

Environmental & Wayfinding Design — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a working wayfinding project for one real building. As you progress you will run a wayfinding walk, map every decision point, define your destinations and journeys, build a coded sign-type family, write the message schedule that drives fabrication, check it against ADA and ISO standards, and assemble the location plan and drawing package a fabricator can build from. Keep every decision in the worksheets, logs, and templates so the system stays consistent - and so anyone can extend it later from the same source of truth.

How People Find Their Way

Choose your project building and learn to read it as a navigation system using Lynch's elements and the four-stage decision model.

Worksheet: Project Building Brief

Pick one building you will design wayfinding for and record its basics. Keep this brief visible; every later exercise applies to this building.

Building / site name and type (clinic, campus building, retail, office, transit)

Number of floors and approximate floor area

Main public entrances (list each)

Primary visitor types (e.g., first-time patients, students, shoppers, staff)

Top 5-6 destinations people come to reach

Existing wayfinding standard or brand guideline to honour (name it, or none)

Known governing codes (ADA / BS 8300 / AS 1428 / local sign ordinance)

Exercise: Read the Space with Lynch's Five Elements

Walk or study a plan of your building and label its paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. Then find the gaps - where the building itself could do more navigating before any sign is added.

- What are the main paths (corridors, concourses, walkways) people move along?

- What are the key nodes (lobby, atrium, lift bank, major junction) where people pause and decide?

- Which areas read as distinct districts, and which have no identity, name, or colour?

- What landmarks exist that people could navigate by - and where is there none, so you might create one?

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- Which single Lynch-element improvement (a district colour, a clearer node, a new landmark) would cut the most sign-reading work?
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Exercise: Trace One Journey Through the Four Stages

Take your single most important visitor journey and walk it in your mind, naming what the visitor needs at each of the four wayfinding stages.

- Orientation: at the entrance, how does the visitor work out where they are relative to their goal?

 - Route decision: at each junction, what choice must they make and is the information there?

 - Route monitoring: on long stretches with no junction, what reassures them they are still right?

 - Destination recognition: how do they know they have arrived at the exact place?

 - Where in this journey did you have to guess - those guesses are your first sign locations?
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Checklist: Wayfinding Mindset Orientation

- I can name the four wayfinding stages: orientation, route decision, route monitoring, destination recognition
- I understand a sign belongs at a decision point, not a blank corridor
- I can name Lynch's five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, landmarks
- I have framed wayfinding as a measurable cost (time lost, missed appointments, lost sales) for my stakeholder
- My project building, entrances, and top destinations are written down, not assumed

Analysing a Building and Planning Routes

Audit the existing condition, then convert the floor plan into destinations, a circulation network, decision points, and a consistent naming system.

Exercise: Run the Wayfinding Walk

Attempt 3-4 realistic journeys as a first-time visitor (or recruit one) and record what helped, what was missing, and where confusion happened. Photograph every existing sign.

- At which exact spots did you stop, double back, or feel unsure where to go?

 - Which existing signs were missing, wrong, contradictory, or out of date?

 - Where is the same place called by two or more different names?

 - Is the step-free accessible route signed, and are tactile/Braille signs present where required?

 - Which three pain points, tied to specific locations, are the most urgent to fix?
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Worksheet: Destination Hierarchy & Naming Sheet

List every destination, group it by level of importance, and fix one approved name for each. This controlled vocabulary must be used on every sign, map, and letter.

Primary destinations (major reasons people come)

Secondary destinations (sub-areas within the primaries)

Amenities repeated everywhere (toilets, lifts, exits, cafe, ATM)

Approved single name for each (the term the public uses)

Old or internal names to retire (so they never appear on a sign)

Floor numbering convention (is ground = 0 or 1? state it)

Room numbering logic (does the number encode the floor? odd/even sides?)

Worksheet: Decision-Point & Journey Map

For each of your top journeys, list every decision point from car park to arrival and write the exact message the visitor needs there. These messages become rows in your message schedule.

Journey name (e.g., Arriving for an X-ray)

Decision point 1 - location and message needed

Decision point 2 - location and message needed

Decision point 3 - location and message needed

Vertical moves passed (lift / stair / escalator) and how they are signed

Any point where this journey conflicts with another (one sign serving several)

Sign type likely needed at each point (orientation map / directional / reassurance / ID)

Checklist: Analysis Complete

- Existing signs inventoried with location, message, type, and condition
- Pain points marked on the plan with the recorded confusion at each
- All destinations listed and grouped into primary / secondary / amenity
- One approved name fixed per destination (controlled vocabulary)
- Circulation network (primary, secondary, service routes) drawn over the plan
- Top 5-6 journeys traced with a message written at every decision point
- Floor and room numbering conventions decided and documented

Sign Types, Messages, and Standards

Build a coded sign-type family, write the message schedule that drives fabrication, and check every sign against ADA and ISO standards.

Worksheet: Sign-Type Family Definition

Sort every sign your analysis calls for into the four families, then define reusable sign types with codes. Each sign type gets one drawing and is reused at many locations.

Identification types (e.g., ID.1 room sign, ID.2 department entry) - purpose and where used

Directional types (e.g., D.1 overhead, D.2 wall directional) - purpose and where used

Informational types (e.g., I.1 directory, I.2 you-are-here map) - purpose and where used

Regulatory/safety types (e.g., R.1 exit, R.2 statutory) - purpose and where used

Which types must be tactile + Braille (signs naming permanent rooms)?

Confirm every journey from Module 2 is covered by at least one type

Total count of distinct sign types (aim for a small, reusable set)

Exercise: Draft the Message Schedule

Using the provided template, create one row for every physical sign in the project. Get the exact wording approved by the client before anything is fabricated.

- Does every sign have a unique sign number that matches a tag on the location plan?

- Is the message text written exactly as it will read, line by line, spelling checked?

- Are arrow directions specified for every directional sign?

- Is each sign single- or double-sided, with any back-to-back differences noted?

- Sorted by sign type, how many of each do you need (your bill of quantities)?

Worksheet: ADA & ISO Compliance Check

For each tactile identification sign and each symbol used, confirm the headline standards. Fix any item that fails before fabrication.

Raised characters uppercase sans serif, 5/8 in to 2 in high, raised $\geq 1/32$ in? (Y/N)

Grade 2 Braille present beneath tactile text with domed dots? (Y/N)

Tactile text mounted 48-60 in above floor (60 in baseline rule)? (Y/N)

Mounted on latch side of door (or nearest adjacent wall)? (Y/N)

Characters contrast with background, non-glare finish? (Y/N)

Symbols drawn from ISO 7001 / AIGA-DOT / ISO 7010, not invented? (list which)

Pictogram field ≥ 6 in high with text label below the field? (Y/N)

Checklist: Sign System Ready for Fabrication Spec

- Every needed sign sorted into one of the four families
- A small set of coded sign types defined, each with a clear purpose
- Message schedule complete: number, type, location, exact message, arrows, notes
- Client has approved the actual wording in the schedule
- Tactile/Braille signs meet ADA 703 character, Braille, height, and location rules
- All symbols use recognised standard sets (ISO 7001 / AIGA / ISO 7010)
- Bill of quantities (count per sign type) produced from the schedule

Materials, Branding, and Handoff

Specify materials and mounting, lock the visual brand system, and assemble the location plan and drawing package a fabricator builds from.

Worksheet: Materials & Mounting Specification

For each sign type, specify what it is made of, how the graphics are applied, and how it mounts. Specify for the worst conditions the sign will face.

Sign type code

Substrate (acrylic / aluminium / Dibond / glass / timber / foamed PVC)

Graphic method (cut vinyl / digital print / screen print / routed or photopolymer tactile)

Finish (matte/non-glare, painted, brushed, illuminated face-lit/halo-lit)

Mounting method (flush / standoff / projecting / suspended / post-and-panel / applied)

Mounting height and clearance (60 in tactile band / 7-8 ft overhead underside)

Interior or exterior, and any UV / weather / corrosion requirements

Changeable insert needed (for names/functions that will change)? (Y/N)

Worksheet: Spatial Brand & Visual System Sheet

Lock the visual rules so every sign type shares a family resemblance and carries the brand. Record them in a standards manual.

Primary wayfinding typeface and sizes (primary / secondary / tertiary messages)

Colour palette with exact references (brand + any district/zone colours)

Contrast and colour-blind check done on every text/background pair? (Y/N)

One arrow design and one symbol set chosen and used everywhere

Layout grid (margins, alignment, spacing) shared across sign types

Zone/colour-coding scheme, each colour tied to a name AND number

Where the signage standards manual lives (the source of truth)

Exercise: Assemble the Fabricator Handoff

Pull the package together and pressure-test it: could a fabricator quote, build, and install from these documents without phoning you?

- Is there a signage location plan per floor with numbered tags matching the schedule?
- Does each sign type have a dimensioned drawing with type, colour, material, mounting, and code notes?
- Are production-ready artwork files supplied in the format each method needs (vector for cut vinyl, high-res for print)?
- Is there a bill of quantities and an installation sequence / phasing plan?
- Will you proof a first article (especially tactile/Braille and exact wording) before the full run?

Checklist: Handoff & Close-Out Complete

- Materials, finishes, fixings, and mounting heights specified per sign type
- Visual system locked: typeface, colour, arrow, symbol set, layout grid
- Signage standards / design intent manual written for future extension
- Location plans, message schedule, and sign-type drawings cross-reference cleanly
- First article / prototype approved before full fabrication
- Installation done to the plan, then snagged for correctness, level, height, and damage
- As-installed schedule, plan, and manual handed to facilities for maintenance

Your Action Plan

1. Pick one project building and write the Project Building Brief - entrances, visitor types, top destinations, governing codes.
2. Run a wayfinding walk on 3-4 real journeys, photograph existing signs, and mark every pain point on the plan.
3. List all destinations, group them primary/secondary/amenity, and fix one approved name for each (controlled vocabulary).
4. Draw the circulation network on the plan and trace your top 5-6 journeys, writing the message needed at every decision point.
5. Decide floor and room numbering conventions so the numbers themselves help people locate rooms.
6. Sort every needed sign into the four families and define a small set of coded sign types (ID.1, D.1, I.1, R.1...).
7. Write the message schedule - one row per sign with number, type, location, exact message, arrows - and get the wording approved.
8. Check tactile signs against ADA 703 (raised characters, Grade 2 Braille, 60 in baseline, latch-side, contrast) and use only ISO/AIGA symbols.
9. Specify materials, graphic method, finish, and mounting for each sign type, designing for the worst conditions it will face.
10. Lock the visual system (typeface, colour, arrow, symbol set, grid) and write a signage standards manual.
11. Produce the location plans and sign-type drawings, cross-referenced to the schedule, with

production-ready artwork files.

12. Proof a first article, install to the plan, snag the result, and hand over the as-installed package to facilities.

