

# Worksheet: Creating a data visualization

This worksheet has been arranged into a series of steps to help guide your data visualization process. However, the data visualization process isn't always a linear one – the first two steps, for example, can be interchanged. Sometimes you start with a purpose then examine the data and other times your data drives your purpose. Complete the steps in whichever order makes the most sense to you.

## STEP 1: Understand your data

Questions	Answers
1. What type of data do you have? Is it quantitative (mostly numbers) or qualitative (mostly text)?	
2. What is your data telling you? What are your key findings? Which data supports your key message?	
PROTIP: You'll likely have a lot of data to sift through. Take your time doing this. Focus on data points that add value to your message or are important for your audience.	

## STEP 2: Define your purpose

Questions	Answers
1. What are you trying to get across? What is your point?	
2. What is your objective, what are you trying to accomplish with this visualization? (Share knowledge, generate conversation, inspire action, or something else)	
3. What tone are you trying to convey? Is it serious or funny? Sad, nostalgic, hopeful etc	
4. What data will you include in your visual? Which of your key findings serve your purpose?	

## STEP 3: Define your audience

Questions	Answers
1. Who are you creating this visualization for? Who is your target audience?	
2. What does your target population care about? (e.g. health, money, social justice, liability, etc.)? What questions are important to your target audience? What will they find useful, interesting or inspiring?	

<p>3. How will you combine your target audience's interests and the findings from the data to frame your key messages? Write out your key messages.</p>	
<p>PROTIP: You might have multiple audiences with varying levels of comfort, experience and knowledge with the topic or data you are presenting. A one-size-fits-all approach to data visualization is limiting. Complete the steps on this list for each of your target audiences.</p>	

## STEP 4: Begin formulating your idea

Questions	Answers
<p>1. What keywords come to mind when you think about your visual? Brainstorm keywords that relate to your key messages and data.</p>	
<p>2. What mental images come to mind? Brainstorm images that relate to your key messages and data.</p>	
<p>PROTIP: This step is most important when creating an infographic or a PowerPoint Presentation, but might apply less to stand alone charts or whole reports. Take your time brainstorming ideas for your infographic or slides. Put your creative cap on and start visioning – no idea is a bad idea!</p>	

## STEP 5: Develop your visual solution

Questions	Answers
<p>1. Which type of chart(s)/graphic(s) work best for your type of data, purpose, message and audience? Use the chart chooser to help you select the right type of visualization.</p>	
<p>2. What colours are appropriate? Dark and moody, fun and bright? Do you need to follow an organizations' colour scheme?</p>	
<p>3. How should the layout be arranged? Think about: placement, size, scale, orientation, etc. It helps to sketch out your visual before creating. Remember, white space and alignment is important. Don't overcrowd your visual.</p>	
<p>4. What program should you use to accomplish your ideas? Canva, Venngage, Flourish, Piktochart etc.</p>	
<p>PROTIP: When designing infographics, start with your most powerful piece of data so that your audience is hooked. Order your supporting information so that it has a surprise in the middle, and builds towards a clear conclusion and call-to-action at the end. It's a good idea to either focus your information on a central image or to arrange your information in rows with two, three, or four columns.</p>	