

## Using Effective Infographics to Communicate Research

---

### Infographic sites:

- This article outlines the features of several top online infographic editors:  
<https://buffer.com/library/infographic-makers>
- I most often use Piktochart & Canva- they were the most accessible when I began making infographics and haven't explored much since ☺. Important features to consider: payment structure (free versus paid graphics in addition to levels of subscriptions), individual versus team or class accounts, types of templates (poster, presentation, flier, etc.), options for organizing and sorting your infographics, sharing and downloading options.

---

### Infographic How-to Resources:

---

- For communicating research:
  - Journal of Marketing Management: How to turn your journal article into an infographic:  
<https://www.jmmnews.com/how-to-turn-journal-article-into-infographic/>
  - General guidelines for communicating science visually with lots of explanation about different types of graphs & charts: <http://www.clips.edu.au/infographics/>
  - Broader Impacts Summit- A conference funded by NSF to improve science communication:  
<https://broaderimpacts.net/>
- For teaching:
  - Infographic research projects: <http://www.edudemic.com/how-classroom-project-infographic/>
  - Using infographics as creative assessment- TONS of links to resources on making infographics:  
<http://www.schrockguide.net/infographics-as-an-assessment.html>
  - <https://piktochart.com/blog/piktochart-classroom-infographics-education/>
  - <https://creativeeducator.tech4learning.com/2013/lessons/Infographics>
- Finding images & sharing work:
  - Lots of information about creative commons licensing at <https://creativecommons.org/> in detail at <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/licensing-types-examples/> , and they just launched their own search interface for pictures you can search by use license- give author credit on most: <https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/>
  - Public domain images (Creative Commons CC0)= free of copyrights – attribution is appreciated but not required
    - Pixabay.com: see info. about responsible use of images here:  
<https://pixabay.com/en/blog/posts/public-domain-images-what-is-allowed-and-what-is-4/>
    - Pexels.com: see information about use here: <https://www.pexels.com/photo-license/>
    - Unsplash.com license information: <https://unsplash.com/license>
  - To give artist credit, it is recommended:

**Tip: How to give credit 📸**

Even though credit isn't required, Unsplash photographers appreciate a credit as it provides exposure to their work and encourages them to continue sharing. A credit can be as simple as adding their name with a link to their profile or photo:

Photo by [Jeremy Bishop](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- Attend to copyright laws for reproducing published material- see rules from journals
  - o From the k-state library (courtesy of Carol Sevin): <http://guides.lib.k-state.edu/UsingContent>
  - o <https://www.k-state.edu/copyright/>
- Accessibility for the blind or visually impaired:
  - o <https://webaim.org/resources/designers/#infographic>
  - o <https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/complex/>
  - o <https://piktochart.com/blog/inclusive-design-make-visuals-accessible/>
  - o <https://create.piktochart.com/output/24792004-accessibility>
  - o <https://product.canva.com/one-thing-every-designer-must-consider/>
  - o Wave is the web accessibility evaluation tool: <https://wave.webaim.org/extension/>
  - o K-State website accessibility guidelines: <http://beach.k-state.edu/tools/access/guidelines.html>

---

Turning a research article into an infographic:

---

1. Identify the purpose of your infographic (what thoughts or emotions are you trying to elicit?) and your audience – consider education level, cultural preferences, age, etc.
2. Identify main points: If summarizing an article, first start with the abstract, then fill in by going through the text- write them down in bulleted phrases. If summarizing multiple articles about a topic, the process is similar to below, but you will be pulling from multiple sources.
  - a. Look at the research questions identified in the article(s) and think about how you would explain the purpose to friend or family member. Identify an intriguing, yet simple, “essential question” to hook the reader- what can they learn from reading this infographic/ the research you are summarizing? (if posting on social media- keep it short)
  - b. Clarify the so-what of the research- this may be specific findings that you expand on later, but what, more generally, is the importance of this research to the life of the person reading it (if a public audience) or to the scientific field (if an academic audience)
  - c. Identify important context of the research or approaches that provide information about who or what the results apply to: is there a specific population these findings are based on? Or are there important data collection points (e.g., locations, timeframe, sociopolitical context) that provide context? Important background information?
  - d. Key findings
  - e. Implications can be included based on purpose of infographic and audience: implications for science advancement, solving a specific problem, guiding policy development, improving community/ personal well-being, etc.

3. Go through what you extracted and assess for ease of understanding by your audience and adjust accordingly. Sometimes this may include simply defining key terms, other times, it may mean removing scientific terms or academic language and replacing with common language. Depends on the audience and the importance of that term to the topic.
  - a. Go here for a rough visual of how commonly used the words you chose are:  
<http://splasho.com/upgoer6/> - redder is less common. Here's what it looks like:
    4. Go through what you extracted and assess for ease of understanding by your audience and adjust accordingly. Sometimes this may include simply defining key terms, other times, it may mean removing scientific terms or academic language and replacing with common language. Depends on the audience and the importance of that term to the topic.  
([Perma-link](#) to share this)
  - b. I end up using a thesaurus a lot.
4. Think about what organization would work best for your infographic: Group the information and order it: Are there things that need to come first, second, third? Does some information work best side by side (a process where several things are linked might go horizontal, for example, or a compare contrast).
5. Begin building your infographic using selected infographic editor.
  - a. Think about how you want to share your infographic and pick a size that matches (e.g., if printing the infographic versus sharing online, you will need to set different size parameters)
  - b. Set up your infographic in sections to match what you came up with in 5a
  - c. Spend time thinking about how the scientific findings you are conveying could be represented visually: closeness of words, arrows, lines, icons vs. words, maps, charts, graphs, etc.
  - d. Think about the most accurate way to cite your sources. This also depends on how you will share your infographic- online with links or as a PDF.
  - e. Choose stylistic elements
    - i. Search for images that convey your message quickly.
    - ii. Pick fonts and colors that fit the tone and audience of your message
    - iii. Adjust whitespace, size of fonts and images, and location on the page to guide the reader through the information and highlight important points. There are lots of guides on the styling of infographics once you have the content defined e.g.:
      1. <https://blog.mindthegraph.com/how-to-make-an-infographic-6/#.XcHfzZpKhO9>
      2. <https://visme.co/blog/bad-infographics/>
      3. ...also see links on previous page for a place to start to refine your design.
6. Share your infographic- download and share it in PDF or image form, share directly to social media, or embed in a website, etc. You may end up resizing or making several different versions of your infographic for different audiences or different publication formats.