

Creating Infographics with Canva

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Northeastern University
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/fa25-fuchs-engw3302-infographics>



Infographics



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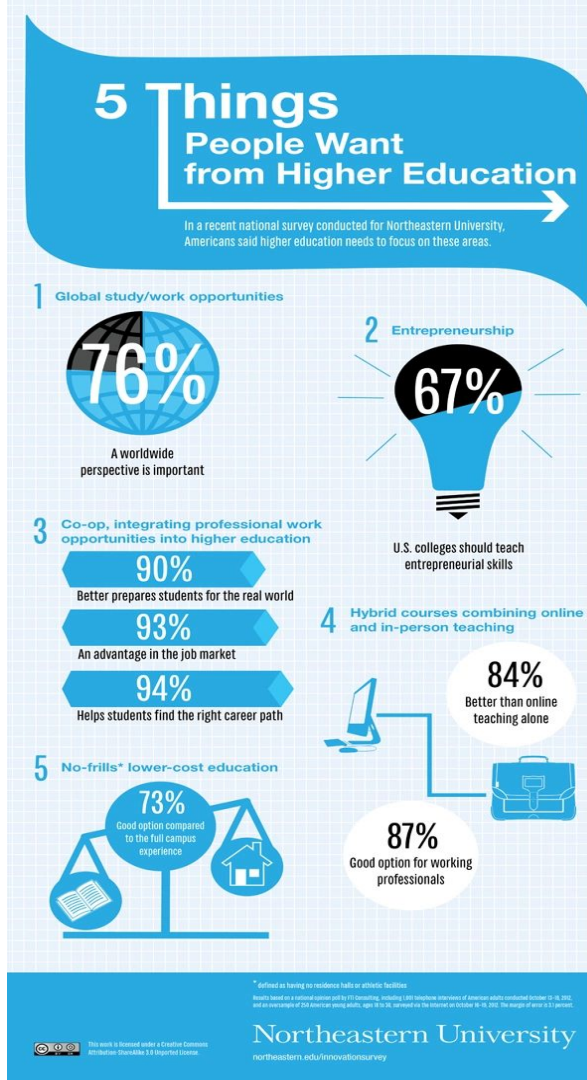
Infographics Basics

- 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](#)



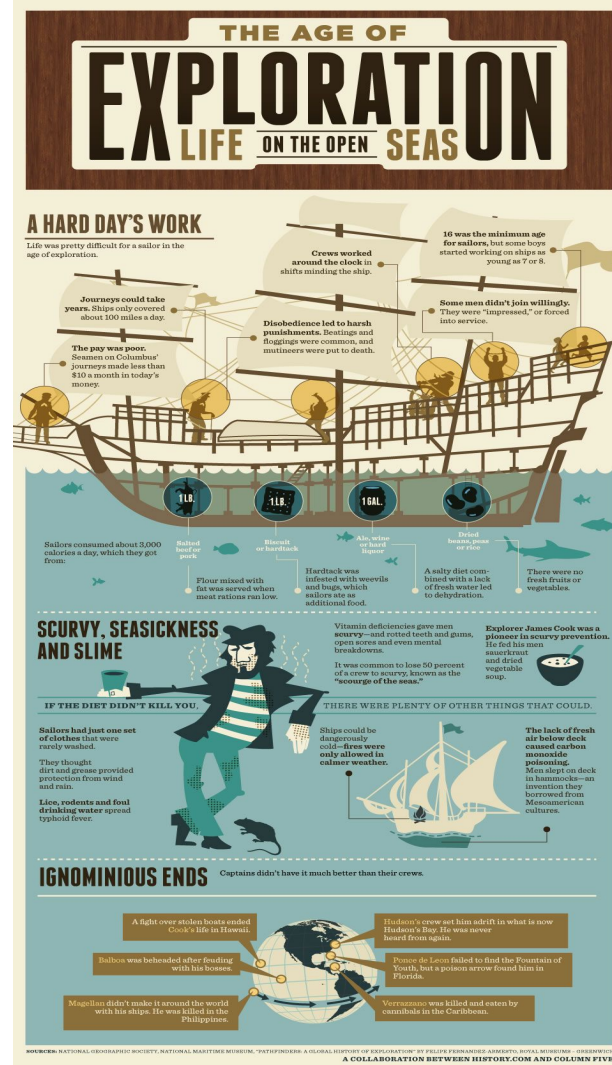
Infographics Example 1

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



Infographics Example 2

Source:
[History.com](https://www.history.com/history/infographics/the-age-of-exploration) &
[Column Five](https://www.history.com/history/infographics/the-age-of-exploration)

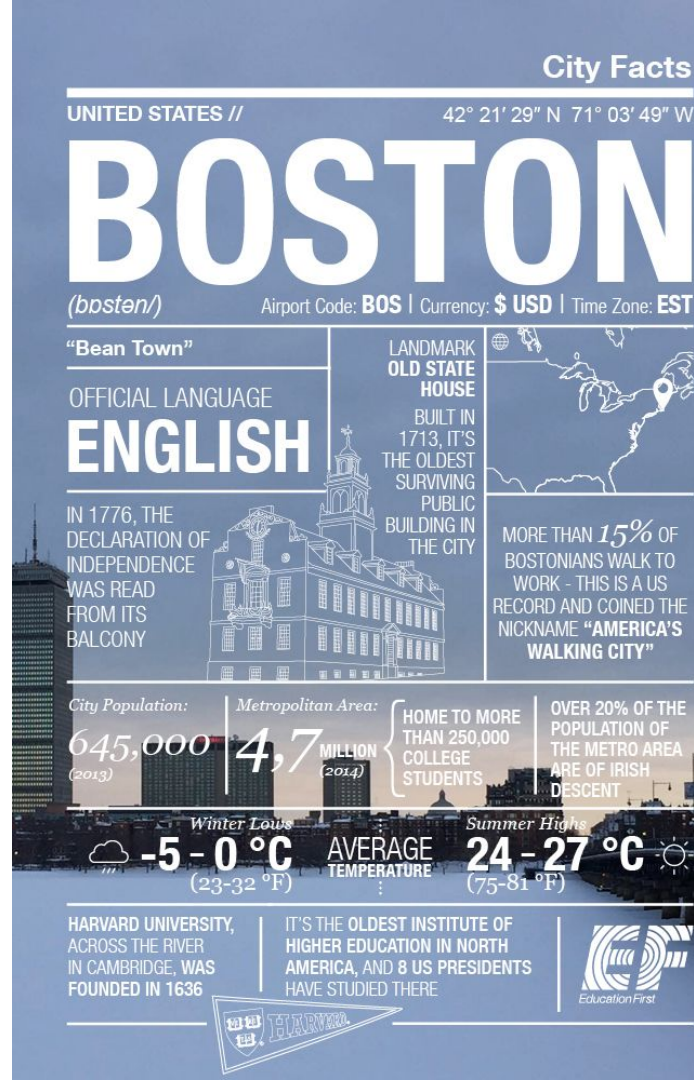


Infographics Examples

Source:
[Education First](#)

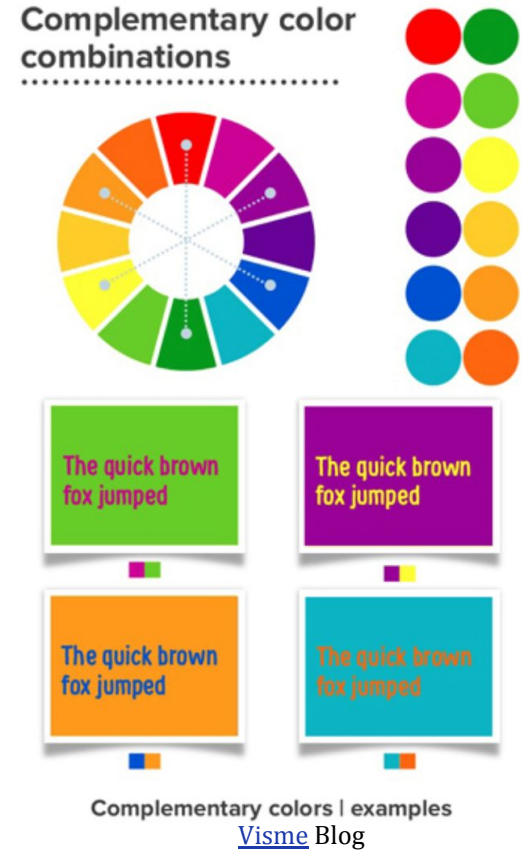


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Choosing Colors

- 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



Getting Started with Canva



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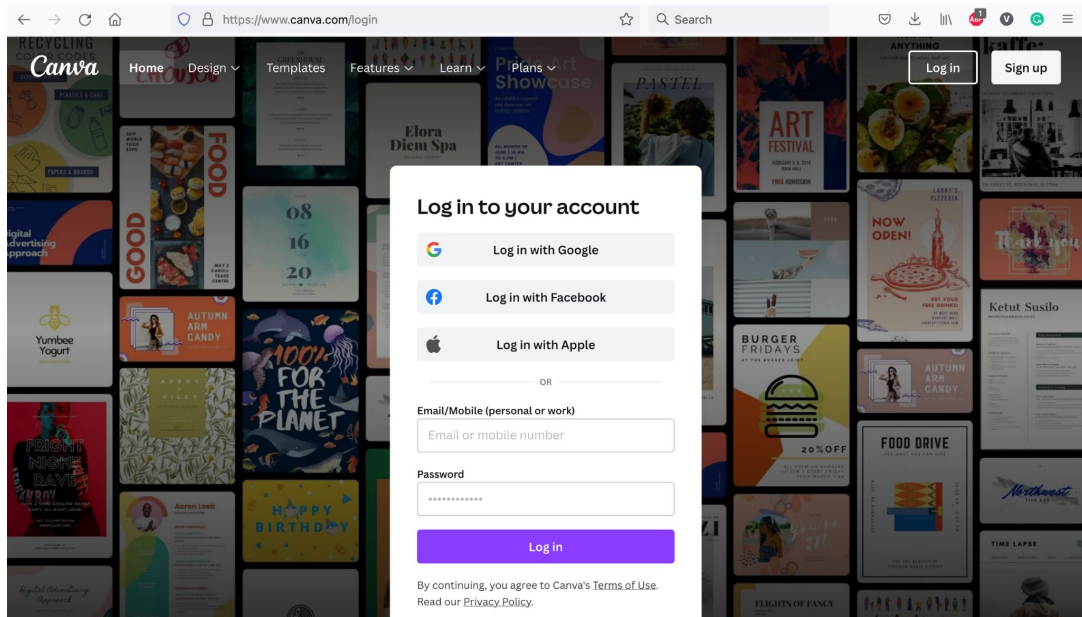
Data Privacy

- 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



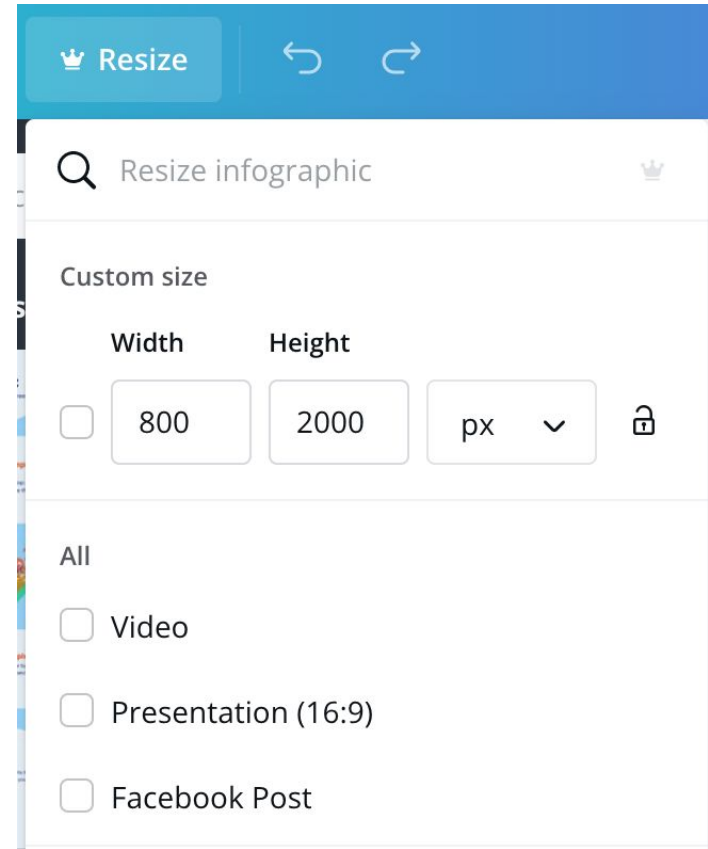
Sign up/Login

- 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

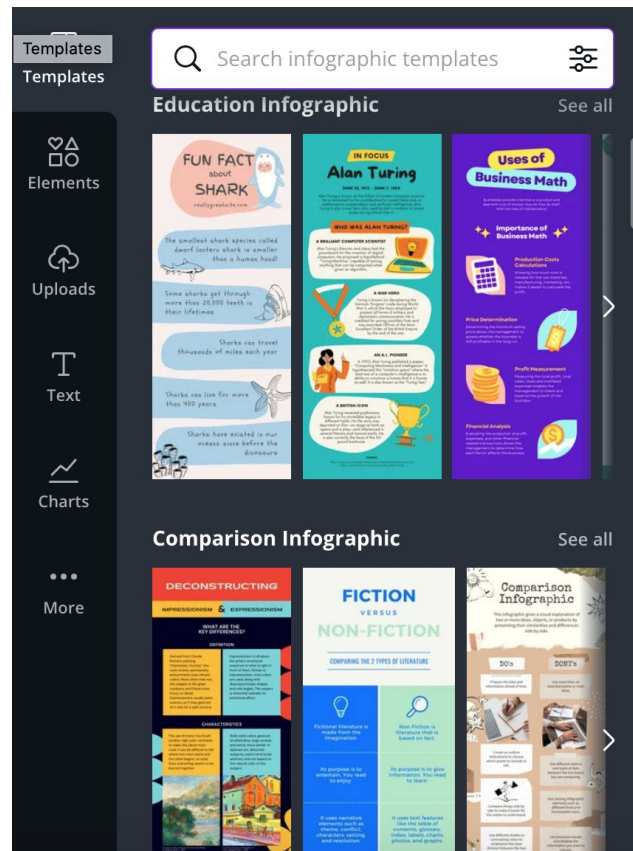


The screenshot shows the 'Resize infographic' dialog box in Canva. At the top, there is a blue header with a 'Resize' button (crown icon), a left arrow, and a right arrow. Below the header is a search bar with the text 'Resize infographic' and a crown icon. The main section is titled 'Custom size' and contains two columns: 'Width' and 'Height'. Under 'Width', there is a checkbox, the number '800', and a unit dropdown set to 'px'. Under 'Height', there is a checkbox, the number '2000', and a unit dropdown set to 'px'. To the right of these inputs is a lock icon. Below the 'Custom size' section, there is a list of preset sizes: 'All', 'Video', 'Presentation (16:9)', and 'Facebook Post', each with a checkbox.



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



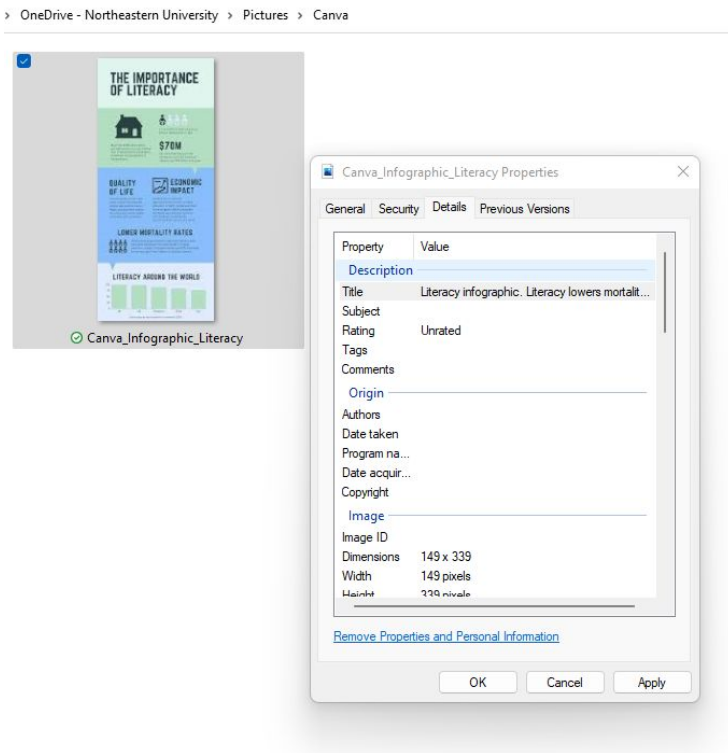
Layers

- 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



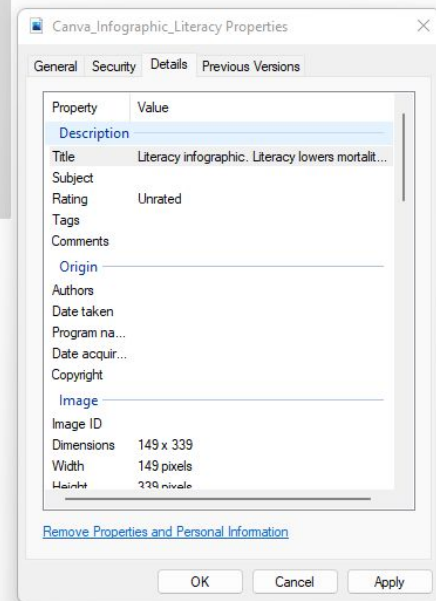
Based on: [Microsoft's How to write effective alt-text](#)



Adding Alt-Text

- To add alt-text, first export your infographic as an image
- 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 your infographic

> OneDrive - Northeastern University > Pictures > Canva



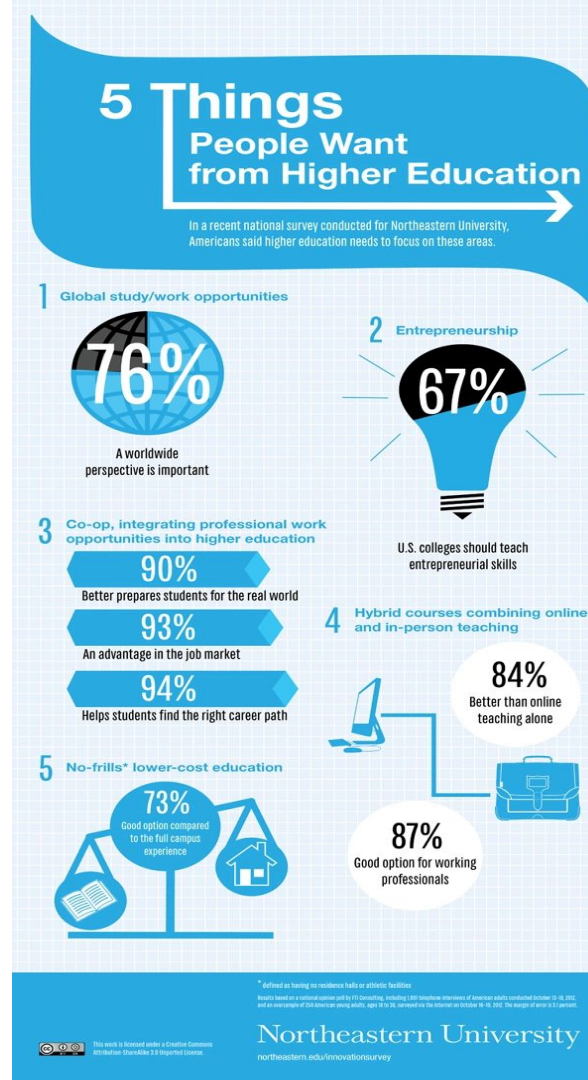
Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!



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



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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



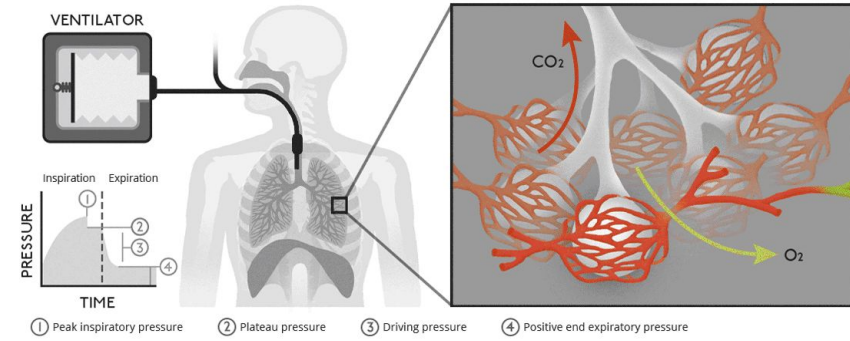
Some more tips

- 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

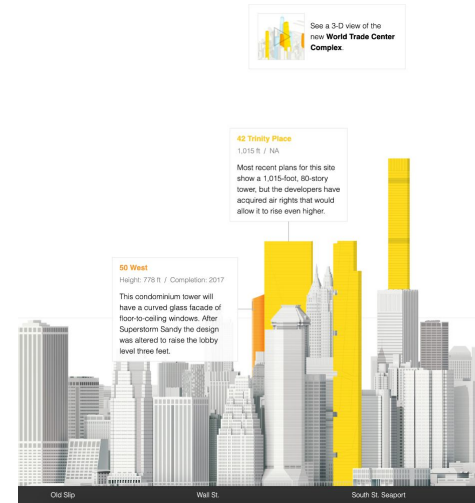


Infographic Formats

- **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 York Skyline,"
National Geographic



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

- 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/fa25-fuchs-engw3302-infographics>



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.



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:

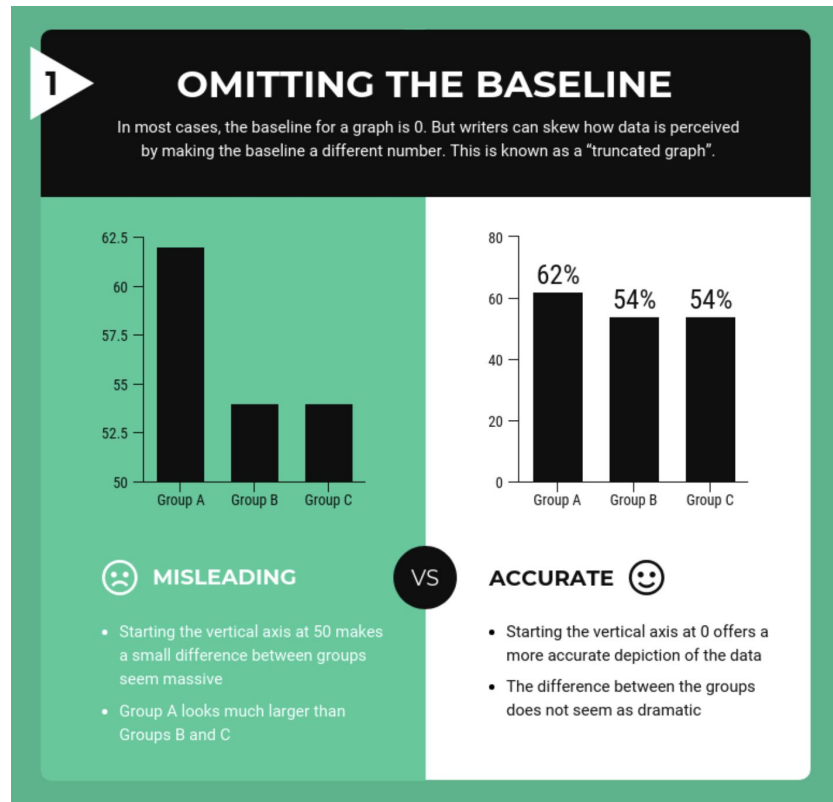
“The concept of ‘misrepresentation,’ unlike ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsification,’ is neither clear nor uncontroversial. Most scientists will agree that fabrication is making up data and falsification is changing data. **But what does it mean to *misrepresent* data? As a minimal answer to this question, 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

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?

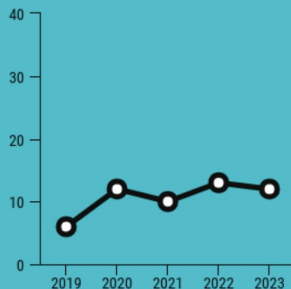


Limitations in presenting data in charts & diagrams

2

MANIPULATING THE Y-AXIS

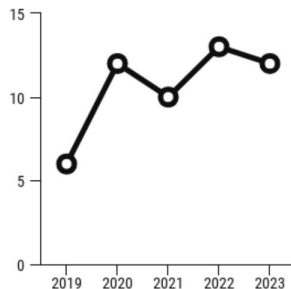
Expanding or compressing the scale on a graph can make changes in data seem more or less significant than they actually are.



MISLEADING

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

VS



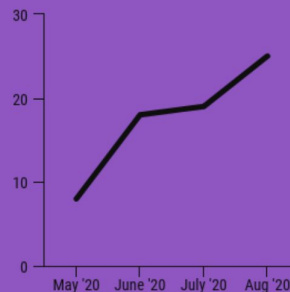
ACCURATE

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

3

CHERRY PICKING DATA

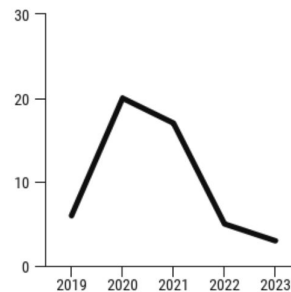
Writers may only include certain data points on their graphs to reinforce their narratives. This can create a false impression of the data.



MISLEADING

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

VS



ACCURATE

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



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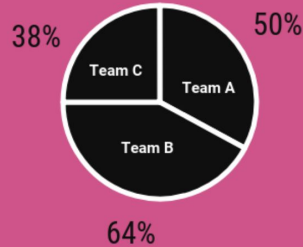
Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

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

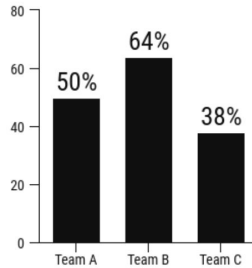
- Pie charts are used to compare parts of a whole, not the difference between groups
- A different type of graph should be used to compare the three teams

VS

ACCURATE



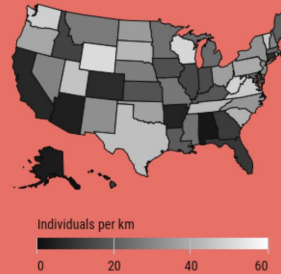
- Bar graphs are better for showing the differences between groups
- This chart is a better visualization of the data



5

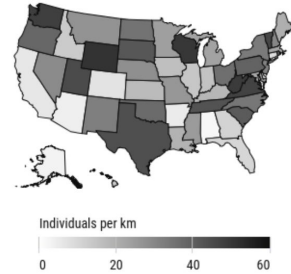
GOING AGAINST CONVENTIONS

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



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

