Reading: small signs and labels

English Pre-A1 starter

What this topic teaches

Signs are some of the first English words you will read on your own: on doors, in shops and at stations. Most signs are one short word in **capital letters**.

- You will read six signs: *OPEN*, *CLOSED*, *PUSH*, *PULL*, *EXIT* and *QUIET*.
- You will read a sign together with a place: *Room 4: OPEN*.
- Memory hook: read the **word**, not the colour. A green sign can still say *CLOSED*.

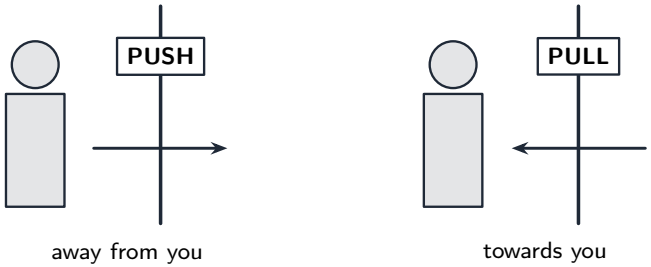
Open and closed

Sign	Meaning	Chinese
OPEN	you can go in now	
CLOSED	you cannot go in now	

- *OPEN* and *CLOSED* tell you the **status** of a place: what it is like now.
- The status can change. Room 2 can be *OPEN* in the morning and *CLOSED* in the evening.

Push and pull

Sign	Meaning	Chinese
PUSH	move the door away from you	
PULL	move the door towards you	



PUSH moves the door away from you; PULL moves it towards you

- Look at the door and your hand: *push* moves away from your body, *pull* moves towards it.
- One door can say *PUSH* on one side and *PULL* on the other side.

Exit and quiet

Sign	Meaning	Chinese
EXIT	the way out	
QUIET	please make no noise	

- *EXIT* shows a way out of a building. It is not a room number and not a shop name.
- *QUIET* is a request: speak softly or not at all. You often see it in a library.

A sign with a place

Many signs give a place and a status together.

Label	Read it as
Room 4: OPEN	Room four is open.
Shop: CLOSED	The shop is closed.
Library: QUIET	Be quiet in the library.

- Keep each sign with its own place. If Room 2 says *CLOSED* and Room 3 says *OPEN*, do not swap them.
- To write a sign, give the place, then the status: *Room 5: OPEN*.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **CLOSED, not CLOSE.** The sign says *CLOSED* with *-d*. *CLOSE* on a sign is a different word and looks wrong.
- △ **PUSH and PULL both start with P-U.** Read the whole word. *PUSH* ends in *-SH*, *PULL* ends in *-LL*.
- △ **Do not guess from the colour.** Signs use many colours. Only the word tells you the meaning.
- △ **EXIT is the way out, not the way in.** On a door it never means the way in.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. A shop door says *CLOSED*. Can you go in now? – **No.** *CLOSED* means you cannot go in now.
2. You want to open a door towards you. Which sign matches? – **PULL**.
3. Which sign shows the way out? – **EXIT**.
4. Make it correct: *Room 3: CLOSE*. – **Room 3: CLOSED**.
5. Write a sign: the library is open. – **Library: OPEN**.

■ Practice: match the sign

(6) You are in a library. The sign says _____.
(7) The door must move away from you. The sign says _____.
(8) The shop is open now. The sign says _____.

Answers. 6 **QUIET**. 7 **PUSH**. 8 **OPEN**.