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Exercise 05: fix a poster

🕒 2 min read · Updated 25 September 2026

Change one caption in a poster spec, regenerate the poster, see the drift check pass and the walkthrough update — and learn why a poster is generated from a spec and pinned to the code it describes.

<https://docs.gurbanisoul.com/exercises/05-fix-a-poster/>

Goal. Make a small, correct improvement to a poster and see every check that keeps posters honest. **Needs.** the local setup with docs-site dependencies (make docs once). 30 minutes.

1. Find something to improve

Open any poster page — [the request lifecycle](#) is a good one — and walk it with *Next*. Find a caption that could be clearer, or a fact you can check against the file its footer names. (If you find a fact that is *wrong*, that is a bug: open an issue and fix it for real.)

2. Edit the spec, not the picture

Posters are generated: never edit docs/diagrams/posters/*.svg by hand. Edit the spec — docs-site/posters/08-request-lifecycle.mjs for that poster — change the caption in steps, and regenerate:

```
make posters
git status --short docs/diagrams/posters
```

Expected: the poster's .svg and .steps.json show as modified. Now the drift check:

```
cd docs-site && node scripts/build-posters.mjs --check
```

Expected: build-posters: every poster is current. Try the reverse: edit the .steps.json by hand and run the check again — it reports the file as stale, because the spec is the source of truth. Regenerate to fix it.

3. See it

```
make docs-dev
```

Open the page, press *Next* to your step, and read your caption. Then run the gate the pull request would run:

```
make docs-check
```

Expected: 0 error(s). If you made the text too wide for its box, `make posters` told you already — the kit refuses text that overflows or is smaller than 16 px.

Self-check

You want to change a poster. What do you edit?

- ☐ The spec in docs-site/posters/ and regenerate
- ☐ The SVG in docs/diagrams/posters/
- ☐ The steps JSON only

A poster's footer names a file that has been deleted. Who notices?

- ☐ tools/docs_check.py, on every pull request
- ☐ Nobody; footers are decoration
- ☐ The lightbox