

# Infographic Design - Workbook

This workbook turns the Infographic Design course into one real, finished, fact-checked infographic. Each section pairs with a course module and mixes guided exercises, fill-in worksheets, and checklists so you end up with an actual shippable piece - a defensible chart, a consistent visual system, and correctly sized exports - not just notes. Work through it with a real dataset open in Google Sheets or Excel and your chosen design tool (Figma, Canva, or Illustrator) on screen. The value is in the infographic you build and the decisions you write down, so a skeptical reader could trust every number on it.

## Foundations: From Data to a Story Worth Showing

Find the single story in a real dataset and lock the governing question before any pixels are placed.

### Exercise: Interrogate a Real Dataset

Pick a real, public dataset you find interesting (try Our World in Data, data.gov, the World Bank, Statistics Canada, or a Kaggle CSV). Open it in Google Sheets or Excel and run the analysis pass from the course: clean inconsistent labels and decide how blanks are handled, then build a PivotTable or use SUM/AVERAGE/COUNTIF to collapse the rows into a handful of totals you can actually see. Hunt for one comparison worth showing.

- What are the columns, units, and time range, and what is the one comparison a reader would care about?

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- After summarizing, what is the single most surprising or lopsided number you found?

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- Did you normalize anything to a rate or percentage to make the comparison fair, and why?

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- Write your finding as one declarative sentence (not a topic label) - what is the story?

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### Worksheet: One-Page Creative Brief

Fill this out before opening any design tool. It takes ten minutes and constrains every later choice. Keep it visible while you work and check new elements against the governing question.

Governing question (the one thing the reader should answer in ten seconds)

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One Big Idea (a complete sentence stating your point of view and what is at stake)

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Audience (who they are, how much they already know)

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Destination and format (Instagram 1080x1350 / LinkedIn card 1200x628 / A3 print)

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Three to five key numbers that must appear (with their source)

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Action or takeaway (what the reader should think, feel, or do next)

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## Checklist: Story-Readiness Checklist

- Dataset cleaned: duplicates removed, labels standardized, blanks handled deliberately
- Rows summarized into a few totals via PivotTable or SUM/AVERAGE/COUNTIF
- Comparisons made fair (rates/percentages where populations or sizes differ)
- The finding is written as one declarative sentence, not a topic
- A single governing question is chosen and competing stories are set aside
- Big Idea drafted as one complete sentence
- Every key number has a recorded source and year

## Charts That Tell the Truth

Choose the right chart for each question, strip it to its evidence, and audit it for the ways charts mislead.

### Worksheet: Chart Selection Map

For each key number from your brief, name the intent (comparison, composition, distribution, or relationship) and the chart that answers it honestly. Reject pie charts with more than three slices, dual y-axes, and any 3D form. Fill one row per number.

Key number / metric

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Intent (comparison / composition / distribution / relationship)

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Chosen chart (bar / line / stacked bar / scatter / histogram / pictograph)

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Why this chart is the honest fit for the intent

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A flashier chart you rejected, and the reason you rejected it

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### Exercise: Declutter a Chart (Before and After)

Build one of your charts with the default settings in Excel or Sheets and screenshot it. Then rebuild it stripped using the data-ink pass: delete border and background fill, mute or remove gridlines, drop the legend in favor of direct labels, sort the bars by value, and give only the bar that matters one accent color while the rest go gray. Place the before and after side by side.

- What ink did you erase that carried no data (borders, fills, gridlines, 3D, redundant ticks)?
  - Did you replace the legend with direct labels so the eye never hunts for a key?
  - Which single data point did you highlight with the accent color, and does it match your governing question?
  - Side by side, is the story faster to read in the after version?
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### Checklist: Truthfulness Audit (run on every chart)

- Every bar-chart y-axis starts at zero
- Area and bubble sizes are scaled by area, not radius or diameter
- The time range shown is the full relevant range, not a flattering slice
- Comparisons are fair: rates where populations differ, same units throughout
- No dual y-axis manufacturing a false correlation
- No pie/donut with more than three slices, and no 3D
- The source is recorded and will appear on the final piece

## Building the Visual System: Type, Color, Icons

Lock the reusable type scale, accessible palette, and single-family icon set that make the piece feel like one object.

### Worksheet: Type, Color, and Icon System Spec

Define your reusable system before laying anything out, then save each as a named style in your tool (text styles and color styles in Figma; paragraph and swatch styles in Illustrator). Keep to three type levels and a small palette.

Title / display typeface and the workhorse body typeface (e.g. Inter, Source Sans)

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Three type sizes on a consistent ratio (e.g. 36-48 pt title / 24 pt header / 16 pt body)

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Palette type chosen (sequential / diverging / categorical) and why it fits the data

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Accent color (HEX), neutral-dark, neutral-light, and any category hues (HEX)

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Icon library chosen (Noun Project / Material Symbols / Phosphor / Font Awesome) - one only

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Icon style locked (stroke weight, fill vs outline, corner radius) and license/attribution note

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### Exercise: Accessibility and Grayscale Pass

Run your palette through a color-blindness simulator (Coblis or the Stark plugin) and then view your charts in grayscale. Check text and meaningful graphics for WCAG contrast (aim for at least 4.5 to 1 for normal text). Fix anything that relies on color alone by adding labels, patterns, or position.

- In the color-blind simulation, can every category still be told apart?
  - In grayscale, does any comparison vanish - and if so, what label or shape will you add?
  - Does your body and label text meet roughly 4.5:1 contrast against its background?
  - Does the same hue mean the same thing in every chart across the piece?
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### Exercise: Pictograph the Hero Number

Take the single proportion a lay reader should feel (your hero number) and design it as a pictograph / isotype: repeat one small icon where each unit equals a fixed quantity (e.g. 10 figures at 10 percent each, or 1 in 7 highlighted). Follow Neurath's rule - show more of a quantity with more same-size symbols, never one bigger symbol.

- What quantity does one symbol represent, and is that stated for the reader?
  - Did you keep every symbol the same size (no scaled-up single icon)?
  - Is the pictograph easier to feel than the equivalent bar would be - if not, switch back to a bar?
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### Checklist: Visual System Checklist

- Exactly three type levels defined and saved as named text styles
- No more than two typefaces in use
- Palette type matches the data type (sequential / diverging / categorical)
- Palette saved as named color styles; one hue = one meaning everywhere

- Passed a color-blind simulator and a grayscale check
- All icons come from one family at one consistent style
- Icon and pictograph elements saved as reusable components
- Icon library license checked and attribution noted if required

## Layout, Narrative, and Shipping the File

Compose the flow on a grid, assemble in your tool, and export accessible, sourced, correctly sized files.

### Exercise: Thumbnail the Visual Flow

Before building, sketch the whole infographic as rough thumbnails - boxes and squiggles, no real content - structured as hook (title plus hero number), body (three to five sections, each a chart plus one sentence), and close (takeaway plus sources). Then hand the thumbnail to someone and watch their eyes travel it.

- Does the reading order march cleanly top to bottom, or does the eye jump around?

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- Where did you use proximity and whitespace to separate sections and bind captions to charts?

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- Did you alternate heavy charts with lighter callouts so no five dense graphics stack in a row?

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- After ten seconds with the thumbnail, can the tester restate your Big Idea?

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### Worksheet: Build and Export Plan

Plan the assembly so you avoid rework: set the canvas to the final destination size first, build the system, then the content. Record your destinations and the format each needs.

Design tool (Figma / Canva / Illustrator) and why it fits this piece

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Primary canvas size set at the start (e.g. 1080x1350 px, or A3 at 300 dpi)

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Column grid: number of columns, gutter, and margins

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Components to build once (chart frame, callout block, section header)

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Source line text (dataset + organization + year) and where it sits

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Export targets and formats (PNG @2x for social / 1200x628 card crop / CMYK PDF 300 dpi for print)

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### Checklist: Final Pre-Ship Checklist

- Canvas was set to final destination size before placing elements
- Everything aligns to the column grid; nothing floats
- Text uses the three named styles; color uses the named styles
- Every chart passed the truthfulness audit
- Visible source line present and legible (dataset, organization, year)
- Any data transformation (averaged / normalized / filtered) noted
- Icon library credited if its license requires it
- Screen PNG exported at correct pixel size (2x for retina)
- Print PDF exported as CMYK at 300 dpi with bleed if going to press
- Hero number is legible at thumbnail scale on a feed

## Your Action Plan

1. Choose a real public dataset and clean it, then summarize the rows into a few totals you can see.
2. Find the single story and write it as one declarative sentence; turn it into a governing question and a one-sentence Big Idea.
3. Fill the one-page creative brief, fixing audience, key numbers, takeaway, and destination size.
4. Map each key number to an intent and the honest chart that answers it; reject distorting chart forms.
5. Build each chart decluttered - direct labels, sorted, one accent color - and run the truthfulness audit.
6. Lock the visual system: three type levels, a meaningful accessible palette, and one icon family, all saved as named styles.
7. Run the color-blind and grayscale passes and fix anything relying on color alone.
8. Thumbnail the vertical flow (hook, body, close) and test the reading order on a real person.
9. Set the canvas to final size, assemble with components and styles, and add the visible source line.
10. Export a screen PNG at the right size and a print-ready CMYK PDF, confirm sourcing, and ship.









