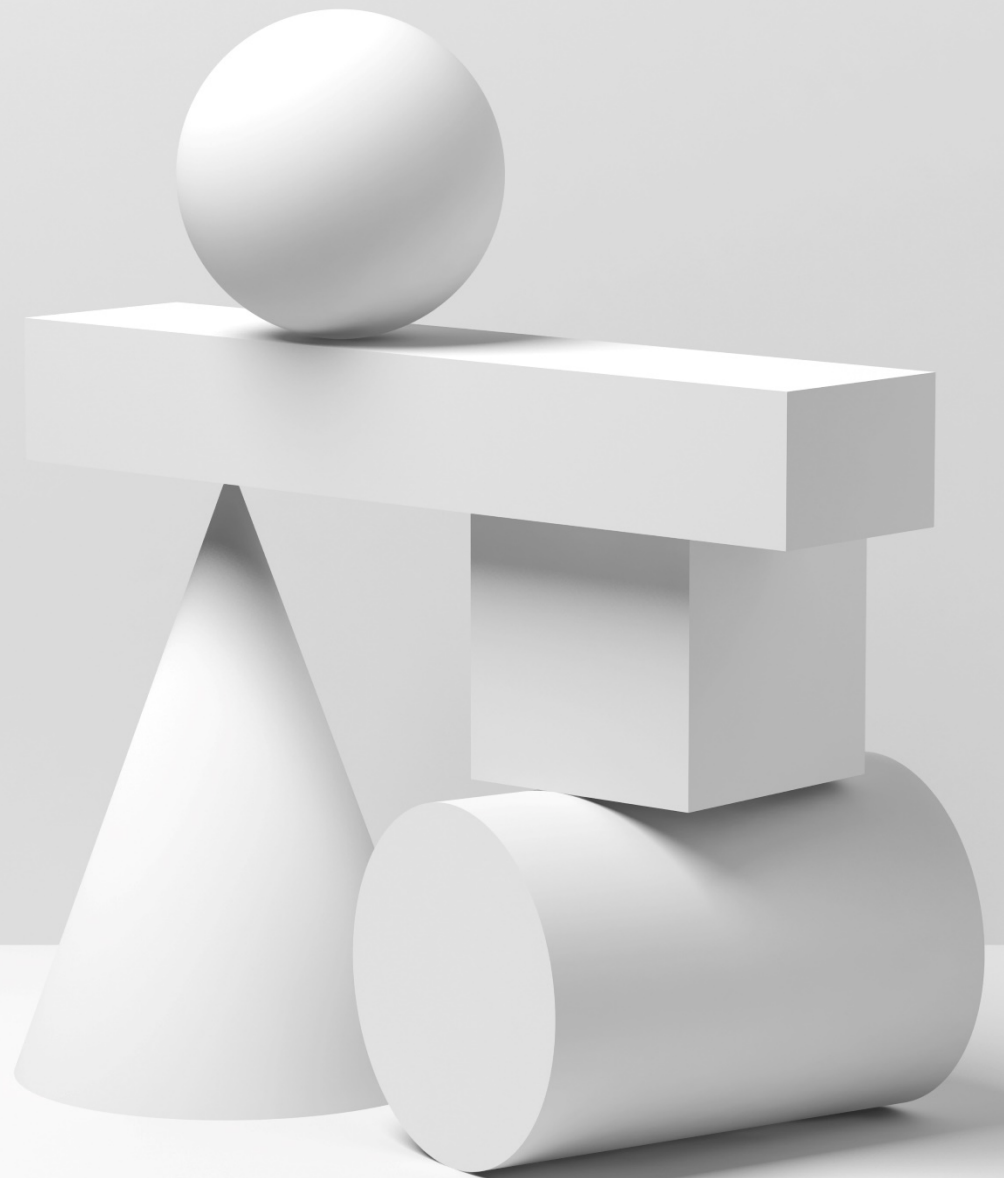# E2A Tool Kit:

V. Infographics and One-pagers

Samia Amin, Carolyn Corea, Phomdaen Souvanna, and Siobhan Mills de la Rosa

June 2023

V. Infographics and One-Pagers

> "Form follows function."
>
> Louis Sullivan

We've all seen them – a one-page summary or infographic that is designed to synthesize findings for busy people. Sometimes these are well done – sharing a few skimmable and relevant insights where graphics help you anticipate, understand, and remember content. More frequently, they fall within one of two extremes:

- A text-heavy page that's hard to read – with too much content and too many graphics jammed together, with tight margins and every available space filled with information.

- An infographic with so little information that you struggle to know what to do with it or how to place it in context.

This happens when we don't pay sufficient thought to why we are creating the one-pager, for whom, and what we want it to achieve. Mastering how to create effective one-pagers and infographics is critical for advancing E2A. Most people have such limited time that they are unable to read reports, even those that are well written. Infographics and one-pagers allow researchers to share study findings with their target audience in a meaningful way. They enable audiences to review the information and understand its implications for their work.

Infographics can be used independently of or incorporated into other evidence products, such as reports, presentations, and one-pagers. One-pagers provide easy-to-read snapshots of key action steps, findings, or takeaways. This chapter provides guidance on planning, content development, and design to help you develop effective infographics and one-pagers.

Key Steps

Plan	Develop Compelling Content	Design for Focus

I. A Tool Kit Overview

II. Planning for E2A Products

III. Written Products

IV. Presentations

V. Infographics & One-pagers

VI. Data Visualization

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Step 1: Plan

1. **Define the target audience and topic.** When developing infographics and one-pagers, it is important to define your audience and their unique needs and what you want them to do after reading your infographic and one-pager.

    ▪ Define and prioritize your users. Given the tough choices you will need to make on what to include in and what to exclude from your one-pager/infographic, you will need to prioritize your users. (See the discussion in Chapter II: Planning for E2A Products on selecting primary and secondary audiences.)

    ▪ Think about where your audience is in their evidence use journey and how you want them to use your one-pager/infographic to move them along from one stage to the next.

2. **Define your key goal by asking the right questions.** You might be tempted to begin with the question "What type of infographic or one-pager do I want to develop?" Instead, focus on: "What is my key goal in developing this infographic/one-pager? What's the primary 'call to action,' i.e., the one thing I want the audience to do after they read it?"

    ▪ If your first response is simply "know about my study," push yourself to answer why that goal is important. Defining the call to action can be challenging but will simplify later decisions, such as:

    — Determining the infographic type (see Step 2 below)
    — Identifying the core message(s) to include
    — Deciding what to exclude due to limited space

    ▪ In the exhibits below, we illustrate four potential goals and their associated calls to action, using examples of varying complexity. The types of goals illustrated are listed below, but please note that this is not an exhaustive list:

    — Understand the importance of the problem (Exhibit V.1)
    — Understand and retain selected study findings (Exhibit V.2)
    — Share a snapshot of the study (Exhibit V.3)
    — Encourage the use of evidence-based practices (Exhibit V.4)

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Exhibit V.1. Sample Goal: Understand the Importance of the Problem
Call to action: Care about the topic and develop appetite to pay attention to it
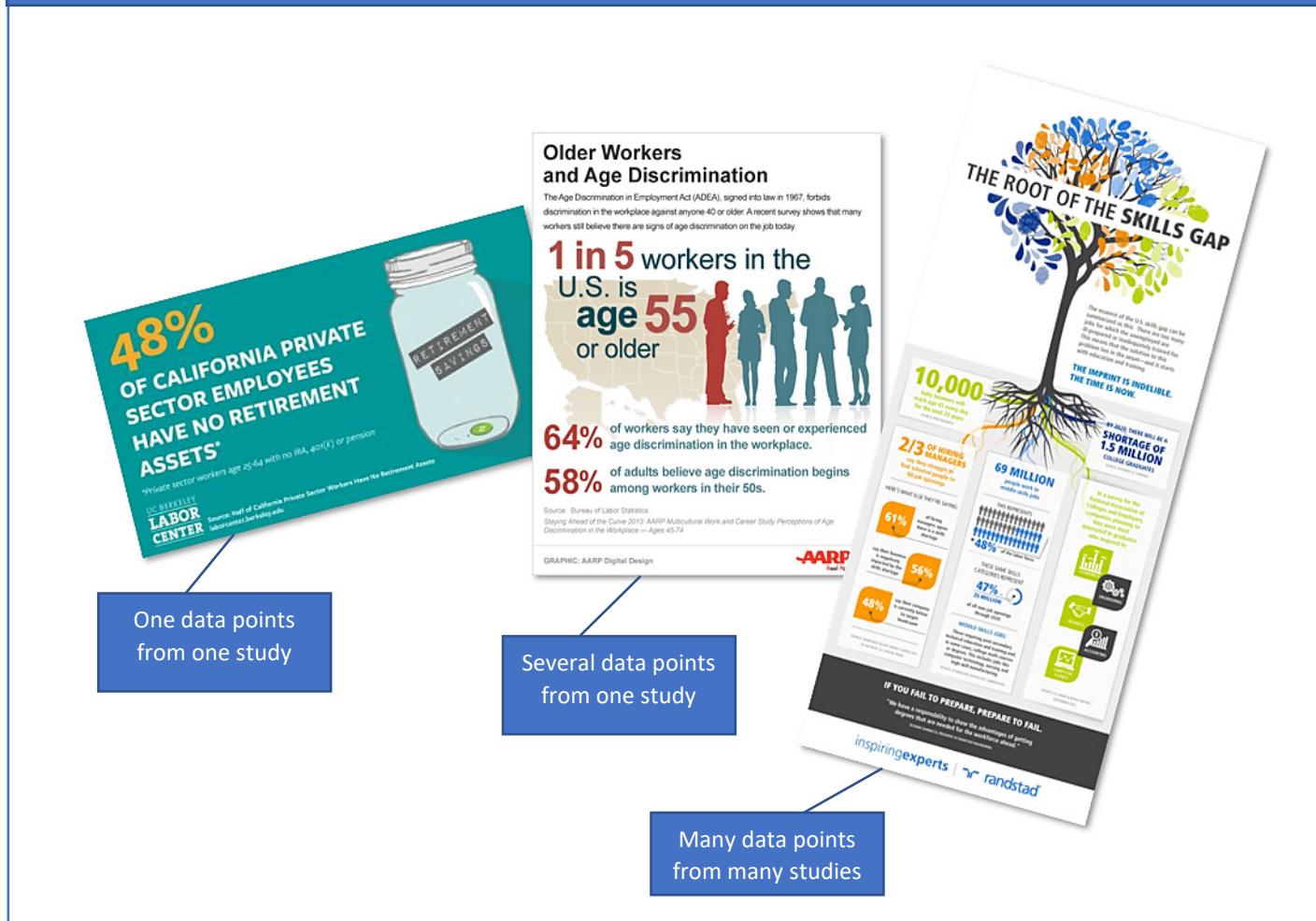
One data points from one study

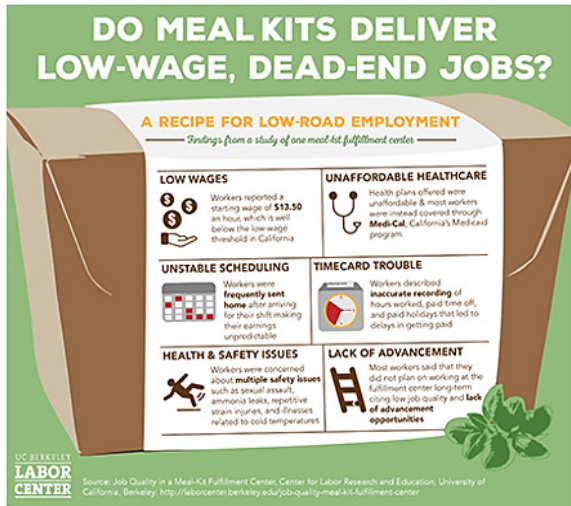Several data points from one study

Many data points from many studies

Source: Collated and annotated by authors. Infographics sourced from: https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/tools-resources/; https://www.aarp.org/work/age-discrimination/workplace-age-discrimination-infographic/; and https://elearninginfographics.com/the-root-of-the-skills-gap-infographic/.

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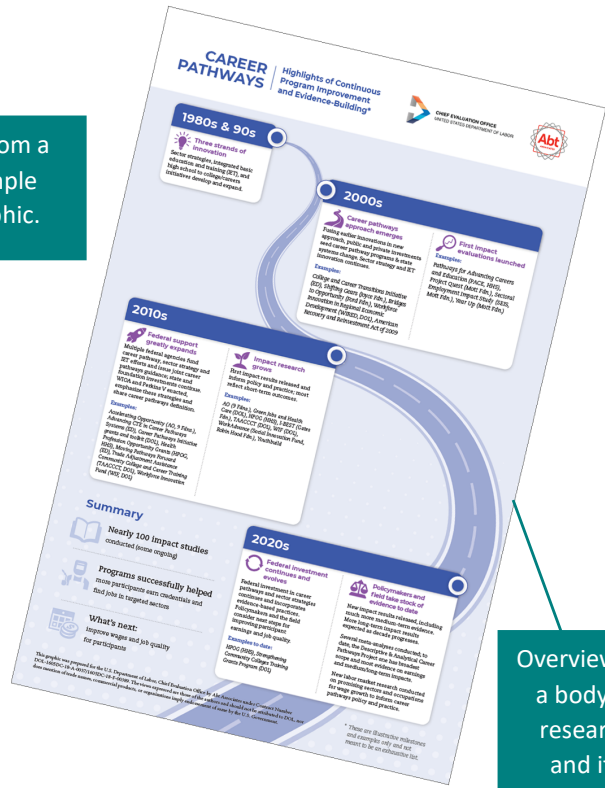# Exhibit V.2. Sample Goal: Understand and Retain Selected Study Findings
Call to action: Drive interest in findings and a desire to learn more
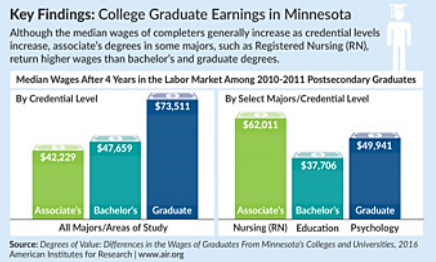
A single insight from a single study. Simple comparison graphic.

Overview of a body of research and its significance. Simple but effective design.

Key findings from a single study. Strong visual design reinforces each finding.

Source: Collated and annotated by authors. Infographics sourced from: https://news.berkeley.edu/2018/10/30/popular-meal-kit-companies-may-be-creating-low-wage-dead-end-jobs-study-finds/ and https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/Career%20Pathways_Highlights%20of%20Continuous%20Program%20Improvement%20and%20Evidence%20Building_one%20pager.pdf.

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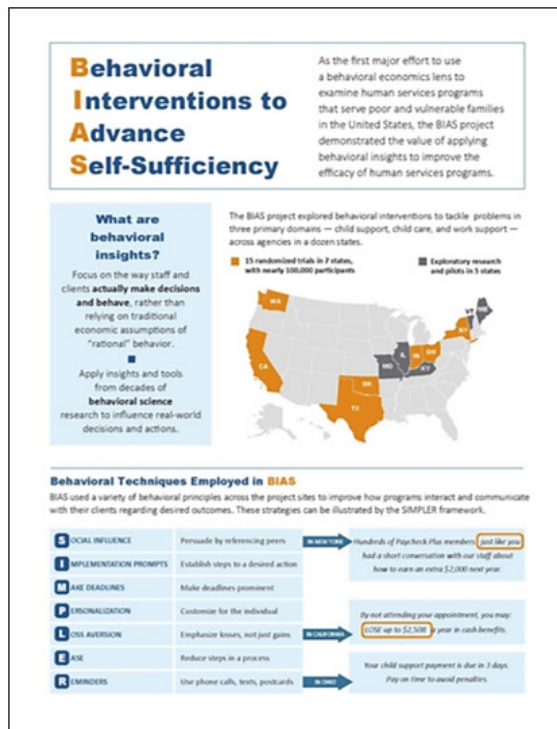
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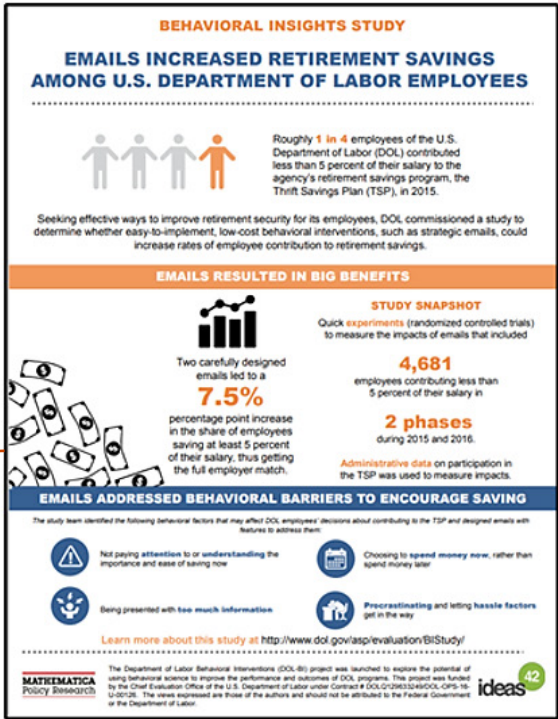
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Exhibit V.3. Sample Goal: Share Study Snapshot, Including Context, Methods, and Findings
Call to action: Increase recall, application and sharing of study context and findings

EARLY SNAPSHOT: Shares study goals, locations, and methods.

FINAL SNAPSHOT: Summarizes study context and design and highlights findings.

Source: Collated and annotated by authors. One pagers sourced from: https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/BIAS_TwoPageInfographic_11-9-2016.pdf and https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/4a-50291-EBSA-Infographic-Color-20170501.pdf.

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Exhibit V.4. Sample Goal: Encourage Evidence-Based Practices
Call to action: Increase understanding and application of actionable steps

Education Endowment Foundation

IMPROVING SECONDARY SCIENCE
Summary of recommendations

1 Preconceptions: Build on the ideas that pupils bring to science lessons
- 1a: Understand the preconceptions that pupils bring to science lessons
- 1b: Develop pupils' thinking through cognitive conflict and discussion
- 1c: Allow enough time to challenge misconceptions and change thinking

2 Self-regulation: Help pupils direct their own learning
- 2a: Explicitly teach pupils how to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning
- 2b: Model your own thinking to help pupils develop their metacognitive and cognitive knowledge
- 2c: Promote metacognitive talk and dialogue in the classroom

3 Modelling: Use models to support understanding
- 3a: Use models to help pupils develop a deeper understanding of scientific concepts
- 3b: Select the models you use with care
- 3c: Explicitly teach pupils about models and encourage pupils to critique them

4 Memory: Support pupils to retain and retrieve knowledge
- 4a: Pay attention to cognitive load—structure tasks to limit the amount of new information pupils need to process
- 4b: Revisit knowledge after a gap to help pupils retain it in their long-term memory
- 4c: Provide opportunities for pupils to retrieve the knowledge that they have previously learnt
- 4d: Encourage pupils to elaborate on what they have learnt

5 Practical Work: Use practical work purposefully and as part of a learning sequence
- 5a: Know the purpose of each practical activity
- 5b: Sequence practical activities with other learning
- 5c: Use practical work to develop scientific reasoning
- 5d: Use a variety of approaches to practical science

6 Language of Science: Develop scientific vocabulary and support pupils to read and write about science
- 6a: Carefully select the vocabulary to teach and focus on the most tricky words
- 6b: Show the links between words and their composite parts
- 6c: Use activities to engage pupils with reading scientific text and help them to comprehend it
- 6d: Support pupils to develop their scientific writing skills

7 Feedback: Use structured feedback to move on pupils' thinking
- 7a: Find out what your pupils understand
- 7b: Think about what you're providing feedback on
- 7c: Provide feedback as comments rather than marks
- 7d: Make sure pupils can respond to your feedback

Teaching for engagement

Effective use of color to distinguish elements

Concise column headings and subheadings make domains and guidance memorable

Bulleted text in columns provides actionable steps

Evidence citations omitted, reducing distracting text for practitioners

Source: Collated and annotated by authors. One pager sourced from: https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/eef-guidance-reports/science-ks3-ks4/EEF_science_summary_of_recommendations_poster.pdf?v=1685484361ks4/EEF_science_summary_of_recommendations_poster.pdf?v=1685484361.

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3. **Consider the dissemination plan.** You may need to customize the format of your infographic or one-pager depending on how you plan to distribute it and how your users will receive it.

   ▪ For example, an infographic shared solely via social media may stand on its own but, if it is shared as a conference handout, you will likely need to embed it in a one-pager.

   ▪ If you are sharing a one-pager electronically, you might prefer that all your content fits on the front of the page. If you are sharing it as a hard copy, you may want to prioritize space on the front for your most important content and use the back to list supporting information, authors, and sources.

   ▪ If you anticipate people will view it on a mobile device rather than a desktop, you will need to make different choices about the size of the infographic and what you will include in it.

4. **Plan for multiple Iterations.** Infographics and one-pagers often require significant iteration to winnow down the content to what is most important and finalize the visuals, formatting, and layout. When developing your infographic timeline, allow time for multiple reviews and revisions.

> *Reminder: See Chapter II. Planning E2A Products for tips on assembling a team with diverse skills, which Is critically important for one-pager and infographic development.*

Step 2: Develop Compelling Content

1. **Plan for your infographic or one-pager to have no more than four main components.** These include a title, introduction, body (a mix of text and visuals), and source. See Chapter III. Written Products: Writing for Impact for tips on developing effective written content for your one-pager.

   ▪ **Title.** The title should be descriptive, brief, and, if possible, highlight the key takeaway as simply as possible. Creating such a title can often be a challenging and time-consuming task. The brainstorming you did during the planning phase about your audience and call to action will help you determine how to word the title to encourage your audience to read the entire one-pager and take the desired action.

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- **Introduction.** The introduction should consist of 1 to 3 sentences. Due to the brevity of infographics and one-pagers, you should consider what your audience already knows about the topic. This will help you focus on presenting new information while providing only the minimum and essential context.

- **Body.** The body should include visuals and limited narrative that communicate your message and highlight your call to action. Developing the body is the hardest part of creating the one-pager and can benefit from input from a diverse team with a mix of skills. We discuss the key content choices below.

- **Source(s).** Cite sources at the bottom of the infographic or one-pager. (Listing a source may not always be necessary when the goal is to convey evidence-based practices.)

The example in Exhibit V.6 at the end of this section demonstrates the effective application of these principles.

2. **Winnow down the information you want to convey.** Think about how much time your target audience is likely to spend on the infographic or one-pager. Studies suggest that people typically spend less than 7 seconds looking at a visual before deciding whether it is worth their time. Exhibit V.1 on page 47 shows three types of infographics that require very different amounts of time to process and read. Ask yourself:

- How many discrete pieces of data should I present?

- What additional value does each piece of information contribute?

- What is the best way to convey each information element: as text, visuals, or both? This is not always a straightforward choice. A pie chart showing that only 15 percent of people do X may be harder to interpret than a statement saying the same. If that is the only information you want to convey, consider including both text and visuals; however, if you need to include other data elements, you may need to choose one or the other.

- What is the minimum amount of context I need to provide to achieve my main goals?

3. **Use visuals to communicate your message.**

- Infographics essentially consist of three layers of visual elements, presented below in the order in which audiences experience them.

    — **Design elements that grab attention:** The first layer includes the design elements that make the infographic visually appealing (see the next section on Step 3).

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— **Intuitive elements:** The second layer consists of the design elements that help audiences begin to understand content before they even fully pay attention. (This is known as pre-attentive processing, and an example might be the use of a dollar sign icon to cue the reader to think of financial costs or benefits.)

— **Core content:** The third layer is the data elements that present the core content you want to share.

- **Core content:** Combine your understanding of your goals and call to action to select effective visuals. Exhibit V.5 displays some common elements used in infographics and one-pagers. For more detailed guidance on developing effective charts, graphs, and bar charts to highlight trends and patterns in data, see Chapter VI. Data Visualization. When developing your visual content, consider the following:

  - Timelines help tell a story.

  - Pie and donut charts highlight parts that make a whole.

  - Lists can encourage action.

  - Flowcharts visually describe a process and can highlight specific parts of it.

  - Maps can demonstrate trends across a geographic area.

- Use free infographics templates for design inspiration and/or to develop your infographic. See the options listed in the Resources section of this chapter.

4. **Highlight the key takeaway.** Make it easy for readers to identify the key takeaway and *how* they should use it. In Exhibit V.6 below, for example, the main takeaway is very clear, memorable, and shareable.

Exhibit V.5. Types of Visuals

List

Timeline

Comparison

Types of Visuals for Infographics

Map

Flowchart

Data Visualization
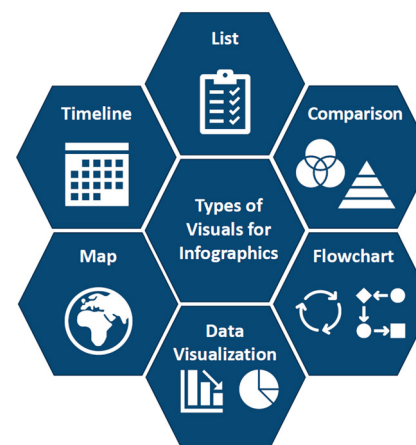
Source: Adapted by authors from Easelly's 7 Common Types of Infographics.

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Exhibit V.6. Example One-Pager (with Infographic) Structure and Design

TITLE: The use of succinct text in large font clarifies the topic and thesis.

INTRODUCTION AND SUBTITLE: Provide key finding and context on scope of study.

TEXT CONTENT: Succinct and memorable findings and sub-findings that are easy to scan. Additional detail in smaller font.

VISUAL CONTENT: Clever use of takeaway box to cue readers to overall topic. Great use of icons to convey sub-findings.

DESIGN: Great use of different font sizes, capitalization, and bold text to focus attention in stages. Effective use of white space and placement and complementary colors.

Source and hyperlink to learn more

Source: Annotated by authors. Infographics sourced from: https://news.berkeley.edu/2018/10/30/popular-meal-kit-companies-may-be-creating-low-wage-dead-end-jobs-study-finds/.
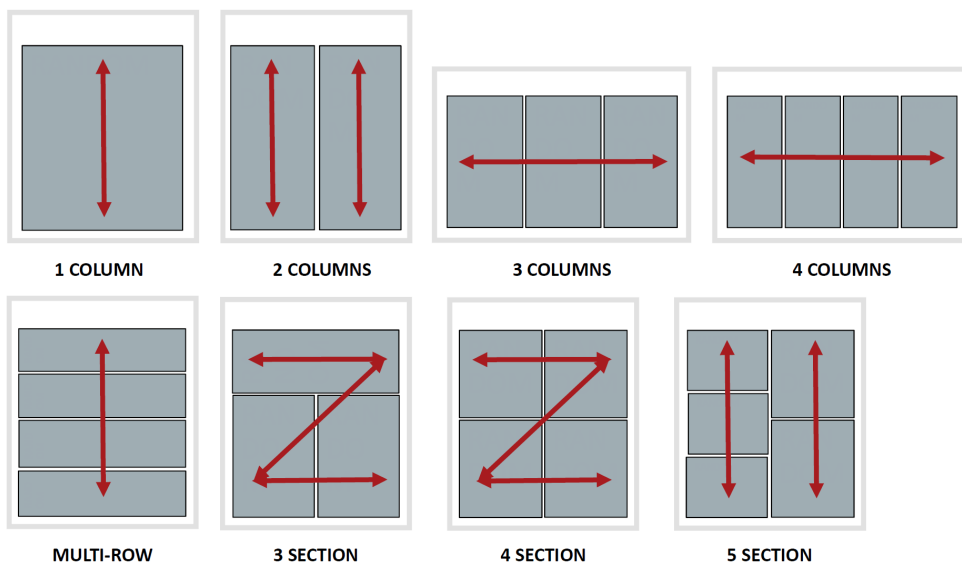
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Step 3: Design to Focus Attention

1. **Use white space.** Infographics and one-pagers can feel overwhelming. To make them inviting, use white space to reinforce that they are easy to read.

2. **Use fonts and color to highlight key takeaways.** Font choice, color, and size can help the reader differentiate between key takeaways and supporting content.

> *Reminder: See Chapter II. Planning for E2A Products for tips on developing accessible products.*

   - Use bold, bright color and larger fonts for key takeaways. Avoid script fonts, which are hard to read.

   - Limit your color scheme to 2 to 3 main colors to minimize distractions to the reader.

   - When appropriate, choose colors that are relevant to the content (e.g., green might be a prominent color in an infographic or one-pager on retirement savings) and help convey your findings (e.g., using different shades of color to demonstrate scores, scales, or ratings).

3. **Leverage the flow and layout of your content to focus attention.** The layout dictates how you want the audience to read the content (e.g., top to bottom or left to right).

   - Exhibit V.7 shows common types of layout options with arrows that depict related reading patterns. You want to choose a layout that will help draw attention to the most important information.

   - Consider positioning key text in an F-pattern. Research on how people scan websites may be helpful for written content as well. Eye tracking research suggests that readers' eyers move in an F-pattern (see Exhibit V.8). In other words, they start at the top left corner of the content, scan horizontally, move on to the next line to do the same (but this time scanning less content), and then drop to the next block and scan vertically down. Unless they find something compelling in this scan, they may abandon the effort. Position key content based on this pattern.

   - When comparing different options, a two-column format of presentation may be more effective.
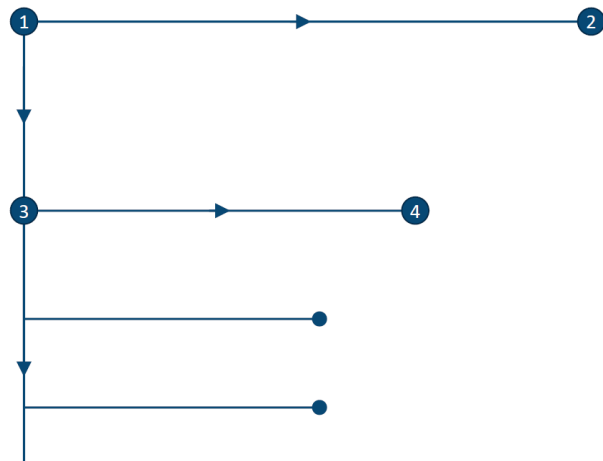
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Exhibit V.7. One-pager Layout Options

1 COLUMN   2 COLUMNS   3 COLUMNS   4 COLUMNS

MULTI-ROW   3 SECTION   4 SECTION   5 SECTION

Source: Adapted by authors from: https://mention.com/en/blog/infographics-best-practices/.

Exhibit V.8. F-format Reading Patterns

Source: Adapted by authors from: https://sproutreach.com/blog/f-shaped-reading-pattern-on-the-web-revisiting-its-meaning/.

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4. **Explore if data surfaced early in a study lends itself to infographic.** Developing infographics to describe study populations provides a visual element that can be used across study products (interim briefs and presentations, informational material to drum up interest in the study, final reports) (see Exhibit V.9 for examples)
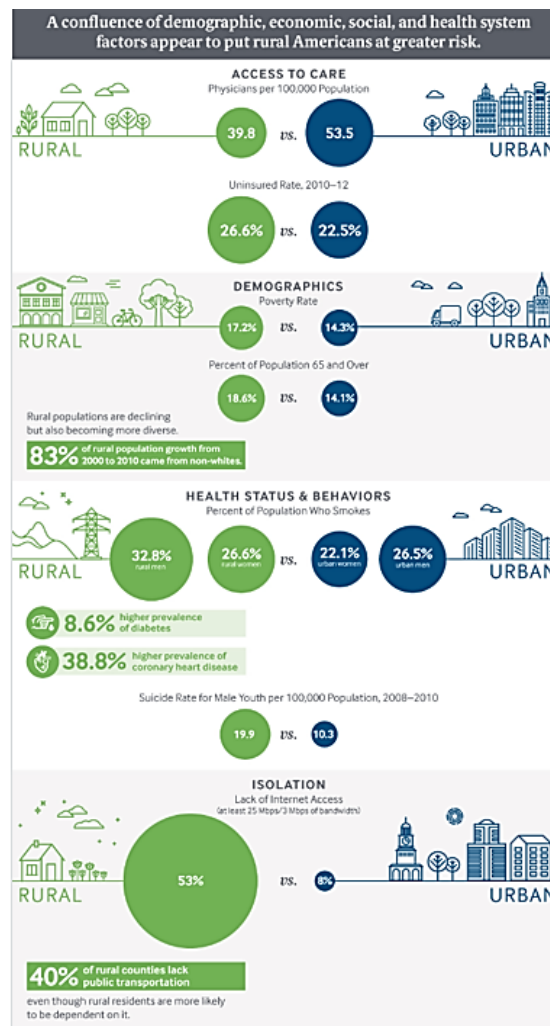
Examples V.9. Using Icons and Data Visualization to Share Participants' Characteristics
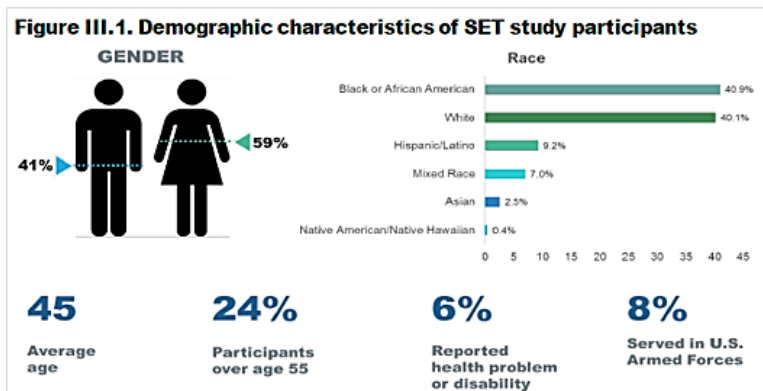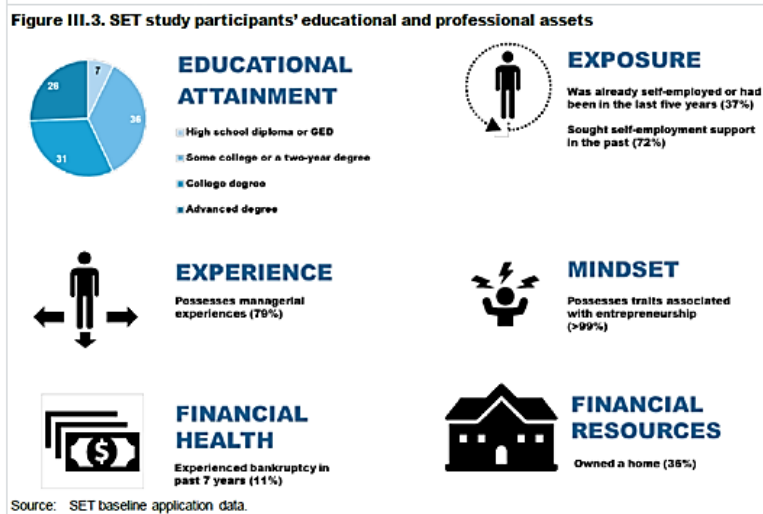
Source: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/SET_Pilot_Program_Implementation_Study_Report.pdf and https://www.commonwealthfund.org/node/15471.

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☑ Infographics and One-Pagers Checklist

❖ **Plan**

    ☐ Define the target audience and topic

    ☐ Define your key message and call to action

    ☐ Select your approach and dissemination plan

       — Plan for multiple iterations

❖ **Develop Compelling Content**

    ☐ Stick to a simple structure

    ☐ Use visuals to communicate your message

    ☐ Highlight the implications

❖ **Design to Focus Attention**

    ☐ Consider the flow and layout of your content

       — Think about how the layout will shape how your audience reads

    ☐ Use fonts and color to highlight key takeaways

       — Use bold, bright, and larger fonts that are easy to skim

       — Limit your color scheme to 2 to 3 colors

       — Where possible, choose colors that cue your audience to the content

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Resources

Infographic templates

- Visme infographic templates: https://www.visme.co/templates/infographics/

Infographic rubrics

- Simple rubric: https://guides.lib.unc.edu/ld.php?content_id=35032138
- In-depth rubric: https://www.schrockguide.net/uploads/3/9/2/2/392267/schrock_infographic_rubric.pdf

Additional Sources

Design

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Rubrics

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