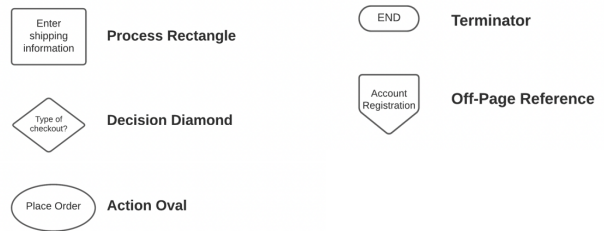# Flow Diagramming Quick Reference

**Flow diagrams** illustrate both primary and alternative task flows (different paths to a successful outcome that a system must support as part of the user experience.) Flow diagraming helps you think through the needed paths and factors driving those paths.

**Adhering to the standard flow diagramming conventions** makes it easier to create diagrams—and your diagrams will be easier for others to consume.

## Flow Diagramming Symbols for UX

| Symbol | Name |
|---|---|
| Enter shipping information | **Process Rectangle** |
| Type of checkout? | **Decision Diamond** |
| Place Order | **Action Oval** |
| END | **Terminator** |
| Account Registration | **Off-Page Reference** |

In a **task flow diagram**, each rectangle describes a step in the process, but the screen-level experience is not yet defined. Each step might represent one or possibly more screens.
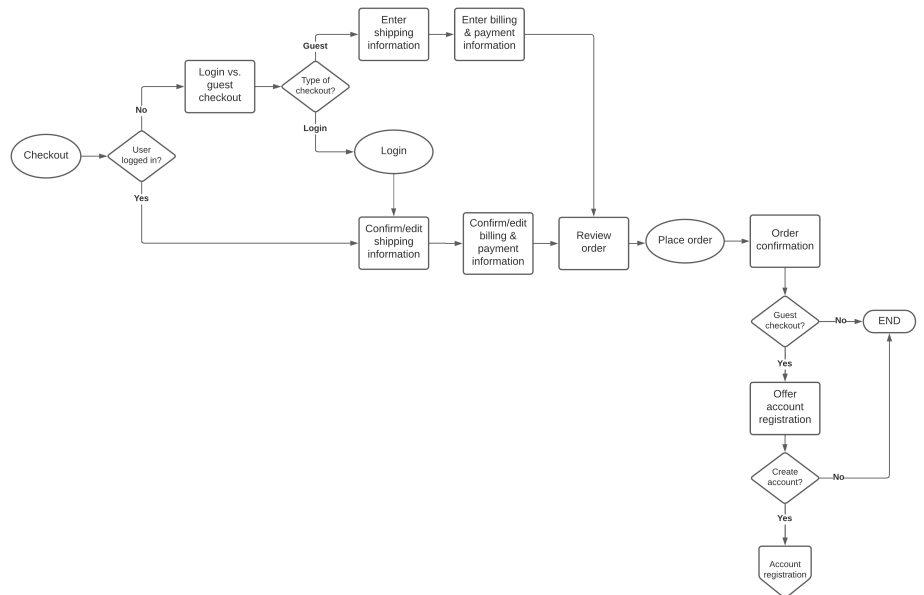


A task flow diagram can, as the design progresses, evolve into a **screen flow diagram**. A screen flow diagram uses screen schematics to illustrate how the flow will be implemented from a design standpoint.
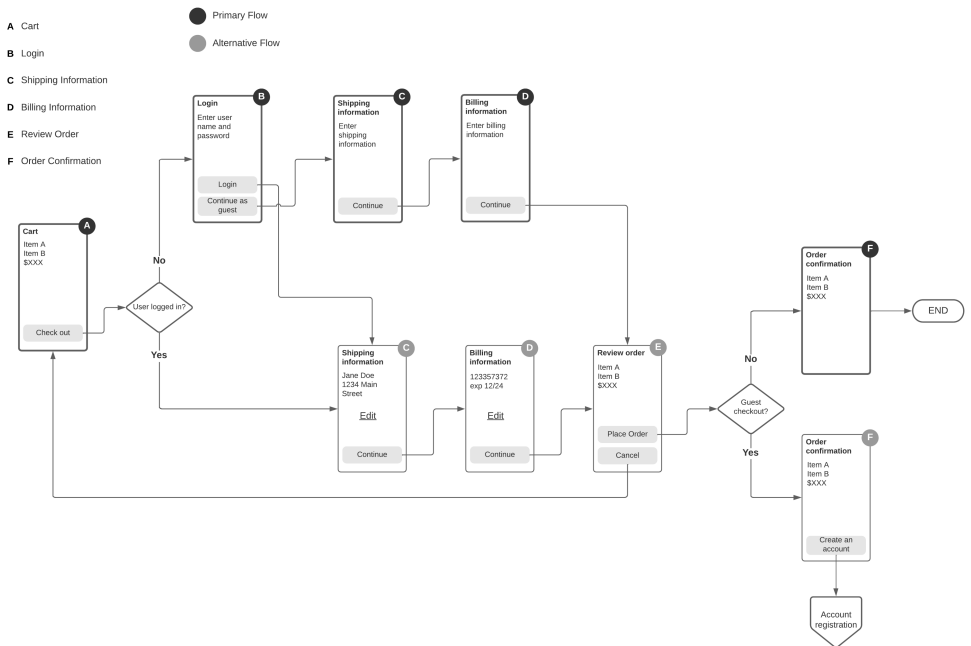


**Are both types of diagrams always necessary?**
In some cases, it makes sense to begin with a task flow diagram, particularly when requirements are unclear. However, you may find that you can work directly with a screen flow diagram for more straightforward flows or updates to existing flows.

**Double-check your work**
Flow diagrams must not have logic flaws or dead-end paths, so be sure to double-check your work—or better yet, walk through it with a colleague. Explaining the flow and logic to others often highlights problems that you wouldn't otherwise identify.