

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CREATING

SHAREABLE INFOGRAPHICS

Created by



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INTRODUCTION

Let's be totally honest. A significant percentage of infographics circling the Web today are just plain bad. From poorly structured infographics that have no clear message to badly designed ones that literally make your eyes hurt, there's a ton of "chart junk" out there that can serve as examples of what NOT to do. To help you properly translate your ideas into infographics so that you can extend their reach and lifespan on the web, we've created this ultimate guide for beginners on how to create effective and shareable infographics for your marketing. Follow these simple step-by-step instructions and you'll be on your way to creating impactful visual messages in no time.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD INFOGRAPHIC?

An effective infographic

should be well-designed, supported by data and tell a story—just like any other piece of content. In order to help you tell the good from the bad so you can find the right kind of inspiration online, we've compiled a list of characteristics you should keep in mind when creating your own infographics.

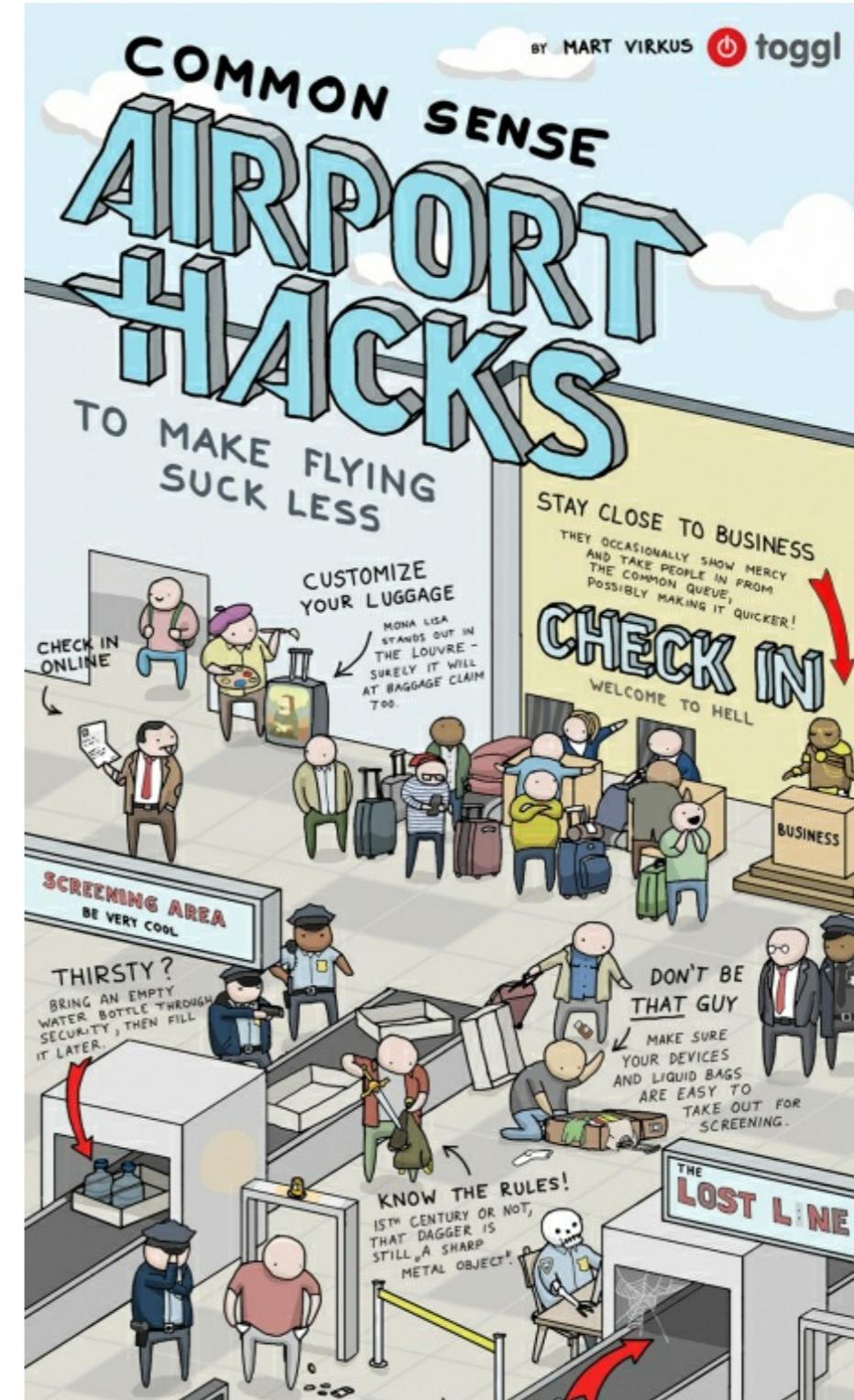


“The key to making information visual is to first have good information...”

Alberto Cairo

1 IT TELLS A STORY

An effective infographic not only conveys valuable information in a convincing manner, it also **narrates a story worth telling**. Take a look at the infographic on the right. It's a delight to read, both because of the engaging illustrations and the way it is mapped out. It does an excellent job of taking readers by the hand and guiding them through a visual-and entertaining-tour of an airport. (Click on the source link at the bottom to view the complete version.)



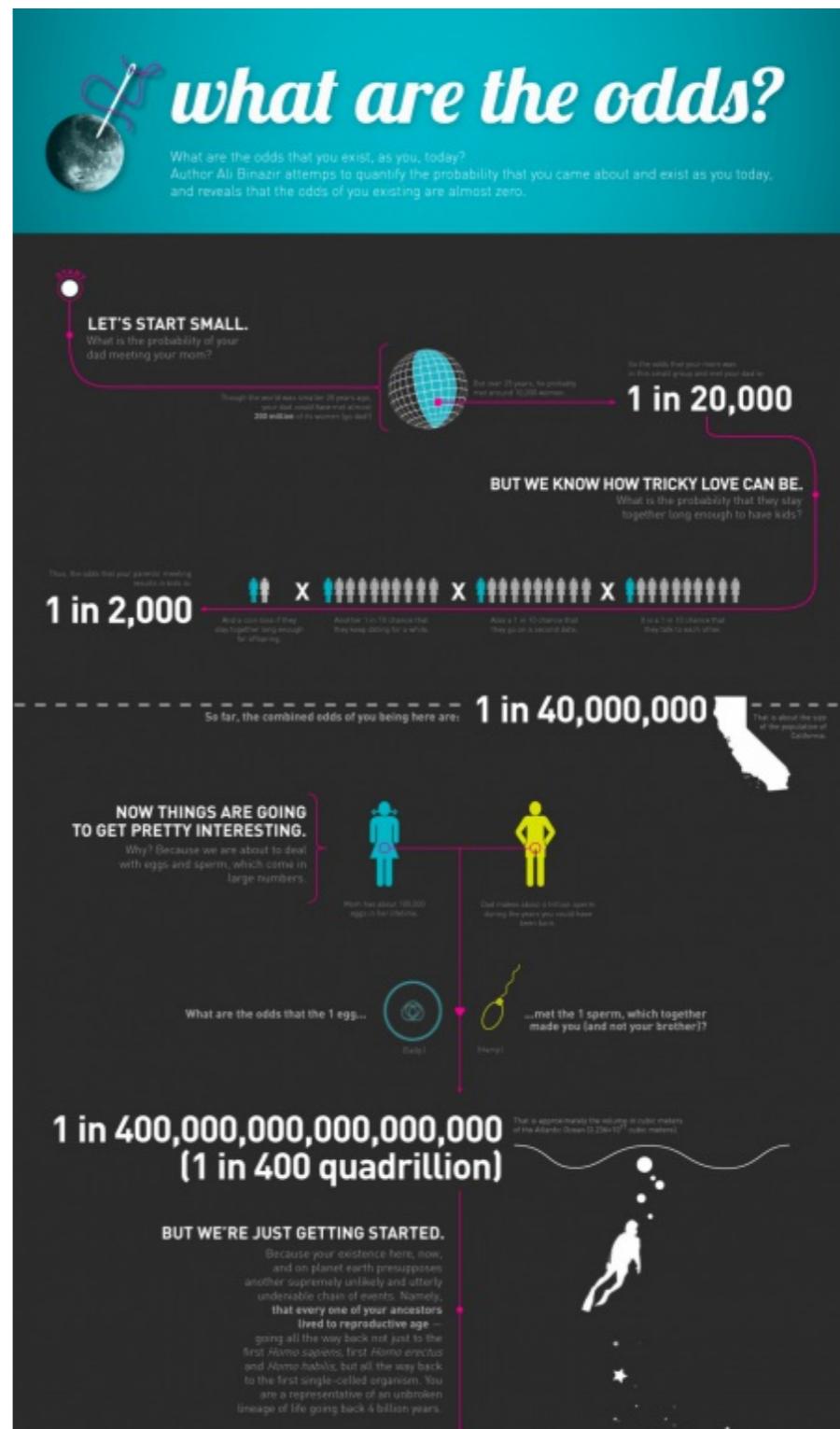
[Source](#)

2

IT TAKES YOUR EYES ON A PREDEFINED JOURNEY.

You can be sure of one thing: If a reader's gaze is darting from one end of your infographic to another, trying to figure out where to look next, then it is probably lacking structure and visual hierarchy.

The mark of a good infographic is its effectiveness in communicating a message. That is the final goal. This infographic, for example, uses everything at its disposal—from a harmonious color combination with effective contrast to a clear storyline—to get you, the reader, from point A to point B. Along the way, you are both entertained and enlightened and reach the end, thinking, “Wow, I’m glad I read that!”



[Source](#)

3 IT IS WELL STRUCTURED.

If you have a lot of textual information to present, it's best to **organize your infographic into sections** so it is easier to read and scan. This infographic, for example, is neatly divided into sections, making it extremely easy to understand and digest the information presented. Within a few seconds, you have a clear idea of its purpose and message.



[Source](#)

4 IT SENDS ONE KEY MESSAGE.

The most effective infographics implement everything at their disposal--including design elements and text--to send one key message, as is done in this example.

One way to gauge whether your infographic meets this criterion is to ask someone who wasn't involved in the creation process to explain it to you. If they don't understand the information or are confused anywhere along the way, then you most likely have to rethink or redesign your visual.

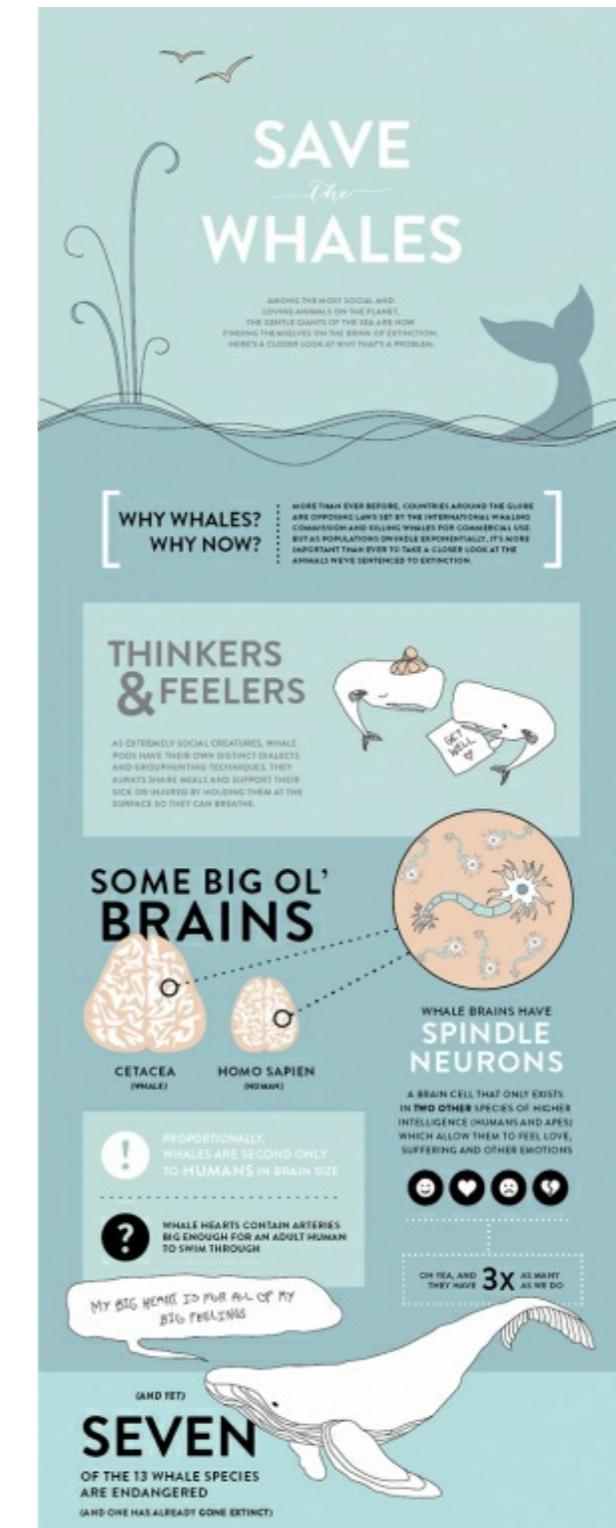


[Source](#)

5 IT IS VISUALLY APPEALING.

One of the big pluses of using an infographic is the added visual appeal that makes it stand out from textual content.

Whether it's a new website you're launching or a series of charts and graphs, **presentation matters** and, when used effectively, can make your content all the more effective.

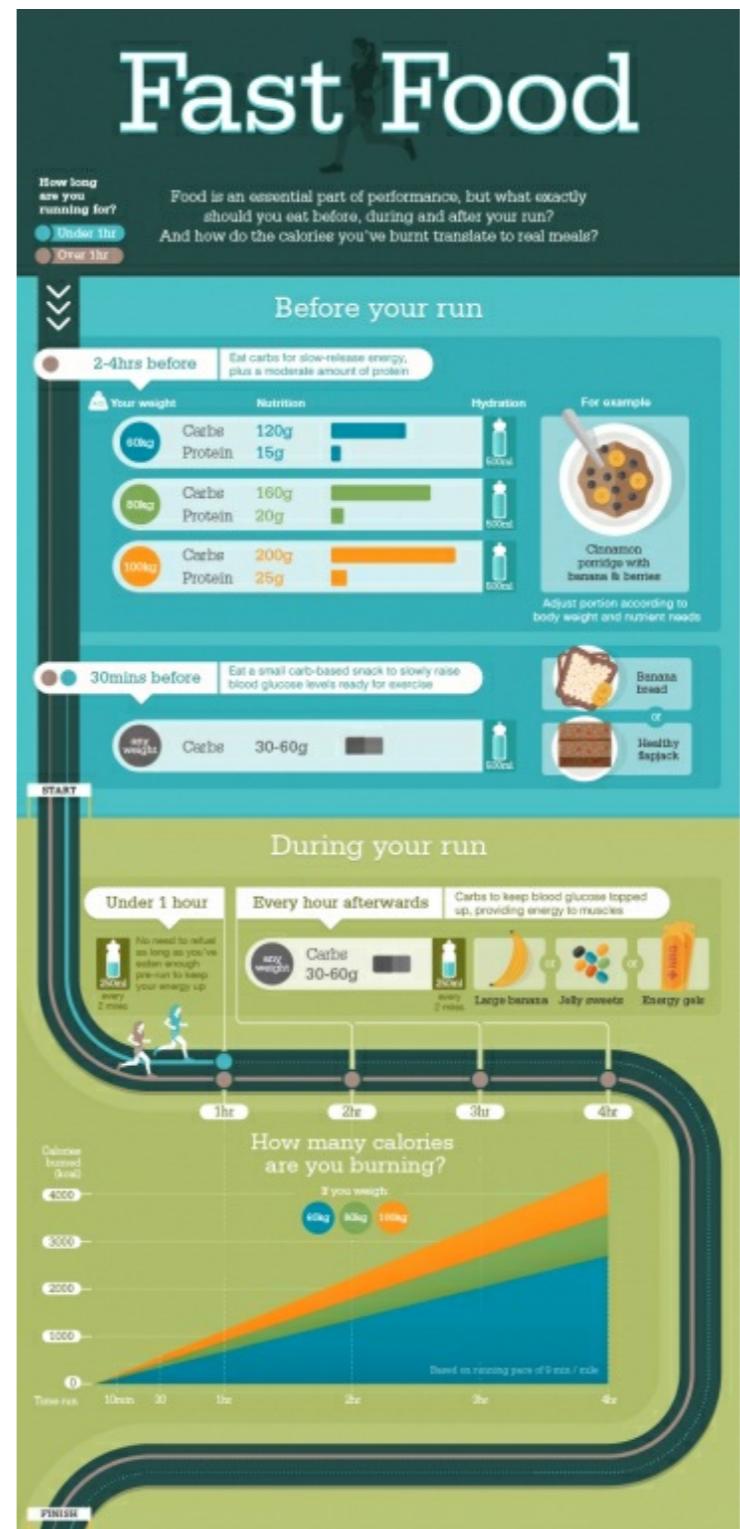


[Source](#)

6 IT IS ACCURATE AND WELL-RESEARCHED.

One of the worst infographic sins you could commit is misleading readers with inaccurate or incomplete information. But some infographics do just that by incorrectly interpreting the results of certain studies or citing information from dubious sources.

Handle information responsibly and give useful tips based on widely agreed-upon facts, such as is done in this infographic.



[Source](#)

TYPES OF INFOGRAPHICS

One of the key steps in the process

of creating an effective and shareable infographic is understanding that information can be categorized in one of five ways:

- Chronologically
- Alphabetically
- Geographically
- Categorically
- Hierarchically

The visual format you choose will depend on how you want to organize your information. To help you identify which type of infographic will best serve your purpose and audience, we've compiled a list of the most-used types, along with advice on when to use them and examples of each.



“Never simply show data; rather, make data a pivotal point in an overarching story and use it to drive your audience to action.”

Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic

1 MIXED CHARTS

As its name implies, this type of infographic incorporates different chart and graph formats.

For example, this infographic uses not only the typical bar chart, but also resorts to pie charts, maps and comparisons using vector icons.

This mixed bag of charts and graphs is the best option when you have many statistics, facts and figures to communicate to your audience.



[Source](#)

2 INFORMATIONAL / LIST

Another common type of infographic is the list-based or informational visual. **This type of longform presentation is composed mostly of text** and doesn't rely too much on graphs, charts or other visual elements, as seen in this infographic. While the information is enhanced with an attractive color scheme and icons, overall, the words drive the message home.

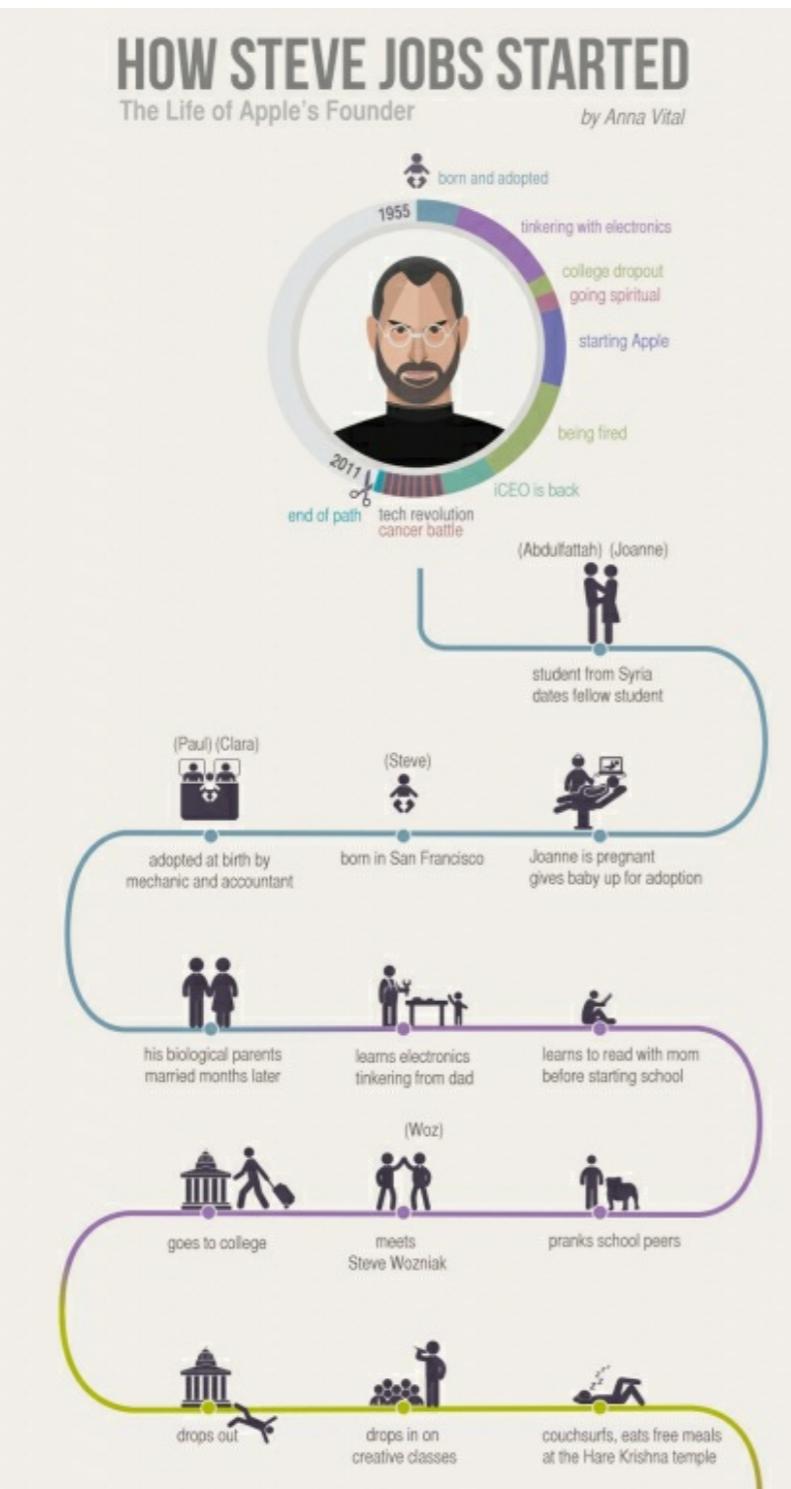


[Source](#)

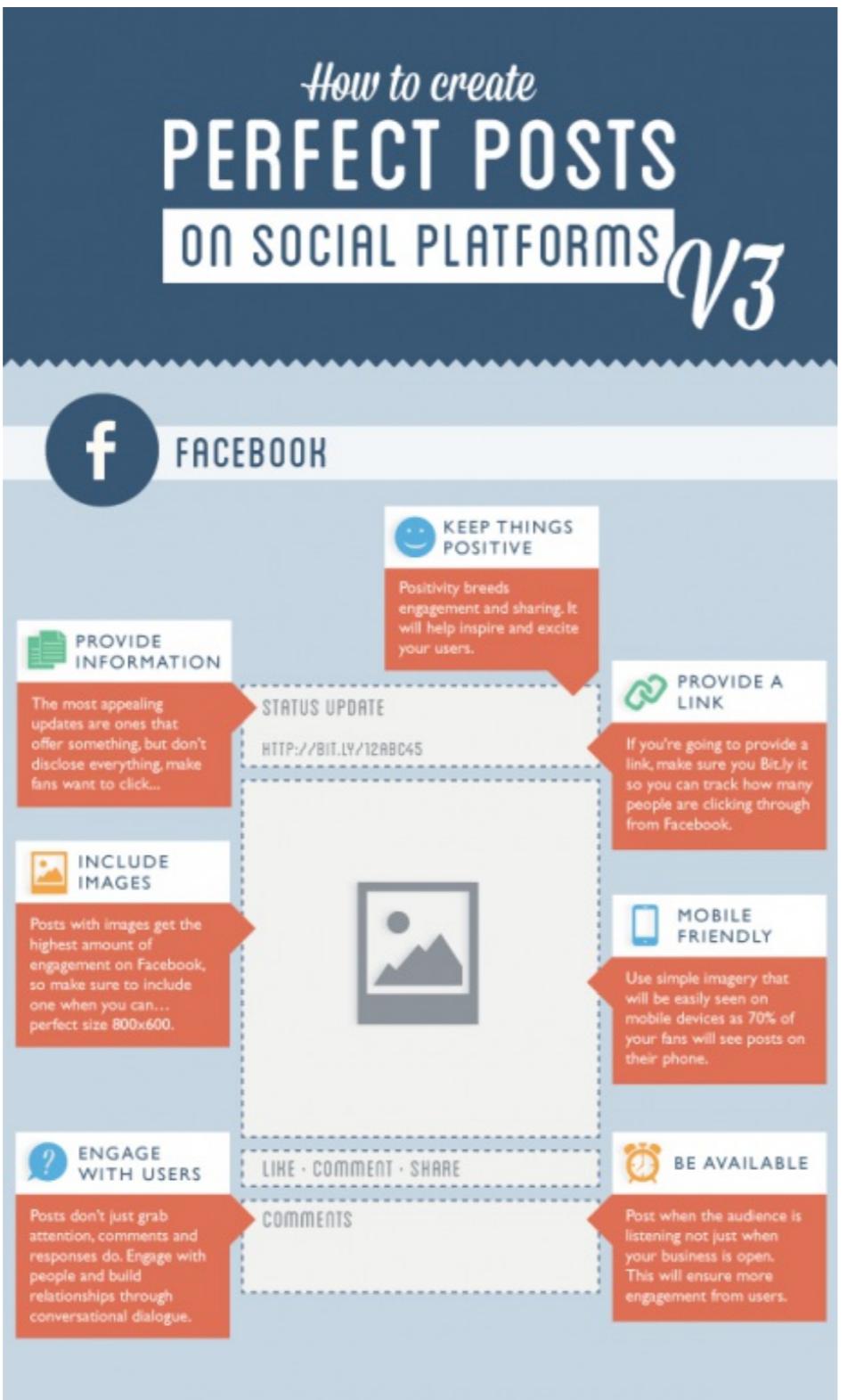
3 TIMELINE

Whenever you want to **show how something has evolved over time or want to tell a story in chronological order**, this type of infographic is the most useful in getting your point across.

Timelines can be used for everything from brand stories to resumes to the historical development of a trend, person or product. They are most effective when they incorporate many different data points spread out across time and are accompanied by images, icons and other graphic elements.



[Source](#)



4 HOW TO

These types of infographics show the steps involved in creating something. For example, the visual to the left shows readers how to create perfect posts on social platforms. This format is best suited for visualizing how-to articles and the description of any procedure with several instructions to follow.

5 PROCESS

This type of infographic is commonly referred to as a **flow chart** or a **decision-tree**.

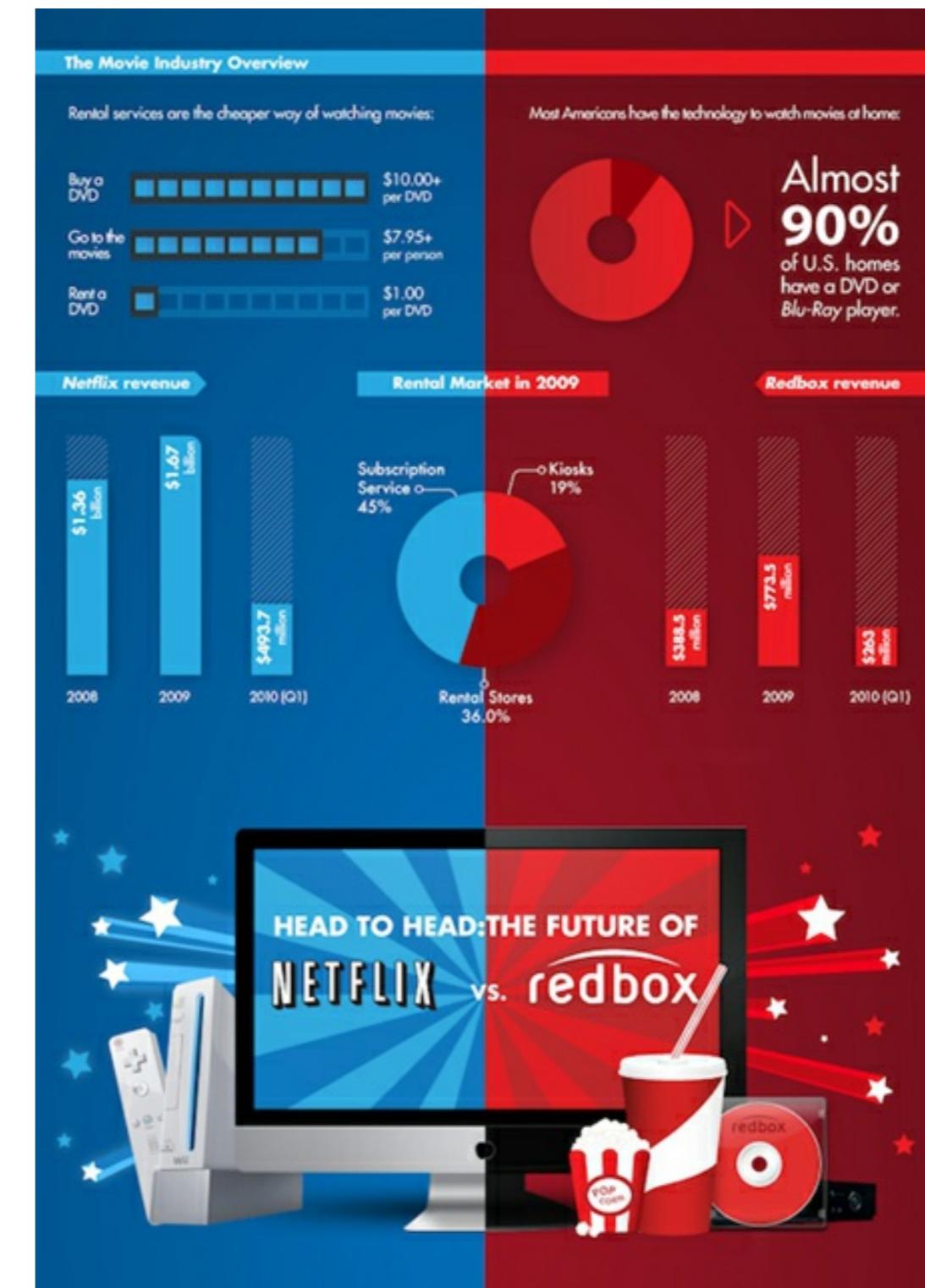
From determining what kind of personality you have to finding the right employee for a job, there are flow charts for just about everything.



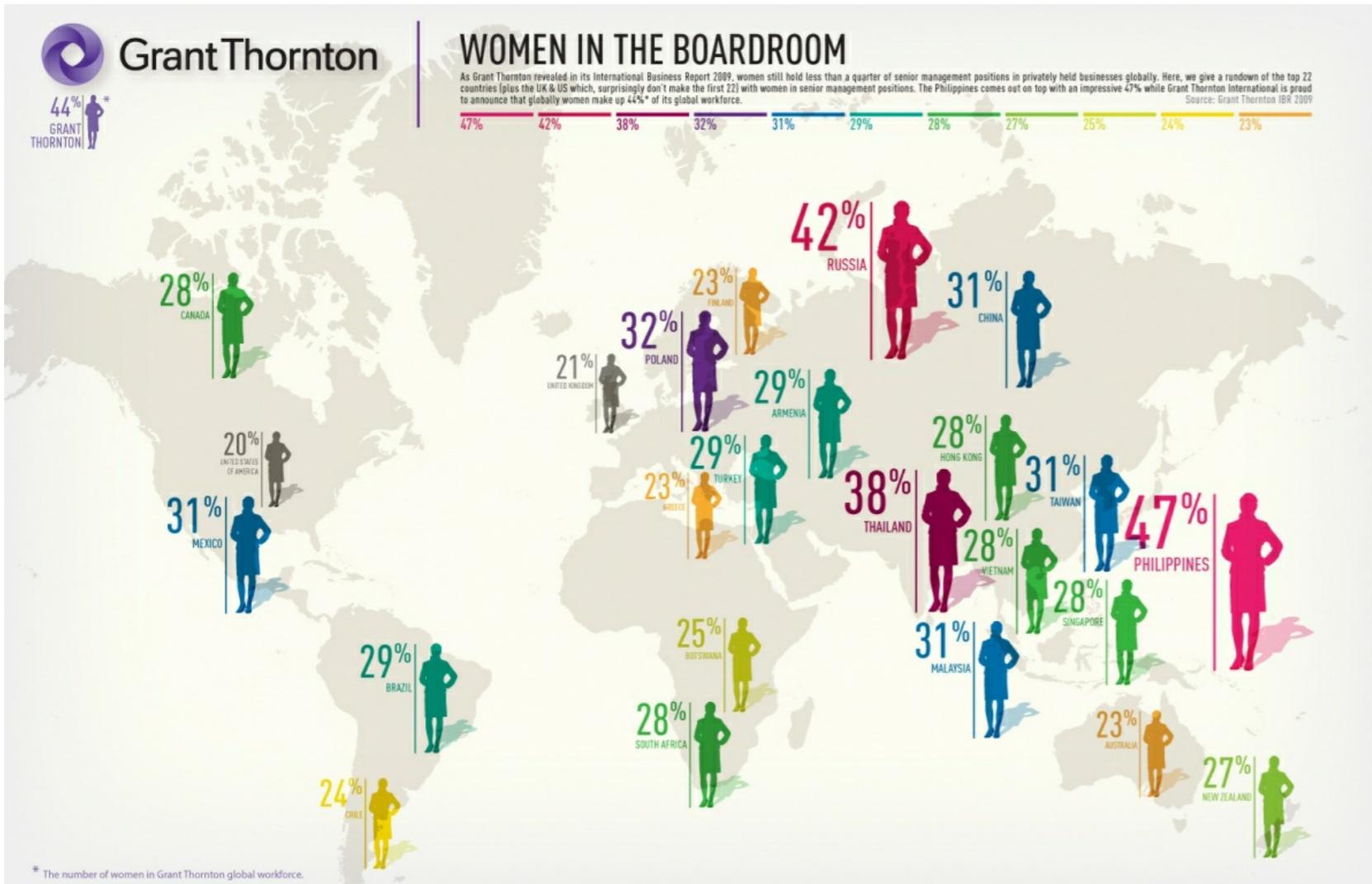
[Source](#)

6 COMPARISON

Another common use for infographics is making comparisons between two products, people, ideas, things, events or places. Besides comparing two products side by side, it can also be used to visually contrast and compare seemingly opposing things to reveal similarities, differences and relative advantages.



7 LOCATION



[Source](#)

One of the easiest ways to visually communicate trends across a region—local, national or global—is to use a location infographic. Usually in the form of a map with icons and color-coded regions, this type of visual is ideal for **comparing regional and global statistics on a relevant subject that readers care about**.

For example, one idea could be a map of crime rates across different states; another could be comparisons of cost of living; or a visual representation of the expansion of a company across the world.

8 PHOTO-GRAPHIC



[Source](#)

A photographic infographic or “photo-graphic” is what results from the combination of images and graphic elements such as simple line charts, icons or text, as seen here. Working on the basis of a **background composed of high-quality images**, this type of infographic is aesthetically pleasing and catches the eye because of the way it creatively combines disparate visual formats.

9

HIERARCHICAL

This type of chart **organizes information according to levels**—whether it be level of importance, level of difficulty, income level, among others. Although most commonly seen in the shape of a pyramid, as in this example, this type of infographic can also be seen in the form of an organizational chart. The key function of this type of visual is to compare the different levels and show the relation between each of them.



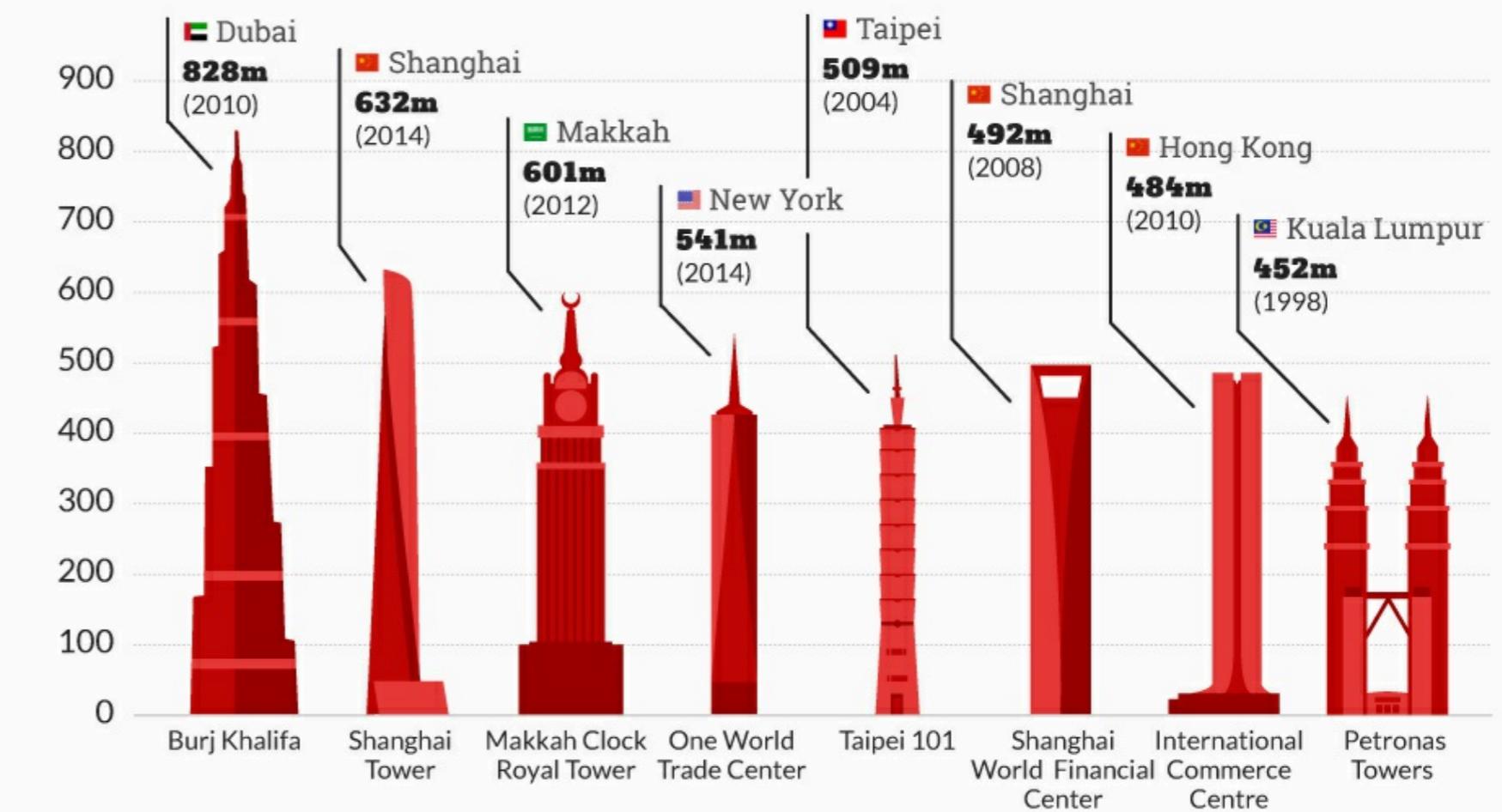
[Source](#)

10 SINGLE CHART

As the name implies, single-chart infographics simply use **one chart type as the focal point of the data visualization**. In comparison with mixed-charts infographics, this one performs much better in terms of shares and views on social media platforms.

One World Trade Center is the world's fourth tallest building

The tallest buildings worldwide (in metres)



@StatistaCharts Source: Emporis

i100

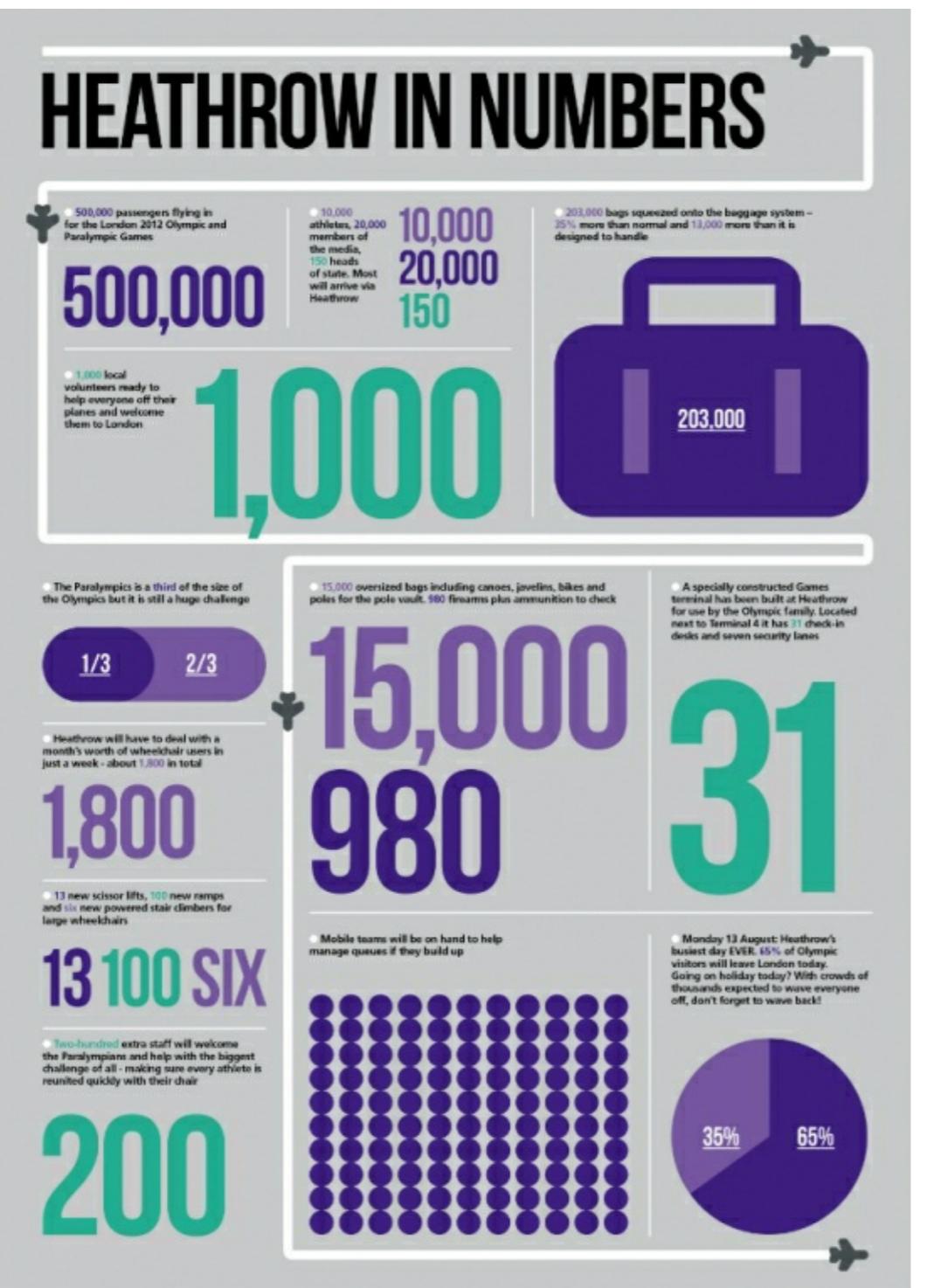
from The INDEPENDENT

statista

[Source](#)

11 VISUALIZED NUMBERS

We've all seen these kinds of infographics floating around the Internet: The ones with various stats and figures visualized using large numbers, icons or other graphic elements. Sometimes called "number porn," this type of infographic is ideal for adding visual interest to individual units of information.



[Source](#)

12 ANATOMICAL

This type of infographic uses visual metaphors such as the human body to display information. For example, if you want to present the ideal profile of a CEO, this format allows you to visualize this information in a palatable manner, versus a plain list of characteristics.

Alternatively, you can also make use of less figurative anatomical infographics by using representations of objects and displaying the parts that make up their anatomy, such as “the anatomy of the perfect website.”



[Source](#)

13 VISUAL RESUME



Source

Many job candidates have resorted to turning their text-based Word resumes into visually captivating infographics.

But it's not all about flashy graphics. Hannah Morgan, author of the book [The Infographic Resume](#), advises using visuals with a purpose, such as charts that highlight key statistics and accomplishments.

She also advises using these types of infographics in industries that are the most open to non-traditional resumes, such as marketing, advertising, graphic design, and tech startups.

STEPS TO CREATING AN INFOGRAPHIC



Many non-designers like yourself

may find themselves in the same predicament:
full of ideas worth listening to but lacking the
know-how to visualize them in a way that will
really captivate readers.

This practical, step-by-step guide is meant to
bridge that gap between the desire to
communicate effectively through infographics
and the technical know-how to do so.

So, first things first...

“Form and content have to
work together to deliver an
idea that is enjoyable, useful
and informative”

Francesco Franchi



1 DEFINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

The first step to crafting any message, whether in a textual or visual format, is to define your target audience.

Who are you communicating to? Business executives? Millennials? Stay-at-home moms? Your answer to this question will set the tone of your copy and the overall mood of your visual theme.

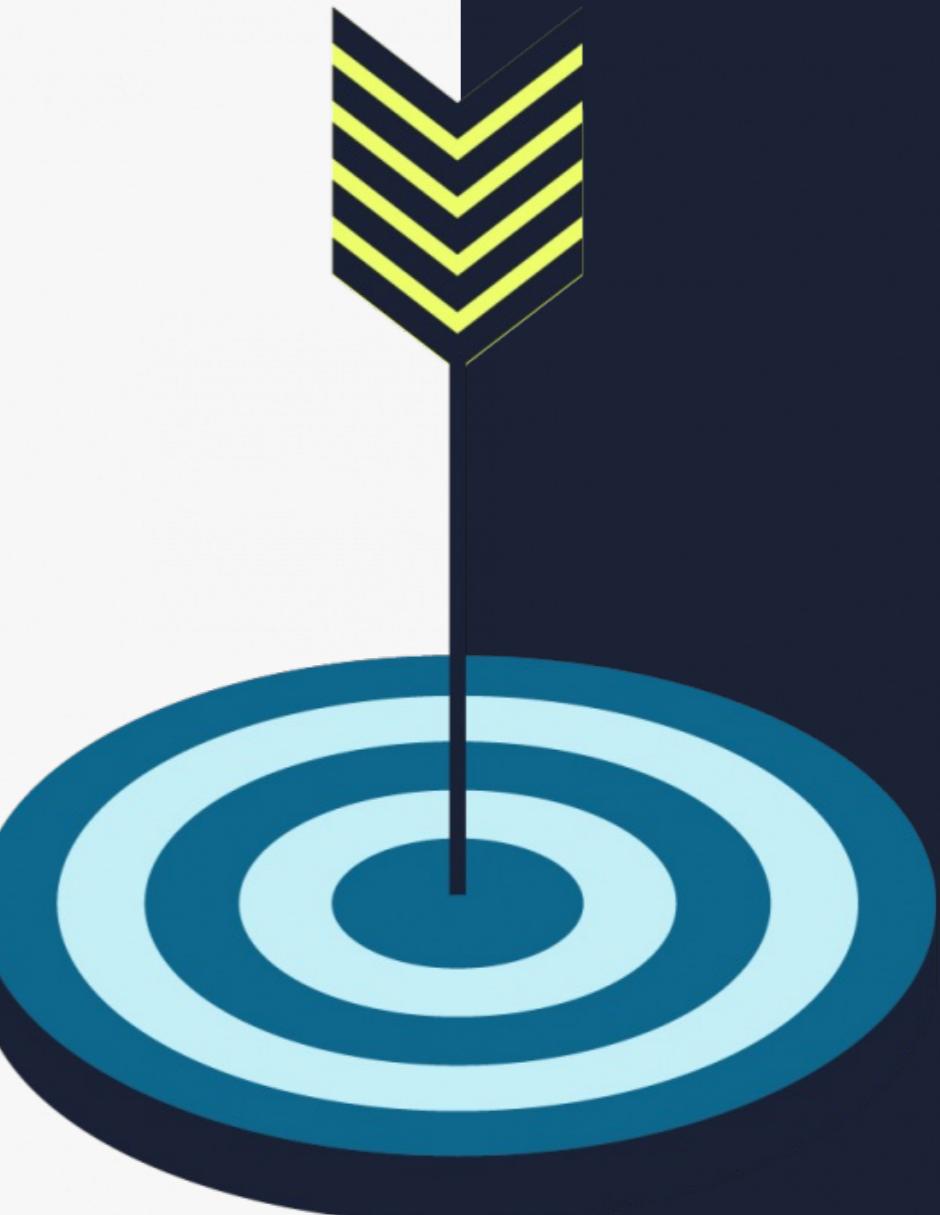


2 DEFINE YOUR GOALS

Ask yourself: What exactly do I want to achieve with this infographic? Here are a few objectives you may have:

- **Reveal** hidden trends and patterns using data.
- **Break down** complex information and present it in an easy-to-digest way.
- **Provide** your audience with a step-by-step guide on how to do something.
- **Raise** awareness of a specific issue or cause.
- **Create** a comprehensive, go-to visual resource on a topic.
- **Compare** two or more products or concepts.
- **Translate** a story, such as a brand story, into a timeline infographic.

Each of these different goals corresponds to a different type of infographic, so choose which one best fits your needs at the moment and consult the previous section to determine the best format for your message.



3

DEFINE THE MEDIUM



Nowadays, many of the infographics created for marketing purposes are published online, which saves a lot of time and resources.

But if your objective is to translate a report into a print infographic that can be handed out at a meeting, then you'd have to consider factors such as the dimensions of your infographic, file format and image resolution.

The infographic on the right, for example, represents the size of a flyer and has been designed to be printed out on basic letter-size paper (8.5 x 11 inches), while the one of the left is designed for the web and is typically longer since visitors scroll through to the end (800 x 1600 pixels).

4 CHOOSE YOUR TOPIC



The process for creating a shareable infographic is a lot like the process for writing an effective piece of communication.

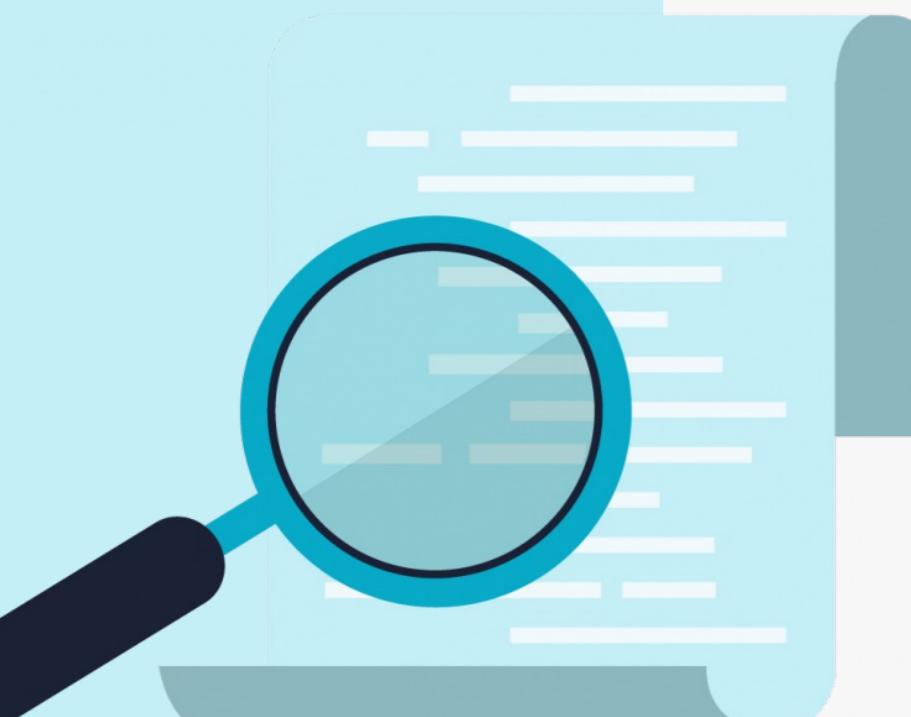
Think about the last time you wrote a proposal or a paper. How did you begin the process? You probably started by organizing your ideas, then identifying a thesis statement and arguments to support it.

The same goes for infographics. Start by asking yourself:

- Do I already have a **thesis statement backed up by data?**
- Or do I still have to **conduct research to arrive at a well-supported argument?**

For example, if your infographic will be based on a company report or any other type of research, then you already have the basis of your content. But let's say you want to create an original infographic on a trending topic or other news-related issue, then you'll have to conduct your own thorough research before publishing anything.

5 FIND THE RIGHT INFORMATION.



If you still have to **investigate** and sift through data to find the right information, start by consulting these possible sources:

- Recently published surveys or polls
- Newly released reports
- Press releases
- Proprietary company data
- Academic studies
- Interviews with experts and/or clients
- Your own informal surveys using Google Forms

If you're looking to **create** an informative infographic on a current events or social issue, you can also consult open-source databases, such as the following:

- [US Government Open Data](#)
- [US Federal Statistics](#)
- [Data.gov.uk](#)
- [Dataportals.org](#)
- [Gapminder](#)
- [World Bank](#)
- [United Nations](#)
- [Census.gov](#)
- [American FactFinder](#)
- [Censtats](#)
- [Immigration Statistics](#)
- [Education Statistics](#)
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- [Environmental Statistics](#)
- [Google Public Data Explorer](#)
- [Data Hub](#)
- [Open Data Network](#)
- [Data Catalogs](#)
- [UK Data Archive](#)
- [Clinical Studies](#)

6 PROCESS YOUR DATA

Once you have the data you need to answer your initial question or to support the point you want to make, you can now **convert the data into a format you can work with.**

Since you need to import data into an Excel or Google spreadsheet, you'll want to—whenever possible—download data in CSV format (comma separated value). There are times, however, that you'll find a chart or graph in a PDF file, in which case you'll need to insert this data into Excel using a converter, such as Zamzar, Import.io, Tabula or ScraperWiki. Other times, you may also find useful information as an image, in which case you can use optical character recognition software, such as Free Ocr.



7 FIND THE STORY IN THE DATA

Now comes the part where you “interview” your data to **find a story worth telling**. By asking many questions, you will obtain various interpretations of the same data instead of simply sticking with your first reading.

Once your data has been cleaned up to eliminate inconsistencies and reformatted to suit your purposes, you can start processing the information using spreadsheet skills, such as sorting, filtering and aggregating. For example, you can sort data in ascending or descending order in terms of size or by location; you can calculate and compare means; you can also compare two data sets. To obtain more robust conclusions, you can also conduct simple statistical and graphical analyses using free software such as RStudio and R-Project.

Just like journalists interview sources to gather evidence and piece together a narrative, you must now shift through your data and ask certain questions to detect patterns and trends that reveal facts such as:

- **Changes over time**
- **The differences or similarities** between items
- **The makeup or composition** of a whole
- **The relationship** between two or more variables



Besides interviewing your data in spreadsheet form, you can also detect patterns by visualizing data through different types of charts. To choose the right type of chart, just ask yourself if you want to:

COMPARE VALUES



Bar chart



Line chart

SHOW THE INDIVIDUAL PARTS THAT MAKE UP A WHOLE



Pie chart



Stacked bar



Stacked column

ANALYZE TRENDS



Line chart



Bar chart

UNDERSTAND HOW DATA IS DISTRIBUTED



Scatter plot



Line chart



Bar chart

COMPREHEND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DATA SETS



Line chart



Scatter plot



Bubble chart

■ Trends Over Time

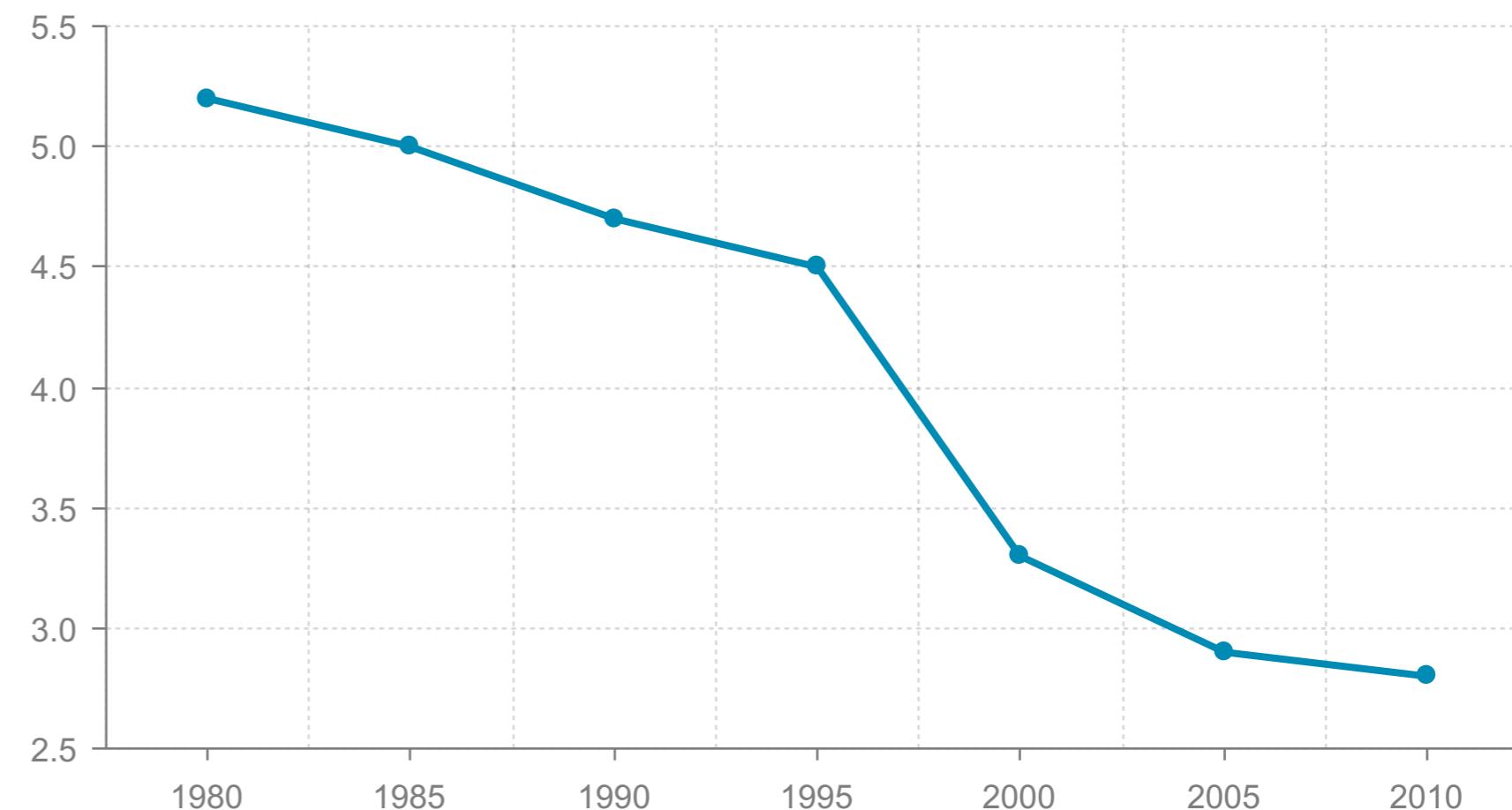
For example, if you want to reveal a downward trend in America's divorce rate, from the 1980s to the present, you can **use a line graph to chart changes over time.**

Instead of comparing two data points, one from 1980 and the other from 2016, show the entire progression of the divorce rate over this period of time.

TIP: In order to identify a trend, always use more than two data points.

America's Divorce Rate (1980-2010)

Divorces and Annulments per 1,000 people



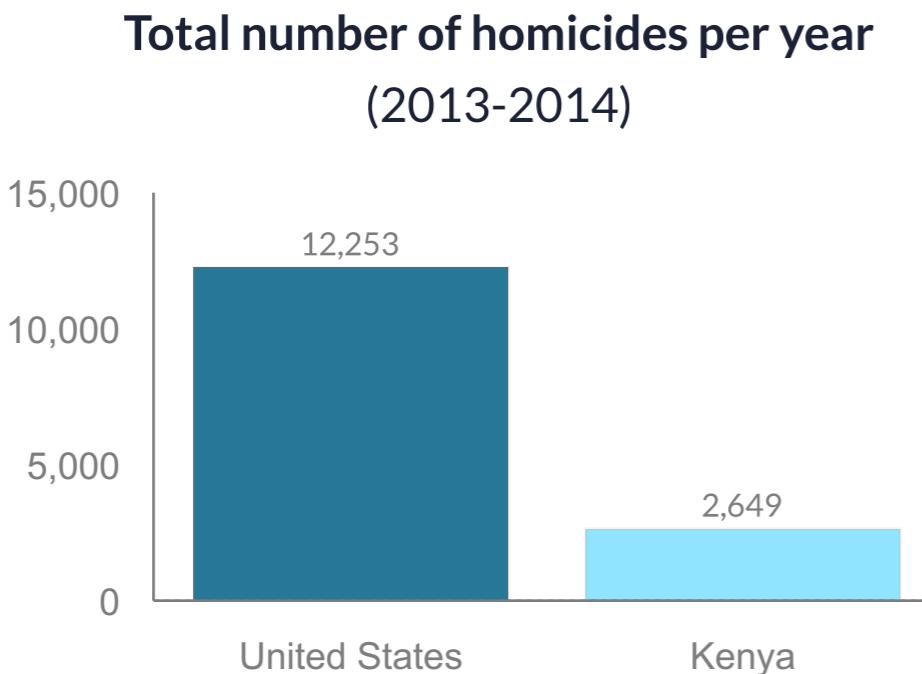
Sources: CDC NCHS

■ Comparisons Between Items

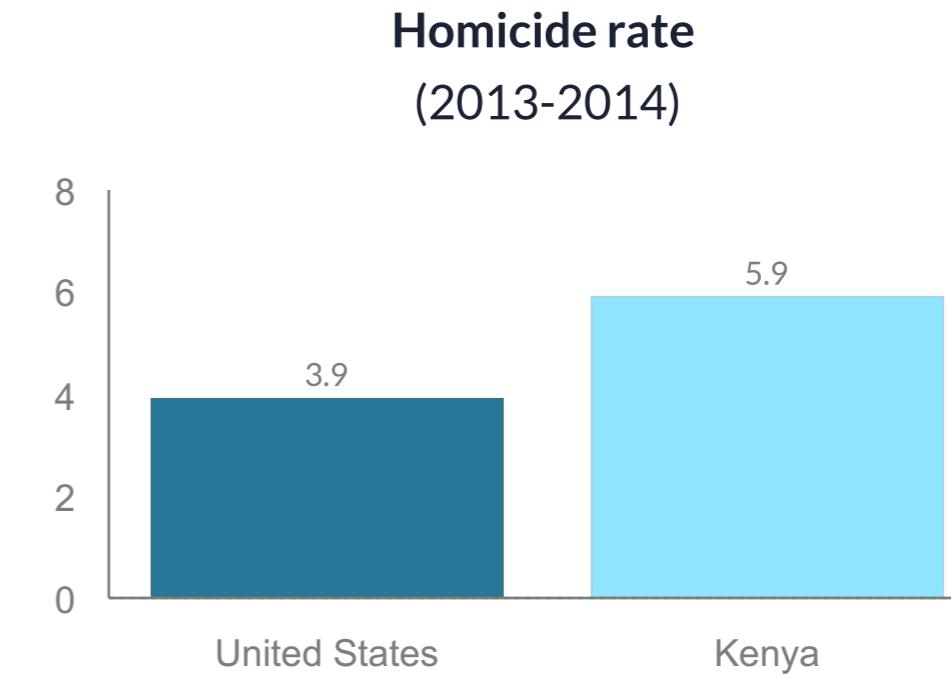
One of the most important rules to keep in mind when visualizing information is to always place information in context.

For example, if you compare the total number of homicides in the United States with those of Kenya, you might be led to believe that the former has a much more serious crime problem.

But this is a misrepresentation of reality. In order to place comparable units of measurement side by side, you should calculate the number of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, as seen below. In this case, we can clearly see that Kenya's murder rate was actually higher than that of the US.



TIP: Compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges.



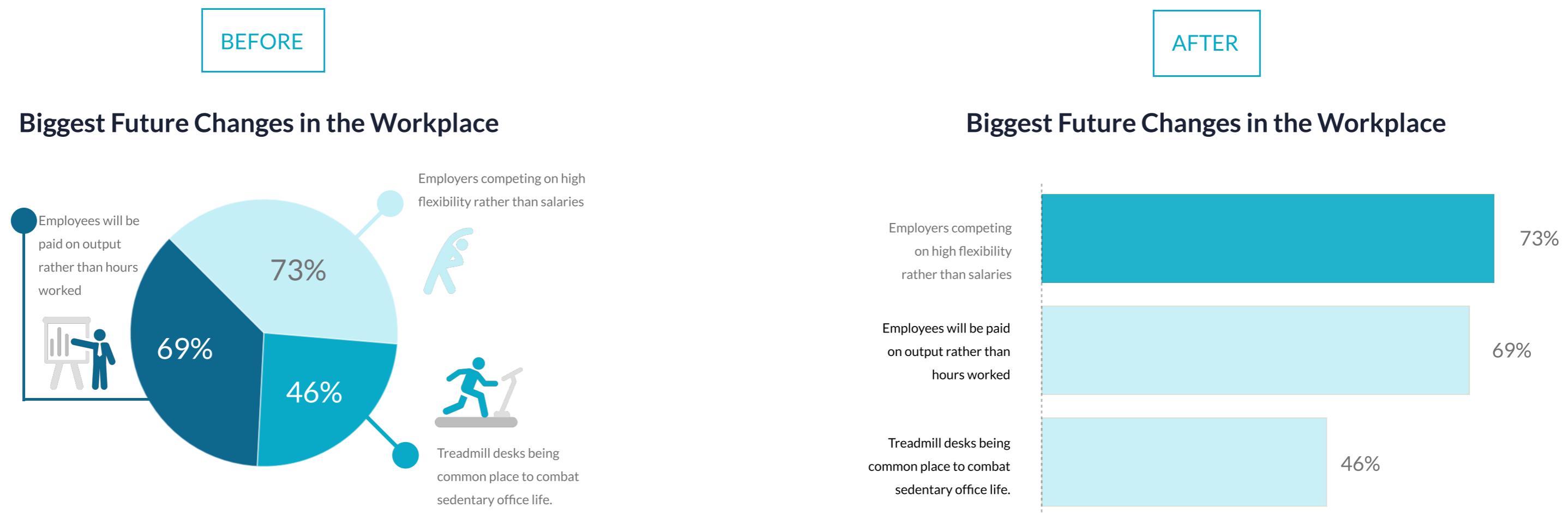
Source: UNODC

■ Composition of a Whole

When your goal is to reveal the makeup of a particular group or data set, then the most common format used is the pie chart.

Although easily deciphered due to its ubiquity, there are a few pointers you should keep in mind:

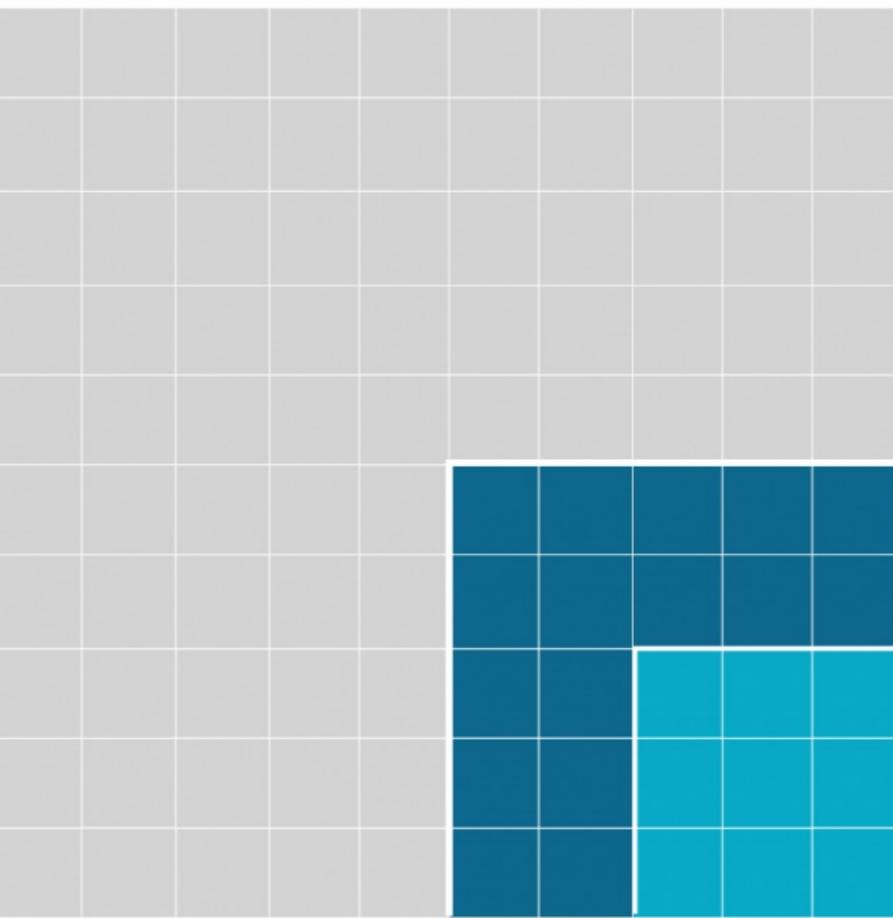
For example, if you're presenting the results of a poll that allowed for more than one response, then the results will not add up to 100, in which case a pie chart should not be used to visualize the results.



Although the human eye is not as adept at interpreting differences in area as it is in comparing single dimensions, such as length and width, area graphs are also an option when visualizing the composition of a whole and comparing numbers with drastic differences in magnitude.

TIP: Make sure the visual representation you are using is the correct one for the type of information you have.

Interview breakdown



[Source](#)

Out of every **100**
phone screens

**we bring 25
candidates onsite
for interviews...**

**and
extend 9 offers.**

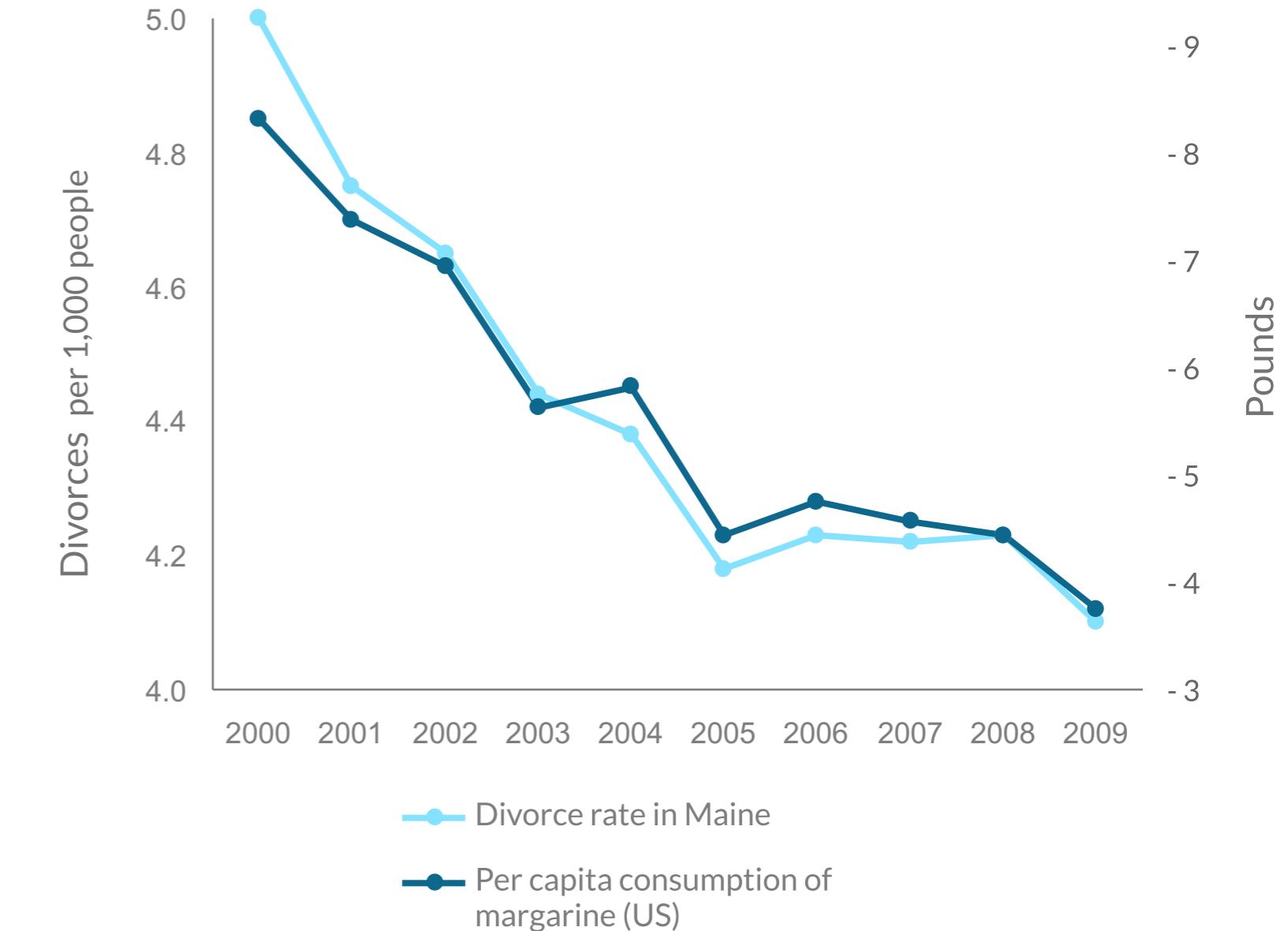
■ Relationships Between Two or More Variables

If you've ever dabbled in statistics, you probably know that correlation between two variables does not necessarily mean causation.

Take, for example, this graph of the divorce rate in Maine compared to the per capita consumption of margarine in the US. Although there appears to be a very strong correlation, it is, of course, a spurious one.

In cases where there appears to be a strong correlation, you might need to consult with those who conducted the research, since they are likely to have a clearer picture of all the extraneous factors involved and whether one variable may be linked with the second.

TIP: Keep in mind that correlation does not necessarily mean causation.

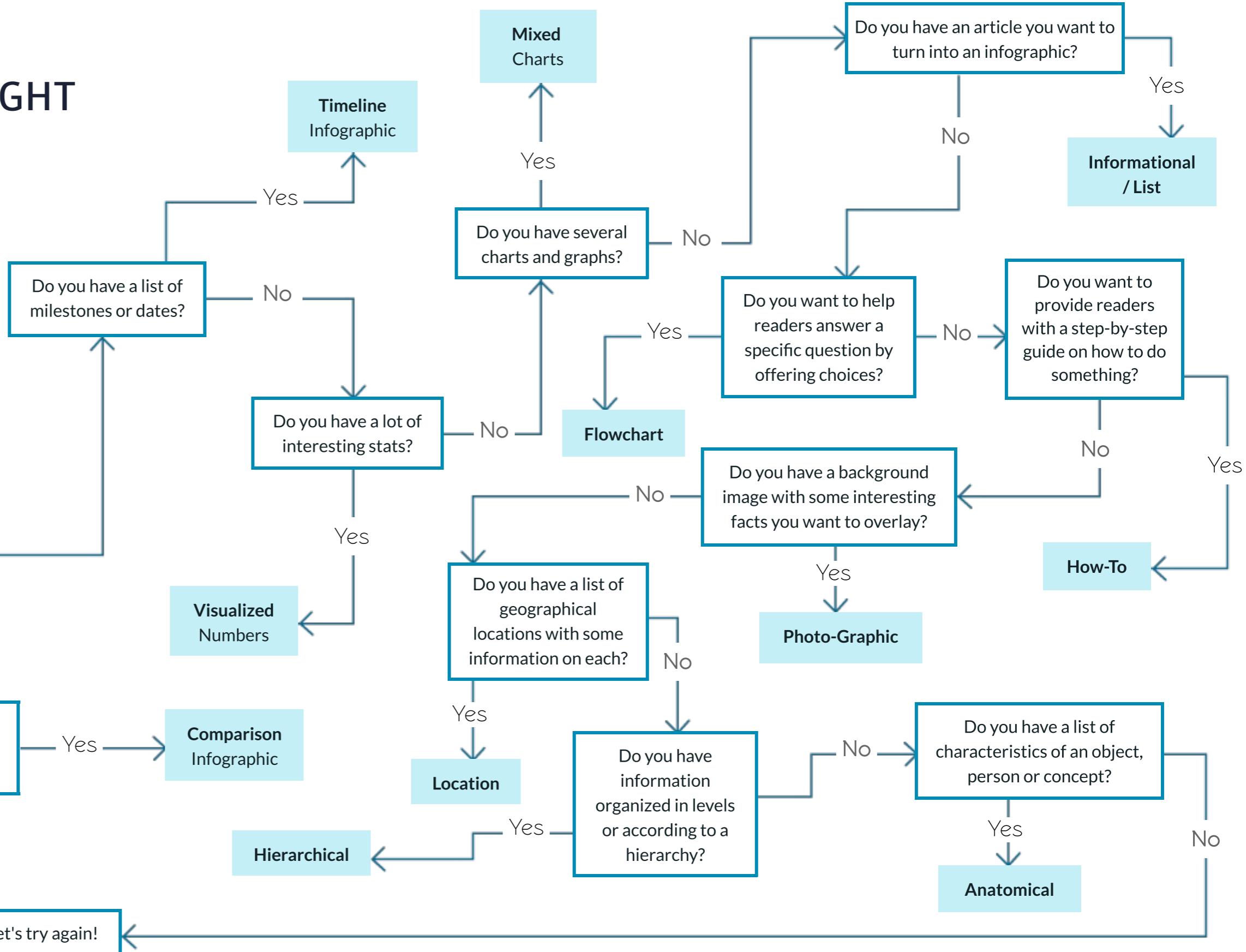
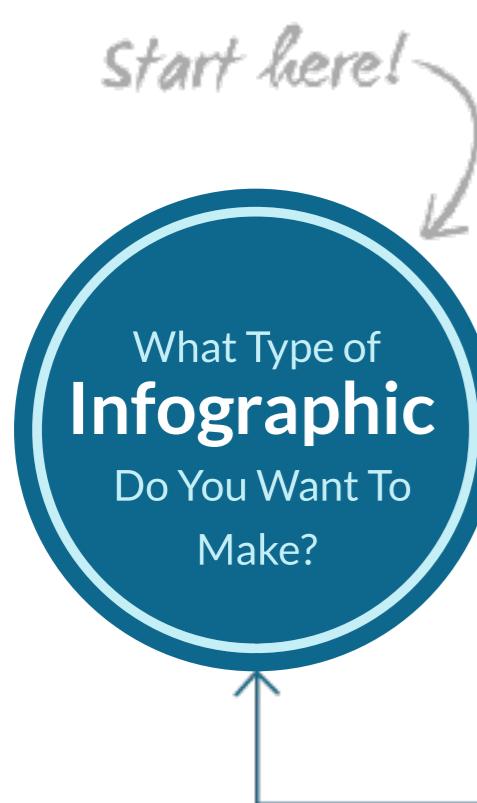


Correlation: 99%

Sources: US Census & USDA tylervigen.com

8 HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE OF INFOGRAPHIC

You can now proceed to visualize your information with the right type of infographic. To make things easier for you, we've created this handy flow chart infographic to help you decide which format works best for you.



9

HOW TO WRITE COPY FOR YOUR INFOGRAPHIC

■ The One Big Idea

Just like with any piece of communication, the key to creating an effective and shareable infographic is zeroing in on the one main message you want to get across.

To do this, consider your answers to the questions in steps 1, 2 and 4 of this process: Who is your intended audience, what is your primary purpose and what is your thesis statement?

Then, try to sum up the main message of your infographic in just a few sentences. Finally, condense it even further by explaining it in just one sentence.



“Find the surprise in your data and add it as the title.”

Swizec Teller

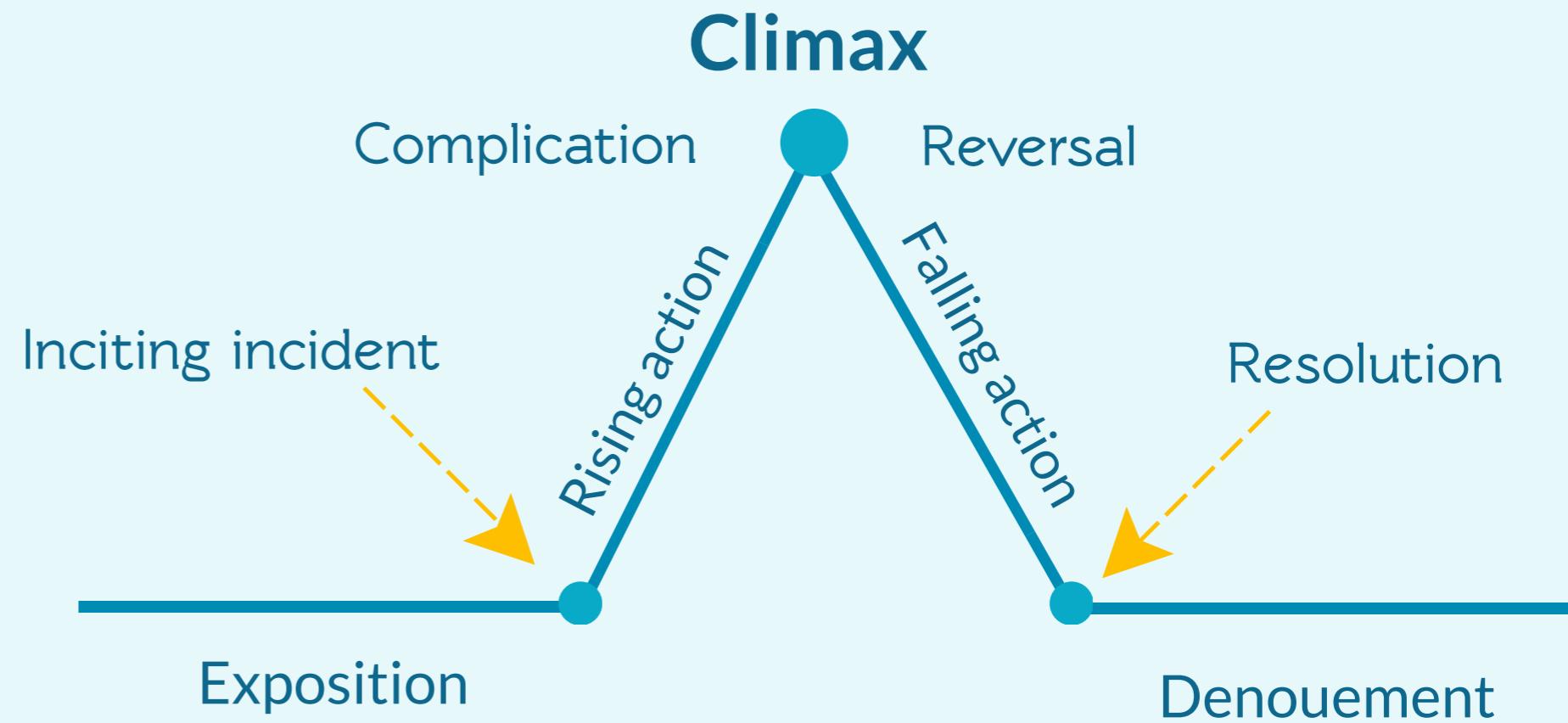
■ Fleshying Out a Narrative

If you're a communicator of any sort, you've likely noticed that people are inherently attracted by stories, while charts and statistics tend to put some people to sleep.

This is why it's crucial to think about the story you're trying to tell, even before going into the details of how you will present your data.

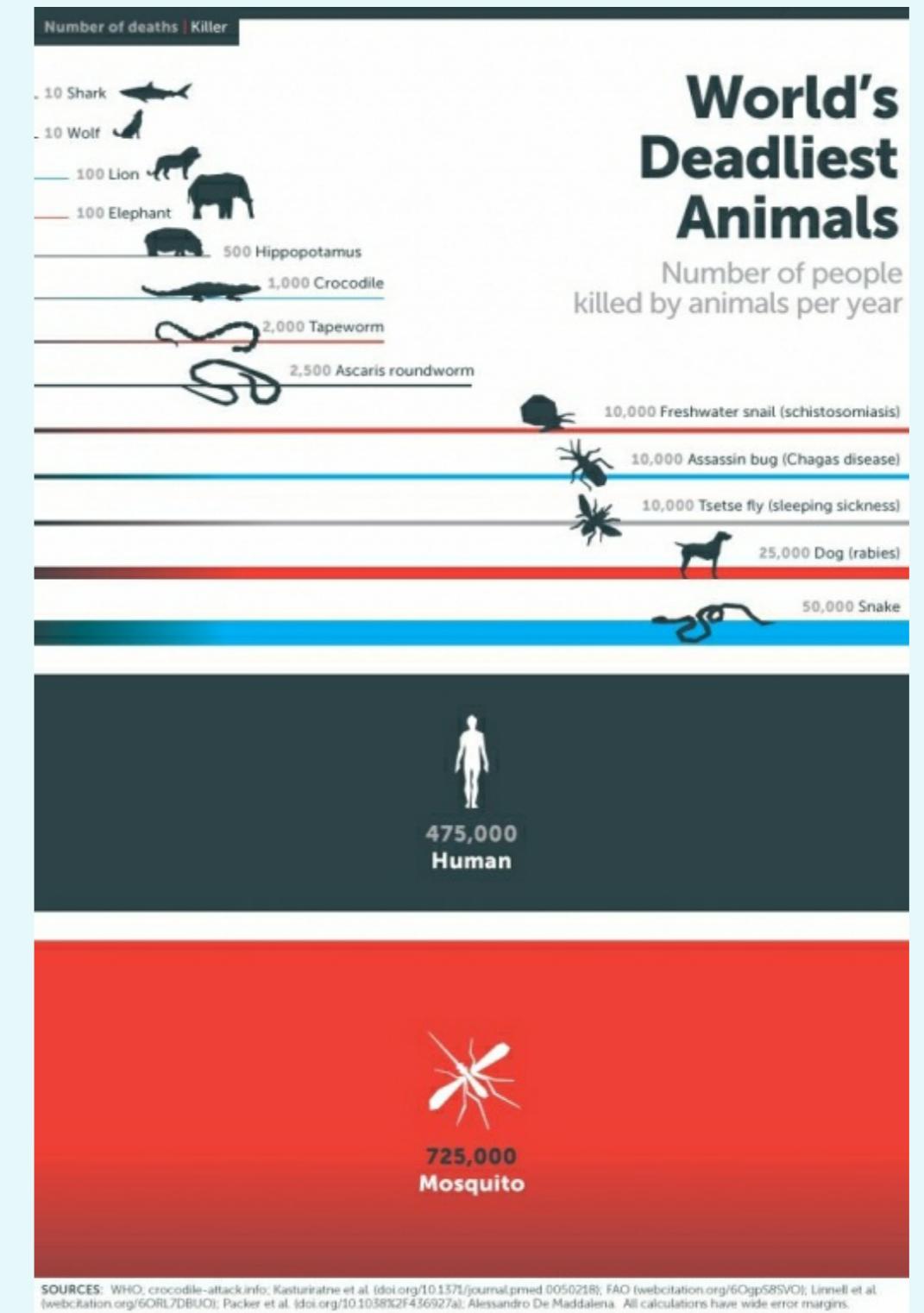
With this in mind, think about the basic elements of all intriguing stories:

- Introduction
- Exposition
- Rising action
- Climax
- Falling action
- Resolution



Just like words are usually the main ingredient of a gripping novel, so numbers and charts can also be used as the foundation of a coherent and enticing narrative that binds your visual story together.

Instead of citing statistic after statistic, weave an engaging story that uses data as a pivotal point in the story or that leads up to a surprising conclusion, as is done in this infographic.

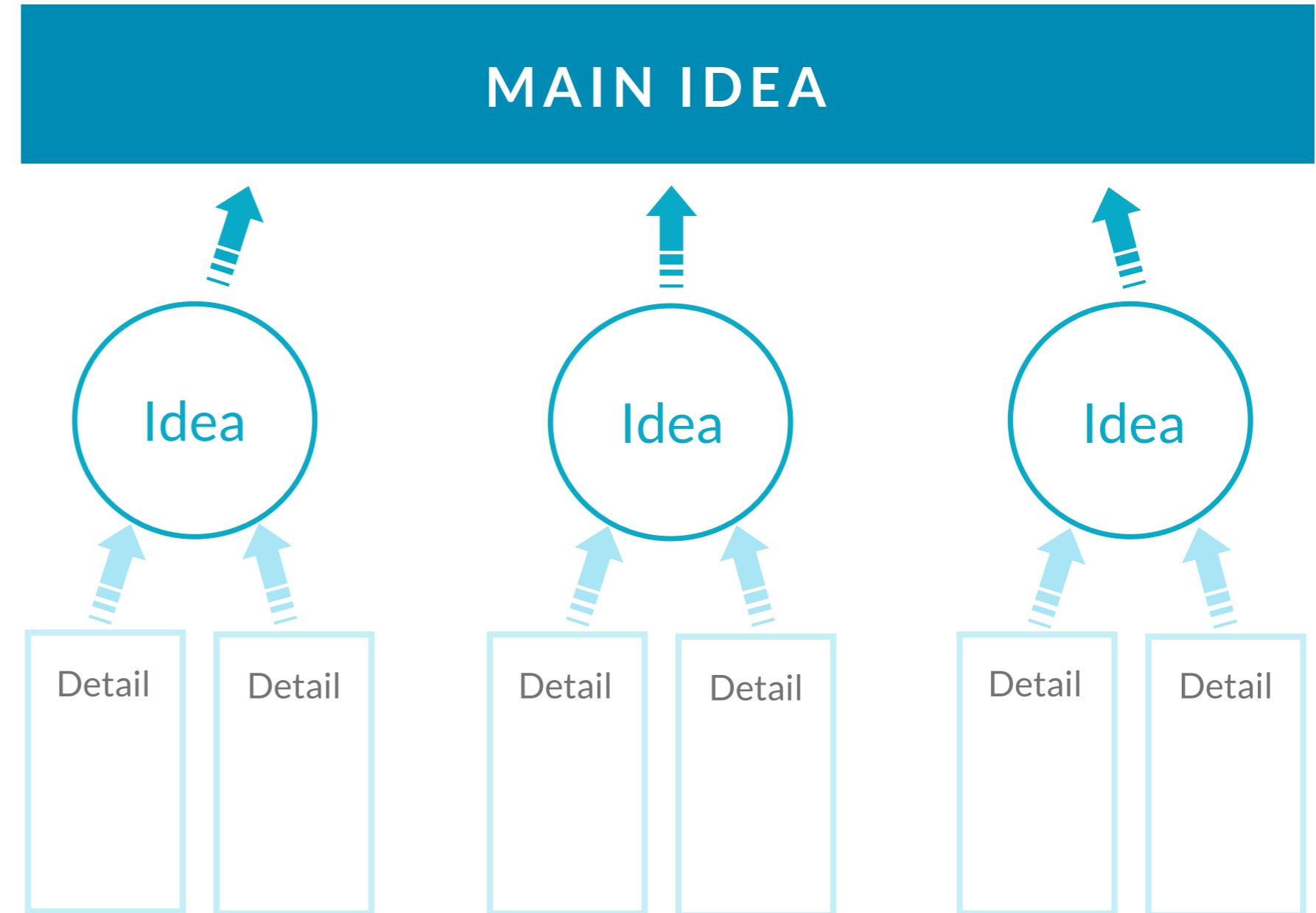


[Source](#)

■ Building an Airtight Case

Besides telling a story, you're also building a case within your narrative. Whether you're trying to raise awareness of a cause or reveal little-known benefits of a certain food product, you will need to use corroborated facts and figures to back up your claims.

You can start outlining your case by going back to your one big idea and then identifying each of your main points, followed by supporting details. To help you craft an airtight argument, you can use an idea map like this one.



■ Deciding on the Tone

If your target audience is comprised of Millennials, then your tone may be laid-back and irreverent; if it's comprised of business executives, then it may be more serious and straightforward.

Next, ask yourself, is your purpose to **educate, entertain, inspire or persuade?** Your copy should be crafted in accordance with your intended goal.



■ Create a Textual Outline

Now you're finally ready to put all your ideas on paper. But remember: Writing copy for an infographic is not the same as writing content for a business report or an academic paper.

Rather, think of it as writing copy for a website: It must be extremely **succinct and go hand in hand with the visual elements** you will use to accompany your text. According to a recent study, the most shared infographics contain an average of 396 words, so don't tell your audience something when you can **show** them.

Also, make sure your textual outline contains all of the following elements:

► Title

Take the time to come up with a catchy and informative headline that summarizes your data. Your headline can be:

- A numbered list with an effective hook, such as "15 facts everyone thinks are true."
- A question, such as "Where does your taxpayer money go?"
- A title based on a visual metaphor, such as a race track for a visual comparing the economic growth of different countries.
- A straightforward title, such as "How to Be an Inspiring Leader."

► Introduction

Your introduction should be no more than a few lines and can:

- State a problem
- Define why your audience should care about it
- Set the stage for your exposition of the problem or a unique point of view
- Provide an enticing statistic or figure to pique your audience's interest

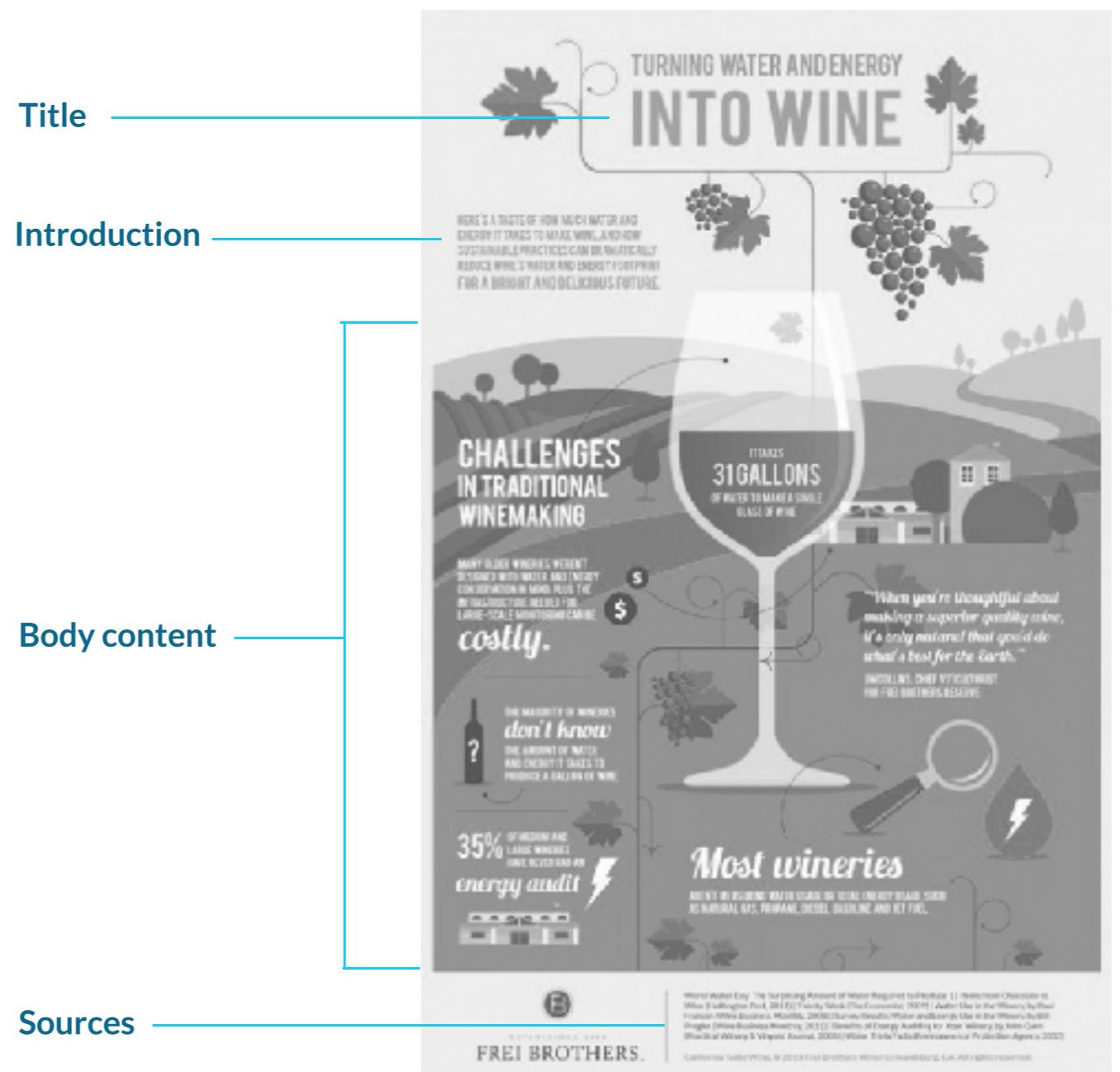
► Body content

The body of your infographic should develop the narrative and arguments behind each of your claims. Include:

- Section subheadings that correspond with each of your main points.
- Subsection text under subheadings that correspond with each of your supporting details.
- Concise text to support highlighted stats or figures.
- Chart labels

► Sources

Always remember to include a complete list of information sources, with links, at the end of your infographic.



10 CREATE A WIREFRAME

Now comes the part where you start translating your text into visual elements. To begin, simply create a sketch of the skeletal structure of your final design, based on the type of infographic you chose in step 7.

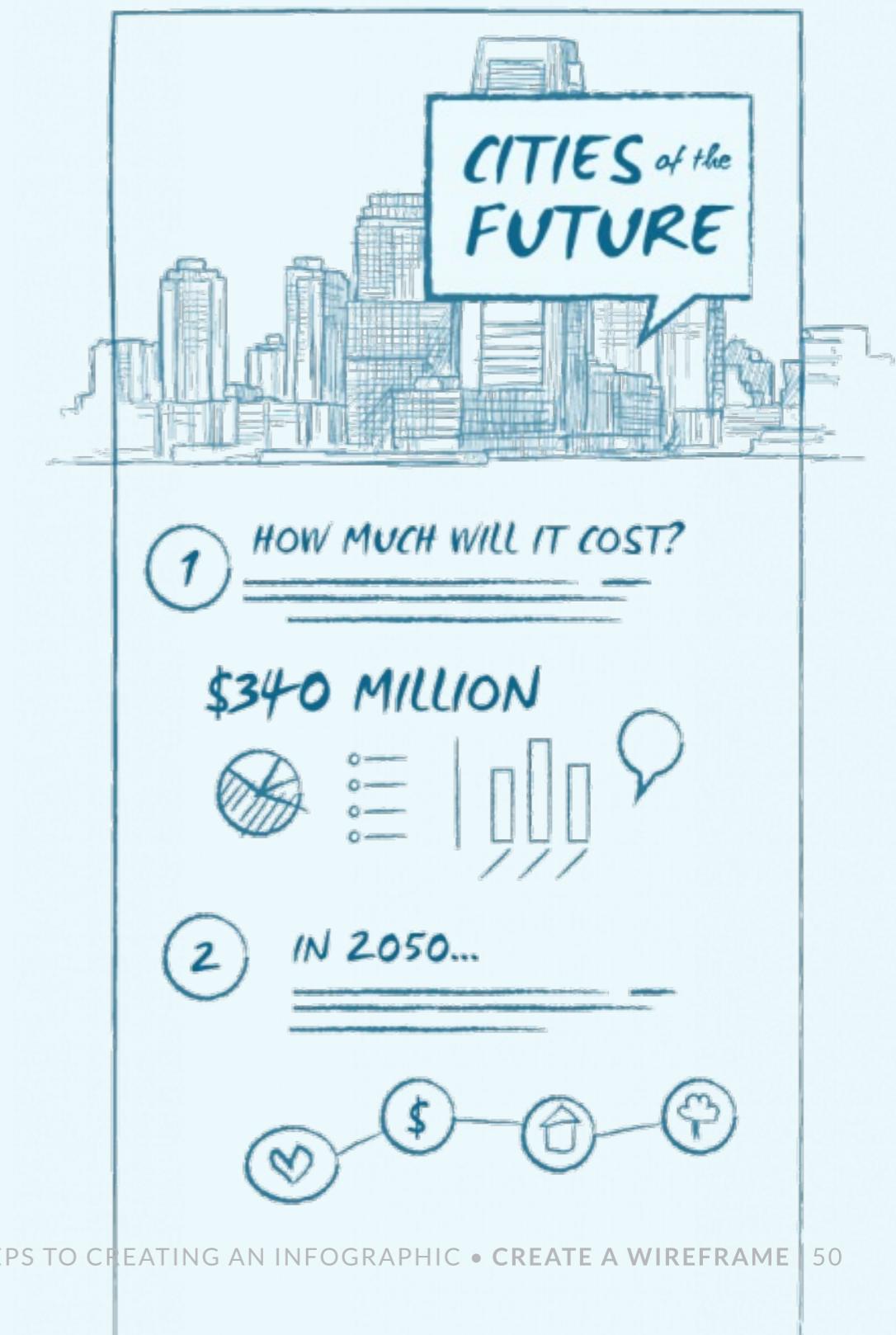
This will help you determine the general placement of both textual and visual elements in relation to each other and allow you to gauge how well your story flows from one point to the next.

This way, you can detect early on whether you will need to go back and edit certain parts of your story to create a more coherent narrative. Also, you can determine whether viewers' eyes are attracted to the most important parts of your infographic or if the key message is lost along the way.

You may need to create several iterations of your wireframe before finally arriving at one that effectively tells your story.

Make sure to include the following in your wireframe:

- Placement of titles, subtitles and introduction
- Placement of highlighted stats and figures
- Rough sketches of charts and graphs
- Rough sketches of illustrations or icons



One way to break down the intimidating endeavor of designing an infographic into more manageable mini-tasks is to segment your visual into various content blocks, as seen here.

You can use basic geometric elements, such as rectangles, squares, lines and circles and triangles to define general areas of your visual, which makes it easier to create a visually organized and coherent layout.



11 DESIGN YOUR INFOGRAPHIC

■ Deciding on a Visual Theme

To bring your story to life, it can be helpful to use a visual metaphor, symbols or other visual associations to flesh out the visual theme of your infographic. Here are a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing.



Visual elements related to honeycombs and bees are used throughout.

[Source](#)



Infographic is contained within an overarching forest theme.

[Source](#)



Information is framed within imagery of mining machinery.

[Source](#)

■ Choosing a Color Scheme

What Do Colors Mean

Colors speak volumes all on their own. Some of the most common associations made in the West include:



Red: passion, romance, anger



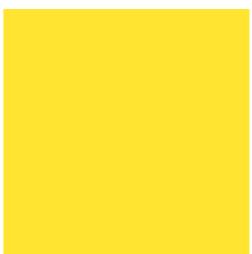
Purple: luxury, royalty, creativity



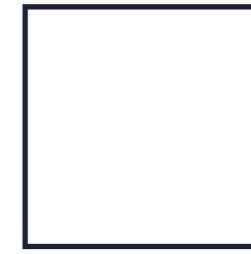
Orange: optimism, happiness, energy



Black: elegance, mystery, darkness



Yellow: happiness, hope



White: purity, cleanliness



Green: fertility, nature, abundance



Brown: enduring, dependability, nature



Blue: professionalism, calm, transparency



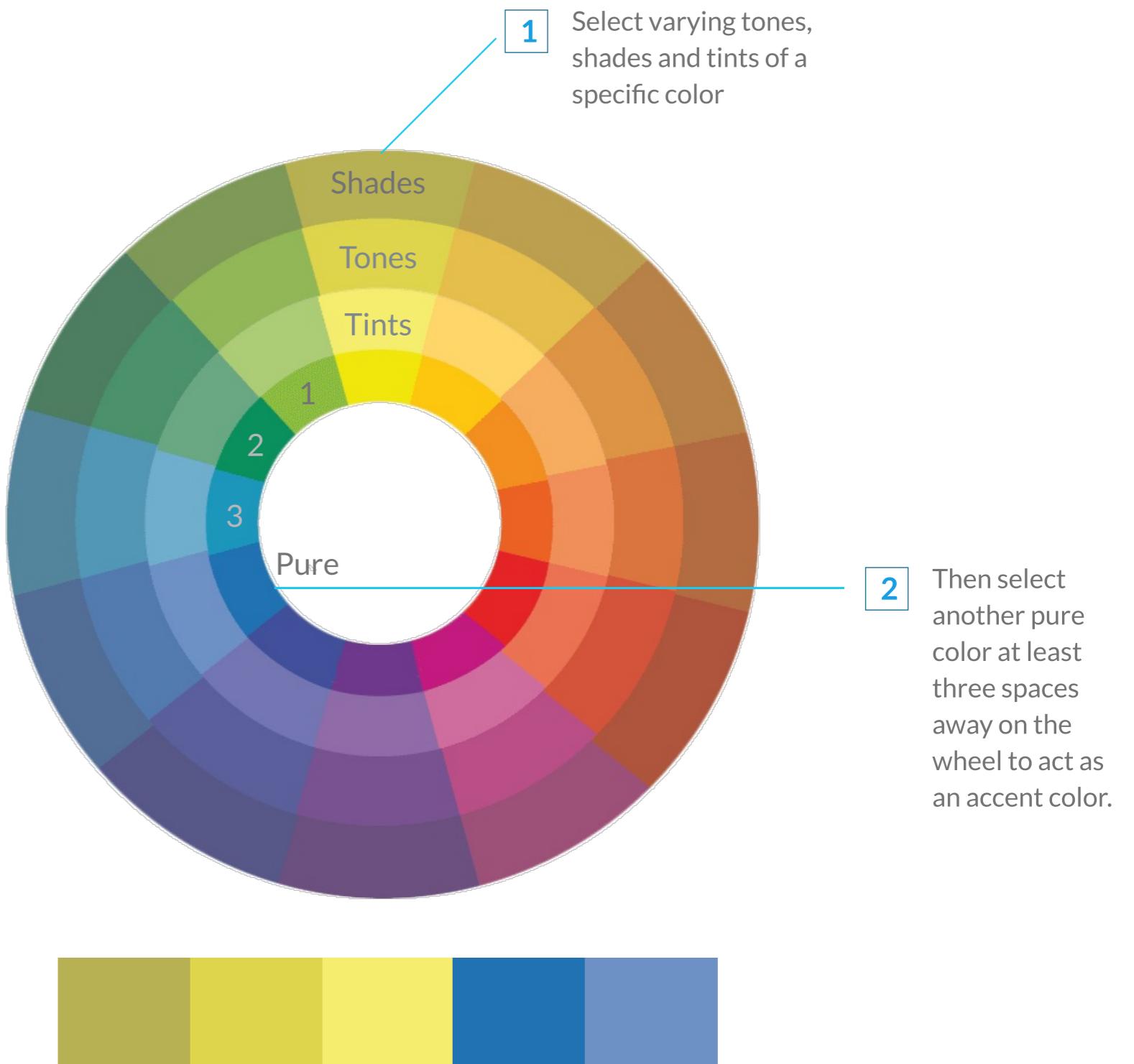
Beige: conservatism, piety, dullness

High Contrast

It's important to create high contrast to achieve the highest impact possible. Contrast is not simply about choosing different colors but selecting those that will create the most visual interest when placed side by side.

An easy but effective way to create your own high-contrast color scheme is to select varying tones, shades and tints of a specific color (not the pure hue) and then select another pure color at least three spaces away on the wheel to act as an accent color, as seen in this diagram.

If you're interested in reading more about how to create your own color schemes, you can read about it [here](#).



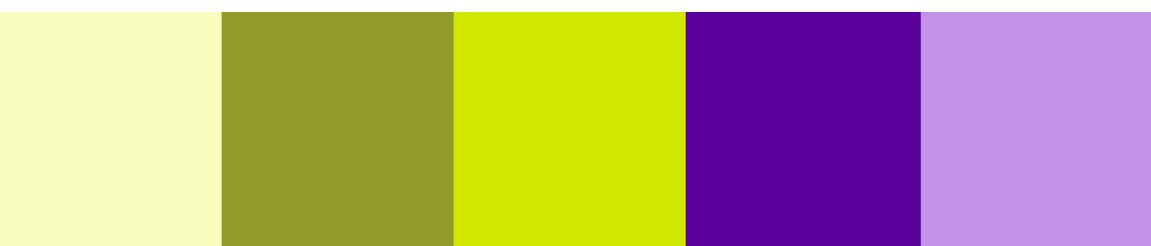
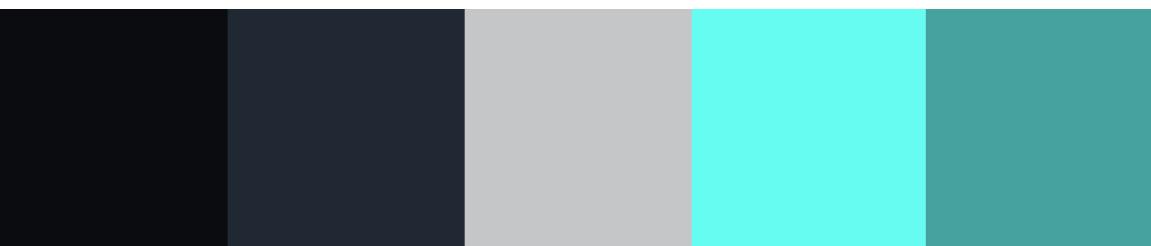
Color Scheme Tools

If you don't have time to create your own color schemes, there are plenty of free color scheme generators such as:

- [Adobe Color CC](#)
- [Colors.co](#)
- [Paletton](#)

Here are a few color schemes automatically generated by these tools:

Click on scheme to see hex code



Keep It Simple

You've probably heard this before, but when it comes to design, less is usually more. Try to keep it simple and don't use too many colors. In general, three to four colors is sufficient for an infographic.



[Source](#)

The 60-30-10 Rule

An easy way to create a balanced infographic is to stick by the 60-30-10 rule. This means that if you've chosen three colors, as recommended in the previous tip, then you should devote 60 percent of the space to the primary color, 30 percent to the secondary and 10 percent to the accent color.



■ Choosing Font Combinations

In addition to your color choices, your selection of fonts will also determine the mood and overall look and feel of your infographic. Since there are so many fonts out there to choose from, here are a few handy tips you should keep in mind:

1 **Combine** a serif font with a sans serif. This helps to create contrast.

2 **Avoid** choosing typefaces from similar classifications, such as two Scripts. Rather, pair fonts from different classifications to create contrast.

Serif Font
Sans Serif Font

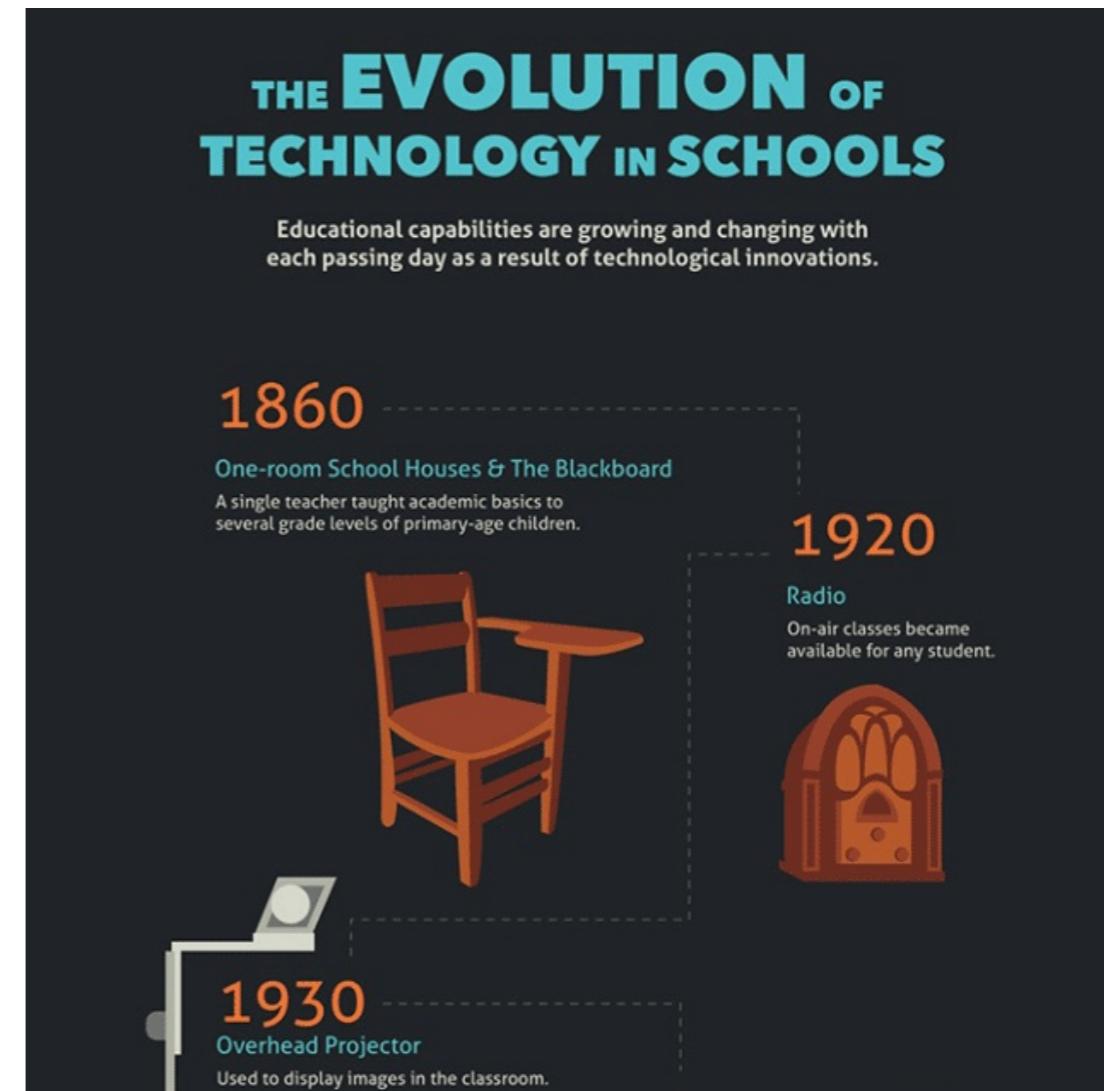
Script
Sans Serif Font

3 Achieve contrast and create visual hierarchy by varying the point size between the different fonts for headlines, subtitles and body text.



[Source](#)

4 Assign a role to each of the fonts used. For example, you can use the same font for subtitles, another for the body text, a third font for data explainers, and so on.



[Source](#)

5 Pair a distinct font that has a lot of personality with a more neutral one.



[Source](#)

6 Save time by using different fonts from the same typeface or font family.



[Source](#)

7 Stick to two—max three—combinations and, above all, keep it simple.



[Source](#)

Examples of Font Combinations

To help you get started, here are a few fresh font combinations that can be used across a variety of infographic themes and topics.

OSWALD

Old Standard TT

Rokkitt

Ubuntu

Vollkorn

Exo

Abril Fatface

Josefin Sans

PT Mono

Open Sans Condensed

Colaborate

Titillium

Lobster

Lato

Ubuntu

Source Sans Pro

■ How to Select and Use the Right Icons

The key to effective visual communication is mastering the ability to combine the right images with as little text as possible.

One way to do this is replacing words with symbols such as icons. There are a few helpful pointers you should keep in mind when selecting icons for your infographics:

1 Replace names and titles with icons.



Instead of typing out each of the names in a list or chart, you can use icons instead.

[Source](#)

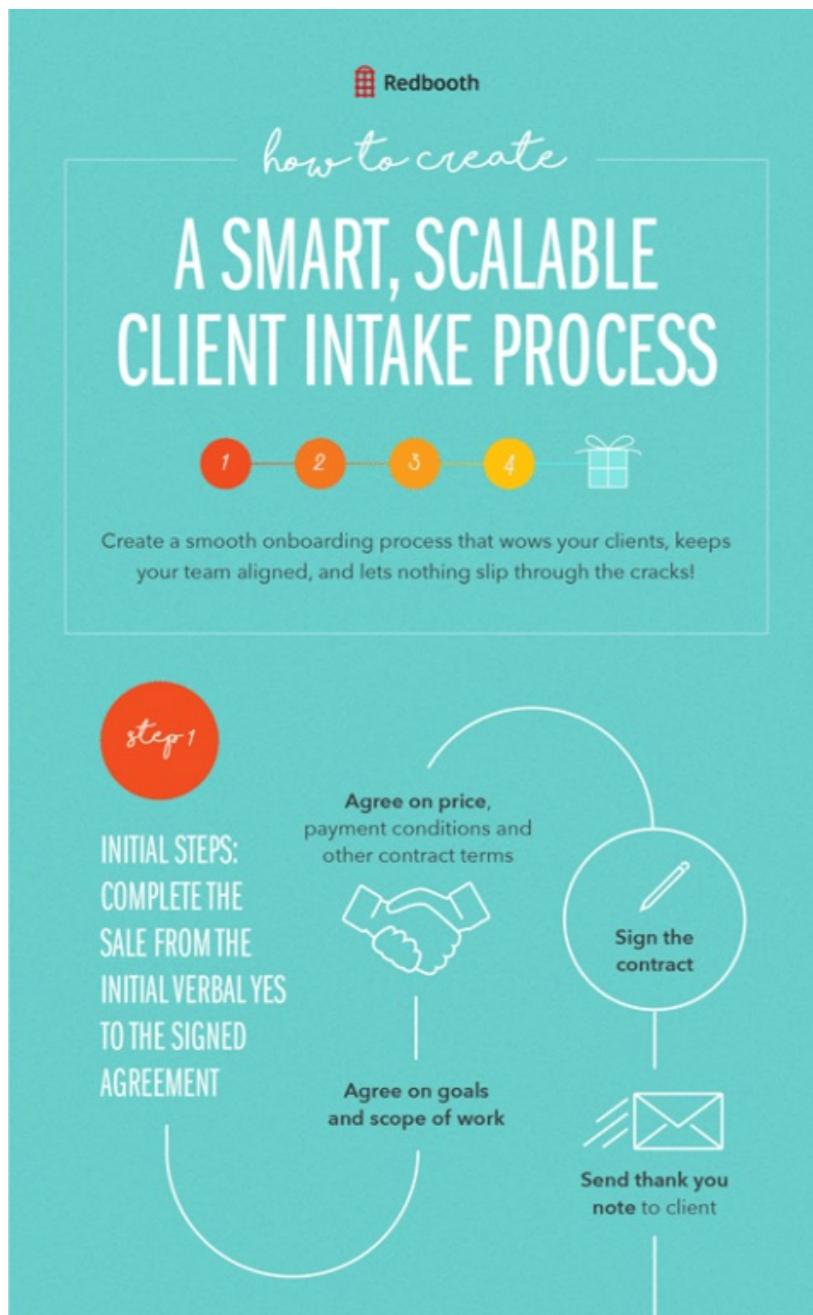
2 Use icons in graphs and charts.



[Source](#)

Instead of using words and legends to label the different columns or bars in a chart, you can use icons to communicate the same concept.

3 Use icons to communicate a theme.



[Source](#)

4 Use icons in lists.



[Source](#)

Replace the numbers or bullet points in your lists with icons to communicate more effectively.

5 Use icons in headers.



You can also use icons in your headers to illustrate the main concept of your infographic.

6 Use icons in the background.



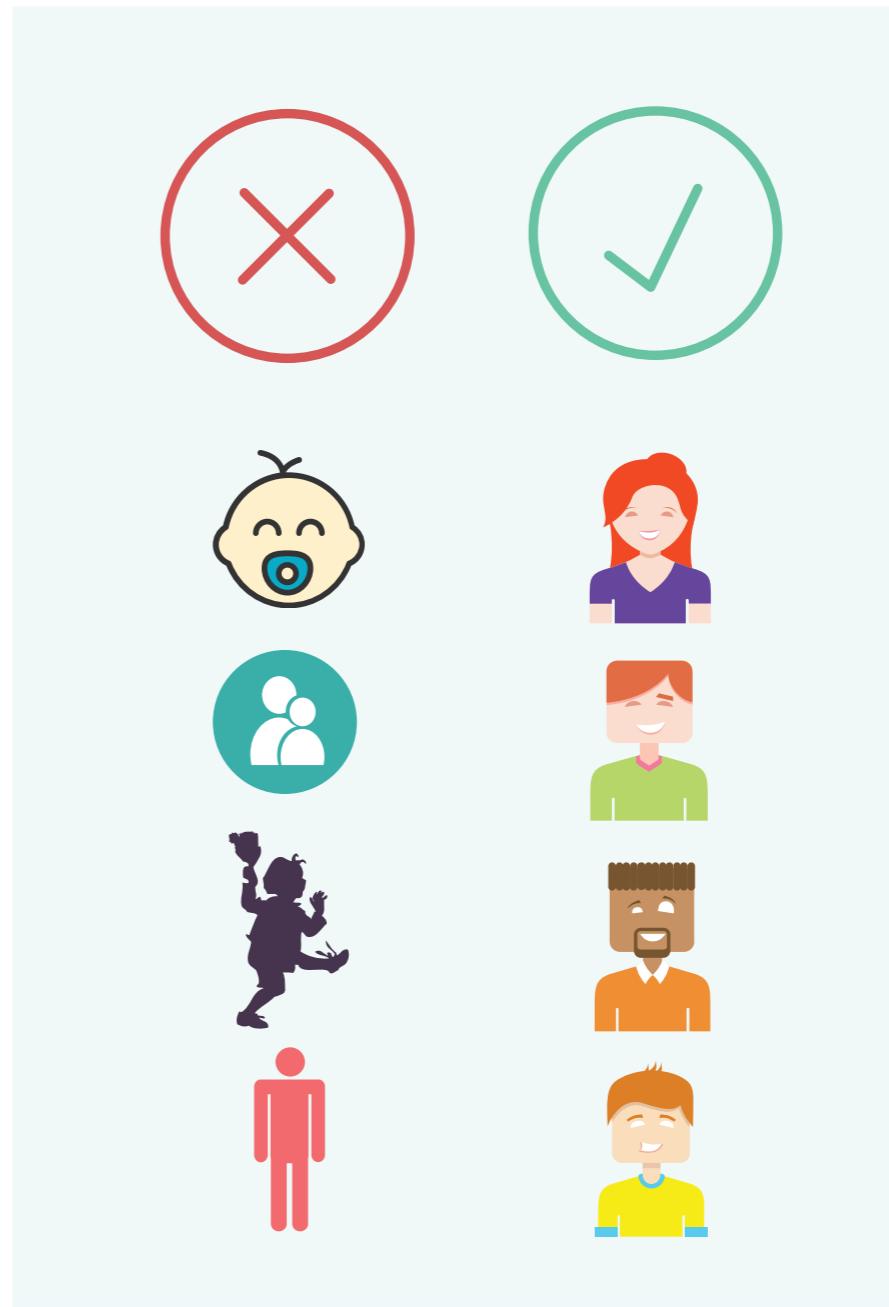
Icons can also be used in the background of a header or section of your infographic.

7 Use icons to explain a concept.



You can also create customized images using icons to illustrate a concept.

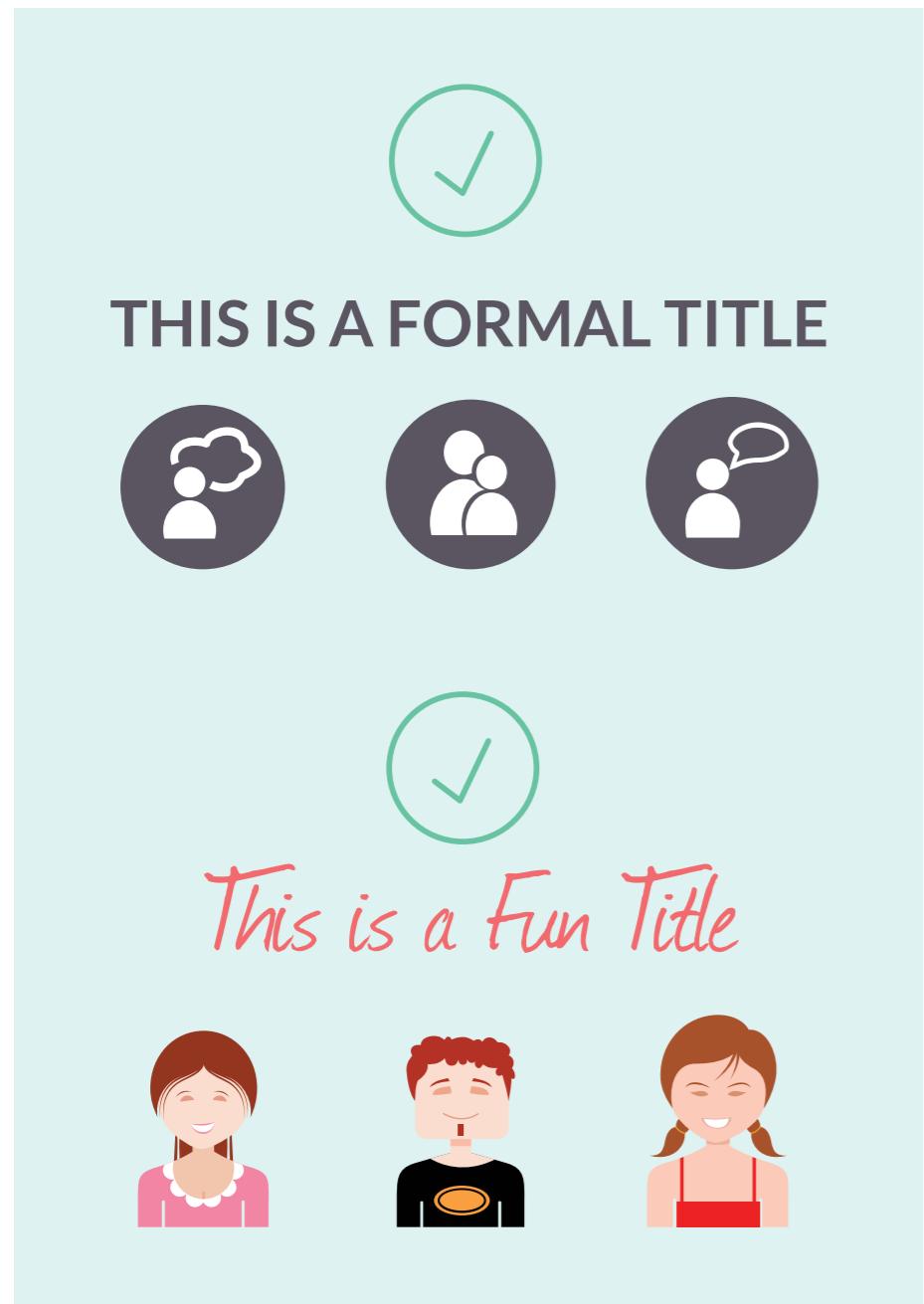
8 Stick with one icon style.



In order to ensure design consistency and an overall clean and professional look, make sure to stick to one icon style throughout your infographic.

[Source](#)

9 Pair icons with **fonts**.



Another way to ensure a harmonious design is to pair icons with the right kinds of fonts. Determine the style and tone you're going for and choose your fonts and icons accordingly.

10 Pair icons with a **color palette**.



■ How to Create Effective Charts

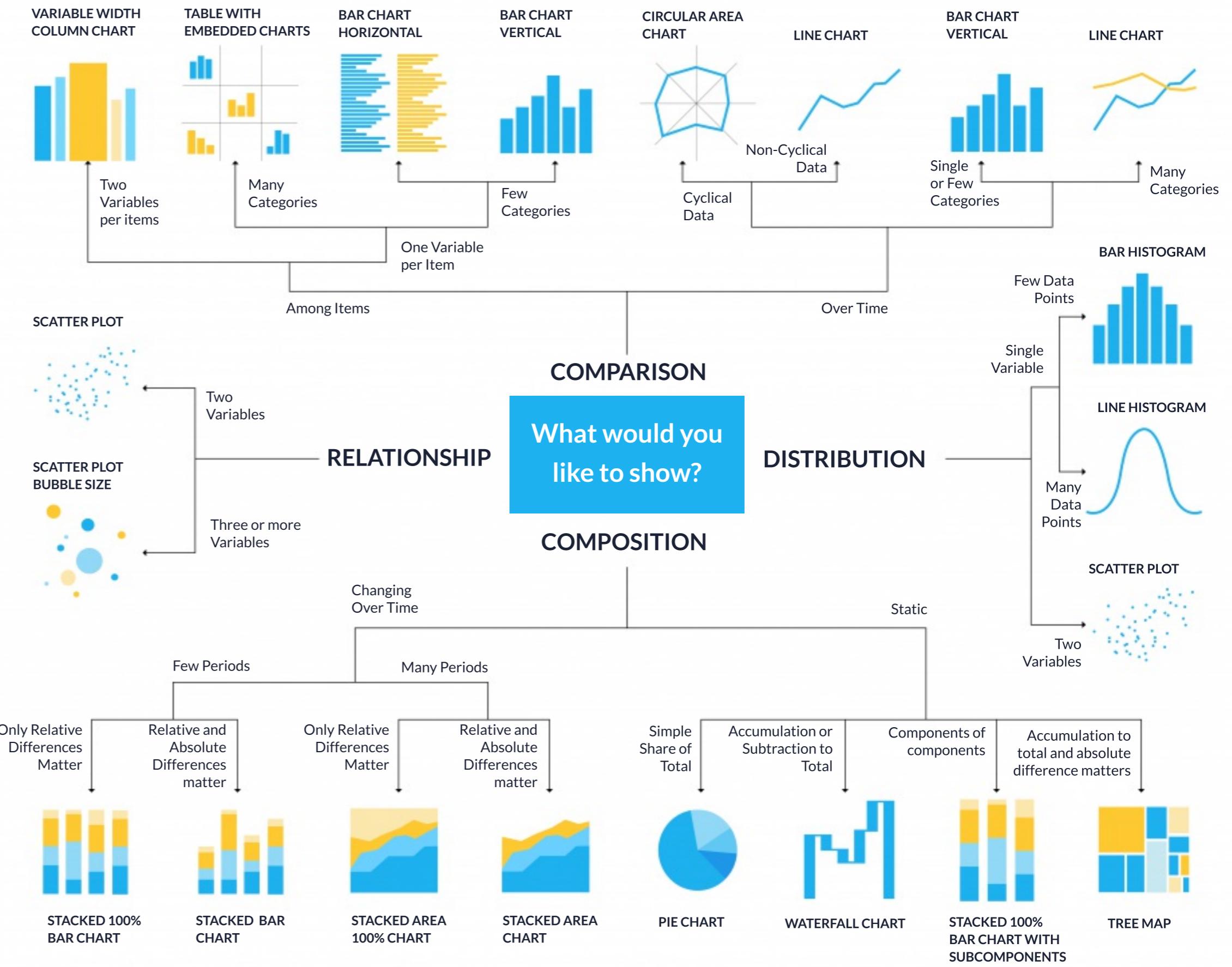
The process of creating effective and persuasive charts is a dense topic all on its own

and can fill an entire book, but in this section, we'll cover the basics to get you started.

Similar to the steps followed in the first part of this book to find the key message of your infographic, you should first put your ideas down on paper before rushing to choose the type of chart you think would work best.

Once you've defined what you want your audience to know, you can match some of these keywords to different types of charts, summarized in this handy cheat sheet.

[Source](#)



Make Your Key Point Stand Out

The first step to getting a message across is to first figure out what you want to say and then convey that in a clear and concise manner. The same goes for charts and graphs.

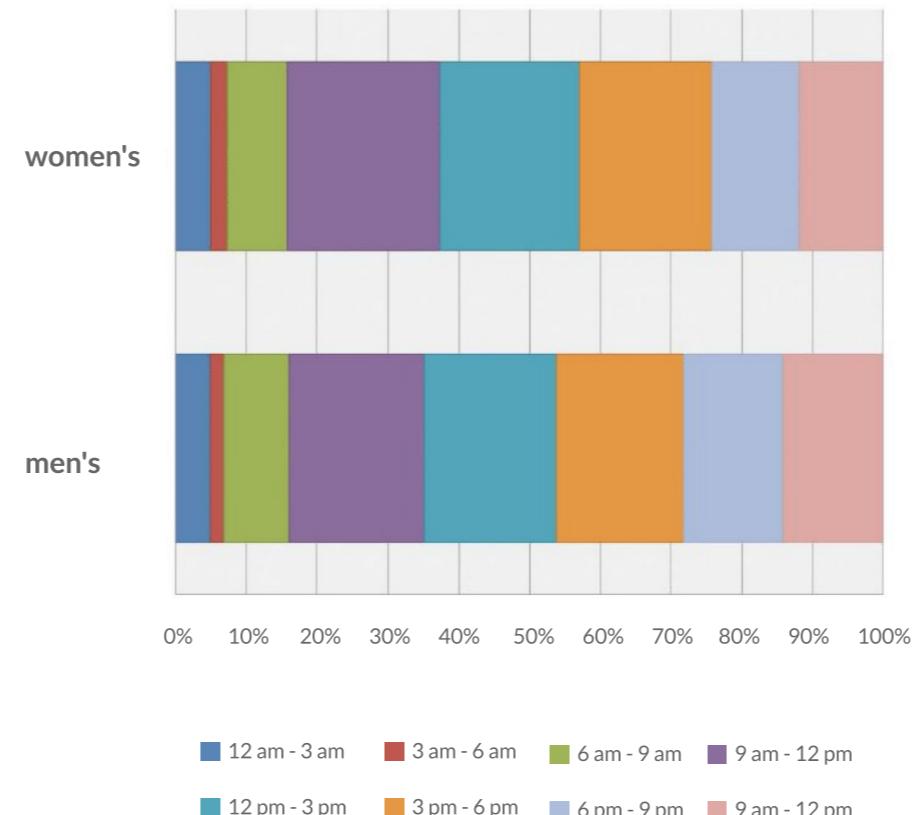
Randy Krum, author of the book [Cool Infographics](#), advises to “use color to highlight the insight from the data.” For each chart element, ask yourself: “Do I need this to communicate my key message?” If the answer is no, then consider eliminating it.

1

Ask yourself, “Can this be summarized?” If certain details are not essential, then consider summarizing certain elements by **grouping them into broader categories**.

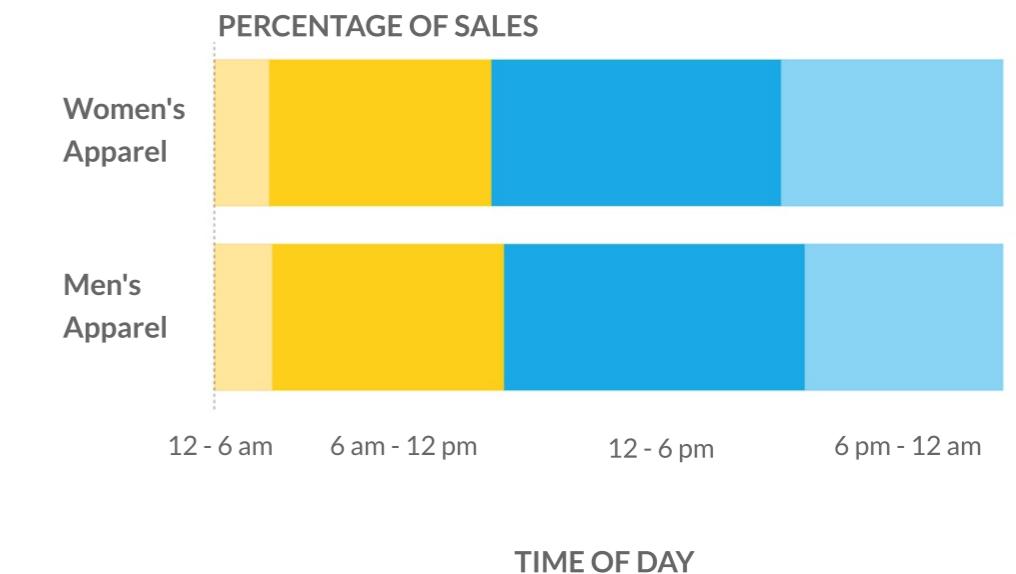
Before

When do people buy on our website?



After

WHEN DO PEOPLE BUY ON OUR WEBSITE?

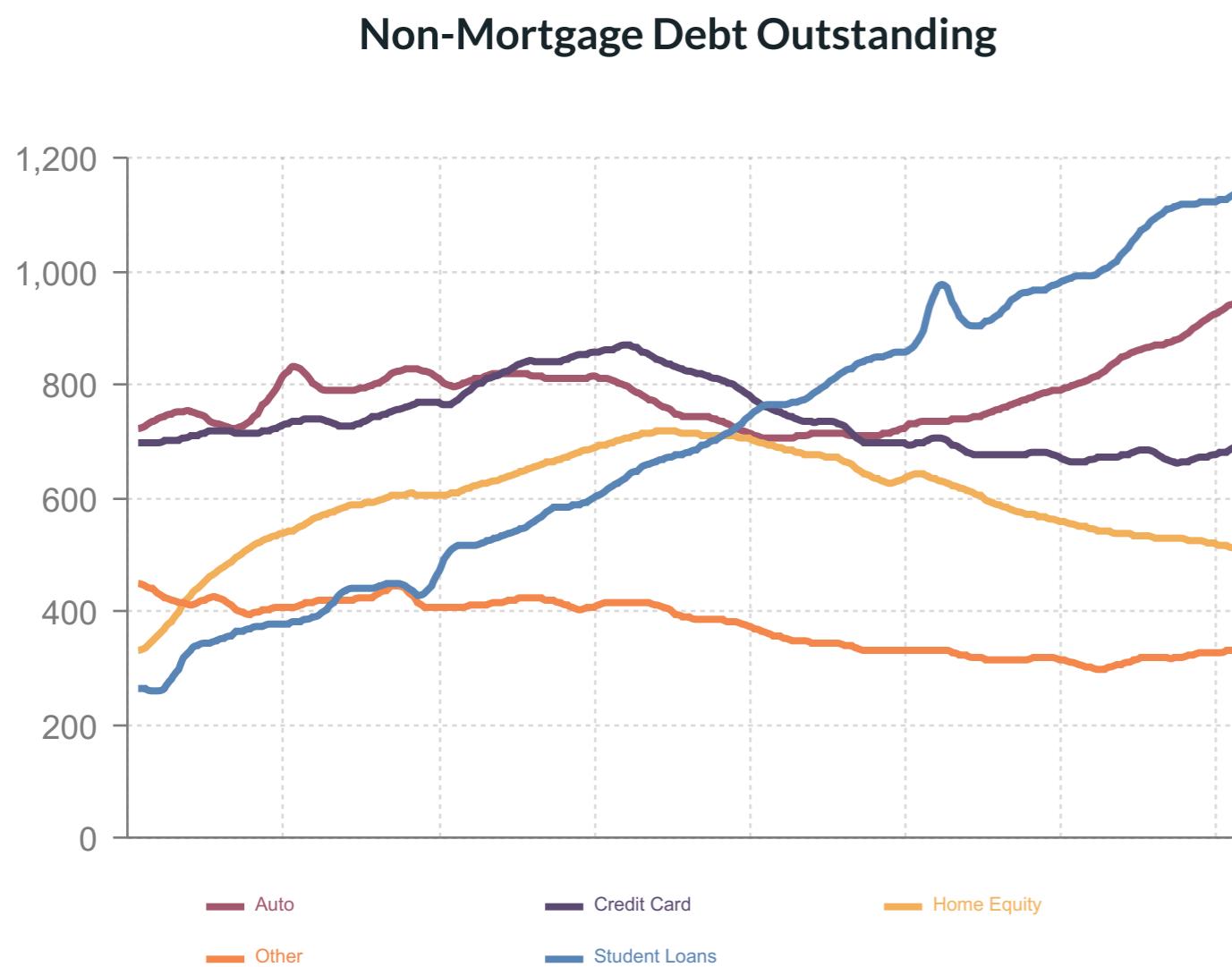


Source: Good Charts

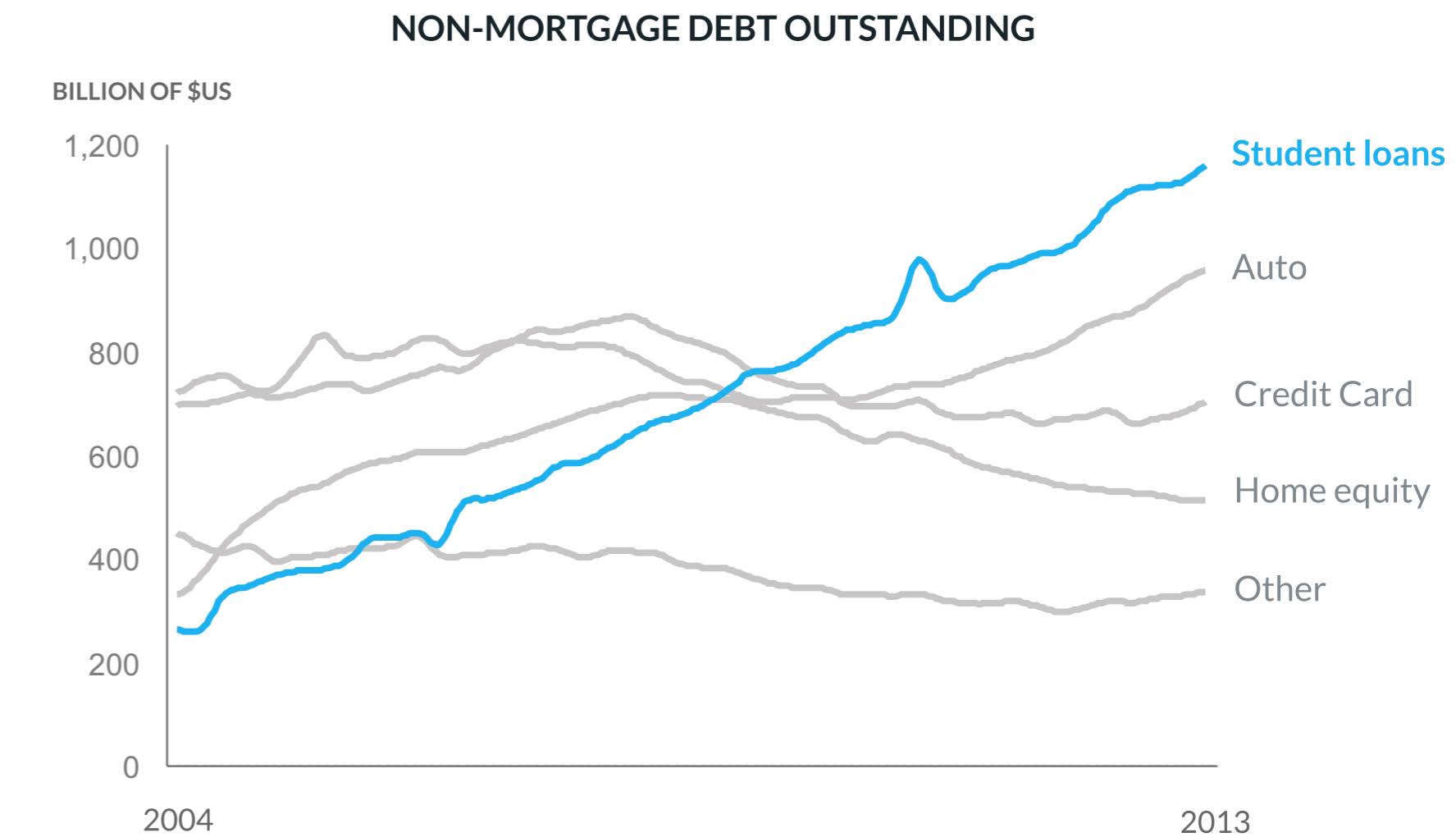
2

Next, push all chart elements to the background by applying a light grey color. Then go through **the most important of these elements** and use different design techniques to make them stand out, such as making the size bigger, making certain lines thicker, applying color, adding data explainers or labels, among others.

Before



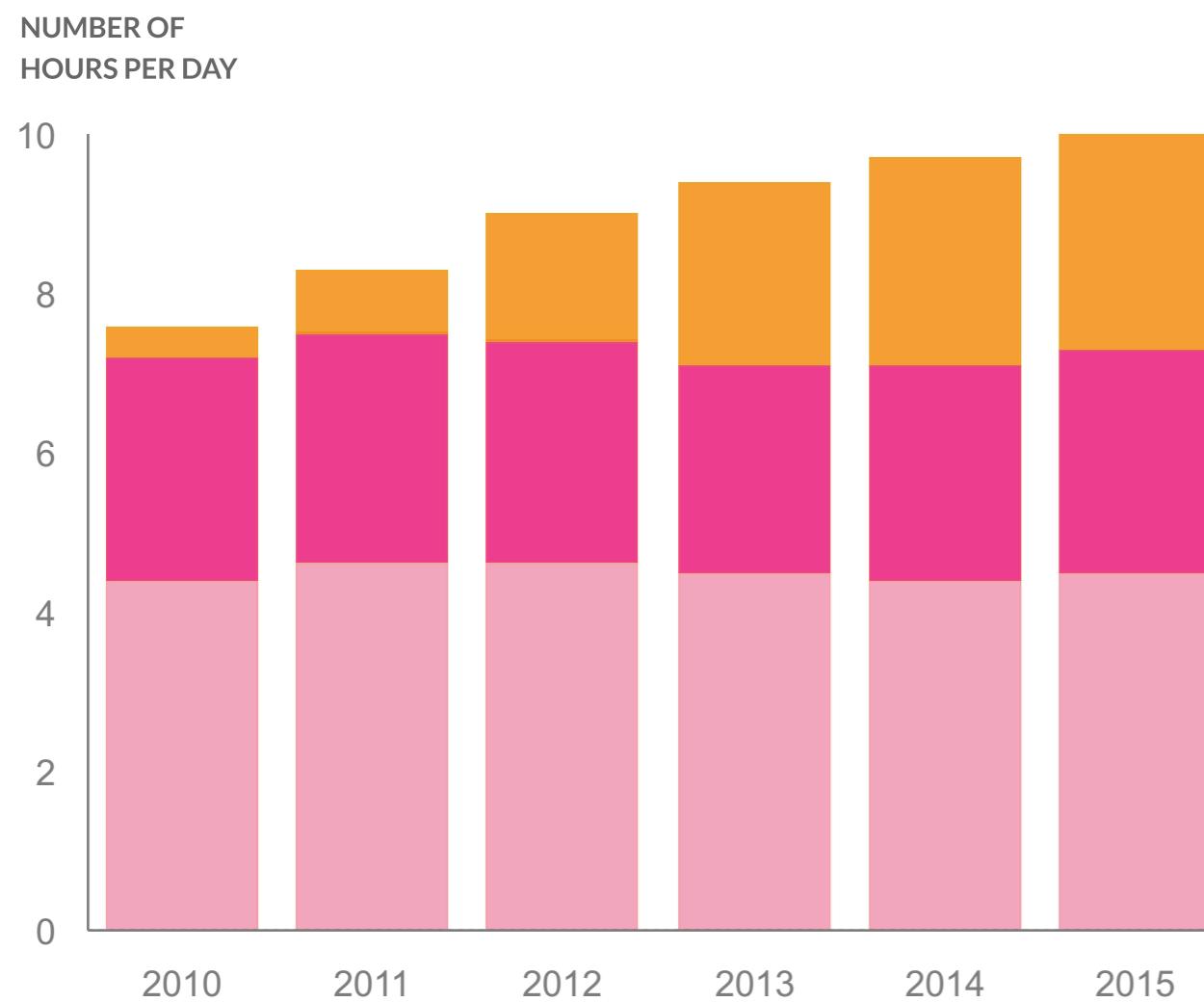
After



3

Use only two to three colors to highlight the most important points. Use grey for the rest of information.

SCREEN TIME IN THE U.S.

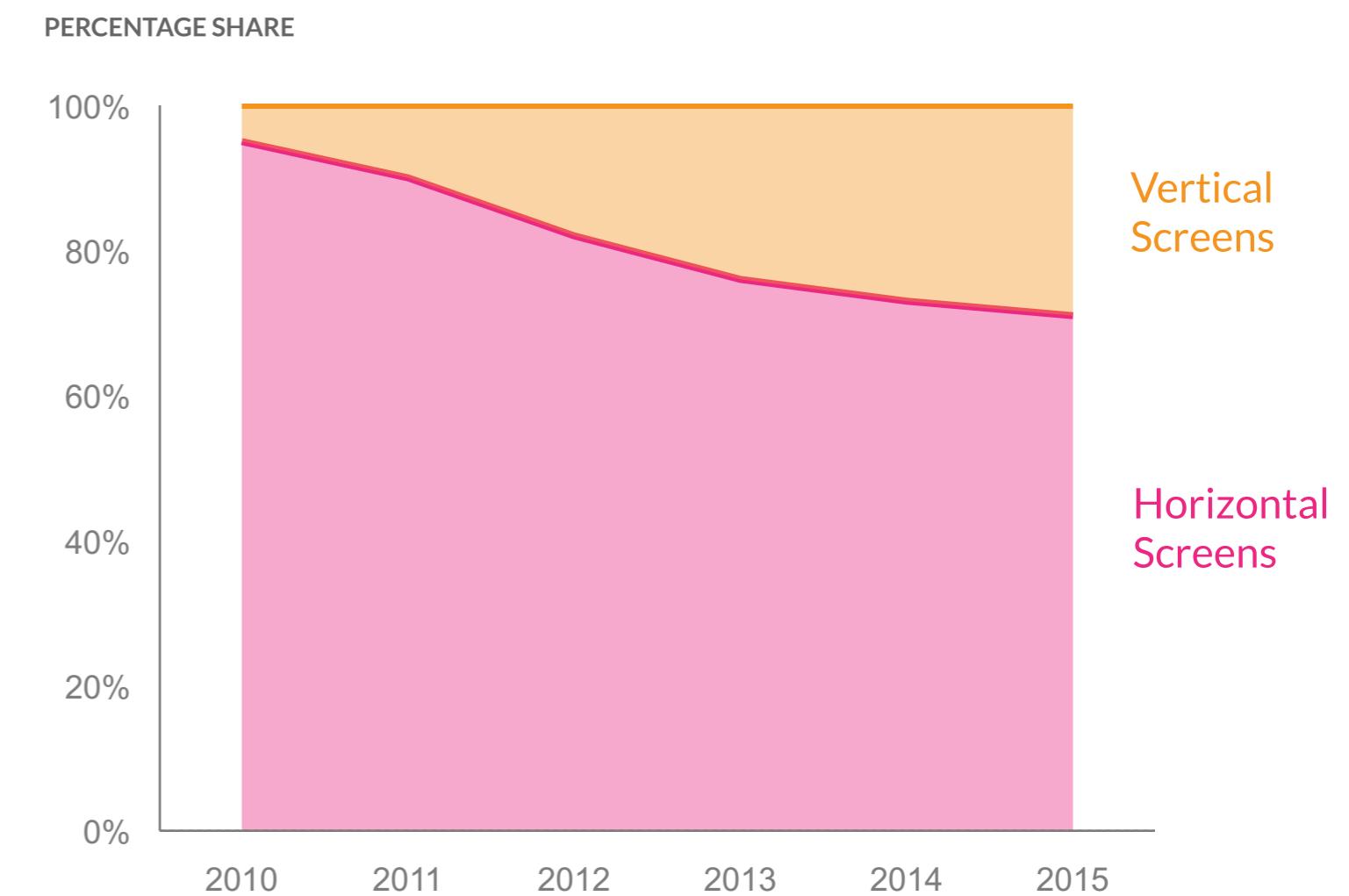


Mobile

Computer

Television

TIME BY ORIENTATION



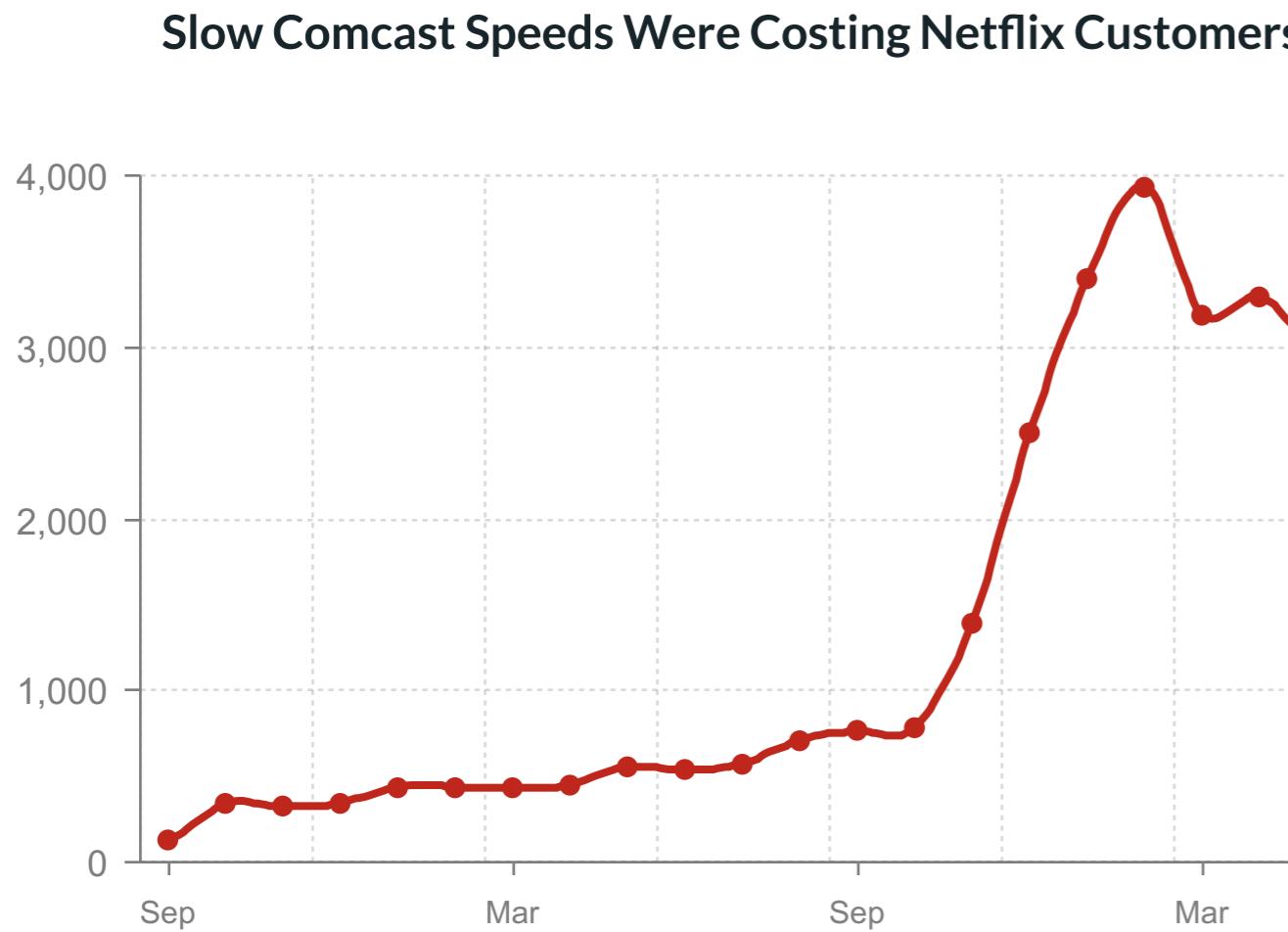
Vertical
Screens

Horizontal
Screens

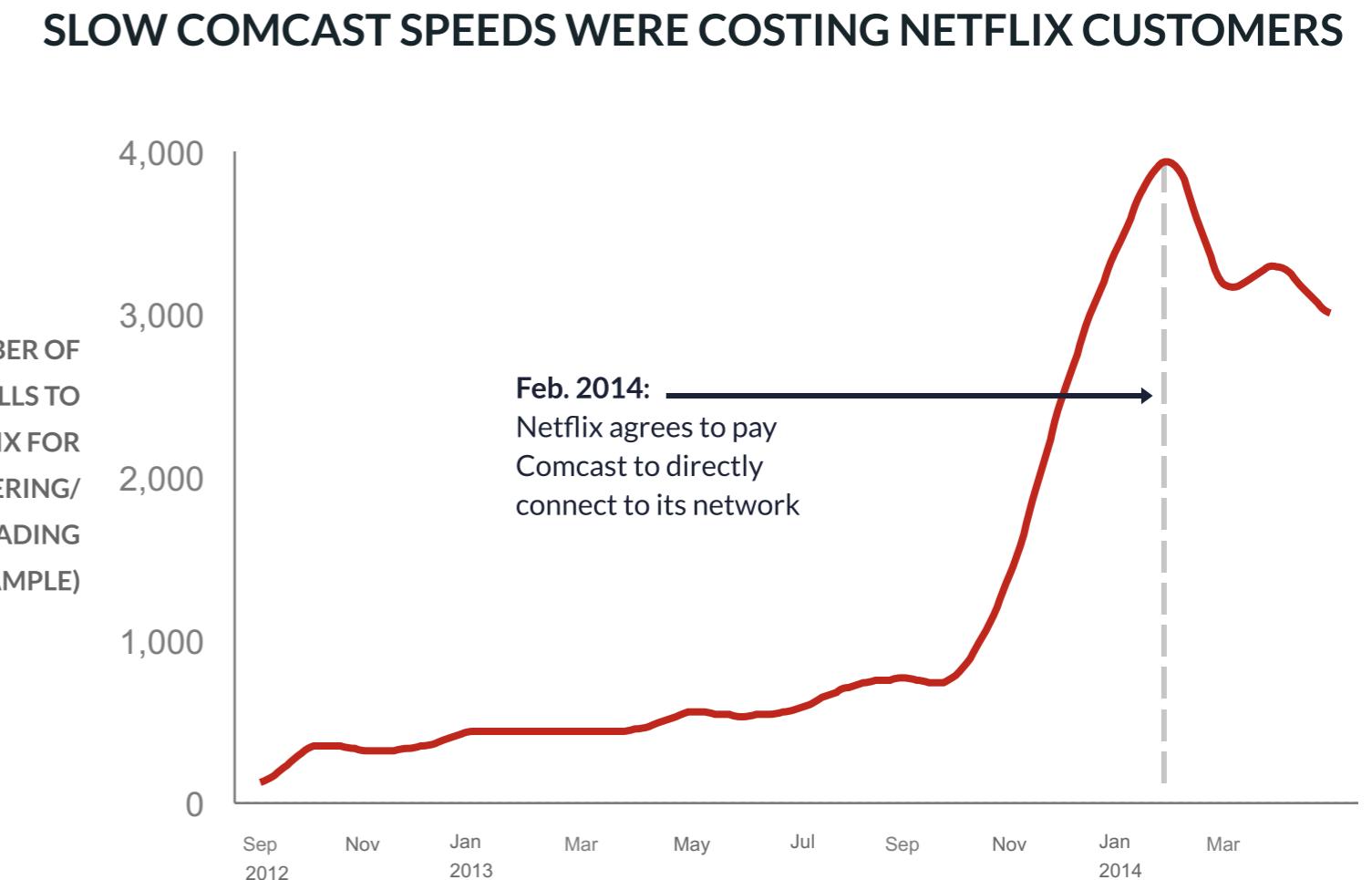
4

When possible, do away with chart gridlines and borders.

Before



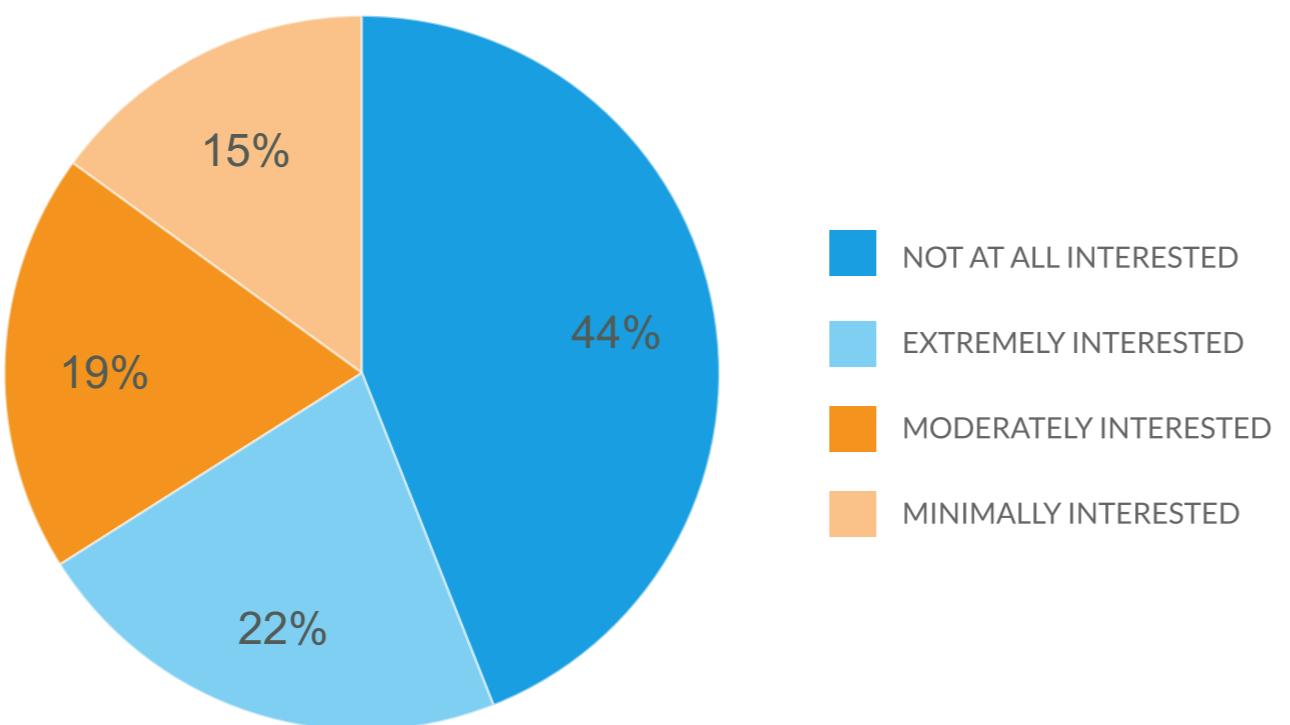
After



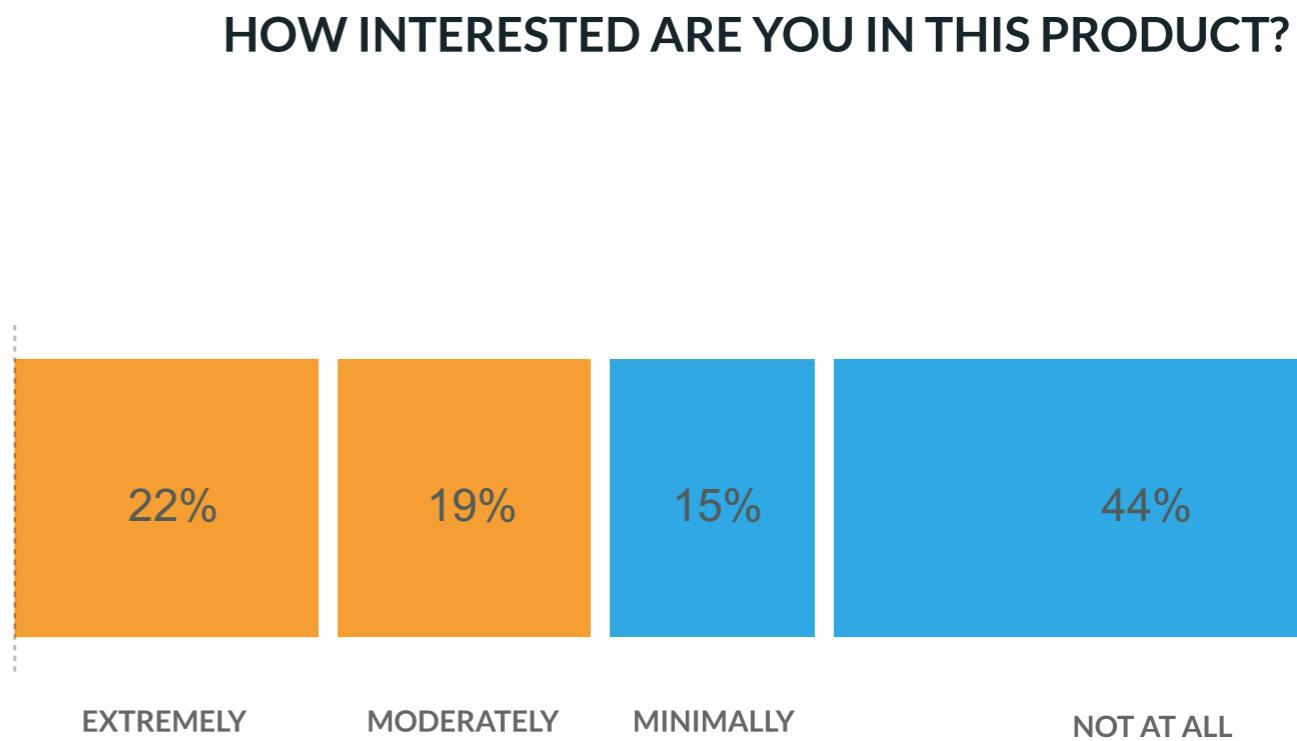
5

In order to limit eye movement from one end of the chart to another, eliminate legends when possible and instead label segments, lines or bars directly.

Before



After



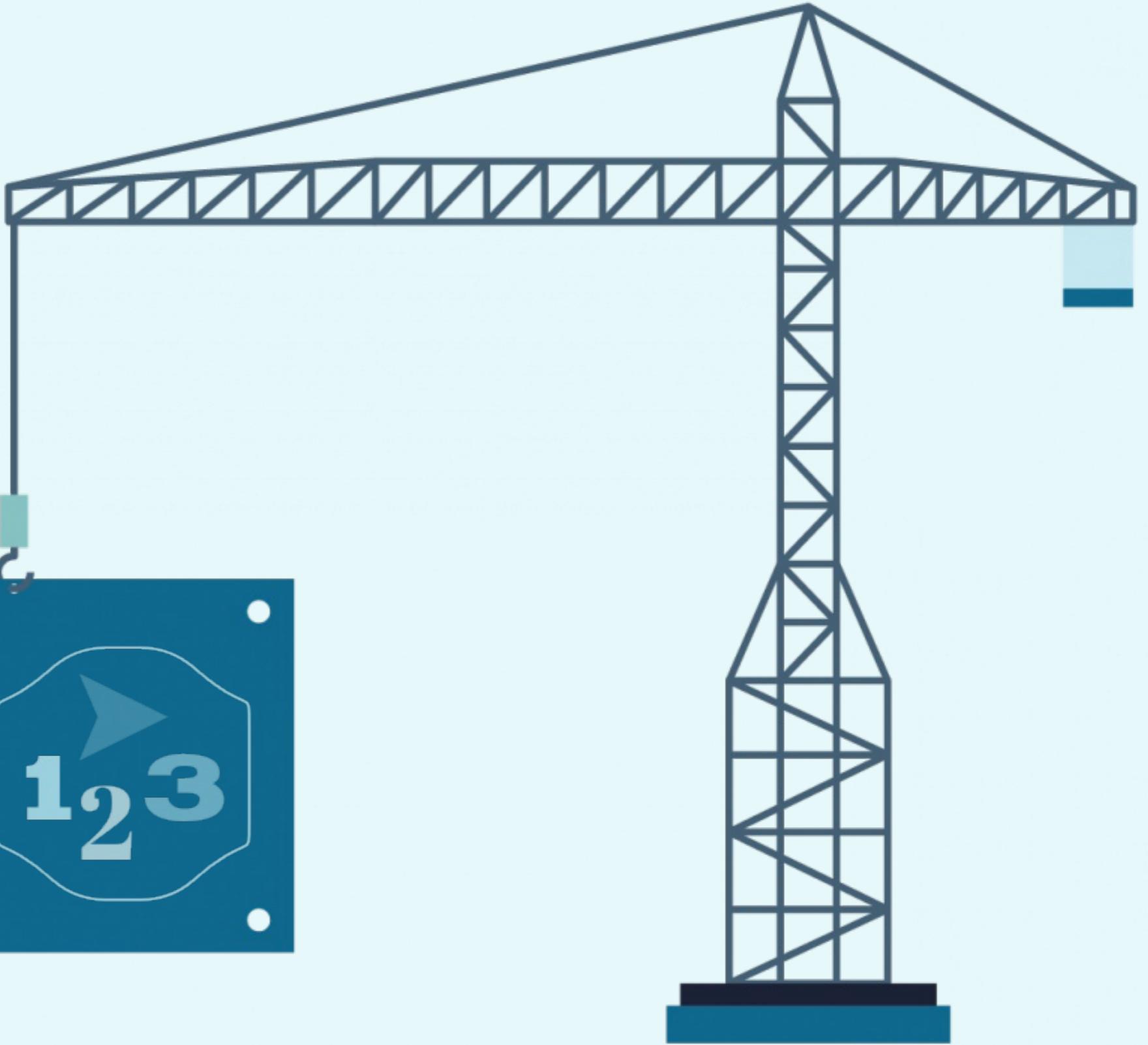
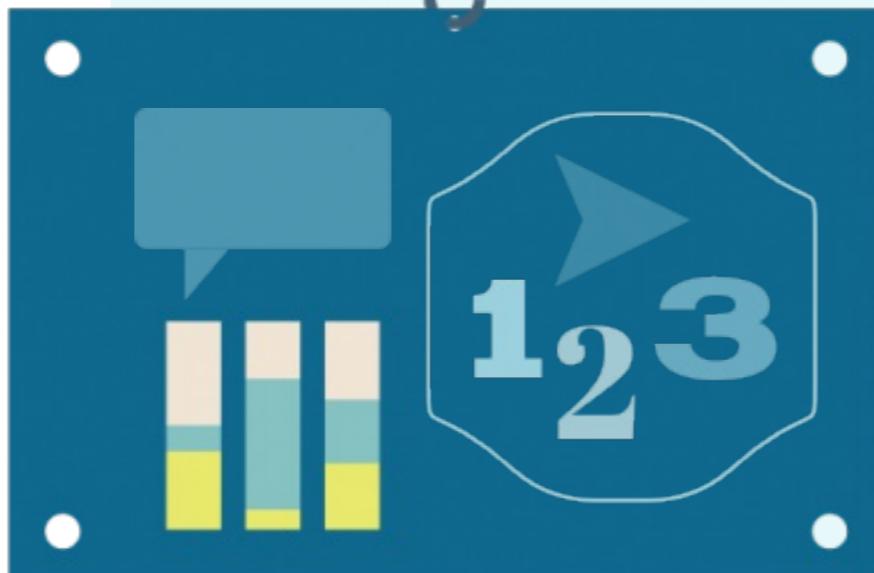
■ Achieving a Beautiful (and Functional) Design

Whether your infographic is data-heavy or mostly text-based, you'll want to use a variety of design elements to continue fleshing out your infographic in a way that it is both attractive to the eye and easy to comprehend.

A few of these include:

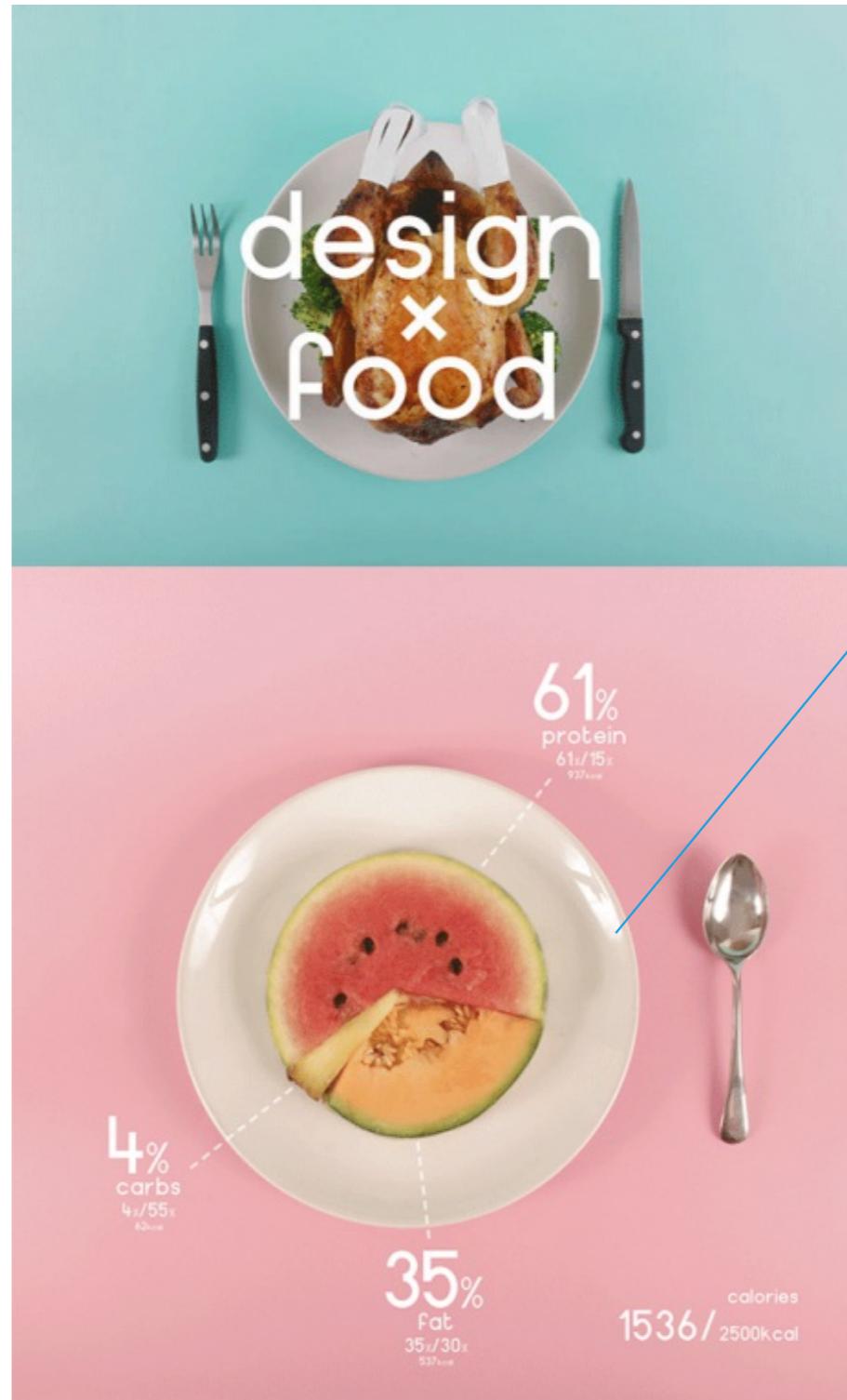
- Background images
- Section dividers
- Geometric shapes
- Visualized numbers

Let's go through each of these...



Background Images

In certain cases, you may want to use images or other graphic elements in the background to convey a certain mood and develop your visual theme.

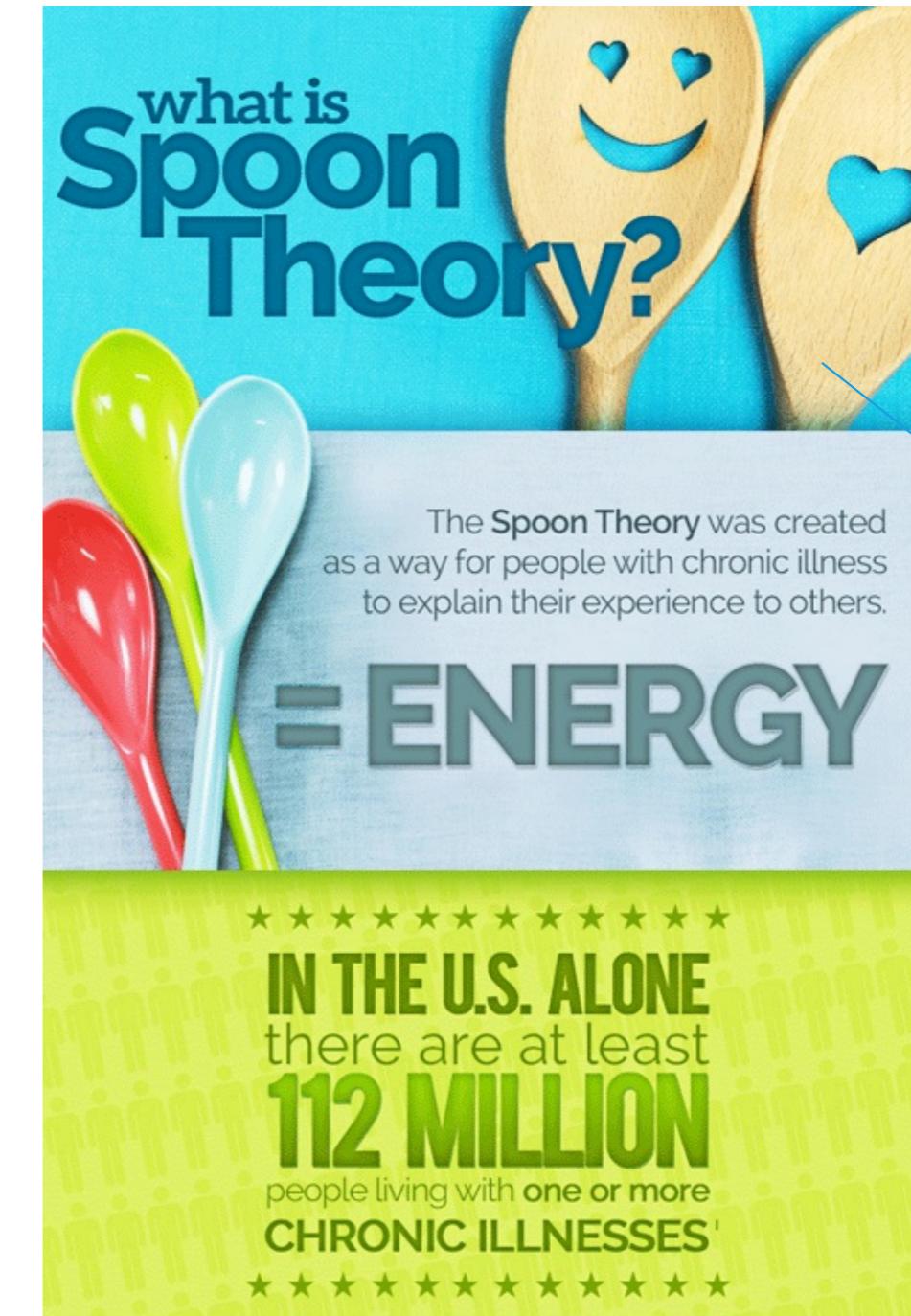


[Source](#)



Images of European cities are used to create a look and feel evocative of scenic white winters.

[Source](#)



Images are used to add an attractive cloth-like texture to the header section.

[Source](#)

Here are a few rules to keep in mind when combining images with text and other graphic elements:

1

- Choose images that evoke the right emotions.
Well-chosen photos speak volumes all on their own.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ALGORITHM

1. IT MUST STOP AT A CERTAIN POINT.
If the task is to make a cake, the algorithm is a cake recipe where you are instructed on what to prepare, what to mix, what oven temperature to set, and when to stop baking to produce a perfectly made cake.

2. IT MUST HAVE WELL-DEFINED INSTRUCTIONS WITH SPECIFIC STEPS.
If the task is to locate the park, the algorithm is a set of directions which will clearly explain what to do and where to go to reach the park.

3. IT MUST BE EFFECTIVE IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM IT WAS DESIGNED TO SOLVE.
If the task is to build a toy plane, the algorithm is an instruction manual which will guide you on which parts to put together to end up with a fully-assembled toy.

[Source](#)

2

- Use fonts that reinforce the mood and message of your background image.

Futurism Visit Futurism.com for a daily dose of the future

Sixth Senses of the **ANIMAL WORLD**

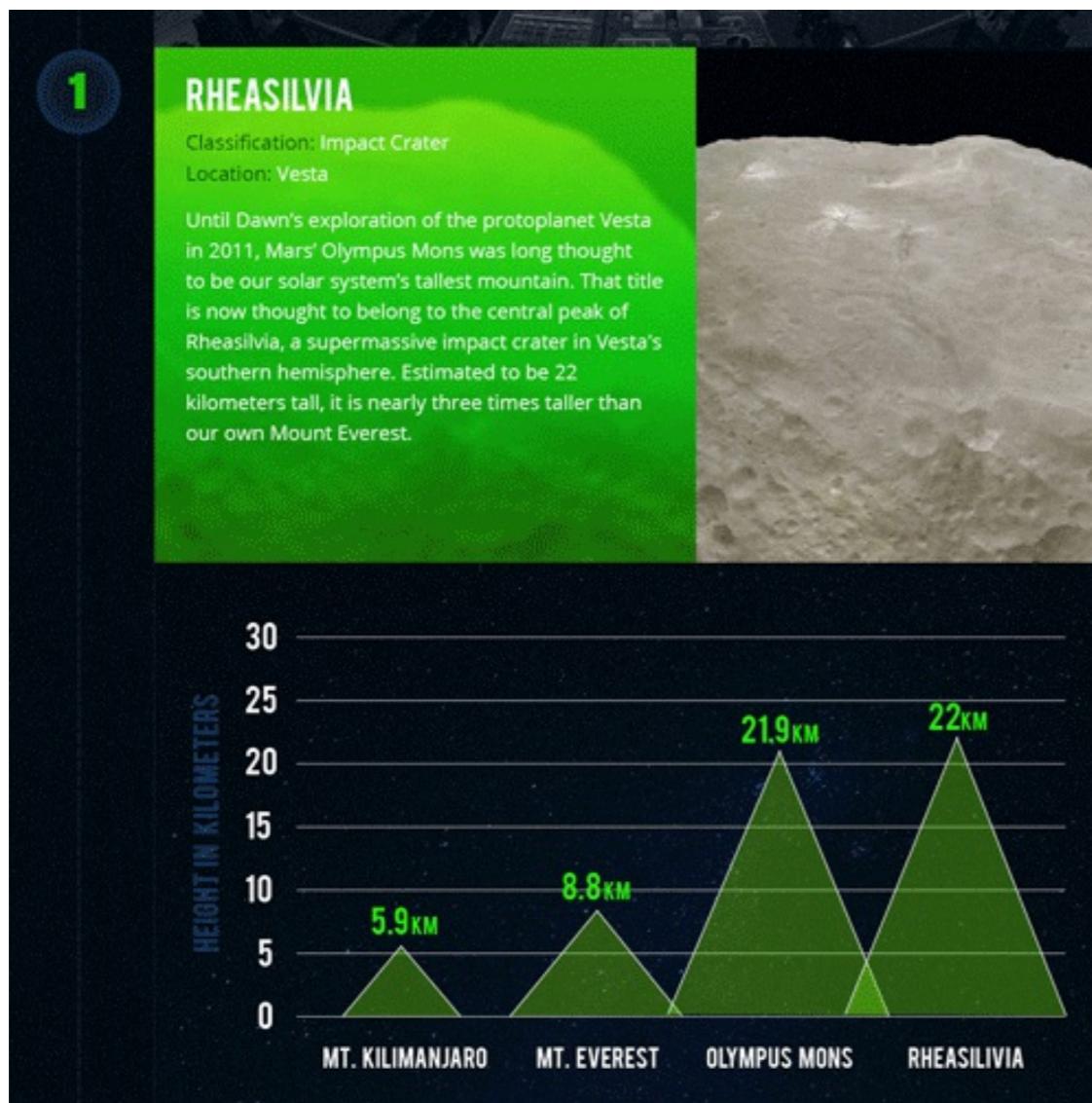
Much of the animal kingdom doesn't have the luxury—or the ability—to sustain themselves using the five senses alone. To combat this, a handful of animals have developed special organs and receptors that allow them to navigate, feed, and protect themselves from harm. These 'sixth senses' are invaluable sources of information and insight for scientists studying the history and potential of human genetics.

Pit Viper

[Source](#)

3

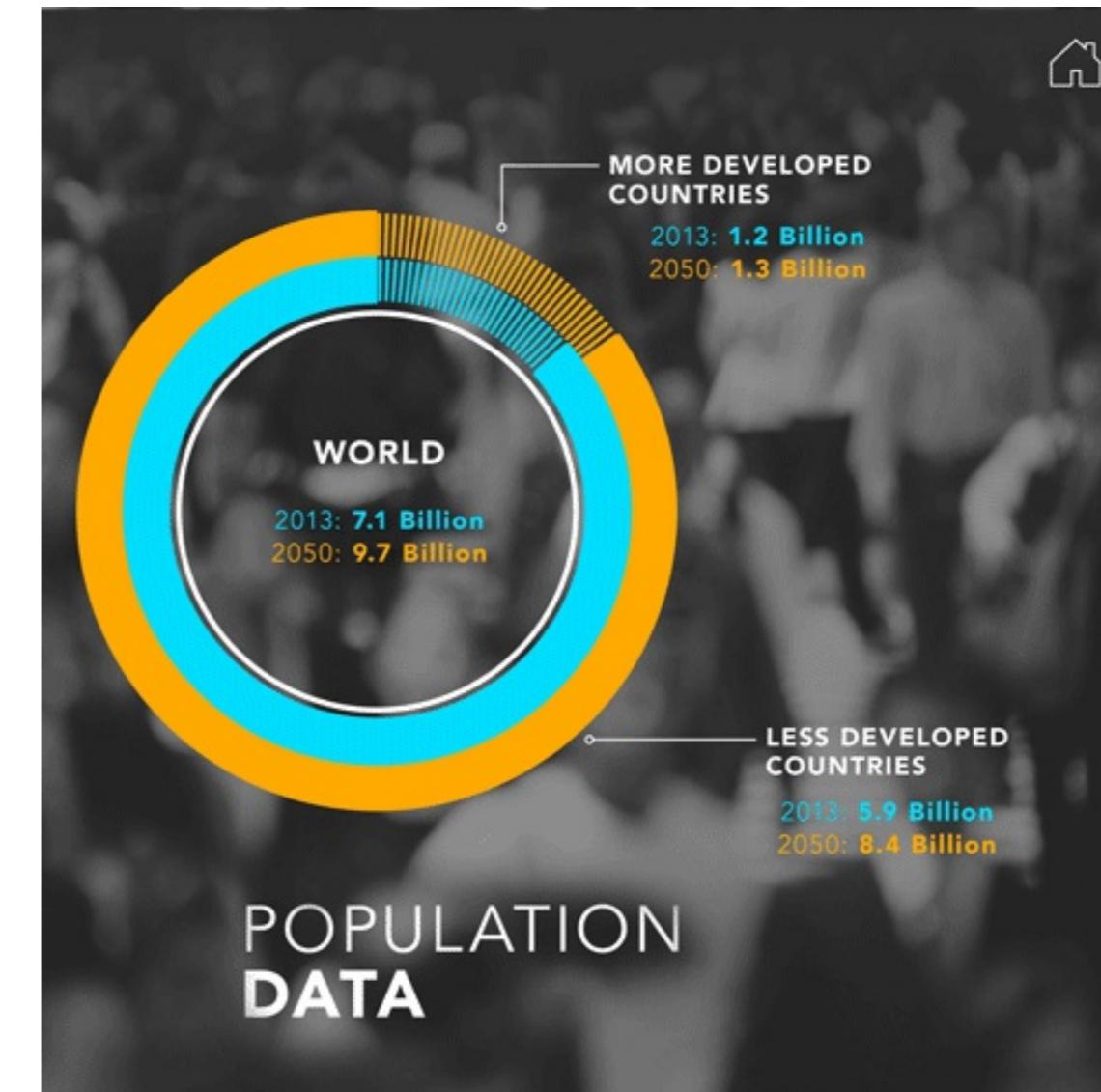
Make text readable. One way to do this is to place text inside shapes and frames to make it stand out against the background image.



[Source](#)

4

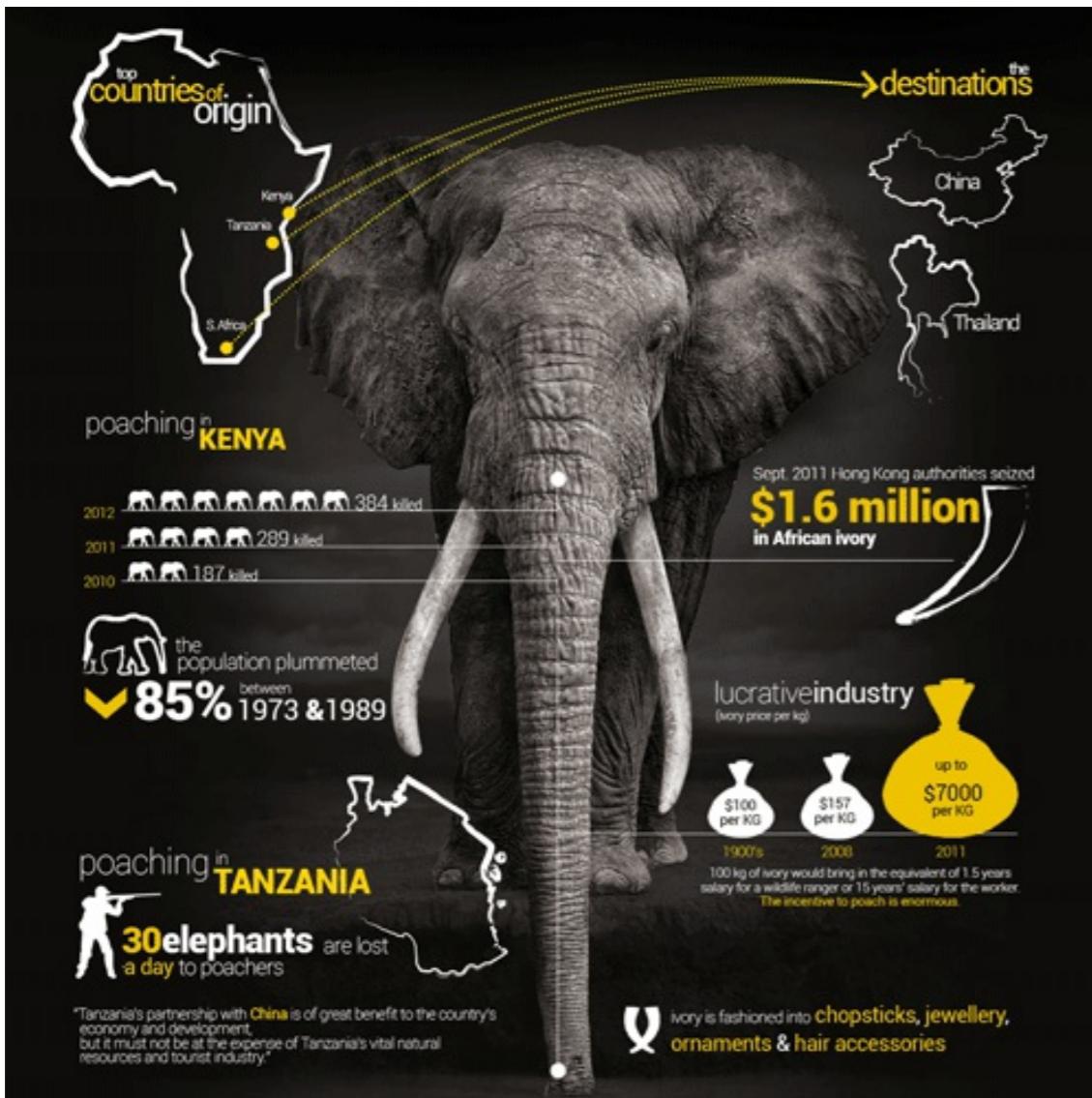
Use a degree of transparency to create a more uniform surface for typography, and apply text colors that provide sufficient contrast with the background.



[Source](#)

5

Use backgrounds that are relatively empty in order to place text in portions of the photograph that are less busy.



[Source](#)

6

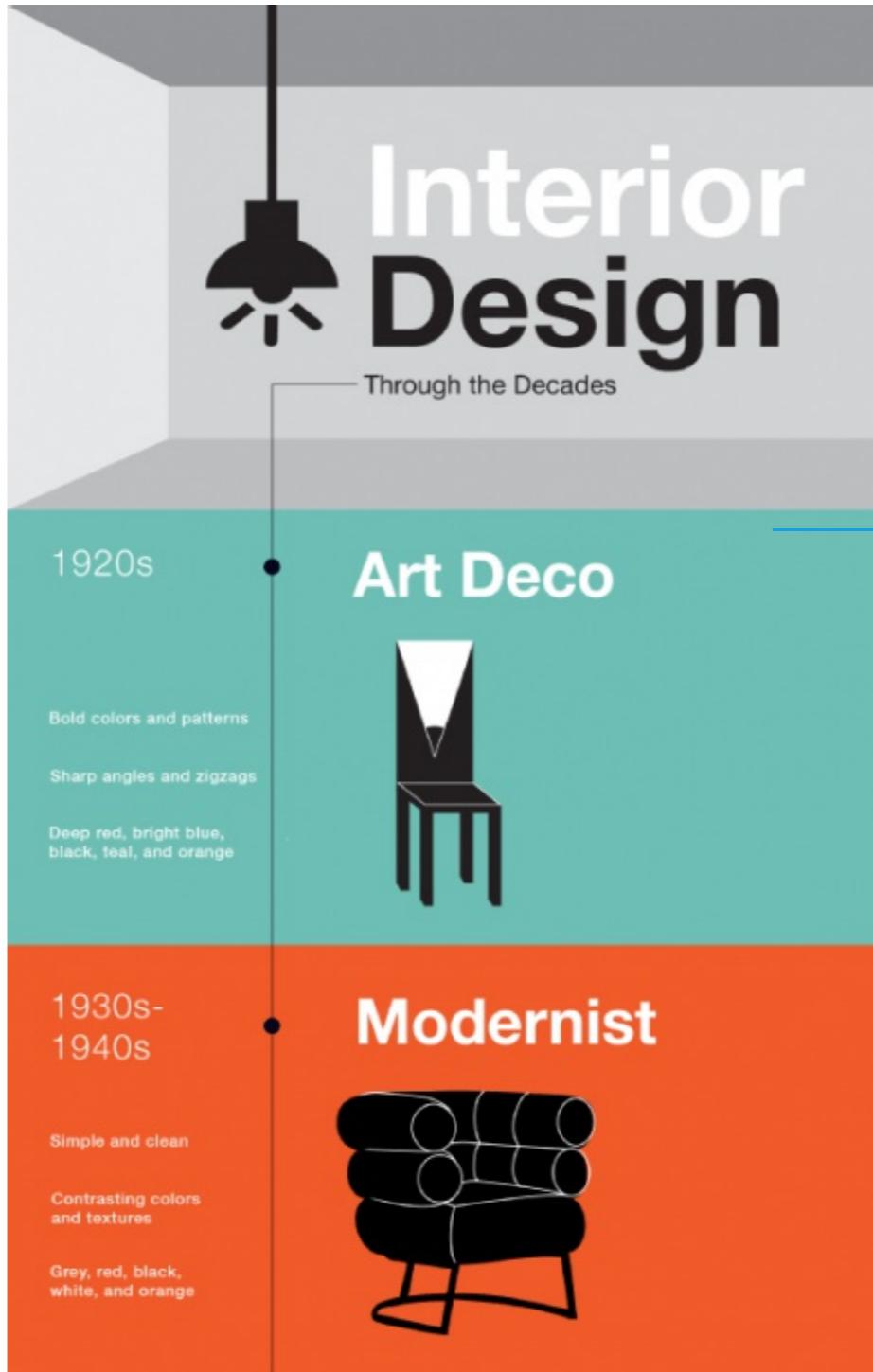
Create a dynamic and cohesive design by Integrating photo elements with your typography. In some cases, you can even arrange them using a layered effect so they look intertwined.



[Source](#)

Section Dividers

To visually divide your infographic into sections that correspond with the main points of your outline, here is a list of graphic elements you can use:



[Source](#)

Colors

Alternate colors for each section. Stick to two-max three-colors and, when suitable, use tones, shades and tints of the same hue.



Arrows

Here, the reader's gaze is directed by arrows that are extensions of the different blocks.

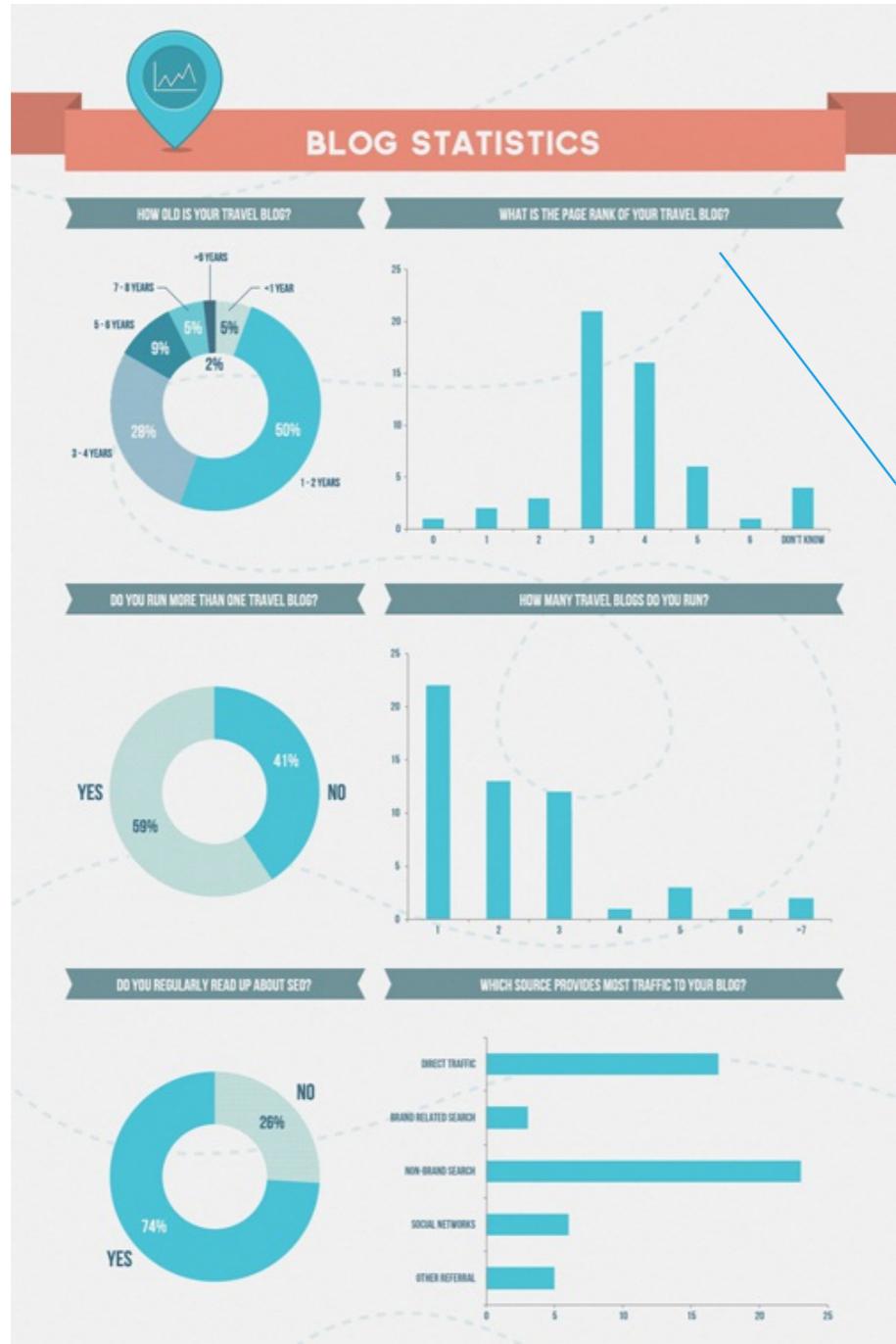


Lines

Lines can come in all sorts of styles: dashed, dotted, curvy, straight, zigzag, among others.

[Source](#)

[Source](#)



[Source](#)



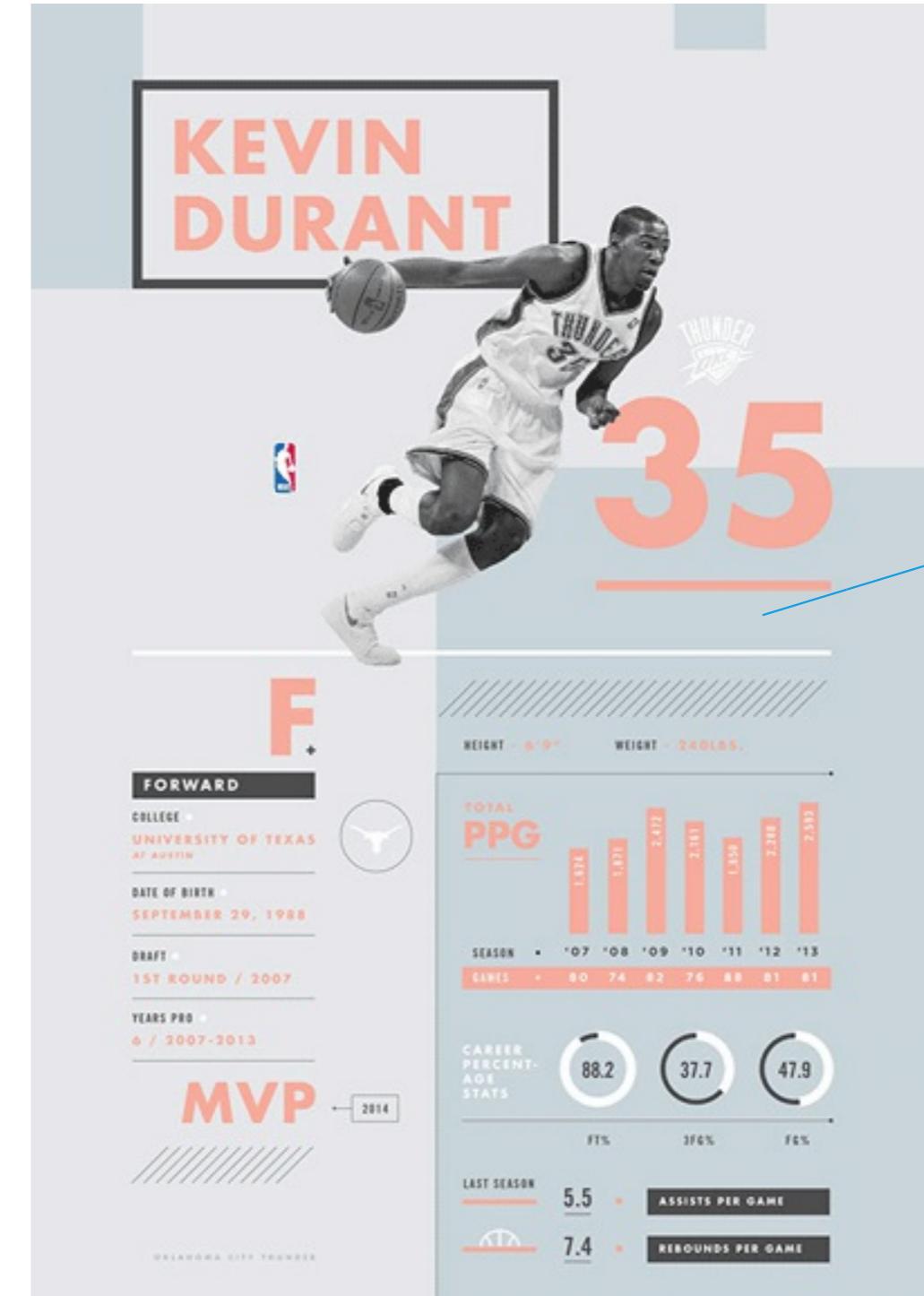
[Source](#)

Numbers

One of the most commonly used ways to segment your infographic is to use numbers to separate each section.

Geometric Shapes

Shapes are a basic element of graphic design and can be used to frame content, highlight important points and create visual interest.

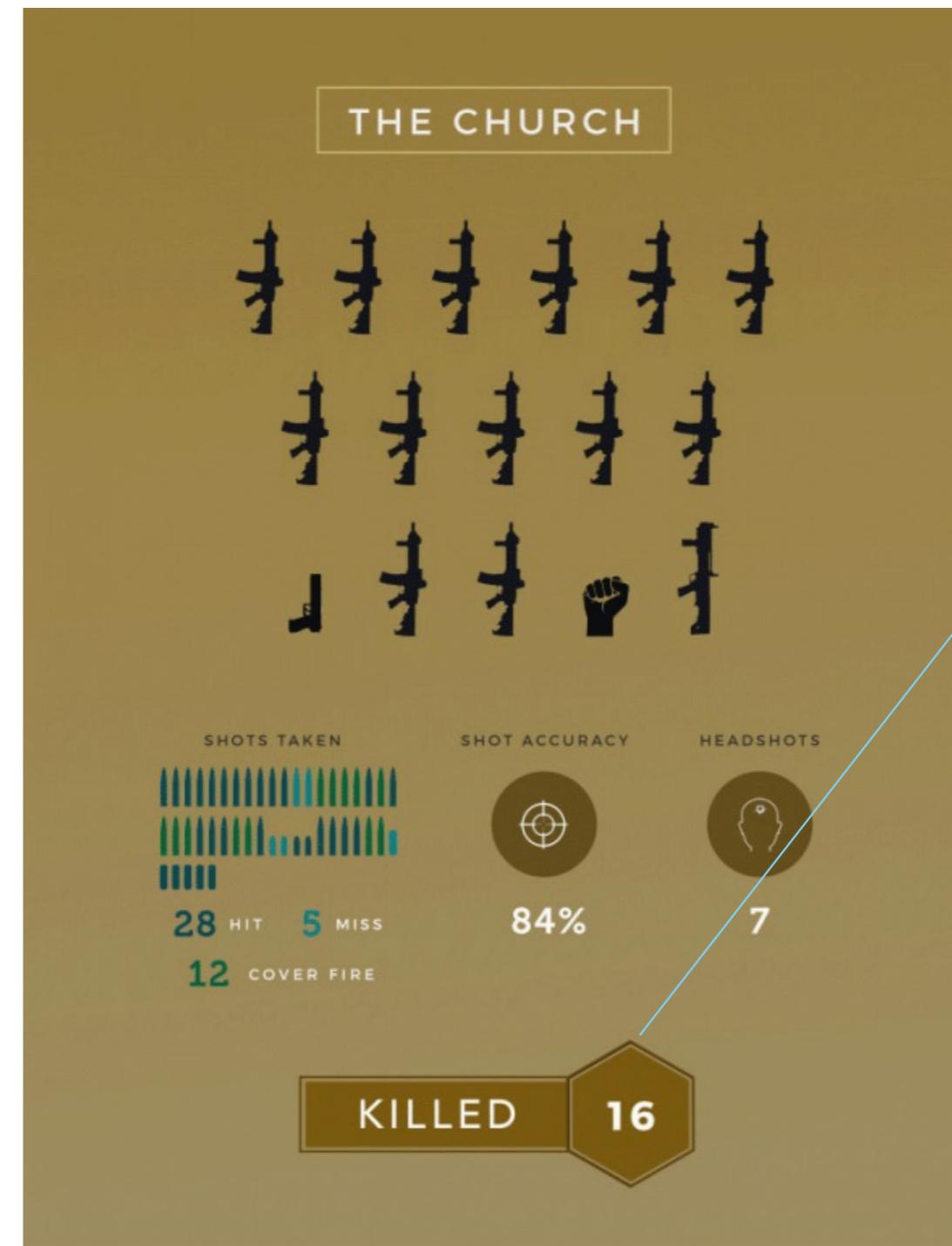


[Source](#)

Rectangles and squares of different colors can be used to segment content and create visual interest.



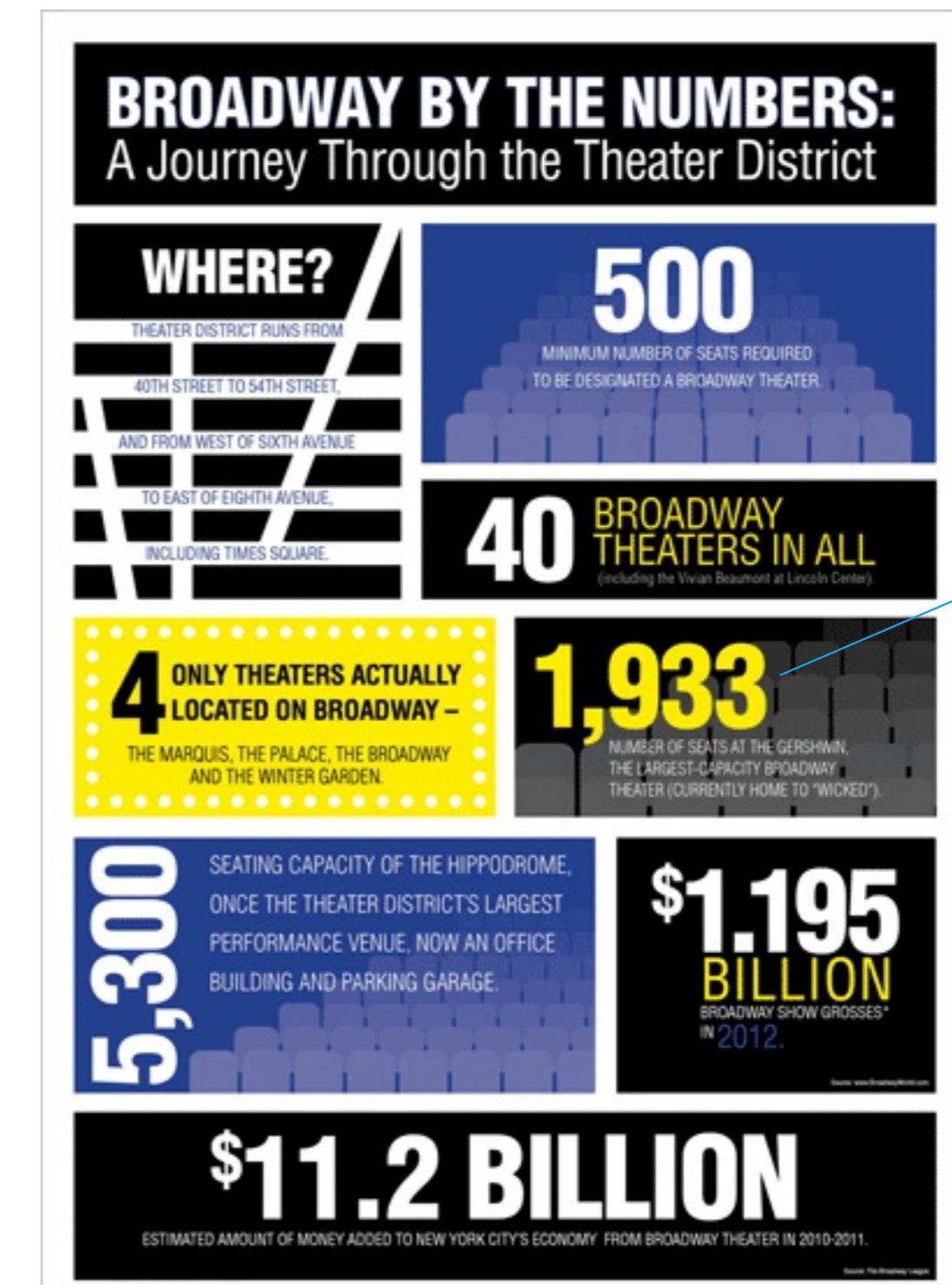
Circles and rectangles are used to frame key points.



[Source](#)

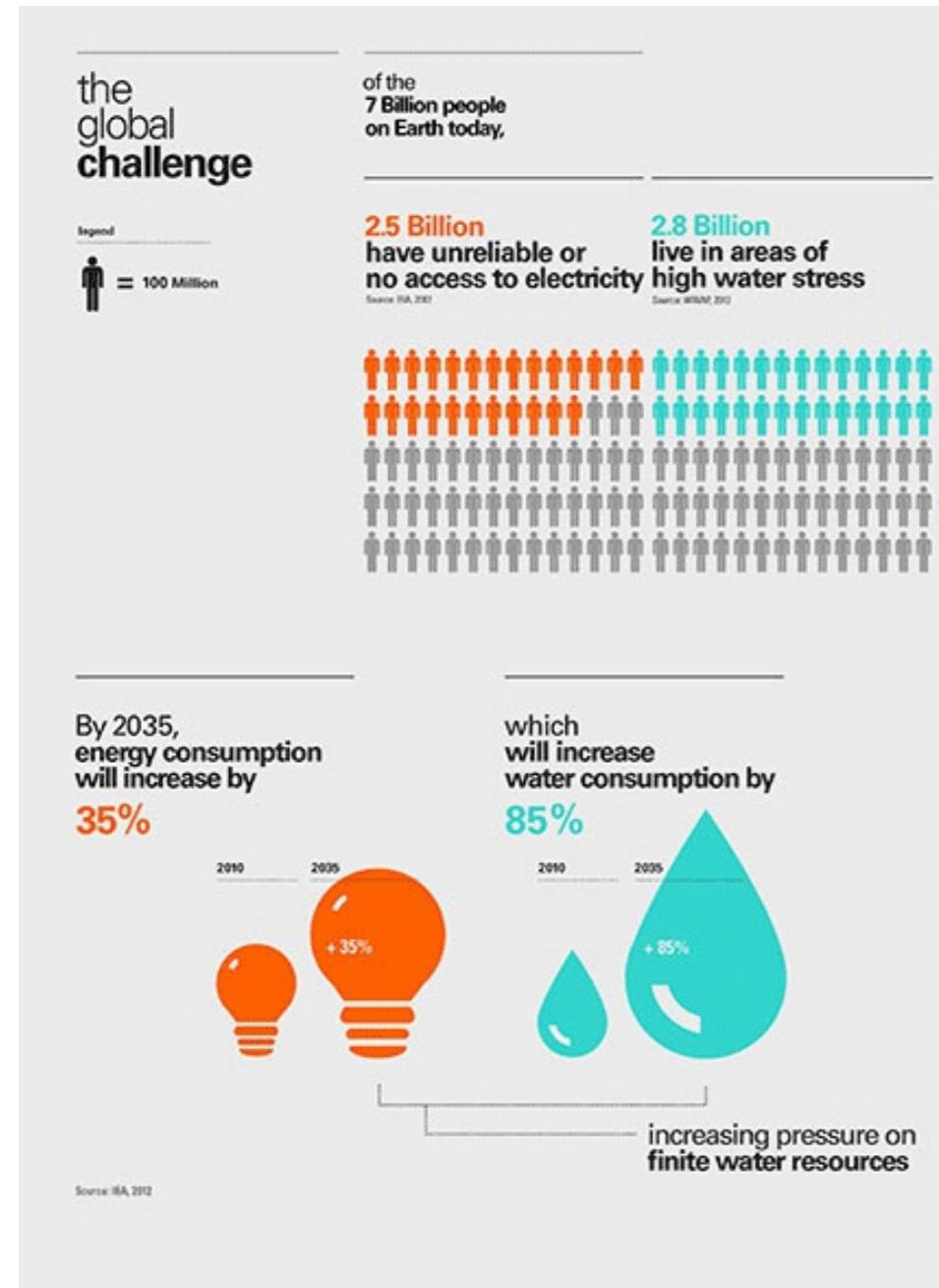
Visualized Numbers

Statistics and figures can be visualized either through typography or data visualizations, such as the ones below:



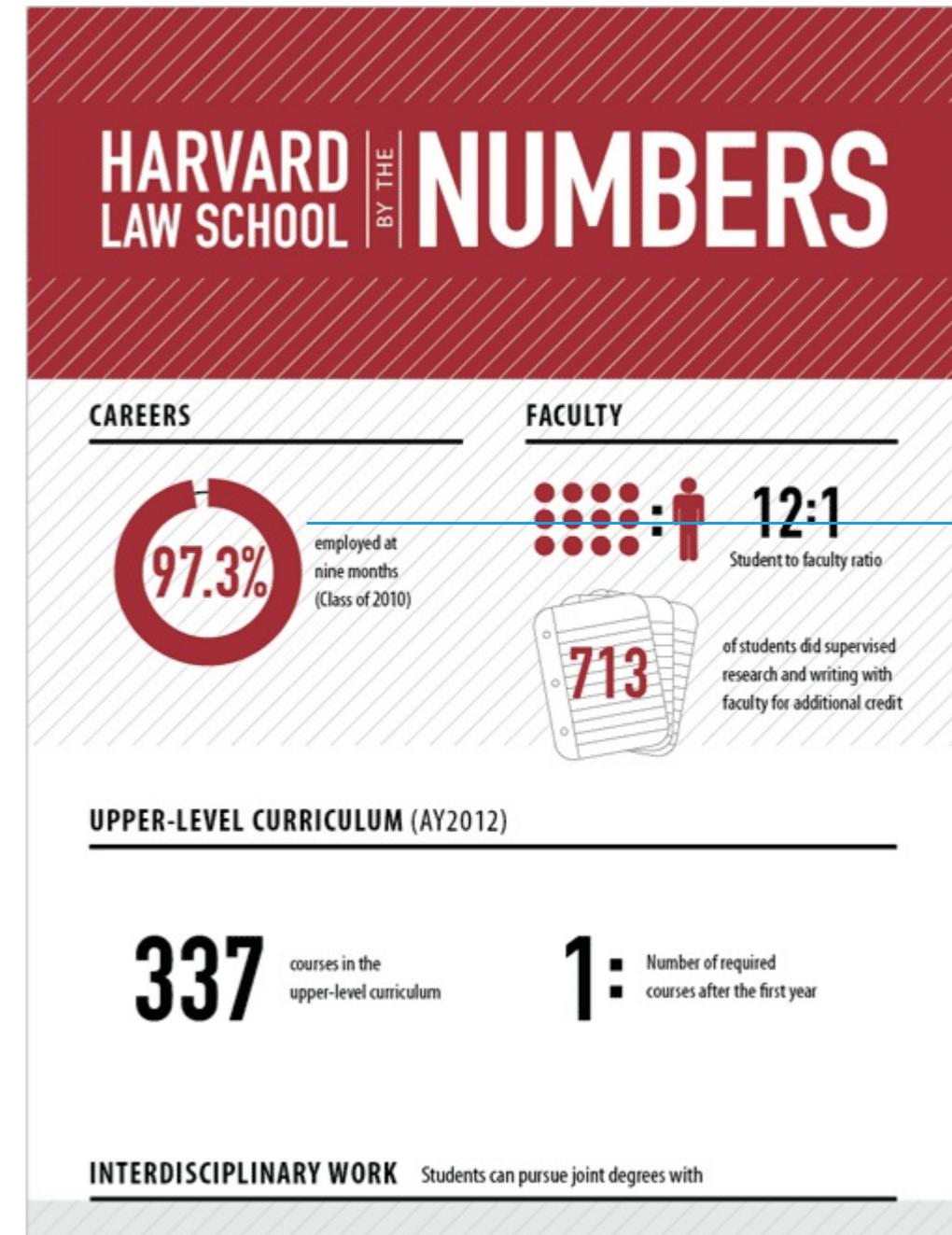
[Source](#)

Increasing the size of numbers is often used to attract attention to important figures.



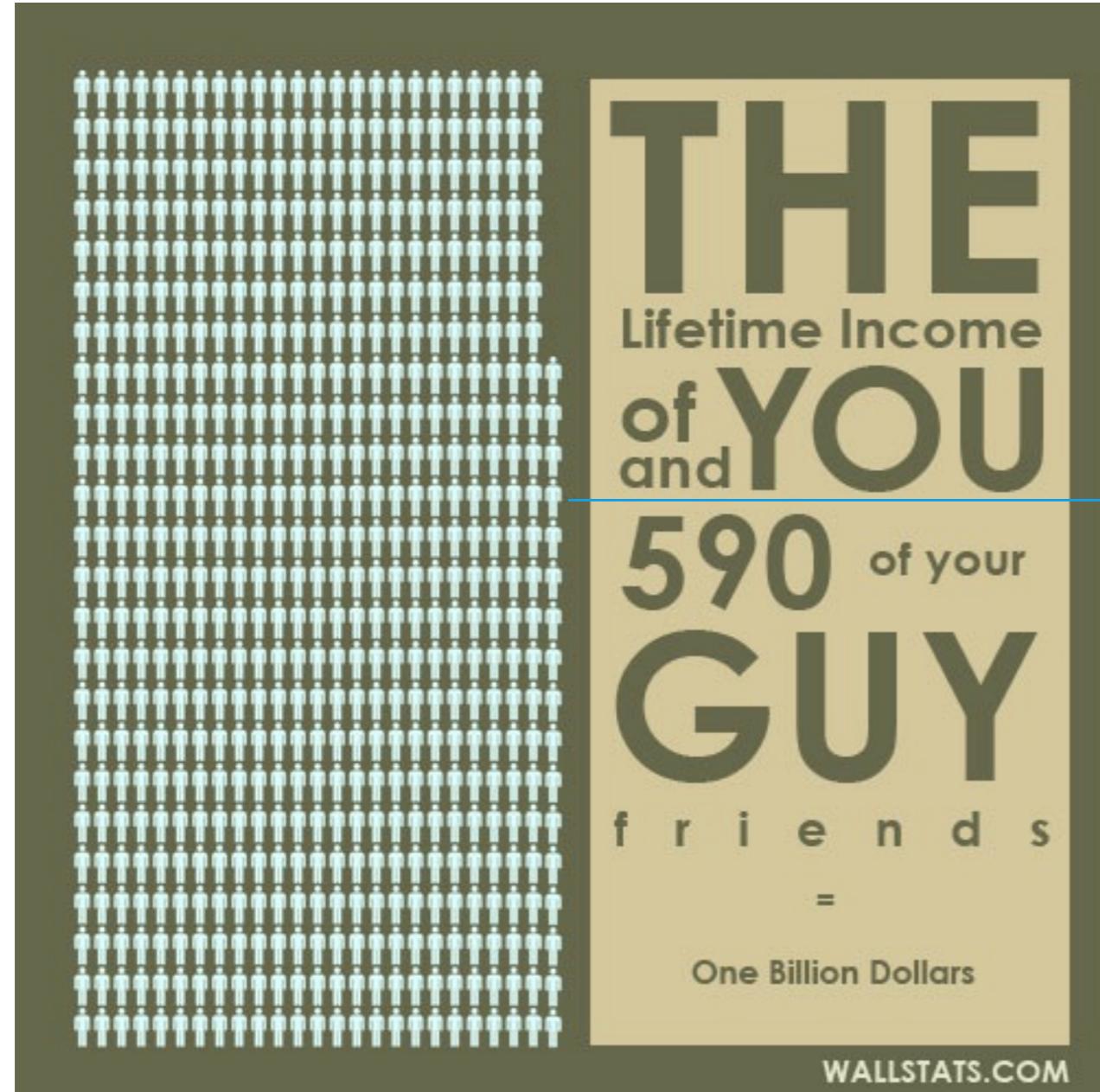
Icons of objects and people can be used to visualize statistics and large amounts.

[Source](#)



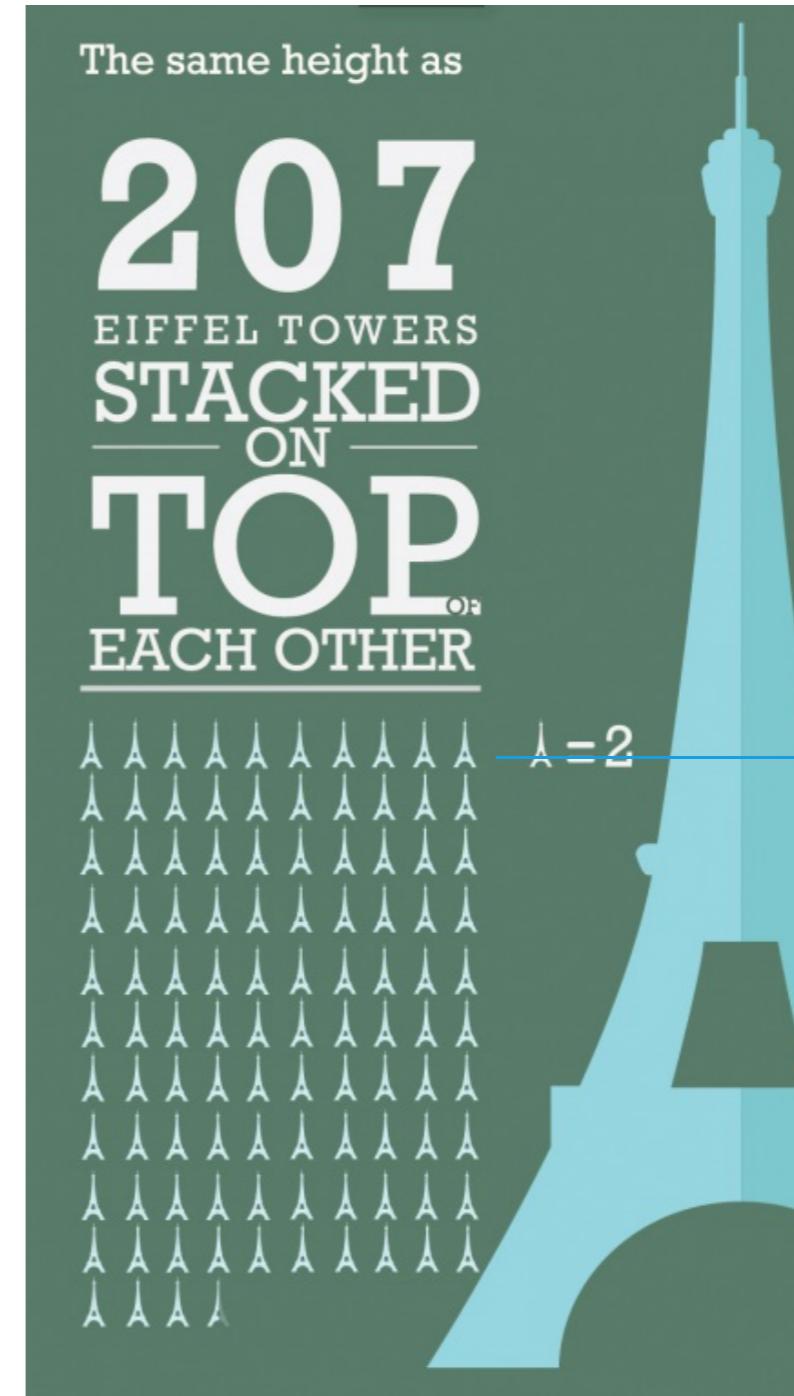
[Source](#)

Radial dials, gauges, clocks and meters can also be used to represent percentages or single units of information.



[Source](#)

Make large numbers more relatable by using comparisons, such as is done in this infographic.



[Source](#)

Visualize numerical amounts—whether it be percentages, distance, time or space—using visual comparisons.

■ Putting It All Together

Having the right elements for your design is only half of the journey to creating an awesome visual. Now comes the part where you put everything together to create a harmonious combination of shapes, colors and typography.

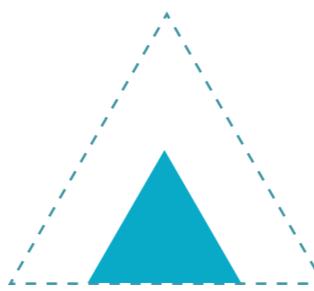
Here are some of the ways you can apply basic composition rules to create more effective, professional-looking infographics, even without a design background.



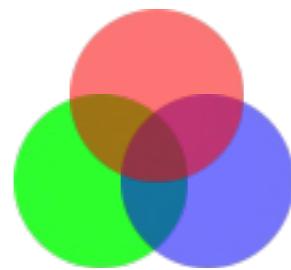
Create a focal point

Just like with any other form of communication, every design must have a core message and a clear goal. This can't be achieved, however, if the viewer doesn't know where to look first because there is no one thing that stands out. Some of the different characteristics you can vary to create dominance in a design include:

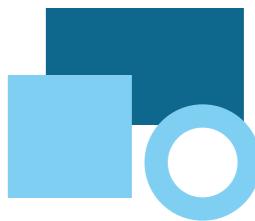
- Size
- Color
- Shape
- Depth
- Placement
- Texture



Size



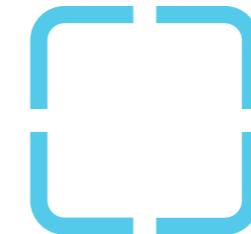
Color



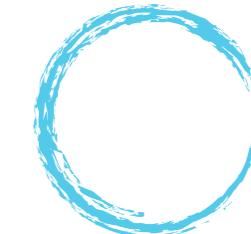
Shape



Depth



Placement



Texture

Create Visual Hierarchy

The goal of a good visual design is to orient viewers' eyes in a specific direction. The first step to doing this is creating a visual entry point into your design using a focal point, as covered in the previous section. Then, you can provide a path for your viewers' eyes to follow by applying other elements in your toolbox--such as contrast, typography, color and spacing--to prioritize content and influence the order in which the human eye perceives the different elements.

In this infographic, for example, the viewer is first drawn to the focal point, which is the large title in the header section. The eyes then move down in the order indicated here.



[Source](#)

This is the order in which each element is viewed in this section of an infographic.

Use leading lines

Another effective technique for creating a visual journey with your design is to use what are called leading lines.

Either implied by the natural shape of objects or explicit through the use of actual lines, leading lines are used to direct readers' eyes to other elements on a page.



Source

These objects in the header create an implied leading line, guiding the eyes toward the next point on a predetermined visual journey.

Scale elements to create effects.

Another way to indicate the relative importance of elements is to adjust their scale. The most important elements are usually larger and more prominent than less important ones. In this way, scale is used to establish the dominance or visual weight of an object.

In an effective design, all elements shouldn't have the same visual weight; if so, they would all be competing for attention and the viewer wouldn't know where to look first.



[Source](#)

This large element in the header immediately attracts the eye first, before anything else.

Balance your elements.

In most cases, you will want to achieve a balanced design in order to create visual harmony.

Like in the real world, each element carries a visual weight determined by its size, color and shape, among other things. For example, a large circle would have greater visual weight than a small one; or a highly textured object would have more weight than a flatter element.

Just like you would try to balance physical objects on a seesaw (by perhaps having the larger person move toward the center), so would you adjust the placement of visual elements on a page to achieve balance in a design.



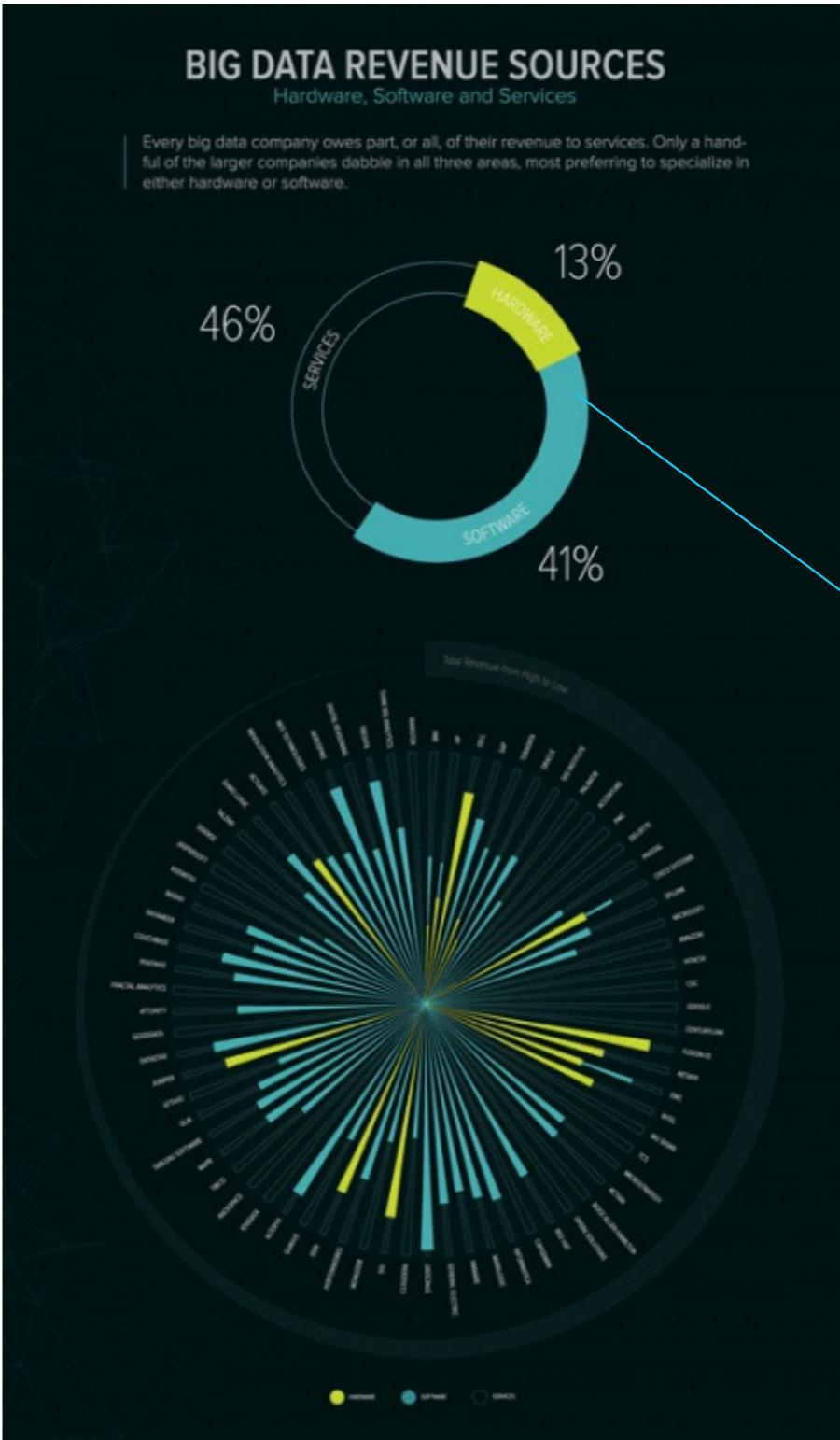
[Source](#)

Achieve a harmonious design by placing elements in such a way that they balance each other out.

Use contrast to draw attention.

Contrast is one of the most effective tools for making certain elements in your design stand out. As human beings, one of the first things our eyes notice is difference, whether this be a difference in color, shape, texture, size or position, among other things.

By nature, we tend to group similar objects together and differentiate between those that are dissimilar.



[Source](#)

Draw attention to a key point in your infographic by applying accent colors that create contrast.

Create a cohesive design

To create a well-composed visual, you also want to tie elements together to form a whole. One way to achieve a cohesive design is to repeat certain elements. This way, the viewer recognizes a visual pattern and knows what to expect next.

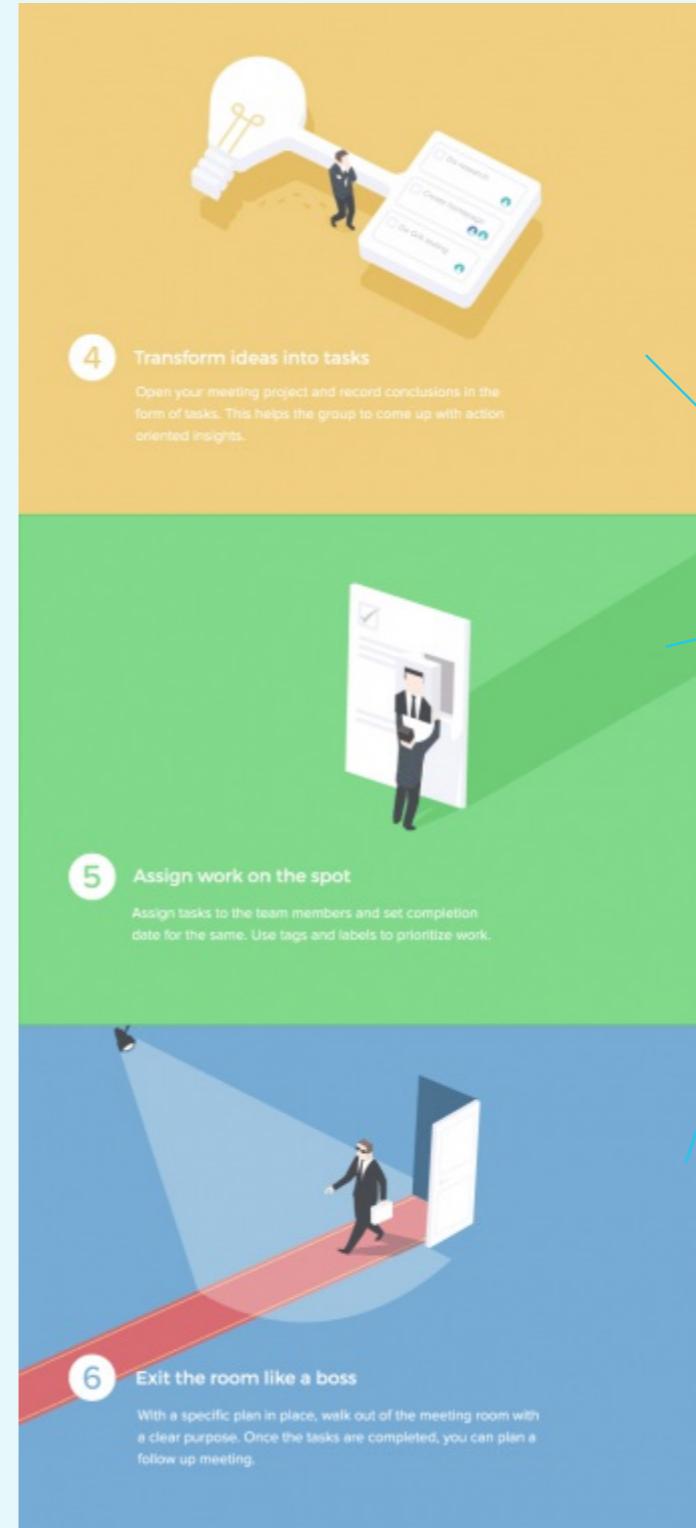


[Source](#)

Effectively use white space.

You've probably heard this before, but negative space (or white space) is just as important to your design as the positive elements.

It has many functions within a visual: It lets the readers' eyes rest; it gives room for visual pathways that the eye can follow; it draws attention to the main elements of your design; and it makes your design look clean, sophisticated and efficient.



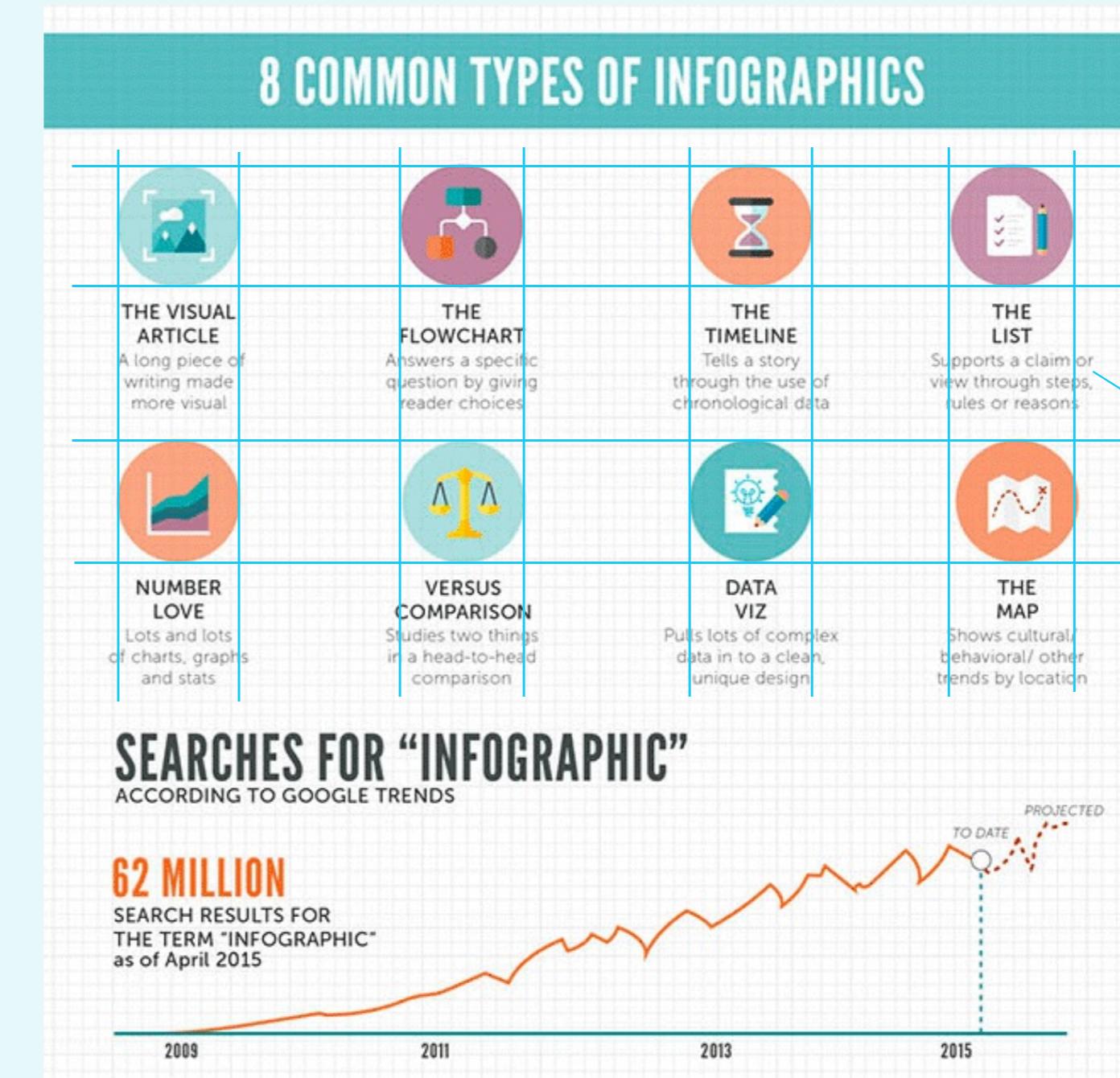
Let your design breathe by effectively using white space.

[Source](#)

Use grids to align your elements.

One way to ensure that your design doesn't look disorganized and unprofessional is to use grids to align your elements.

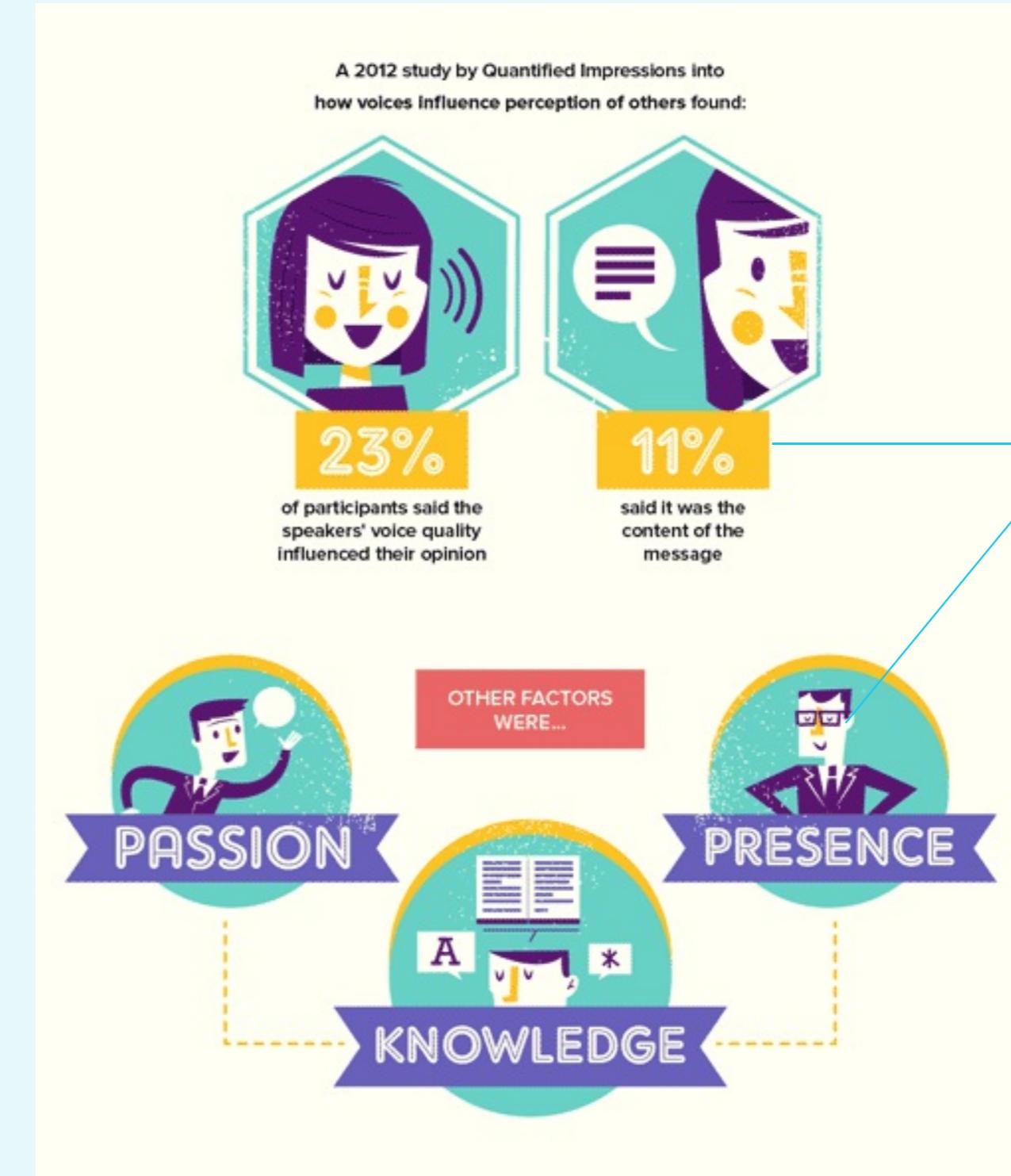
Instead of simply eyeballing the placement of your elements, try to use a grid to make your designs look more organized and balanced. They can also help you identify your focal points and lay out the visual path you want viewers' eyes to take.



[Source](#)

Be consistent throughout.

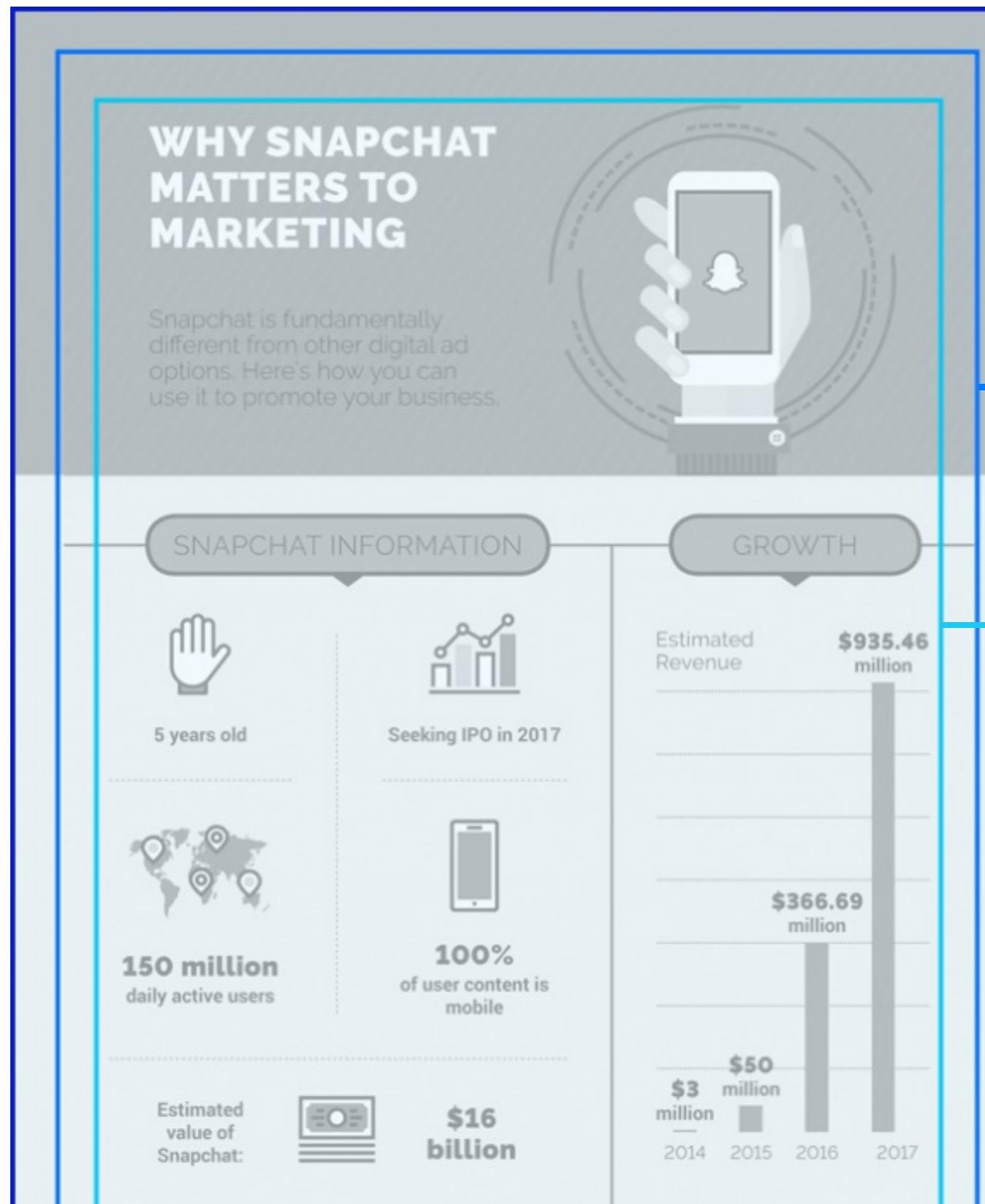
Use the same styles of icons, images, fonts and color palettes throughout your design so it looks clean and professional.



[Source](#)

Pay attention to margins and spacing.

If you want to print your infographic, you will want to familiarize yourself a bit with these terms:



Bleed: Zone outside the trim area used to account for any inconsistencies in design or movement of paper.

TIP: Exceed the bleed area by at least 1/8" of an inch.

Trim: Line where infographic will be cut.

TIP: Do not let your content go past the trim marks.

Margin: Zone inside the trim area.

TIP: Leave at least 3 to 5 mm distance (or about 10-15 pixels) between the important elements of your design and the cutting line.

*For online infographics, keep elements at least 20 pixels from the edge of your canvas area. Also, make sure there is enough space between each of your elements so it doesn't look cluttered and hard to read.

WRAPPING EVERYTHING UP

Now comes the part where you start wrapping up your design and adding the finishing touches to your infographic.



Include your sources.

In an online world where misinformation spreads like wildfire, it's important to **include a list of credible sources with links at the end of your infographic.**

If you have a particularly large number of references, you can also include a link to a second page with a more detailed list of sources.



Go back and proofread.

Like with any other piece of content, it's important to go back and **check for any grammar and spelling errors.**

Also, ask yourself: Does everything in this infographic support my key message? If it doesn't, consider eliminating it.



Ask others for feedback.

After being immersed in this creative process for several days, it's easy to lose sight of crucial details that might be obvious to others.

This is why it's important to **ask others who were not involved in the creative process for their feedback.**

Ask them to take a look at your infographic and tell you what they took away from it. If it doesn't align with your intended message, then consider revisiting key parts of your infographic.

HOW TO GENERATE BUZZ FOR YOUR INFOGRAPHIC

After all the hard work

put into creating a stellar infographic, most content creators drop the ball when it comes to promoting it.

If you spent, for example, a week creating your infographic, then you should spend roughly the same amount of time promoting it. Here's a rough outline of how to do that:



“We can make information human and, all of a sudden, people listen and understand that this data is about them.”

Nathan Yau

1 POST YOUR INFOGRAPHIC.

The first step is to post your new creation on your website or blog. Include both an embed code and a link to your infographic so that viewers can easily post the complete version on their sites or share it on social media. This way, every time someone embeds your infographic on their site, it will display the complete version of your visual and link back to it. Also, make sure that all social sharing buttons can be easily seen and accessed on your site or blog.



2 SEED CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA.



Next, plant small content seeds all over social media channels and see what grows into a viral social sharing tree. To do this, first **determine the most fertile ground for your content**. Would your content appeal more to LinkedIn users? How about Google+, Pinterest or Twitter users? This is where knowing your audience's interests, needs and reading habits is indispensable.

To make the most of your infographic, execute a drip campaign by posting the most intriguing and revealing stats, figures or quotes. Each day, you can roll out 2 or 3 tweets with these highlights, along with one Facebook or Google+ post per day.

3 REACH OUT TO INFLUENCERS.

Now comes the part where you really pull out the big guns by reaching out to key influencers and bloggers who can share your infographic with their audiences and increase your exposure many times over.

But how do you do this in a way that guarantees they won't say no or ignore you? Well, you can start by offering them something of value instead of simply asking for a favor.

For example, if your infographic is on the best vegan restaurants in the city, then you can reach

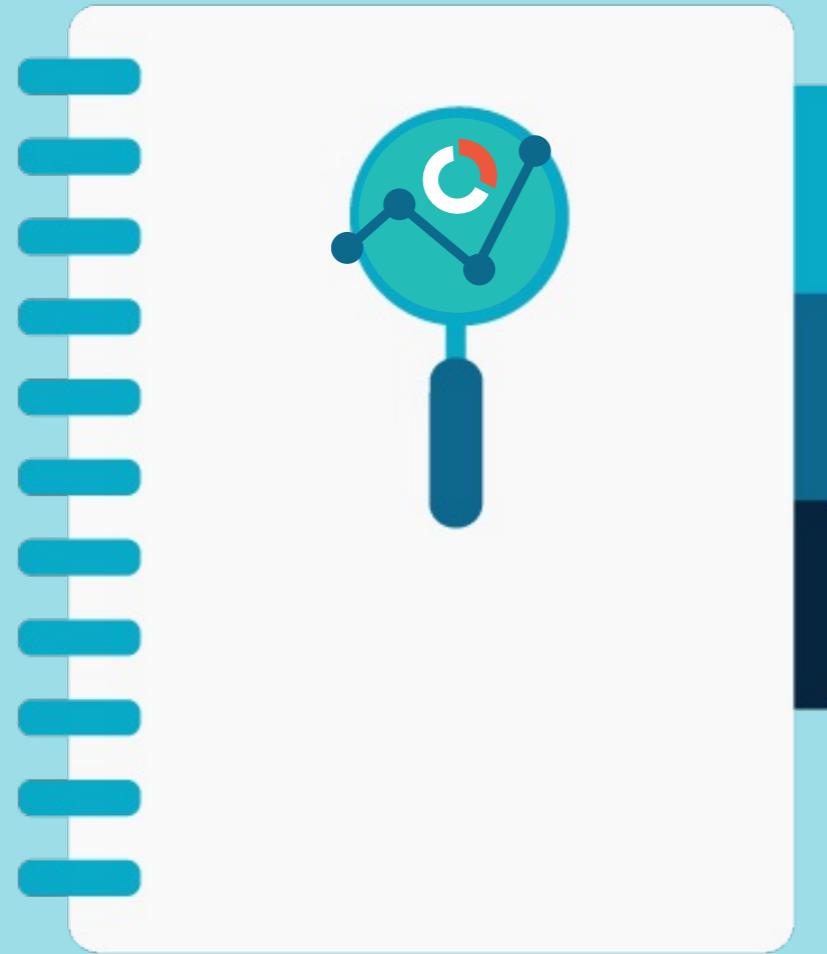
out to influential bloggers and writers who have a sizable following interested in vegan dining.

You can then send them an email asking them to check out your infographic, which is sure to interest their audience.

Better yet, if you cited the blogger or writer in your infographic, you can mention this in your message. No need to ask for links or attribution in the first communication. Just wait for their response, and they'll likely link back to you if they're interested in posting your content.



4 SUBMIT TO INFOGRAPHIC DIRECTORIES.



The next step is to submit your visual to infographic directories such as Visual.ly. There are dozens of them, which you can check out [here](#). Most of these infographic directories will allow you to provide a link to the original infographic and a short description of its contents.

5 SEND EMAILS TO CONTACTS.

Besides contacting influencers in your field, you can also reach out to your contacts, such as colleagues, friends and family members. You never know when a social share by one of your peers may go viral and spark a conversation among their Facebook or Twitter friends.

Also, you want to make sure to contact all of those cited as references in your infographic. Many times, people who are referenced in an infographic as an authoritative source will gladly share your content with their audience.



6

SUBMIT A PRESS RELEASE.



If your content and design are really exceptional, you might want to consider submitting a press release. Since journalists follow press releases, especially those with a revealing, valuable, provocative and newsworthy story, there's a chance you might get featured on an important online publication as a result of submitting one. Check out some of the most popular press release sites, such as [PR Newswire](#), [PR Leap](#) and [PRWeb](#).

SOURCES

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- Good Charts: The HBR Guide to Making Smarter, More Persuasive Data Visualizations
- 25 Expert Tips on How to Make Information Beautiful

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