PLAY YOUR CHARTS RIGHT

START FROM NOTHING

Bar charts are great for comparisons. To judge their end points, the bars should begin at a zero baseline.

PRESENT THE FACTS

DISTORTED REALITY

Line charts often show a trend. Stretching the height of the graph can create fake drama, while stretching the width can underplay it.

DITCH THE PIE

Pie charts seem friendly, but in reality they're hard to read. In most cases, you can find a better alternative.

SIZE MATTERS

It's harder to compare areas or volumes than lengths. To avoid people getting the wrong impression, use them as a last resort.

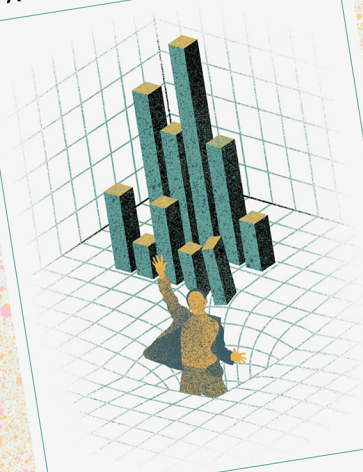
STICK TO THE POINT

Extra decimal places look impressive and imply accuracy, but they're often pointless. So, take a step back and round numbers off before plotting.

SPARE THE INK

Background, borders, shading, dark grid lines and needless labels are your enemies. Banish them to draw attention to the data.

A DIMENSION TOO FAR



Unless you're actually plotting the third dimension, don't use 3D. It skews the data and makes comparisons harder.

OVER THE RAINBOW

Use color to communicate information and not for decoration. Too many colors can confuse and disorient.

LESS IS MORE

AVOID MYSTERIES

Text is your friend. Thoughtful use of labels means no one's in the dark. Every chart and every axis need at least a title.

A TALE OF TWO STORIES

Charting two sets of data with one scale on the left and another on the right can be confusing, and suggests a relationship that may not exist.

STAND ON THE RIGHT

1858
353
3
556
7889
05455
75422
35688886
567543
6654
356765
7574
67585
8
32
5235

Tables are good for looking up individual numbers. But, to help people scan and compare them, align whole numbers flush right.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

BACK TO BASICS

With charts, simpler is always better. To keep things even clearer, when you have one or two values, just show the numbers.

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Read more at **geckoboard.com/learn/data-literacy/**