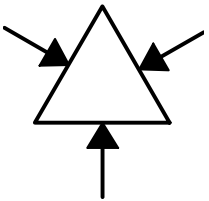
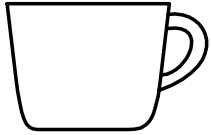


## Symbols

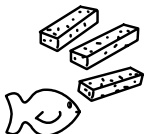
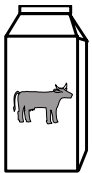
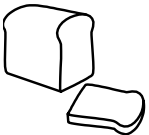
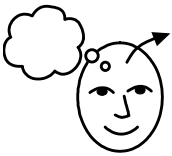
- What are symbols?

A symbol is a very simple line drawing that stands for one word or idea. For example, this cup may not look like the one you use at home but represents the idea of a cup. Symbols are easier to draw than pictures. You can look at some symbols and it is easy to know what they mean. These symbols stand for words that are easy to show the meaning of (concrete concepts). Some people will need to learn these by matching the symbol to the real thing or photo. Some symbols are difficult to work out (abstract concepts). These symbols can be difficult to learn.



- Why are symbols needed?

Most people with learning disabilities find reading difficult. Symbols help some people understand written information. Some people can use symbols to communicate with other people. Symbols can help people remember things.



Symbols are very simple line drawings. The brain has to imagine or work out what is missing. This means symbols are too difficult for some people to understand. These people may be able to understand and use photos or pictures. Some people can use a mixture of easy symbols, photos and pictures. Some people need objects to understand or ask for things. Speech and Language Therapists can help you work out what will work best.

- How to use symbols



Symbols can help people understand the important words someone is saying or writing. Try to avoid sentences that need more than 3 symbols to show the main meaning. Make symbols big enough with thick enough lines for people to see.

There are different ways of laying out information which uses symbols. If you can, make things together so people can decide which is the best layout for them.



There are different symbols systems used nationally. In Devon the special schools use Widgit. This software includes Picture Communication Symbols by Mayer-Johnson Inc. and Somerset Total Communication Symbols to choose from if necessary. This means young people are learning these symbols. We use the same with adults with learning disabilities.

For more information about Using Symbols go to [www.easyinfo.org.uk](http://www.easyinfo.org.uk)