

# How to spot a misleading graph – Lea Gaslowitz

## VOCABULARY

### 1. Put words/phrases in the correct column.

stabilize      rocket      plummet      reach a peak      fluctuate  
 increase      decrease      drop      grow      fall      rise  
 level off      climb      decline      plunge      recover

GO UP	GO DOWN

### 2. Study the table and rewrite the sentences given below.

NOUNS	VERBS
There was an increase <u>in sales</u> .	Sales increased <u>by 20%</u> .
There was a decrease <u>of 20%</u> .	
There was a <u>sharp</u> increase.	Sales increased <u>sharply</u> .

a) Last year, the sales of mobile phones went up dramatically.

Last year, there was \_\_\_\_\_

b) As you can see, there was a fall in the price of oil last quarter.

As you can see, the price of oil \_\_\_\_\_

c) In 2002, we observed a rise in our production of 15%.

In 2002, our production \_\_\_\_\_

d) There was a slight drop in profits.

Our profits \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Write a description for the graph showing the sales (in million \$) of ABC Ltd company.




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4. Work in pairs. One of you should describe a graph and the other should draw that graph below.



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### VIDEO & DISCUSSION

#### 5. Watch the video and complete these sentences with one word each.

- a) Yet, as it turns out, there are plenty of ways graphs can \_\_\_\_\_ and outright manipulate.
- b) This is one of the most common ways graphs misrepresent data, by \_\_\_\_\_ the scale.
- c) First of all, the scale is \_\_\_\_\_, compressing the 15-month span after March 2009 to look shorter than the preceding six months.
- d) And picking specific data points can \_\_\_\_\_ important changes in between.
- e) The first graph plots the average annual ocean temperature from 1880 to 2016 making the change look \_\_\_\_\_.
- f) When they're used well, graphs can help us intuitively grasp \_\_\_\_\_ data.

#### 6. Match words which you wrote down in exercise 5 with their synonyms.

- complicated –
- unimportant –
- cover –
- illogical –
- change –
- cheat –

#### 7. Discuss:

- Do you agree with the statements that “numbers don’t lie”?
- What is cherry picking according to the video?
- In which situations can we receive misleading data? Why would some people like to hide some of it? (think about the video + your own examples)
- How often do you see distorted or inconsistent graphs?
- Do you think people should be punished for misrepresenting data given to the public?