

# 5 Using visual aids

## In this unit:

- designing visual aids
- using visual aids successfully



## 5.1 Talking points

- 1 Before you watch the video, consider these questions.  
What kinds of visual aid do you like to use? Why?  
What problems do people have when using visual aids?
- 2 While you watch people talking about the questions above, compare their views with yours.

## 5.2 The presentation

- 3 Patricia Reyes, a market researcher, is presenting the results of a survey. While you watch three extracts of her presentation, answer the questions below about visual aids.

Extract 1: visual aids – PowerPoint slides

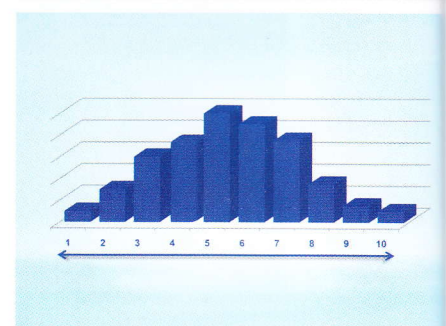
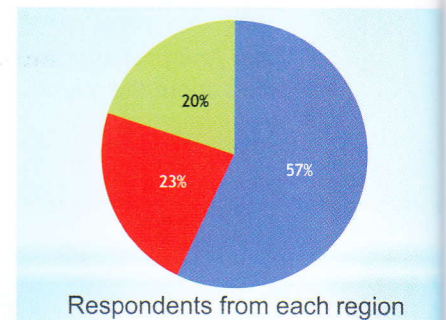
- 1 Write down the three words on her first slide.
- 2 What were the two key questions the survey needed to answer?

Extract 2: visual aids – flow chart, pie chart and handouts

- 3 Patricia's third slide shows a flow chart describing the survey. 90,000 customers were selected. What percentage responded?
- 4 Look at the pie chart. What does the blue section represent?
- 5 What information is in Patricia's handout?

Extract 3: visual aids – bar charts

- 6 The first bar chart has a scale along the bottom of 1–10. What do these numbers represent?
- 7 Does the chart suggest that customers would recommend QPG?
- 8 In her second bar chart, what do the red and yellow bars represent?





vývojový diagram flow chart  
 skupový graf bar chart

**5.3 The expert view**

4 Before you watch the video, read these tips about designing slides and using visual aids. Which ones do you think give good advice? Which sentences give bad advice?

**Designing slides**

- ◆ The Rule of Five: have no more than five lines of text on a slide and no more than five words on a line.
- ◆ Pictures and diagrams are often more effective than words.
- ◆ Use as many slides as possible because slides help the audience to understand.
- ◆ Keep graphs and charts simple by only including the main information.

**Using visual aids effectively**

- ◆ Always begin with a visual aid.
- ◆ Look at the audience not the screen.
- ◆ Walk up to the screen and point out details.
- ◆ Don't turn your back on the audience.
- ◆ Announce a slide before you show it.
- ◆ Describe everything on the visual aid.
- ◆ Control when your audience reads the handout.

5 While you watch Andrew talk about using visual aids, tick the points above that he mentions. For a summary of how to design and use visual aids, read the article on page 55.

**5.4 Analysis**

6 While you watch Patricia's presentation again, make notes in the table about each visual aid.

The visual aid	How clear are her slides? Could she improve the design?	How effectively did she present the visual aids? Could she do anything differently next time?
Slides with bullet points		
Flow chart		
Pie chart		
Handout	N/A	
Bar charts		

**5.5 The expert feedback**

7 How does Andrew's analysis of the presentation compare with yours?



## Language focus

### 5.6 Describing and referring to visual aids

- 1 In her presentation, Patricia uses a lot of phrases to describe visual aids:

*'Let's look at those responses in a bit more detail ... This blue section shows that 57% of those responses came from the region with the difficulties.'*

Complete this extract from Patricia's presentation by replacing the words in *italics* with one of the verbs below. In some cases more than one answer is possible.

break down    summarize    illustrate    indicate    represent

I'm going to *sum up*<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ the key findings ... According to this chart the overall response *suggests*<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ that customers are fairly likely to recommend your company. However, this chart *shows*<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ an average response across the three regions. If we *divide*<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ these responses into the three regions like this, it *shows*<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ the difference in customer satisfaction region by region.

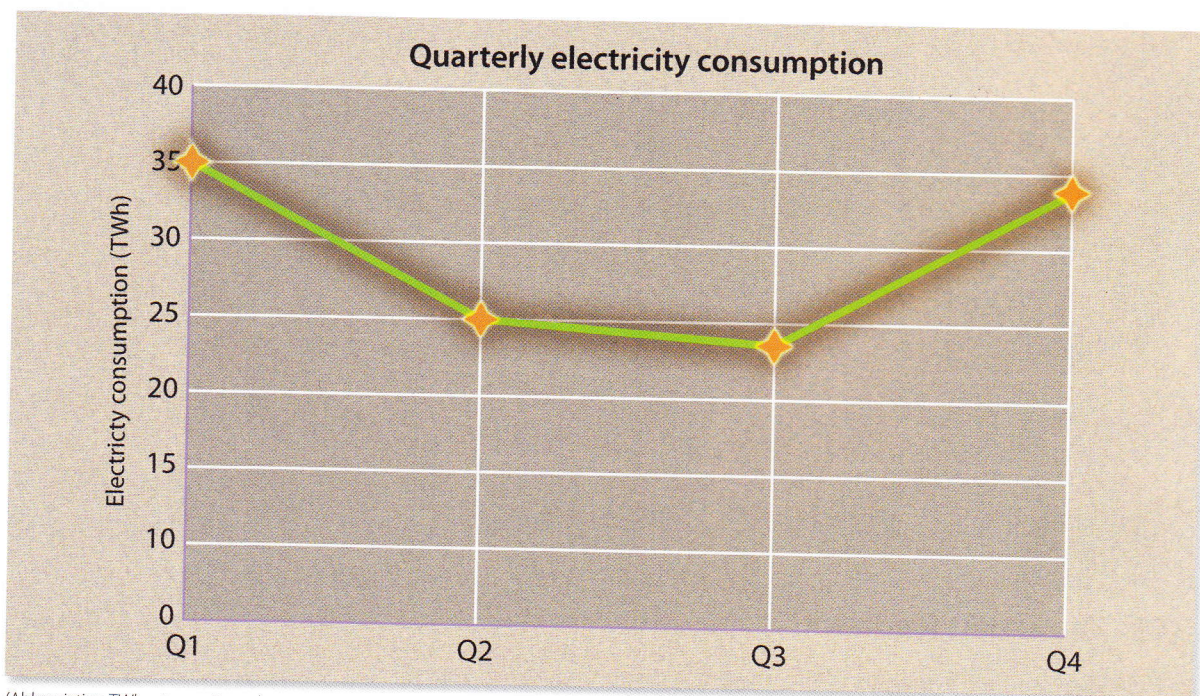
- 2 Watch extract 3 from Patricia Reyes's presentation and compare it with your answer.

### Describing cause and consequence

- 3 Explaining the causes and consequences of your findings is a key part of using visual aids. In her talk, Patricia describes some bar charts and explains what caused these results.

*'Now remember red and yellow are the regions with increasing numbers of customers. Consequently the responses are quite high ... the lower scores in the previous chart were caused by the decline in these "blue" responses.'*

Read the explanation of the graph on the next page and write in the missing words that are used to describe cause and consequence. Some words can be used more than once.



(Abbreviation TWh = terawatt per hour, a measurement of energy usage)



result (or consequence) so because due caused consequently

I'd like to describe domestic energy consumption in the UK last year. <sup>1</sup> *So*, let's start by looking at the graph which shows last year's energy consumption on a quarterly basis. As you can see, at the start of year consumption stood at 35 terawatts. It fell from 35 to 25 terawatts in the first quarter as a <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ of the fall in demand for heating. In the following quarter, it went down by only two terawatts <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ of the unusually cool weather last summer. The cold weather was <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ by a change in weather patterns – possibly the <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ of global warming. In the final quarter, consumption rose to 33 terawatts <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to the return of the winter. Unfortunately, as well as an increase in demand in the last quarter, there was also a rise in global fuel prices. <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, household energy prices increased significantly.

## Talking about trends and figures

- 4 Find the words in the description in 3 that describe trends (e.g. *increase, decrease*, etc.) and add them to the table below. Some of the words are nouns and some are verbs.

↑	↓	↔
<i>increase</i> (verb)		

- 5 Now look at these other verbs and nouns that are used to describe trends. Add them to the correct part of the table above.

go up (*verb*)    remain / stay the same (*verb*)    decrease (*verb, noun*)  
hold steady (*verb*)    decline (*verb, noun*)

- 6 Look at these examples of describing trends from the text in 3. Notice the prepositions that are used.

... consumption stood **at** 35 terawatts ... it fell **from** 35 **to** 25 terawatts ... it went down **by** only two terawatts ... an increase **in** demand ...

Complete the sentences below by adding *at, by, from, in* or *to* in the correct place. Use each preposition only once.

Compared to the previous survey, the response rate increased <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ three per cent. The rise <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ responses was due to the use of a new online survey. The number of positive responses among customers aged 18 to 30 rose <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ fifty-five per cent <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ sixty-nine per cent this year. For the 30 to 60 age range, it stayed the same <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ seventy-five per cent.

- 7 Prepare a visual aid about one of the topics below. Give a short presentation to describe these trends, using the words in 5, 6 and 7. Try to use some of the expressions from 3 to explain the causes for these trends.

- your company's recent turnover
- numbers of customers using your products / services in the last three years
- your country's economy

### TIP

When you want to refer to a particular place on a slide you can point, but it's also helpful to say where. Use these phrases:

*In the middle*

*At the top*

*At the bottom*

*On the right*

*On the left*

*In the top left corner*

*In the bottom right corner*

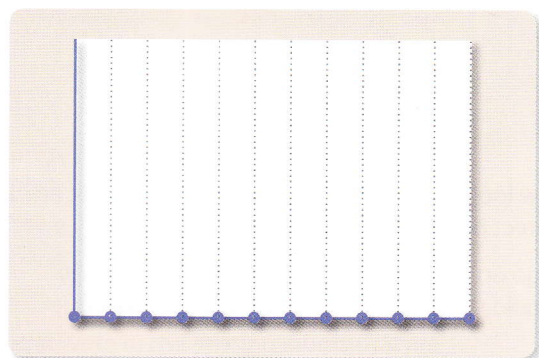
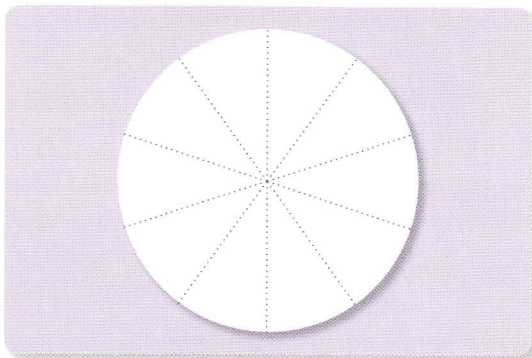
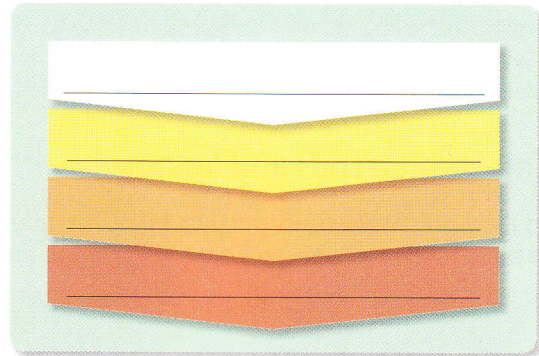


## Presentation task

- 1 A group of business students is visiting your company. You are going to give a short presentation describing some of the basic processes in your workplace, a breakdown of your key markets, and recent sales results. You can invent these details if you need to. Using the visual aids below, make notes in each one to prepare for your presentation.

Then give a short presentation with the slides.

- Write two or three words in each part of the flowchart to present a key process in your workplace, e.g. *raw materials delivery* → *processing* → *delivery to warehouse*.
- Complete a pie chart showing percentages for your main markets or customers, e.g. *European customers 53%*, *Asian market 27%*, etc.
- Complete the graph to show your key sales results or production output for the past year.



### Useful phrases

#### Referring to your visuals

Now let's look at ...  
 This shows / illustrates ...  
 As you can see from this ...  
 Take a look at this graph / chart / table.

#### Explaining the visual aids

The different colours indicate / represent ...  
 This upward / downward trend shows ...  
 I'd like to draw your attention to this line ...  
 It's divided into ...  
 I've broken it down into ...

#### Trends

↑ increase, go up, rise, pick up  
 ↔ stay the same, remain the same, hold steady  
 ↓ decrease, go down, fall, decline

#### Describing cause and effect

This is connected to ...  
 The reason for this is ...  
 This is caused by ... / This is because of ...  
 This is due to ... / This is a result of ...  
 This resulted in ... This led to ...

#### Handouts

Does everyone have a copy of the handout ...?  
 Can you turn to page X of the handout?  
 You can see the graph on page X of the handout.  
 I'll be giving everyone copies of this at the end.

## Analysis

Use this analysis form as a checklist when you prepare your presentation. If you are working with other people on a course, ask someone to complete it for you while they watch your presentation.

What types of visual aid did the presenter use?

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Rate the quality of these visual aids below:

(1 = very good 2 = satisfactory 3 = still needs a lot of work)

amount of written text	1	2	3
amount of visual information	1	2	3
simplicity and clarity	1	2	3

When the presenter referred to the visual aids, rate the following:

maintained eye-contact with audience	1	2	3
used effective physical movements (e.g. pointing)	1	2	3
introduced a slide	1	2	3
explained complex visuals effectively	1	2	3
drew attention to key information	1	2	3

Add any further comments or suggestions for improvement: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Self-assessment

After your presentation, spend a few minutes thinking about your performance and make notes about the questions below.

1 What did I do well?

2 What do I need to work on for next time?

3 What have I learned from watching other people's presentations?