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Whether you're trying to read a flowchart or creating a flowchart, knowing the most common flowchart symbols and conventions makes it a lot easier. Here we have the four flowchart symbols you need to know, plus an overview of some more intermediate process symbols if you're looking for extra credit.

- 1. The OvalAn End or a BeginningThe oval, or terminator, is used to represent the beginning and end of a process. Use the Gliffy Flowchart tool to drag and drop one of these bad guys, and you have the start of a flowchart yourself. Remember to reuse the same symbol to indicate that your flowchart is complete.
- 2. The RectangleA step in the flowchartThe rectangle is your go-to symbol once you've started flowcharting. It represents every step in the process that you diagram and is the workhorse of the flowchart diagram. Use rectangles to capture process steps, such as basic tasks or actions in your process.
- 3. The ArrowIndicate Directional FlowThe arrow is used to guide the viewer along their flowcharting path. And while there are many different types of arrow tips to choose from, we recommend pasting one or two for your entire flowchart. This keeps your diagram looking clean, but also you highlight certain steps in your process.
- 4. The DiamondIndicate a DecisionThe diamond symbolizes that a decision is needed to move forward. This can be a binary, this-or-that choice or a more complex decision with multiple choices. Make sure you record every possible choice in your diagram. With these four basic symbols, you'll probably have everything you need to get started on your own flow schedule!

Give creating a flowchart a try with a free trial of Gliffy or read on for more info on intermediate flowcharting symbols. Intermediate & Advanced Flowchart SymbolsAs you know, flowcharts consist of a range of actions, data, services and/or materials. They illustrate where data is entered and executed, where information is stored, what decisions should be made and which people should be involved. In addition, the basic flowchart conventions, rules and symbols, these intermediate flowchart symbols will help you describe your process with even more detail. Document symbolizationSingle and multiple document icons show that there are additional reference points involved in your flowchart. Use them to indicate items such as create an invoice or check test paperwork. Data symbolsData symbols clarify where the data that your flowchart references are stored. (You probably won't use the paper tape symbol, but it certainly came in handy back in the day.) Input & Output SymbolsInput and output symbols indicate where and how come in and out during your entire process. Merge & Connect SymbolsConnect and connector symbols make it easier to connect flow charts with multiple pages. Extra useful flowchart symbolsThe above are a few additional symbols that prove your flowcharting prowess well used. Start making a FlowchartY have the building blocks to create a great flowchart, so get started! Try online try in ConfluenceP.S. We threw together a little cheat sheet-slash key of flowchart symbols that you use to keep drawing. Here's a recommended reading if you want to know more before you create a flowchart: When you start a workflow process, such as developing new software, applications, or documents, and reports, it can sometimes be helpful to create a flowchart to map the processes. When creating a flowchart, generic symbols can be used to display different elements of the workflow. Depending on the complexity of the workflow and processes, the flowchart symbols used can range from commonly used to more complex and specific to workflow processes. In this article, you'll learn the common and complex flowchart symbols and their meaning. Workflow describes the processes for how specific work should be done, and a flowchart is the diagram that outlines these processes. Within the flowchart, symbols are used to describe the steps of the workflow process. These symbols are called flowchart symbols or workflow symbols because they are used to outline the path that the workflow must take to complete the assigned tasks. Read more: A funnel chart guide easily applies to tasks with a funnel symbolRe a common workflow symbols that can be applied to a flowchart, but different departments of an organization can use more complex symbols to outline certain workflow processes specific to each team. For example, for a software development company, the programming department may use flowchart symbols to sketch a specific diagram for an application, data processing program, or user flow software. The following list first shows the most commonly used flowchart symbols, followed by more process-specific symbols. Related: Types of charts and graphsThis symbol is also called the terminator symbol, because it represents start and end points, as well as possible results of a process path. The starting and end symbols are an elongated oval shape. This common symbol is shaped like a rectangle and can also be called the action symbol. It represents an action, function or process and can be considered one of the most commonly used flowchart symbols. This symbol is shaped like a rectangle with the bottom in a wave and is used to display the input or output of a document. For example, this symbol can be used to outline a document input, such as receiving an email or report. Similarly, it can be used to display a document output, such as the presentation or project. These symbols are small circles that are used to connect individual elements of a flowchart across an entire page. Connectors are typically used in flow charts with more complex processes, such as software or application development. Shaped like a rhombus, this symbol is used to indicate a question that results in a yes or no answer, if as a possible true or false situation. Depending on the answer to the suggested question, the flowchart can then be split into different branches to complete the workflow perimeter. Read more: A bubble chart guideThis symbol looks like an inverted pentagon and is often used in more complex flow chart to connect the individual elements of multiple pages. There can be a page number in any shape, making it easier to refer. This symbol is used to display all the data that may be available for input and output. This form, also called the data symbol, can also be used to display the resources used or produced. Shaped as a parallelogram, it can sometimes be replaced by the paper tape symbol. This symbol is the common brace {} and is placed with additional information or comments in a specified range. It can also be connected by a dotted line with different related sections of the flowchart. Conversely, as far as the document symbol is concerned, this symbol represents more than one document in the flowchart. It has the same meaning as the document symbol, with the addition of more documents or reports that may be needed for the workflow. This symbol should only be used in complex flowchart and indicates a process, operation, or function that is already defined. This cylindrical flowchart symbol represents the data stored in a storage service that enables user searches and filters. For example, the data that a real estate app must run can be housed in a storage service for users to search for and filter results by price, location, and other search criteria. This flowchart symbol is also called the data storage symbol and indicates where the data is stored in a workflow process. For example, a software developer who produces a new accounting program can use this symbol to display the specific location of different financial data within different calculation processes. This symbol, shaped like a wavy flag, is one of the more complex flowchart symbols and is likely to be used in rare cases, such as mapping the processes or specific input data for CNC machines and older computers. This symbol is often used in flow charts that outline software designs and can indicate the data stored in the internal memory system. Related: A stacked bar chart guideThis flowchart symbol is used to display manual input of data, such as a step in a process or typing data into a field. For example, if you sign up for a new account you must enter your data manually in the sign-in fields. This symbol is used to display this process in the software development flowchart. This flowchart symbol is shaped like a trapezoid and is used to display each step of a process that needs to be completed manually rather than automatically. Formed as a railroad sign- that is, a circle with an X in it - this flowchart symbol sums up the input of several converging process paths. Similar to the sum-connection symbol, the or is used to indicate where a workflow process occupies more than one path. This triangle shape is used to symbolize the merging of multiple paths in a single process path. The preparation symbol is used to distinguish between the steps for preparing the work and the steps taken to complete the work. It can also be used to outline the setup to other steps that are part of the same process. A half-oval in appearance, this symbol is used to indicate a delay within a process. Often programmers will use this symbol when developing software to indicate the length of the delay within the process. Read more: Workplace documentationThis symbol is used in a flowchart to indicate where data or information is displayed in the process. This symbol is also called a direct access storage symbol and has the shape of a cylinder on its side. It is used to indicate where data is stored on a hard drive. This symbol looks like a triangular hourglass, and it is used to display a step that orders data and information in default format. A flowchart symbol that looks like a cross-sectioned kite, the species symbol is used to indicate a step in a process that organizes lists of items into collections or sequences determined based on specific criteria. This symbol is used to display a series of commands or prompts that are repeated continuously until the processes are manually stopped. The opposite to the manual loop symbol, this flowchart shape indicates the stop point of the process loop. This flowchart symbol indicates a series of sequenced actions that perform specific, smaller tasks that are part of a larger process. Often, this symbol can indicate that there is a more detailed description of the outlined sequence within a separate flowchart. Flowchart.

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