

# Information Design Project Description

## Project Goals

- Gain a better understanding of document design and visualizations
- Write based on a specific purpose and audience
- Create appropriate visuals from numeric data
- Use visuals to support a specific point or argument
- Analyze visuals to integrate data into an argument
- Apply principles of design to create a visually appealing, readable document

## Description

This project asks you to engage with data, present data for a specific audience, and practice making effective data visualizations. The project focuses on

- the fair, accurate, and ethical use of data
- the conventions of writing with numbers and data
- how to integrate figures into a document
- how to design effective visualizations.

Audience and purpose are central to the goal of the final deliverables. As you will learn in completing this project, numbers don't speak for themselves, and writing with data requires critical and rhetorical thought, as well as visual design skills.

In working on this project, you will engage with different types of visuals, as well as the conventions of writing with data and numbers. To achieve these goals, you will select one of the data sets listed below. After reviewing the data set you select, you will decide on a point you want to make for a specific audience using the data in your data set. You will then make decisions about which data to visualize from the larger data set and you will create three data visualizations help you make your point. Then you will write about and analyze that data in a final brief visual report. The final visual report you create will include the three visuals you have made, and the supporting text necessary to explain the data you have visualized and make your point.

In addition to the visual report, you also will create a second deliverable. You also will compose a reflective memo that explains your choices and goals, and how the visual report deliverable achieves them.

In addition to your the textbook chapter on Visual Design, you may wish to use this [Periodic Table of Visualization Methods](#) to explore various types and uses of visuals.

Data visualizations bring a number of benefits to any professional document, even short ones:

- Though they have become extremely easy to make, **people in the workplace still tend to be impressed** by the extra effort and thoughtful presentation implicit in making a visualization.
- Data visualizations also help to **make the work of digesting and interpreting data more efficient** by displaying trends or illustrating the significance of specific information without poring over page after page of numbers.
- Because of this efficiency, visual elements are also **better at communicating certain ideas more quickly than words or tabular data**. Something that may take many sentences to communicate, a sudden drop in the efficiency of a process, or a surge in sales among a certain demographic, are instantly recognizable as spikes or dips along the X axis of a line graph.

#### **For example:**

This short report from the [Department of Education](#) provides an overview of literacy and numeracy for men and women. In this online short report, the authors created two bar charts that are designed to show relationships between data and then they briefly explain the importance of the data.

In your visual report, you will create three visualizations and integrate them into your report, providing an introduction to the topic and analysis of the data you include to make a point about the topic using your data.

## Assignment

For this project, you will select a data set from the ones listed below and create a short informational report that includes at least three data visualizations that you create and that you feel best communicates the data you select from your data set in a form that maximizes the impact of the data to suit a specific audience and purpose.

To create your visualizations and informational report, select **one** of the following data sets:

ENC 2210 (Recommended)

- [CDC Obesity and Dietary Trends](#)
- [CDC Substance Abuse](#)
- [Unicef Literacy Rates and Gender](#)

ENC 3246 (Recommended)

- [Pew Trust Core Trends in Technology and the Internet](#)
- [Pew Trust Cybersecurity](#)
- [Pew Science Trends](#)

ENC 3250 (Recommended)

- [Census Bureau Place of Birth and Poverty](#)
- [FBI Crime in the US](#)
- [Pew Trust Global Economic Attitudes](#)

Once you have selected a data set, spend some time with the data. Identify the trends that jump out at you as most significant. As you identify your audience, think about who would want to know about the data and the point you'd like to make. You will not be able to visualize or discuss all the data in your data set. Your job is to select and visualize the data that is most relevant to your audience and the point you are making.

## Deliverables

### Document 1: Visual, Informational Report

**A short, informative, visually interesting report that makes a point about your subject using the data in your data set.** This report should incorporate at **three visuals** that you have created along with a discussion/analysis of the data in your figures. The text in your report should

- introduce the topic and its importance
- explain the meaning of the visuals
- point to the conclusions suggested by the data.

You should think through and identify a clear audience. Your understanding of the audience informs how the data is presented, the form the visualizations take, and the point you use the data to make, as well as the overall purpose of the document.

### Document 2: Reflective Analysis

A short 250- to 500-word note that explains the following (use headings to identify each of the topics listed below):

- How and why you selected your data set
- How you selected which data to visualize and why you visualized it in the form you did
- Who was your target audience and what was your overall goal/purpose
- How you ensured that your visualizations of the data were fair, accurate, and clear
- The raw data set used to create the report (with a citation for the data)