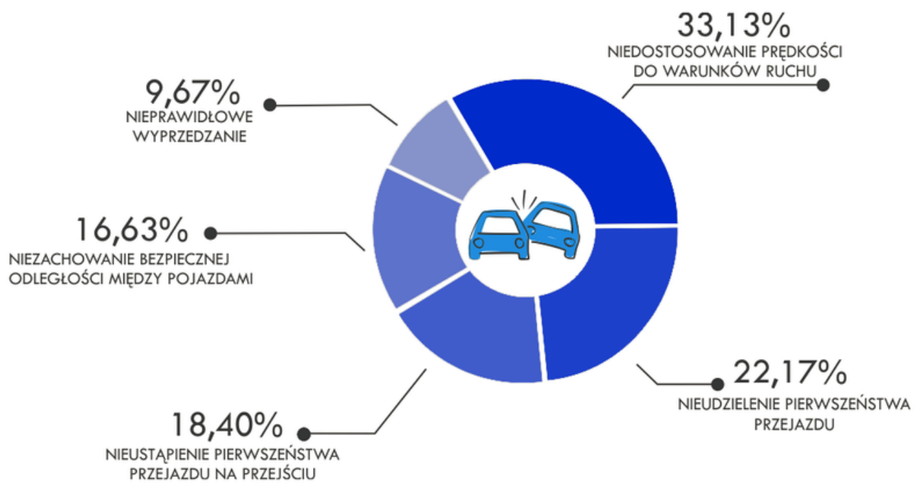
CREATE MORE READABLE DATA VISUALIZATIONS USING SIMPLE BAR PLOTS

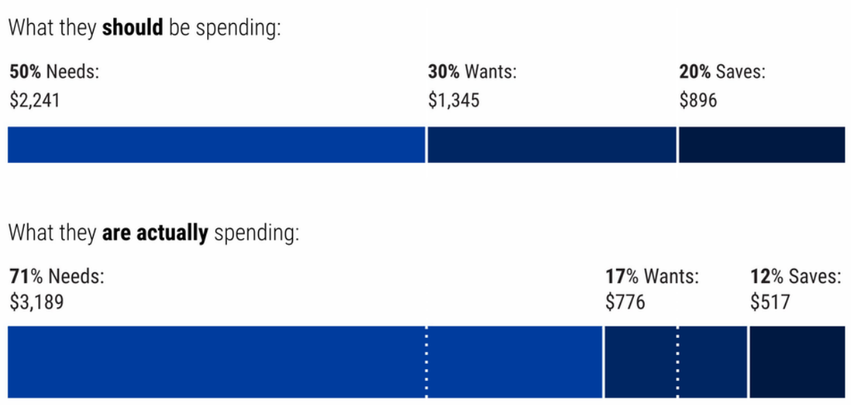
Problems with donut chart

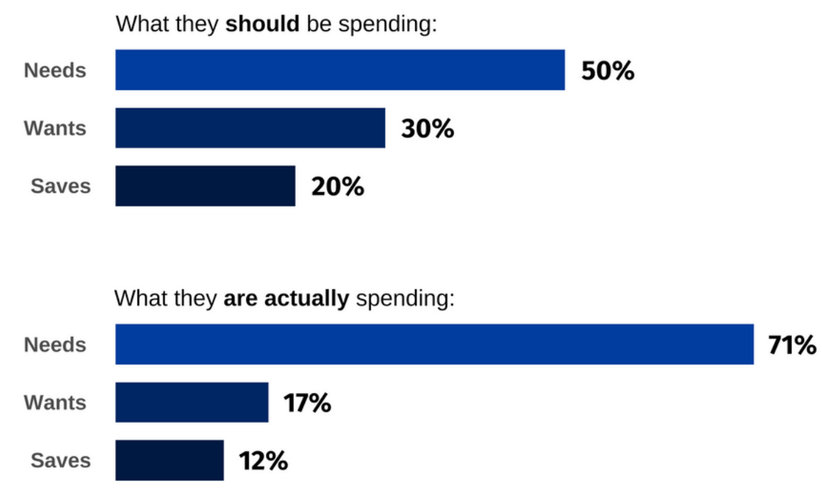
Although donut chart looks correct at first glance, it causes major problems. Comparing sizes of different groups is error-prone. Viewers are focused on the image in the center of the chart, while useful data is provided in the background.



Good looking does not mean more readable

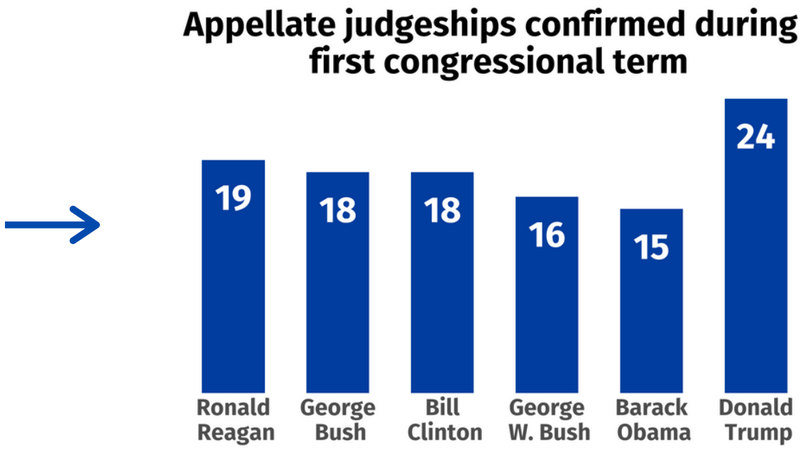
While one could argue that this plot looks great, it also has some flaws. Firstly, the second bar is wider which skews the perception. It is really hard to rate the proportions of the middle bar - the dotted lines only kind of help with the bars on the sides.





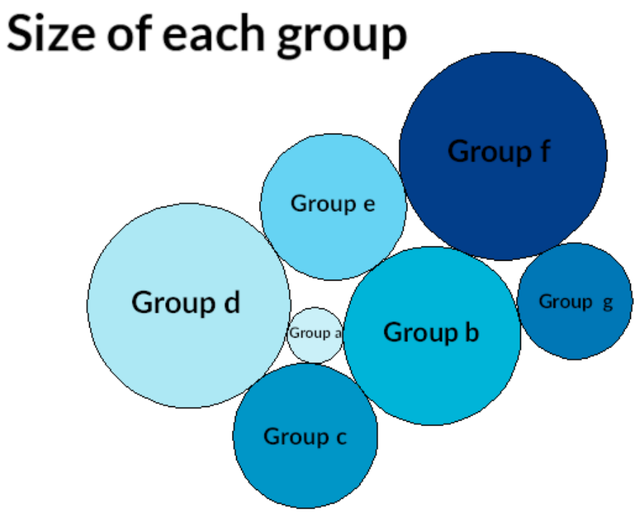
A great example of what not to do

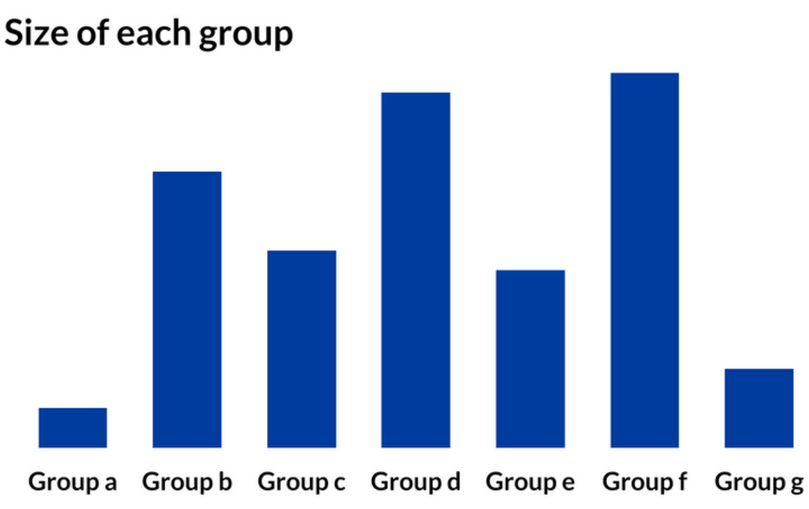
This is a political chart, so the point is to exaggerate the size of the last gavel. To do this, the author did many things you should not do. Probably the most important one is the scale starting at the minimal value and bars placed at an angle. There are also mistakes that do not rely on the manipulation act - the labels are really small, and the whole gavel theme, while it gains readers attention, is redundant.



Heights are easier to compare

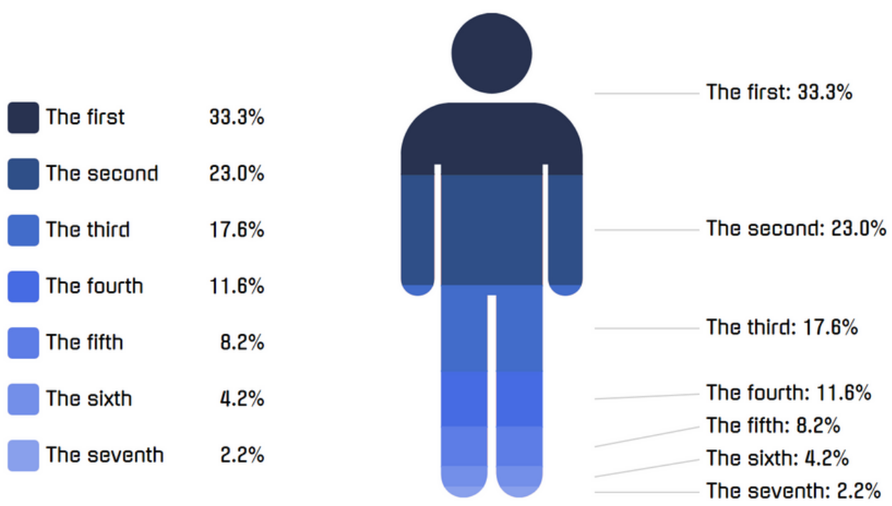
Thanks to the bar plot on the right we can effortlessly say that the order of the groups sorted by size is a, g, e, c, b, d, f. Would it be so simple with the bubbles?

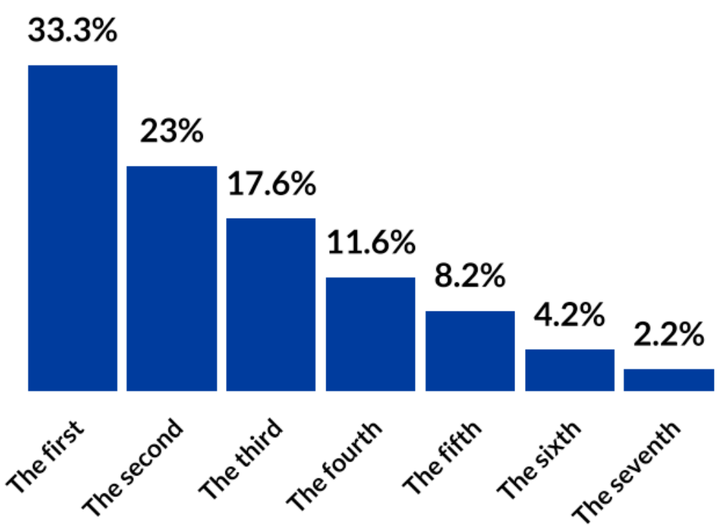




Avoid non-standard shapes

The human-shape plot might look interesting, however due to the different shape of each section it is highly difficult to approximate its value. The bar plot helps the reader to quicly distinguish the proportions between the bars.





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