# Best practices: bar plots

INTERMEDIATE DATA VISUALIZATION WITH GGPLOT2

**Rick Scavetta**
Founder, Scavetta Academy

# In this chapter

- Common pitfalls in Data Viz
- Best way to represent data
  - For effective explanatory (communication), and
  - For effective exploratory (investigation) plots

# Bar plots

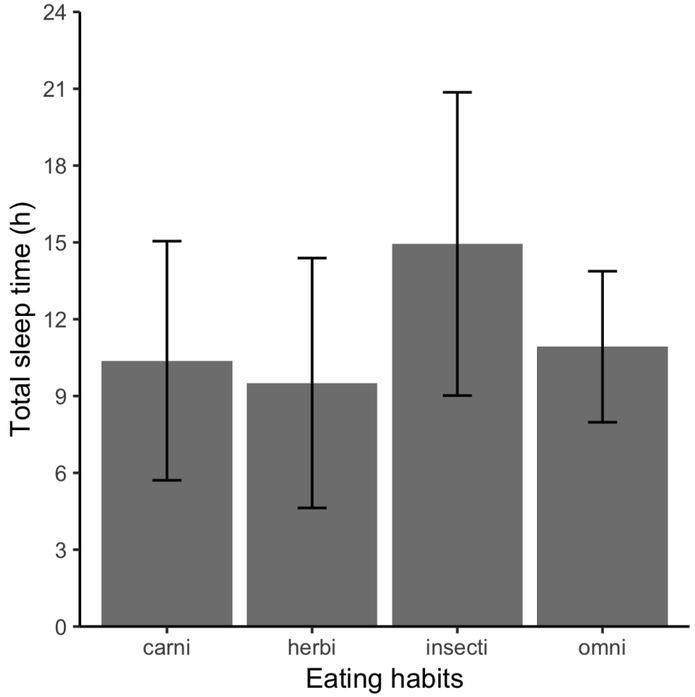
- Two types
  - Absolute values
  - Distributions

# Mammalian sleep

```
Observations: 76
Variables: 3
$ vore  <chr> "carni", "omni", "herbi", "omni", "herbi", "herbi", "carni", …
$ total <dbl> 12.1, 17.0, 14.4, 14.9, 4.0, 14.4, 8.7, 10.1, 3.0, 5.3, 9.4, …
$ rem   <dbl> NA, 1.8, 2.4, 2.3, 0.7, 2.2, 1.4, 2.9, NA, 0.6, 0.8, 0.7, 1.5…
```

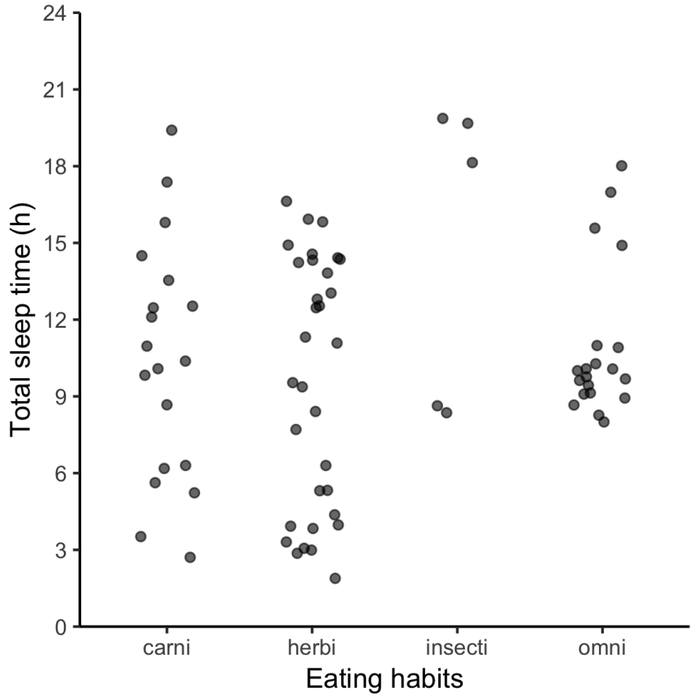
# Dynamite plot

```
d <- ggplot(sleep, aes(vore, total)) +
 # ...

d +
  stat_summary(fun.y = mean,
               geom = "bar",
               fill = "grey50") +
  stat_summary(fun.data = mean_sdl,
               fun.args = list(mult = 1),
               geom = "errorbar",
               width = 0.2)
```



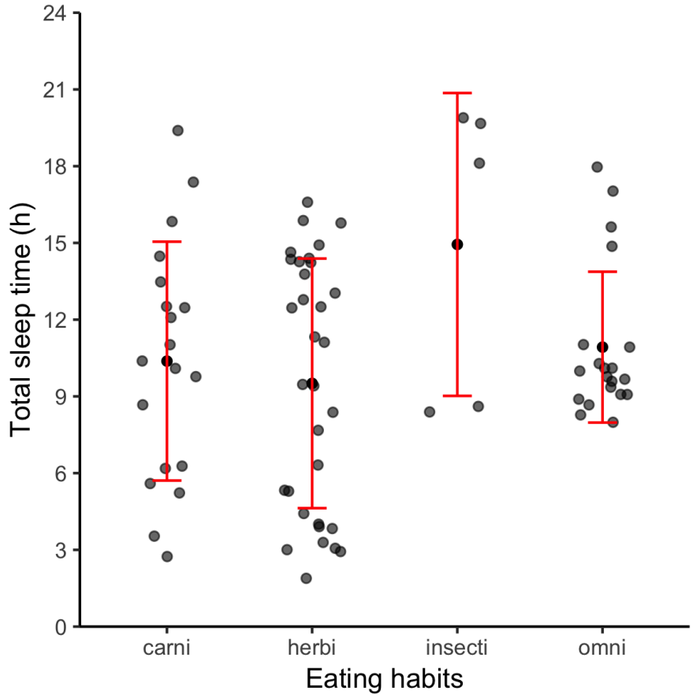
# Individual data points

```
# position
posn_j <- position_jitter(width = 0.2)

# plot
d +
  geom_point(alpha = 0.6,
             position = posn_j)
```



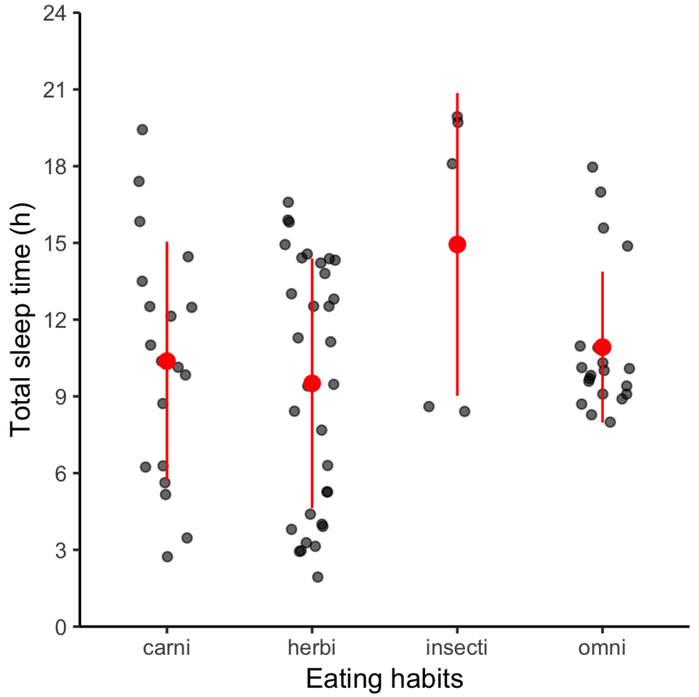
# geom_errorbar()

```
d +
  geom_point(...) +
  stat_summary(fun.y = mean,
               geom = "point",
               fill = "red") +
  stat_summary(fun.data = mean_sdl,
               fun.args = list(mult = 1),
               geom = "errorbar",
               width = 0.2,
               color = "red")
```



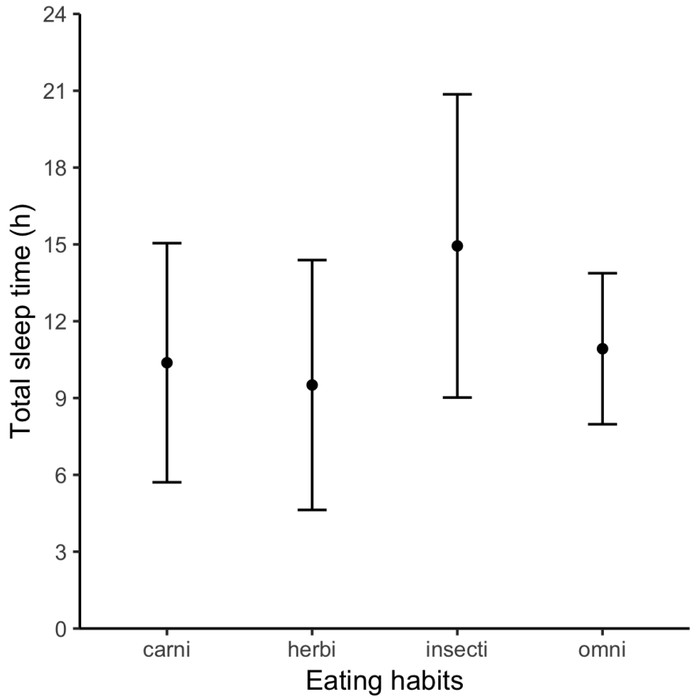
# geom_pointrange()

```
d +
  geom_point(...) +
  stat_summary(fun.data = mean_sdl,
               mult = 1,
               width = 0.2,
               color = "red")
```

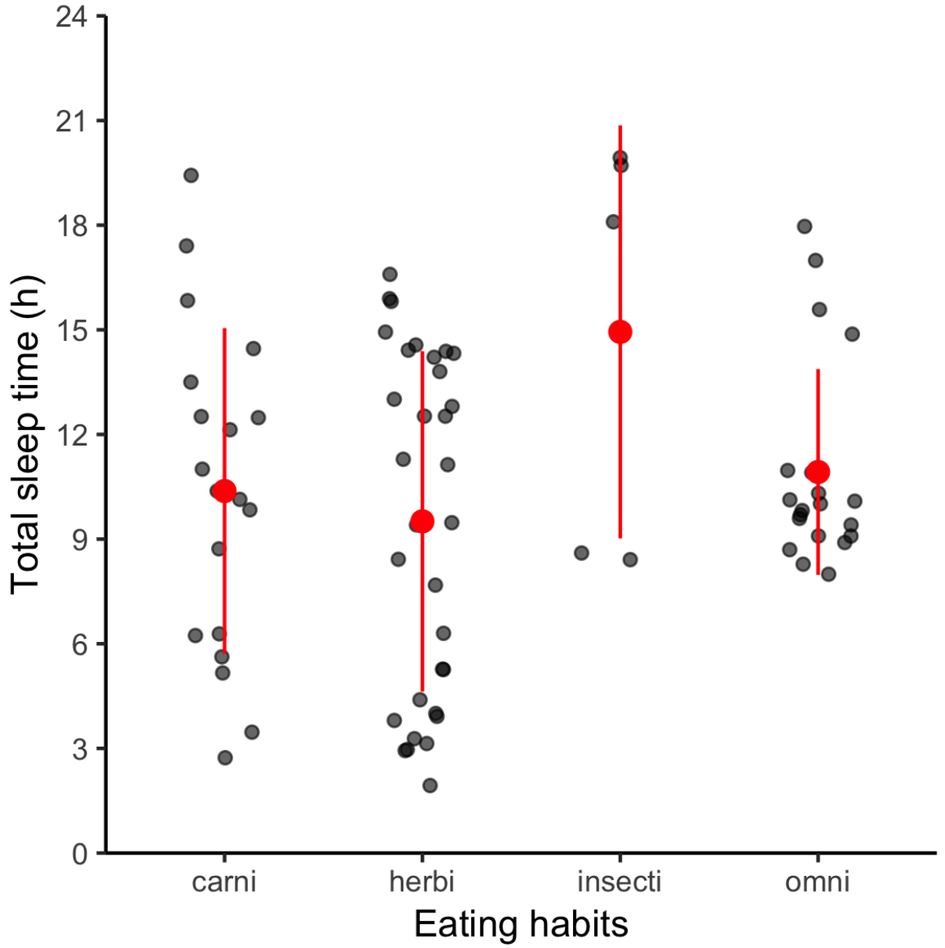


# Without data points

```
d +
  stat_summary(fun.y = mean,
               geom = "point") +
  stat_summary(fun.data = mean_sdl,
               fun.args = list(mult = 1),
               geom = "errorbar",
               width = 0.2)
```



# Bars are not necessary



# Ready for exercises!

INTERMEDIATE DATA VISUALIZATION WITH GGPLOT2

# Heatmaps use case scenario

INTERMEDIATE DATA VISUALIZATION WITH GGPLOT2

**Rick Scavetta**
Founder, Scavetta Academy

datacamp

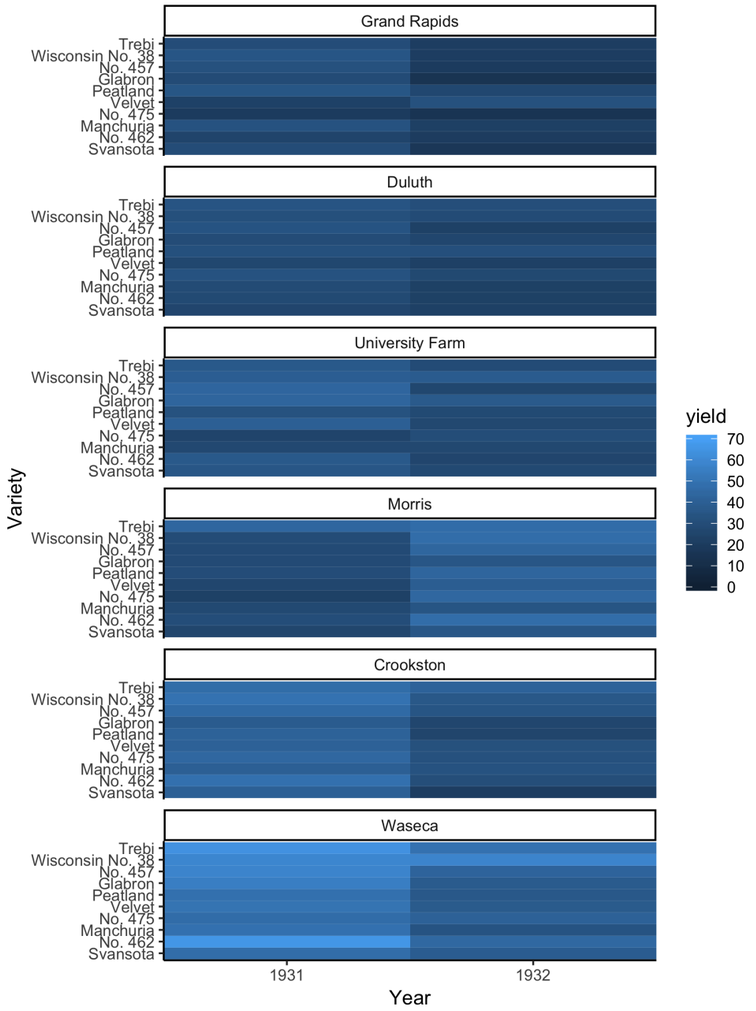
# The barley dataset

```
head(barley, 9)
```

```
      yield   variety year            site
1  27.00000 Manchuria 1931 University Farm
2  48.86667 Manchuria 1931          Waseca
3  27.43334 Manchuria 1931          Morris
4  39.93333 Manchuria 1931       Crookston
5  32.96667 Manchuria 1931    Grand Rapids
6  28.96667 Manchuria 1931          Duluth
7  43.06666   Glabron 1931 University Farm
8  55.20000   Glabron 1931          Waseca
9  28.76667   Glabron 1931          Morris
```

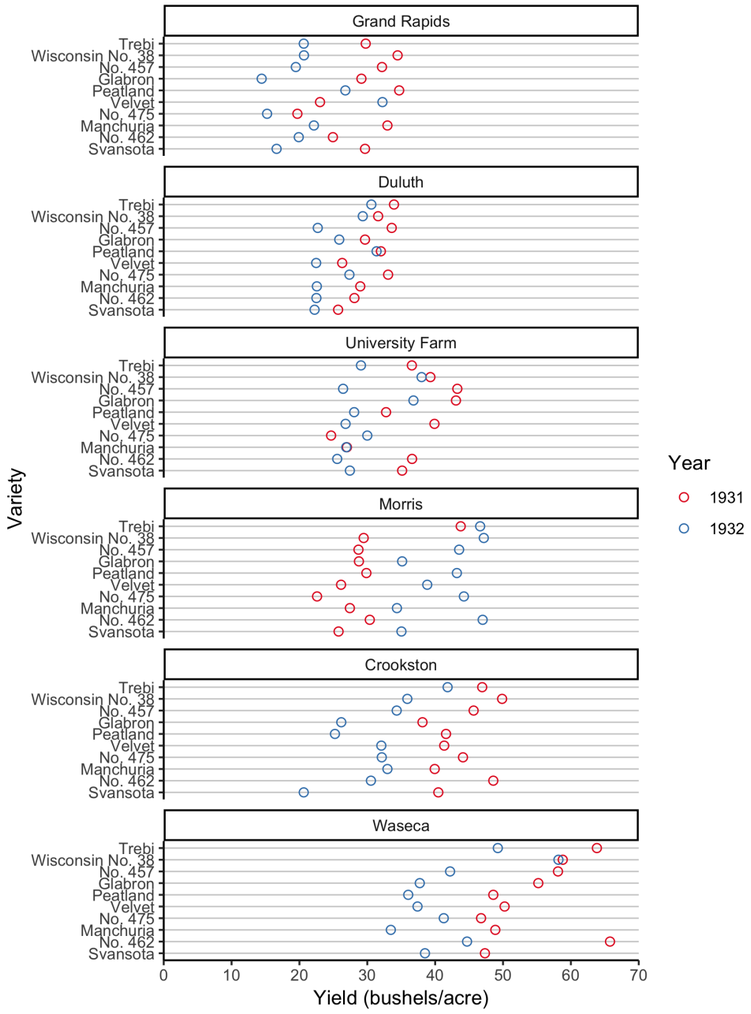
# A basic heat map

```
ggplot(barley, aes(year, variety,
                   fill = yield)) +
  geom_tile() +
  facet_wrap(vars(site), ncol = 1) +
  ...
```



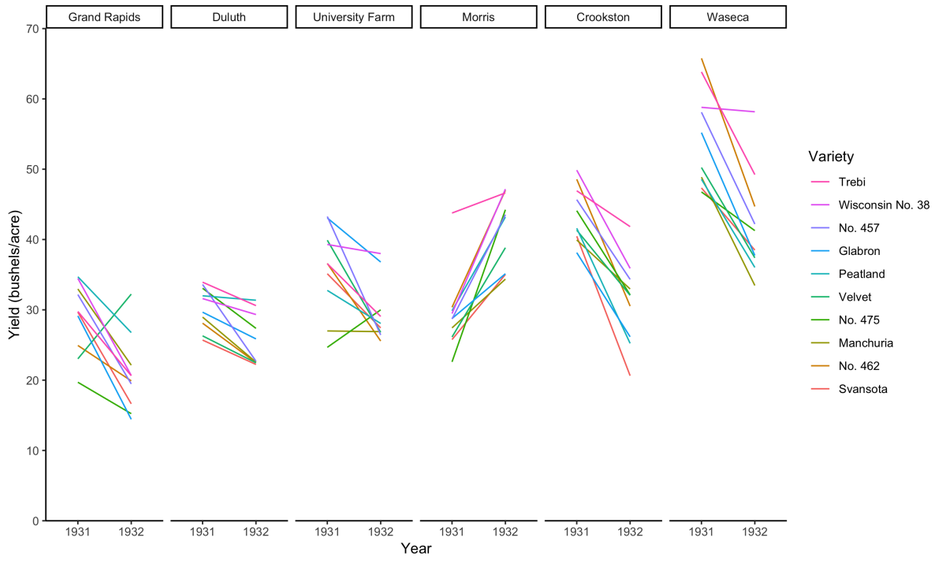
# A dot plot

```
ggplot(barley, aes(yield, variety,
                   color = year)) +
  geom_point(...) +
  facet_wrap(vars(site), ncol = 1) +
  ...
```



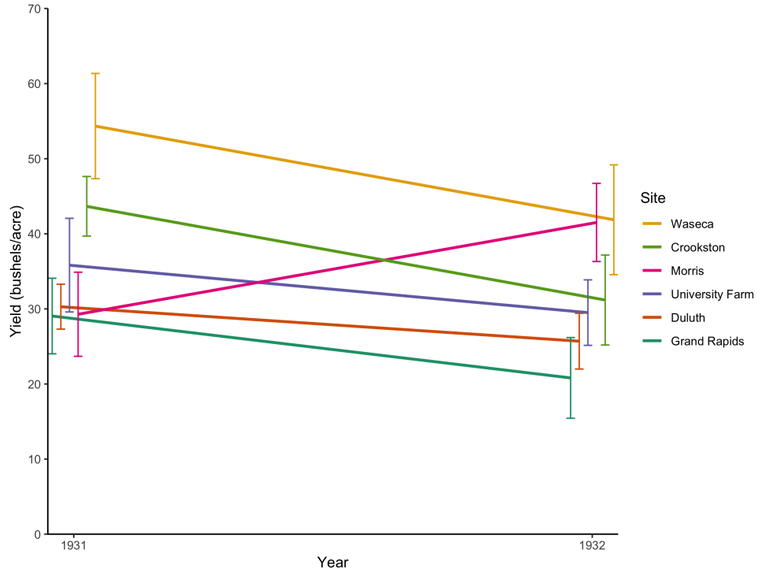
# As a time series

```
ggplot(barley, aes(year, yield,
                   group = variety,
                   color = variety)) +
  geom_line() +
  facet_wrap(vars(site), nrow = 1) +
  ...
```



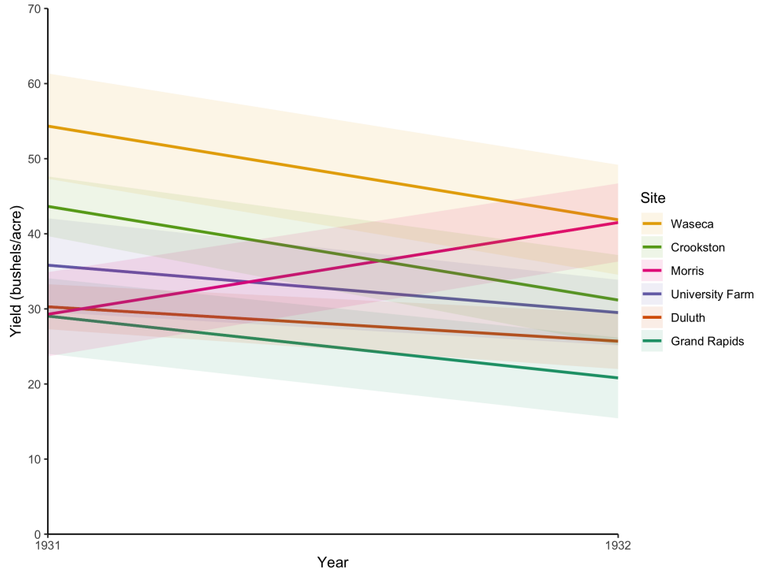
# Using dodged error bars

```
ggplot(barley, aes(x = year, y = yield,
                   group = site,
                   color = site)) +
  stat_summary(fun.y = mean,
               geom = "line", ...) +
  stat_summary(fun.data = mean_sdl,
               geom = "errorbar", ...) +
  ...
```



# Using ribbons for error

```
ggplot(barley, aes(x = year, y = yield,
                   group = site,
                   color = site)) +
  stat_summary(fun.y = mean,
               geom = "line", ...) +
  stat_summary(fun.data = mean_sdl,
               geom = "ribbon", ...) +
  ...
```



# Coding Time!

INTERMEDIATE DATA VISUALIZATION WITH GGPLOT2

# When good data makes bad plots

## INTERMEDIATE DATA VISUALIZATION WITH GGPLOT2

**Rick Scavetta**
Founder, Scavetta Academy

datacamp

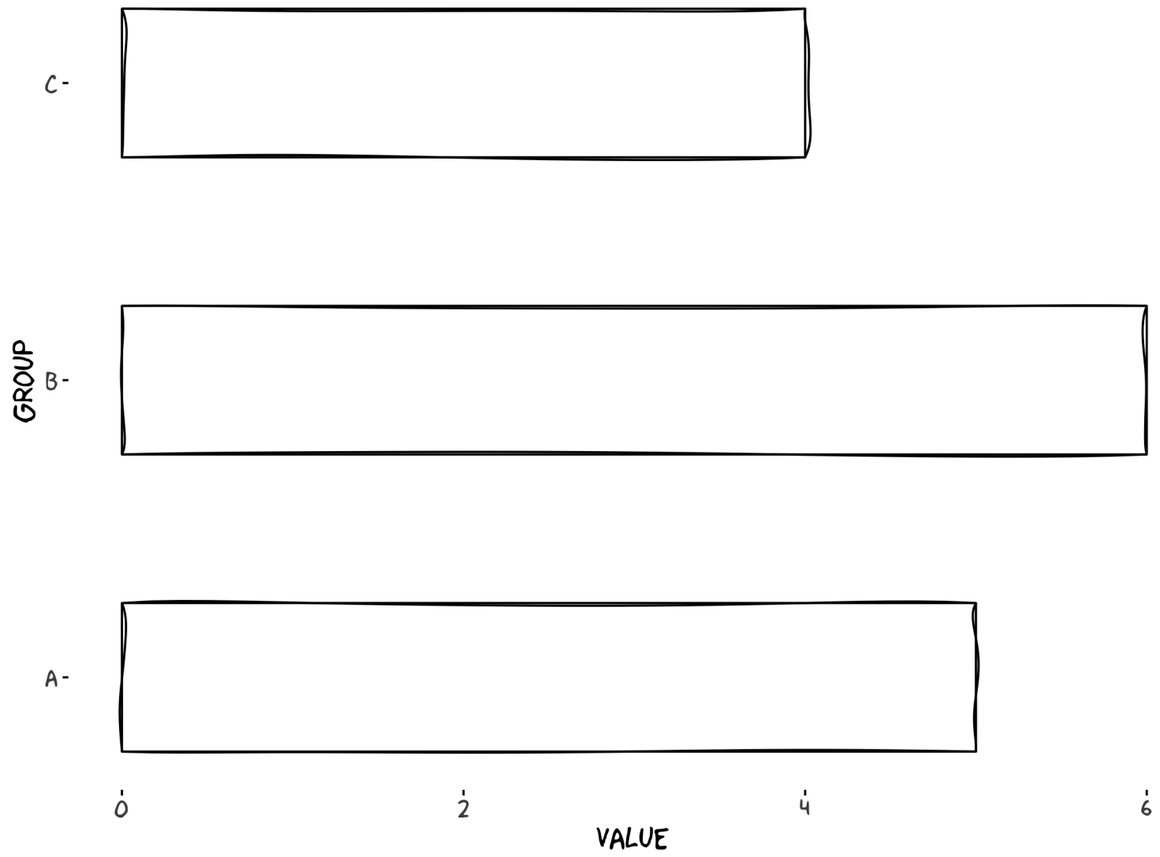
# Bad plots: style

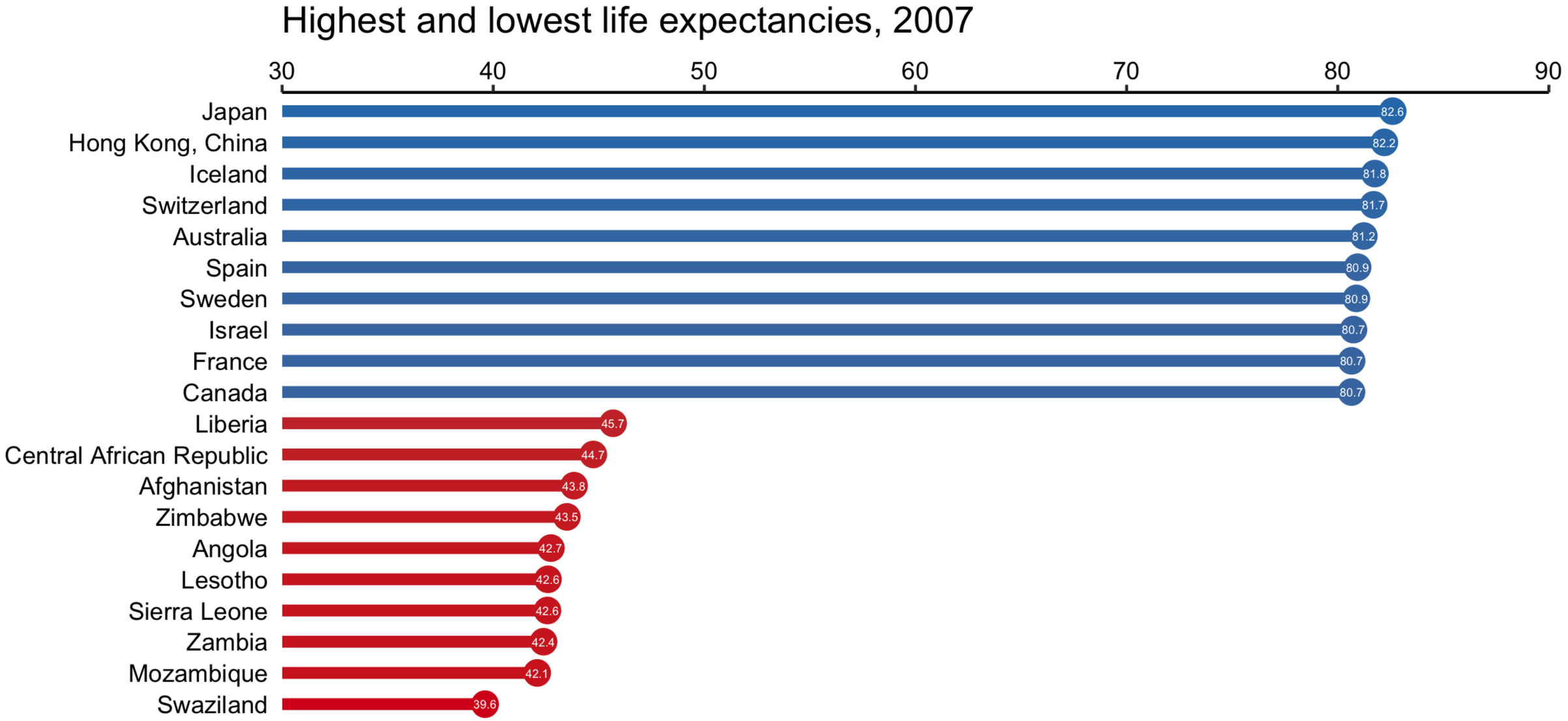
- Color
  - Not color-blind-friendly (e.g. primarily red and green)
  - Wrong palette for data type (remember sequential, qualitative and divergent)
  - Indistinguishable groups (i.e. colors are too similar)
  - Ugly (high saturation primary colors)
- Text
  - Illegible (e.g. too small, poor resolution)
  - Non-descriptive (e.g. "length" -- of what? which units?)
  - Missing
  - Inappropriate (e.g. comic sans)

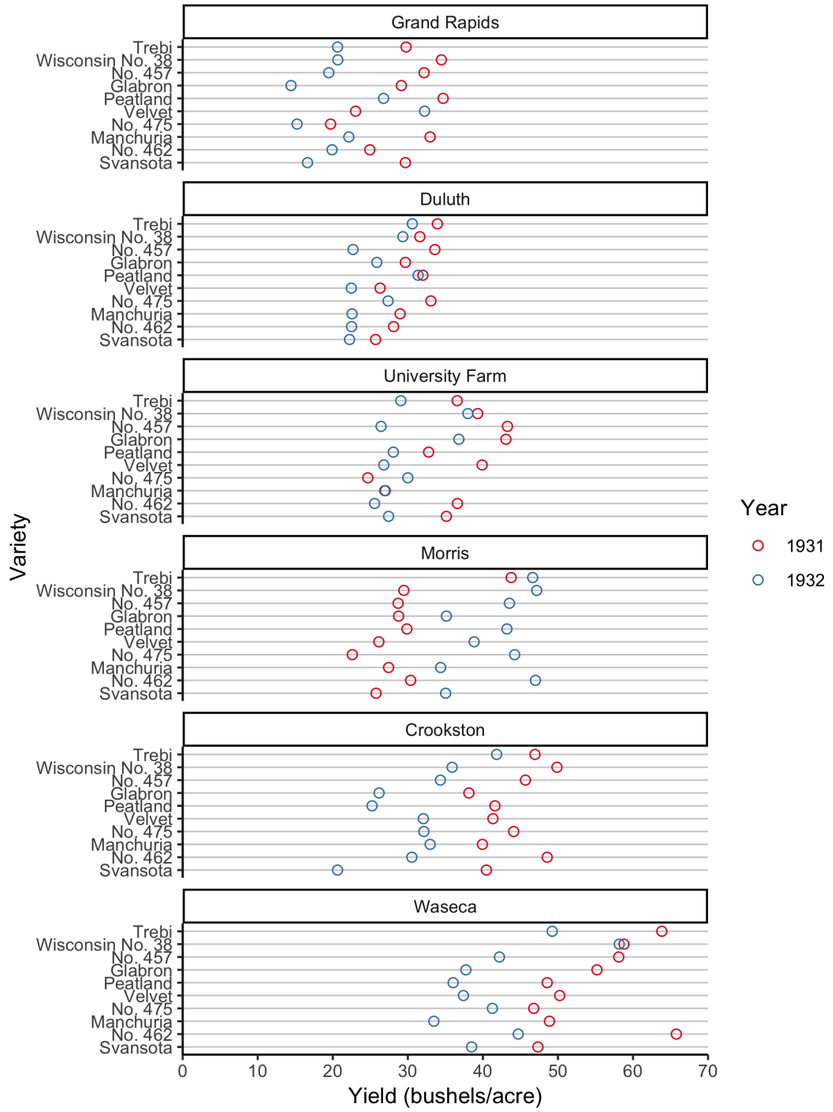
# Bad plots: structure and content

- Information content
  - Too much information (TMI)
  - Too little information (TLI)
  - No clear message or purpose
- Axes
  - Poor aspect ratio
  - Suppression of the origin
  - Broken x or y axes
  - Common, but unaligned scales
  - Wrong or no transformation
- Statistics
  - Visualization doesn't match actual statistics
- Geometries
  - Wrong plot type
  - Wrong orientation
- Non-data Ink
  - Inappropriate use
- 3D plots
  - Perceptual problems
  - Useless 3rd axis

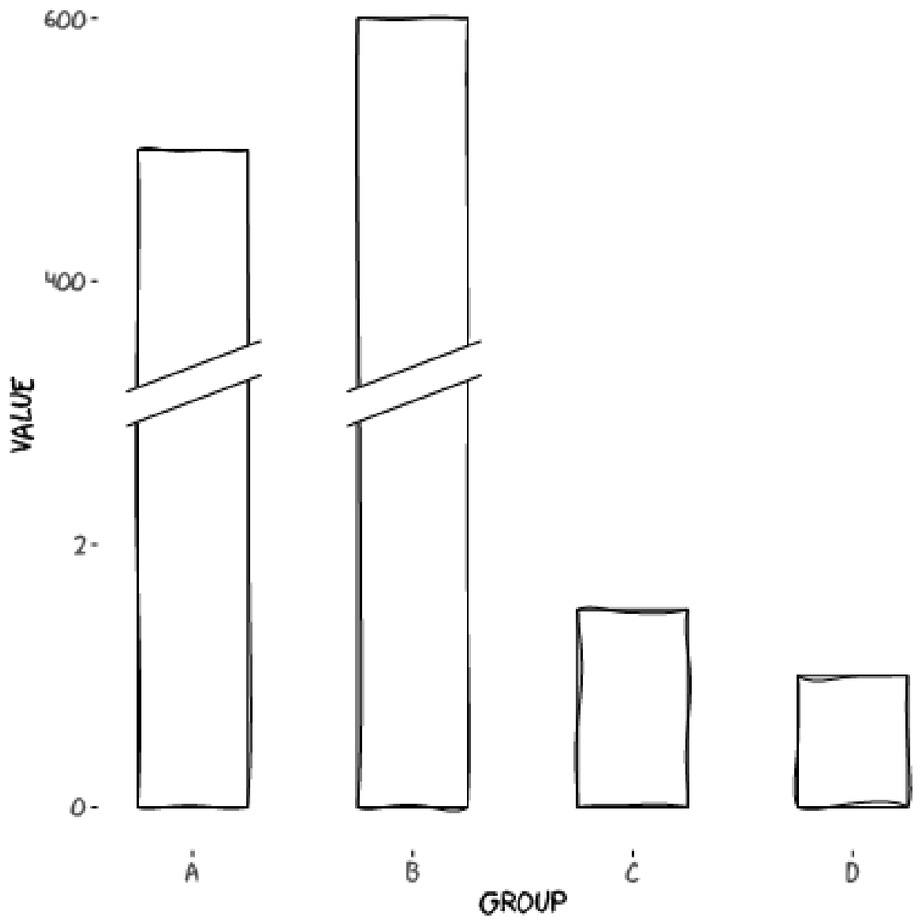
# Wrong orientation



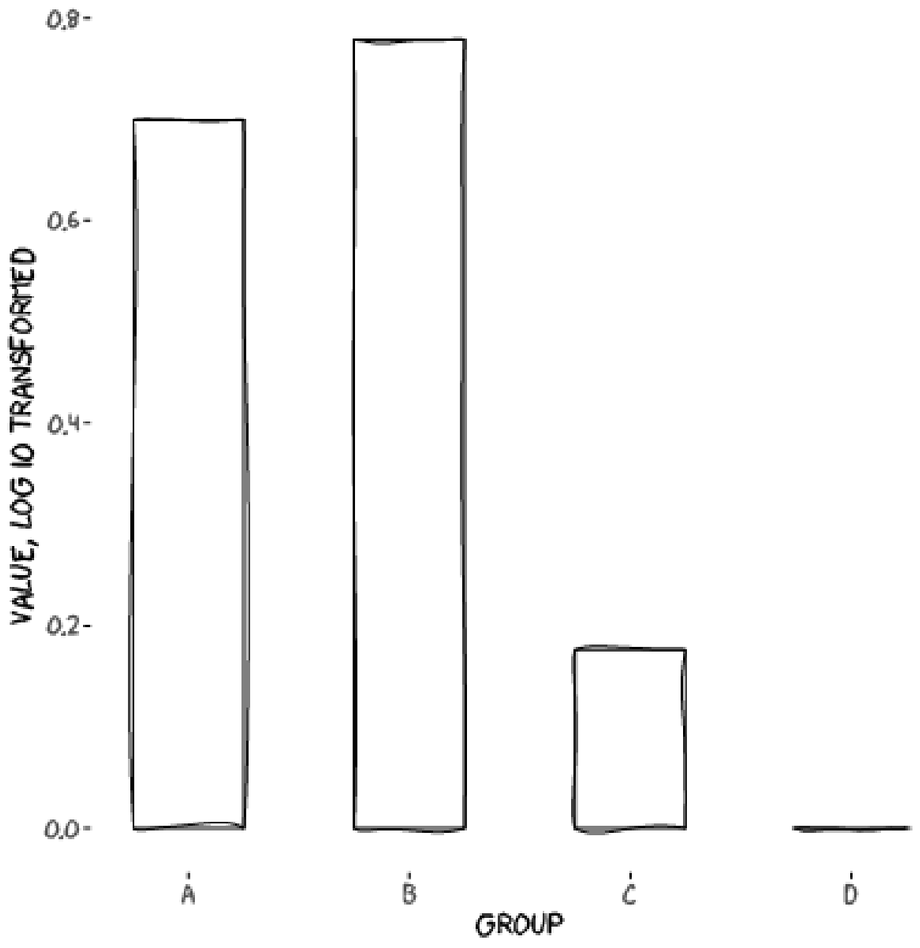

Highest and lowest life expectancies, 2007
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
Japan
Hong Kong, China
Iceland
Switzerland
Australia
Spain
Sweden
Israel
France
Canada
Liberia
Central African Republic
Afghanistan
Zimbabwe
Angola
Lesotho
Sierra Leone
Zambia
Mozambique
Swaziland
82.6
82.2
81.8
81.7
81.2
80.9
80.9
80.7
80.7
80.7
45.7
44.7
43.8
43.5
42.7
42.6
42.6
42.4
42.1
39.6
Source: gapminder


Grand Rapids
Duluth
University Farm
Morris
Crookston
Waseca
Trebi
Wisconsin No. 38
No. 457
Glabron
Peatland
Velvet
No. 475
Manchuria
No. 462
Svansota
Variety
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
Yield (bushels/acre)
Year
1931
1932

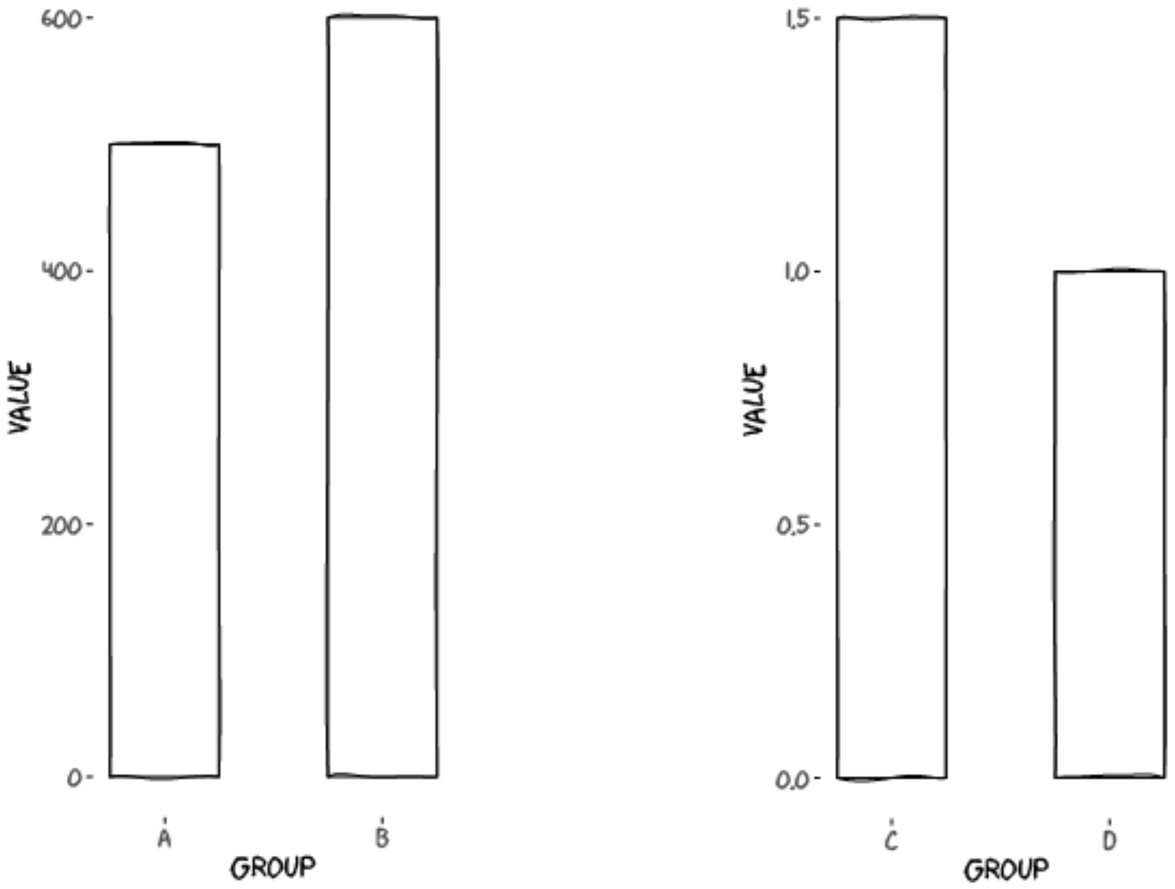
# Broken y-axes



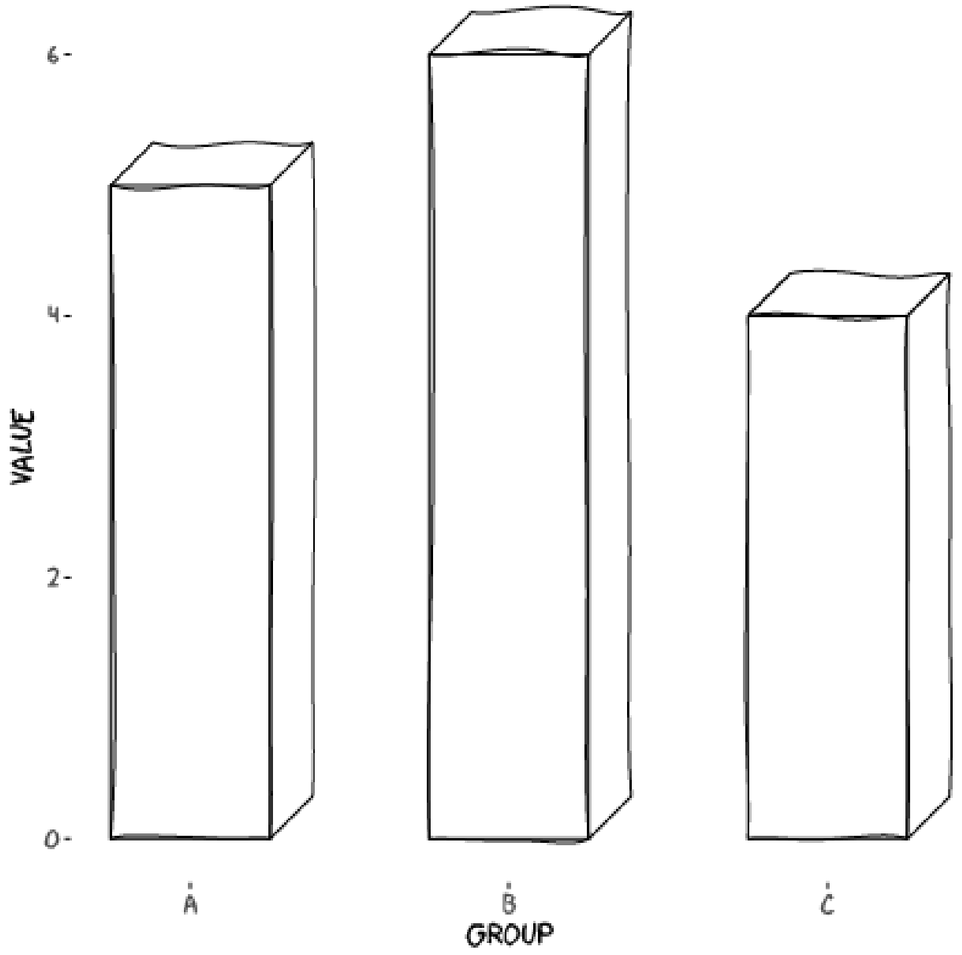
# Broken y-axes, replace with transformed data



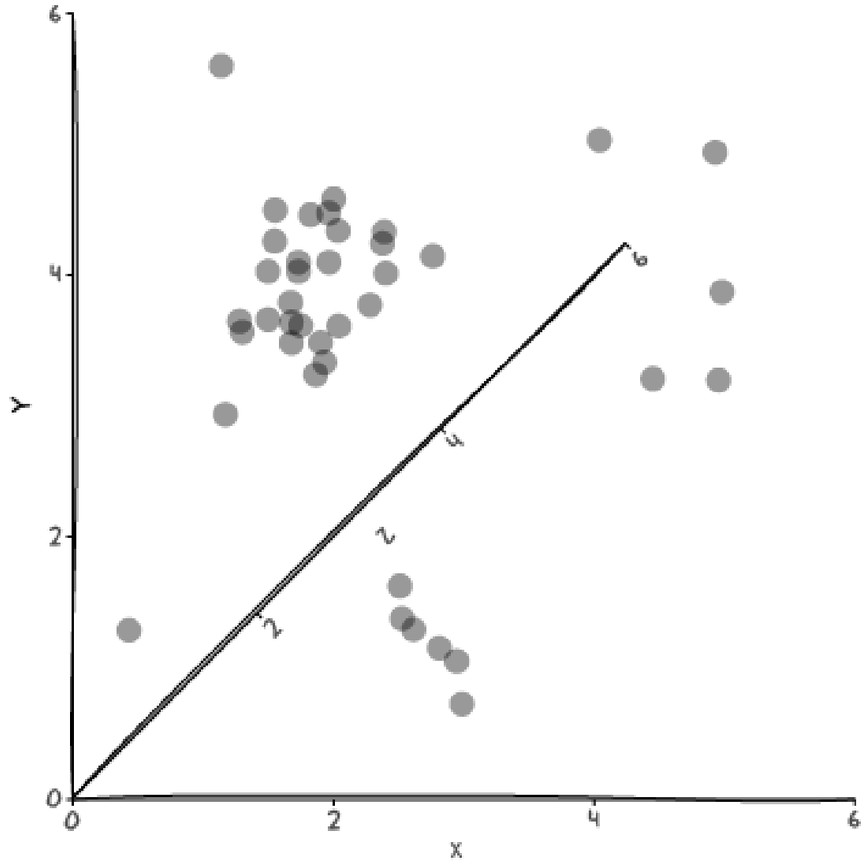
# Broken y-axes, use facets



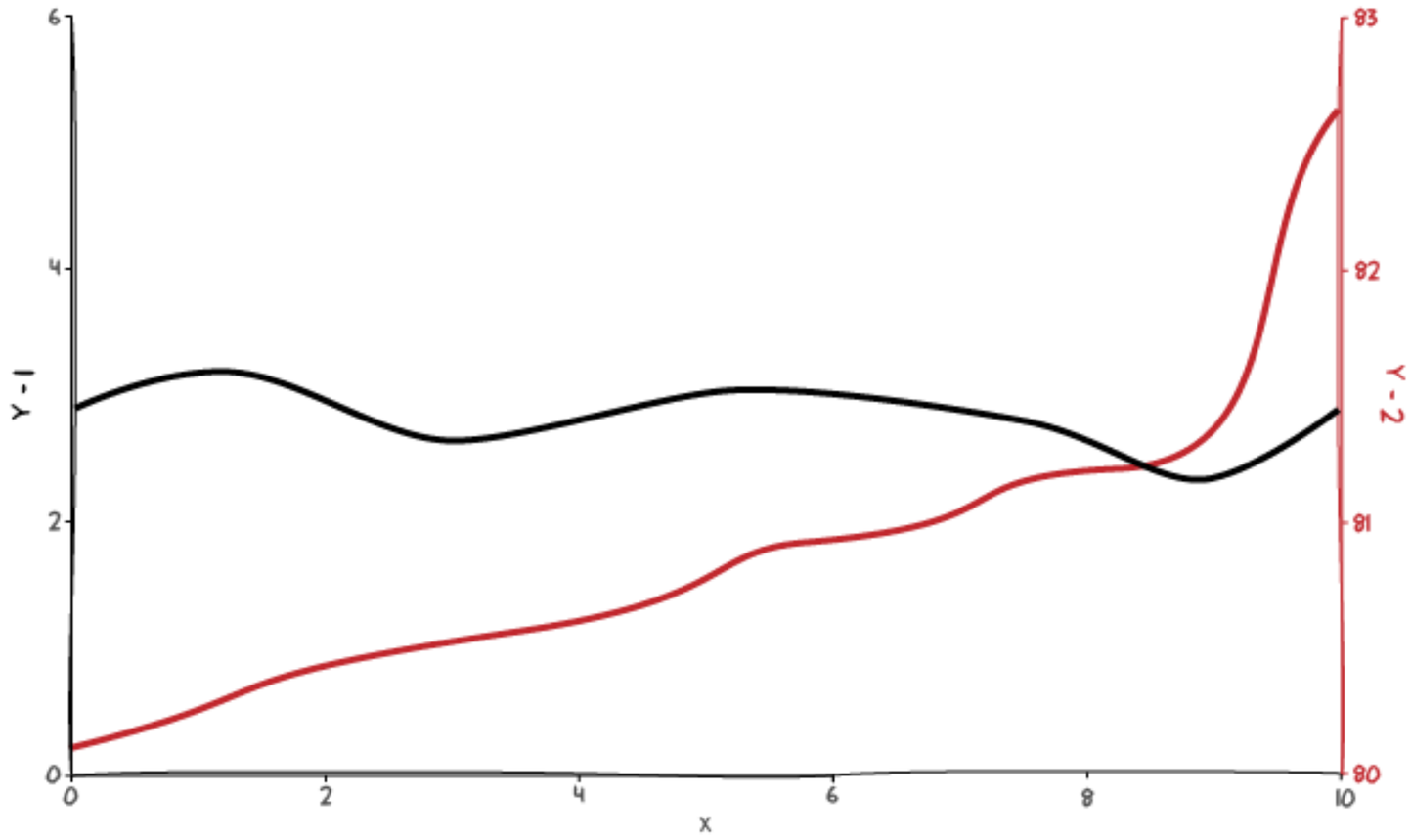
# 3D plots, without data on the 3rd axis



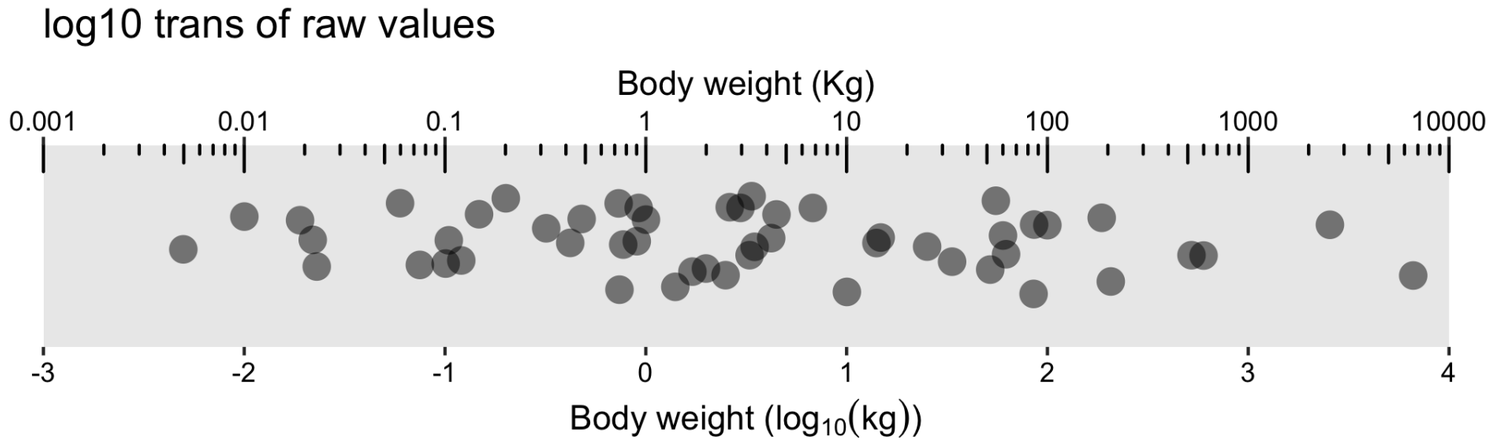
# 3D plots, with data on the 3rd axis



# Double y-axes



# Double y-axis for transformations



# Guidelines not rules

- Use your common sense:
  - Is there anything on my plot that obscure a clear reading of the data or the take-home message?

# Let's practice!

INTERMEDIATE DATA VISUALIZATION WITH GGPLOT2