How To Make
Awesome
Diagrams
For your slides

Me
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I do software at Splendeo
@otikik

Disclaimer

- I'm not a designer.
- I've just done lots of diagrams in presentations.
- These guidelines work for me.
- “Right” and “Wrong” are used in that context. **Don't take them personally.**

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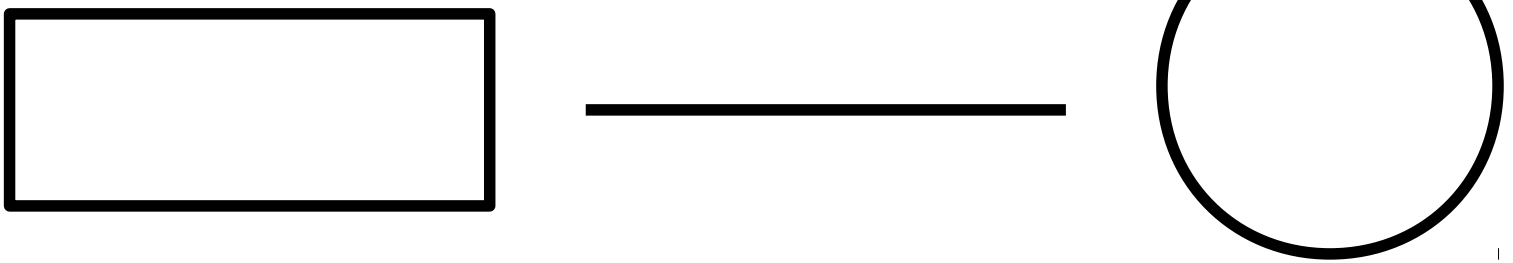
Never use 0pt line width

Wrong

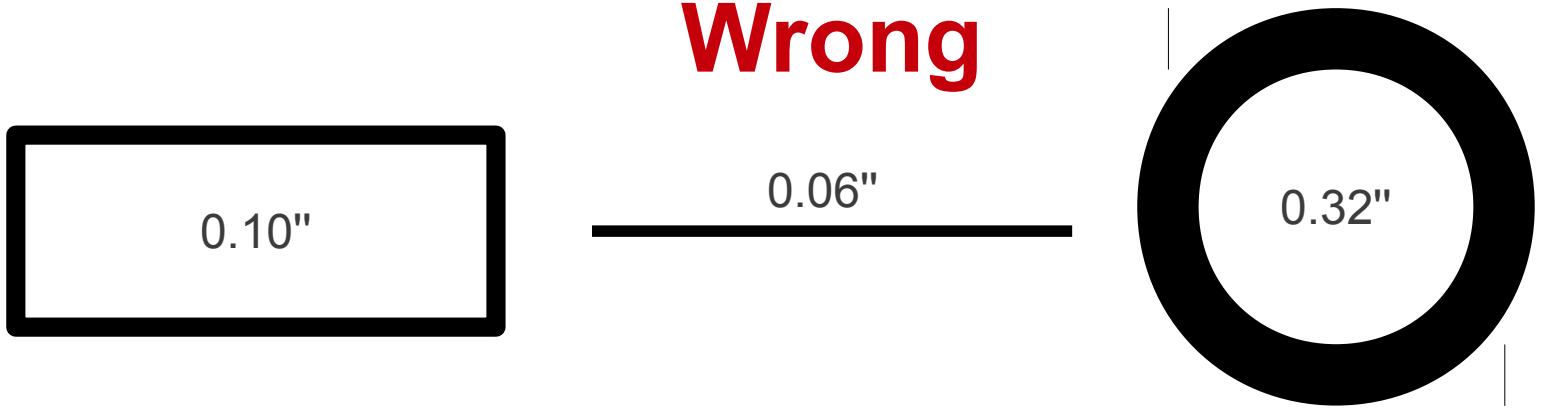
Right



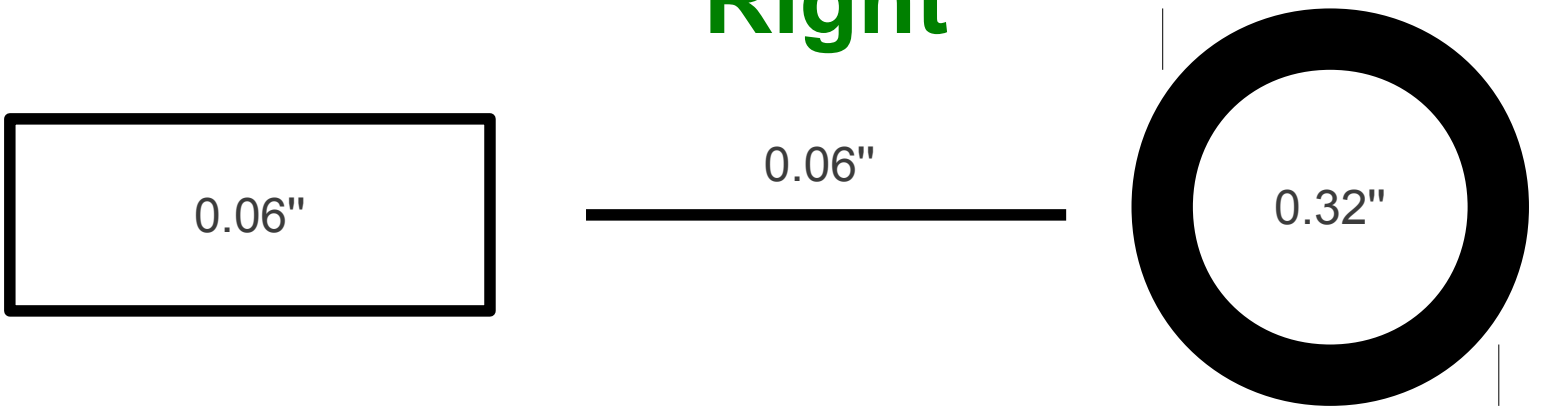
Visible from the far end of the room

Have **consistent line width**

Wrong



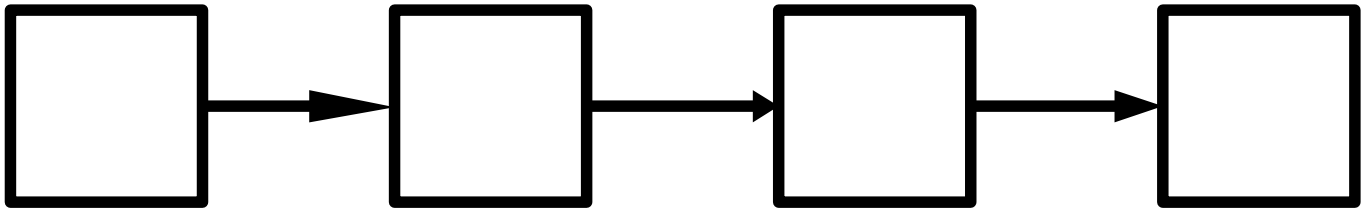
Right



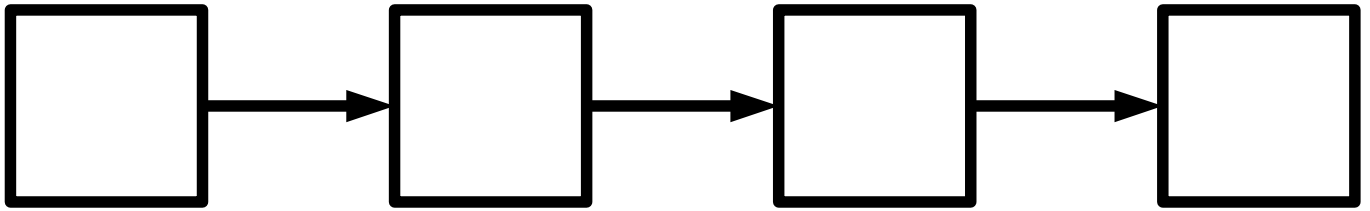
Maybe two very different widths; not more

Use only **one line ending**

Wrong



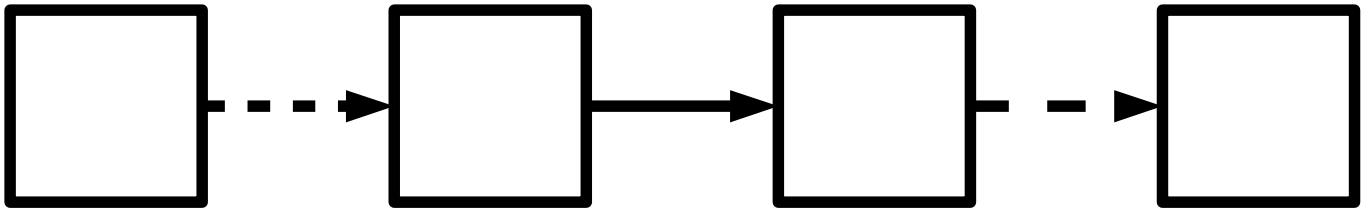
Right



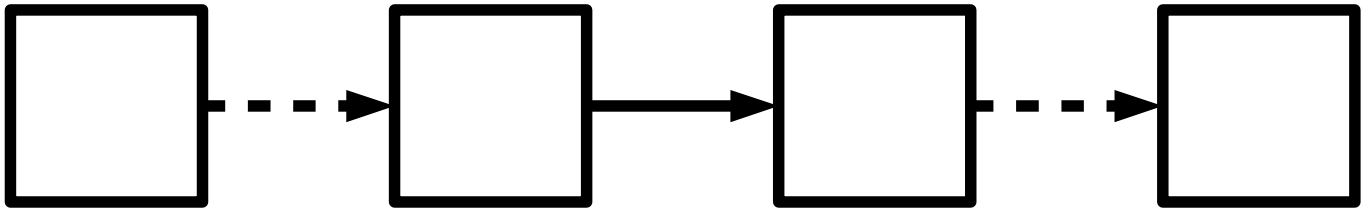
People at the far end won't see the difference

Use **one dashed style**

Wrong

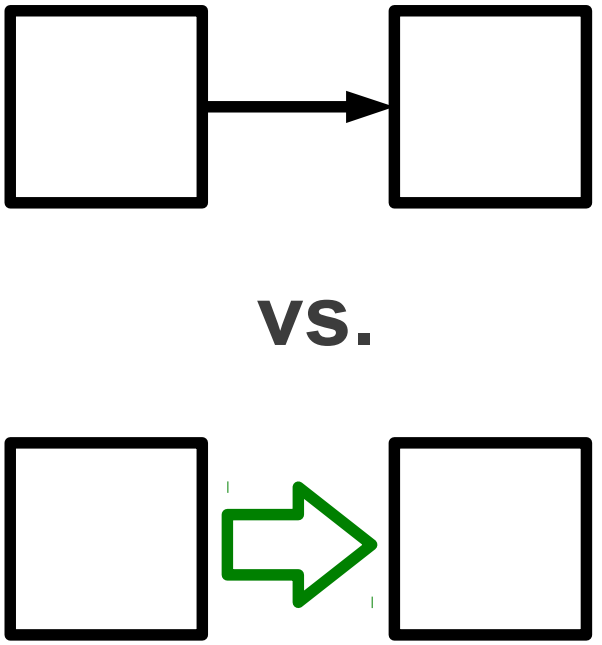


Right



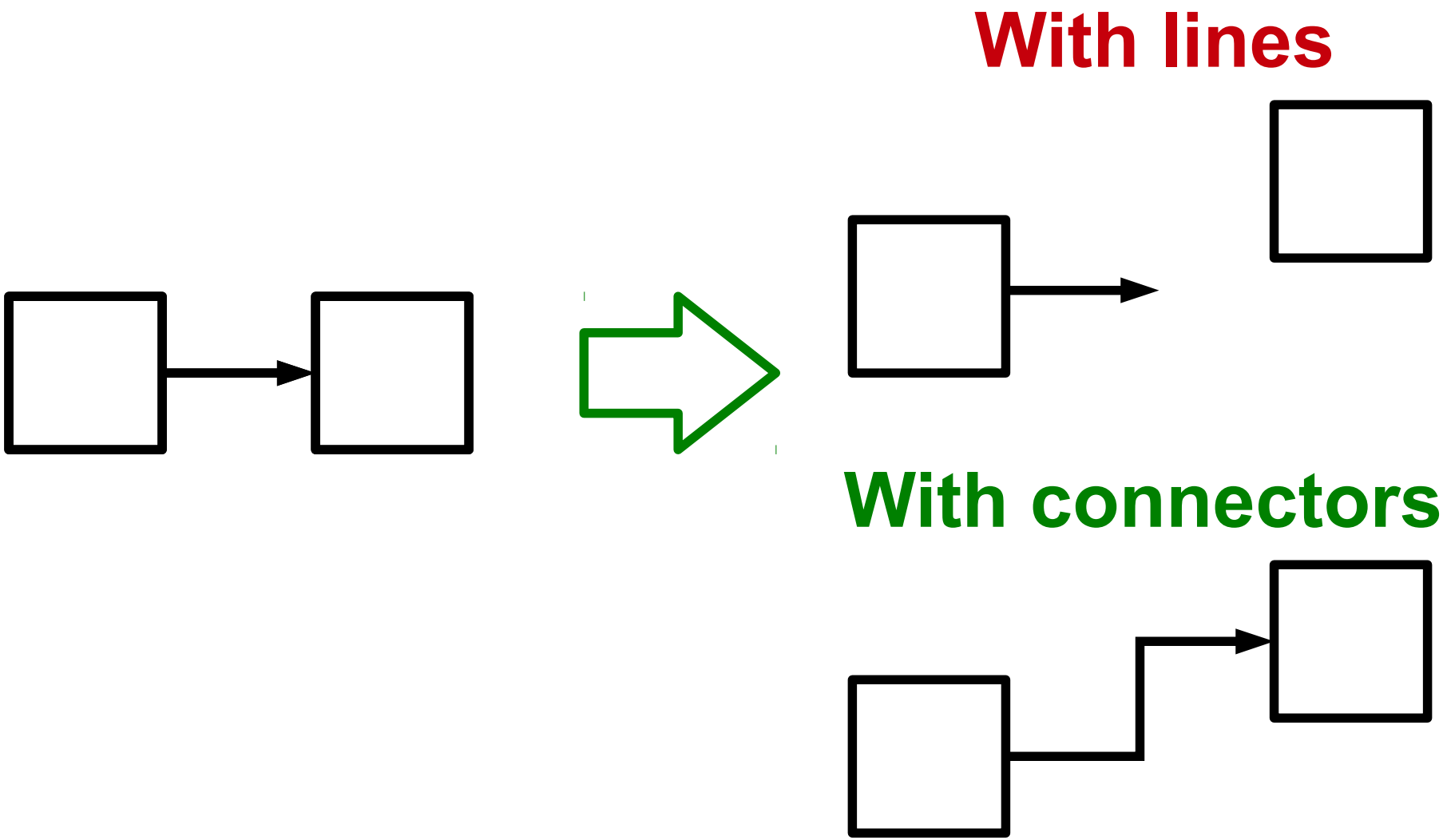
Guess

Arrows instead of lines

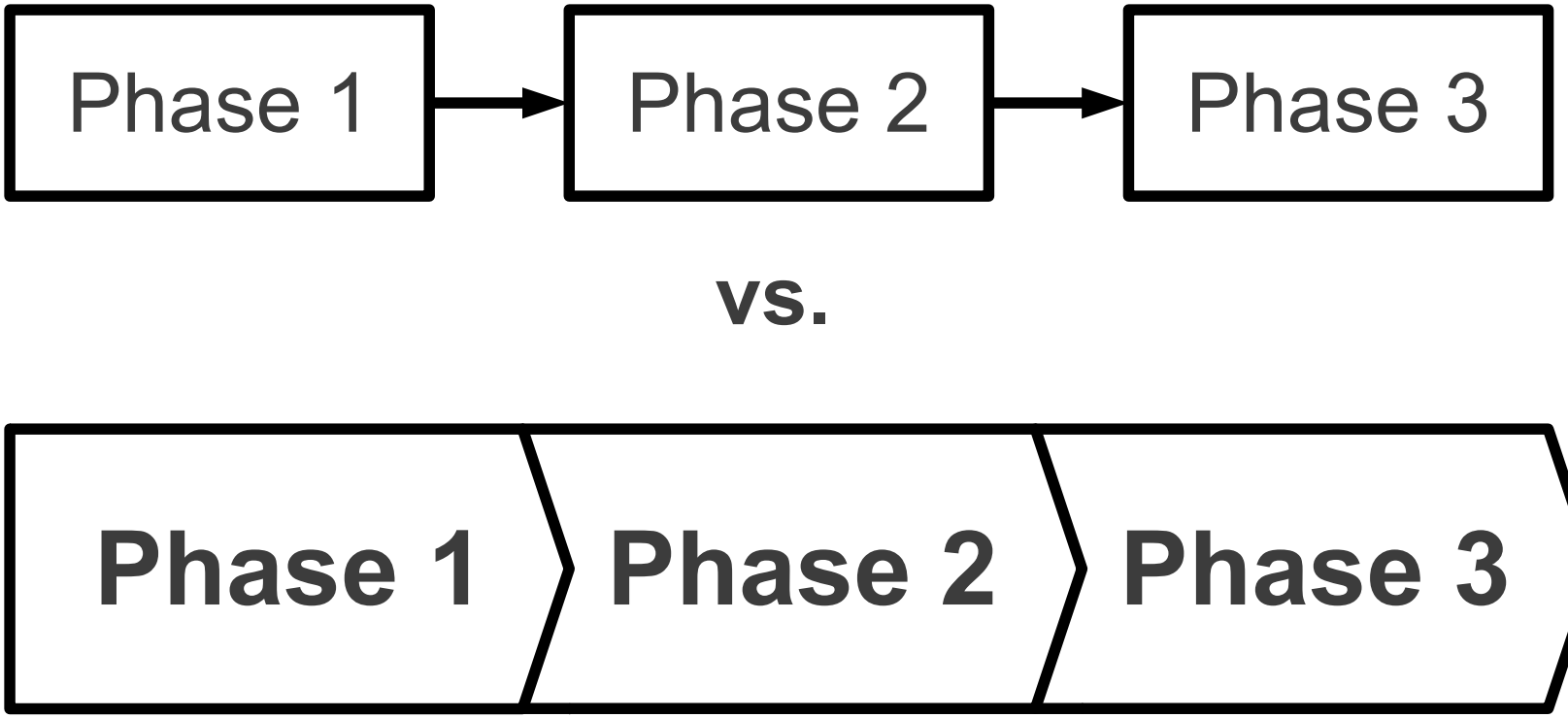


When? See example on next slide

Use **connectors**, not straight lines



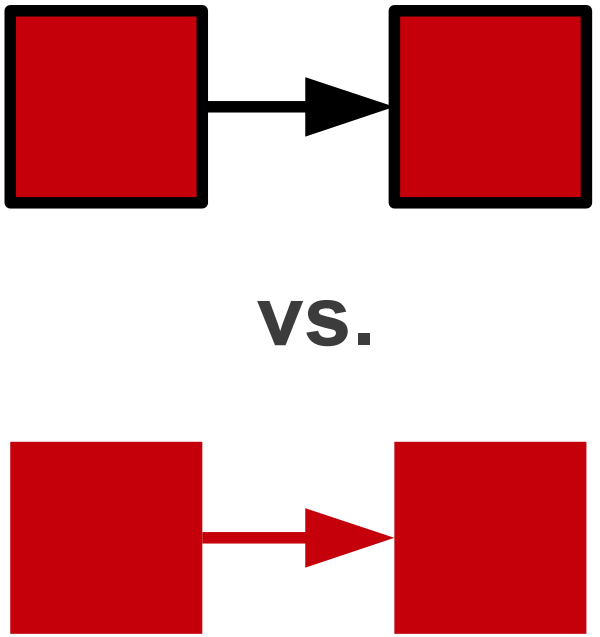
Shapes instead of **lines** (sometimes)



?

They look better on simple workflows

Colors instead of **outlines** (sometimes)



?

Useful to reduce the number of colors

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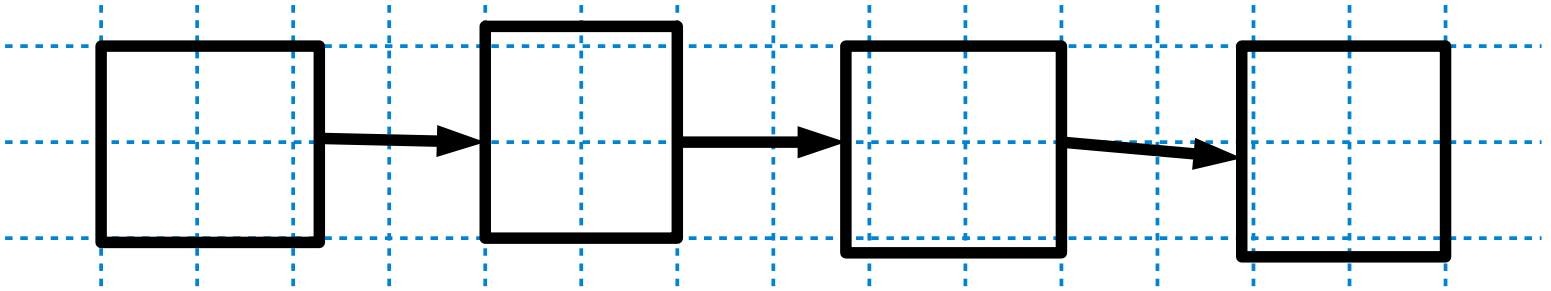
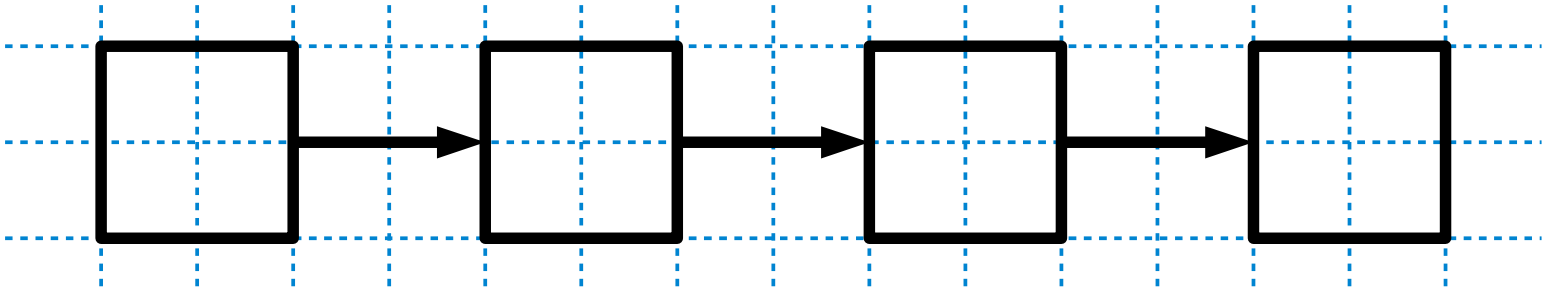
Use a **grid**

Wrong

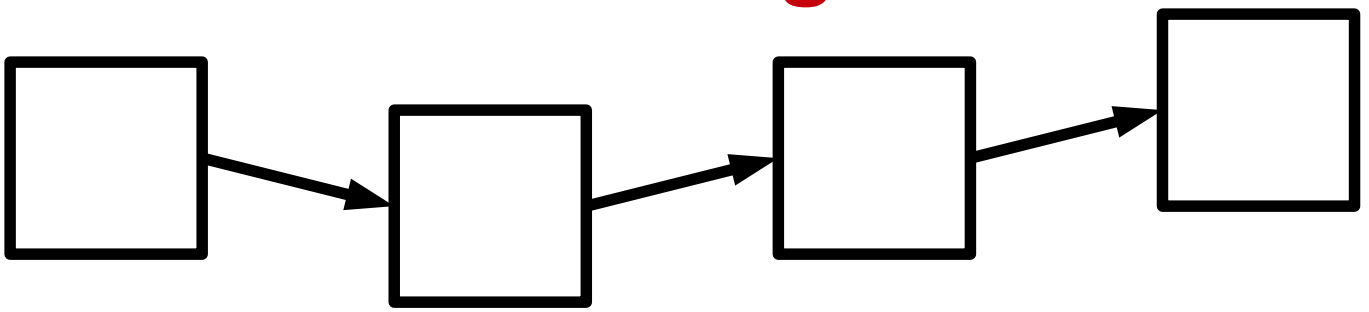


Right

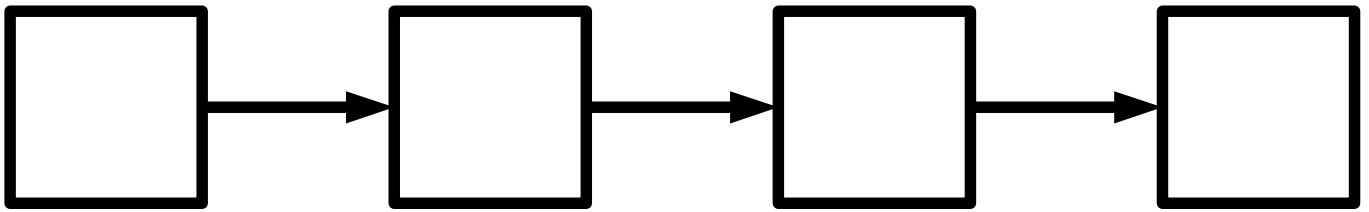


Align when possible

Wrong

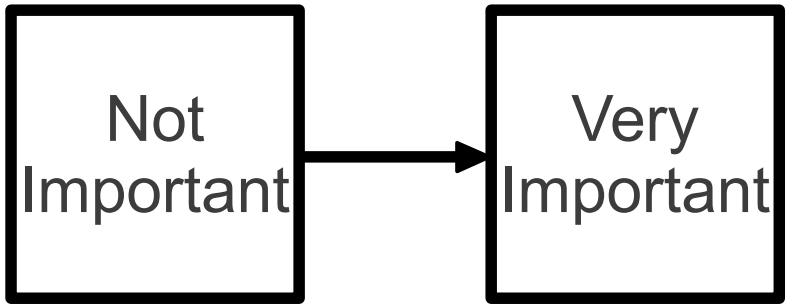


Right

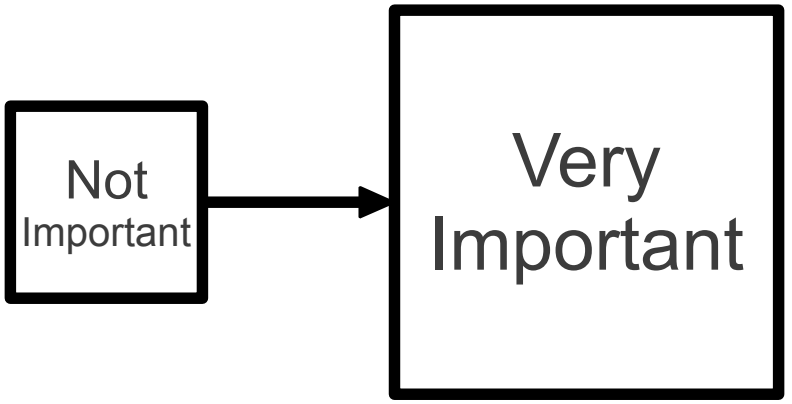


Size means **Importance**

Wrong

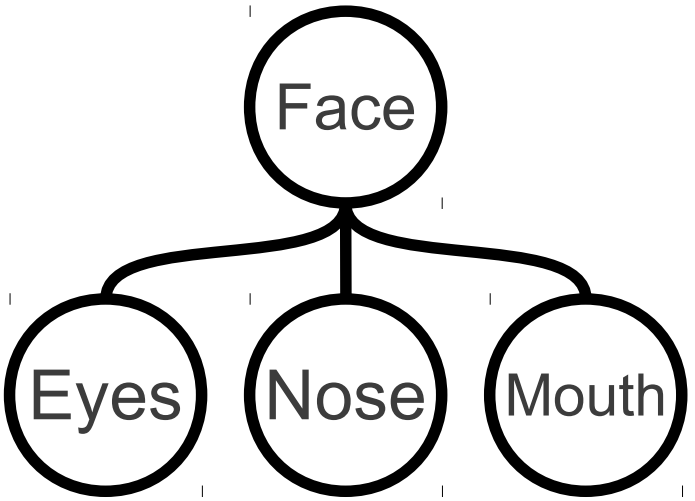


Right

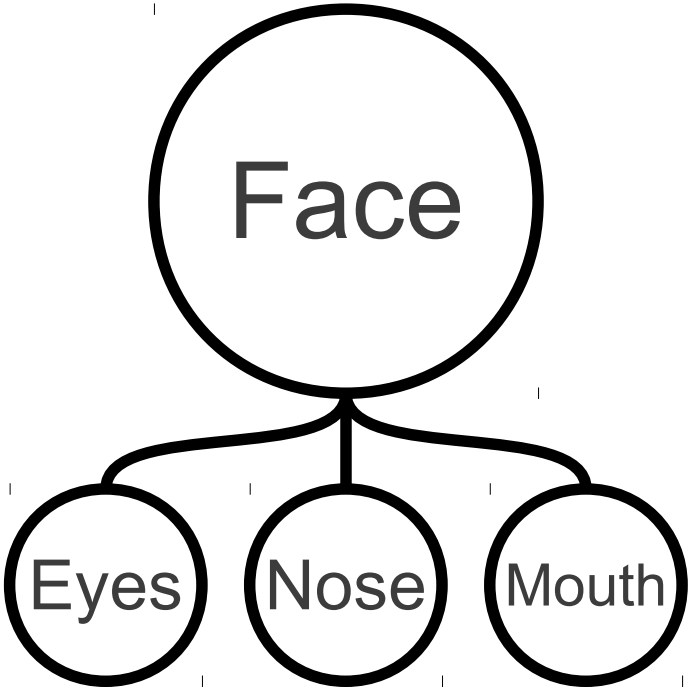


Size means **Hierarchy**

Wrong

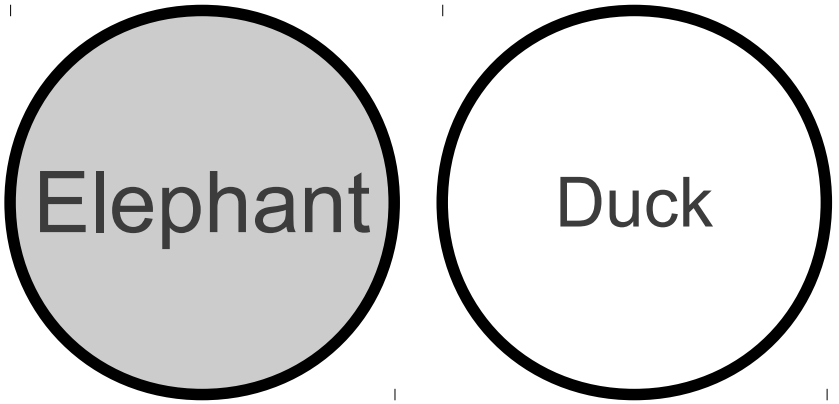


Right

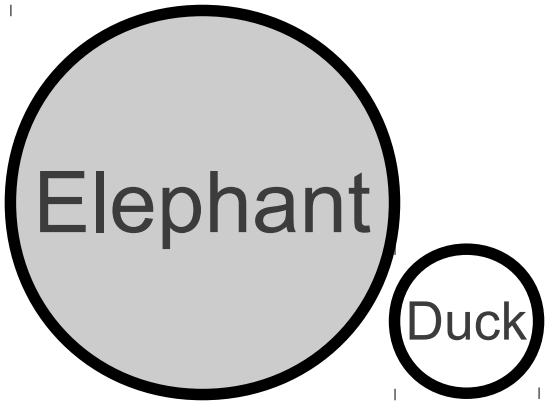


Size means **Relative Size**

Wrong



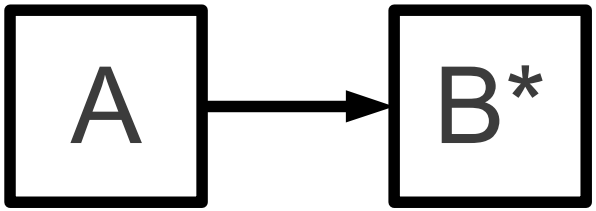
Right



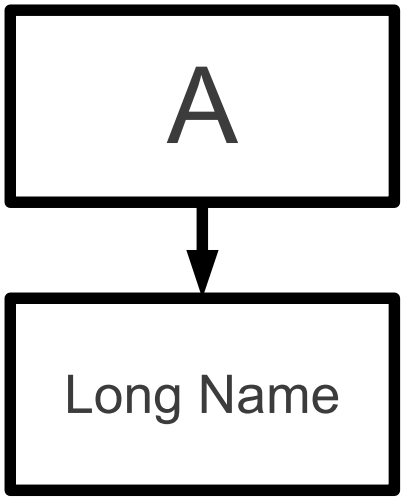
Size **doesn't** mean “long name”

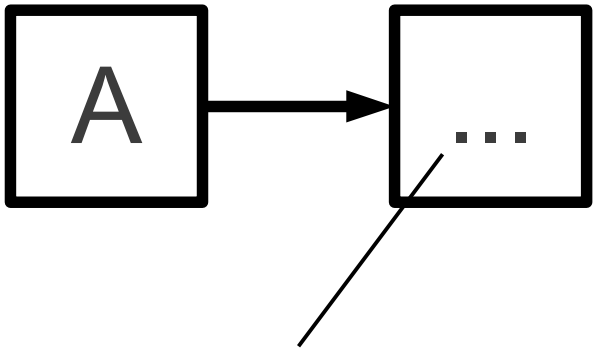
Wrong

Right



* Long Name

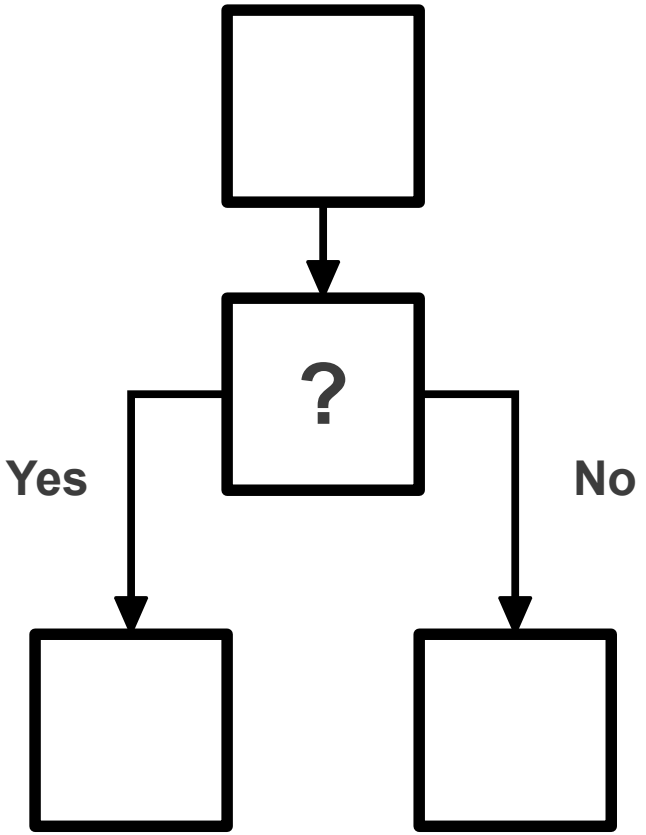




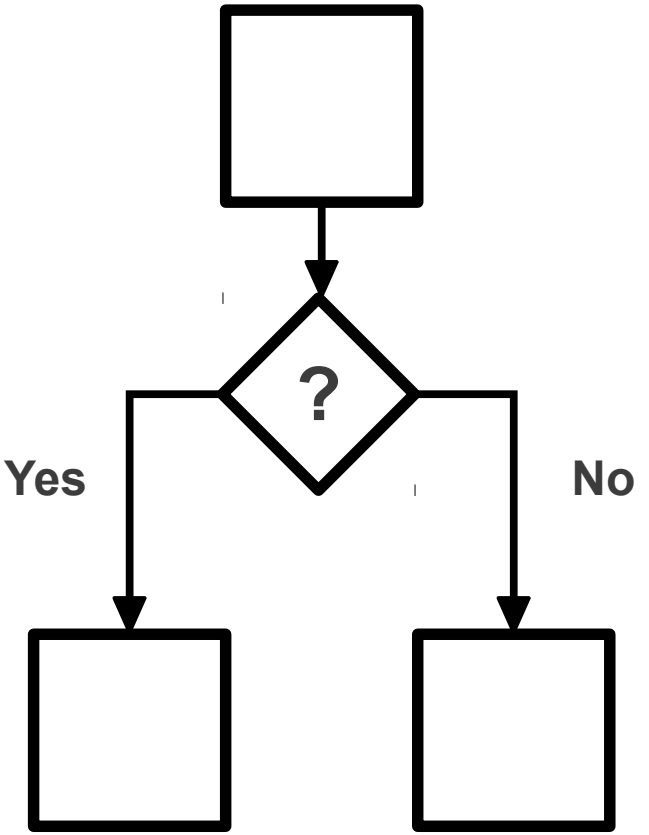
Long Name

Different Shape = Different **Type**

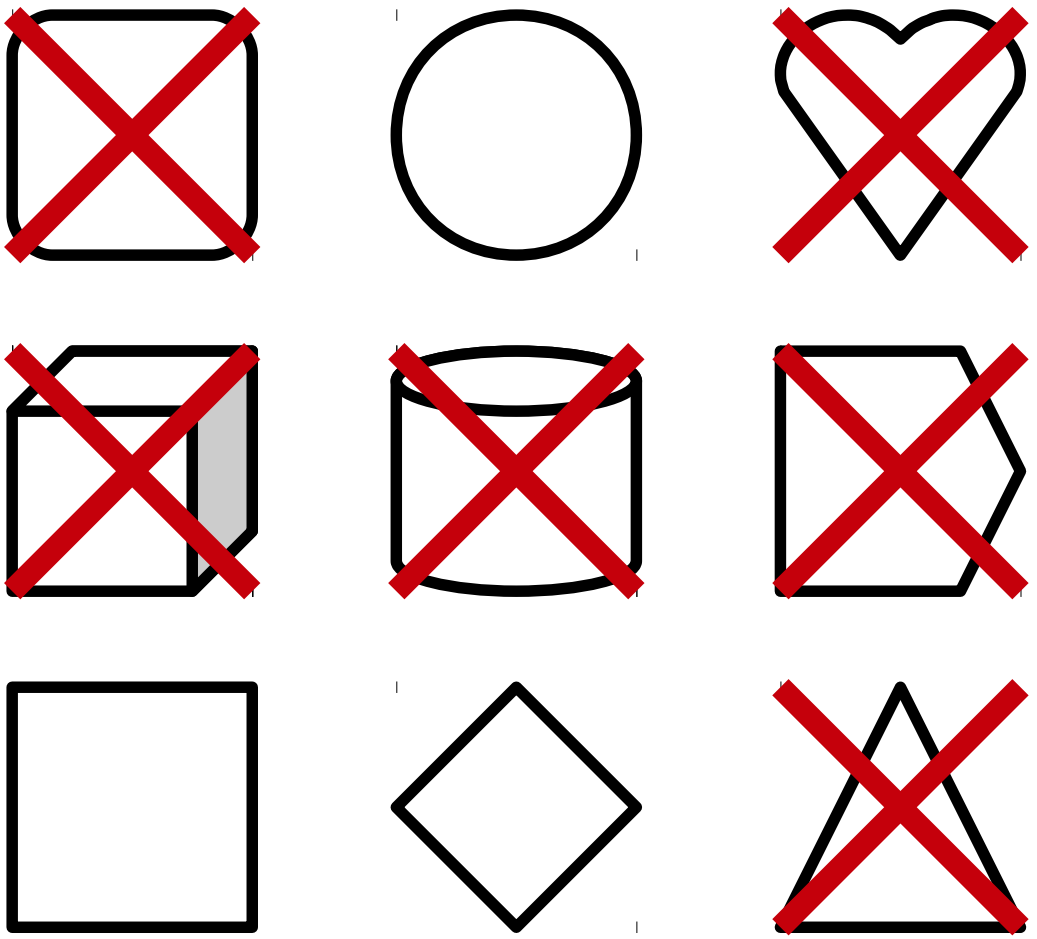
OK



Better

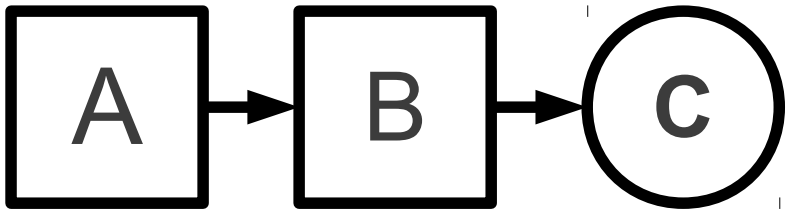


Maximum number types: **4**



If you need more, use **images**

OK

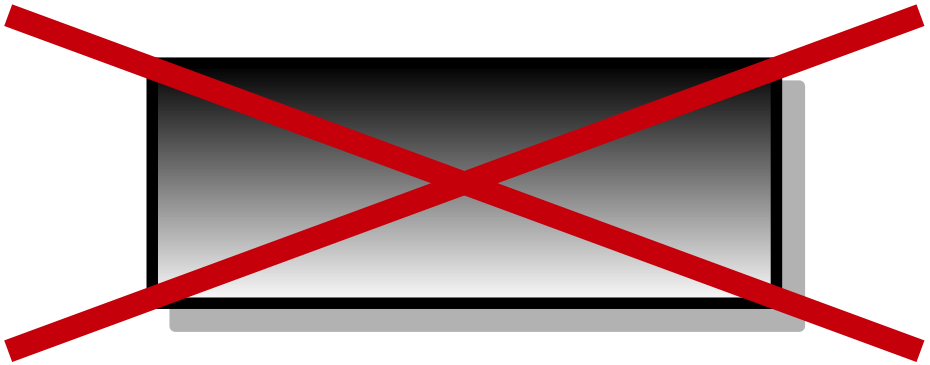


Better

Warning! Finding appropriate images takes time

Transparencies, Shadows & Gradients

Don't



They take a lot of time to get right, and most projectors won't show them anyway

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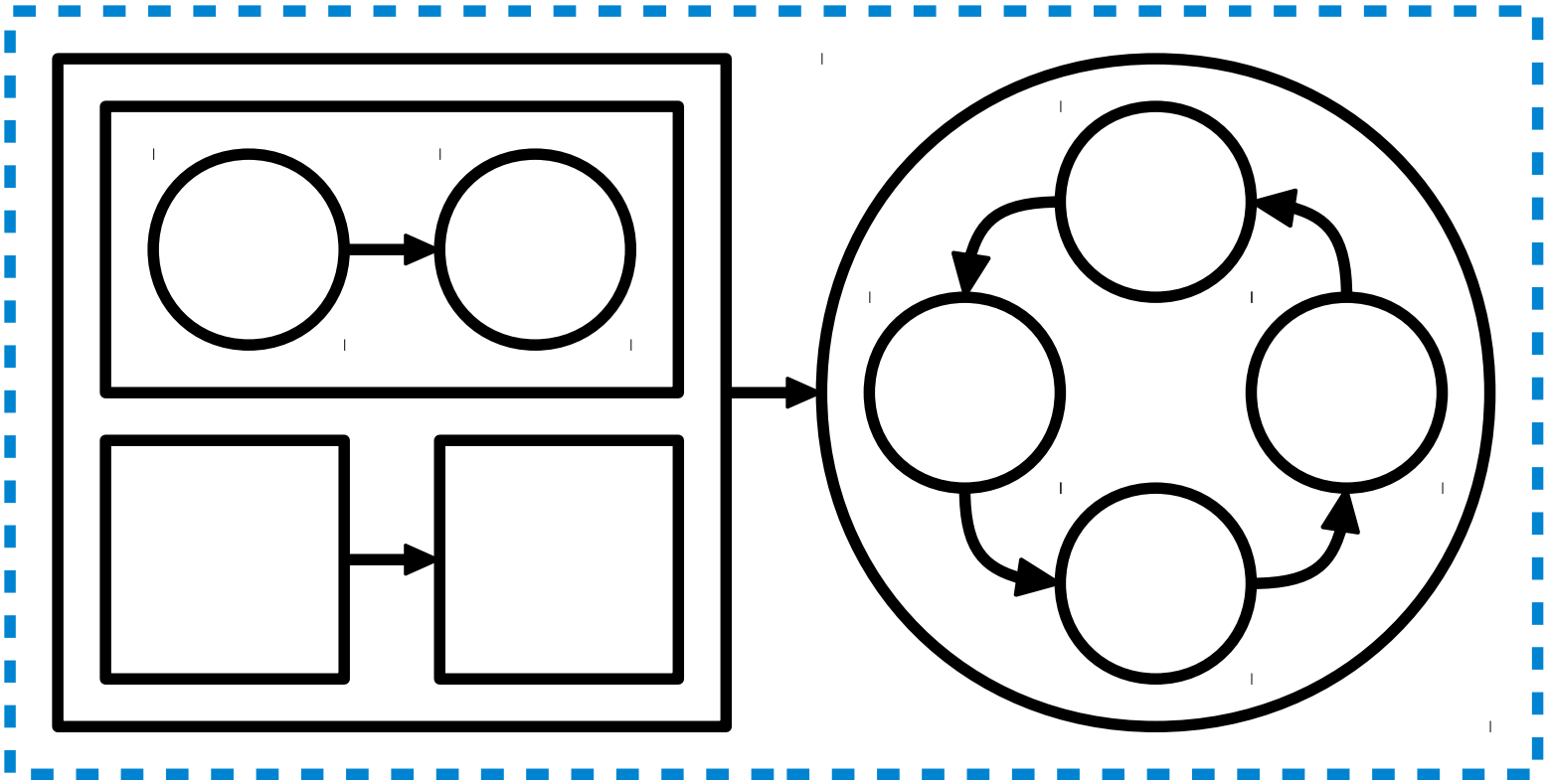
3. Nesting

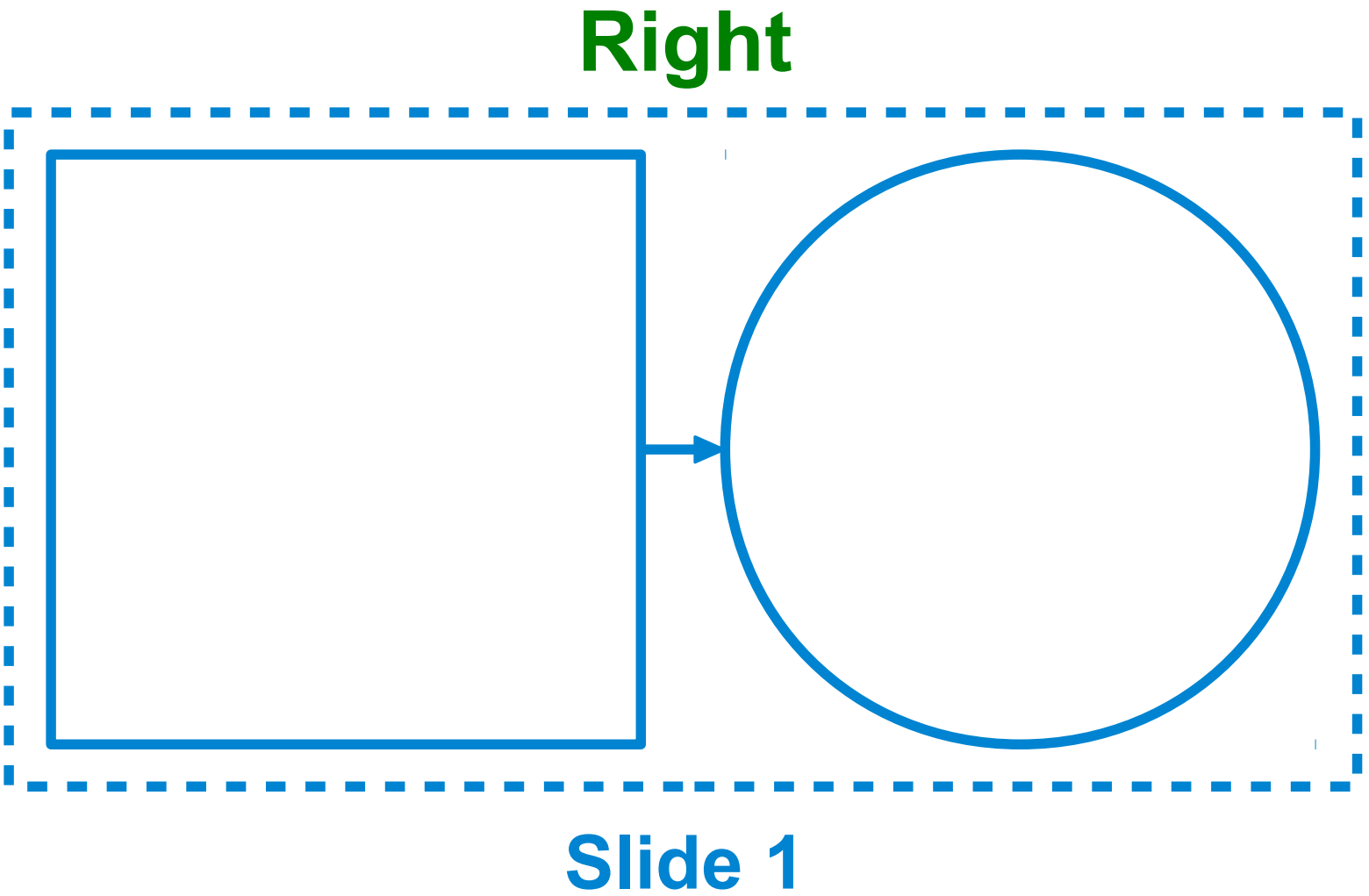
One nesting level per slide

Wrong



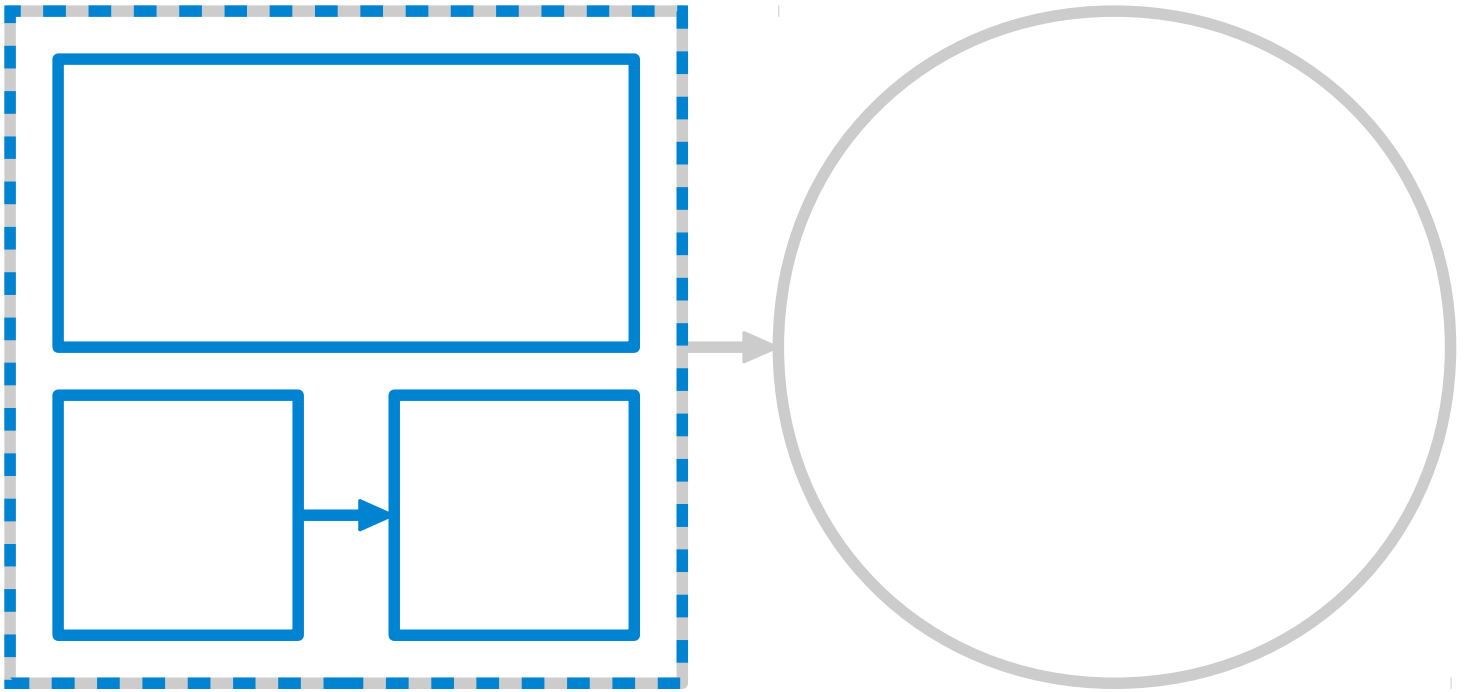
Unique slide

One nesting level per slide



One nesting level per slide

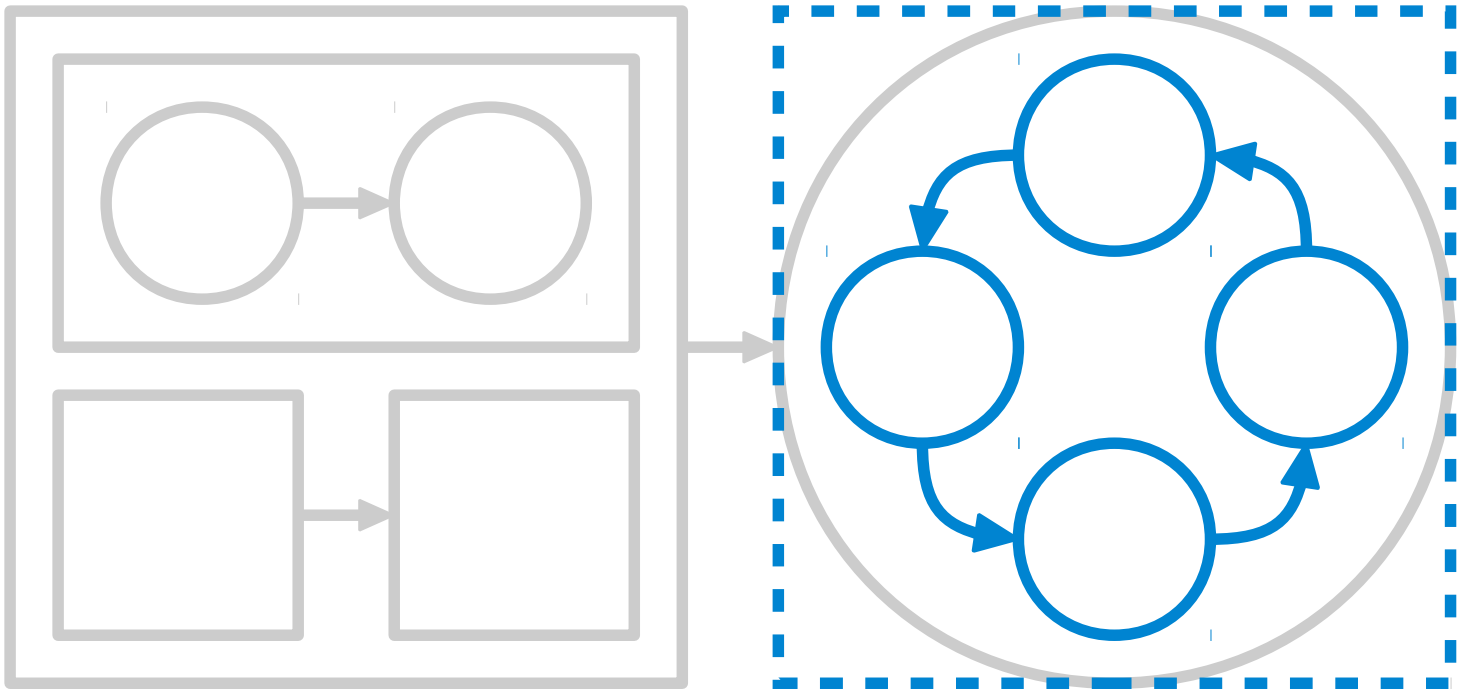
Right



Slide 2

One nesting level per slide

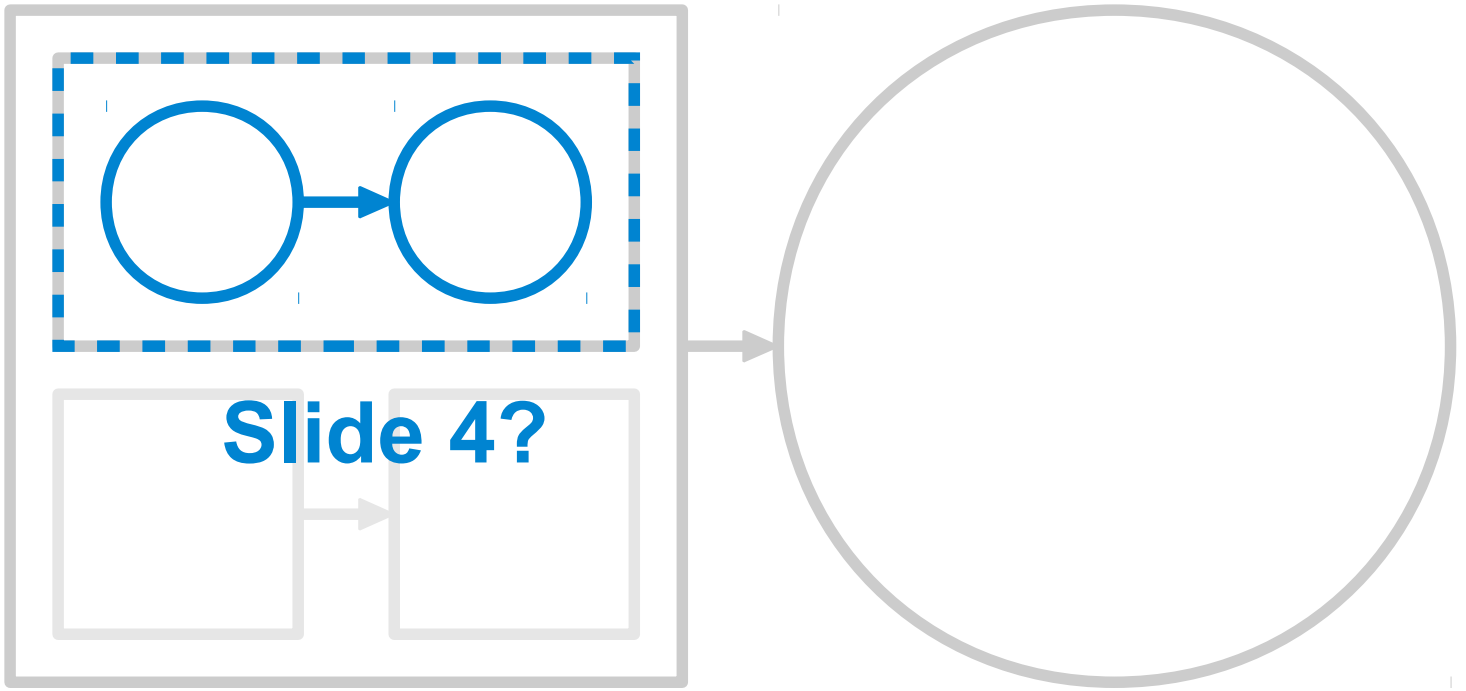
Right



Slide 3

One nesting level per slide

Right

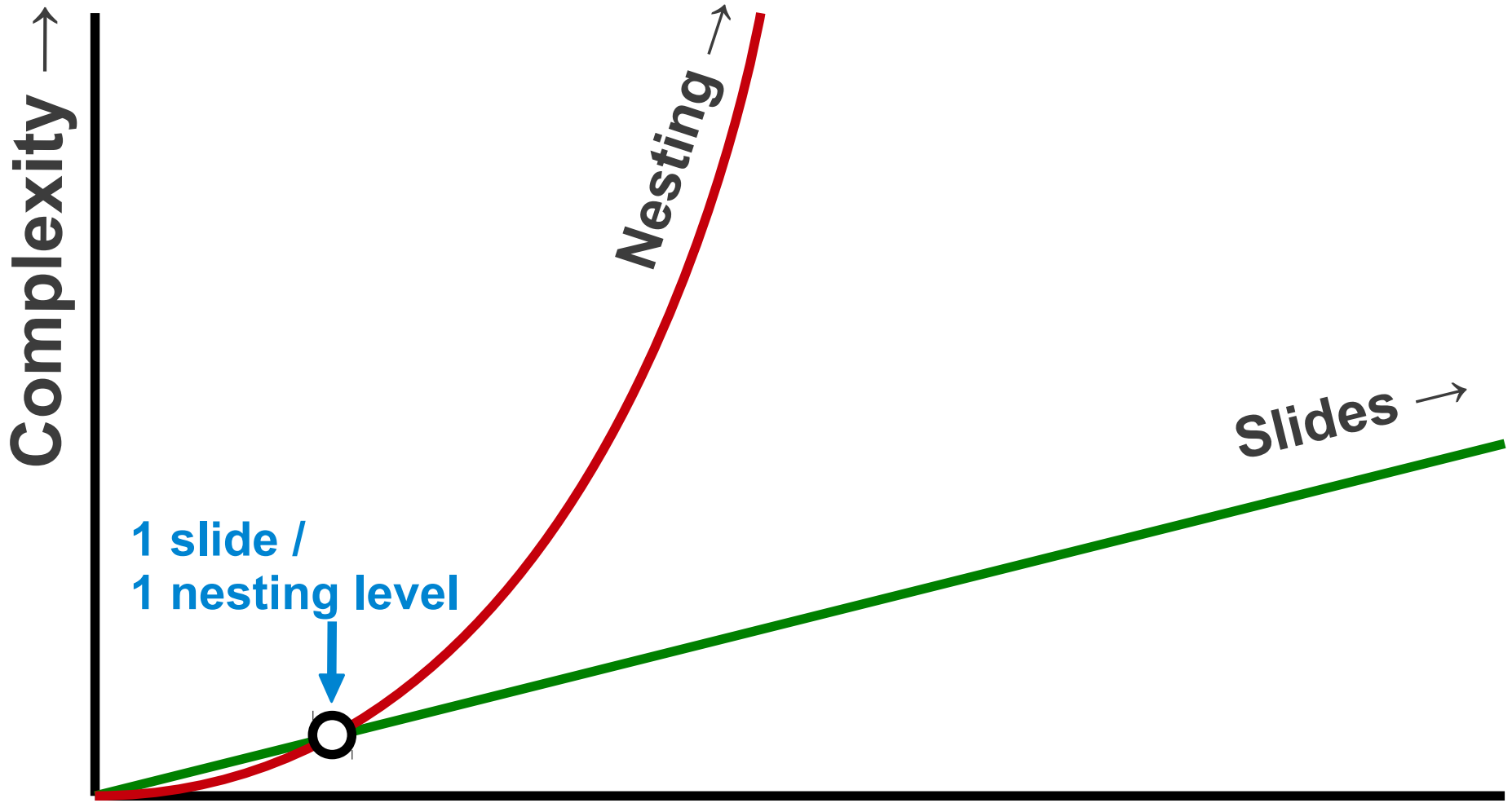


Is this level *really* needed?

But, won't adding slides increase the presentation complexity?

Yes, it will.

But less than nested shapes.


Complexity →
Nesting →
Slides →
1 slide /
1 nesting level

If you need everything in one place

You are not making a presentation

Consider other formats

LaTeX

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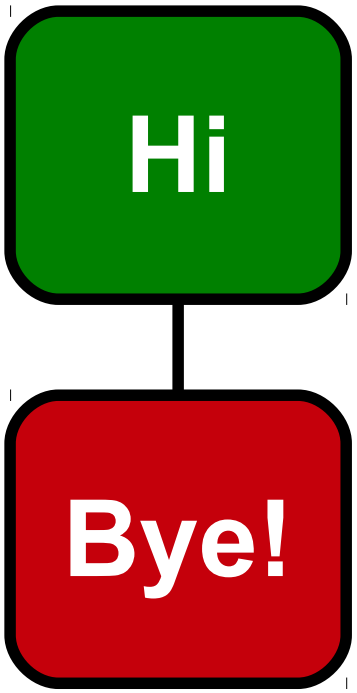
Color count

Fill + Text + Lines - Background

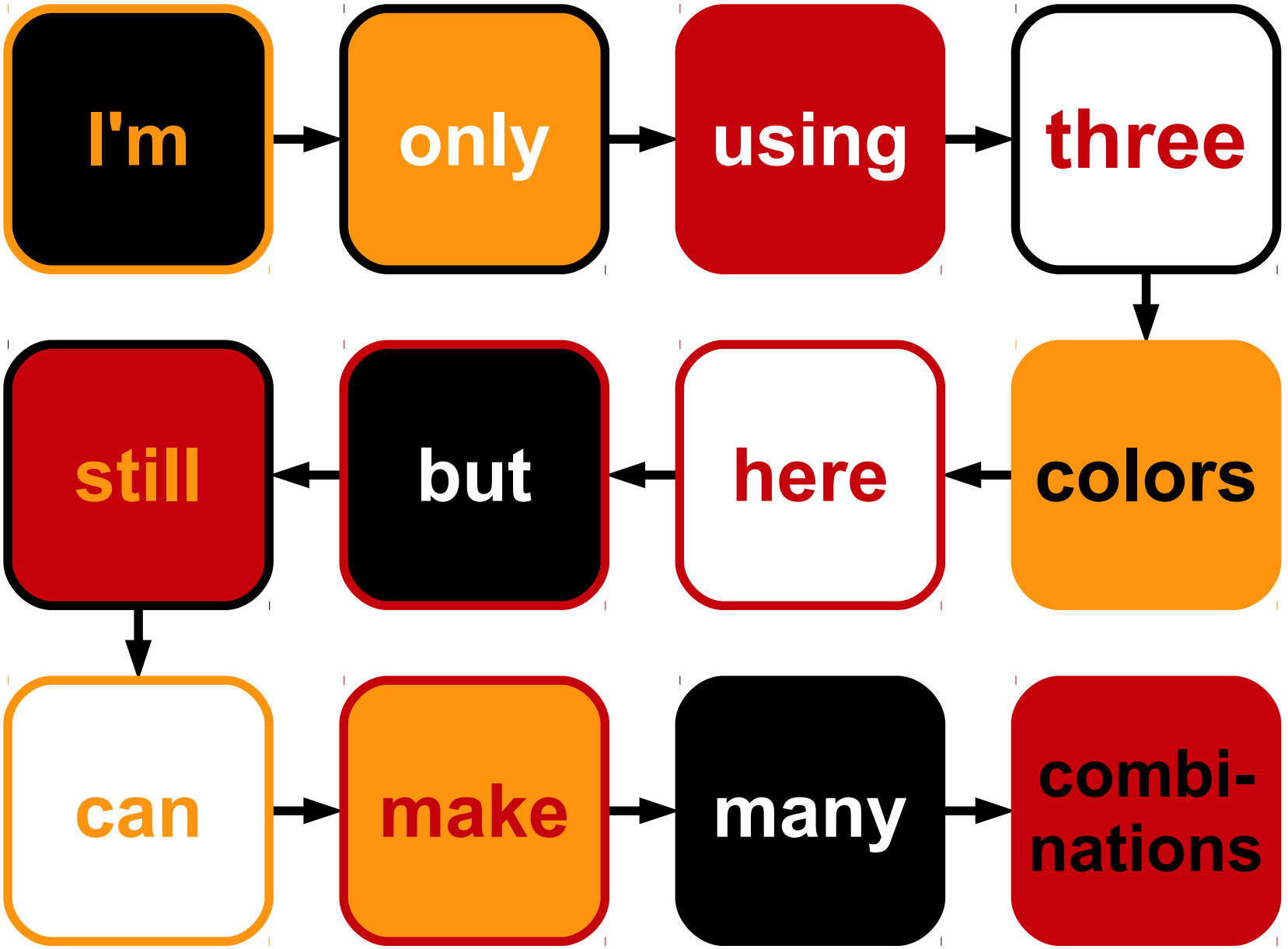


Fill = Green + Red = 2
Text = White = 1
Lines = Black = 1
Background = White = -1

2 + 1 + 1 – 1 = 3

Color count should be ≤ 3

The magic of combinatory



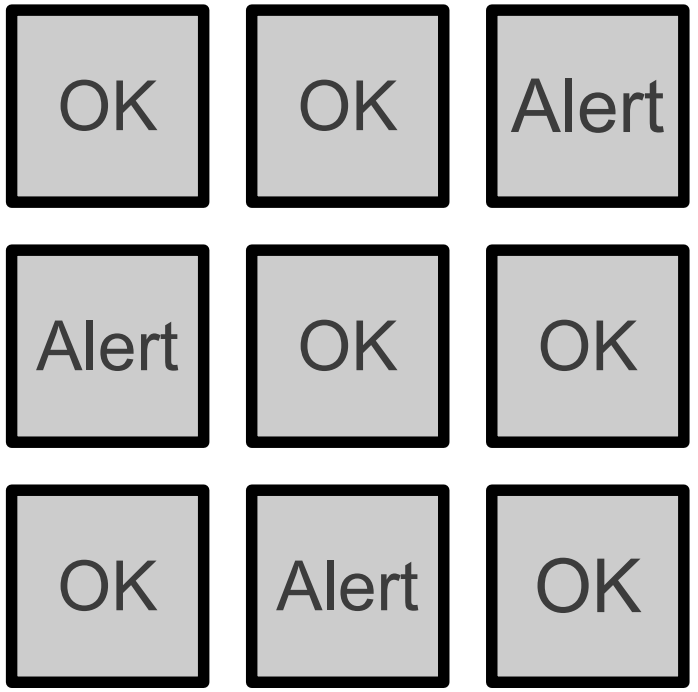
When in doubt, use **Primary colors**

In LibreOffice: Chart 11, Chart 3, Green, Chart12

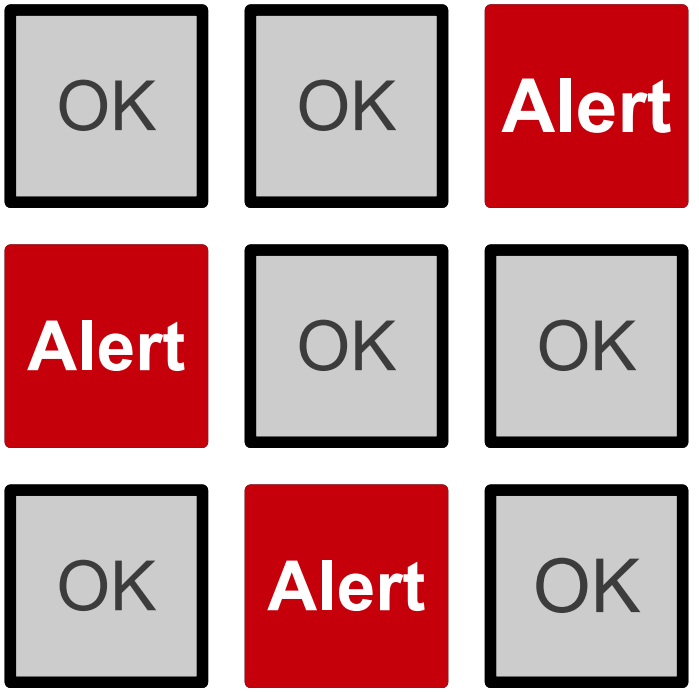
These are **awesome** for diagrams

Color is great for **Stress** or **Status**

Wrong

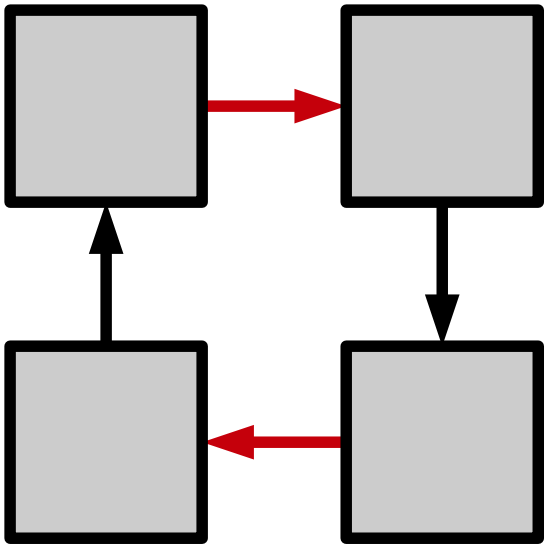


Right

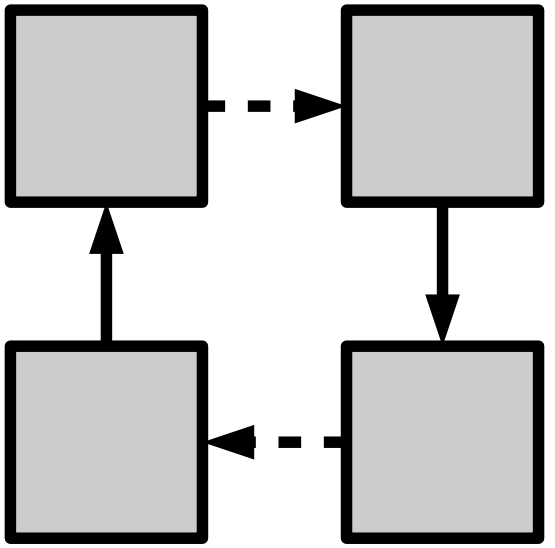


Color is **not great for lines**

Wrong

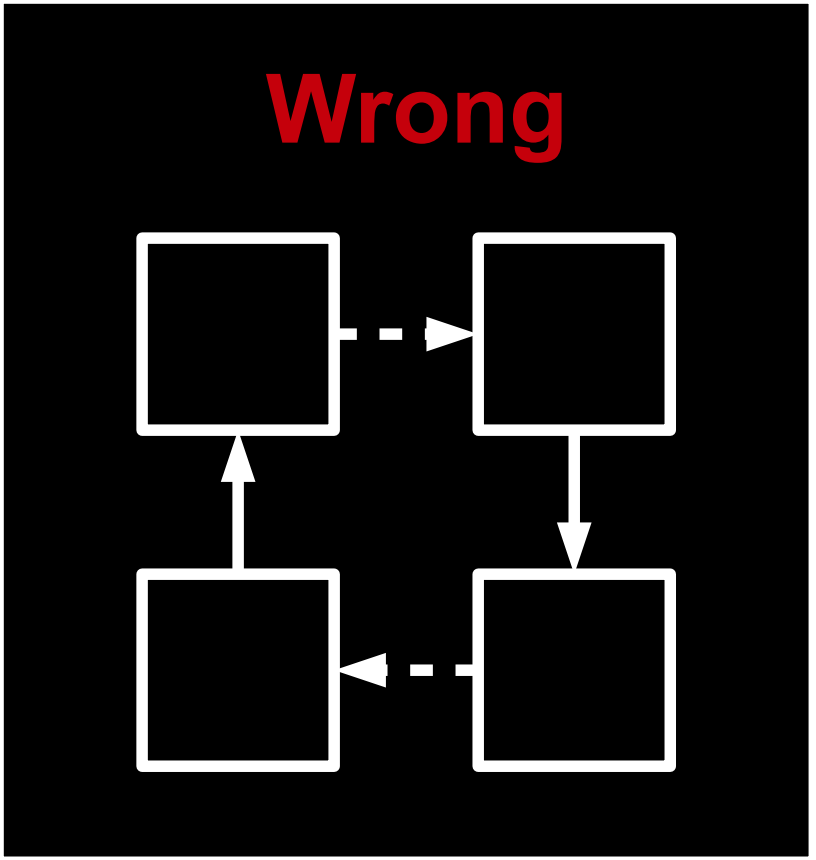


Right

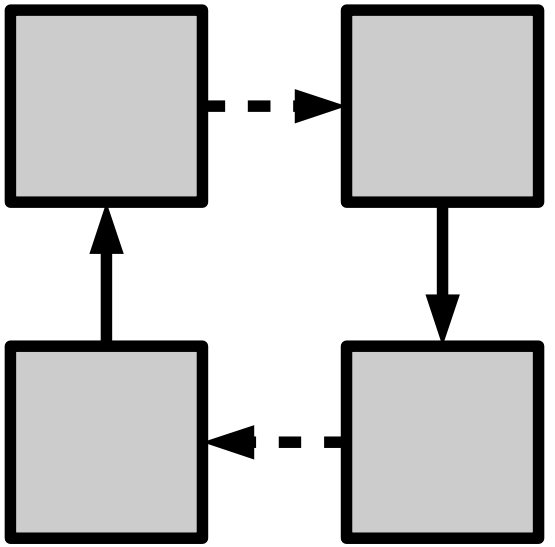


More easily seen from far away

Use **bright background colors**



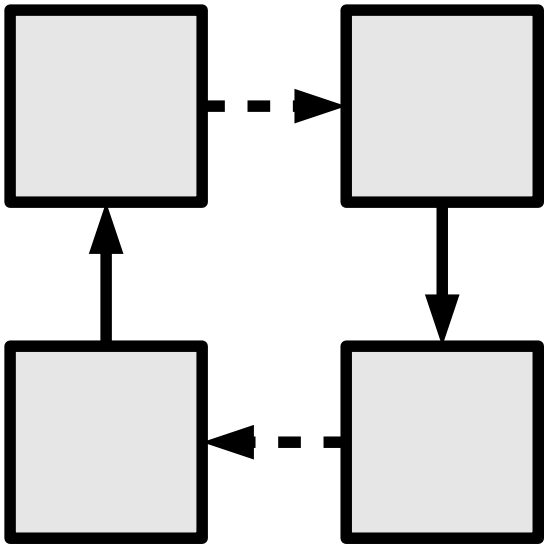
Right



Some projectors don't handle dark slides well

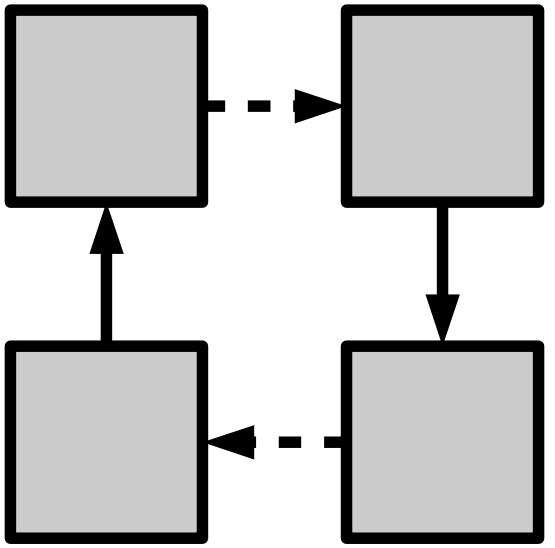
Don't use pale colors in foreground

Wrong



Gray 10%

Right



Gray >20%

To projectors, any pale color = white

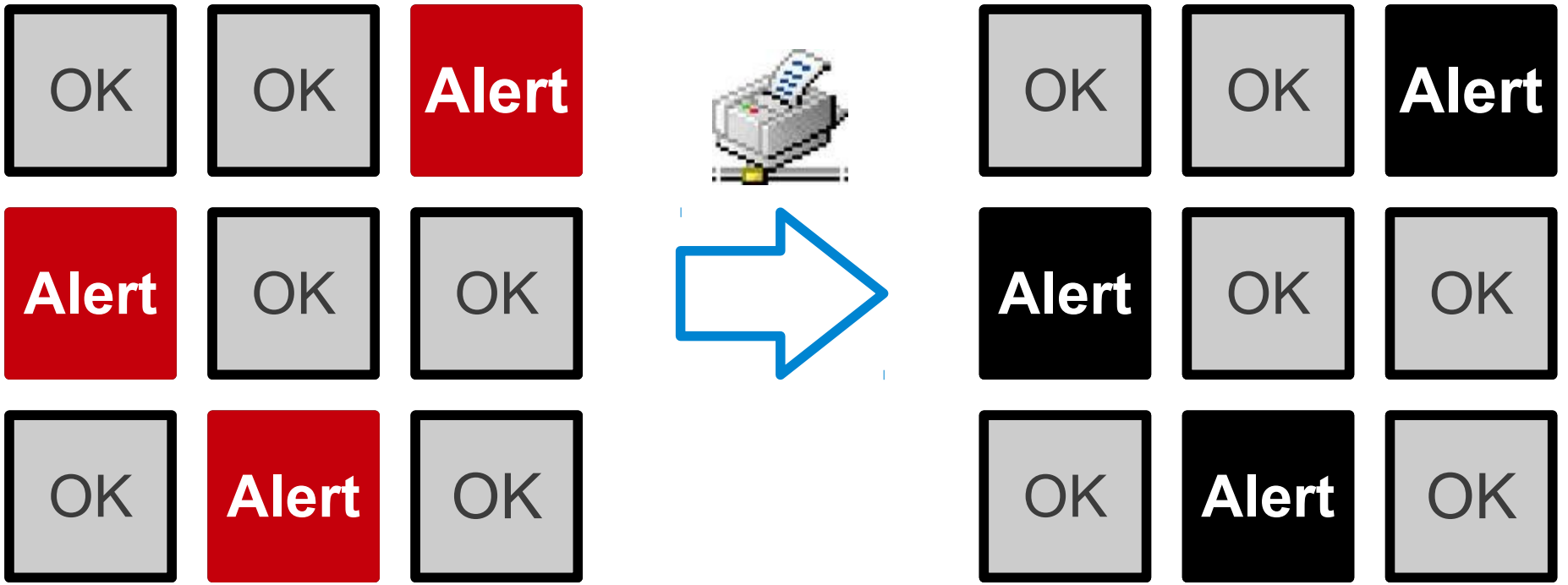
Printing: **Black and White**

OK	OK	Alert
Alert	OK	OK
OK	Alert	OK

OK	OK	Alert
Alert	OK	OK
OK	Alert	OK

Black and White = information loss

Printing: **Graceful Degradation**



Use contrast and borders to compensate

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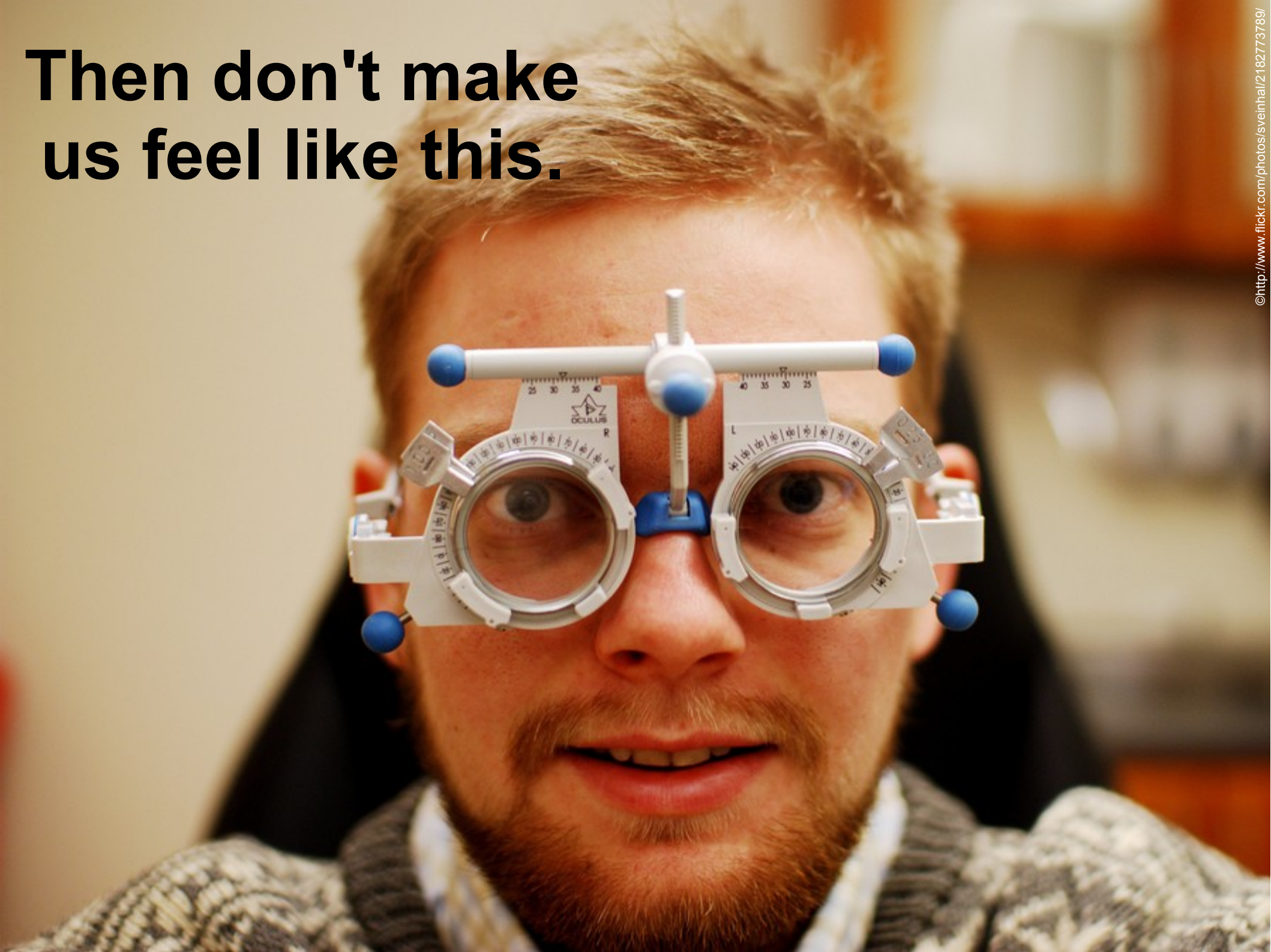
First and foremost:

Are you an

optometrist?


Then don't make
us feel like this.
OCULUS
©http://www.flickr.com/photos/sveinhal/2182773789/

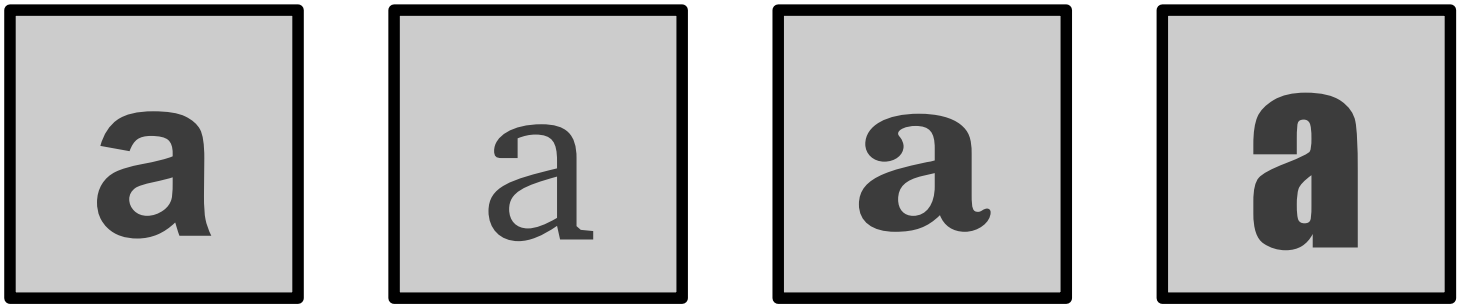
Smallest font size:

20px

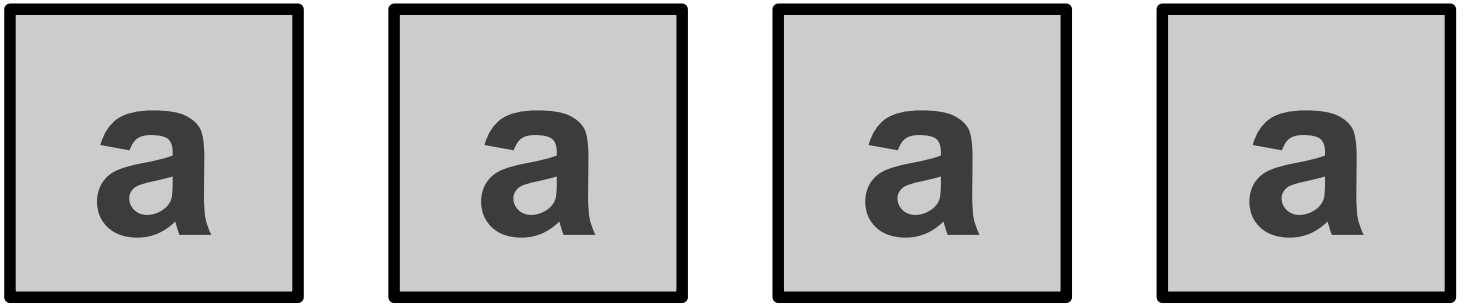
Otherwise it's impossibly difficult to read from far away

Only **one font**

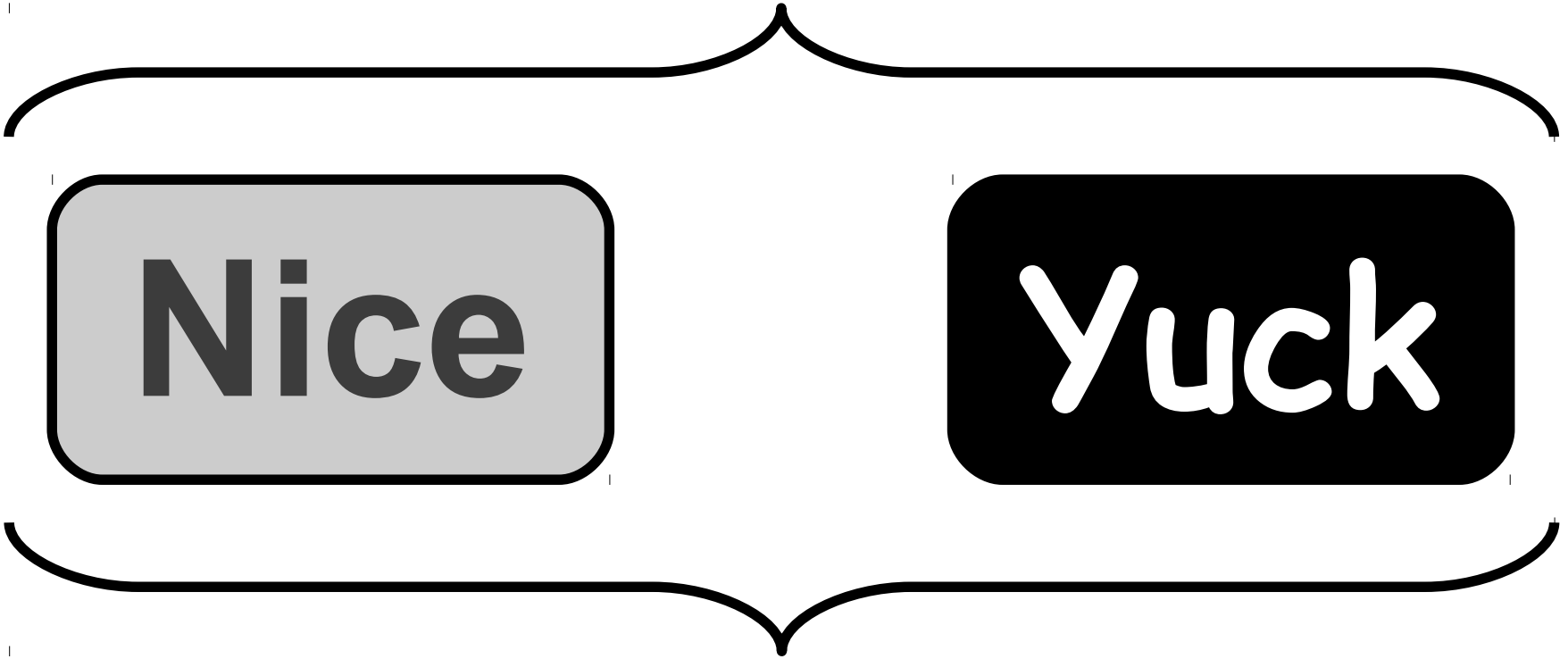
Wrong



Right

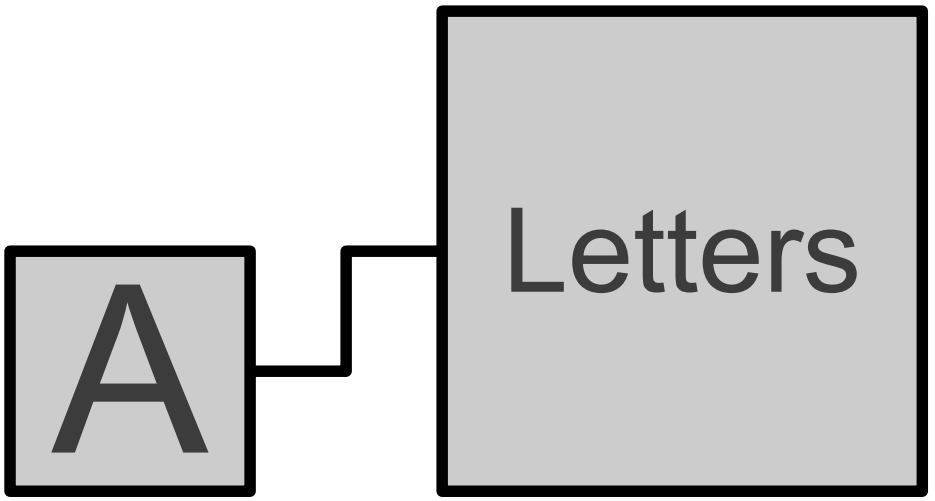


Exception: **Typographic diagrams**

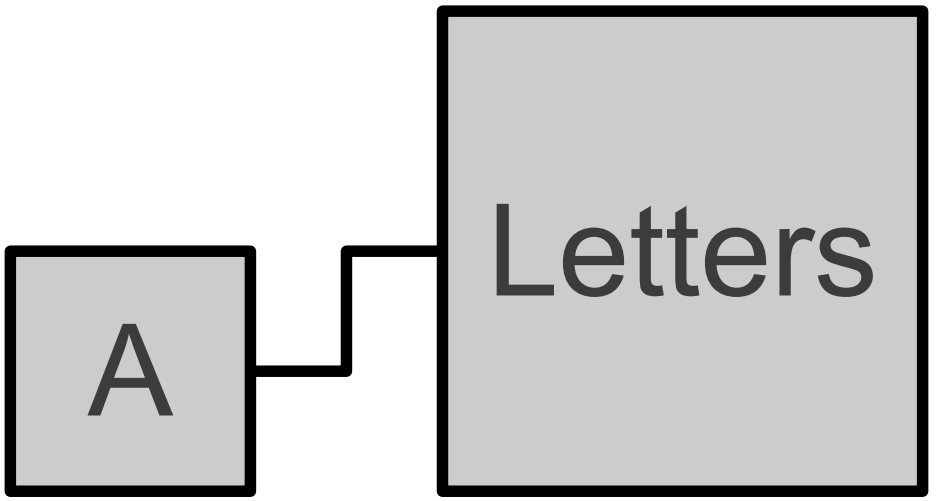


Bigger shape ⇒ Bigger or equal text

Wrong



Right



Otherwise text size contradicts shape size

Italics: *Don't bother*

Wrong

a

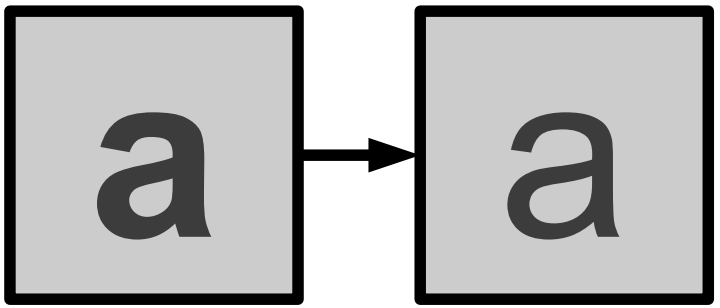
Right

a

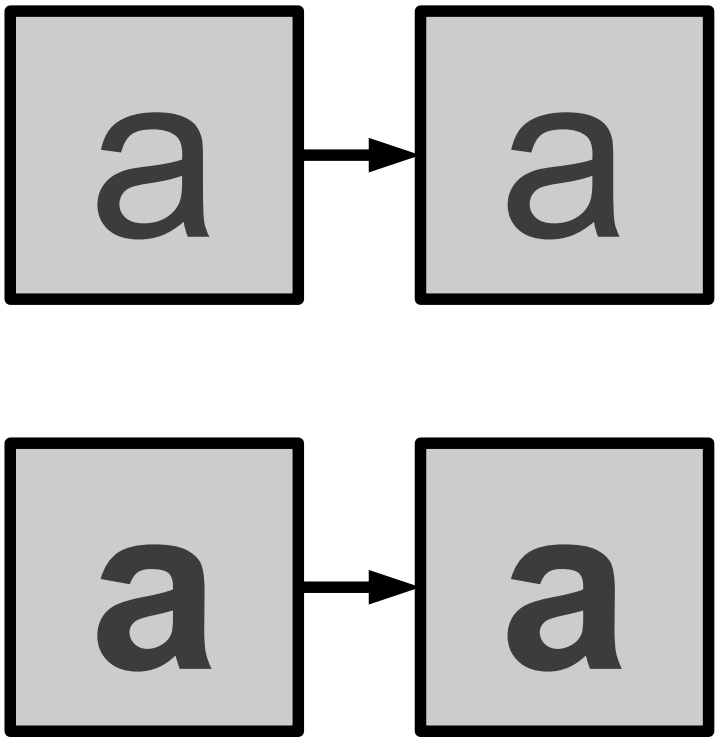
No one will notice the difference

Bold: **Don't mix it**

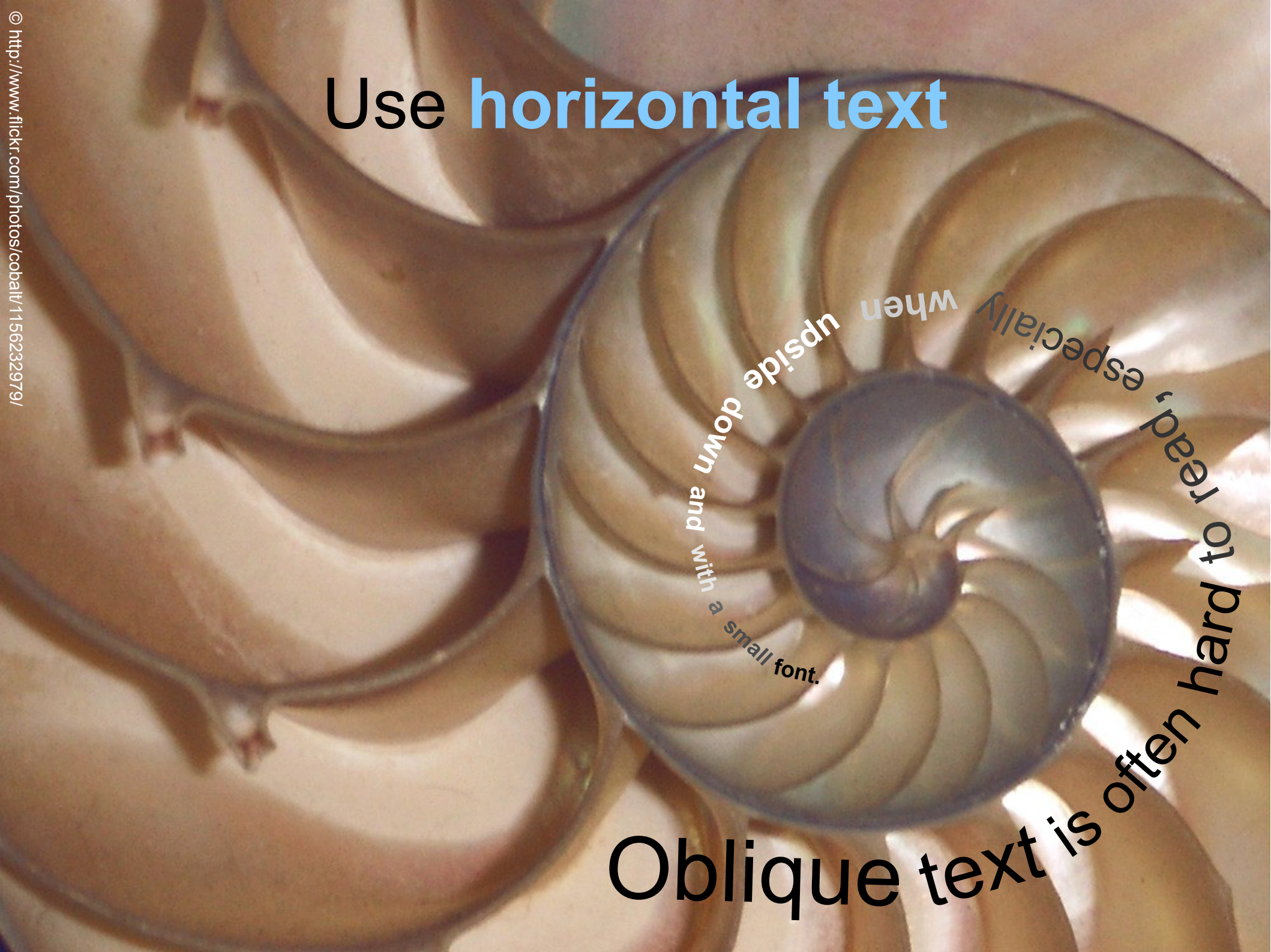
Wrong



Right



Again, the difference is hard to notice



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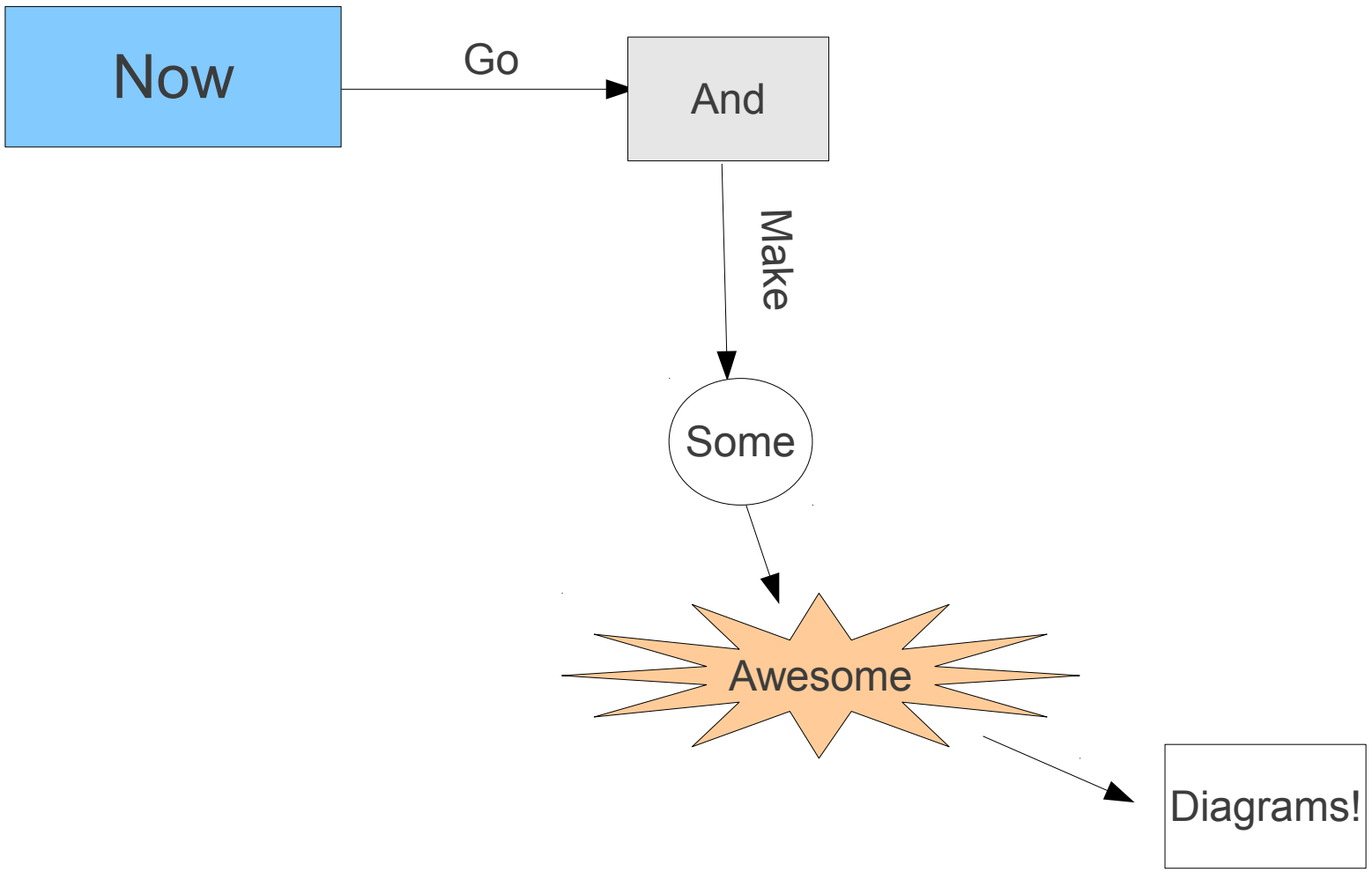
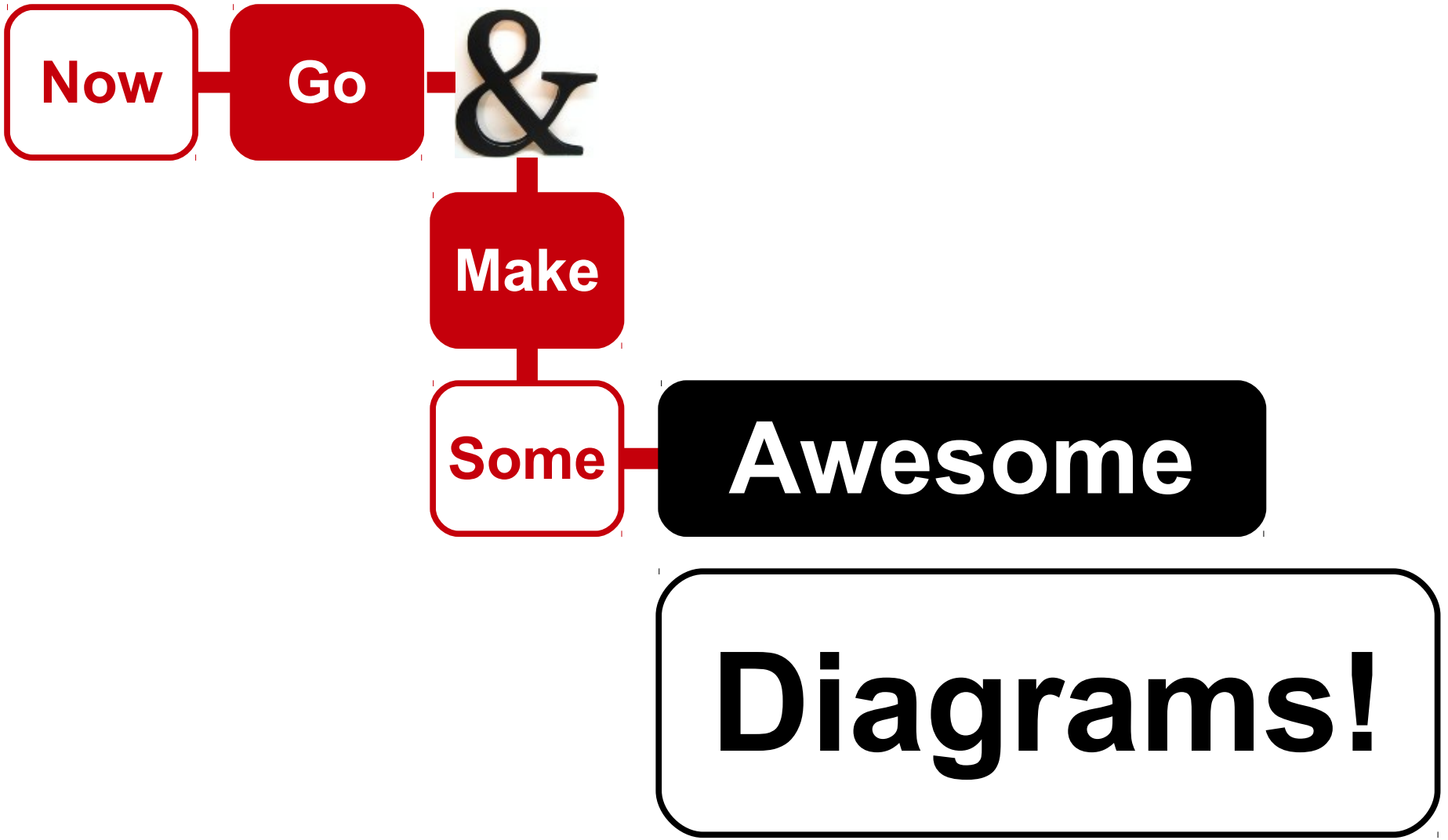

Now
Go
And
Make
Some
Awesome
Diagrams!


Now
Go
&
Make
Some
Awesome
Diagrams!

Thank you!
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