

LIS 186

Assignment #10

Data Visualizations in the Wild

DUE SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, BY 6PM

Purpose:

Presenting information visually is supposed to make it easier for people to understand, and these days you see charts, graphs, and other visualizations everywhere—on the news, on social media, in books and journal articles, and all over the internet. How do you know if you can trust what you are seeing in charts, graphs, and other visualizations, though? You will see visualizations about important issues in both academic and nonacademic contexts, and being able to determine whether or not the conclusions drawn about those visualizations are reliable is therefore an important skill to have. In class we've been talking about the best practices in data visualization and how to avoid distorting data when you present it visually to others. Now you will get to apply what you've learned to visualizations created by other people and you will get to practice deciding if the data has been distorted in such a way as to lead to unreliable conclusions.

Skills:

1. Recognizing whether or not common graphs, charts, etc. follow best practices for information visualization
2. Determining if the data in a chart, graph, etc. is distorted
3. Evaluating the credibility of a chart, graph, or other visualization based on principles of information visualization

Knowledge:

This assignment will familiarize you with knowledge in the following areas:

1. Best practices of information visualization

Task:

For Assignment #10, you are going to be browsing the internet for information visualizations that present numbers or statistics in some way. There is a sample of one type of information visualization you might find below, but any charts, graphs, infographics, and other visualizations similar to those we reviewed in class would work as well. It does not matter what the topic is; it could be something relating to your research or just something that interests you. Once you find a visualization, you will post an image of it or a link to it on the Assignment #10 Open Forum.

You will also post a few sentences about the graphic you have found. Please answer the following questions:

1. What is the visualization trying to convey? Do you think it is successful?
2. Does the visualization distort the data in any way? How do you know?
3. If you had to create a visualization of this same information, how would you do it? Would you use the same form, colors, images, etc? Why or why not?

Once you are done, please comment on at least one other post by one of your classmates.

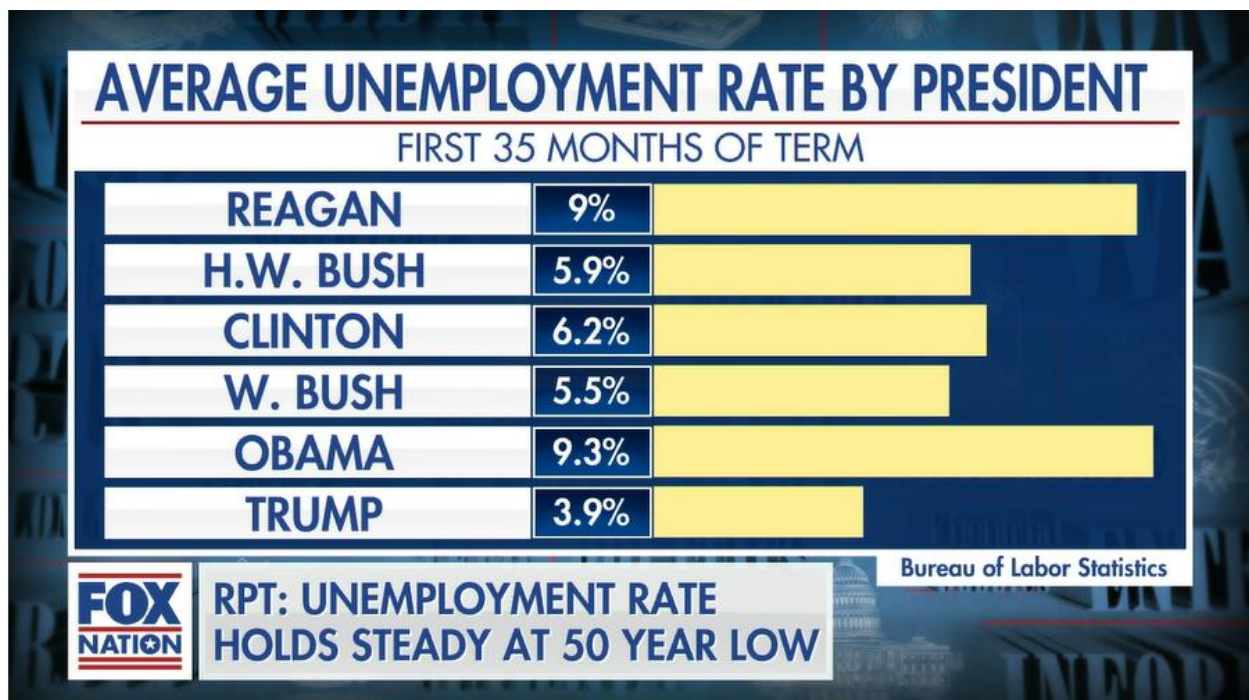
Criteria for success:

A successful assignment will meet the following criteria:

- ☐ It will be posted to the Moodle Open Forum before the deadline
- ☐ It will include a link or a graphic of the visualization in question
- ☐ It will answer all questions in complete sentences and will refer to the best practices discussed in class
- ☐ It will include a response to another student's posted visualization that comments on their observations and/or the best practices discussed in class.

In next week's class, we will discuss the visualizations posted in the forum as a group.

Sample infographic:



Source: <https://www.foxnews.com/media/trump-campaign-unemployment-chart>

Anderson, M. (2021, 4 January). *Data visualizations in the wild* [Assignment prompt]. Pacific University Oregon Research Repository. <https://commons.pacificu.edu/work/ns/a35642fb-ae4b-424b-b496-07c710b36072>