

Creating Infographics with Canva

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Digital Integration Teaching Initiative
Dr. Carolin Fuchs
ENGW 3302 | Spring 2026



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NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

*Feel free to ask questions at any point during
the presentation!*

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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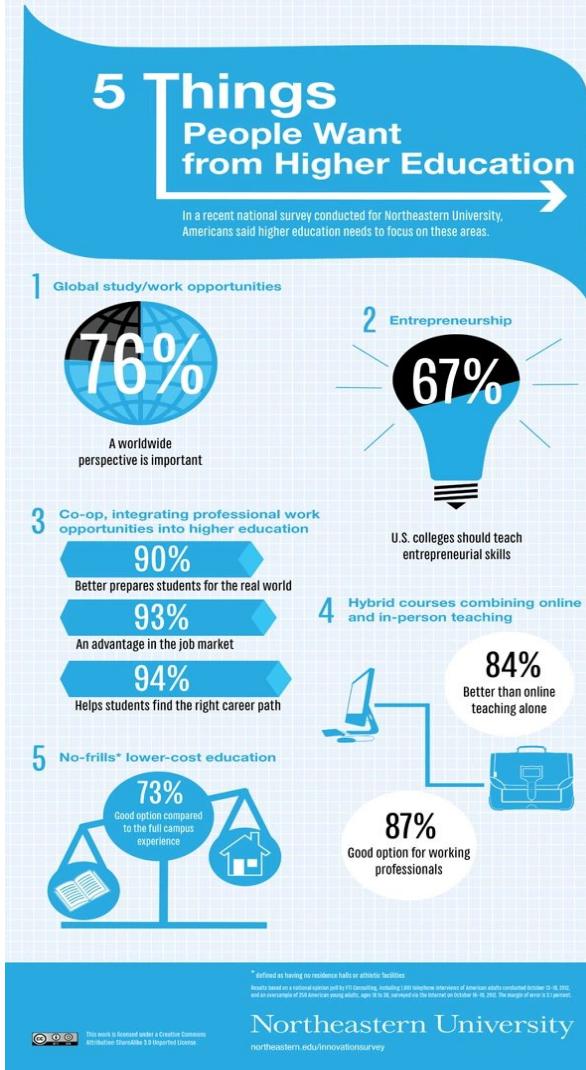
Infographics Basics

- 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**



Infographics Example 1

Source: [Northeastern University College of Professional Studies](#)



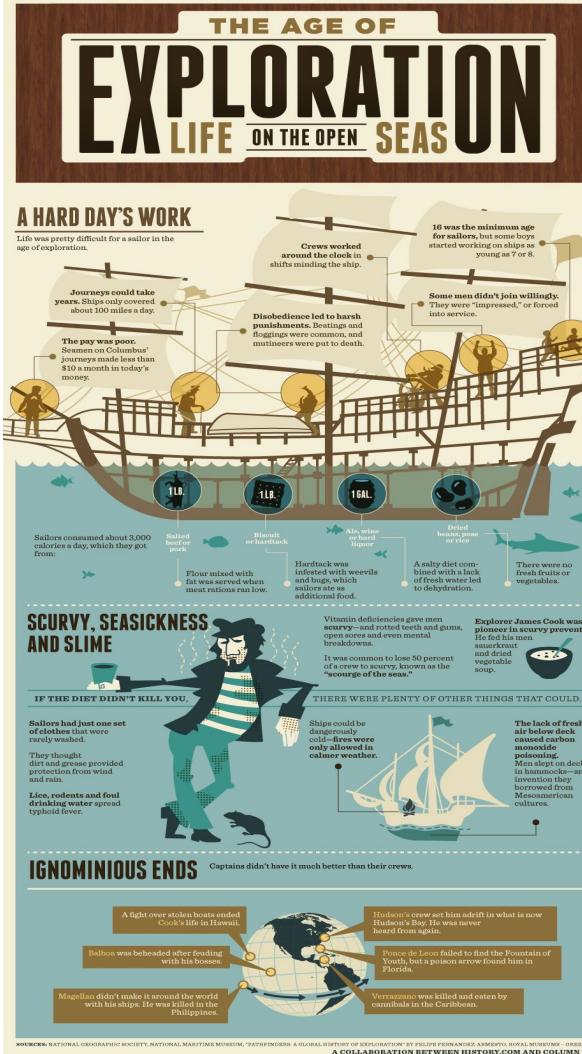
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northeastern.edu/innovationsurvey

Infographics Example 2

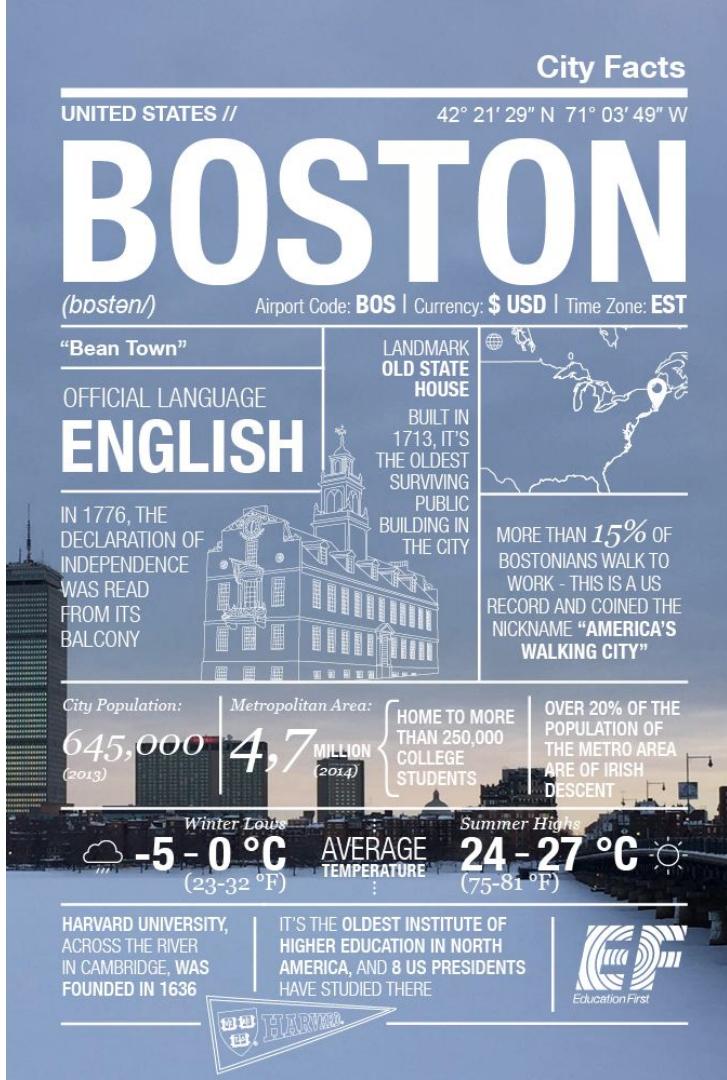
Source:
[History.com &
Column Five](http://History.com & Column Five)



Infographics Examples

Source:
Education First

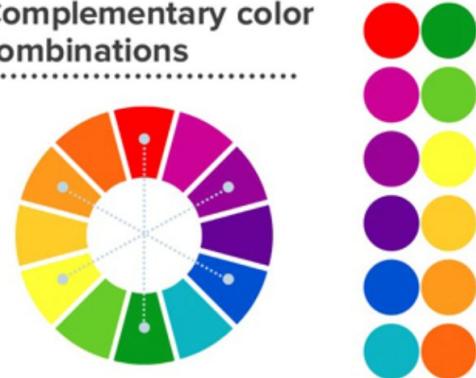
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Choosing Colors

- 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

Complementary color combinations



Complementary colors | examples
[Visme Blog](#)

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Getting Started with Canva



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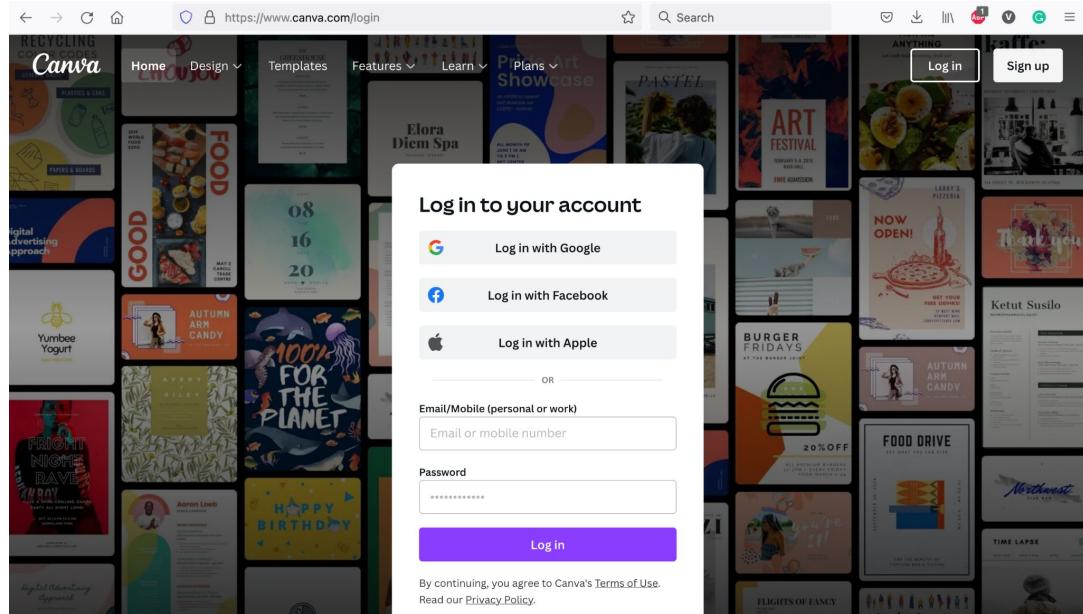
Data Privacy

- 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



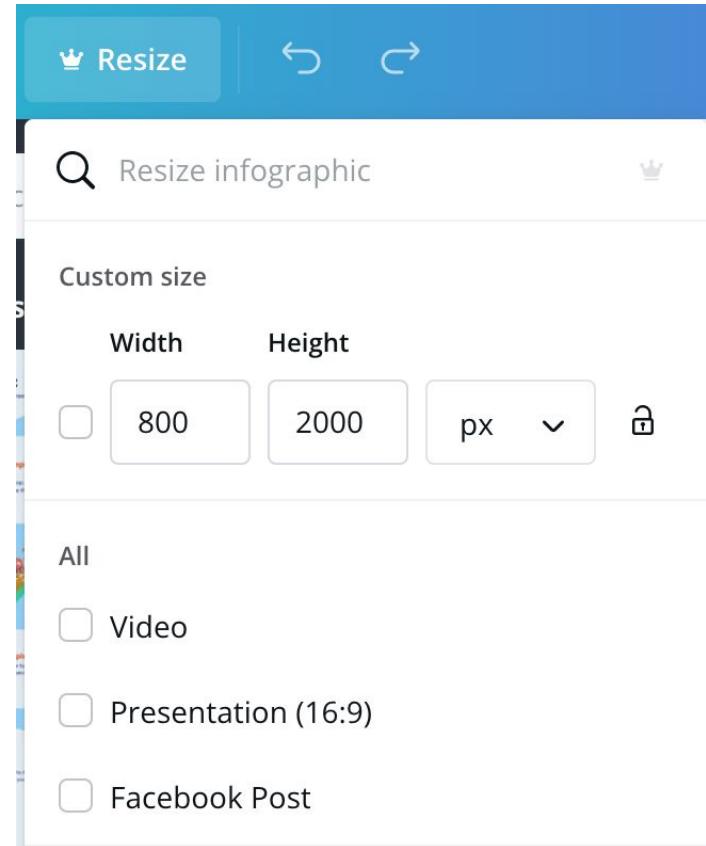
Sign up/Login

- 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”



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



Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!



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

The screenshot shows the Canva interface with a dark theme. On the left, a sidebar lists navigation options: Templates (selected), Templates, Elements, Uploads, Text, Charts, and More. A search bar at the top right says "Search infographic templates". Below the search bar, there are two sections of templates:

- Education Infographic:** Includes a "FUN FACT about SHARK" template with a penguin icon, an "IN FOCUS Alan Turing" template with a portrait, and a "Uses of Business Math" template with a calculator icon.
- Comparison Infographic:** Includes a "DECONSTRUCTING IMPRESSIONISM & EXPRESSIONISM" template comparing painting styles, a "FICTION VERSUS NON-FICTION" template comparing literature types, and a "Comparison Infographic" template with a pencil icon.

Each template card includes a preview image, a title, and a "See all" link.

Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!



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

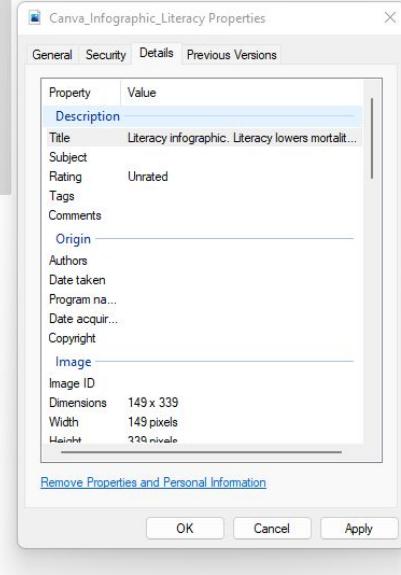


Alt-Text

- 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



Canva_Infographic_Literacy

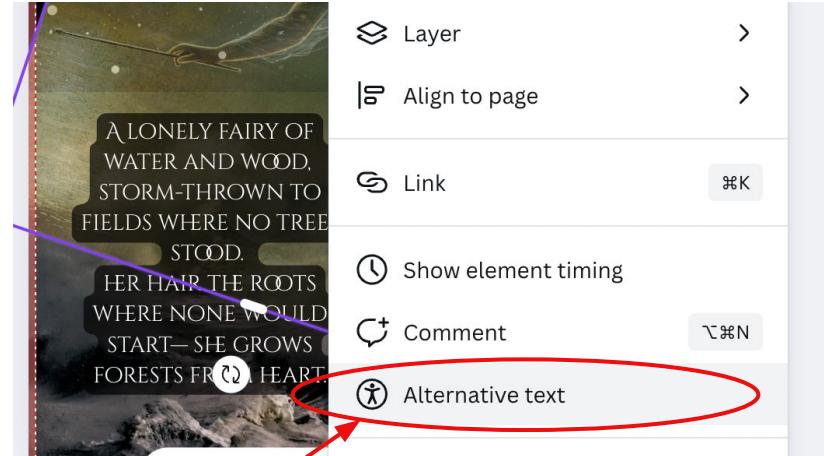


Based on: [Microsoft's How to write effective alt-text](#)



Adding Alt-Text in Canva 1/2

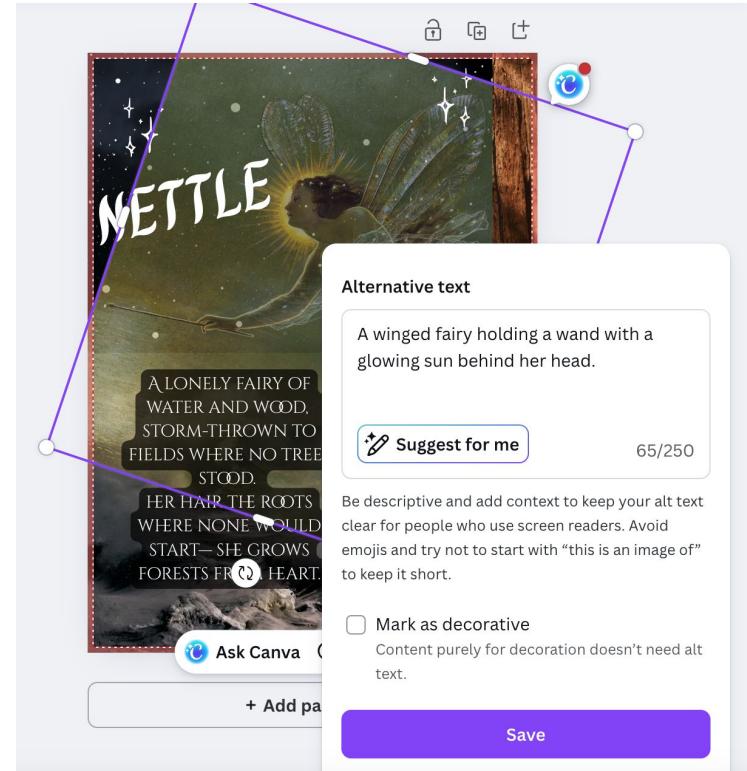
In the Canva editing page, double-click on your image, and a menu will open to the right (the same menu as when you add layers). Click on the option for “Alternative text”



Adding Alt-Text in Canva 2/2

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

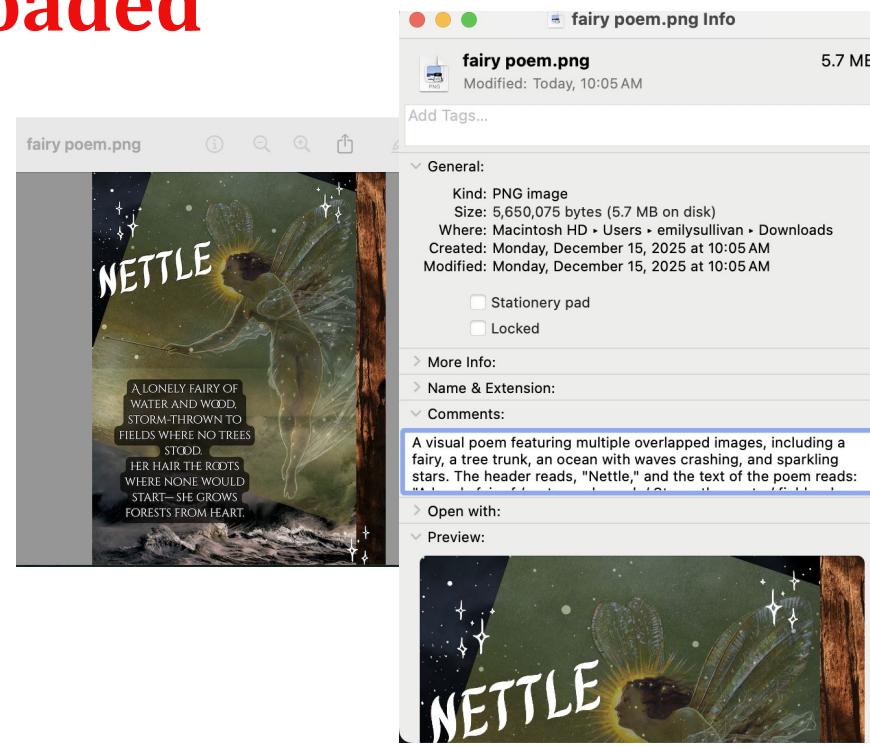
Note: this method means that you can add alt-text to each image separately, which is especially important if you are creating a file that contains multiple overlapping images or elements.



Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

Adding Alt-Text to a downloaded image file

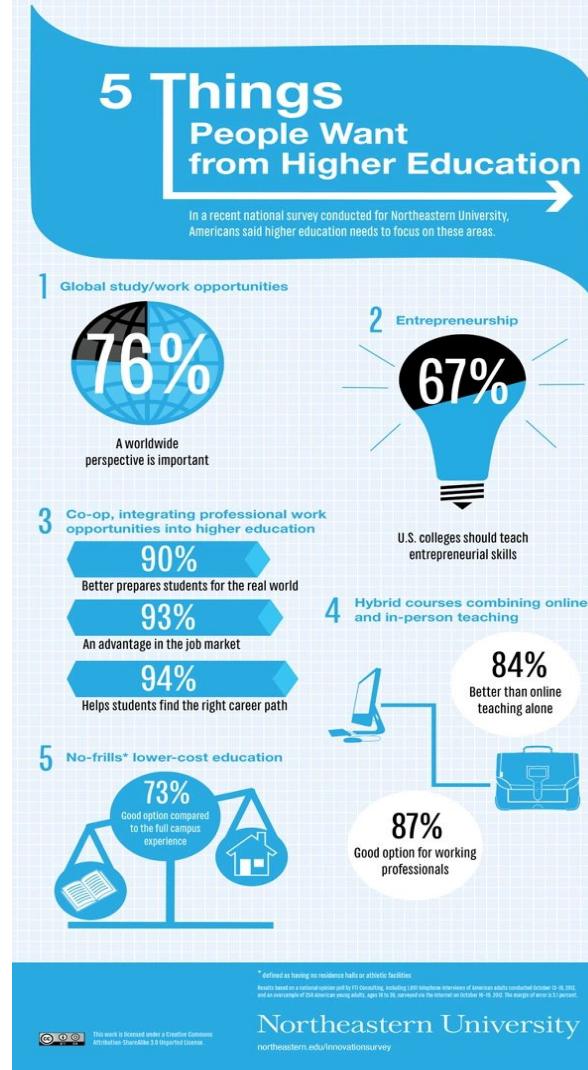
- You can export your infographic as an image and then add alt-text.
- Find the image in your file directory.
- On PC: Right-click the image and select 'Properties.' Choose the 'Details' tab and click on the 'Title' field.
- On Mac: Control-click the image and select 'Get Info' on Macs, then edit the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



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



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



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



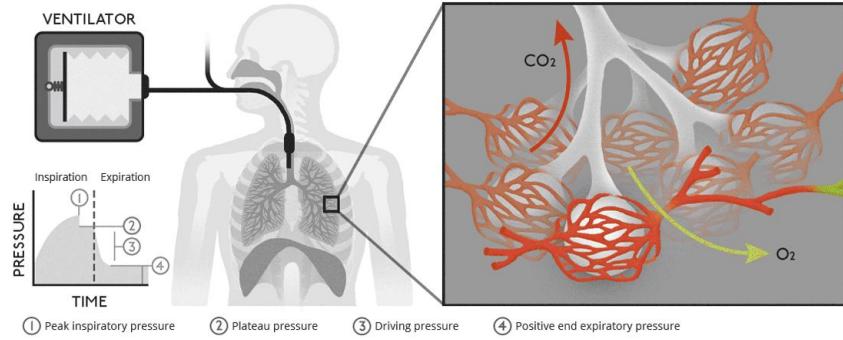
Some more tips

- 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

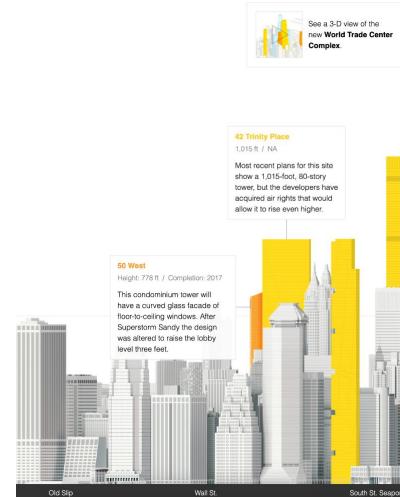


Infographic Formats

- **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](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)



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



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>



For Further Consideration: Accurately Representing Data in Visuals and Infographics

—Developed in collaboration with BARI



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.



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.



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.

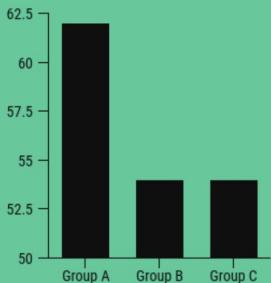


Limitations of Charts, Diagrams, Graphs, & Maps

1

OMITTING THE BASELINE

In most cases, the baseline for a graph is 0. But writers can skew how data is perceived by making the baseline a different number. This is known as a “truncated graph”.



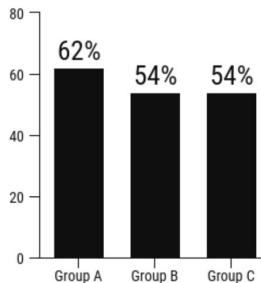
MISLEADING

- Starting the vertical axis at 50 makes a small difference between groups seem massive
- Group A looks much larger than Groups B and C

VS

ACCURATE

- Starting the vertical axis at 0 offers a more accurate depiction of the data
- The difference between the groups does not seem as dramatic



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?

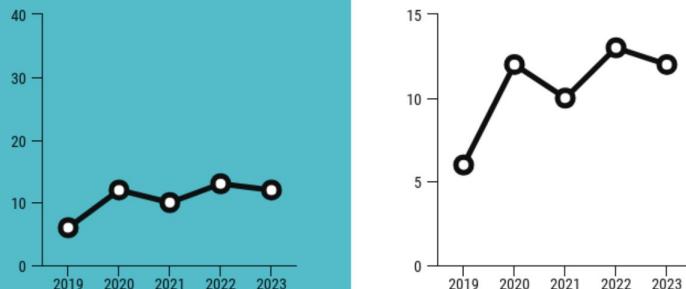


Limitations in presenting data in charts & diagrams

2

MANIPULATING THE Y-AXIS

Expanding or compressing the scale on a graph can make changes in data seem more or less significant than they actually are.



😢 MISLEADING

- The scale is disproportionate to the data, making the change over time seem small

VS

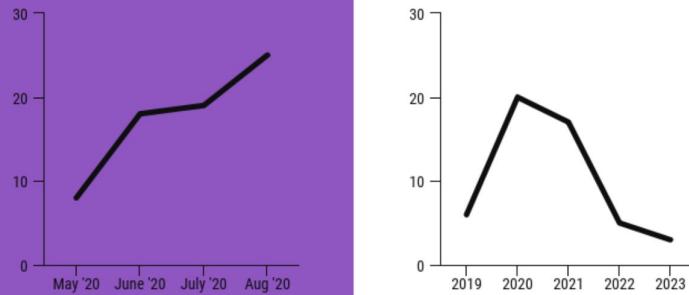
😊 ACCURATE

- The scale is proportionate to the data, showing a greater change over time

3

CHERRY PICKING DATA

Writers may only include certain data points on their graphs to reinforce their narratives. This can create a false impression of the data.



😢 MISLEADING

- Only a few months out of the year are graphed, depicting an upward trend

VS

😊 ACCURATE

- A much wider date range is graphed, revealing an overall downward trend
- This graph shows the bigger picture

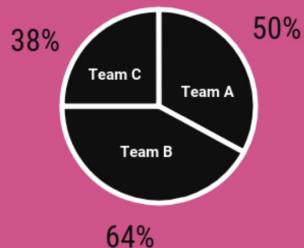


Limitations in presenting data in graphs & maps

4

USING THE WRONG GRAPH

The type of graph you use should depend on the type of data you want to visualize. Using the wrong type of graph can skew the data. Writers will sometimes use the wrong type of graph on purpose.



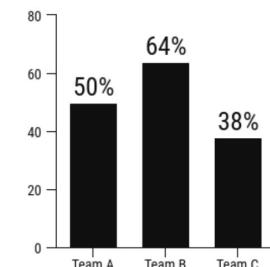
😢 MISLEADING

- Pie charts are used to compare parts of a whole, not the difference between groups
- A different type of graph should be used to compare the three teams

VS

😊 ACCURATE 😊

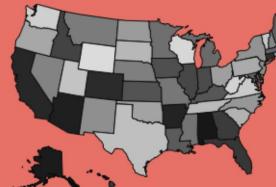
- Bar graphs are better for showing the differences between groups
- This chart is a better visualization of the data



5

GOING AGAINST CONVENTIONS

Over time, we have developed standards for how data is visualized. Flipping those conventions can make a graph confusing or misleading to readers.



Individuals per km
0 20 40 60

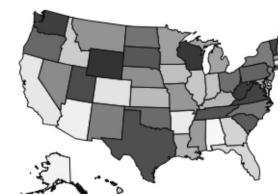
😢 MISLEADING

- Normally, darker shades are associated with density on a map but here, dark has been used to depict lower population density
- This graph can confuse and mislead readers, who expect dark to represent a higher population density

VS

😊 ACCURATE 😊

- This map follows the convention of using lighter shades for lighter density and darker shades for higher density
- Readers will intuitively know how to interpret the data



Individuals per km
0 20 40 60

