CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHART · PART 7 OF 8 · AGES 11–16

Charts in Everyday Life

You read charts every day, often without noticing. Here is where they hide and what to check.

Weather forecasts

A line shows temperature through the day; bars show expected rain in mm. A percentage is the chance of rain, not how much will fall.

Fitness and step counters

A bar for each day's steps or active minutes, with a goal line across. A ring that fills up shows how much of today's goal is done.

Screen-time reports

Stacked bars split each day by type of app, so you see the total and where the time went. Check: daily average or weekly total?

News and elections

Bars compare votes or prices, lines track change over months and shaded maps show results by region. Check the source, the date and the axis.

School reports

Marks or attendance shown as bars or a line across terms. Read the scale: a percentage, a grade and a target can look alike.

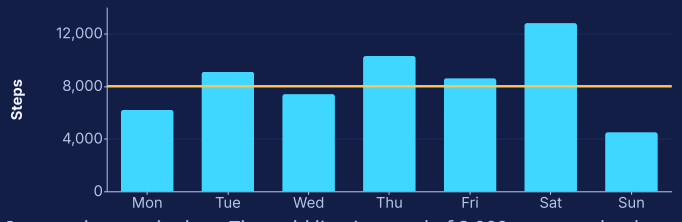
Sports statistics

League tables are tables. Possession is often a split bar or pie, as the shares make 100%. Heat maps show where a player spent time.

Energy bills

Bars show energy used each month in kilowatt-hours (kWh). Comparing with the same month last year allows for the seasons.

Example: one week of steps from a fitness app



Invented example data. The gold line is a goal of 8,000 steps set by the user. It was met on 4 of the 7 days.

Three questions for any chart

What is being measured, and in what units? Where did the data come from, and when? Does the picture match the numbers, or does it exaggerate?

NEXT IN THE SERIES
8. Charts Quiz: Test Yourself

Free to share · CC BY-NC 4.0 · Sources at infographhub.com