

[◀ Back to Week 1](#)[✕ Lessons](#)[Prev](#)[Next](#)

Peer-graded Assignment: Graphics Lies, Misleading Visuals

You submitted!

Your work is ready to be reviewed by classmates. You have reviewed enough classmates to receive a grade, but in the meantime, you may review more classmates. We'll email you when your grade is ready. Your grade should be ready by **September 27, 11:59 PM PDT**.

[Review Classmates' Work](#)

[i](#) It looks like this is your first peer-graded assignment. [Learn more](#)

[Instructions](#)[My submission](#)

Misleading House Prices from The Economist

[Discussions](#)

Submitted on September 18, 2017

[Shareable Link](#)

PROMPT

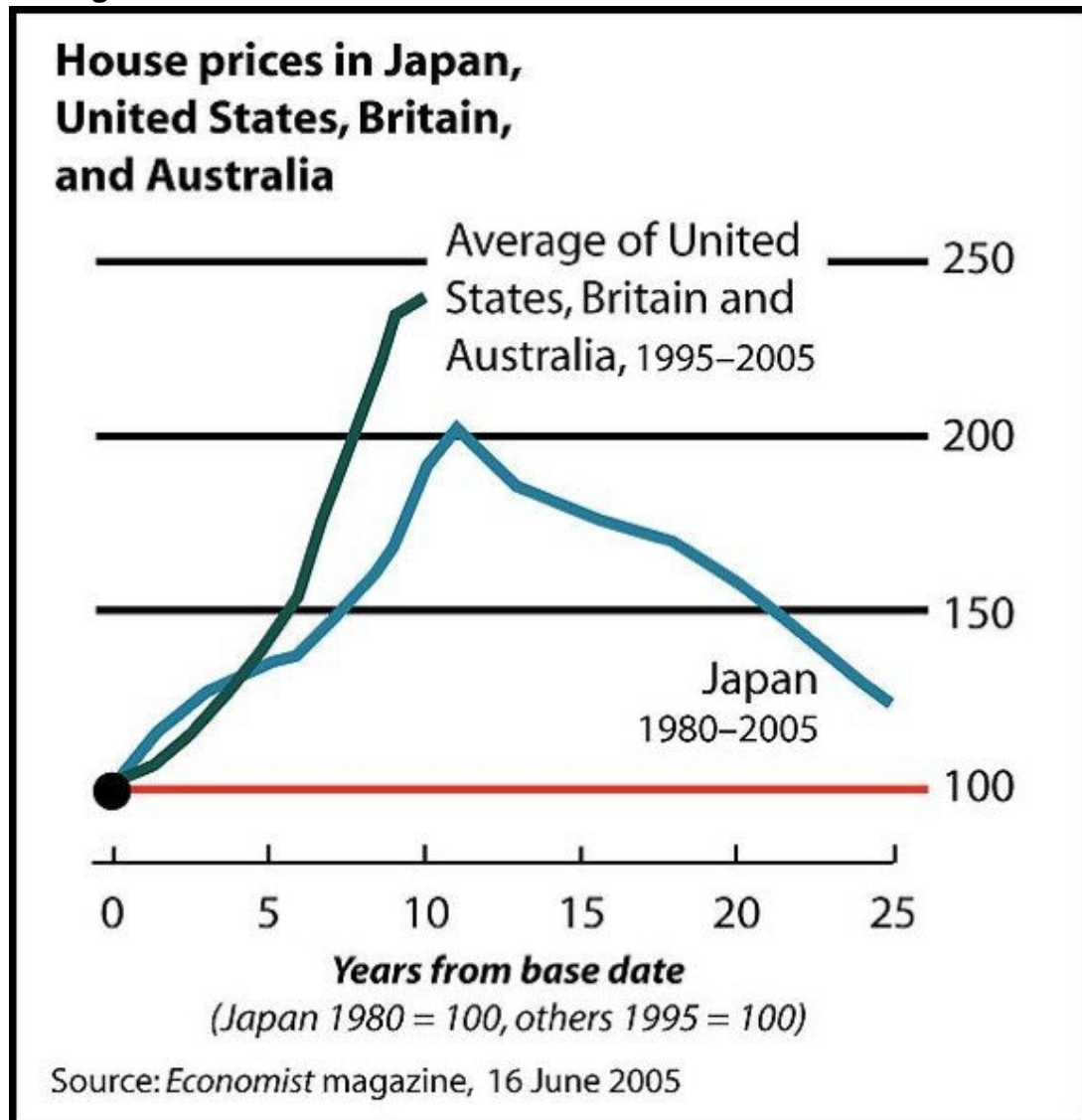
Read Alberto Cairo's work, Graphics Lies, Misleading Visuals

Locate an example of a misleading visual that uses one or more of the mechanisms for misleading that Cairo outlines in his book chapter: (1) Hiding relevant data; (2) Displaying too much data and obscuring reality; (3) Distorting data through visual forms.

Please upload an image of this visual using a widely accessible graphic format (e.g., PDF, .jpg, .png)

[Help Center](#)

Feeling Home-sick?



Comparison of house prices in the USA/Britain/Australia vs. Japan.

PROMPT

Briefly describe the context for the visual by addressing the following questions:

1. What is the source of the visual? (e.g., URL or bibliographic citation)
 2. Who is the intended audience (i.e., decoders)? How do you know this?
1. The source of the visual is this article from the Economist, titled "In come the waves", posted in 2005. URL: <http://www.economist.com/node/4079027>
 2. The article is written for The Economist readers/subscribers. More specifically, this diagram was to encourage American readers to have lower confidence in their housing market. This can be noted from the section in which the chart is presented, which says, "Americans who believe that house prices can only go up and pose no

risk to their economy would be well advised to look overseas."

PROMPT

1. Identify the specific component(s) of the visual that is/are misleading
2. For each part(s) of the visualization that is/are misleading, identify the mechanism that is used: hiding relevant data to highlight what benefits us; displaying too much data to obscure reality; using graphic forms in inappropriate ways (distorting the data)
3. Explain how the mechanisms are used to mislead

This diagram presents several components in which the reader is misled.

1. Distorting Data: The starting year of the plot for the housing prices for USA, Britain, Australia (1995) is not the same as Japan (1980) even though they start at the same point on the chart. This makes it seem as though the Japanese housing price trends follows that of the USA and Britain, i.e. that housing price trends is similar across these regions for the same period of time. We also assume that the house prices among the countries were once equal at the same time period (starting point of the graph). This is poor representation by the Economist.
2. Lack of information. The house prices of USA, Britain, Australia is lumped together. However, this might not accurately match the house price trend of the USA, which is what the article is trying to discuss. Perhaps house prices of the USA fell within 1995-2005, but British/Australian house prices rose significantly enough to show a cumulative increase in house prices.
3. Excessive data clutters to obscure key insight: The label for the US/UK/Aussie housing prices is too big, and covers a large part of the chart. My first assumption was the label truncated the green line. On further analysis, the green line had already represented all available data (up till 2005, the date of the article) but either way, this huge label was confusing and initially misleading.

PROMPT

Optional: Describe any additional issues you found with visual that did not fall under Cairo's three misleading mechanisms.

It takes a ridiculous amount of time to decipher what the y-axis is referring to. 100 is the base index for the house prices at each of the start times (1980 and 1995 respectively for Japan and USA/UK/Aussie), but the base price is not necessarily the same in both categories.

Help Center