

# Visuals for Instructions

Research shows readers learn better from words and pictures placed closely together. Use the following strategies to help your reader follow your directions:

1. **Analyze** your audience. (You already know the purpose.)
2. **Select a type:** photo, line drawing, etc. Consider whether shadows, highlights, extra details will over-complicate a visual.
3. **Choose an orientation**—prefer a visual that respects the learner’s point of view. Keep the viewpoint and size consistent throughout, or explicitly indicate if either of these has changed. (See Figure 1 at right.)
4. **Show the parts list** before the relevant parts start undergoing the process. (See Figure 2 at right)
5. **Determine which specific “frames”** (views, specific illustrations) the audience will need. In other words, don’t leave out steps that may be important for a novice. At minimum, show the action and the result.
6. **Number and caption** the visuals and/or steps. Or consider a modular set up: group a visual and its corresponding instruction for each step—the step functions as the caption (Figure 4, page 2).
7. **Include guides** for orienting the reader, but don’t clutter the visual. Decide whether to place the guides on or next to the visual. Use the following judiciously:

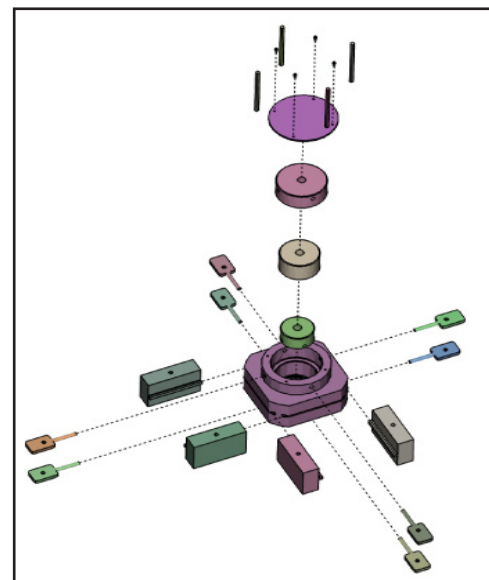
- hands —drawn or photographed (Figures 1, 3 at right).
- landmark labels (right, left, top, side, Area A, etc.)
- part labels (see Figure 3 at right)
- arrows
  - ◊ direction indicators
  - ◊ motion indicators
  - ◊ force indicators (see Figure 5, p. 2)
  - ◊ attention getters (*this end up*)
  - ◊ object focus or identification

8. **Test** instructions and visuals for usability.



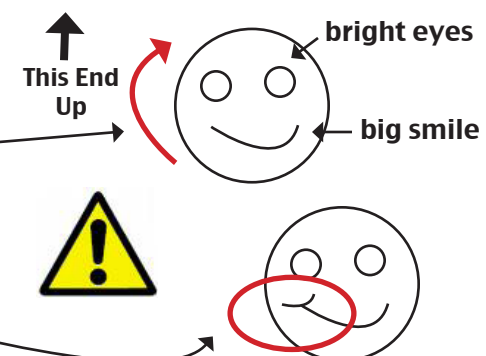
**Figure 1: Photo from IKEA**

[http://www.ikea.com/ms/en\\_US/customer\\_service/assembly\\_instructions.html](http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_US/customer_service/assembly_instructions.html)



**Figure 2: Exploded View**

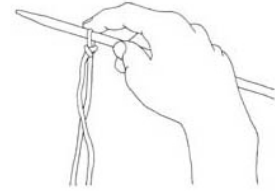
[http://graphics.stanford.edu/papers/assembly\\_instructions/](http://graphics.stanford.edu/papers/assembly_instructions/)



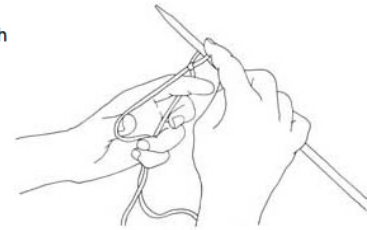
**Figure 3: Arrows and Labels**

## Lesson 2: Learn to Cast On

1. Place your slip knot on a needle. Hold the needle in your right hand pointing to the left. Hold the slip knot in place with your right index finger so it does not fly off the needle.



2. Place your left thumb and index finger in between the two strands of yarn dangling from the needle. (Your thumb should be closer to you and the index finger away from you.) Hold the dangling yarn taut with your ring and pinky fingers.



**Figure 5: Force Indicators**  
(Batman Comic)

**Figure 4: Modular Set Up**  
[http://www.theyarnco.com/cast\\_on.php](http://www.theyarnco.com/cast_on.php)

