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Curriculum

Professional Foundations ^

Average: 97.49% v

Week 5 ≡

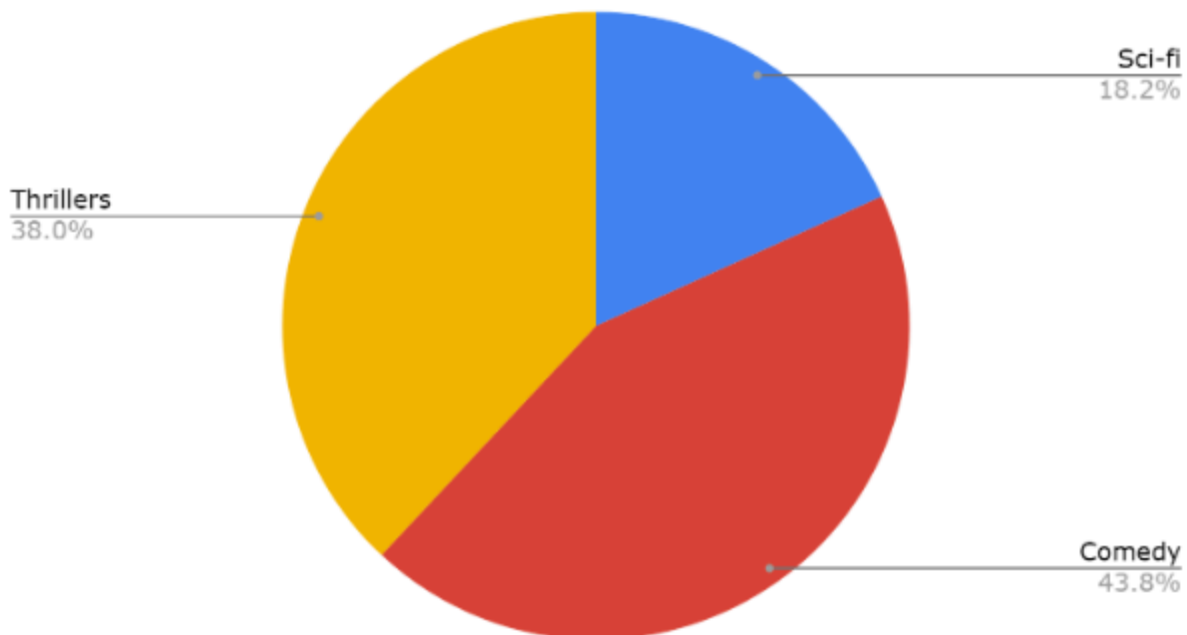
Basic Types of Charts Pt 3

Pie Charts

A pie chart is a **circular graph** that shows the relative contribution that different categories contribute to an overall total. They are generally **used to show percentage or proportional data** and usually, the percentage represented by each category is provided next to the corresponding slice of pie. The total of all the percentages shown in the pie chart should be 100. Pie charts are good for displaying data for around **6 categories or fewer**. When there are more categories it is difficult for the eye to distinguish between the relative sizes of the different sectors and so the chart becomes difficult to interpret. Pie charts are most commonly misused. If you are trying to compare data, leave it to bar charts.

See below some images of a pie chart.

Movie Genre Preference of Students at ALU



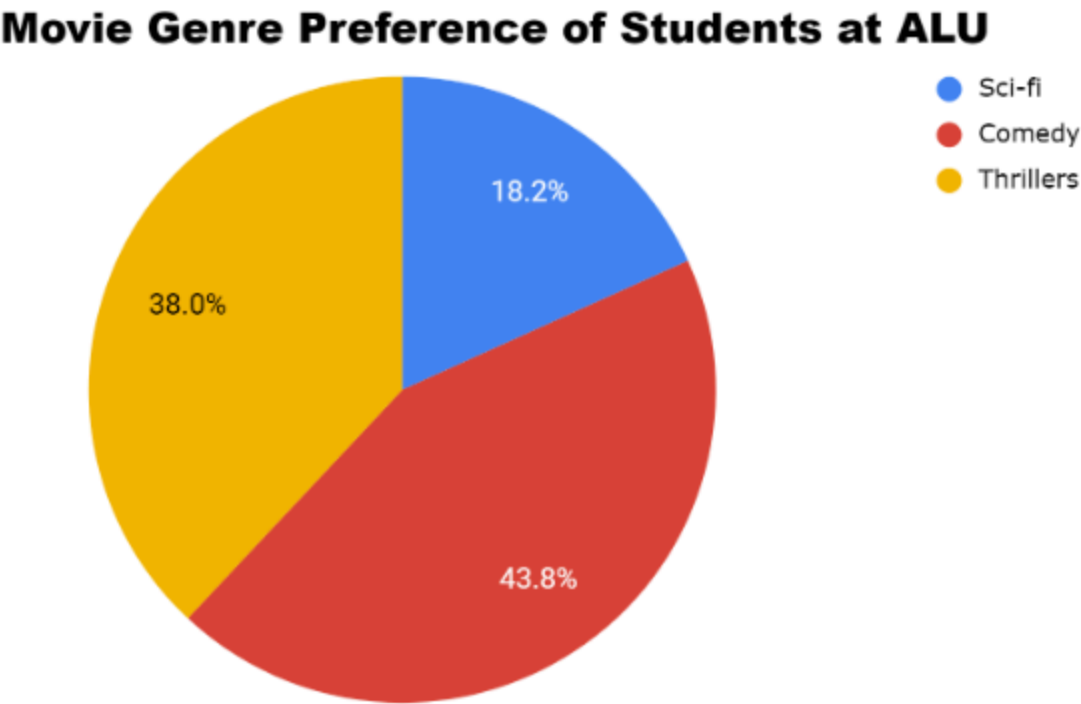
If you are following the content closely, you will realise that pie charts break a few rules you learned about the basic structure of the chart. For starters:



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- Again, because pie charts have no axes, they do not have axes labels. They do, however, have category/section/pie labels as seen from the above chart. "Sci-fi", "Thrillers" and "Comedy" are category labels.
- Finally, each category has a data label as shown by the percentages in the above chart.

Sometimes, pie charts are also shown this way:



In the image above, the sections of the pie only have the data labels on them while the section/category labels are shown as some sort of key on the side. This key is called **the legend**. The legend is helpful when each category/section/pie has a unique and differentiating colour.

That’s a lot of charts and graphs. The table below is a quick summary to help you choose the most appropriate type of chart to use in any given scenario.

Chart Type	Best Used
Column Charts	When you have numerical data that splits nicely into different categories.
Bar Charts	When you have numerical data that splits nicely into different categories but the category titles are long
Clustered Bar Chart	When you need to compare values and identify patterns or trends across different categories or subcategories.
Line Charts	When you have numerical data and you want to view the trends in the data over time.
Pie Charts	When you want to show relative proportions – or percentages – of information for 6 categories or fewer

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