

The Nature of Images: Pictures illustrations & symbols Help Sheet 25

Pictures



A photograph gives a great deal of information. Without a caption it is not easy to know its precise communicative purpose.



A single image in a photograph is clearly representational. The subject is obvious but specific.

Illustrations



An illustration is less specific and thus more suitable for general information, but may still require a caption or explanation.



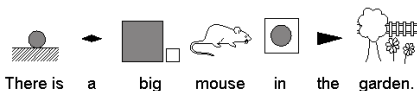
Some images are in themselves very specific and suitable as an illustration. A symbol is a generic images, like a word, which can be used in many contexts.

Symbols

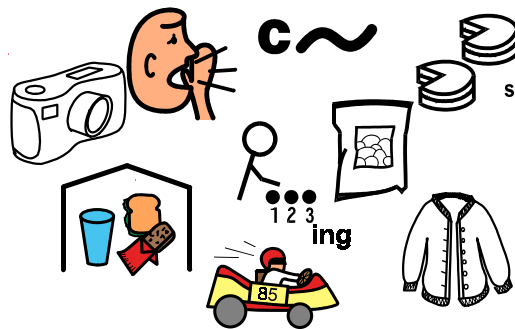
Symbols represent generic concepts that are understood by the reader.



They can be sequenced to build sentences from the separate concepts.



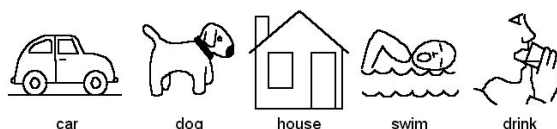
A symbol represents a single concept. It is a generic image that can be used in a variety of contexts.



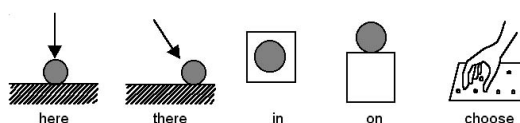
There is still a variety of representational styles even within symbols. Care needs to be taken when mixing images with different styles.

Levels of Symbols

Level one symbols are representative and likely to be understood by many users, including parents and 'outsiders'.



Level 2 symbols need to be taught, but their schematic structure makes them learnable by many, and each instance does not necessarily have to be separately remembered.

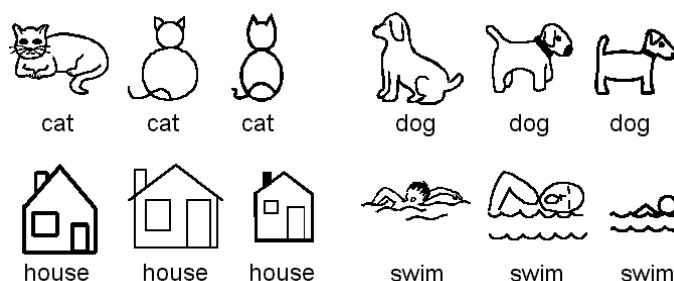


Level 3 symbols must be taught and learned, and are not suitable for all symbol users.



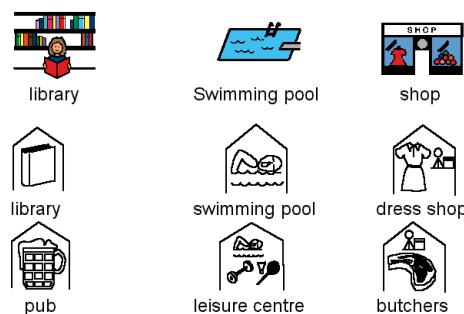
Different Symbol Sets

At level one, there is little difference between symbol sets, and choice may be simply be a matter of preference.



The structure of Symbols

At the earliest level each concept is illustrated by a drawing. As the level of understanding develops a more schematic representation (which can often be related to signing concepts) gives a model for developing understanding.



The Widgit Rebus Symbol Collection:

Throughout the symbols set, common elements, such a building or room, have been standardised. This helps in the visual display, but importantly, can help a learner to 'de-code' a new image.

Small buildings:

The generic item for building has been standardised, and has a floor. Normal buildings will have a single item in it.



Large buildings:

There is a new graphic to indicate large buildings, thus allowing a difference between similar buildings, e.g. clinic and hospital.



Rooms:

A standard room element is a square.

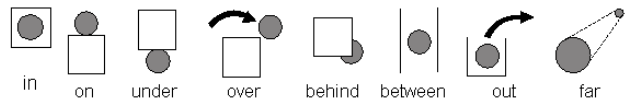


Using a consistent style of drawing helps learners understand the connections between concepts within a group.

A grey tone has been used to identify the target part of the symbols.

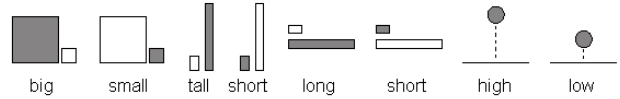
Prepositions:

The positional item is in grey rather than black. The positioned element is the same size in all prepositions.



Distance/size:

The grey shade is used to draw attention to the focus part of the symbol.



The schema for jobs is to qualify the specific person with relevant items. Some of the more general people and actions are not suitable for representation with 'stick' people, and so a more solid image is used in these circumstances.

People/ Jobs



Non 'stick' people

Although the standard person is represented by a stick person - being genderless and non-cultural, there are times when a fuller figure is needed. This may be to allow emphasis, as in adult or child, or in certain actions, such as cuddle - which does not work with stick images.



Faces

A more consistent approach has been taken to faces, especially when representing feelings.



There are many new symbols for current themes.

