Creating Infographics with Canva

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Digital Integration Teaching Initiative
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ENGW 3302 | Spring 2026

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Workshop Agenda

- Learn about how to convey information using infographics
- Start making infographics using Canva, a free online tool
- Review best practices for visualizing data
- Consider accessibility in designing infographics

Slides and handouts available at
https://bit.ly/sp26-fuchs-engw3302-infographics

SDG Report 2020

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Infographics

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Infographics Basics

- Infographics **concisely** convey information to different audiences **across platforms and media**
- They tell a story with **structure** and **sequence** through images, numbers, charts, graphs, and/or text
- They have a **narrow** focus, **short** titles, and **cite** their information
- They consider **accessibility**: make sure text is not cut off or covered by image, add descriptive alt-text to your infographic image
- For more information on **accessibility**, please see: **DITI accessibility handout**

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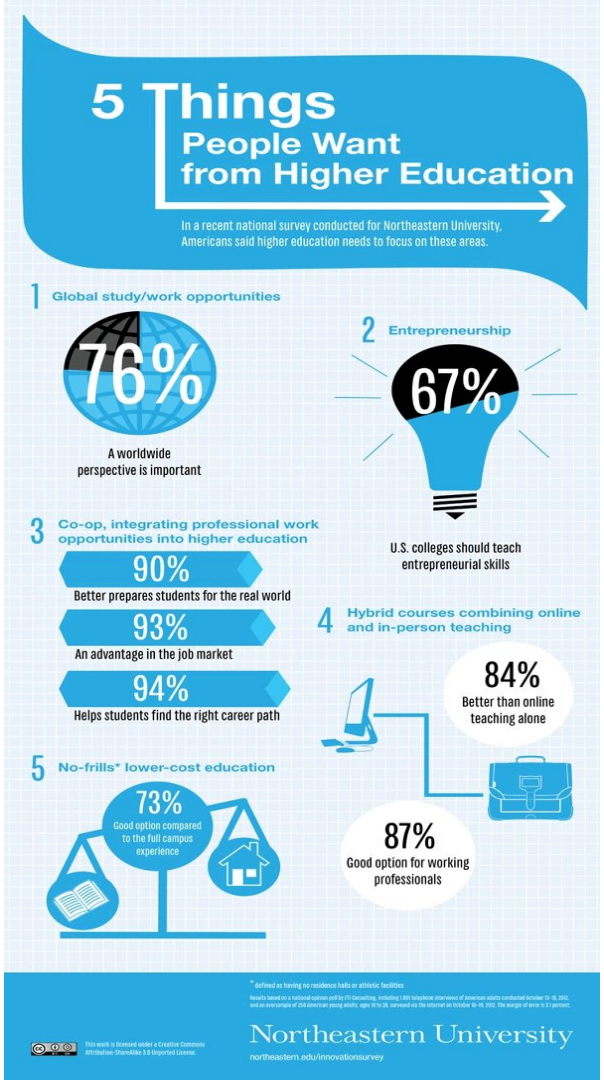
Infographics Example 1

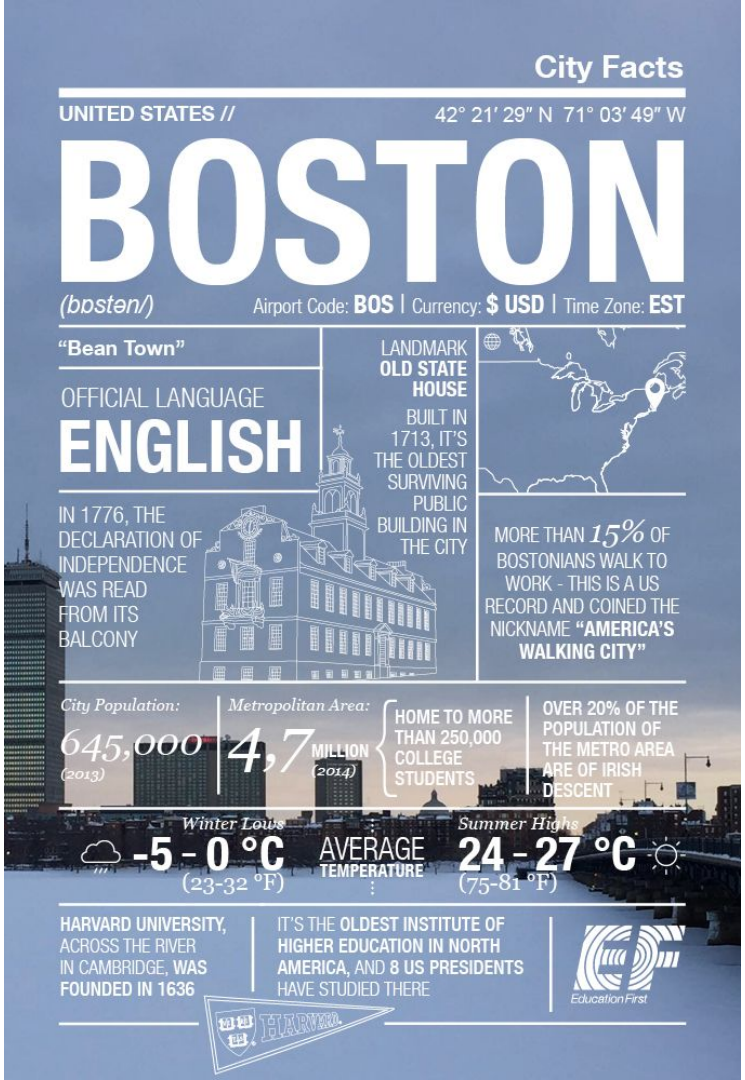


Source: [Northeastern University College of Professional Studies]

Infographics Example 2

Source:
[History.com & Column Five]

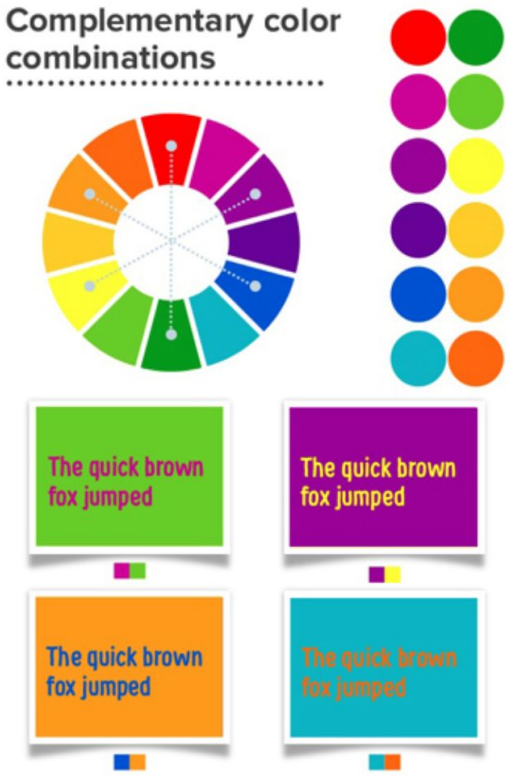
Infographics Examples



Source:
[Education First]

Choosing Colors

- Make color choices that are accessible to everyone (and appropriate for the infographic).
- Find complementary colors (e.g. use this tool)
- Use a contrast checker to make sure your color schemes are **high contrast**
- Think about limiting your palette (3 colors can be effective)
- For example, NU Colors provides the Northeastern University palette



Visme Blog

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Getting Started with Canva

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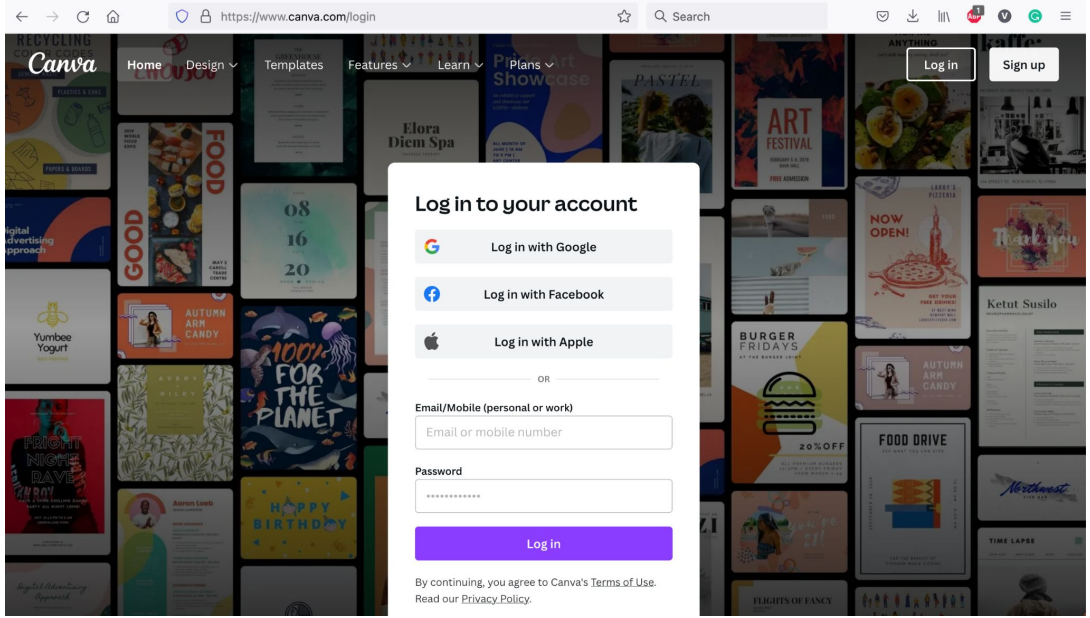
Data Privacy

- It's important to pay attention to data privacy when using digital resources, such as Canva
- **Data privacy** is the ability for someone to control which of their personal information is shared and with whom
- See the DITI's **Data Privacy** handout for help with deciding how to interact with digital tools in ways that honor your boundaries with your data

Sign up/Login

- Head to www.canva.com, a free online infographic maker
- Use your Gmail, Facebook, or Apple ID to sign in or create an account
- Click “Create A Design”



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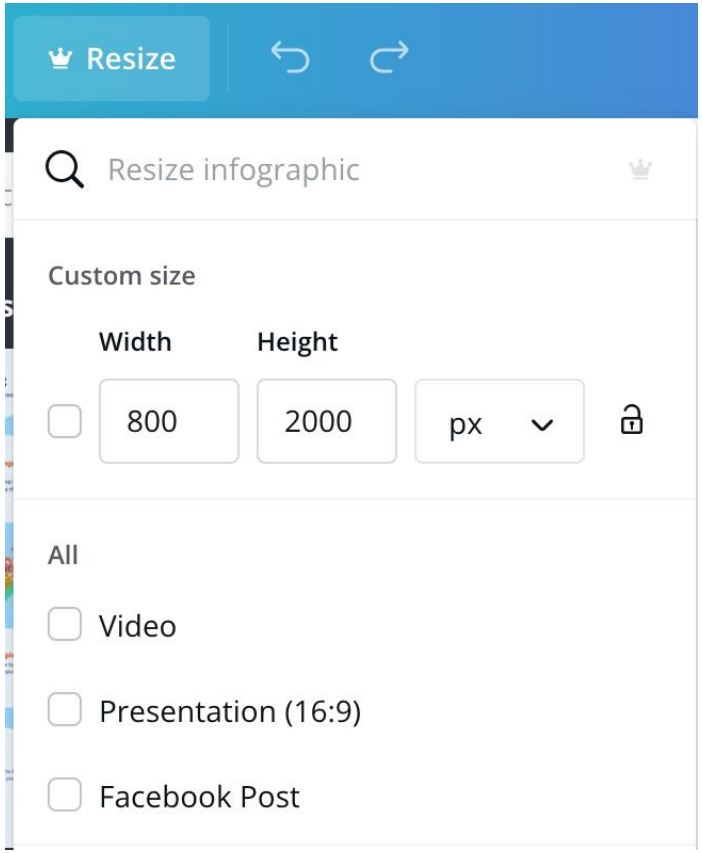
Start a New Infographic

- First, pick your canvas dimensions. You may use Canva's standard "infographic" size, or customize it
  - Note: resizing an existing graphic is only available in paid subscriptions
- Infographics work best when presenting information through one direction, so it make it long either vertically or horizontally
- You can add more 'pages' once you create the graphic



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Pick a Style

- Infographics work best when presented in a uniform style
- Try to get your information and your design to work together
- If you need some help or inspiration, Canva offers several infographic templates you can start from. Use the search bar on the left to browse. Some of them require payment, but there are several free options

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Layers

- Each Canva project is made up by multiple graphic **layers**
- **Layers** can be anything that shows up on the canvas, such as elements, charts, text, shapes, and so on
- Layers can be customized in many ways: you can drag them around, change their colors, resize them, and more!
- You can send a layer ‘forward’ or ‘back’ relative to other layers with a right click on PC, or control click on Mac

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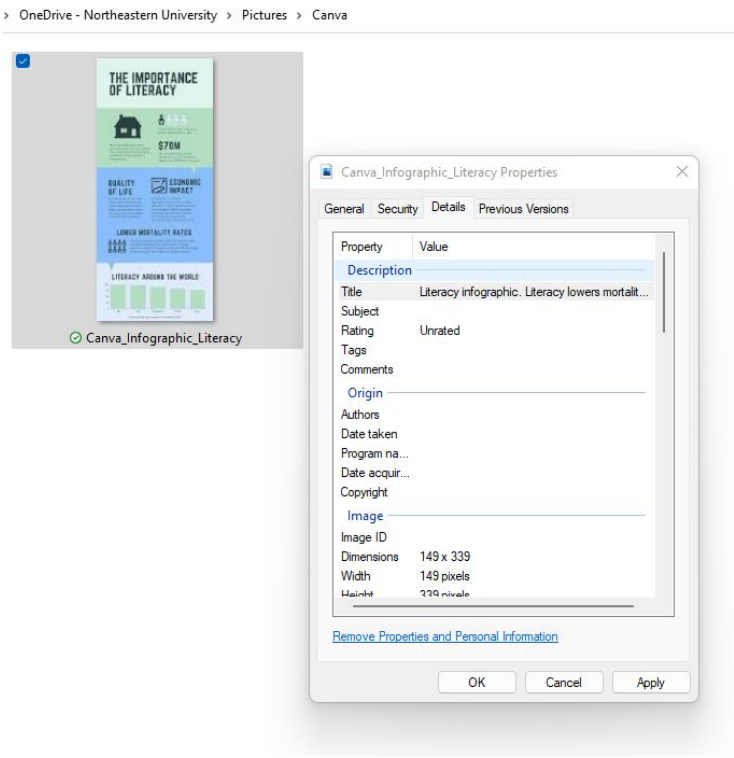
Alt-Text

- Alt-text is a description of an image that conveys its content and meaning.
- It is attached to the image's file properties
- It is usually 125 characters or less
- People with low or no vision can use assistive technology like screen readers to hear the alt-text description of digital images



Based on: [Microsoft's How to write effective alt-text]

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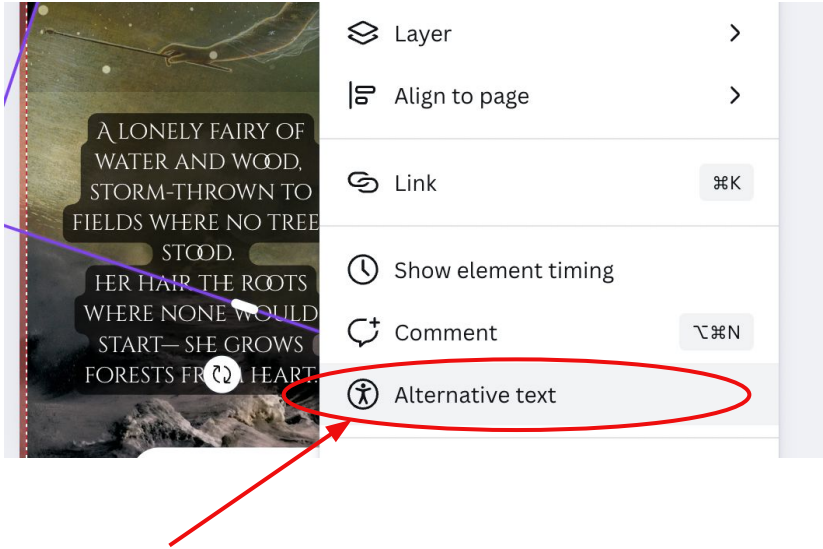
Adding Alt-Text in Canva 1/2

In the Canva editing page, double-click on your image, and a menu will open to the right (the same menu as when you add layers). Click on the option for “Alternative text”



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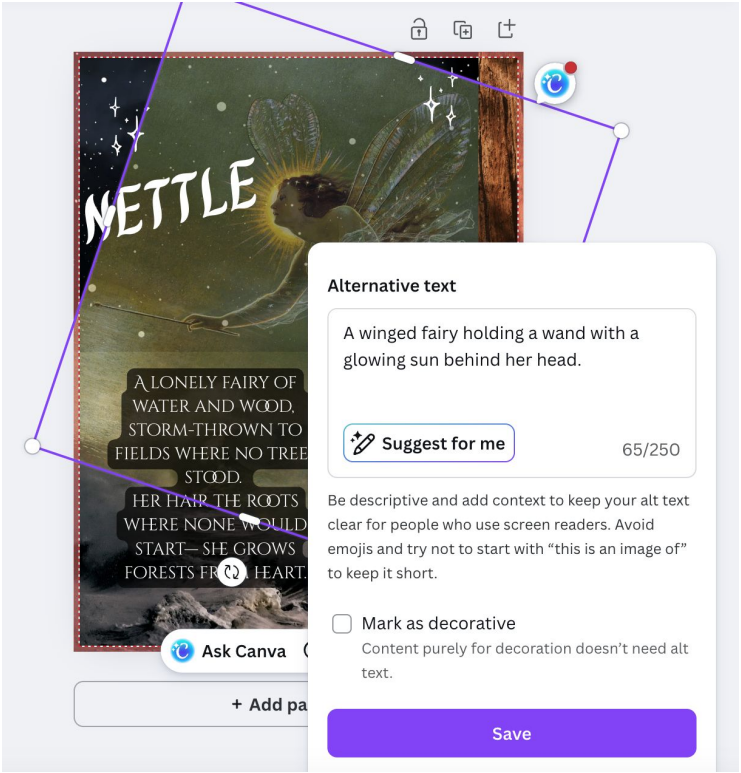
Adding Alt-Text in Canva 2/2

A text bubble will appear where you can add the descriptive alt-text.

Note: this method means that you can add alt-text to each image separately, which is especially important if you are creating a file that contains multiple overlapping images or elements.



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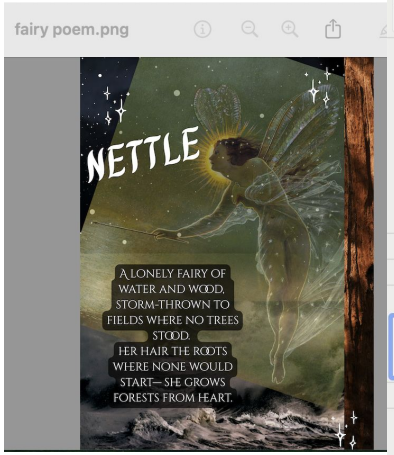
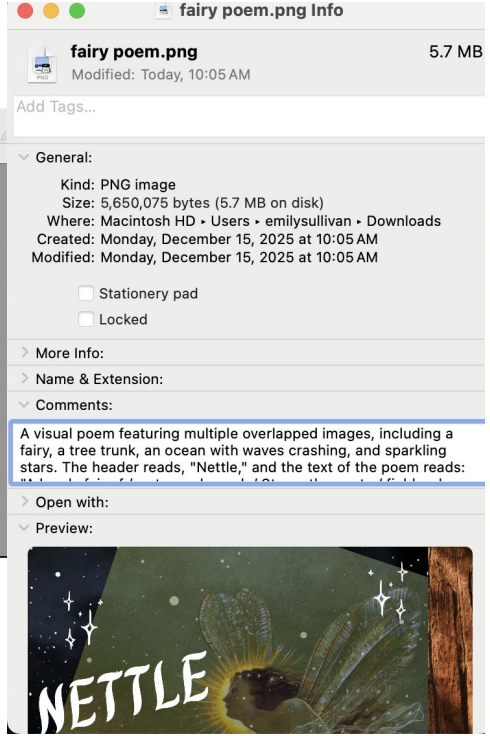
Adding Alt-Text to a downloaded image file

- You can export your infographic as an image and then add alt-text.
- Find the image in your file directory.
- On PC: Right-click the image and select ‘Properties.’ Choose the ‘Details’ tab and click on the ‘Title’ field.
- On Mac: Control-click the image and select ‘Get Info’ on Macs, then edit the ‘Comments’ field.
- Write a description of and insights from your infographic.





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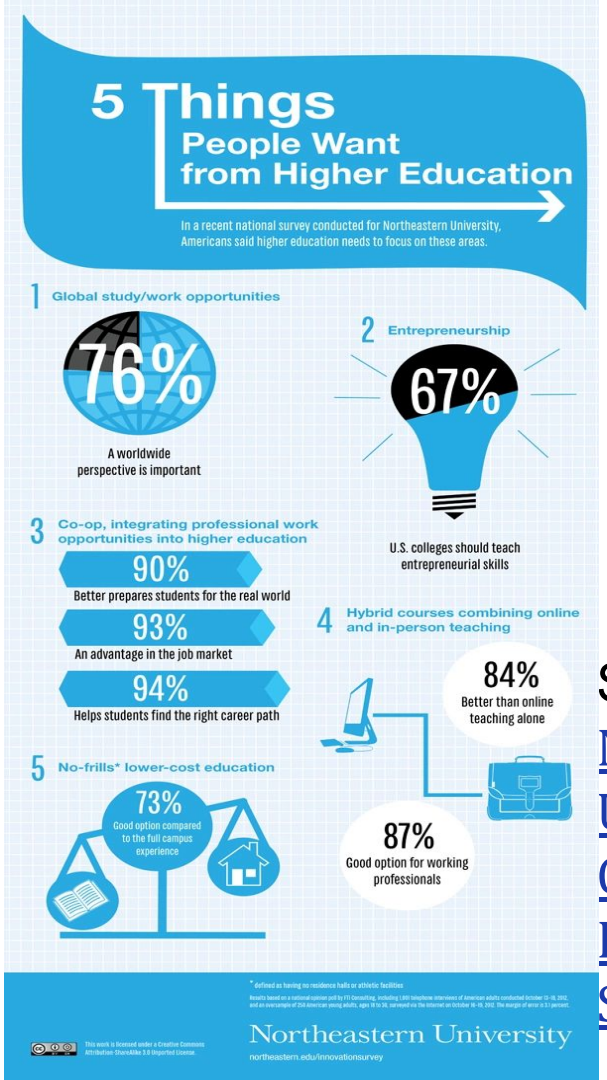
Example: Alt-Text

What are 2-3 takeaways from this infographic?

What information do you think is important to include in alt-text for this infographic?



Source: [Northeastern University College of Professional Studies]

Your Turn! Practice creating an infographic in Canva

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Hands On

Questions to consider as you work:

- How can visuals enhance your writing?
- What elements of your writing do you think could be improved by being presented in an infographic format (ie. thesis, structure, flow, etc)?
- What are some obstacles you might face when converting your writing to an infographic format?

More Tips & Info to Consider

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Build a coherent argument or narrative

- Treat your infographic like any other form of argument, explanation, or narrative—be **intentional**, and **organize** your points chronologically or as ordered steps
- Put **main ideas front-and-center**, and consider having your points progress down in orders of importance
- Use **signposts** or **sections** to orient your audience. For example, you can put points in numbered bullets or shift color gradients

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Some more tips

- Draw up an outline or storyboard **before** you build the graphic
- Have a specific and **clear title**
- Use **carefully-proofed syntax and vocabulary**, and explain terms/jargon
- Use **proper citations**
- Don’t mix too many visual types within your infographic. Keep a consistent font, color scheme, animation effects, design, and formatting
- Be concise in your text—keep negative space for the graphical component

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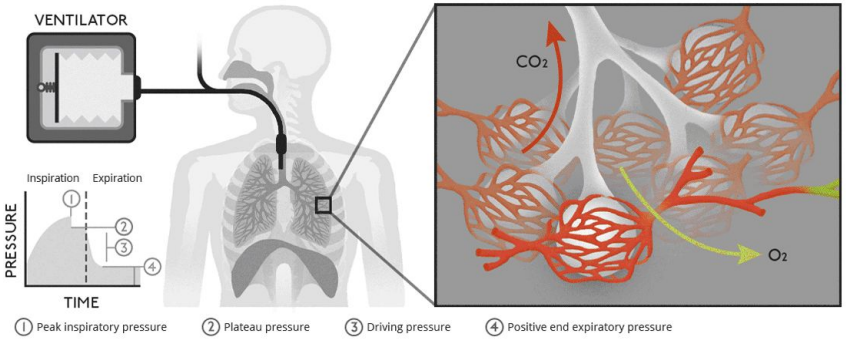
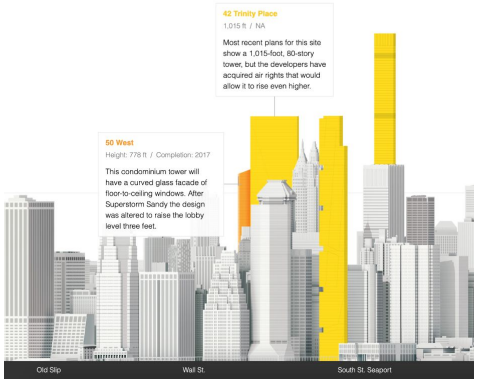
Infographic Formats

- **Static** infographics:
  - Fixed information on a still image
- **Motion** infographics:
  - Fixed information with animation
- **Interactive** infographics:
  - Can be fixed or dynamic information
  - Allows user interaction like searching for data, shaping the content displayed, and choosing which information is accessed



"Biology of ventilation," tapletopwhale.com



From "The New New York Skyline," *National Geographic*

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For Further Exploration

Here are links to the handouts presented in these slides:

DITI infographics handout

DITI accessibility handout

DITI data privacy handout

DITI copyright and fair use handout

NULab Meet the Method: Canva

See also the Beginner's Guide, published by Canva

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Thank you!

Developed by DITI Research and Teaching Fellows Emily Sullivan, Carlos Arriaga Serrano, Kasya O'Connor Grant, Dipa Desai, Javier Rosario, and Ayah Aboelela

- Please fill out this survey to give us feedback: https://bit.ly/diti-feedback
- For more information on DITI, please see: https://bit.ly/diti-about
- Schedule an appointment with us! https://bit.ly/diti-meeting
- If you have any questions, contact us at: nulab.info@gmail.com
- Link to online materials: https://bit.ly/sp26-fuchs-engw3302-infographics

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For Further Consideration: Accurately Representing Data in Visuals and Infographics

—Developed in collaboration with BARI

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Data Presentation Tips

- **Create your own tables**, or make sure to use only images that are shared with permissions that support reuse—and always cite your sources!
- **Be sure to present your data *accurately***—be mindful that your charts, graphs, maps, and infographics are scaled and structured to present data and conclusions *completely* and *correctly*.
- **Use visual representations of numbers**—this will help concretize abstract concepts.
- **Label judiciously**, but don't overwhelm the viewer with dense text.
- **Beware of trying to make too many points in one graphic**—focus on the big takeaways.

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Limitations of Some Data Presentation Methods: Charts, Graphs, Diagrams, Maps

- The **structure** and **scale** of charts and graphs could be **manipulated** to amplify or diminish differences.
- **Different types** of graphs and charts work better for some types of data than others—for example, a pie chart and a line graph might not both be able to represent the same data accurately.
- A chart with **too much information** will be difficult to understand, but **too little information** could be an indication that data has been cherry-picked to support an argument.
- There is **limited space** in an infographic for in-depth analysis; nuances can be flattened and obfuscated.

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Misrepresentation of Data

From D.B. Resnik, in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2001:

"The concept of 'misrepresentation,' unlike 'fabrication' and 'falsification,' is neither clear nor uncontroversial. Most scientists will agree that fabrication is making up data and falsification is changing data. **But what does it mean to *misrepresent* data? As a minimal answer to this question, one can define 'misrepresentation of data' as 'communicating honestly reported data in a deceptive manner.'"**

This **online book from The Data School** covers some common ways data could be misrepresented at multiple points in the process of gathering, analyzing, and presenting findings on data-based research.

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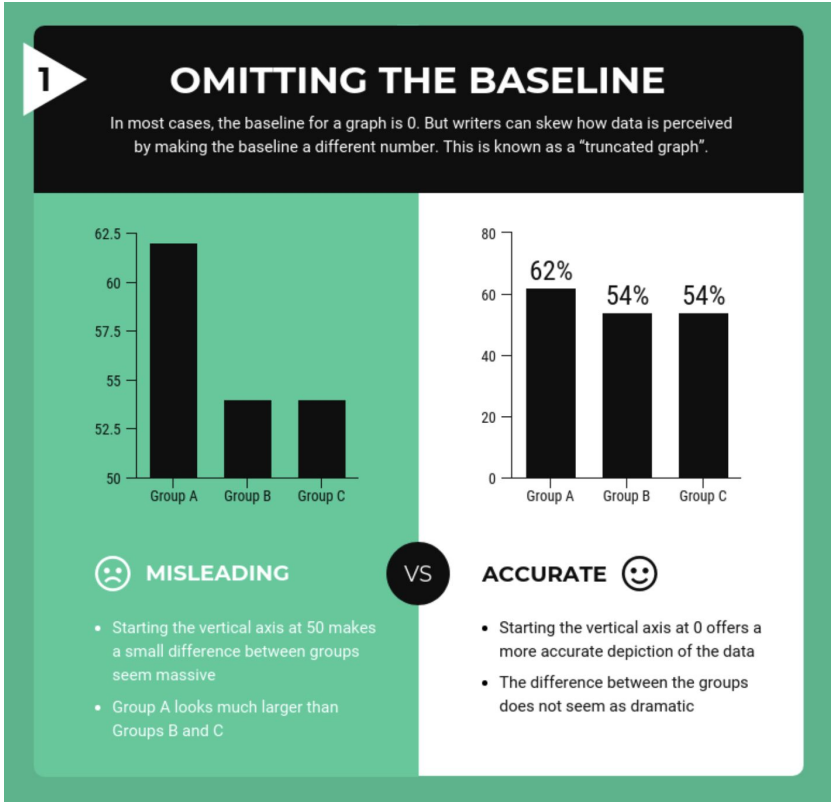
Limitations of Charts, Diagrams, Graphs, & Maps



Consider these questions as you review the examples in this section:

- What **commonalities** do you notice among the more misleading and more accurate versions of graphs and charts in these examples?
- How would you define "**accuracy**" in the context of data presentation? Why is that question essential to ask?
- In what **contexts** does it make the most sense to use these kinds of visuals to present data? Are there other times where they're inappropriate? How so?

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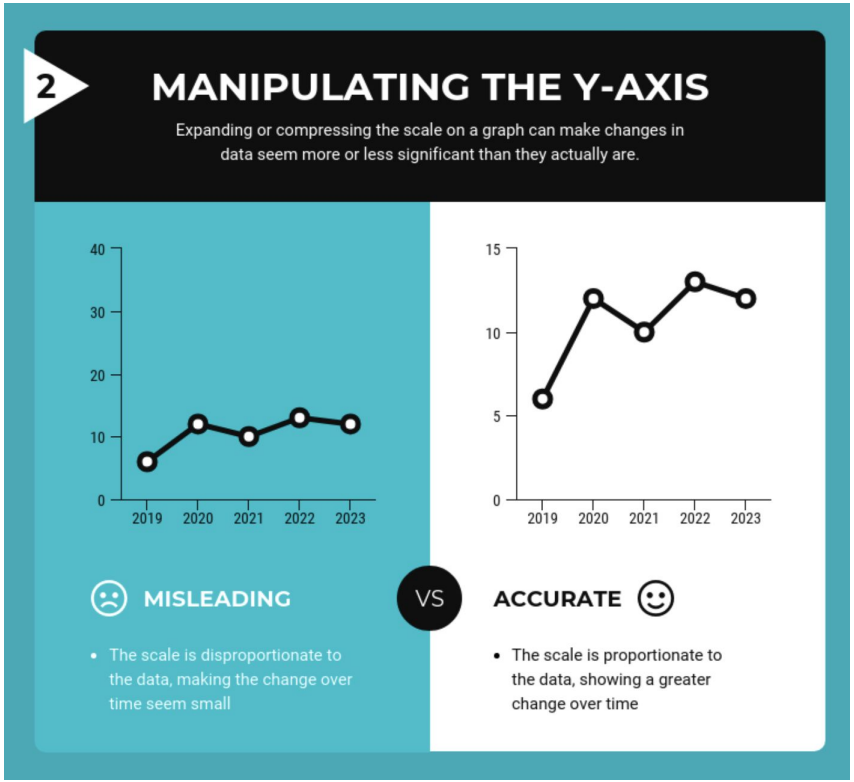
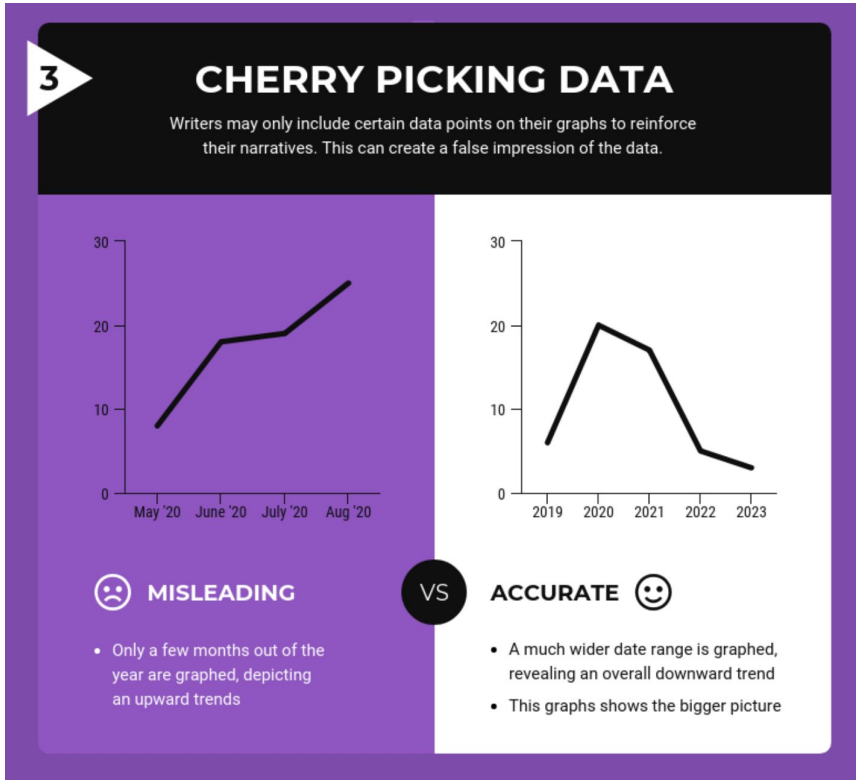
Limitations in presenting data in charts & diagrams





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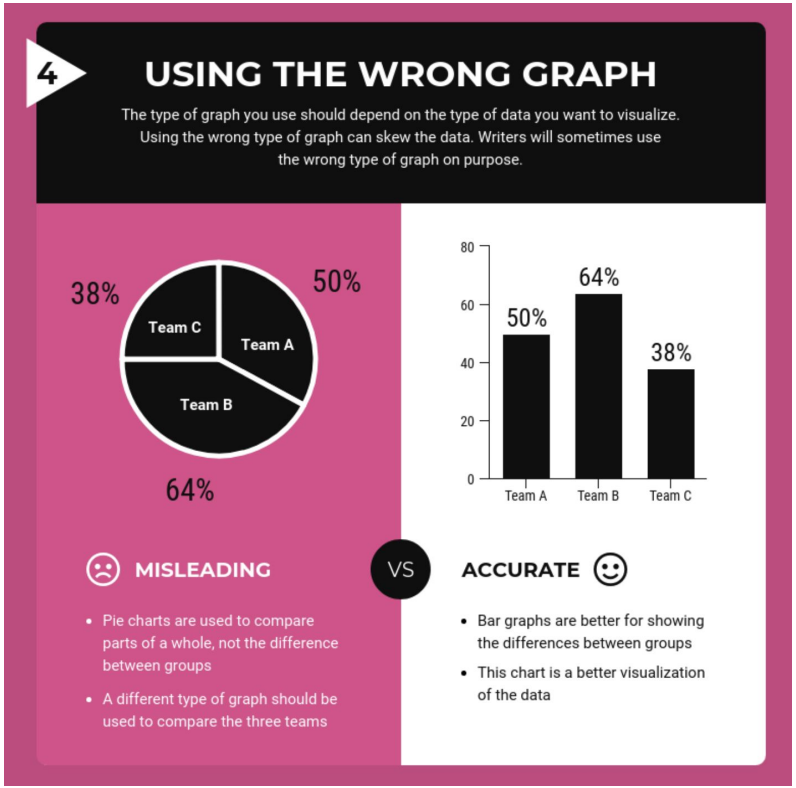
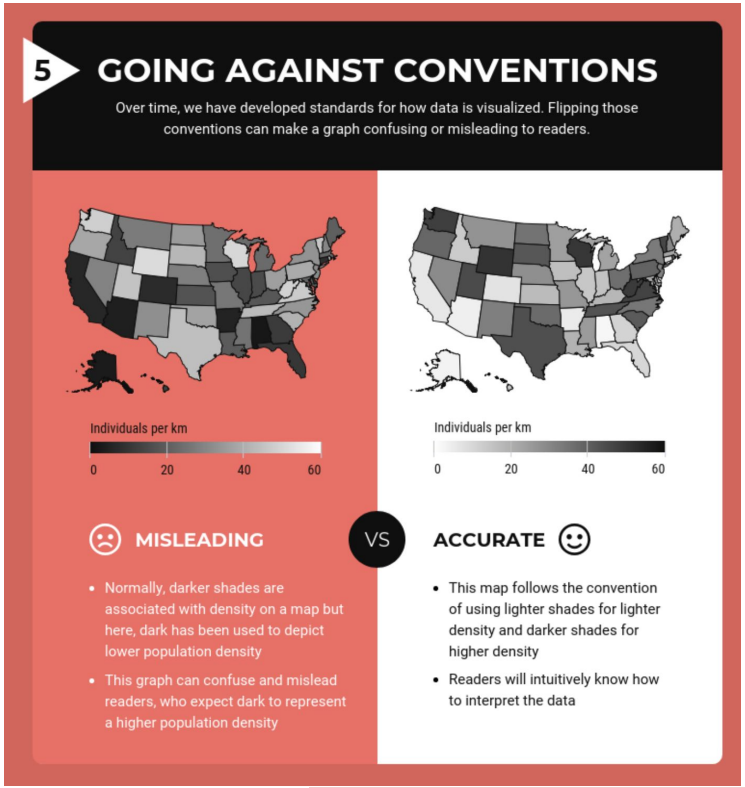
Limitations in presenting data in graphs & maps





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