A large, thick black L-shaped graphic is positioned on the left and bottom edges of the slide, framing the central text.

# MAKING DATA MEANINGFUL

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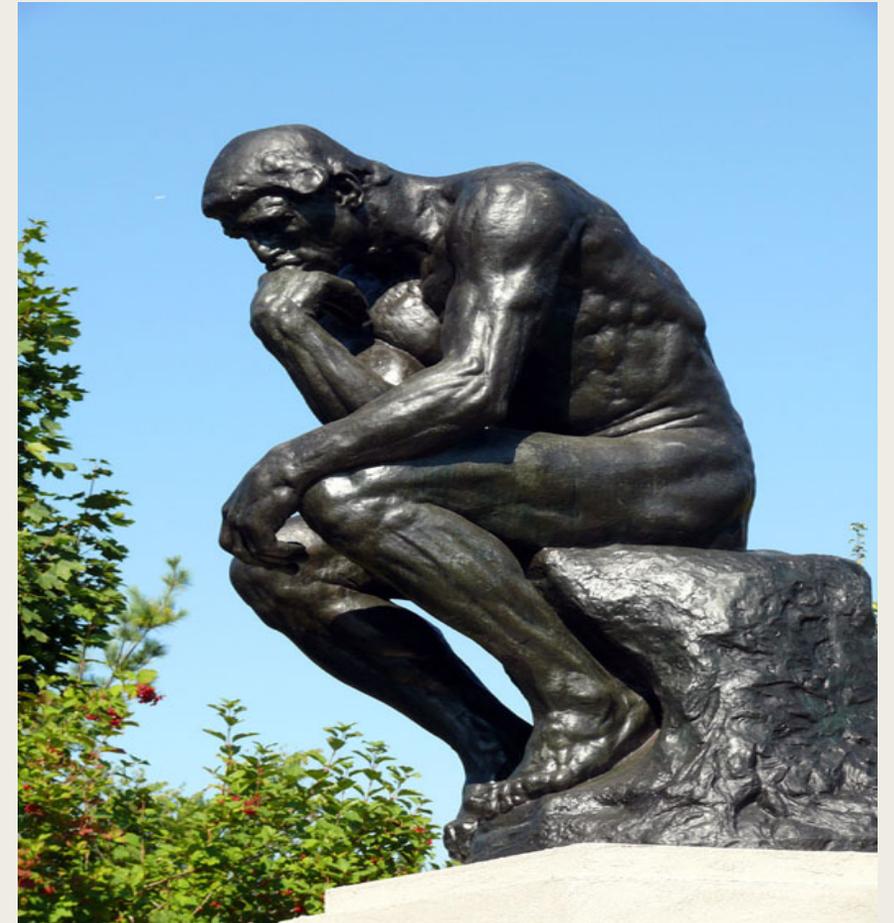
# Storytime

- What is a statistical story?
- Why tell a story?



# Setting your Stage

- What might be important to consider?
  - *5 W's (and an H)*
    - Who
    - What
    - Where
    - When
    - Why
    - How



# Making Data Make Sense

- Good, interpretable data comes in both words AND pictures!
  - *Make your words count*
    - Simple and to the point
  - *Make your pictures clear*
    - Avoid clutter and “chart junk”



# Tips for Wording

- Focus on one or two findings
- Write in everyday language (the “popular science” level)
- Create images for your readers
- Focus on the things you want readers to remember
- Choose the points you think are newsworthy and timely

# Writing Tips- Strive to use



- Language that people understand
- Short sentences, short paragraphs
- One main idea per paragraph
- Subheadings to guide the reader's eye
- Simple language: "Get," not "acquire." "About," not "approximately." "Same," not "identical"
- Bulleted lists for easy scanning
- A good editor. Go beyond Spell-Check; ask a colleague to read your article
- Numbers in a consistent fashion: For example, choose 20 or twenty, and stick with your choice
- Active voice. "We found that..." Not: "It was found that...."
- Rounded numbers (both long decimals and big numbers)
- Embedded quotes (these are sentences that generally explain "how" or "why", and which journalists like to use verbatim in their news stories in quotes)
- URLs, or electronic links, to provide your reader with a full report containing further information

# Writing Tips- Avoid using



- “Elevator statistics”: This went up, this went down, this went up
- Jargon and technical terms
- Acronyms
- All capital letters and all italics
  - *Mixed upper and lower case is easier to read*
- “Table reading”- describing every cell of a complex table in your text

# Writing Examples

Not Amazing:

- From January to August, the total square metres of utility floor space building starts rose by 20.5% from the January to August period last year.

Better:

- In the first eight months of 2004, the amount of utility floor space started was about 20% higher than in the same period of 2003.

# Tips for Pictures

- Show the big picture by presenting many data points
- Use “paragraphs” of data that convey one finding or a single concept
- Highlight the data by avoiding extra information and distractions, sometimes called “non-data ink” and “chart-junk”
- Present logical visual patterns

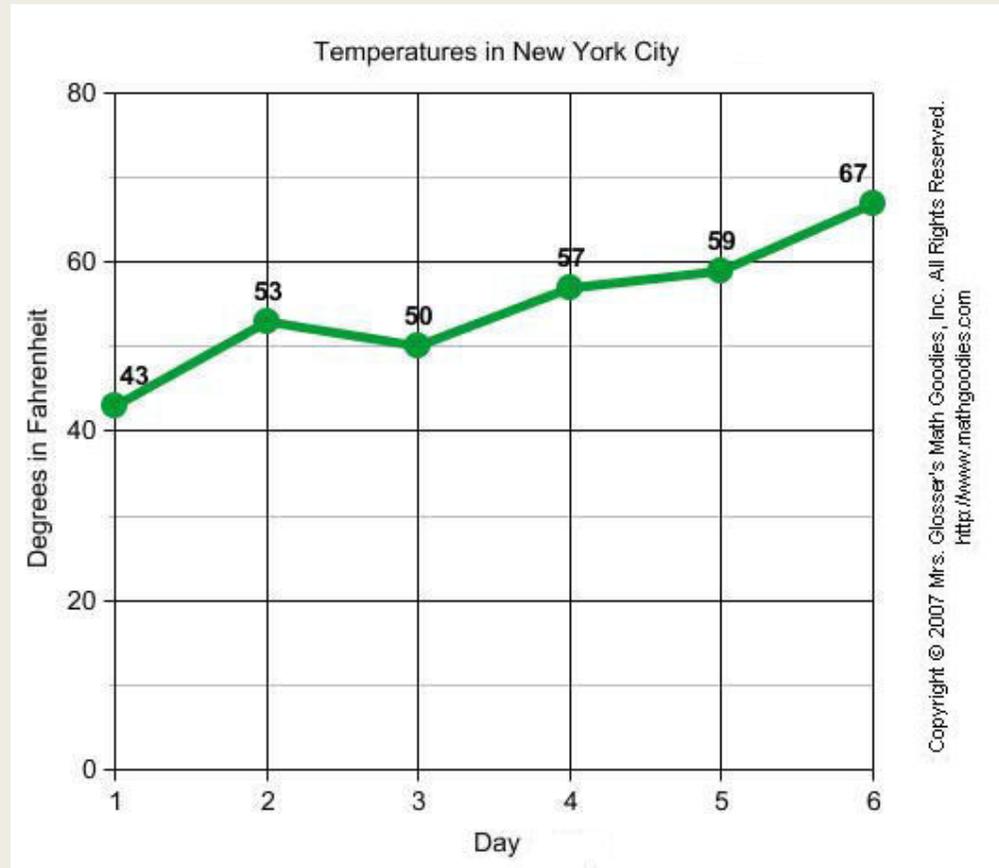


# Picture Tips

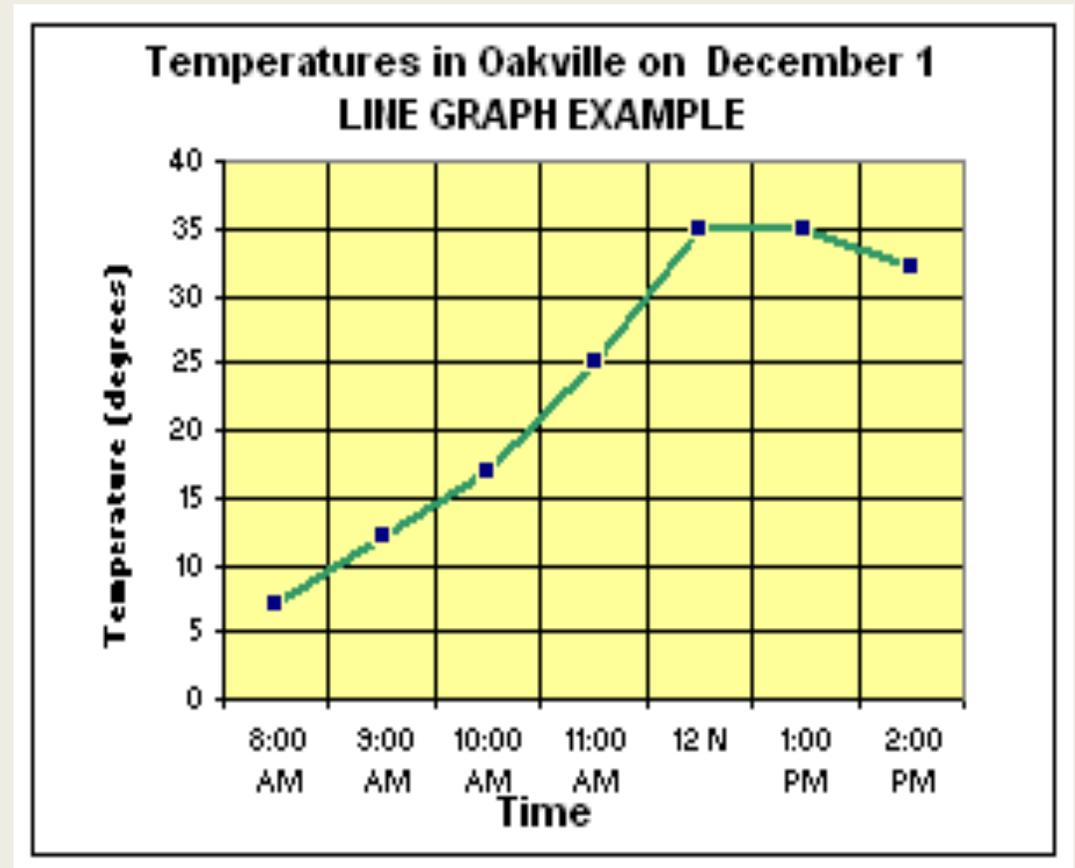
- Avoiding data point markers on line graphs
- Use data values on a graph only if they don't interfere with the reader's ability to see the big picture
- Starting the Y axis scale at zero
- Using only one unit of measurement per graphic
- Using two-dimensional designs for two-dimensional data
- Make all text on the graph easy to understand
  - *Not using abbreviations*
  - *Avoiding acronyms*
  - *Writing labels from left to right*
  - *Using proper grammar*
  - *Avoiding legends except on maps*

# Line Graph

Okay

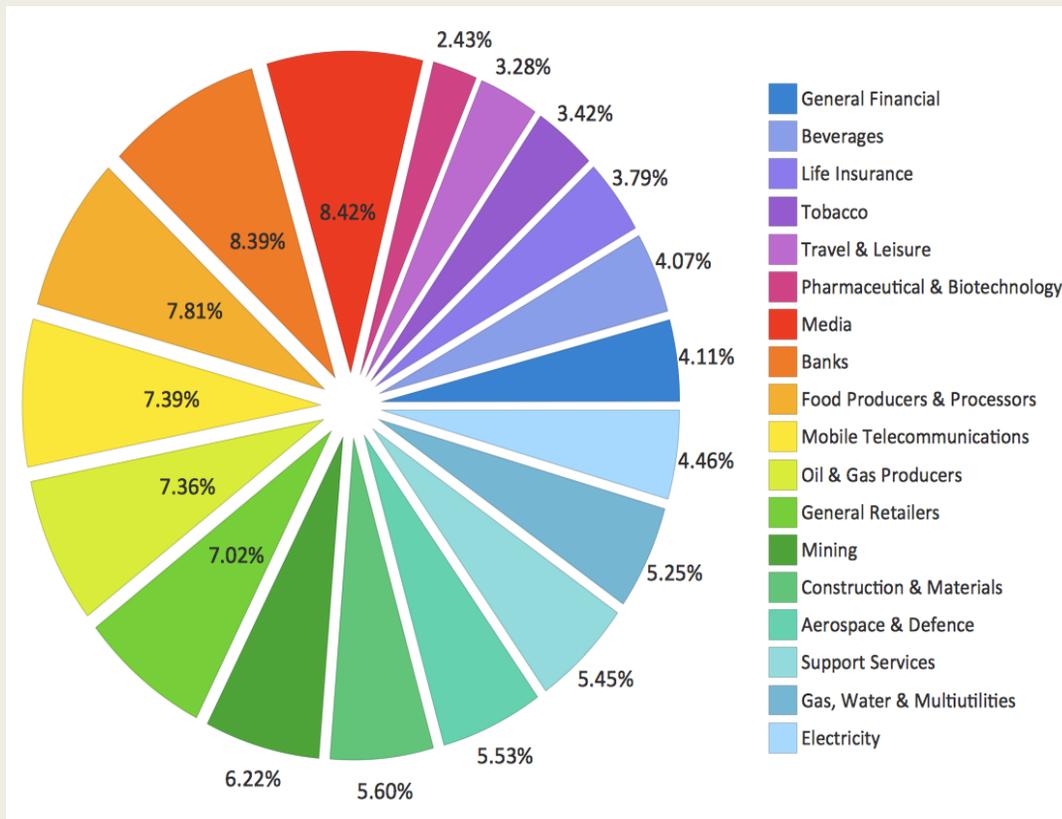


Better

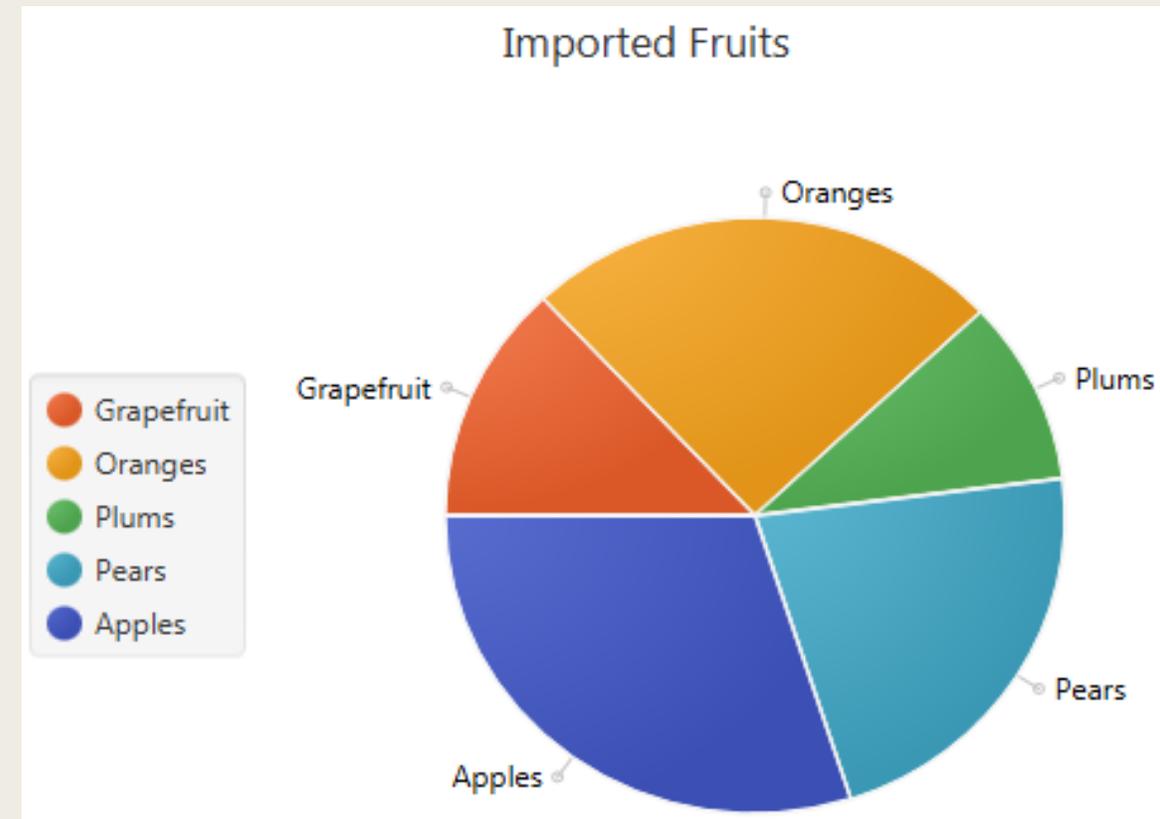


# Pie Chart

Okay(ish)



Better



30C  
29C  
28C  
27C  
26C  
25C  
24C  
23C  
22C  
21C  
20C

Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



Saturday



Sunday



Fig. 1. subject: Å, n = 4 Å] inclu ≤ 263 dense-r

# Takeaways

- Be clear
- Be simple
- Have purpose
- Convey that purpose in a clear and simple manner!



# Example time! From CHA to CHIP

Of the interviewed households, 98.6% strongly agree or agree they feel safe in their home; 97.1% strongly agree or agree they feel safe in their community; 93.6% strongly agree or agree there are places to be physically active near their home; 89.5% strongly agree or agree their community is a good place to raise children; 87.7% strongly agree or agree they have enough financial resources to meet their basic needs; 81.9% strongly agree or agree their community is a good place to grow old; and 67.1% strongly agree or agree they can get the health care they need near their home. The three most important health concerns in Mineral County include alcohol/substance abuse (79.3%), unemployment (39.3%), and child abuse/neglect (24.3%)

# Great Resource

- <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/writing/>