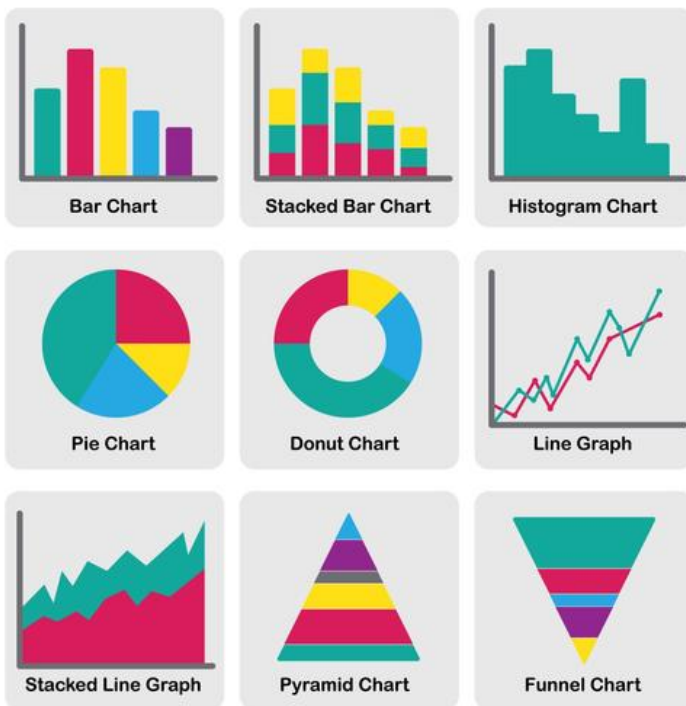


Charts and Graphs



Choosing the right graph depends entirely on the **story** you want your data to tell. Different structures highlight different relationships, whether you are tracking a variable over time, breaking down a whole into segments, or comparing discrete (individual, separate) categories.

Here is a breakdown of the most common types of graphs and their primary use cases:

1. Line Graphs & Stacked Line Graphs

- **Best Used For:** Showing trends, trajectories, and continuous changes over time (chronological periods).
- **When to Use:** Use a **Line Graph** when you want to highlight a clear pattern, a sudden spike, or a steady plateau over days, months, or fiscal years. Use a **Stacked Line Graph** when you want to track both the total trend and the individual contribution of different variables stacked together.

2. Bar Charts & Stacked Bar Charts

- **Best Used For:** Comparing discrete categories, tracking large data changes, or showing a breakdown of different groups.
- **When to Use:** Use a standard **Bar Chart** to compare independent variables (e.g., comparing the GDP of five different countries). Use a **Stacked Bar Chart** to show how a broader category is broken down into segments across those groups, making it easy to compare both the total values and the internal composition at a glance.

3. Pie Charts & Donut Charts

- **Best Used For:** Showing proportions and percentages of a whole dataset.
- **When to Use:** Use these when your data represents a single static snapshot where all parts add up to exactly 100%. A **Pie Chart** divides a circular layout into slices, while a **Donut Chart** removes the center to focus the viewer's eye more on the relative length of the arcs.
- *Pro tip:* Limit these to 5 or fewer segments; too many slices make the graph hard to interpret during a presentation.

4. Histogram Charts

- **Best Used For:** Showing the distribution and frequency of data within specific intervals (bins).
- **When to Use:** While they look similar to bar charts, histograms measure continuous data instead of discrete categories. Use them to show how often data points fall into specific numerical ranges—for example, analyzing a population's income distribution or student exam scores.

5. Specialty Frameworks (Pyramid & Funnel Charts)

- **Best Used For:** Showing hierarchical data, linear processes, or narrowing stages.

- **When to Use:** Use a **Funnel Chart** to track a sequential process that narrows down at each stage, such as a sales pipeline or website user conversion rates. Use a **Pyramid Chart** to represent a structure with a large foundation that naturally tapers off at the peak, like organizational hierarchies or demographic age distributions.

YouTube video: See this useful video by Interactive English: [DESCRIBING GRAPHS IN ENGLISH](#)  | [Great for IELTS, TOEFL, or Business Presentations](#)

Here are twenty common terms used to present graphs and data visualisations in a presentation context, formatted exactly as requested (compiled by Gemini, 20 July 2026).

Axis; A fixed reference line on a graph used to plot data points; Coordinate line; Reference line; Grid line

Data point; An individual value or piece of information plotted on a graph; Plot point; Coordinate; Value

Legend; A key that explains what the different symbols, colors, or patterns on a graph represent; Key; Caption; Index

Trend; The general direction or tendency in which data is moving over time; Tendency; Drift; Inclination

Spike; A sharp, sudden, and temporary increase in a data value; Surge; Peak; Leap

Trough; The bottom of a trend, which then often picks up again: Low-point; Bottom, Depression

Fluctuation; Irregular variations or unstable changes rising and falling within a data set; Variation; Oscillation; Wave

Outlier; A data point that differs significantly from other observations in the same set; Anomaly; Deviation; Exception

Correlation; A mutual relationship or connection between two or more variables; Association; Link; Relationship

Projection; An estimate or forecast of a future trend based on current data; Forecast; Prediction; Outlook

Label; A descriptive word or phrase assigned to a specific part of a graph; Tag; Identifier; Marker

Scale; The sequence of numbers or marks that measure the values on an axis; Graduation; Range; Proportion

Variable; An element, feature, or factor that is liable to vary or change; Parameter; Factor; Element

Threshold; A specific level or limit that must be reached to trigger a certain result; Boundary; Limit; Benchmark

Breakdown; An analysis or classification of things into constituent parts; Decomposition; Analysis; Segmentation

Segment; A distinct portion or part of a whole graph, especially in pie charts; Slice; Section; Fraction

Trajectory; The path or direction followed by data over a chronological period; Path; Course; Route

Clustering; A grouping of a number of similar data points close together; Grouping; Concentration; Aggregation

Margin; The edge or border of the graph, or the allowance for error in data; Border; Boundary; Allowance

Pattern; A discernible regularity or recurring sequence in the way data behaves; Trend; Configuration; Sequence

Use these definitions to complete the online crossword puzzle on [“Describing Graphs” here](#).