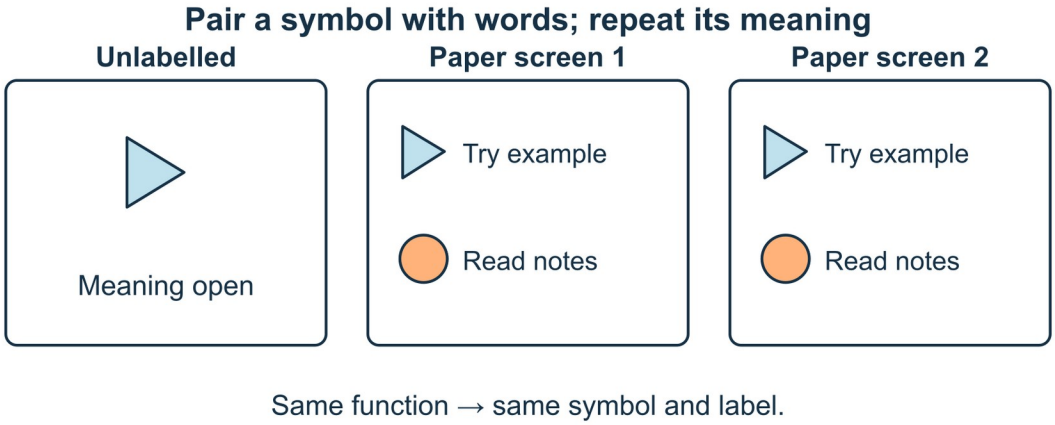
# A symbol that explains itself

## What instructions help an unfamiliar icon communicate its meaning?

Give an original symbol one clear function, pair it with words and use the same meaning consistently.

**Make | 10-20 minutes, or one label | The supplied example, read or heard, Optional scrap paper and a pen or pencil**

**Start here** Look at an unlabelled triangle. It might suggest several actions. In this invented interface, the chosen action is 'Try example'.




A symbol gets its meaning from a clear label

### 1 Choose one function

Write what the control is meant to do. Here, triangle means Try example; a circle means Read notes. The meaning comes from the declared legend, not the shape alone.

### 2 Pair the symbol with text

Draw the triangle beside the words Try example. Place the words close enough to belong to the same control. Keep the circle's different label separate.

### 3 Repeat consistently

On a second paper screen, use the same triangle and label for the same action. Do not change it to mean Back without changing the design and explanation.

### 4 Check the instruction

Ask what information an unfamiliar reader would need. You can identify an ambiguity yourself; no other person or user study is required.

# Constructed interface two functions

The symbols belong to an invented interface. The model chooses meanings and labels; it does not assume every reader already knows them.

• Triangle + Try example is one control.

• Circle + Read notes is a different control.

• On the next paper screen, triangle still means Try example.

**What this example can show** A clear legend and consistent labels can help, but this drawing is not a usability trial, a universal symbol set or accessibility certification.

## A different way

Choose a supplied label for the triangle or explain which of two controls does the stated action. Drawing is optional.

## If you want to go further

Design a third control for a different function and give it a distinct label. Explain how it avoids colliding with the first two meanings.

## Something to notice

Did the symbol keep one meaning, and could the words explain it without the symbol?

## Read or explore more

Horizon topic Icons Symbols

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/icons-symbols/

Horizon topic Wayfinding Signs

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/wayfinding-signs/

Horizon topic Accessible Design

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/accessible-design/

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative Use Icons that Help the User

https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG2/supplemental/patterns/o1p07-icons-used/

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative Understanding SC 3.2.4: Consistent Identification

https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/consistent-identification.html

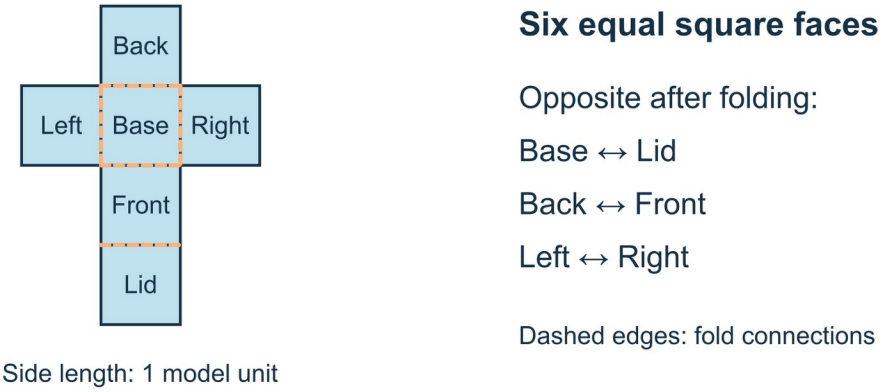
# Sketch a small package net

## Which folds and labels would another person need to understand the design?

Read a complete six-face cube net, identify neighbours and explain what a drawing leaves out of a real package.

**Make | 15–25 minutes, or one face pair | The supplied example, read or heard, Optional scrap paper and a pen or pencil**

**Start here** Use six equal square faces. In row 1 put Back; row 2 is Left, Base, Right; row 3 is Front; row 4 is Lid. The single faces line up with Base.




Six faces with explicit connections

### 1 Read the net

Use a top-to-bottom grid. Back is above Base, Front below Base and Lid below Front. Left and Right sit beside Base. Every face has side length 1 model unit.

### 2 Imagine the folds

Treat Base as the floor. Fold its four immediate neighbours up to form sides; Lid folds from Front over the opening. You can trace these changes without cutting or making anything.

### 3 Identify opposite faces

In the imagined cube, Base opposes Lid, Back opposes Front, and Left opposes Right. Adjacent on the flat net does not mean opposite in the cube.

### 4 Write a practical limit

The drawing shows face connections but no tabs, seam allowance, material thickness or tested closure. Label those as further design questions.

# Original net six squares for a cube

The supplied positions define one constructed net. They are not a copied template or a manufactured package.

• Top row: Back above Base. Middle row: Left-Base-Right. Below: Front then Lid.

• All six faces are squares of side 1 model unit.

• Opposite pairs after folding: Base/Lid, Back/Front, Left/Right.

**What this example can show** A valid face net is not proof of a practical package. Its seams, thickness, closure and suitability for any object are untested.

## A different way

Point to Base and one neighbour, listen to a folding description or use the supplied opposite pairs. No scissors, glue, real box or purchase is needed.

## If you want to go further

Rotate the whole net on paper without changing face connections. Check whether the same opposite pairs still follow.

## Something to notice

Did I distinguish a flat neighbour from an opposite face in the folded shape?

## Read or explore more

Horizon topic Packaging Nets

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/packaging-nets/

Horizon topic Products Prototypes

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/products-prototypes/

Horizon topic Design

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/design/

NRICH, University of Cambridge  Cut Nets

https://nrich.maths.org/problems/cut-nets

Government Digital Service, GOV.UK  Making prototypes

https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/design/making-prototypes

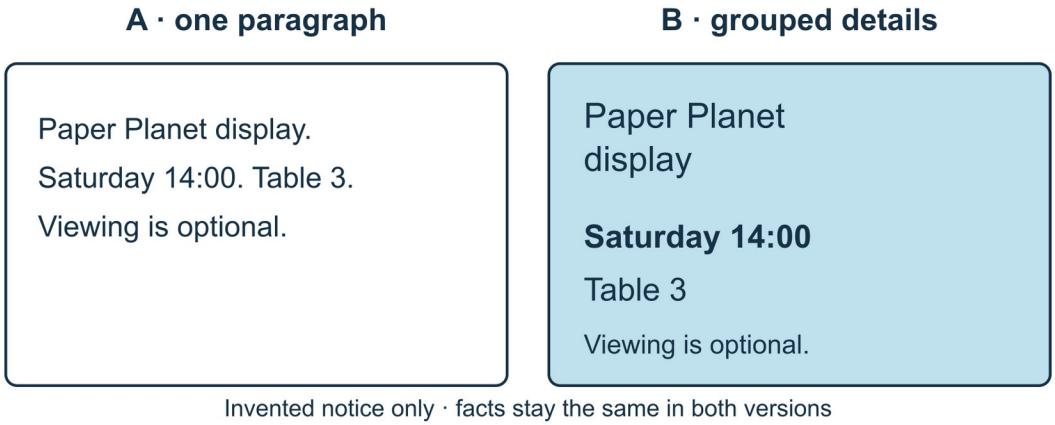
# Make an invented poster easier to read

## Which layout change helps a reader find one important detail?

Reorganise an invented poster so its title, time and place are easier to locate without changing the facts.

**Make | 10-20 minutes, or one layout change | The supplied example, read or heard, Optional scrap paper and a pen or pencil**

**Start here** Use this complete fictional notice: 'Paper Planet display. Saturday 14:00. Table 3. Viewing is optional.' It is not an actual event invitation.




Same facts, clearer groups

### 1 Keep the facts fixed

Copy the title, day, time, place and optional-viewing statement. First arrange them as one unbroken paragraph with equal emphasis.

### 2 Create a second hierarchy

Give the title a clear heading, then place Saturday 14:00 and Table 3 on separate short lines. Keep Viewing is optional as a readable note.

### 3 Check a concrete question

Point to where a reader would find the time in each version. Explain the structure that helps locate it, rather than asserting that everyone will read it faster.

### 4 Make one revision

Choose a clearer order, more space or a shorter label. Verify that no time, place or participation fact changed during the redesign.

# Constructed poster same information two arrangements

Both versions describe the same invented Paper Planet display. No actual session, booking or location is offered.

• A puts all four sentences in one paragraph with equal emphasis.

• B uses a title followed by Saturday 14:00, Table 3 and Viewing is optional on separate lines.

• The facts stay fixed; the grouping and heading structure change.

**What this example can show** A layout explanation is not a timed reading test. Font, size, contrast and the actual reader's needs still matter.

## A different way

Reorder spoken labels, direct someone to place the lines or compare the two supplied versions. A finished graphic is unnecessary.

## If you want to go further

Make a narrow-screen version with the same reading order. Explain which lines can wrap without separating the day from its time.

## Something to notice

Did I improve the organisation without quietly changing the message?

## Read or explore more

Horizon topic Typography Layout

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/typography-layout/

Horizon topic Information Design

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/information-design/

Horizon topic Human Centred Design

https://launchhorizonhq.com/learn/human-centred-design/

Australian Government Style Manual  Structuring content

https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/structuring-content

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative  Headings

https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/page-structure/headings/