

The *chart clarity* checklist

Charts and graphs are everywhere in presentations. They're excellent ways to include proof points that make your content come to life. But sometimes the story ends up hiding amidst reams of chart junk, or even worse, there's no story at all.

So what can you do?

Don't start with the chart!

Start with the story!



Find the story

What point does your chart help you make?

Sum it up in one sentence. Even if you need your audience to explore the data themselves, you still need to be able to articulate the point as you're planning your content

- I can summarise the takeaway in one sentence?
- I can link the chart to what comes before and what goes after?



Simplify the data

With your story set, it's time to get rid of the clutter you don't need to help you tell your story.

Remove:

- Legends and labels that don't need explanation
- Unnecessary gridlines and design motifs
- Extra data sets you aren't planning to discuss



Amplify the message

With all your key elements in place, it's time to use your design skills to focus your audience's attention.

- Use colour to pull forward key data points, and greyscale to push others back.
- Use animation to bring in chart elements a piece at a time.
- Position and animate your key takeaway as the punchline to your data story.

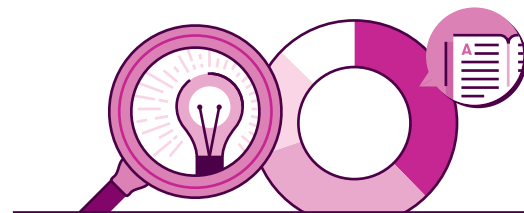


Ready to present?

Check these things to make sure your chart is good to go!

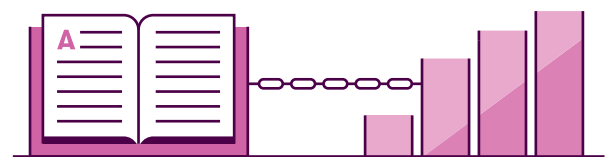
The chart has a story to tell and a place in the presentation

- ☐ I can summarise the takeaway in one sentence?
- ☐ I can link the chart to what comes before and what goes after?



The chart only includes data and detail tied to this story

- ☐ I can link every data set - or data point, depending on the specific chart type - and design element to the story
- ☐ Removing anything else would make the story less clear



The design helps to focus my audience's attention on my story

- ☐ The punchline is not the title
- ☐ When I squint or zoom out, the key data still stands out
- ☐ If animated, the chart builds in step with the story

