

Data Visualization Checklist

Principles	Y/N/NA ^a
Show the data	
Include data labels.	
Integrate a legend or key into the chart.	
Include the data source and metadata if appropriate.	
Use appropriately scaled axes.	
Reduce the clutter	
Show only essential data.	
Remove unnecessary chart elements.	
Use the accompanying text.	
Integrate text and visualizations	
Be strategic about the text used in the visualization.	
Use descriptive titles.	
Use arrows or callout boxes to emphasize critical information and provide additional information.	
Use color to emphasize the data you want to show.	
Use heavier line weights or larger font sizes for emphasis.	

Principles	Y/N/NA ^a
Portray the meaning of the data accurately and ethically	
Do not hide negative data or cherry-pick data.	
Do not manipulate the display to change the meaning.	
Do not suggest conclusions that are not supported by the data.	
General practices	
Use consistent data visualizations over time.	
Do not display data side by side if they should not be compared.	
Think beyond the default graph.	
Focus on the message for the intended audience.	
Use plain language. Avoid jargon, acronyms, and technical terms.	
Choose fonts that display and reproduce well.	
Use color wisely.	

a. Y is yes, N is no, and NA is not applicable.

Note. Adapted from *Forum Guide to Data Visualization: A Resource for Education Agencies*, by National Forum on Education Statistics, 2016, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/NFES2017016.pdf>).

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