

## Factors to consider when selecting a technique to present data

Factors	Comment
Scale/interval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is too big a scale or interval (e.g. 1-190) it will hide patterns.</li> <li>• If the scale is too small (e.g. 1-3), it would take too long and can produce over-complex patterns.</li> <li>• Is the scale interval arithmetic (e.g. 0-5, 5.1-10) or geometric (e.g. 0-5, 5.1-15.1) or a log etc? All figures should have a clear scale with no overlapping values such as 0-12, 12-24 (where would 12 go?).</li> <li>• Remember that scales always start at 0 but they can be 'broken' if there are only high values to show.</li> </ul>
Location	Where should the figure be placed to best represent the area or feature to which it applies? Always make sure comparative diagrams are adjacent and at the same scale.
Size of symbol	If you make symbols too large you may hide information on the map or they may overlap; if too small it may not be seen or its value judged inaccurately.
Shading	Shading should always get darker as values increase. White implies no data. Totally solid shading implies that it is full up. Try to avoid mixing stipple and lines as this confuses the eye and can't be compared accurately.
Colour	Colour is best avoided as it difficult to compare different colours e.g. is blue denser than green? Also, certain colours imply certain things e.g. blue always suggests water. Colour can be useful when comparing patterns, such as red and black dots on a map, but do not use too many colours as this confuses.
Lettering	Lettering varies in alignment, size, spacing and style. It must not obscure other data and should be capable of being read easily so try to keep it horizontal. Do not use too many different sizes and styles on any one figure.
Dimension	3D can cope with higher values but the value is proportional to its volume, so this involves careful calculation and it may mislead visually by looking less than it actually is.
Key	All maps and diagrams should have a clear key (the convention is to locate it at the bottom right of maps and/or diagrams).
Legend or caption	All diagrams, maps etc should have a title and a figure number.
Scale	All maps should have a scale.