Problems with Figures

Misleading figures are sometimes deliberately misleading and sometimes it’s just a case of people not understanding the data behind the graph they create. The “classic” types of misleading graphs include cases where:

- The Vertical scale is too big or too small, or skips numbers, or doesn’t start at zero.
- The graph isn’t labeled properly.
- Data is left out.
- Data is misrepresented

Other Figures are just plain hard to understand or can be unclear

https://www.statisticshowto.datasciencecentral.com/misleading-graphs/
https://www.distractify.com/humor/2017/05/26/cssBB/hilariously-bad-graphs

What’s Wrong with this Figure??

Interesting Pie Chart
Misleading Figure

“Huge Increases in Federal Welfare Rates!”

THE BLOG

Over 100 Million Now Receiving Federal Welfare

2:40 PM, AUG 8, 2012 • BY DANIEL HALPER

A new chart set to be released later today by the Republican side of the Senate Budget Committee details a startling statistic: “Over 100 Million People in U.S. Now Receiving Some Form Of Federal Welfare.”

Over 100 Million People In U.S. Now Receiving Some Form Of Federal Welfare

Figures Count Means-Tested Welfare, Not Social Security Or Medicare

Number of Americans

- 2009 Q1
- 2009 Q2
- 2009 Q3
- 2009 Q4
- 2010 Q1
- 2010 Q2
- 2010 Q3
- 2010 Q4
- 2011 Q1
- 2011 Q2

Figures include anyone residing in a household in which at least one person received a program benefit.

Source: U.S. Census’ Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Produced by Senate Budget Committee Republican staff. Ranking Member Jeff Sessions | http://budget.senate.gov/republican

IF BUSH TAX CUTS EXPIRE

TOP TAX RATE

NOW JAN. 1, 2013

35% 39.6%

42%

34

DOW 13008.68 64.33 S&P 1379.32 5.98 NASDAQ 2939.52 6.32
Actual Top Graph

Weird Conclusions

“College is Not Worth Your Time and Money!”


Rebuttal:

Dishonest Portrayal of Data

“Fox’s 108.6 million figure for the number of “people on welfare” comes from a Census Bureau’s account...of participation in means-tested programs, which include “anyone residing in a household in which one or more people received benefits” in the fourth quarter of 2011, thus including individuals who did not themselves receive government benefits. On the other hand, the “people with a full time job” figure Fox used included only individuals who worked, not individuals residing in a household where at least one person works.”