

Infographics Assignment

Using the book you chose for your 3rd quarter reading assignment, you will create an infographic to support the main argument of a section of the text. Wikipedia offers a really decent working definition of the term: “Infographics are graphic visual representations of information, data, or knowledge intended to present complex information quickly and visually.”¹

Infographics have become a really popular medium, and there are many guides to different types and formats. Attached to this assignment is a list of academic Infographics that will give you a good indication of their uses and applications. You’ve probably seen many online, and now is your chance to create one.

Your infographic will be judged on the following categories

1. Topic:

A clearly defined topic is one that identifies the major point or argument you are using the infographic to make.

2. Content:

Content should be covered thoroughly with details and examples. A well-executed infographic proves that you have strong knowledge of the subject and the text.

3. Graphics:

Graphics should be related to the topic and make your argument easier to understand.

4. Attractiveness:

Since this is a visual medium, you should pay attention to font, color, graphics and effects. Everything should be designed to support your larger argument. Nothing in your infographic should distract or detract from the information you’re providing.

Four basic kinds of infographics and characteristics

Note: Many infographics combine these 4 basic types. Don’t be afraid to use more than one!

I will put a more specific handout with additional categories and examples on Blackboard. I cannot photocopy in color and the file is over 2Mb, so I don’t want to clog your emails.

3. Compare/Contrast:

Characteristics:

- a. Looks at specific categories that make sense together. Consider old fashioned Venn Diagrams.
Compare/Contrast infographics can be created in a similar visual manner.
ex. Poverty in different states.
- b. Shows levels or issues compared make sense together.
ex. Number of women in poverty, Education levels of those in poverty, etc.
- c. Makes a larger argument. It should be clear what the information you’re providing supports.

4. Timeline/ Research results/informational:

Characteristics:

- a. Uses significant amounts of data to support the argument being made.
- b. Organizes the data into understandable chunks.
 - Specific point or argument is easy to identify. An infographic focused on poverty would provide information and data on all facets of that issue (see example attached).
 - Data does not overwhelm the viewer. There should be a clear, recognizable flow to the images and the information.

2. How To/Process

Characteristics:

- a. Focuses on creating a step-by-step process that easy to follow.
- b. Supports each step in the process through graphics, numbers, and/or text. The visuals should allow the argument to unfold on its own, while included text helps support claims.
- c. Communicates the overall issue/process is communicated by combining the text and visuals. For example, if

this was a “how to” on ending poverty, each step would lead to a deeper understanding of the argument.
d. Includes claims and arguments from the text. Use footnotes to cite.

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Characteristics:

- a. Looks at the evolution of a process, or an event, in a chronological manner that makes sense to the viewer.
- b. Provides information that makes a larger point.
- c. Explains both the argument and the evolution overtime through visuals and text that work together.

No matter what type of infographic you use, remember, citation is key to credibility!

Why should I believe you if you can't tell me where this information originated?

What do you need to do? Planning your infographic:

Don't just open up a piece of software or sit down with poster board and think an infographic is going to happen. This isn't magic. The technology or the manual process of assembly is the LAST piece. The thinking comes first.

1. Ask yourself these questions to establish your purpose.²
 - a. What do I want my audience to know?
 - b. How do I want them to feel?
 - c. Do I want them to do anything with this information?
2. Think about these questions to help think of what you want to include:
 - a. What concepts to I have to include?
 - b. What factual or statistical information helps me support my purpose?
 - c. What do I have to interpret? What speaks for itself?
 - d. What information do I need to explain in words?
 - e. What do I need to show in charts, graphs, graphics, and/or icons?
 - Hint: A great list of graphic types compiled by IBM Research can be found at http://www-958.ibm.com/software/data/cognos/manyeyes/page/Visualization_Options.html.
 - Hint: “The Periodic Table of Visualizations” by Visual-literacy.org is an infogrpahic of infographics! This interactive categorization graphic links to examples. See http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic_table/periodic_table.html.
3. Start sketching out a plan!
 - a. Literally, take pen to paper and think of what you might want the whole thing to look like.
 - b. If you can't see the whole thing, start with little chunks and play with how they might fit together.
 - c. Make little subsections on Post-it notes and move them around on a big sheet of paper.
 - d. PLAY!

² These questions are adapted from Miranda Rench's “10 Tools for Creating Infographics and Visualizations,” available at <http://www.seomoz.org/blog/10-tools-for-creating-infographics-visualizations>. Rench's blog post links to some interesting web and software tools you can use.

Ways to make infographics

You are not required to use any particular method or tool. This can be as technology-involved or as manual as you choose.

What I will require is that you have a digital image or file of the product to post on a wiki or you link to a valid location for your project on the Web.

- If you're a computer person or are willing to play around with technology there are many tools available.
 - Look at web-based tools. Some free and others not, available. If you search for "how to make infographics" or "infographic tools," I guarantee you will find something.
 - There are several programs you probably already use that can be useful, too.
- You can always make a poster-based presentation with good old-fashioned glue and paper, and then take a high-quality picture of it.

Think creatively!

- Sophisticated tools
 - a. InDesign
 - b. Photoshop
 - c. Microsoft Publisher
 - d. Web-based tools like Prezi, Visual.ly, Piktochart, Glogster, Easi.ly, Taxego, Wordle, and others
- Easy tools
 - a. Excel: Make charts and graphs from data.
 - b. PowerPoint: Place charts, words, images, and clip art in a variety of places.
 - c. Word: Type up short pieces of text. Make some larger and others smaller. Color code the text.

Evaluating your infographics

This rubric gives a notional breakdown of what I'm looking for when I review the infographics. Topic and content and Graphics have more weight than the others; however, all factor into the overall impression.

Multimedia

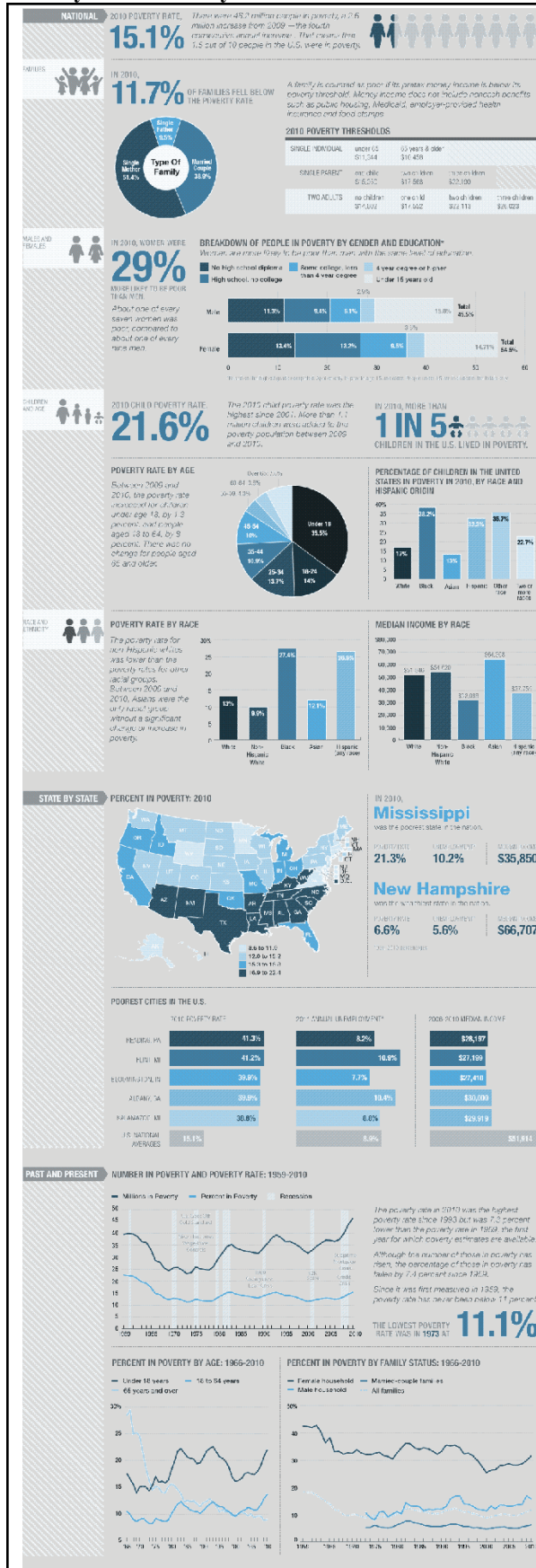
Project :

Infographic

Student Name:

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Topic and Content	Covers topic in-depth with details and examples. Subject knowledge is excellent.	Includes essential knowledge about the topic. Subject knowledge appears to be good.	Includes essential information about the topic but there are 1-2 factual errors.	Content is minimal OR there are several factual errors.
Graphics	All graphics are related to the topic and make it easier to understand.	All graphics are related to the topic and most make it easier to understand.	All graphics relate to the topic.	Graphics do not relate to the topic.
Attractiveness	Makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance the presentation.	Makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance to presentation.	Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. but occasionally these detract from the presentation content.	Use of font, color, graphics, effects etc. but these often distract from the presentaion content.
Mechanics	No misspellings or grammatical errors.	Two or fewer misspellings and/or mechanical errors.	Three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Four or more spelling or grammar errors.

Poverty in the U.S. By The Numbers³



This infographic supported a July 2012 NPR News Series called “Poverty in America: The Struggle to Get Ahead.” The series can be found at <http://www.npr.org/series/155932539/poverty-in-america> and the infographic can be viewed at full size and in color at <http://www.npr.org/2012/07/10/156387172/poverty-in-the-u-s-by-the-numbers>. I highly recommend you go online and find it! (Hint: you can click on the links above to open a browser.)

Created by Stephanie d'Otreppe, Nicole Cohen, and JoElla Stralen of National Public Radio, this infographic makes the argument that poverty is more complex than statistics like “% of the population who live in poverty” and “total number of Americans living in poverty” show. D'Otreppe, Cohen, and Stralen use color coding, simple images, numbers, words, graphs, charts, and timelines to convey the variety of information about poverty. The only one of the four basic kinds of infographic they don't use is How to/Process.

Notice that the infographic is broken into 3 major sections, designated by little flags: National, State by State, Past and Present. These little flags help organize the huge volume of data into easier to understand pieces. Within each section, the categories are broken down even further, as indicated by the thin dividing lines (called rules).

Take a look at some of the specific strategies used:

1. The national section shows how images, charts, graphs, along with variety in size, color, and shading help manage the data and make it understandable.

Examples:

- The shaded images of people help with categorization of people, comparisons between categories, and visualization of numbers in more understandable terms.
 - Varying between % and 1 in x helps put the percentages into context, too.
 - It's easier to understand how many out of 10 people would be poor by showing 10 figures than to try to figure out how to depict millions of people. It's also easier to see 20% as 1 in 5!
2. The maps, charts, and numbers in the State by State section demonstrate trends and really show how averages and national statistics hide some extreme differences in poverty.
 3. The timelines in the Past and Present section show how recessions have impacted poverty and some key events in recent history. The graphs at the bottom bring back the subcategories of people introduced in the National section to show how their poverty rates have changed over time, too.

At the bottom of the web page, the creators credit the sources by including this entry (not seen on this handout):

Source: 2010 Census, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Legal Momentum's "Reading Between the Lines: Women's Poverty in the United States, 2010"

This would allow readers to go to those sources and investigate for themselves! In your infographics, I'd like a similar list, with page number, section, and/or chapter references. If you used an eBook, section headings and chapter titles/numbers should work.