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Ultimate Flowchart Guide (Complete Flowchart Tutorial with Examples)

29 November 2011

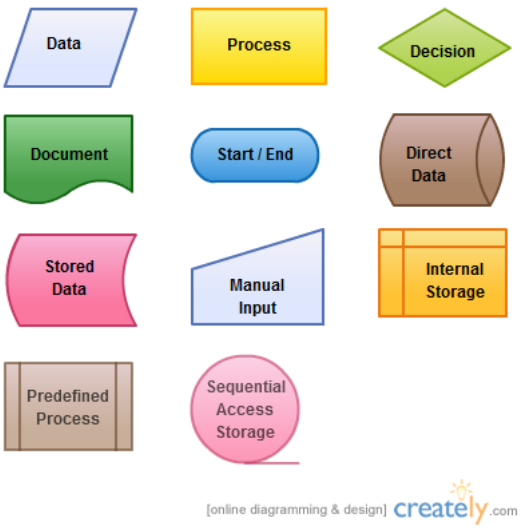
This is the only Flowchart guide you will ever need. Creately blog and the website has some really awesome articles covering various things related to flowcharts like Meanings of flowchart symbols, how to use swim lanes in flowcharts, flowchart best practices , case studies and many more. This blog post will simply gather all that information and present them in a logical way . Since this will be a somewhat long post I added sections to make it easier to navigate. So you can go to best practices quickly if you are not interested about the history.

- History of Flowcharts
- Flowchart Symbols Meaning
- How to Draw a Flowchart
- Flowchart Templates and Examples
- Flowchart Best Practices
- Common Mistakes Made when Drawing Flowcharts
- Flowchart Case Studies
- Feedback on Flowchart Guide

History of Flowcharts

Flowcharts were introduced by Frank Gilberth in 1921, and they were called “Process Flow Charts” at the beginning . Allan H. Mogensen is credited with training business people on the use of Flowcharts. Wikipedia has a great summary about the history of flowcharts, read more in **this wiki section (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flowchart#History)**.

Flowchart Symbols Meaning



(http://static1.creately.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Flowchart-Symbols1.png)

Flowchart Symbols

Before drawing flowcharts you need to understand the different symbols used in Flowcharts. Most people are aware of basic symbols like processes and decision blocks. But there are many more symbols to make your flowchart more meaningful. Below image shows all the standard flowchart symbols.

Most people don't know about some rarely used flowchart symbols like Sequential access storage, Direct data, Manual Input etc. Check the **flowchart symbols (http://creately.com/diagram-type/objects/flowcharts)** page for a detailed explanation of different symbols. Although these are the standard symbols available in most **flowchart software (http://creately.com/flowcharts-and-workflow-diagrams-online)**, some people do use different shapes for different meanings. The most common example of this is the using circles to denote start and end. The examples in this flowchart guide will stick with the standard symbols.

How to Draw a Flowchart

Flowcharts can be categorized into four main types. Document flowchart, System flowchart, data flowchart and program flowchart. Not everyone agrees with this categorization, but the core principals of drawing a flowchart remains the same. You need to consider few things when drawing a flowchart, Check out **6 useful tips on drawing flowcharts (http://creately.com/diagram-type/article/6-useful-tips-drawing-flowcharts)** before you start.

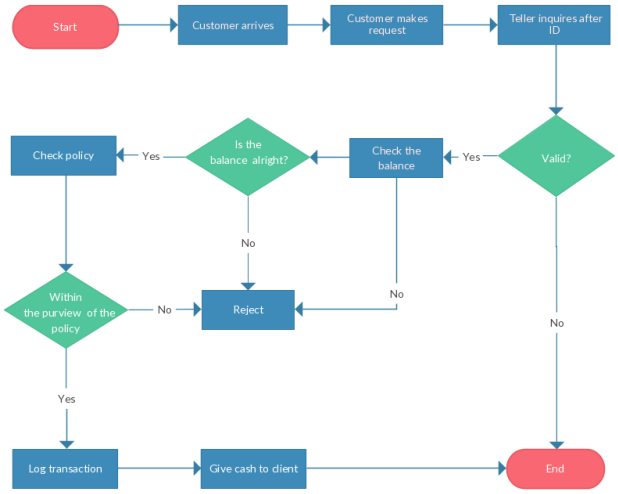
If you are drawing a flowchart with many responsible parties you can group them together using swim lanes. Swim lanes are a powerful technique to increase the readability of you flowchart so you should use them according to the situation. Read **using swim lanes in flowcharts (http://creately.com/diagram-type/article/swim-lanes-mapping-processes)** to learn more about the process.

Below video shows how to draw a flowchart using Creately. It is very simple to use and one click create and connect helps you draw them faster as well. You can drag and drop symbols from the library or drag images to your diagram by doing an image search.

Drawing Flowcharts Online Using Creately Diagramming Tool

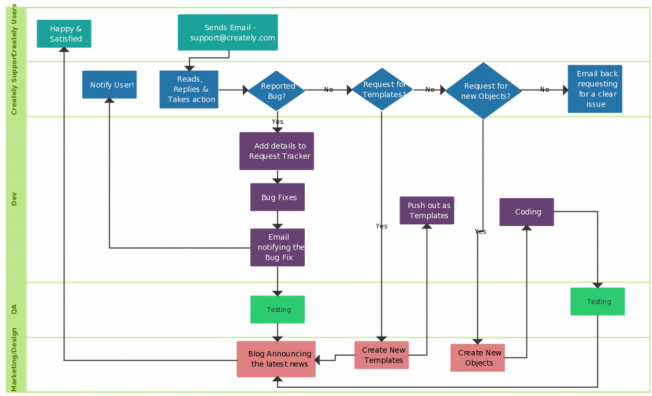
Flowchart Templates and Examples

Although you can start drawing flowcharts by scratch it is much easier to use templates. They help you reduce errors and reminds you about the best practices to follow. If you want to use a ready made template, go to **flowchart templates (http://creately.com/diagram-type/templates/flowcharts)** page and click on the flowchart that best suits you. Click on the use at template after the image and you are ready to draw your flowchart. Below are two templates out of **hundreds of flowchart templates (http://creately.com/diagram-community/popular/t/flowchart)** available to the user. Click on any of them to start drawing flowcharts immediately.



(http://creately.com/diagram/example/gmd8bbfk2/Banking+Teller)

Support Process Flowchart Template



(http://creately.com/diagram/example/geu4qzpa5/Support+Process+-+Swimlane)

Support Process Flowchart Template

Flowchart Best Practices

There are few things you can do to make your flowchart universally accepted. And there are some things that you can do to make it visually pleasing to others as well. Using standard symbols will make it understandable for a wide audience. However it is important to remember that the idea is to give out information in a easy to understand manner. It is perfectly acceptable to use an alternative image instead of the document symbol as long as the audience understands it. Keeping the arrow flow to one side, using same size symbols, naming the decision blocks, processes, arrows etc are few things you can do to make it better. The common mistakes section covers most of these practices in detail.

Common Mistakes Made when Drawing Flowcharts

This section highlights the common mistakes made when drawing flowcharts. Some of the things mentioned here are for better looking and more understandable flowcharts, not having them in your flowchart wont make it wrong. Since there are two posts covering these mistakes in depth I will link to them from this flowchart guide.

15 mistakes you would unintentionally make with flowcharts (Part 1) (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/part-1-15-mistakes-you-would-unintentionally-make-with-flowcharts/)

15 mistakes you would unintentionally make with flowcharts (Part 2) (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/part-2-15-mistakes-you-would-unintentionally-make-with-flowcharts/)

Effective Use of Flowcharts – Case Studies

A flowchart guide isn't complete without some case studies.Below are three case studies and real life examples on how flowcharts can help you make decisions.

- **Ten Flowchart Ideas for Your Business (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/top-10-flowchart-ideas-for-your-small-business/)** – How flowcharts can be used in making business decision and to optimize the current business processes
- **Analyzing Sales Funnel with Flowcharts (http://creately.com/diagram-type/usage/analyzing-sales-funnel-flowcharts)** – How to analyze the Google analytic sales funnel using a flowchart.
- **Flutterscape Case Study (http://creately.com/diagram-type/usage/case-study-flutterscape)** – How one of our customers used flowcharts to enhance their processes.

Comments and Feedback on the Flowchart Guide

I hope this flowchart guide will help you to come up with awesome flowcharts. Flowcharts are a great way present complex processes in a simple to understand manner and they are used all over the world in many industries. If you have a question about drawing flowcharts or have any suggestions to improve this post, feel free to mention in the comments section.

More Diagram Tutorials

- **Sequence Diagram Tutorial: Complete Guide with Examples (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/sequence-diagram-tutorial/)**
- **Business Process Modeling Tutorial (BPM Guide Explaining Features) (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/business-process-modeling-tutorial/)**
- **Use Case Diagram Tutorial (Guide with Examples) (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/use-case-diagram-tutorial/)**

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swim lane flowcharts (http://creately.com/blog/tag/swim-lane-flowcharts/)

‹ (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/top-5-community-diagrams-week-5/)
›
(http://creately.com/blog/announcements/creately-confluence-plugin-upgrade-fix/)

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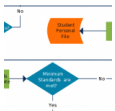

(http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-templates-examples-creately/)
Flowchart Templates Available at Creately (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-templates-examples-creately/)

(http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/top-10-flowchart-ideas-for-your-small-business/)
Top 10 Flowchart Ideas for your Small Business (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/top-10-flowchart-ideas-for-your-small-business/)

(http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/learn-to-unleash-the-power-of-flowcharts/)
Learn to unleash the power of flowcharts (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/learn-to-unleash-the-power-of-flowcharts/)

Author

Nishadha

Software engineer turned tech evangelist. I handle marketing stuff here at Creately including writing blog posts and handling social media accounts. In my spare time I love to read and travel. Check out my personal blog Rumbling Lankan (http://rumblinglankan.com) where I write about online marketing stuff.

View all posts by Nishadha → (http://creately.com/blog/author/nish/)

Comments

Olawale Daniel (http://procomputertech.com)

Hi friend, I love this great drawing tool that you've just shared with us here. Thanks a ton for that and I will start using Creately as well.

06.12.2011 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-31303) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=31303#respond)**

Ankit Saini (http://www.tech2crack.com)

Flowcharts are easy to remember. You give us great guide on it.
Thanks buddy for sharing.

12.12.2011 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-31358) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=31358#respond)**

How to Impress Customers with Collaborative Tools (http://www.mediadesk.co.uk/2012/01/how-to-impress-customers-with-collaborative-tools/)

[…] a great alternative to Visio and the blog has some great articles on diagramming similar to this flowchart guide. 0 […]

21.01.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-31605) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=31605#respond)**

Charan (http://construct.sg)

Thanks Nishadha – you done a great job of putting these together and considering all the pitfalls a flowchart newbie might face.

22.01.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-31612) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=31612#respond)**

Briana Leeder (http://www.canvaswallartmurals.com)

Great writing! I need to draw some flawchart and I will try to follow your suggestions

19.02.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-31760) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=31760#respond)**

Web Development Atlanta (http://www.rockersinfo.com)

Hello

Great explanation and tutorial. i think this is one the best tool i seen for Flow chart. You guyz did very much bench marking and testing and try to make best user friendly . This is 100% perfect too for business and professional use.

22.02.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-31776) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=31776#respond)**

Share and Experience » Minggu Pertama (http://untung-waluyo.blog.ugm.ac.id/2012/04/30/minggu-pertama/)

[…] http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/ (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/) […]

30.04.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-32269) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=32269#respond)**

Jason

hi, I'm doing research on a Gantt chart but I do not know which example/template suits my requirement best any help would be highly appreciated.

25.07.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-32486) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=32486#respond)**

Nishadha

Hi Jason,
Have a look at our Gantt chart templates (http://creately.com/diagram-community/examples/t/gantt) , it's a good place to start your research.

26.07.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-32487) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=32487#respond)**

Ebenezer

im a newbie in flowcharting. pls i need clue to solve these problems:
(1) sketch a flowchart to implement the pseudo-code on moving average of M samples
(2) sketch flowchart to implement the pseudo-code for finding factorial of a number x
(3) sketch a flowchart to implement the pseudo-code on finding the roots of a quadriatic equation ax2+bx+c=0

05.08.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-32515) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=32515#respond)**

Princess27

hey can u make this into a flowchart…and how please tell me the order of symbols needed to us…Draw a flowchart that converts the input value of a dollar into its equivalent peso. Assume that one dollar is equivalent to Php44.50. Display the result.

02.09.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-32596) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=32596#respond)**

omar

im sorry to disturb you but can u tell me how to draw a flowchart that switches between two numbers a,b,please tell me its soooo important ,u can mail me the answer

omar_hammed@hotmail.com (mailto:omar_hammed@hotmail.com)

11.10.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-34112) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=34112#respond)**

MANJU

good and very useful

11.11.2012 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-38268) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=38268#respond)**

Mani Nilchiani

Thanks a lot for the tutorial. Great go to place fot a quickstart.

14.02.2013 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-40702) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=40702#respond)**

huma

hey i want flw diagram of online testing

24.03.2013 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-40746) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=40746#respond)**

meshack

that's good

21.09.2016 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-49467) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=49467#respond)**

User

what this symbol mean:

```
————————————-\
| \
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|_________________/
```

03.04.2013 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-40754) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=40754#respond)**

Uzi

Hi,

We would like to create a document that is made of two parts one next to the other: on the left there will be the code of a software, and on the right there will be a flow chart of the program. Then we would like to link parts of the code on the left to the corresponding element in the flow chart. On top of the page there will be two buttons “>>” and “<>” button would reveal a part from the code on the left, and the corresponding part of the flow chart. A click on the “<> and <<. Is that doable?

The end product should be posted on a web page as html5 (not flash).
Also, we need a designer who knows how to work with Creately, as we don't have the skills or the manpower. Do you have access to a database of freelances who can do the work for us using Creately?

Can you help? Thanks,
Uzi

17.10.2013 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-41175) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=41175#respond)**

ashutosh

hlo
i am student of B.C.A and i have found a lot of difculty with flowchart,
such how to put condition.?

16.12.2013 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-41531) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=41531#respond)**

holly

Excellent post. Thanks

03.01.2014 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-41631) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=41631#respond)**

Dyan Gullas

Im having a hard time answering these. Can you please help me? Im new in flowcharting.

*create a flowchart that will ask for a numeric value and displays the product

*create a flowchart that ask for personal information and displays it.

29.06.2014 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-42919) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=42919#respond)**

Carl Harris

I always stuck and lazy to understand the definition of flowchart symbol but your post is definitely a useful reference.

17.08.2014 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-43335) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=43335#respond)**

Jibrilla Ad

Thanks for the work well done. this is a great guide I learn alot. keep it up.

04.09.2014 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-43470) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=43470#respond)**

jessa monares

i have learned a lot.thanks 4 this guide.

11.09.2014 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-43518) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=43518#respond)**

KAKUUNAH ANTHONY

I have serious problems with flowchart,algorithms n programming.plss need help

08.10.2014 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-43701) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=43701#respond)**

Boateng Michael

Hi, am Michael and am now learning the progaramming please can you help me

27.08.2015 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-46296) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=46296#respond)**

Raj

Thanks a lot for this tutorial. Many of us take it for granted when it comes to flowcharts. But here is some stuff which really claer our doubt. Thanks again!

10.01.2016 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-47328) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=47328#respond)**

petronella chikotsi

l want the steps taken to produce a flowchart

16.02.2016 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-47592) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=47592#respond)**

joekingoli

prepare a program to print all prime numbers between 1-7inclusive

23.05.2016 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-48483) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=48483#respond)**

rogel nathaniel

hi I'm Rogel I'm working on how to make a flowchart on libraries and I don't know where to start. Can you give me some tips?

03.09.2016 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-49334) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=49334#respond)**

jayenmelisse_maceda

hmm,,,, can you help me to my problem,,,,,,,make a pseudocode and flowchart that has a program called "calculator",,

input format

"calculator program"
1.add
2.subtract
3.multiply
4.divide
5.modulus
6.power
0.exit
enter a number of your choice…

guuys i need your help,,,pm me in fb….jayen melisse maceda….

i pass this tommorow

04.09.2016 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-49345) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=49345#respond)**

priscy

can you draw a flow chart for; replacing a
flat tire from your car

13.11.2016 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-49960) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=49960#respond)**

Danish Saifi

Can u please tell me the functions of flowchart symbols?

20.01.2017 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-50525) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=50525#respond)**

Amanda

Hello Danish, you can learn about the functions of flowchart symbols here https://creately.com/diagram-type/objects/flowcharts (https://creately.com/diagram-type/objects/flowcharts)

20.01.2017 (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/#comment-50530) - **reply (http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/flowchart-guide-flowchart-tutorial/?replytocom=50530#respond)**

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