

# UNDERSTANDING GRAPHIC AND VISUAL AIDS

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## ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to understand how to read a graph and other visual aids. After learning about graph and the visual aids, the students are expected to be able to read a graph in a text and other visual aids. Further, they can make their own graph in telling something. The writer has two fold goals in creating graphics: 1. to make the data stand out on the page and 2. To make the data support the main purpose of the document as clearly and strongly as possible. Many technical pieces of writing have two main kinds of material: 1. Prose, the text or written part of the document and 2. Supporting graphic material.

**Keywords :** *Reading, Graphic, Charts, Visual*

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

A visual graphic or graphic aid is any image that assists you, the reader, in understanding the text which accompanies the visual aid. Too often graphs, diagrams, charts, and tables are casually glanced over or bypassed completely by readers. Through this habit, the reader fails to benefit from the tremendous help these aids can provide. Text book reading is improved when you have strategies to help your comprehension and retention of what you are reading. One plan which can assist with comprehension, especially advanced or college level books, is the methodical practice of incorporating the graphs and visual aids into your reading and studying.

The most frequently encountered visual aids in content area texts are explained. Look at the format and purpose.

- Visual aids are designed to summarize information. Sometimes the amount of data is so large that and aid is the only practical way of making the information accessible.

- Visual aids allow the writer to explain complex ideas more concretely, and the reader to visualize abstract concepts
- Visual aids can even present new or additional information to the written text.

When reading any text which accompanied by visual aids or graphs, take your time to look over the item and understand how it is related to the text. From a short explanation we can know a little about graphs and visual aids. Graphics are divided into types of graphic, graphic effects, the text doesn't support the graphic – the graphics support the text. Graphics have seven formats such as table, the graph, the chart, photograph, drawing diagram.

## DISCUSSION

### Types of graphic

#### 1. Graphics in technical communication

Effective writing in business, industry, and government usually implies effective graphics. Often the best way to show is by presenting data in the form of graphs, diagrams, flow charts, and other

graphics. Basically, graphics refers to any of the document's non purpose elements, such as tables, charts, pictures, maps, etc. the writer has two fold goals in creating graphics:

1. To make the data stand out on the page and
2. To make the data support the main purpose of the document as clearly and strongly as possible.

## 2. Graphic Effects

Many technical pieces of writing have two main kinds of material:

1. Prose, the text or written part of the document and
2. Supporting graphic material

Generally speaking then, the text of prose contains directional material-ideas, of the document contains informational material-details that support the opinions and conclusions in the form of tables, charts, graphs, pictures, etc.

## 3. Graphic Formats

Many different graphic formats can be used to support the text's main ideas. However, the ideal graphic format depends on the type of data being presented.

### 1. Tables

The table presents large amounts of data in a simple, brief, and clear linear format. The same data in prose would be bulky, confusing, and inaccessible. Tables help the reader grasp relationship that might be invisible in prose. Also, tables allow the writer to focus attention on specific pieces of data while retaining a clear presentation of the whole.

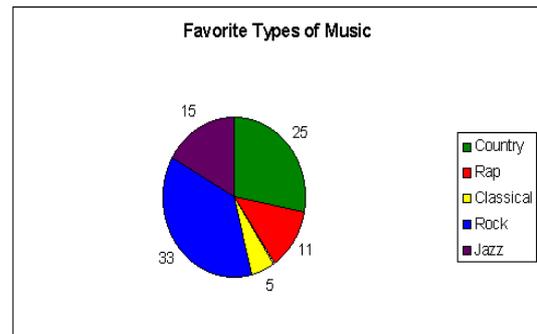
### 2. Graphics and Charts

Graphs are pictures that help us understand amounts. These amounts are called data. There are many kinds of graphs, each having special parts. Chart illustrates the comparisons, usually among several sets of information. Many other sorts of chats are possible.

There're some kinds of graph:

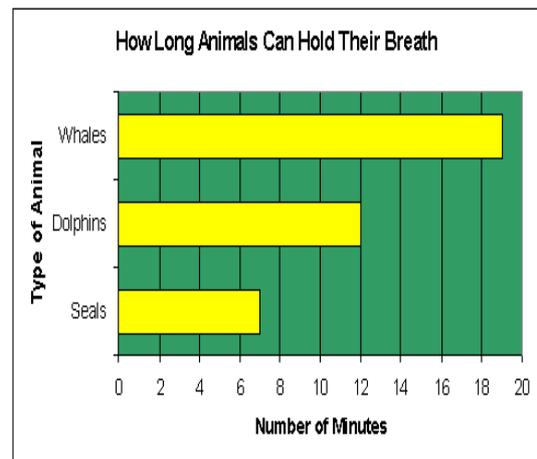
#### 1) Circle Graph

A [circle](#) graph is shaped like a circle. It is divided into fractions that look like pieces of pie, so sometimes a circle graph is called a pie graph. Many times the fractional parts are different colors and a key explains the colors.



#### 2) Bar Graph

A [bar](#) graph uses bars to show data. The bars can be vertical (up and down), or horizontal (across). The data can be in words or numbers.



#### 3) Picture Graph

A [picture](#) graph uses pictures or symbols to show data. One picture often stands for more than one vote so a key is necessary to understand the symbols.

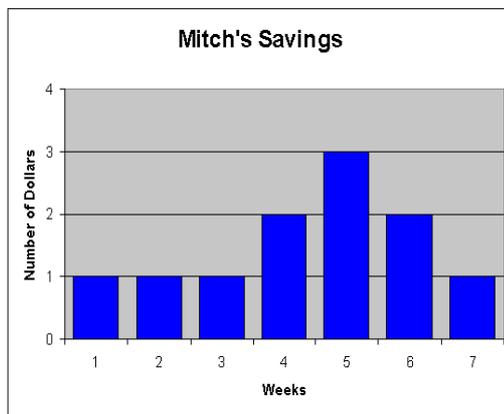
### Number of Books Read

|        |            |
|--------|------------|
| Jeremy | ▣▣▣▣▣▣▣▣   |
| Kevin  | ▣▣▣▣▣▣     |
| David  | ▣▣▣▣       |
| Kelly  | ▣▣▣▣▣▣▣▣▣▣ |
| Emily  | ▣▣▣        |

Each ▣ stands for 5 books.

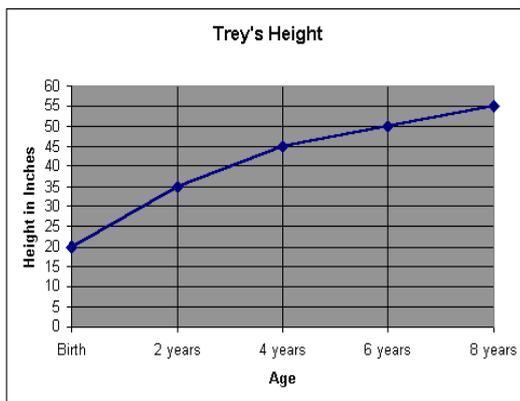
#### 4) Histogram Graph

A [histogram](#) is a special kind of bar graph. The data must be shown as numbers in order.



#### 5) Line Graph

A [line](#) graph shows points plotted on a graph. The points are then connected to form a line.



### Photographs, Drawing, Diagrams

#### Basic Strategies in Reading Photographs

If we want to read the photographs we have to know the general vocabulary used in photographs. Here the general vocabulary used in photographs:

**abstract:** an image that emphasizes formal elements (line, shape, etc) rather than specific, recognizable objects.

**content:** the subject, topic or information captured in a photograph.

**direct approach:** confronting a scene in a straight-forward manner, without using unusual angles or distortion.

**documentary photography:** photographs whose main purpose is to record a place, person(s) or event.

**expressive:** concerned with communicating emotion.

**geometric shape:** simple rectilinear or curvilinear shapes found in geometry, such as circles, squares, triangles, etc.

**intention:** reason(s) why the artist made a work of art.

**landscape:** an image that portrays the natural environment.

**objective:** a point of view free from personal bias, which attempts to consider all available information with equal regard and fairness.

**organic shape:** shapes based on natural objects such as trees, mountains, leaves, etc.

**representational:** an image which shows recognizable objects.

**subject:** the main object or person(s) in a photograph.

**theme:** a unifying or dominant idea in one work of art or in a collection of works.

Besides the general vocabulary, we have to know the visual elements in reading photograph. These are the visual elements:

**focus:** what areas appear clearest or sharpest in the photograph? What do not?

**light:** what areas of the photograph are most highlighted? Are there any shadows? Does the photograph allow you to guess the time of day? Is the light natural or

artificial? Harsh or soft? Reflected or direct?

**line:** are there objects in the photograph that act as lines? Are they straight, curvy, thin, thick? Do the lines create direction in the photograph? Do they outline? Do the lines show movement or energy?

**repetition:** are there any objects, shapes or lines which repeat and create a pattern?

**shape:** do you see geometric or organic shapes? What are they?

**space:** is there depth to the photograph or does it seem shallow? What creates this appearance? Are there important negative spaces in addition to positive spaces? Is there depth created by spatial illusions?

**texture:** if you could touch the surface of the photograph how would it feel? How do the objects in the picture look like they would feel?

**value:** is there a range of tones from dark to light? Where is the darkest value? Where is the lightest?

There are some compositions that we have to know in read photograph:

**angle:** the vantage point from which the photograph was taken; generally used when discussing a photograph taken from an unusual or exaggerated vantage point.

**background:** the part of a scene or picture that is or seems to be toward the back.

**balance:** the distribution of visual elements in a photograph. *Symmetrical* balance distributes visual elements evenly in an image. *Asymmetrical* balance is found when visual elements are not evenly distributed in an image.

**central focus:** the objects(s) which appears most prominently and/or most clearly focused in a photograph.

**composition:** the arrangement or structure of the formal elements that make up an image.

**contour:** the outline of an object or shape.

**contrast:** strong visual differences between light and dark, varying textures, sizes, etc.

**framing:** what the photographer has placed within the boundaries of the photograph.

**setting:** actual physical surroundings or scenery whether real or artificial.

**vantage point:** the place from which a photographer takes a photograph.

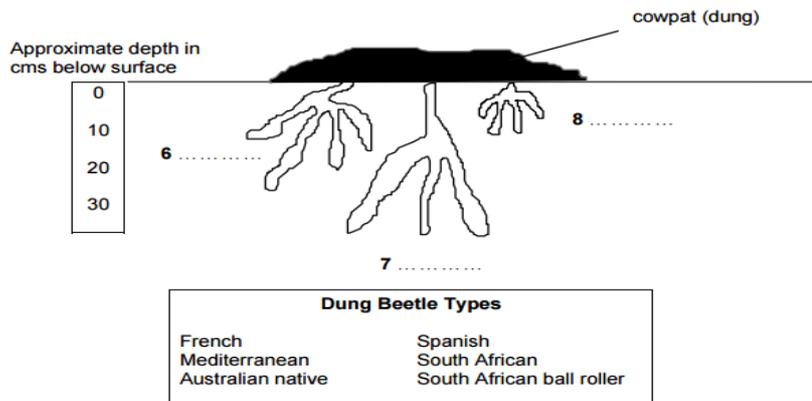
**Examples and the way how to read Diagram**

There are three kinds of diagrams you might get: a technical drawing of a machine or invention, something from the natural world or a design or plan. Below is an example of a natural process taken from a sample.

Questions 6 – 8

Label the tunnels on the diagram below using words from the box.

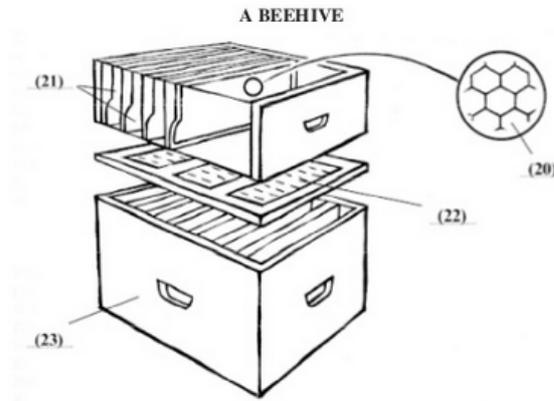
Write your answers in boxes 6-8 on your answer sheet.



Below is an example of a technical drawing:

**Questions 20-23**

Label the diagram below. Choose **ONE OR TWO WORDS** from the Reading Passage for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 20-23 on your answer sheet.



## Common Problems

The main problem with these questions is students focus too much on the diagram and try to understand everything about it. Unfamiliar diagrams can cause panic and lose you time. This is not a test of your technical knowledge but a test of your reading skills. You should try to understand generally what is happening in the diagram, but the relationship between the text and the diagram is more important.

Another big problem is failing to locate the paragraphs that contain the answers quickly and losing time reading the whole text.

Students also lose marks in this section by writing the wrong number of words or spelling words incorrectly.

## Tips

- Check how many words you are supposed to write, it will tell you in the question. In the example above you can only write ‘one or two words’, any more than this and you will lose marks. Remember that numbers count as one word and hyphenated words like ‘state-of-the-art’ count as one word.
- Identify the type of word (noun, verb, adjective) you need. This will help you find the correct answer.
- The answers do not always come in the same order that the paragraphs are in.
- Do the easiest questions first. You are more likely to get these correct. If you cannot find the answer to a difficult question, move on and come back later.
- Try to predict the answer before you read the text. This will help you find the correct answer.

## Strategy

- Check how many words you can write.
- Study the diagram and try to understand generally what is happening.  
*Don't spend too much time doing this.*
- Highlight keywords or labels.
- Identify the types of words required and try to predict the answer.
- Scan the text and identify where the information is located.
- Read in more detail to find the answer.
- Check spelling.

## CONCLUSION

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From the explanation in the previous chapter we've known about graphics and visual aids. Here's the summary for all of them:

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3. Photographs, Drawing, and Diagrams.

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