draws a bold bar along the whole run and labels it with the direction and the number of rows: **B3** is three buy imbalances in a row, **S4** is four sell imbalances in a row. The number is simply how many rows are stacked.

A stacked imbalance means one side kept winning, price after price, without the other side stepping in. It is the footprint's picture of a push that went through several levels at once. Such a zone often matters later, when price comes back to it, because it shows where one side was in control.

OrderFlux also draws the stacked zones as **bands** on the chart (the zone bands, see Chapter 7), so you can see them after the bar has scrolled away.

Absorption

Absorption is the opposite of progress. A lot of aggressive business hits one side, but the price does not move on. Somewhere, a passive player takes everything that is thrown at them.

OrderFlux marks it on a bar when, at the **low or high of the bar**:

- the volume of one side in the **outer tenth of the bar** (at least the two extreme rows, so tall bars of higher timeframes are judged like small ones) is at least **2.2 times** what an average row of that bar would show,
- that side is clearly the bigger one in the row, and
- the bar did **not** close at the extreme, so the price held.

The mark is a **ring around the cell and a dot**:

- A **blue ring with a dot on the left** at the **low** of the bar: sellers hit the bid hard, but the price held. Sellers were absorbed.
- A **red ring with a dot on the right** at the **high** of the bar: buyers lifted the ask hard, but the price did not go on. Buyers were absorbed.

> KEY IDEA Absorption is "effort without result". High effort (volume) at an extreme, no result (progress). It does not say that the price will turn. It says that someone defended the level.

The same idea is used for the **absorption zones**: levels with heavy volume where the price barely moved. They appear as bands with a label such as "Sellers absorbed" until a close breaks through them. The FLOW panel also has an absorption monitor that shows effort against result over the last minute (Chapter 12).

Unfinished auctions

A **unfinished auction** is a bar that closed exactly at its high or at its low. OrderFlux draws a **thin gold line** at that extreme. The idea comes from auction theory: a finished auction ends with the market running out of business at the extreme. A bar that simply closes there did not show that. Some traders treat such a line as a level the market may want to revisit. OrderFlux marks it, you decide what it means.

Large prints

A **large print** is a row whose volume is more than twice the average row volume of that bar. OrderFlux draws a thin outline around such a row, in the blue or red of the side that dominated. It is the quick way to see where a single price attracted an unusual share of the business. Large prints are shown in the Bid/Ask and Profile styles, and you switch them off in *SET, Marks, Large prints*.

Volume highlight

Under the chart, a bar of the volume strip gets an **amber frame** if its volume is clearly above the average (default: 1.6 times). If it is far above (2.6 times), it also gets a gold tint. See Chapter 6.

Reading the marks together

One mark alone is a hint. Two together at a level that matters are worth a closer look. For example:

- An **absorption ring** at a **support level** and a **stacked buy imbalance** on the next bar is exactly the pattern the setup assistant looks for (Chapter 9).
- A **stacked imbalance** into a level and then **no follow-through** (the next bar is small and closes back) says the push got stuck.
- An **unfinished auction** at a high, followed by a quick return to that high, is the picture of a market that came back to finish something.

> HONEST NOTE On Forex and CFDs the volume behind every mark is tick activity (see Chapter 2). The ratios still work, but treat a mark as a prompt to look, never as a promise.
>
> **Try it** Switch the marks off one by one in *SET, Marks* and watch what disappears. Then switch them on again and find one example of each on your chart: an imbalance, a B3 or S3, an absorption ring, an unfinished line, a large print.

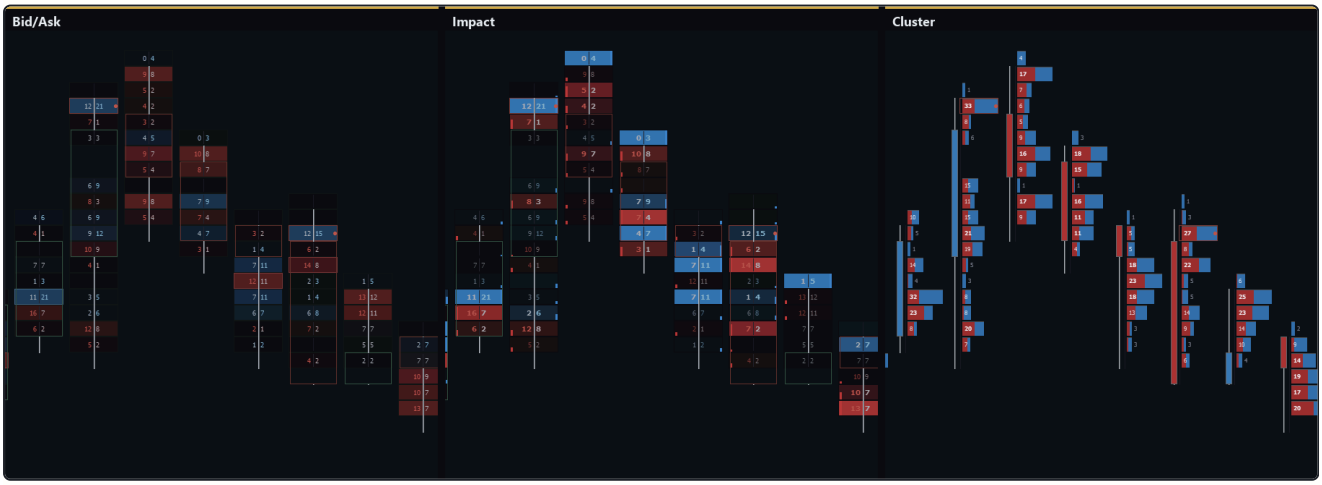
CHAPTER 5

The eight styles

OrderFlux draws the same data in eight ways. Each style answers a different question. Switch with the keys 1 to 8, with the buttons under **STYLE** in the left rail, or in *SET, View and style*. The numbers follow the order of the rail.

Key	Style	What it shows	The question it answers
1	**Bid/Ask**	Sold on the left, bought on the right, at every price.	What exactly was traded at each price?
2	**Impact**	Each cell is coloured by its delta. The numbers step back.	Where was the pressure strongest, at a glance?
3	**Cluster**	A real candle on the left, volume bars growing to the right.	Where are the volume peaks in the bar, in a calm picture?
4	**Sessions**	A candle plus one volume profile per trading day, with value area, POC and naked POCs.	How does today's price fit into the profiles of the days before?
5	**Delta**	Only the delta at each price.	Which prices were dominated by buyers, which by sellers?
6	**Heat**	A heatmap of volume: busy prices glow, quiet gaps are dark.	Where are the volume nodes and the empty gaps?
7	**Profile**	The footprint plus a volume bar behind every row.	Numbers and a visual volume distribution together.
8	**TPO**	The market profile: coloured time blocks (letters) per price.	How much time did the market spend at each price?

Bid/Ask: the classic



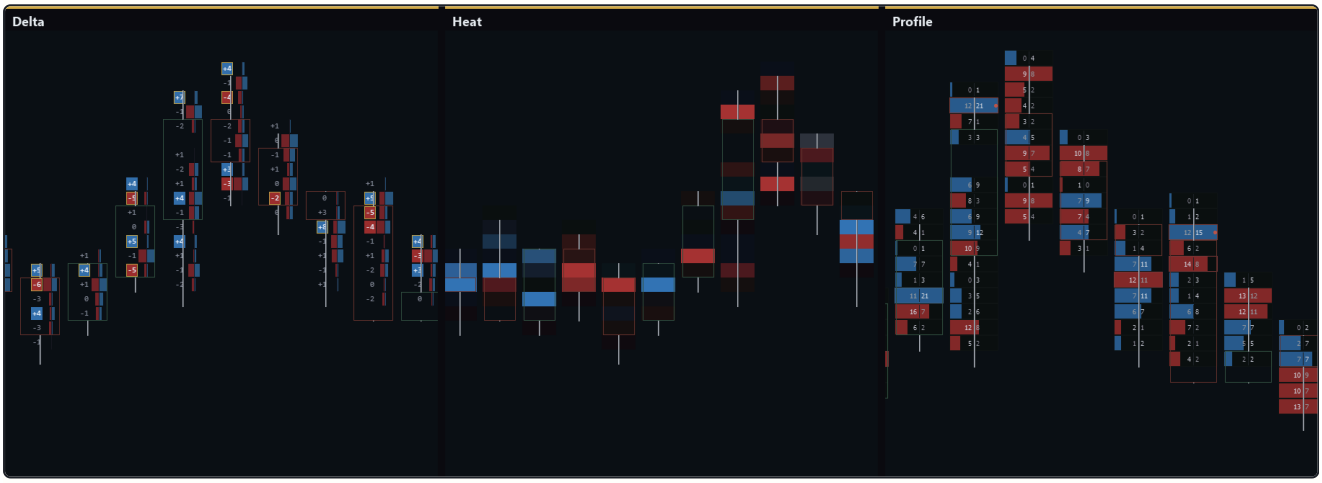
Bid/Ask (left), Impact (middle) and Cluster (right) on the same market (NAS100, M1).

Bid/Ask is the style most traders start with and many never leave. You read the numbers directly. It is also the style in which the marks (imbalance, absorption, large prints) are easiest to understand, because you see the numbers they are built from.

Impact removes the numbers from the foreground. A cell is coloured by who dominated it and how strongly, so the strong levels pop out and the quiet ones fade. Use it when you want to find the levels first and read the numbers afterwards.

Cluster draws a real candle on the left of each column and horizontal volume bars to the right of it. It is the calmest style for seeing the shape of the volume inside a candle, and the best to show a beginner what "volume at price" means.

Delta, Heat and Profile



Delta (left), Heat (middle) and Profile (right), NAS100 on M1.

Delta shows only buyers minus sellers at each price. It is useful when the question is "who dominated?" and not "how much was traded?".

Heat colours the rows by volume, like a heatmap. Together with the switch **HVN / LVN** it also marks high volume nodes (crowded prices) and low volume nodes (prices the market ran through quickly).

Profile keeps the footprint numbers and adds a volume bar behind every row. It is a good all-rounder when you want both.

Sessions and TPO: the day as a whole

Sessions (key 4) draws one volume profile for each trading day, next to a clean candle. Value area, POC, VAH, VAL and **naked POCs** (earlier POCs that price has not touched again) are marked. It is built from the broker's one-minute bars, so it does not depend on the timeframe you are looking at. This style answers the question "where is today relative to the days before?".

TPO (key 8) is the market profile: instead of volume, it counts **time**. Each block is a letter for a stretch of time at a price. The shape of the profile (P, b or D), the initial balance, the open relative to yesterday's value and the naked POCs are part of it. Both styles are described in Chapter 8.

Which style when?

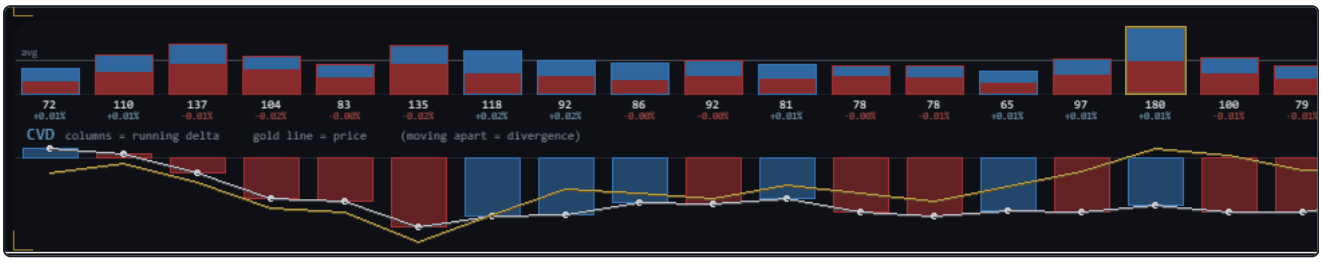
- **Learning:** Bid/Ask and Cluster.
- **Finding levels quickly:** Impact and Heat.
- **Reading the day:** Sessions and TPO.
- **Working with absorption and imbalance:** Bid/Ask and Profile.

> TRY IT Take one chart and one moment in time. Press `1` to `8` in turn and, for each style, say in one sentence what it shows you that the others do not. The styles do not compete. They are different questions about the same bars.
>
> **Honest note** The cell colours and numbers always come from the same tick data. A style never adds information, it changes what is in the foreground.

CHAPTER 6

Volume, delta and CVD

Under the footprint sit two strips that show the story of the whole chart in a few lines: the volume of every bar and the running total of delta. Together with the numbers on the right, they tell you whether the market is getting busier, and who is behind it.



The left part of the strips: the volume of each bar with the average line and, below, the CVD columns with the price as a gold line. The tallest bar carries the amber frame. The two readings sit to the right of the strips (see below).

The volume strip

Each bar of the strip is the **volume of one candle**. The bar is split in two: the upper part (blue) is the volume bought at the ask, the lower part (red) the volume sold at the bid. The thin outline shows the net direction. A thin line with the word **avg** marks the average volume of the visible bars.

Why it matters: a move on low volume is a different thing from a move on high volume. The strip answers "was this bar busy?" before you read a single number.

The amber frame

A bar whose volume is clearly above the average gets an **amber frame**. A bar far above the average gets in addition a gold tint and a third frame. The thresholds are in *SET, Numbers and colours, Volume highlight x* (default 1.6 times the average). The switch is called **Volume highlight** (key B).

Under each bar you see the volume as a number and the price change of the candle in percent.

The CVD strip

CVD stands for cumulative volume delta: the running sum of the delta of every bar. Each column starts at zero and ends at the total after that bar. Blue means the total rose with that bar, red means it fell.

Over the columns runs a **gold line: the price** (closing prices, scaled to fit). This is the most useful thing in the strip:

- When price and CVD **move together**, the aggression behind the move is the same side as the move. That is a healthy move.

- When the price makes a **new high** but the CVD does not, or falls, the buying behind the move is fading. The same works the other way round at lows.

The text under the strip says it: "moving apart = divergence". OrderFlux also puts a **BULL DIV** or **BEAR DIV** tag when, over the last few candles, the price and the CVD went in opposite directions.

> KEY IDEA The CVD does not predict a reversal. It tells you whether a new high or low is carried by aggressive business or only by a lack of resistance. That is a good reason to look at the bar, not a reason to act on its own.

The two readings

On the right of the strips two small numbers give you a feeling for the scale:

- **Avg per bar:** the average volume of the visible bars, and the volume of the last bar for comparison.
- **CVD now:** the current running delta, with a short note such as "sellers ahead on screen" or "buyers ahead on screen".

Switching the strips

Both strips can be switched off in *SET, Bars and strips* (**Volume bars** and **CVD strip**). In the **Basic** view they are off, in **Plus** and **Full** they are on.

What the strips are good for

- To check whether the bar you are looking at is **normal or unusual**.
- To see whether a **breakout** came with volume.
- To catch a **divergence** between price and delta early.
- To compare the **start and the end of a session**: volume is often higher at the open and the close.

> TRY IT Find the tallest bar in the volume strip. Look up the footprint column above it. Where is its POC, who won the delta, and did the price go anywhere afterwards?
>
> **Honest note** The CVD starts from the first bar on your screen, not from the session open. When you scroll or zoom, the starting point changes. Read its direction and its divergence from price, not its absolute value.

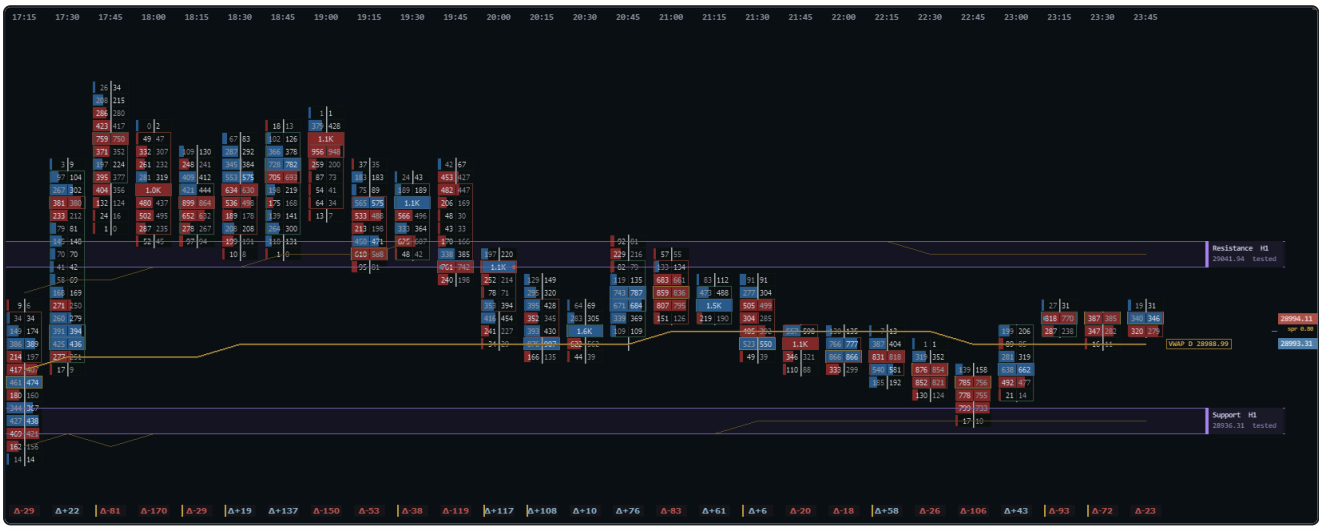
PART 3

Context

CHAPTER 7

Levels, zones and VWAP

A single bar is easier to read when you know where it happened. A bar that shows absorption in the middle of nowhere is a curiosity. The same bar at a support level is a story. OrderFlux therefore draws the levels that matter on the chart itself.



Support and resistance bands with their tags (here "Resistance H1" and "Support H1", both "tested") and the daily VWAP with its tag. NAS100, M15, Profile style.

Support and resistance

OrderFlux finds the **nearest levels from past reactions** on the higher timeframes **H1, H4 and D1**. It does not draw lines by hand and it does not draw dozens of them. By default you see the two nearest, one above and one below the price. Each one is a thin band with a **tag** on the right:

- **Resistance H1** or **Support D1**: the kind of level and the timeframe it comes from. A level from a higher timeframe usually carries more weight than one from a lower timeframe.
- The **price** of the level.
- Its **state**: **fresh** (the price has not touched it since it formed), **first test** (touched once) or **tested** (touched several times, and so usually weaker).

Use the state as a quick filter: a fresh level that the price reaches for the first time is a different situation from a level that has been hit five times.

In *SET, Levels and VWAP* you can switch the levels off, and with **Sensitivity** you decide how strict a level must be to count. A higher sensitivity finds more levels, a lower one fewer and stronger ones.

> KEY IDEA The levels do not say "the price will turn here". They say "the market has reacted here before". Whether it does again is exactly what the footprint helps you judge.

Zone bands

Next to the levels, OrderFlux draws **zone bands** for two kinds of footprint events that have a price:

- **Stacked imbalance** zones (labelled for example "Stacked buy imbalance"): the prices where one side kept winning.
- **Absorption** zones (for example "Sellers absorbed" or "Buyers absorbed", with their price range): the prices where heavy volume did not move the price.

At most three zones, the ones nearest to the price, are shown, so the chart stays quiet. A zone stays on the chart until a close breaks through it. The key `Z` and the switch **Zone bands** (*SET, Marks*) turn them on and off.

VWAP

The **VWAP** is the volume-weighted average price: the average price at which the volume of the period was traded. Many traders treat it as a measure of fair value for the day. OrderFlux draws it as a thin gold line with a tag such as "VWAP D" (daily) or "VWAP W" (weekly). Optionally it adds a band of **one standard deviation** above and below.

You choose it in *SET, Levels and VWAP*: **VWAP line** off, daily or weekly, and **Bands** on or off. The VWAP is available in every style.

How it is used: the price above the VWAP means the day's average buyer is in profit, below means the average seller is. Many traders look for price to return to the VWAP after a stretch away from it, and for absorption or imbalance near it.

> HONEST NOTE On Forex and CFDs the VWAP is weighted by tick volume, not by contracts. The chip at the top tells you which one you have. It is still a useful reference line, but it will differ from the VWAP of an exchange.

Putting it together

A simple way to use all of this is to ask three questions when you look at a bar:

1. **Where is it?** At a level, inside a zone, near the VWAP, or in the middle of nothing?
2. **What happened there?** Which marks are on it, who was aggressive, what did the CVD do?
3. **What would make my idea wrong?** The level itself usually gives the answer: a close beyond it.

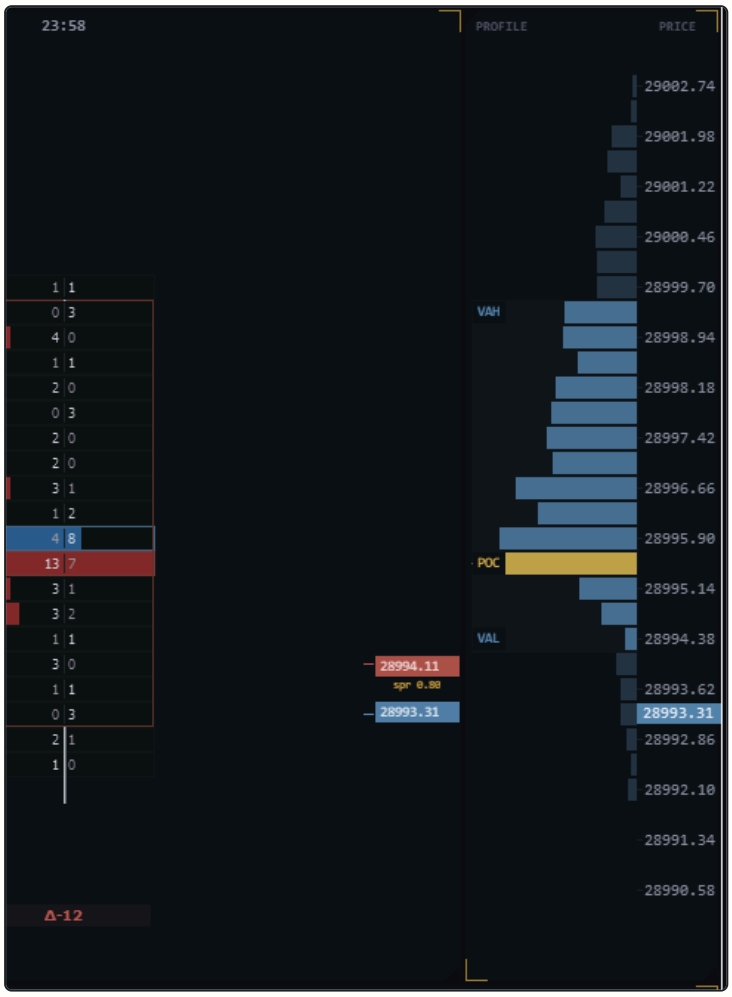
The setup assistant (Chapter 9) does exactly this and writes down the answer, so you see its reasoning.

> **TRY IT** Open *SET, Levels and VWAP*. Switch the VWAP to daily and the bands on. Then look at the last twenty bars: how often did the price return to the VWAP, and what did the footprint look like when it did?

CHAPTER 8

Volume profile, sessions and TPO

Footprint bars show what happened in a candle. Profiles show what happened over a longer stretch: where the market spent its volume, and where it spent its time. Both are standard tools of auction market theory, which sees the market as a process of finding prices where business can be done.



The volume profile on the right of the chart. The POC is the gold bar, VAH and VAL are labelled. NAS100, M1.

The volume profile on the right

At the right edge of the chart, a horizontal histogram shows the **volume at each price** of the visible bars. Three marks are on it:

- **POC (point of control):** the price with the most volume, in gold.
- **VAH and VAL (value area high and low):** the edges of the **value area**, the range that contains **70 percent** of the volume around the POC. This is the zone the market accepted as fair.

You can switch the profile and its value area in *SET, Levels and VWAP* (**Volume profile and value area**, key V).

How to read it

- **High volume nodes (HVN):** peaks in the profile. Prices where a lot of business was done. The market often lingers there and moves slowly. They tend to act like magnets and brakes.
- **Low volume nodes (LVN):** valleys. Prices the market ran through quickly. A move that enters one often continues quickly to the next node, and a price that returns to one is a test of whether the market now accepts it.
- **Price inside the value area:** the market considers the price fair. Rotation is typical.
- **Price outside the value area:** the market is looking for a new fair price, or it will come back. This is where breakouts and failed breakouts happen.

In the **Heat** style, the switch **HVN / LVN** marks the nodes on the chart.

Naked POCs

A **naked POC** is a POC of an earlier session that the price has **not touched again**. Because it was the busiest price of its session and nothing has traded there since, many traders treat it as unfinished business and a possible magnet. OrderFlux draws naked POCs with their price and the date. They are part of the **Sessions** and **TPO** styles.

The Sessions style



Sessions on a daily chart: a candle and a volume profile for each day, the POC in gold, and two naked POCs with their prices on the right. NAS100, D1.

The **Sessions** style (key 4) draws a clean candle and **one volume profile for each trading day** behind it. For each day you see the POC, the value area, VAH and VAL, and the naked POCs of earlier days. Because it is built from the broker's one-minute bars, it is independent of the timeframe of your chart and of your zoom. Use it to answer one question: where is the price now, compared with the value of the days before?

The TPO style



> The TPO style on H4: blocks of time at each price, the shape of each session in the header (here D-shape), POC, VAH and VAL, and naked POCs with date and price. NAS100.

TPO stands for time price opportunity. The market profile counts **time** instead of volume. The day is divided into time blocks (a block is a number of bars, three by default, adjustable with **TPO block** in *SET, Numbers and colours*), and every block that traded at a price puts a letter or a coloured block there. The result is a profile that shows where the market **spent time**.

The TPO style (key 8) shows, for each session:

- **POC, VAH and VAL** of the time profile, with their prices.
- **The shape of the day: P** (volume and time concentrated in the upper part, often after buyers took control or sellers covered), **b** (concentrated in the lower part) or **D** (a balanced, symmetrical distribution, typical for a day in balance). The header shows the shape of each session.
- **The open relative to the previous value:** "open inside", "open above" or "open below" the previous day's value area. An open outside the value says that the market began the day away from what it accepted yesterday.
- **The initial balance:** the range of the first time block, shown as a box. A break out of the initial balance often marks a trending day.
- **High and low marks** and the range of each session.
- **Single prints:** prices that only one time block touched. A stretch of three or more rows is drawn as a zone. Single prints show where the market moved through without stopping, and they are sometimes revisited.

- **Naked POCs** with price and date.
- **Time colours:** the blocks can be coloured by time of day, so you see when each part of the profile was built.

All of this can be switched in *SET, Levels and VWAP* (page for TPO).

Volume or time?

Volume profile and TPO often agree. When they do not, it is information: a price with a lot of volume but little time was traded fast and heavily. A price with a lot of time but little volume was a quiet rest. Use both, and use the footprint to see what happened at the prices that matter.

> TRY IT Switch to the Sessions style (`4`) and find the nearest naked POC. Then switch to the footprint (`1`) and watch what the bars do as the price approaches it.
>
> **Honest note** On Forex and CFDs, volume profiles are built from tick volume, so they show relative activity. Time profiles do not depend on volume at all, which makes TPO a good second opinion on these feeds.

PART 4

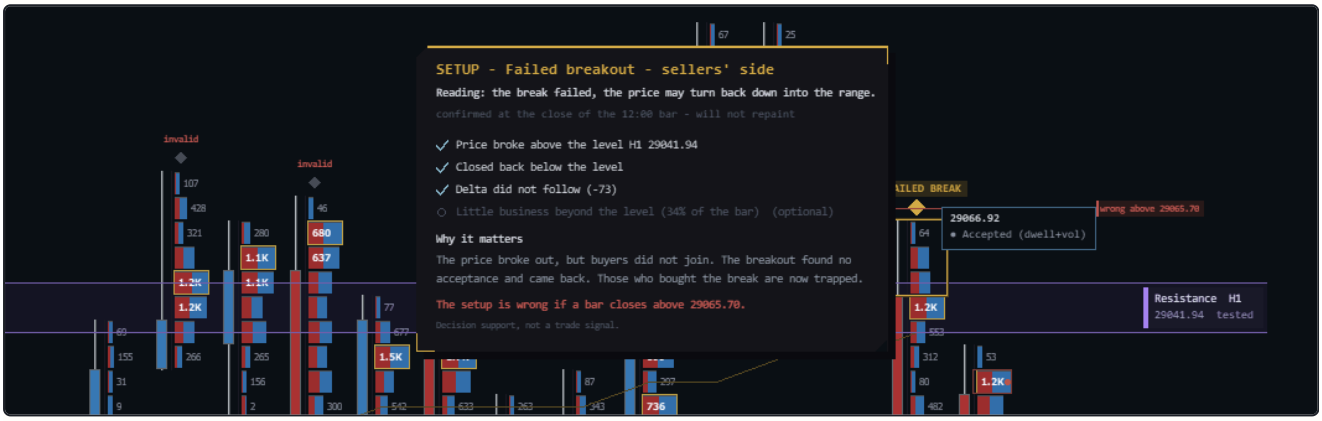
Decision support

CHAPTER 9

The setup assistant

The setup assistant looks at your chart the way a patient colleague would. After every closed bar it checks whether several order-flow facts lined up at a level that matters. If they did, it puts a small gold diamond on the bar and writes down exactly which facts it found.

It is **decision support, not a signal service**. It does not say buy or sell, it does not place trades and it makes no promise about what happens next. Its value is that it shows the reasons, so you can agree or disagree with them.



A failed breakout with the explanation card open: the checks with their ticks, "Why it matters" and the price where the idea is wrong. NAS100, M15.

What you see

- A **gold diamond** with an arrow at the bar: the type of setup and its direction. The arrow points up on the buyers' side and down on the sellers' side.
- **Gold frames** around the cells that triggered it.
- A **red line** across the chart at the price where the idea would be wrong, with a tag such as "wrong below 4099.39".
- An **explanation card** when you point at the diamond (see below).

All of it is calculated on **closed bars only**. A setup never changes after the bar has closed, and it never disappears. This is what "no repainting" means here.

The three setups

1. Absorption at a level

Heavy volume at a level, and the price holds there.

- The bar touches a support or resistance level.

- At the extreme of the bar, one side shows at least 2.2 times its average volume (the footprint's absorption).
- The total volume is at least average.
- The bar closes away from the extreme (in the upper half for a low, in the lower half for a high).
- The delta turns compared with the bar before.
- *Optional:* the POC of the bar lies at the extreme.
- *Wrong if:* a bar closes beyond the extreme of the absorption bar.

2. Breakout with acceptance

A move beyond a level that the market accepted instead of just touching.

- Two bars in a row close beyond the level, after one that closed at or inside it.
- A stacked imbalance of at least three rows points in the direction of the breakout.
- The delta of both bars agrees with the direction.
- The volume is at least average.
- *Optional:* the breakout bar has at least 1.2 times the average volume.
- *Wrong if:* a bar closes back inside the level.

3. Failed breakout

The price pokes through a level, but nobody follows, and it comes back. The people who bought the break are now on the wrong side.

- The bar's high (or low) goes clearly beyond a level, and the bar closes back on the inside. It did not open already beyond.
- The delta did not follow the break.
- The volume is at least 0.8 times the average.
- *Optional:* at most a quarter of the volume of the bar traded beyond the level.
- *Wrong if:* a bar closes beyond the extreme of the failed break.

> HONEST NOTE These rules and numbers are start values. They are built to be simple and to be explained. They will be tuned with experience, and every setup shows the real numbers behind it.

The explanation card

Point the mouse at the diamond. A card opens with:

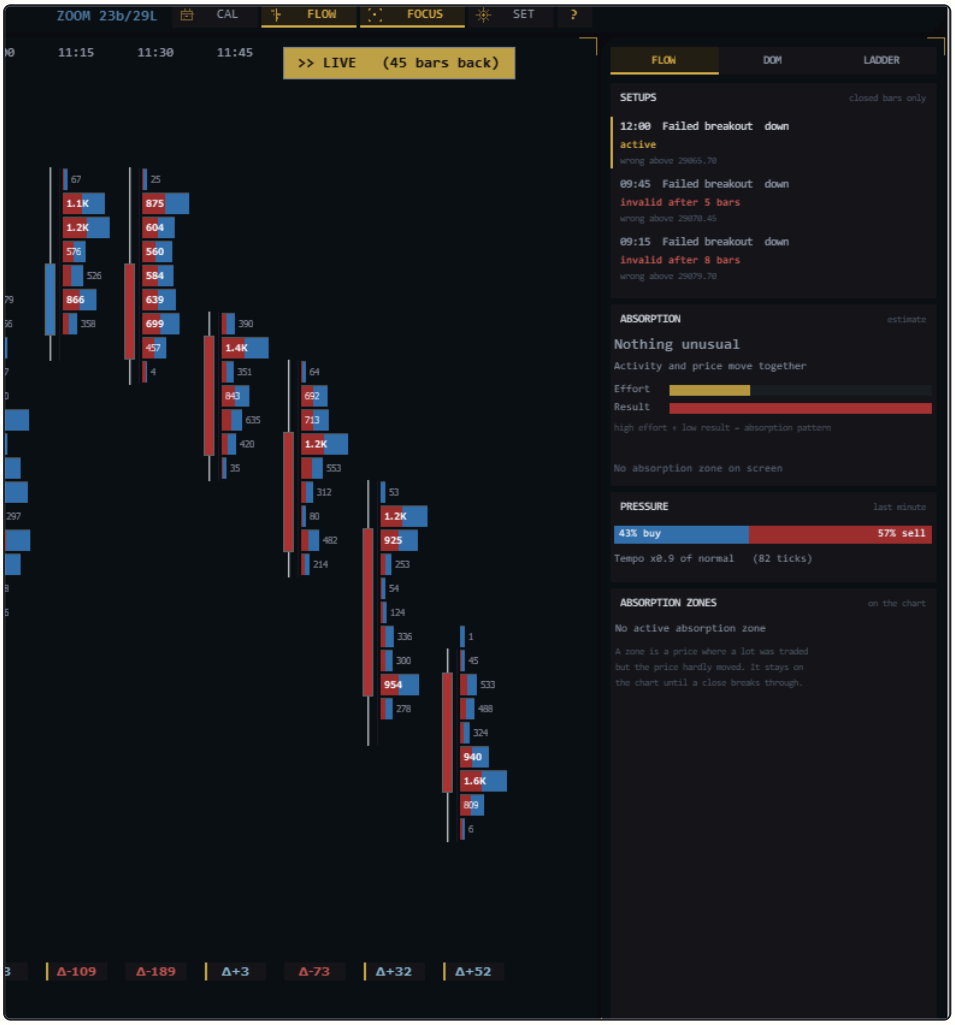
- **The checks**, each with a tick if it was met and an empty circle for an optional one that was not.
- **Why it matters**, a short explanation in plain words.
- **The price where the idea is wrong**, and what happened since.

Read the card before anything else. It is the point of the whole feature.

Setups keep their results

A setup is **active** for six bars. After that it moves into the history, together with its result: how far the price moved in its direction ("+0.00018"), or **invalid** if a bar closed beyond the "wrong" price. The newest six past setups stay on the chart (switch with **Show past setups**), and the FLOW panel lists them in the **SETUPS** card.

This list is the best teacher in the tool. It shows how often a clean-looking pattern simply does not work. OrderFlux does not publish a hit rate, because it would depend on the market, the broker and the time. You see your own results.



The SETUPS card in the FLOW panel: one active setup and two past setups, both "invalid" with the number of bars it took.

Where the levels come from

The setups need levels. They use the support and resistance levels (Chapter 7), the value area of the profile and the zone bands. If there is no level near the bar, there is no setup. That is on purpose: the same footprint pattern in the middle of nowhere is much less interesting.

Settings

Press `A`, or use the **Setups** button in the left rail, to switch the assistant on and off. In *SET, Setups* you can switch each of the three setups separately, and the past setups. Everything it marks is measured from your data.

How to use it

A way that keeps the assistant useful and honest:

1. Treat a diamond as a **question**, not an answer: "Is this a setup I would take?"
2. Read the **card** and check the facts yourself on the footprint.
3. Look at the **context**: the higher timeframe, the profile, the calendar.
4. Decide where **your** idea is wrong, and compare it with the red line.
5. Afterwards look at the **history** and learn how it turned out.

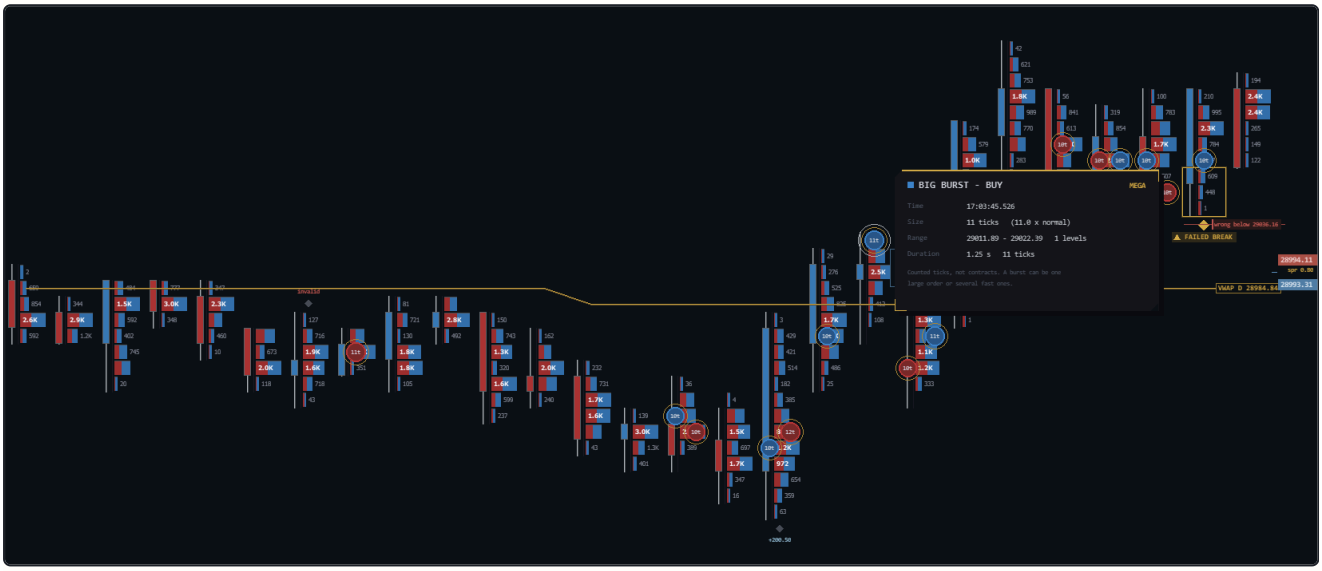
> TRY IT Switch the setups on and scroll back through a day. For every past setup, read the outcome. How many worked, how many went invalid, how many did nothing? Then look at what the market context was in each case.
>
> **Honest note** The assistant measures what happened on closed bars. It cannot know what happens next, it does not know your risk, and it knows nothing about news that has not arrived. It is a way to see the facts faster, not a way to trade without thinking.

CHAPTER 10

Big Trades

New in version 1.36.

Most of the volume in a bar comes from many small orders. Now and then a single large market order pushes in, and the price jumps. **Big Trades** shows exactly that: bubbles at the price where a large aggressive order ran, and a bracket when one order swept through several levels in a single move.



Big Trades: bubbles for large orders at one price, and a bracket with an arrow for an order that swept several levels. NAS100, M15 (a quote feed, so sizes are counted ticks).

What it is, and what it is not

A **big trade** is a large **aggressive** order: a market order that takes liquidity and moves the price. It is not a pending order. Limit orders that are waiting in the order book are the passive side, and you can only see them with real market depth (Chapter 12).

OrderFlux builds a big trade by grouping consecutive ticks of the same aggressor side that follow each other very quickly:

- On a **real feed** (futures, exchange), trades up to 50 milliseconds apart on the same side belong to one order. The size is in **contracts**.
- On a **quote feed** (Forex, CFD), ticks up to 150 milliseconds apart on the same side form one **burst**. The size is the number of **counted ticks**, shown with a "t", for example "38t".

> HONEST NOTE On Forex and CFDs there is no size per order, so a big trade is a burst of counted ticks. It is the footprint of an order that pushed hard through the quote, but it can also be several fast participants or an algorithm. That is why the card says "counted ticks, not contracts". The feature is still useful, because it shows where and when the pressure was sudden.

What counts as big

"Big" always means **compared with what is normal for this symbol right now**. OrderFlux measures the typical group size in the visible bars, and calls a group big when it is a multiple of that:

Sensitivity	Big (tier 1)	Mega (tier 2)	Extreme (tier 3)
Low	6 times normal	15 times	36 times
Medium (default)	**4 times normal**	**10 times**	**24 times**
High	3 times normal	7.5 times	18 times

On a quote feed a burst must also contain at least six ticks and move the price by at least two ticks, so that a crowd of flat quotes does not count as a push.

How it looks

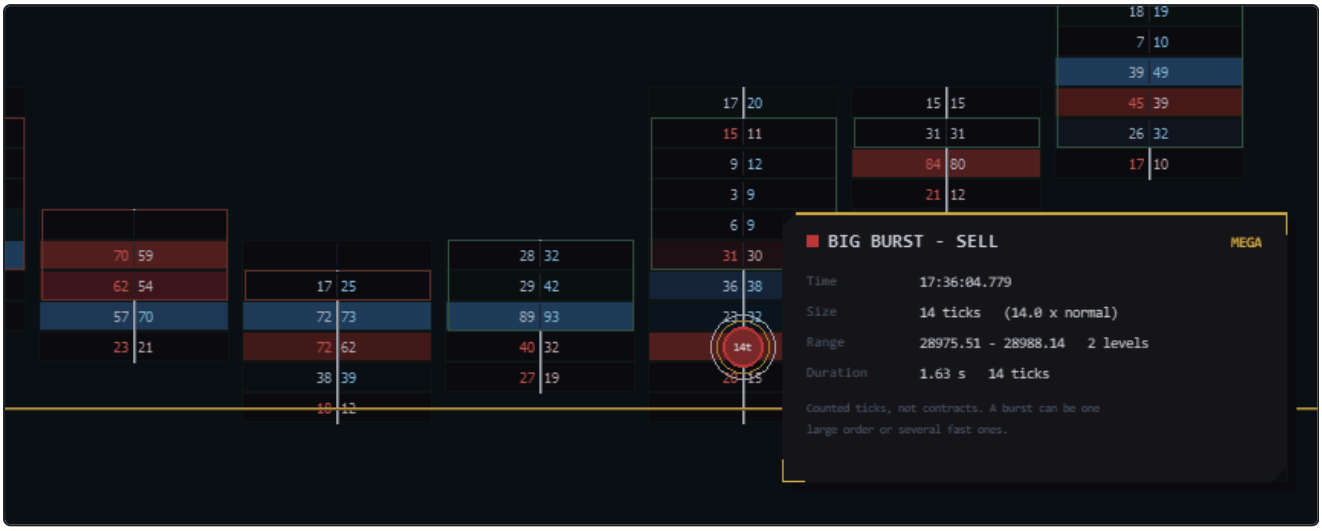
- **A bubble** sits on the price where the order ran, in the middle of the bar column. Its **area grows with the size**. Buyers are blue, sellers are red. A larger bubble shows its size as a number.
- **Three tiers.** The rim gets thicker with every tier. A **mega** trade also gets a thin gold ring around its bubble, an **extreme** trade a second one.
- **A bracket** replaces the bubble when the order ran over three or more rows. It runs from the start price to the end price, with an arrowhead at the end, and the label shows the size and the number of levels, for example "8t 3 lv".
- **At most three** big trades are drawn per bar, the largest ones. If there are more, a small "+2" at the top of the column tells you.

The explanation card

Point at a bubble or a bracket. The card shows:

- the **time** to the millisecond and the **side** (buy or sell),
- the **size** in contracts or ticks, and how many **times normal** it was,
- the **price** (or the range and the number of levels for a sweep),
- the **duration** and the number of ticks,
- and, on quote feeds, the note that these are counted ticks.

In the **FLOW** tab, the **BIG TRADES** card counts the big trades of the last 60 minutes (buys, sells and the net size) and lists the three newest with time, side, size and price.



The explanation card of a big trade, here a sell burst of 14 ticks that ran through two levels in 1.63 seconds.

The settings

Switch the layer on with the **Big** button in the left rail or with the key `W`. More in *SET, Marks*:

- **Big trades sensitivity:** low, medium or high (the table above).
- **Smallest size shown:** hide everything below a size you choose. **AUTO** lets the sensitivity decide. Use it when you want to see only the largest.
- **Bubble opacity:** how solid the bubbles are. Lower values leave the numbers behind the bubble readable.
- **Opacity shows balance:** a bubble becomes more solid when the price cell is more one-sided, meaning that almost only the trade's side traded there.
- **Size in the bubble:** show or hide the number inside larger bubbles.

How to read it

- A **big trade into a level** that then goes nowhere is the picture of absorption: someone took the aggression. Compare it with the absorption ring on the same bar.
- A **sweep** through several levels with a stacked imbalance behind it is a sign that one side was in control during that move.
- A **cluster of big trades on the same side**, bar after bar, says the pressure was persistent.
- A **single large burst at the start of a bar** often explains why the whole bar looks the way it does.

KEY IDEA Big trades are a way to see the sudden pressure that the bar's sums hide. They are one more fact to weigh, together with the level, the delta and the absorption marks. They are not a signal.

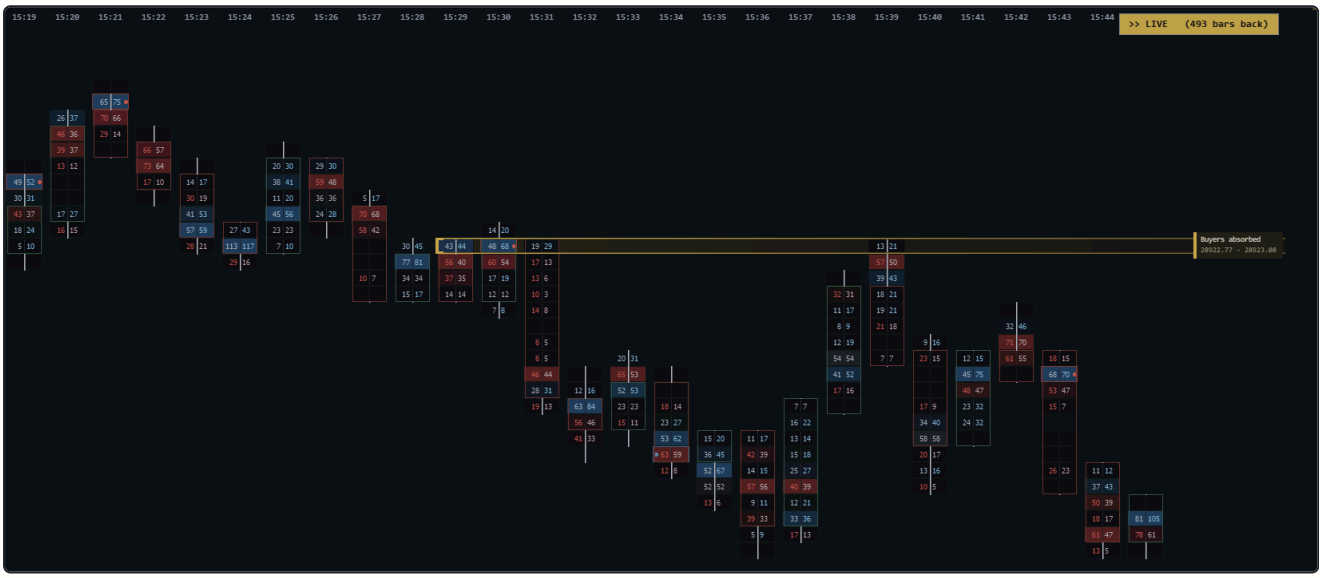
Try it Switch Big on, set the sensitivity to **High**, and look at a busy bar. Then set it to **Low**. Which of the big trades stay? Those are the ones that stood out the most.

CHAPTER 11

Worked examples

The best way to learn to read a footprint is to read many of them. Here are three examples from real charts, taken apart step by step, and a routine you can use as a framework. The examples show how to read the chart. They are not trade recommendations.

Example 1: buyers absorbed at a price



NAS100, M1. The zone band "Buyers absorbed" (28922.77 to 28923.08) runs from the bars where the buyers were absorbed to the right edge of the chart.

The situation. NAS100 on a one-minute chart. The price has risen to a level, and several bars trade around it.

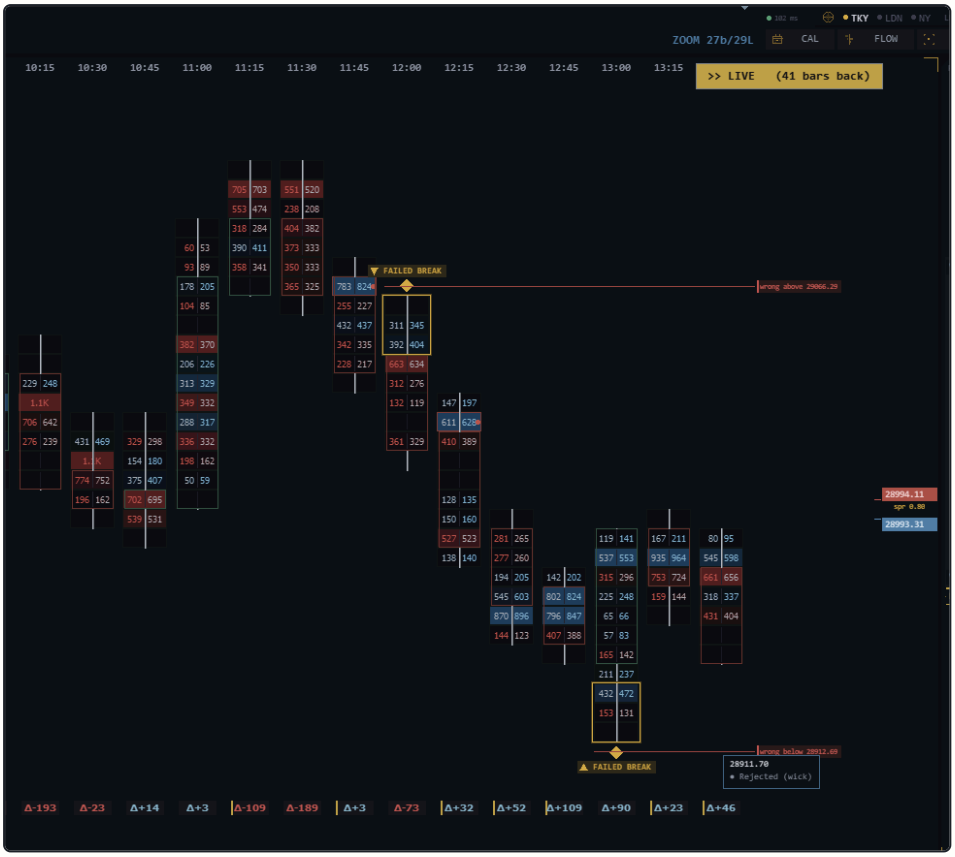
What the footprint shows.

1. On the bars at that price the right numbers are large: buyers lifted the ask again and again. Some of them carry an **absorption mark**, a ring with a red dot on the right.
2. The bars do not make progress. They close below their highs.
3. OrderFlux draws the **zone band "Buyers absorbed"** with its price range, and keeps it on the chart.
4. Afterwards the price moves away from the zone, downwards.

How to read it. Buyers put in effort, but the price did not follow. Someone was selling into them. That is absorption. It does not say that the price must fall. It says the level was defended, and the later bars show that here the defence held.

What to learn from it. A mark is a starting point. Look at what the bars do after it, and use the zone band: it stays on the chart until a close breaks through it, so you can watch what the price does when it comes back.

Example 2: two failed breakouts



NAS100, M15. Two failed breakouts, each with its diamond, its label and its "wrong" line. At the second one the card says "Rejected (wick)".

The situation. NAS100 on M15. The price breaks beyond a level twice and comes back each time.

What the footprint shows at the first one (12:00).

1. The bar goes beyond the level but does not hold. It closes back on the inside.
2. The **delta of the bar is negative** (Δ-73). The push beyond the level was not carried by buyers.
3. A **diamond** and the label **FAILED BREAK** appear after the bar has closed. A line runs to the right with the tag "wrong above" and the price. If a bar closes above it, the setup is invalid.

At the second one (13:00), the mirror image: a long wick below a low, a diamond pointing up, a line "wrong below" with its price, and a small note when you point at the wick: "Rejected (wick)".

How to read it. People who traded the break are now on the wrong side. A failed breakout is only as good as the reason it failed, and the delta of the bar is the first fact to check.

What to learn from it. A breakout needs acceptance. If you check the delta and the close of every breakout bar, you avoid many of the worst entries. And the "wrong" line gives you the answer to the question every idea needs: where would I be wrong?

Example 3: reading six days from the profile



> NAS100, D1, in the TPO style. Each day is a profile with its shape in the header, the open relative to the previous day, the POC and a naked POC from 22.10.

The situation. Six days of NAS100 in the TPO style. The header shows, for every session, its shape and how it opened.

What to look at.

1. **The shape.** The first day is a P shape, the five after it are D shapes (balanced).
2. **The open relative to the previous value.** The header says "open below", "open inside" or "open above" for each day. A day that opens outside the previous value starts away from what the market accepted the day before.
3. **POC and value area** of each day, and how the next day's profile sits relative to them.
4. **Naked POC.** The POC of 22.10 (29349.76) has not been touched again.

How to read it. A string of D days is a market in balance, where rotating around the POC is typical. A P day suggests that buyers took the initiative. A naked POC marks a price that the market left and has not returned to.

What to learn from it. The profile gives you the map. The footprint then tells you what happens when the price reaches an interesting point on that map.

A simple routine

A routine turns the chart from a screen to stare at into a tool. Here is one that fits OrderFlux.

Before the session (five minutes).

1. Press F to see the chart without the clutter, or open **Sessions** or **TPO** for the previous days.
2. Note the **previous value area, POC and any naked POC** near the price.

3. Open the calendar with **CAL** and note the high-impact events and their times.
4. Look at the nearest **support and resistance** and their states.

During the session.

1. Switch to **Bid/Ask** or **Profile** with the marks on.
2. Watch the bars that come to your levels. What marks do they show? Which side is aggressive? What does the CVD do?
3. Use the **setup assistant** as a second pair of eyes, and read the card of every diamond.
4. Keep an eye on the **calendar countdown** before news.

After the session (five minutes).

1. Scroll back through the setups and read the **results**.
2. Take a screenshot of two bars that you found interesting, and write one sentence about each.
3. Ask yourself: what did I see before I knew the outcome?

A trader's edge is rarely a special tool. It is a routine, discipline and honest notes. OrderFlux makes the first part of the routine faster. The rest is yours.

> HONEST NOTE Three examples are not a method. They show how the pieces fit together. Every market, broker and timeframe behaves a little differently, and you learn the most from looking at your own charts for a few hundred bars.

PART 5

Panels and settings

CHAPTER 12

The top strip, the side panel and the calendar

Besides the footprint, OrderFlux has a few areas that give you context: the top strip, the side panel with its three tabs, the economic calendar and two small floating cards. This chapter explains each of them.

The top strip

The strip at the top is a quiet instrument panel. From left to right:

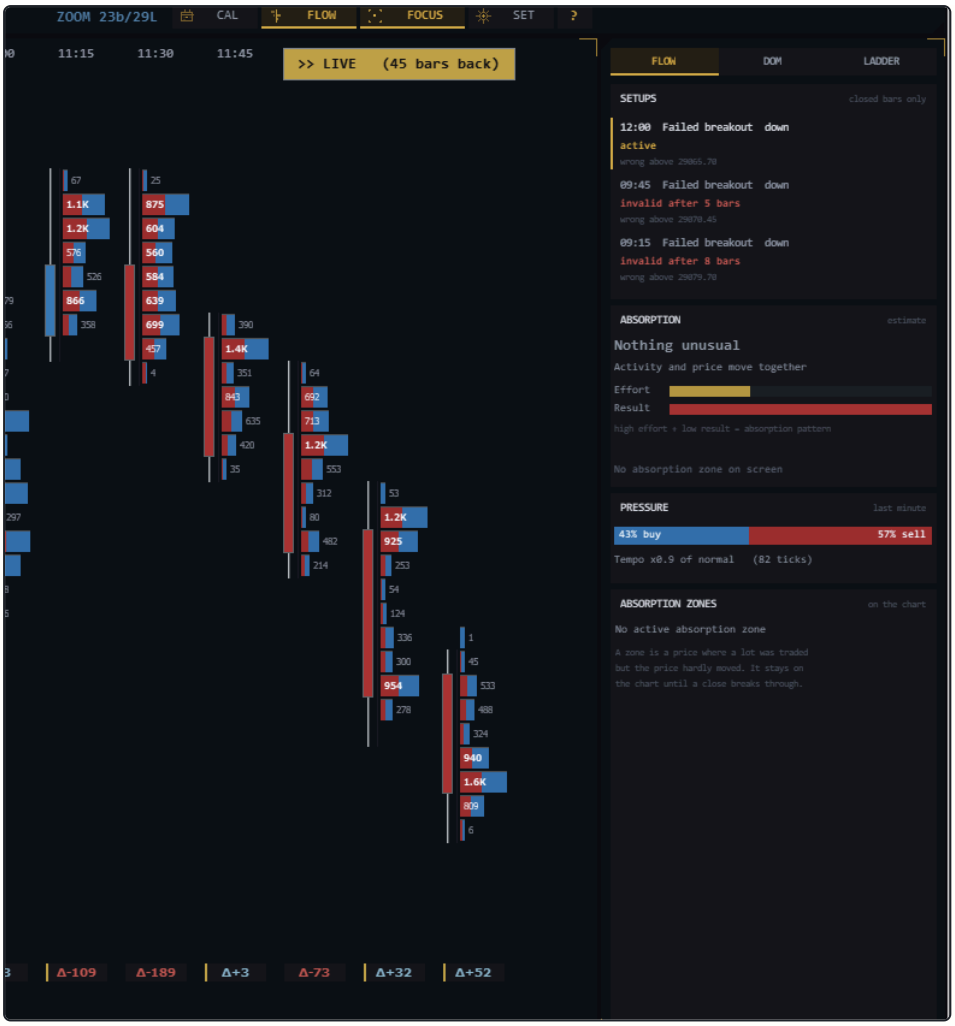
- **Symbol and timeframe**, with the time left in the running bar (for example "M5 01:59").
- **Price and change** of the day, and the **spread**.
- The **data chip**: "Tick volume" or "Real volume". Click it for the data card (Chapter 2).
- Under it, in a second line, the **next economic event** with its forecast and previous value and a countdown, for example "in 1d 11h".
- **Ping** to your broker in milliseconds.
- The three **trading sessions** Tokyo, London and New York. A lit dot means open. Click for the exact times and what opens next. The card notes that the real opening times shift by an hour with daylight saving time.
- **Your clock.**

At the top right are the buttons **CAL**, **FLOW**, **FOCUS**, **SET** and **?**, and a small label such as "ZOOM 27b/44L" that tells you the current zoom in bars and levels.

When you have scrolled back in time, a **>> LIVE** button appears with the number of bars you are back. Click it, or press `End`, to return to the live bar.

The side panel: FLOW, DOM and LADDER

Open it with **FLOW** or the key `D`. It has three tabs.



The FLOW tab: the SETUPS card, the absorption monitor (effort against result), the pressure meter with the tempo, and the list of absorption zones.

FLOW

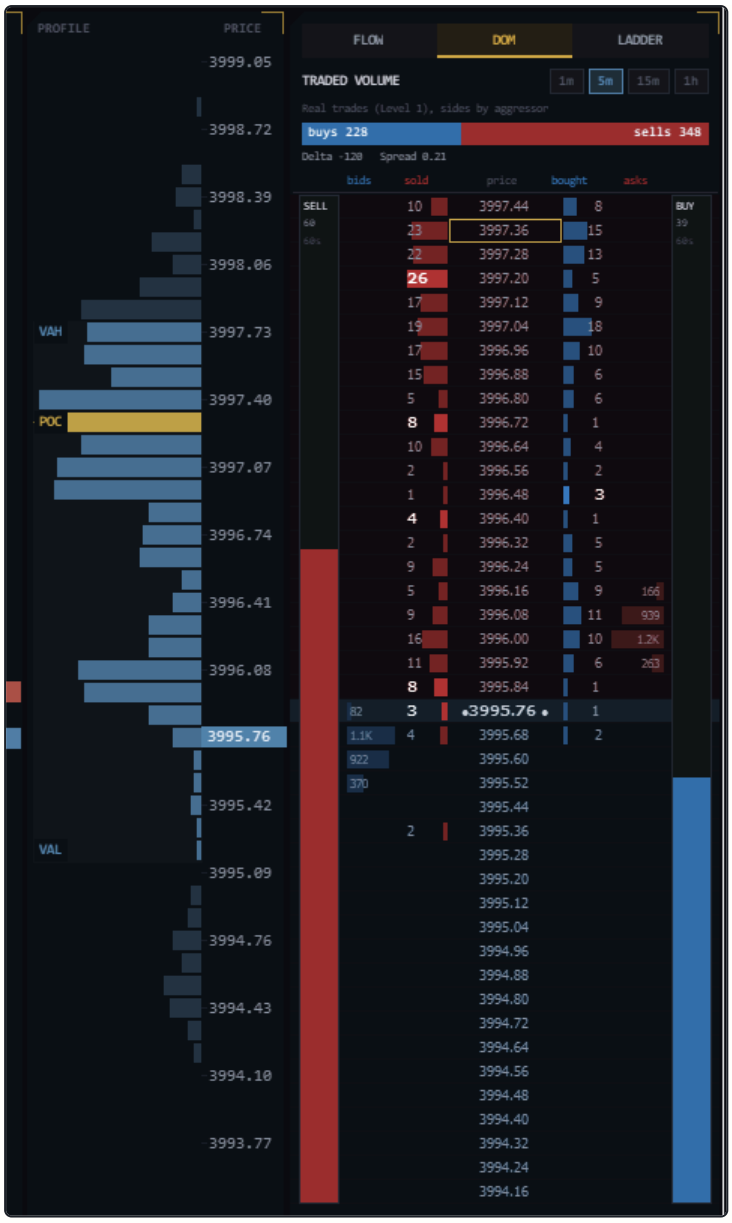
- **SETUPS:** the active setup and the newest past setups with their results (Chapter 9).
- **ABSORPTION:** a monitor that compares **effort** (volume) with **result** (progress of the price) over the last minute. When the effort is high and the result is low, the monitor reads "possible absorption". Otherwise it says "Nothing unusual". Under it the line "high effort + low result = absorption pattern" reminds you of the idea.
- **PRESSURE:** the share of buying and selling in the last minute, and the **tempo** compared with normal (for example "x1.4 of normal"), a good indicator of whether the market has become faster.
- **BIG TRADES:** the big trades of the last 60 minutes, buys and sells with the net size and the three newest (see Chapter 10). It appears when the Big layer is on.
- **ABSORPTION ZONES:** a list of the zones that are also drawn on the chart, nearest first, with the distance. A zone stays until a close breaks through it.
- **TIME & SALES:** only with a feed that delivers real trades. On a quote feed this card shows a short note, because a list of ticks would say little.

DOM

The **DOM** tab shows **traded volume at each price**, for a period you choose with the buttons **1m, 5m, 15m, 1h**. The price scrolls to follow the current price, and the busiest price has a gold frame. At the top, bars show the share of buys and sells and the delta, and the spread.

On a **quote feed**, the DOM shows traded volume rebuilt from ticks. It says so ("Tick volume, rebuilt from ticks, not a real order book"). On a **real feed with Level 2**, it also has the **ORDER BOOK**: the limit orders that are waiting at each price (the best ten levels per side), the **depth balance** between bids and asks, bright marks for large sizes and an outline for a **possible reload**, a large size that keeps growing in small steps.

> HONEST NOTE The order book appears only when your broker sends market depth. OrderFlux never invents it. With the key L you get a **synthetic** order book that is clearly labelled as demo, so that you can look at the features.



The DOM tab on a feed with real trades (Level 1): sold and bought per price for the last five minutes, with the busiest price framed in gold. The bars at the left and right edge show the share of selling and buying.

LADDER

The **ladder** shows the **live bar** row by row, on exactly the same rows as the chart, so you do not have to look from one place to the other. The current price is marked, the POC of the bar is framed, and with Level 2 an extra column shows the resting size.

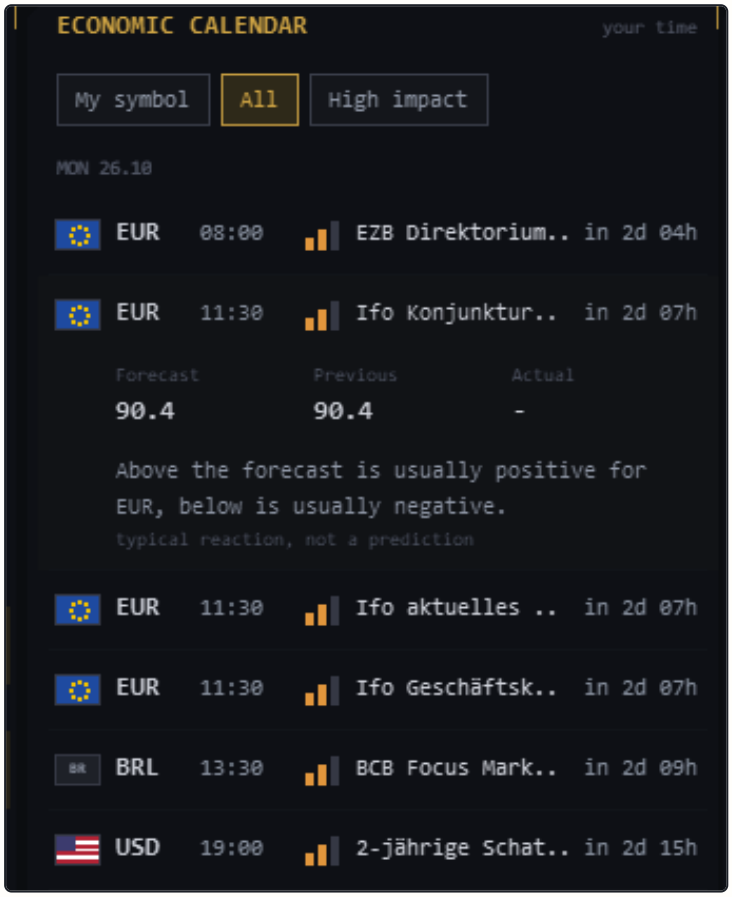
The economic calendar

Open it with **CAL**. It docks to the left of the chart and shows upcoming events with:

- **Flags** for the currencies, so you see at a glance which market is affected.
- **Impact** (high, medium, low), and **forecast, previous and actual** values.

- A **reading aid**: when you open an event, a card explains in plain words what a surprise would usually mean for the currency. For unemployment figures it uses the reverse interpretation, so that more unemployment reads as weaker for the currency.
- **Filters: My symbol** (events of the currencies of your symbol), **High impact** or **All**.
- A **countdown** to the next event, also in the top strip.

With the key `N` (*SET, Bars and strips, News lines*) high-impact events are also drawn as **vertical lines** on the chart, so you see where in the price history they happened.



The economic calendar with the filters My symbol, All and High impact, flags, the time of each event and a countdown. The open event shows forecast, previous and a reading aid.

> TIP Open the calendar before the session. Knowing that a high-impact release comes in twenty minutes changes how you read a quiet footprint.

The HUD and the trade levels

The **HUD** (button in the rail, or *SET, Panels*) is a small floating card with two readings: the balance between **buyers and sellers**, and the **price against the daily VWAP**. You can drag it to where it disturbs you least.

If you have an **open position** on the symbol, the **trade levels** overlay (*SET, Setups, Trade levels*) shows its entry, stop and target on the chart.

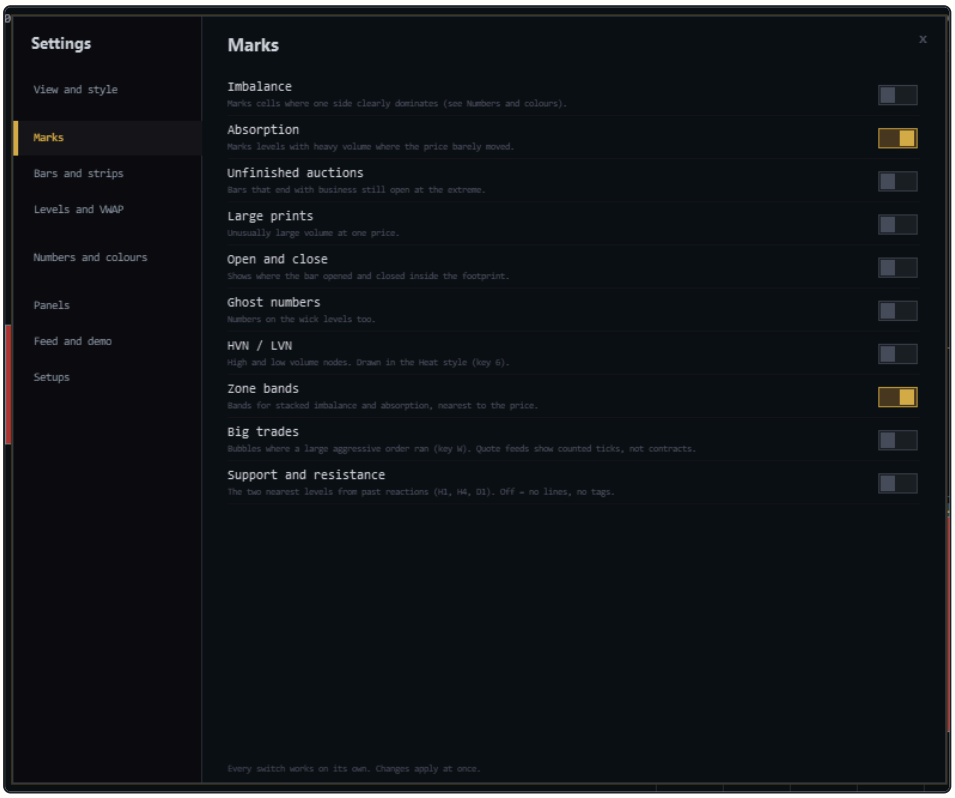
Focus mode

The key F switches the **focus mode**. Everything except the footprint disappears: the rail, the strips, the profile, the levels. If you want, the side panel stays. Press F again to return. It is the best view for learning to read a bar without distraction.

CHAPTER 13

Settings, views and themes

Everything in OrderFlux can be switched on or off, and every switch has one sentence that explains it. Open the settings with the **SET** button or the key `S`. The window has eight pages on the left. This chapter lists every page. Use it as a reference.



The settings window on the page Marks. The pages are on the left, every switch has a plain sentence.

The three views

The page **View and style** starts with three presets. They only set the switches for you. Every switch stays adjustable afterwards.

View	What it shows
Basic	The footprint, the zone bands, the delta badges and the news lines. Quiet.
Plus	Adds imbalance, absorption and unfinished-auction marks, large prints, support and resistance, the volume profile, the volume and CVD strips, the daily VWAP, the volume highlight and Big Trades.
Full	Adds single prints, HVN/LVN, the summary, the HUD, the side panel and the trade levels. Everything.

The pages

View and style

Setting	What it does
View	Basic, Plus or Full (above).
Style	The eight styles. Keys 1 to 8 do the same.
Theme	DRX, PRO or LIGHT (see below). Key `T`.
Bid / ask tag	How the current bid and ask are shown at the right edge.

Marks

Setting	What it does
Imbalance	Marks cells where one side clearly dominates. Key `I`.
Absorption	Marks levels with heavy volume where the price barely moved.
Unfinished auctions	Bars that end with business still open at the extreme.
Large prints	Unusually large volume at one price.
Open and close	Shows where the bar opened and closed inside the footprint.
Ghost numbers	Numbers on the wick levels too.
HVN / LVN	High and low volume nodes, drawn in the Heat style.
Zone bands	Bands for stacked imbalance and absorption. Key `Z`.
Big trades	Bubbles for large aggressive orders. Key `W`. With it: **sensitivity**, **smallest size shown**, **bubble opacity**, **opacity shows balance**, **size in the bubble**.
Support and resistance	The two nearest levels from past reactions.

Bars and strips

Setting	What it does
Candle frame	Outline of the candle around each footprint bar.
Delta badge	Buyers minus sellers under each bar.
Volume highlight	Amber frame on bars with volume far above the average. Key `B`.
Volume bars	The volume histogram below the chart.
CVD strip	Cumulative delta below the chart.
Grid	Horizontal price lines. Key `G`.
News lines	Economic events as lines on the chart. Key `N`.

Setting	What it does
Hover card	Details of the bar under the mouse. Key H.

Levels and VWAP

Setting	What it does
VWAP line	Off, daily or weekly.
Bands	One standard deviation above and below the VWAP.
POC	The price with the most volume.
Volume profile and value area	Where 70 percent of the volume was traded. Key V.
Single prints	Prices touched by only one time block.
Nearest levels	Support and resistance from past reactions.
Sensitivity	How strict a level must be to count.

In the TPO style this page has its own group: **POC and value labels**, **High and low marks**, **Initial balance**, **Naked POCs** and **Time colour**.

Numbers and colours

Setting	What it does
Cell colour	Colour intensity by volume or by delta. Key K.
Numbers	Show 1234 or 1.2K.
Contrast	How strongly volume colours separate.
Imbalance ratio	How many times larger one side must be (default 3).
Volume highlight x	Multiple of the average bar volume for the amber frame.
Number filter	Hide small numbers below a share of the bar maximum.
TPO block	Bars per time block (in the TPO style).

Panels

Setting	What it does
Side panel	Flow, DOM and ladder on the right. Key D.
HUD	A small floating card with the market numbers.

Feed and demo

The page tells you which feed you have: tick volume or real volume, and whether Level 2 is available. The **Demo depth** switch shows a synthetic order book for you to look at the order book features. Key L.

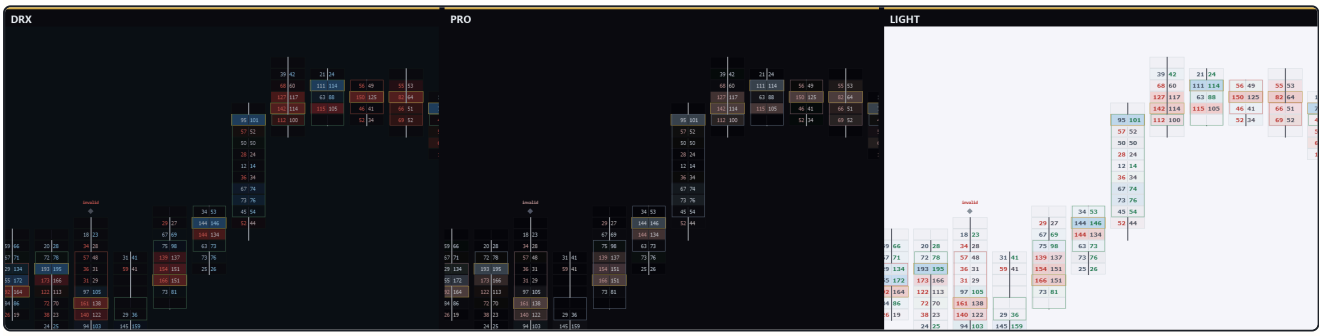
Setups

Setting	What it does
Setups	The setup assistant on or off. Key `A`.
Absorption at a level, Breakout with acceptance, Failed breakout	Each setup type on its own.
Show past setups	Earlier setups stay on the chart with their result.
Trade levels	Entry, stop and target of an open position.

The themes

OrderFlux has three colour themes. They change colours only, never the layout or the data.

- **DRX:** the default, a dark steel look with gold accents.
- **PRO:** a dark, nearly monochrome look. The numbers are in focus and colour is used sparingly.
- **LIGHT:** a bright look for daytime and printing.



The same bars in the three themes: DRX, PRO and LIGHT.

Saving and resetting

OrderFlux remembers your settings **per symbol**, so a change of timeframe keeps everything as you set it. If you want to start over, press `R`: the saved settings are forgotten and the defaults come back.

> HONEST NOTE When a new version changes how settings are stored, your settings are reset once on the first start of that version. It is a rare event and we mention it in the release notes.
>
> **Tip** If the chart ever feels too busy, change the view to **Basic** and then add back the things you miss, one at a time. You will quickly learn what you use.

CHAPTER 14

Keys and mouse

OrderFlux is built for the keyboard and the mouse wheel. Everything here can also be done with the buttons.

Keys

Key	What it does
`1` to `8`	Style: Bid/Ask, Impact, Cluster, Sessions, Delta, Heat, Profile, TPO
`A`	Setup assistant on or off
`B`	Volume highlight (amber frame on busy bars)
`D`	Side panel (FLOW, DOM, LADDER)
`F`	Focus mode
`G`	Grid
`H`	Hover card
`I`	Imbalance marks
`K`	Cell colour: by volume or by delta
`L`	Demo depth (synthetic order book)
`N`	News lines
`S`	Settings
`T`	Theme: DRX, PRO, LIGHT
`V`	Volume profile and value area
`W`	Big trades
`Z`	Zone bands
`+` and `-`	Zoom in and out (bars)
`[` and `]`	Finer and coarser price rows
`0`	Reset the zoom
`End`	Back to the live bar
`←` and `→`	One bar older or newer
`R`	Forget the saved settings
`Esc`	Close the tour, the legend or a header card

Mouse

Action	What it does
Mouse wheel	Zoom the **candles**: how many bars you see
`Ctrl` + mouse wheel	Zoom the **footprint**: the height of the price rows (the ladder inside the candles)
Drag with the left button	Move through the history
Click >> **LIVE**	Return to the live bar
Point at a left-rail button	A short explanation
Point at a diamond	The explanation card of the setup
Point at a Big Trades bubble	The card of the trade
Click the data chip	The data card
Click the sessions	The trading session times
Drag the HUD or a floating card	Move it

A one-page summary

The next page is the cheat sheet. Print it or keep it open next to the chart.

ZOOM

- **Mouse wheel:** zoom the candles. `Ctrl` + **wheel:** zoom the footprint (price rows).
- `+` `-` and `[` `]` do the same. `0` resets.

READ A BAR

- **Left:** sold at the bid. **Right:** bought at the ask.
- **Gold frame:** the POC, the busiest price.
- **Delta badge:** buyers minus sellers. A thin gold edge on it: the candle and the delta disagree.

MARKS

- **Thin blue or red edge bar:** an imbalance, one side dominated that price.
- **B3, S4:** that many imbalance rows in a row (a stack).
- **Ring and dot:** absorption. Blue on the left at a low, red on the right at a high.
- **Thin gold line at a high or low:** the bar closed exactly there (unfinished auction).
- **Outlined row:** a large print.
- **Amber frame in the volume strip:** a bar far above the average volume.

LEVELS

- **Band with a tag:** support or resistance with its timeframe and state: fresh, first test, tested.
- **Zone band:** "Sellers absorbed", "Stacked buy imbalance".
- **Gold line with a tag:** VWAP.

SETUPS

- **Gold diamond:** a setup. Point at it for the card.
- **Red line:** where the idea is wrong.

BIG TRADES

- **Bubble:** a large order at one price. **Bracket:** one order through several levels.
- **38t:** counted ticks on Forex and CFD. A plain number: contracts on a real feed.

YOUR FEED

- **Tick volume:** relative activity. **Real volume:** contracts. Click the chip at the top.

PART 6

Help

CHAPTER 15

Questions and fixes

The questions we are asked most often, with short answers.

The chart is empty, or I see a warning about synthetic data

OrderFlux builds every bar from the **tick history** of your broker. If the broker has no ticks for the period you are looking at, OrderFlux cannot build real bars. It then shows a synthetic distribution so the chart is not empty, and it warns you at the top.

What to try:

1. Let the chart load for a minute. The first read of a long history takes time, and later loads are fast.
2. Scroll back and forth once. MetaTrader downloads tick history from the broker on demand.
3. Try a shorter range (fewer bars) or a more liquid symbol.
4. In the strategy tester, choose a mode that uses real ticks if your broker supports it. Without ticks, the warning is expected.

The numbers are different from my other platform, or from another broker

Two feeds are two different data streams. A broker that sends tick volume gives you the number of price updates. An exchange gives you the number of contracts. Even two Forex brokers send different tick streams for the same symbol. The footprint is built from what **your** broker sends. Compare ratios and shapes between brokers, not absolute numbers.

Is a number "contracts" or "ticks"?

Look at the chip at the top. **Tick volume** means price updates, relative activity. **Real volume** means contracts. Click the chip for the data card.

Do the marks or setups repaint?

No. Marks on a **closed** bar do not change. The **live** bar changes with every tick, which is normal, and marks on it can appear and disappear while the bar is running. The setup assistant only looks at **closed** bars, so its diamonds never move.

The setup assistant shows nothing

That is normal. A setup needs a level near the bar, several facts at the same time, and a closed bar. On many bars there is nothing, and that is the right answer. If you want to be sure it is on, press `A` and look at *SET, Setups*.

I do not see the absorption ring

The ring appears on a bar when the volume in the outer tenth of the bar, at its low or high, is at least 2.2 times what an average row of that bar shows, that side clearly dominated, and the bar did not close at the extreme. Many bars have none. Check that **Absorption** is on in *SET, Marks*, and that you are in a footprint style (keys 1 to 3, 5 to 7, not Sessions or TPO).

The volume strip has no amber frames

The **Volume highlight** switch (key `B`) must be on, and a bar must be at least as far above the average as the value in *SET, Numbers and colours, Volume highlight x*. In a quiet period no bar may qualify.

How can I use OrderFlux together with my trade manager or another tool?

OrderFlux draws its own full-window canvas. Other tools that also draw panels on the same chart can get in each other's way. The most reliable way is to run the other tool on a **second chart of the same symbol**. If a tool closes after a short time, look at the **Experts** and **Journal** tabs in MetaTrader. The message there usually tells you why, and it helps us a great deal if you send it to us.

Can I make the text larger?

Not yet. A text size setting is planned. For now, use the zoom to make cells larger (turn the mouse wheel, or press `+`), the **focus mode** `F`, and the **Number filter** to show fewer, larger-looking numbers.

My settings were reset after an update

When a new version changes how settings are stored, your settings are reset once on the first start. It is rare, and release notes mention it. Your settings are saved **per symbol**, so each symbol is reset the first time you open it.

How do I go back to the defaults?

Press `R`. The saved settings are forgotten and the defaults come back.

OrderFlux is slow

- Zoom out less. Fewer bars on the screen are less work.
- Use fewer price rows (`Ctrl` + mouse wheel, or `]`).
- On very low timeframes with a long history, the first load needs time. Let it finish.
- Switch off what you do not need in *SET*, for example the strips or the side panel.

Does OrderFlux place trades or give signals?

No. It is an analysis tool. It never places a trade, and it never says buy or sell. The setup assistant lists facts and a price where the idea would be wrong. All decisions and all risk stay with you.

Where do I ask questions?

In the comments of the product page on the MQL5 Market. We read them and we answer them. When you ask, it helps to tell us the symbol, the timeframe, your broker, the version, and, if possible, a screenshot.

CHAPTER 16

Practice sheet

Twelve short questions to check what you have read. Try to answer them before you look at the answers on the next page. Use your own chart where it says so.

Questions

1. A bar closes up, but the delta badge shows a clearly negative number. What is that called, and how does OrderFlux show it?

2. At price P the volume bought is 160. At the price one level below, the volume sold is 40. The imbalance ratio is 3. Is there a buy imbalance at P? What if the volume sold below were 60?

3. What is the difference between a **B3** and an **S4**?

4. You see a **blue ring with a dot on the left** at the low of a bar. What happened there, and what must be true about the close of the bar?

5. You are on a Forex symbol. The delta badge says +500. What are the 500?

6. Which style would you choose to see quickly which prices were dominated by buyers and which by sellers, without reading numbers? Name two.

7. A bar closes above a resistance level. Its delta is negative, and its volume is below the average. Can this become a **breakout with acceptance**? Explain.

8. The tag of a diamond says "wrong below 4099.39". What does that mean for the setup if the next bar closes at 4098.50?

9. The price makes a new high, but the CVD makes a lower high. What does that tell you, and what does it not tell you?

10. What is a **naked POC**, and in which styles do you see it?

11. What is the difference between a volume profile and a TPO profile?

12. On a Forex chart a bracket shows "38t 4 lv". Read it.

On your own chart. Find one bar for each of these: an imbalance, a B3 or S3, an absorption ring, an unfinished-auction line, a large print. Take a screenshot and write one sentence for each: what happened, and what happened next.

Answers

1. A disagreement between candle and delta: the side that pushed harder (sellers) did not get the price to move its way. OrderFlux marks it with a thin gold edge at the left side of the delta badge. It is a prompt to look at the bar, not a signal.

2. Yes. 160 is at least 3 times 40 (that would be 120). With 60 below, three times 60 is 180, so 160 is not enough, and there is no imbalance.

3. The letter is the side: B for buy imbalances, S for sell imbalances. The number is how many rows of the same kind lie in a row. A B3 is three buy imbalance rows in a row, an S4 is four sell imbalance rows in a row.

4. Sellers hit the bid hard at the low of the bar (the volume at that extreme was at least 2.2 times the average of one side, and the sold side clearly dominated), but the price held. The sellers were absorbed. The bar must **not** close at its low.

5. Counted ticks, not contracts. On a quote feed, volume numbers are the number of price updates. They are still useful as relative activity.

6. **Impact** (the cells are coloured by delta) and **Delta** (only the delta at each price is shown). Heat and Cluster help for volume, not for who dominated.

7. No. A breakout with acceptance needs two closes beyond the level, a stacked imbalance in the breakout direction, a delta that agrees on both bars and a volume of at least the average. A negative delta and below-average volume are the opposite. If the bar then comes back, it may even become a failed breakout.

8. The idea is wrong when a bar closes below 4099.39. A close at 4098.50 is below it, so the setup becomes **invalid** and stays on the chart as such.

9. The new high was not carried by aggressive buying. Buying fades while the price still rises, which often happens when there is little resistance. It does **not** tell you that the price will turn, or when. It is a reason to look closely at the bars.

10. A POC of an earlier session that the price has not touched again. You see it in the **Sessions** and **TPO** styles, with its price and its date.

11. A volume profile counts how much was traded at each price. A TPO profile counts how long the market stayed at each price (time blocks). Volume can be high with little time (a fast, heavy move), and time can be long with little volume (a quiet rest).

12. A burst of 38 counted ticks on the same side that ran through 4 price levels in one move. It is a sweep. Because it is a quote feed, it is a burst of ticks, not 38 contracts.

CHAPTER 17

Glossary

The terms of this guide in one place, in alphabetical order.

Term	Meaning
Absorption	A lot of aggressive volume at a price, but the price does not move on. A passive player takes the other side. Shown as a ring with a dot.
Aggressor	The side that takes liquidity with a market order. Buyers who lift the ask, or sellers who hit the bid.
Ask	The lowest price at which sellers offer. Volume bought at the ask is on the right of a footprint row.
B3, S4	A stacked imbalance. The letter is the side (B buy, S sell), the number is how many rows in a row.
Bid	The highest price at which buyers bid. Volume sold at the bid is on the left of a footprint row.
Big trade	A large aggressive order, shown as a bubble. On quote feeds, a burst of counted ticks.
Burst	Ticks of the same side that follow each other very quickly.
Bracket	The drawing of a big trade that ran through several price levels.
Cluster	A style with a candle on the left and volume bars on the right.
CVD	Cumulative volume delta. The running total of the delta of the bars.
Delta	Buyers minus sellers: volume at the ask minus volume at the bid.
Delta badge	The small field under a bar that shows its delta.
Diagonal imbalance	The comparison of a price on one side with the neighbouring price on the other side.
DOM	Depth of market. In OrderFlux the tab that shows traded volume per price, and the order book if your broker sends it.
Effort and result	Volume (effort) compared with the progress of the price (result). High effort and low result is absorption.
Footprint	A chart that shows the volume traded at each price inside each candle, split into bid and ask.
HVN, LVN	High and low volume nodes: peaks and valleys of a volume profile.
Imbalance	One side clearly dominates a price, by default three times the other side on the diagonal.
Initial balance	The range of the first time block of a session.
Large print	A row with far more volume than the average row of its bar.
Level 2	The order book: limit orders waiting at each price. Only with a broker that sends it.
Market profile	A profile of time, built from time blocks (TPO).
Naked POC	A POC of an earlier session that the price has not touched again.
POC	Point of control: the price with the most volume.

Term	Meaning
Real volume	Volume in contracts, from futures and exchange feeds.
Setup	In OrderFlux, a list of order-flow facts that lined up at a level on a closed bar, together with the price where the idea would be wrong.
Single print	A price that only one time block touched.
Stacked imbalance	Three or more imbalances of the same side in a row.
Sweep	An order that runs through several price levels in one move.
Tick volume	The number of price updates. Relative activity, not contracts. Typical for Forex and CFDs.
TPO	Time price opportunity: the market profile.
Unfinished auction	A bar that closed exactly at its high or low. Drawn as a thin gold line.
VAH, VAL	Value area high and low: the edges of the range that holds 70 percent of the volume.
Value area	The range around the POC that holds 70 percent of the volume.
VWAP	Volume-weighted average price.
Zone band	A band on the chart for a stacked imbalance or an absorption zone.

CHAPTER 18

Limits and risk

A tool is only useful if you know what it cannot do. This page says it plainly.

What OrderFlux does not do

- **It does not predict.** Everything on the chart is measured from data that already happened. A mark, a zone or a setup describes the past. It does not know what comes next.
- **It does not give signals.** It never says buy or sell. The setup assistant lists facts and a price where the idea would be wrong, so that you can judge.
- **It does not place trades.** OrderFlux is an indicator. It does not open, change or close positions.
- **It does not know your risk.** Position size, stop and target are your decisions. Use a risk tool for the calculation.
- **It does not invent data.** If your broker sends no ticks, no real trades or no market depth, the chart says so. A demo order book is always labelled as demo.

What the data limits

- On Forex and CFDs, volume is **tick activity**. It shows relative activity and is useful for ratios, but it is not the number of contracts.
- A **big trade** on a quote feed is a burst of counted ticks. It may be one large order or several fast ones.
- Two brokers deliver two different tick streams. Numbers differ between brokers, and that is normal.
- Tick history can be incomplete. Where it is missing, OrderFlux warns you and shows a synthetic picture that you should not read as data.

Your responsibility

Trading carries a high risk of loss. Only trade with money you can afford to lose. Past results, whether of a setup or of a market, do not guarantee anything about the future. Nothing in this guide or in OrderFlux is financial advice. Always test an idea on a demo account before you use real money.

Keeping it honest

The best use of OrderFlux is as a way to look more closely, not as a way to look less. Read the bars. Read the card of every setup. Look at the outcomes in the history list, including the ones that failed. Keep notes. Over time you will build your own picture of what the marks mean in the markets you trade, and that picture is worth more than any rule in this guide.