

The first thing we must understand is that, no matter how much visual support they have, papers are written works. Filling pages with unnecessary images, graphs, diagrams or any other kind of visual material is never a good idea. Remember that you are writing a professional academic paper and, therefore, your capacity to discern which material is important. Once this is clear, it is time to discern [which information is likely to be visually demonstrated](#).

Some main ideas would help you to decide when to use graphs. Choose only information that can be clearer if explained visually, and only if it is so important that you desire the reader to keep focus on it more than in other parts. Besides, this piece of information must be qualitatively or quantitatively measurable.

Images can also be used to summarize; plenty of information can be perfectly summed up in a single graph. Lastly, another reason to use images is comparison. Graphs and diagrams are great tools to indicate the differences between two agents.

Do not fill up your images with too much information because it would complicate the readers' understanding. Images combine or support the written words, but should not be used to replace them. A good combination of words and images can ease the paper's general understanding.

Thinking Visually: How to Choose?

It is important to know the possibilities each tool offers. Graphs, for example, are good to express the mathematical relationship or statistical correlation between data. Line graphs are useful to present an evolution, circular graphs are better to indicate proportional parts and column graphs are commonly used to compare different elements.

[Researchers and academics are supposed to have a good command of graphs usage](#). However, the capacity of selecting which data is most likely to be shown this way makes the difference. Indeed, achieving a good command of these tools is quite difficult, but is possible with experience.

Last but not least, it is always helpful to consider the [final goal of an academic paper: communication](#). Thus, if the graph clearly points to one of the research's main statements, do not doubt in using it.

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