

### **Draw great visual instructions**

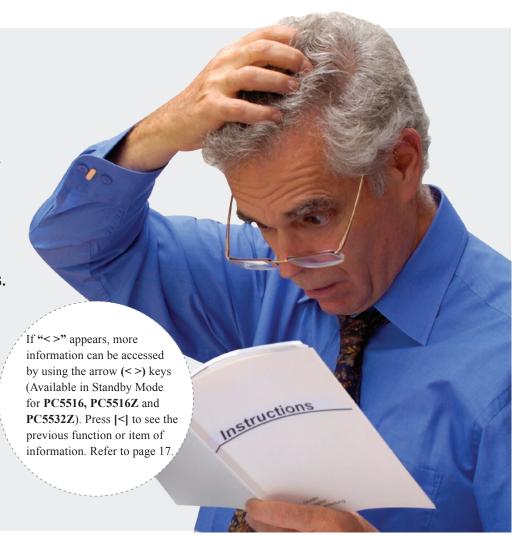
Have something to demonstrate or explain? Don't say it; show it!

Ever bogged down reading a TV manual? Assembly instructions for a folding table? Directions for your food processor? We have, too! Even written in plain English, they're too darn verbal. We live in a visual world. To convey directions intuitively (not to mention globally), we need to use visual language.

We need to speak in pictures.

Key to easy production is to draw from snapshots. Drawing allows you to arrange and rearrange the action quickly with no regard for details. Once a snapshot is made, you are immediately free to pick out important parts, change positions, exaggerate key actions and so forth to make the message clear.

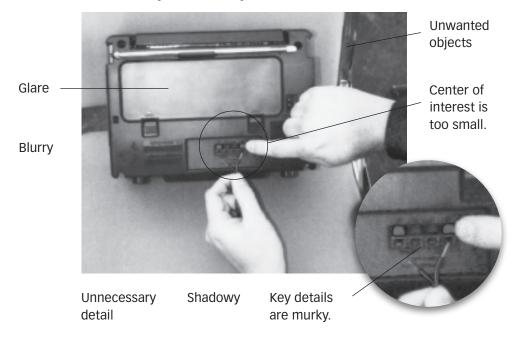
Let's see what we can do.



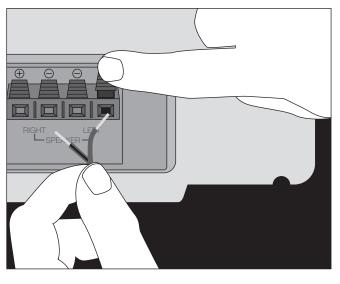
### **Work from photos**

Small digital cameras are great tools for composing visual instructions, because you can work quickly and fluidly, without regard for lighting and other details.

### **Before Compose with a photo**



### After Clarify with a drawing



Sharp Center of interest is drawn larger than life

size for extra clarity.

Clear

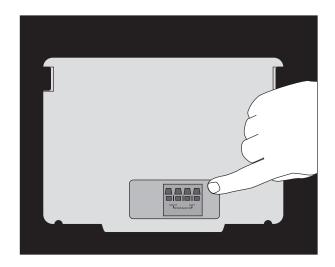
Contrast of value (black, gray, white) clarify the action.

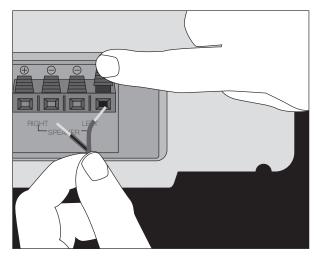
Unnecessary details are now gone.

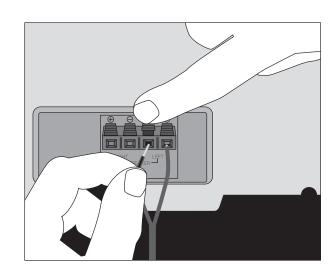
Designer has full control

### Picture the action

Make a storyboard. Before drawing, take a series of shots and ask, "does the series *as a whole* express the action clearly?" Then ask, "does each shot make its point clearly?"





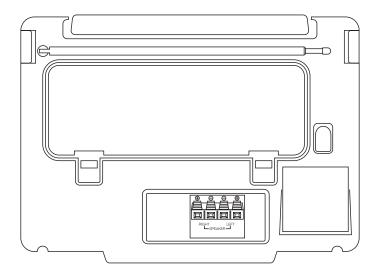


While a simple action can be presented as a single panel, instructions are usually a multipanel sequence of step-by-steps—do this, then that, then the other (above). Illustrated hands are excellent communicators! Although arrows and pointers can do the job, hands are more lifelike and allow us to project ourselves into the action. Hand action in a sequence has another benefit—it appears to be moving, which is how we naturally see things.

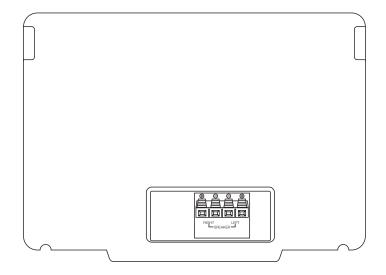
Plan your action thoroughly. Go overboard; too many pictures are preferable to too few. Import your snapshots into your drawing program, and begin tracing. Things to watch for . . .

### ®

### Draw only the parts you need



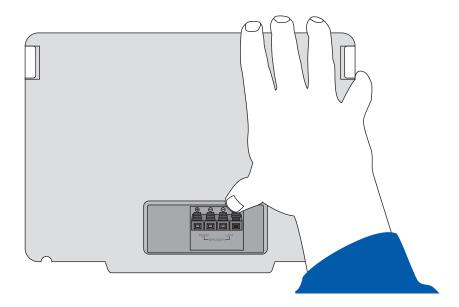




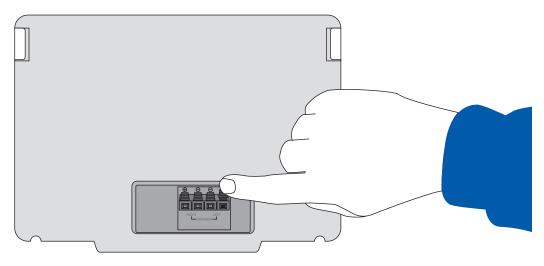
**Think minimum.** At each step in a sequence, draw only the parts pertinent to that step—in this case a mere outline of the radio and the plug-in panel. Also draw any parts needed to orient the object—

in other words, to clue the reader where he is. Above, the small rectangles in the upper corners tell the reader this is the back of the radio. Less radical (but busier) is to gray out the extra parts (left).

### Find the best pose

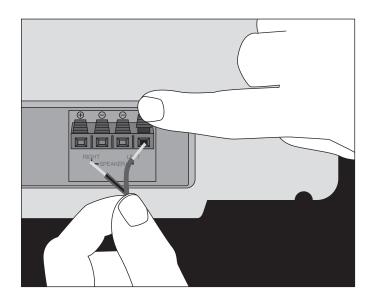


**Unclear** In real life you'd probably press the button this way—by gripping the radio so you don't push it off your desk. But this action does not translate into a clear instruction.

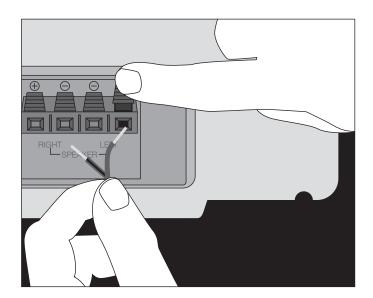


It's clearer this way. Hands are so expressive that every nuance conveys information, so careful work at this step is key to creating clear instructions. Be sure to look at the pictures you make; although *you* know you were pushing the button, the viewer won't unless you've captured the action visually. Experiment; sometimes the most expressive action will feel awkward.

### **Zoom in or exaggerate**



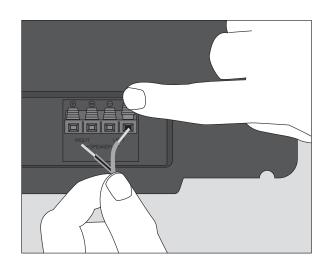
**Close, closer, closest.** Crop to bring the action up close, but watch for two things: Leave a large enough portion of the image to not disorient the reader—note above how the contour of the radio's bottom edge tells you where you are—and show as much of the hands as possible.

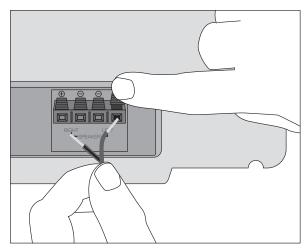


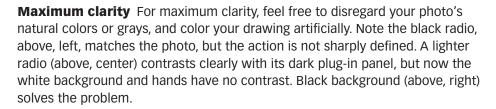


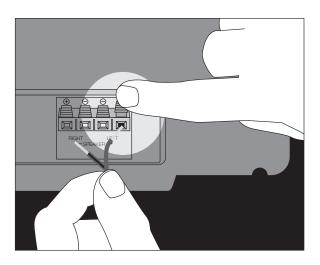
**Exaggerate** In an effort to show detail, the inset (left) is cropped too close. A better approach is to enlarge only one part of the image; (above) the plug-in panel is enlarged relative to the rest of the drawing.

### Highlight



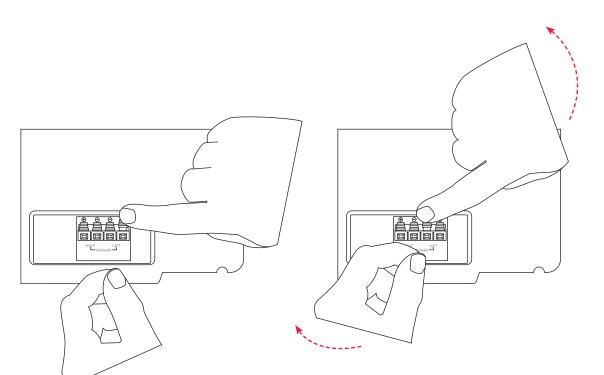


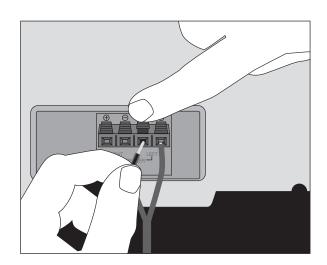




**Highlight the action** A useful way to highlight action in a dark or confined area is with a spotlight. Create a lighter version of the image, then paste it inside a circle.

### **Move and reuse parts**

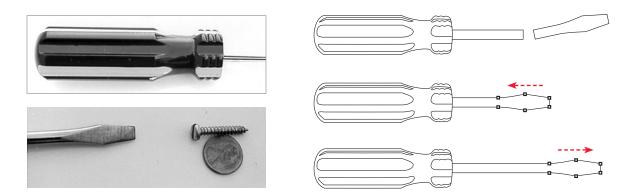




Look for ways to use the same parts more than once. Starting from the previous image, the hands above are easily rotated and repositioned to illustrate the next step—plugging a wire into the second socket. Reusing parts saves drawing time, but be careful; if your old images don't express the new action with equal clarity, take another snapshot.

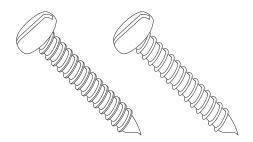
### ®

### **Modify, simplify**

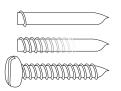


**Modify** Drawing gives you the freedom to modify! The screwdriver above was drawn in two pieces from separate photos and spliced. It was then easy to shorten or lengthen the shaft. Typically, you would do this to fit a space or clarify an action. You don't need to copy a photo literally.

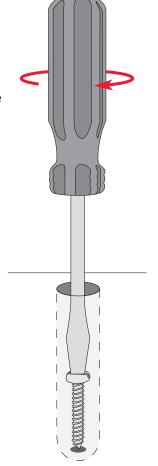
**Simplify** Think minimum. Wherever you can simplify an object without altering the reader's perception of it, do so. Right, the threads have been reduced from three lines to two.



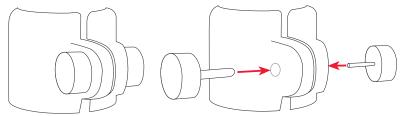
Repetitive parts, patterns and actions can often be drawn quickly. Here, a single thread is duplicated to create the screw.



**Create x-ray views** Your drawings can reveal parts and actions the camera cannot see—an indispensable asset; here, the drawing illustrates access to a recessed screw.







**Exploded views** show how parts fit together. Above, we traced the assembled part from a photo, then added pins to the knobs and hung them in midair. For more complex objects you may need to work from several separate photos.

An excellent way to create assembly instructions is to first show an exploded view of the parts, then follow with the steps of fitting them together.

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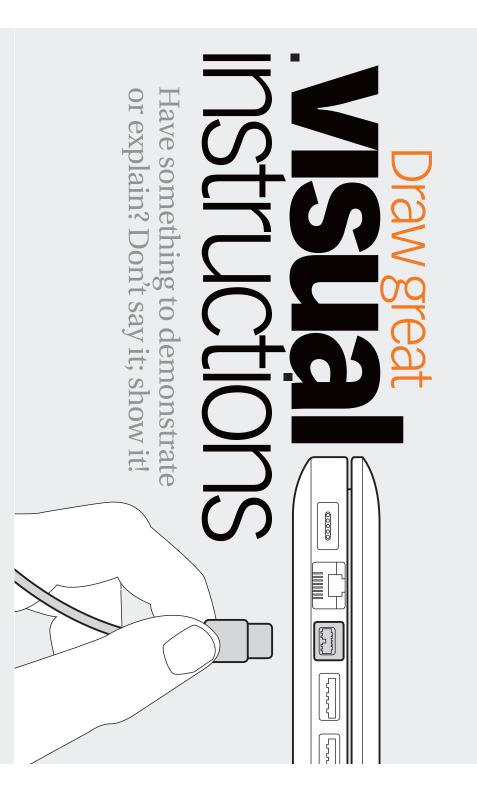


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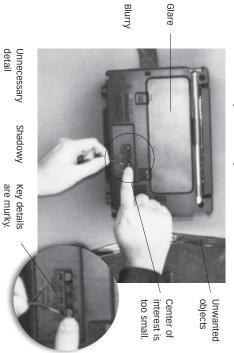
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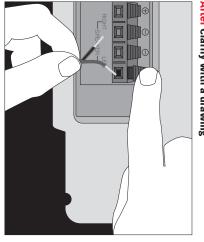
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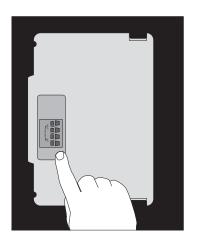
gone. details are now Unnecessary

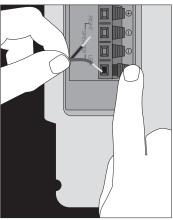
full control Designer has

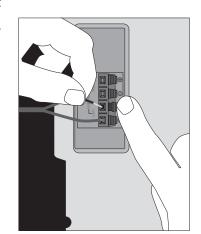
Sharp size for extra clarity. Center of interest is drawn larger than life Clear

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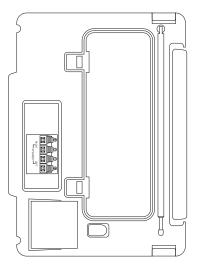


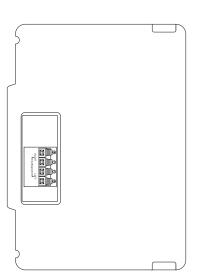
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# Draw only the parts you need





Extra parts divide the reader's attention.

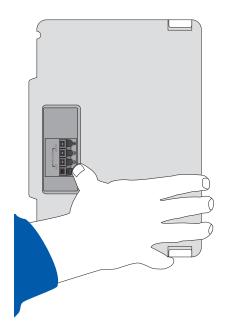
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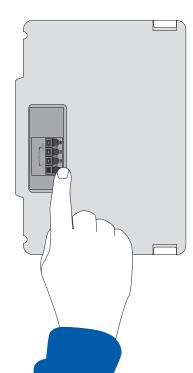
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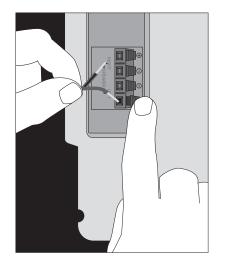


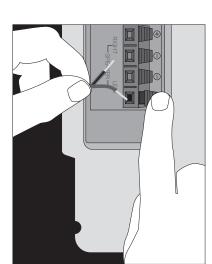
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## Zoom in or exaggerate



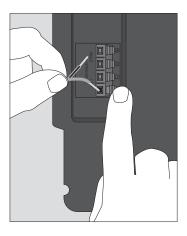


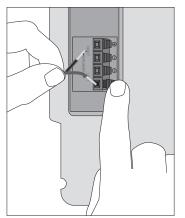
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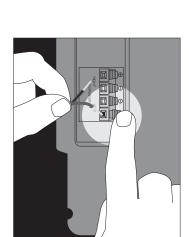


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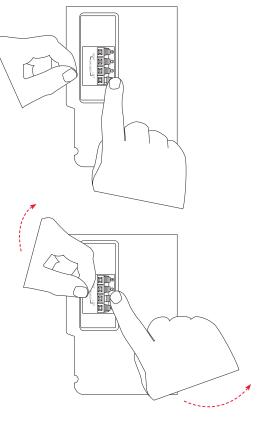




Maximum clarity For maximum clarity, feel free to disregard your photo's natural colors or grays, and color your drawing artificially. Note the black radio, above, left, matches the photo, but the action is not sharply defined. A lighter radio (above, center) contrasts clearly with its dark plug-in panel, but now the white background and hands have no contrast. Black background (above, right) solves the problem.

**Highlight the action** A useful way to highlight action in a dark or confined area is with a spotlight. Create a lighter version of the image, then paste it inside a circle.

## Move and reuse parts

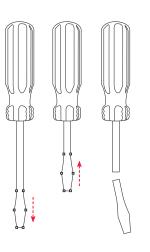




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### **Modify, simplify**





**Wodify** Drawing gives you the freedom to modify! The screwdriver above was drawn in two pieces from separate photos and spliced. It was then easy to shorten or lengthen the shaft. Typically, you would do this to fit a space or clarify an action. You don't need to copy a photo literally.

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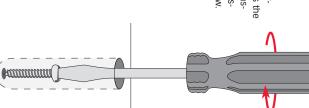


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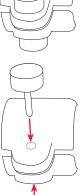
# Create x-ray views, explode parts

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