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Graphical symbols — Test methods — Part 2: Method for testing perceptual quality

*Symboles graphiques — Méthodes d'essai —
Partie 2: Méthode d'essai de la qualité perçue*



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 9186-2 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 145, *Graphical symbols*, Subcommittee SC 1, *Public information symbols*.

This first edition of ISO 9186-2, together with ISO 9186-1, cancels and replaces ISO 9186:2001, which has been technically revised.

ISO 9186 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Graphical symbols — Test methods*:

- *Part 1: Methods for testing comprehensibility*
- *Part 2: Method for testing perceptual quality*

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Introduction

In addition to being comprehensible, a graphical symbol should have sufficient perceptual quality to enable the eventual user population in a practical situation to identify its elements correctly. If the symbol's ultimate meaning is to be understood, it is essential that its elements be identifiable. As an example to clarify this concept of identifiability, consider Figure 1. A person who sees this "lost and found" symbol should be able to report that the symbol consists of a question mark, a glove and an umbrella. If, for example, the glove is seen as a hand, the symbol's identifiability is insufficient. On the other hand, the umbrella would be correctly identified by the description "triangle apex down with a curved line at the top". Stated more generally, an element is considered to be identified correctly, if either an accurate, shape-wise description is given, or the object intended to be depicted is named.



Figure 1 — Graphical symbol for the referent “lost and found” or “lost property”

For designers of graphical symbols, ISO provides guidelines and requirements to support the realization of optimal perceptual quality, such as ISO 22727 and ISO 3864-3.

However, applying requirements and criteria can never guarantee an optimal design outcome. There may be times when there is a need to examine empirically key aspects of proposed graphical symbols. Such a need may arise, for example, during initial design in order to determine how elements within a symbol are identified when the symbol subtends a small visual angle (due to small symbol size and/or large viewing distance), or after comprehension testing has shown there to be difficulties in interpreting a symbol and it is desired to scrutinize the elements making up the symbol as an aid in generating improvements. This part of ISO 9186 describes a test method for assessing the identifiability of symbol elements. The core of this test method is to show a symbol to appropriately representative respondents and have them describe what they see. The respondents' task is to name the elements of the symbol's image content. This procedure will assist in locating those elements within a symbol that may be the source of difficulty.