BPMN 2.0 symbol guide

The sixteen shapes that cover most business process maps. Open bpmn-starter.bpmn in bpmn.io or Camunda Modeler to see them in use.



Start event

Where the process begins: one trigger, such as "Customer wants to invest". Thin line.



End event

Where a path finishes. Thick line. Give each end a result, such as "Request rejected".



Intermediate event

Something that happens part-way through: a wait, a message, a deadline. Double line.



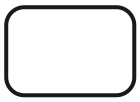
Timer event

A wait for a date or a time to pass, such as "End of day" or "48 hours".



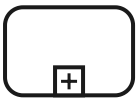
Message event

Sending or receiving a message from someone outside this pool: an email, a file, a call.



Task

One piece of work by one role. Name it verb plus object: "Check balance".



Sub-process

A task with its own detailed map, collapsed to keep the main map readable.



Exclusive gateway

A decision: exactly one path is taken. Ask a question; label every outgoing flow.



Parallel gateway

Split into paths that all run, or wait until all of them have finished.



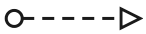
Inclusive gateway

One or more paths are taken, depending on conditions.



Sequence flow

The order of work inside one pool. Solid line.



Message flow

Communication between pools (organisations or systems). Dashed line; never inside one pool.



Pool and lanes

A pool is one organisation or process; each lane is one role or team in it.



Data object

Information a task needs or produces: a form, a report, a file.



Data store

Where information is kept beyond the process: a core banking system, a database.



Text annotation

A note on the map, such as a pain point or a time, linked with a dotted line.

Rules of thumb

- One start event per process, and an end event at the end of every path.
- Name tasks verb plus object; name events with a state ("Request rejected").
- Put the question in the gateway and a label on every flow out of it.
- Draw the as-is process first, with its pain points, before the to-be.
- One lane per role, not per person. Keep the main path left to right.
- Sequence flows stay inside a pool; use message flows between pools.