

## One Fully Composed Chart

Data Visualization Using R  
Spring 2026  
Leah Brooks

Due Lecture 5: Monday February 23 by 3:30 pm

Broadly, the goal of this class is to help you communicate a story told with numbers in a picture. To this end, we make charts.

To properly communicate, charts require many parts – axis labels, data annotations – to succeed. It may not be obvious when you start your policy brief how painstaking this process is. It is also not a good idea to become aware of how painstaking it is two days before your policy brief is due!

To this end, this assignment, worth five percent of your final grade, requires you to submit one fully composed chart and relevant R code. I will give feedback within two weeks and this feedback – and the process of making the chart itself – should give you a sense of the work required for the final policy brief.

An incomplete list of things that a fully composed chart:

- a title that makes the point of the chart\*
- a subtitle that tells us what the data are in the chart\*
- clear axis labels
- annotations as needed on the chart to highlight relevant points/levels
- colors that highlight the story
- a graphic form that is consistent with the point you're trying to make
- ideally, a scheme that directly labels lines, rather than a stand-alone legend

\* These first two are not mandatory. However, if you don't use this method to tell us what the point of your graphic is and what the data are, you need an alternative method that makes this clear.

Here is the [sheet](#) I used last year to grade this assignment. It mentions the most common pitfalls in submitted graphics. I use this worksheet to grade the assignment, and it is a good checklist for a complete chart.

If you want to do some kind of chart annotation or fix that you don't know how to implement in R, note on your document what that is. If you do this, I will grade as if you did produce this, and I can give feedback on how to implement.

As for substance, the topic of the chart is your choice. If you would like to make a chart for your policy brief and get feedback, you're welcome to do that. You're also welcome to make a chart on an entirely different topic.

Turn in the final product via this [google link](#). Submit a pdf; the form is set up to accept pdfs only. The pdf should include (i) the chart and (ii) the R code you used to generate it. You can print both the R code and the project to pdf and combine the pdfs into one.

**Late assignments receive a grade of zero.** It is better to turn in a bad chart on time than a better chart late.