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 in sales. There was a decrease of 20%.	Sales increased by 20%.
There was a sharp increase.	Sales increased sharply.

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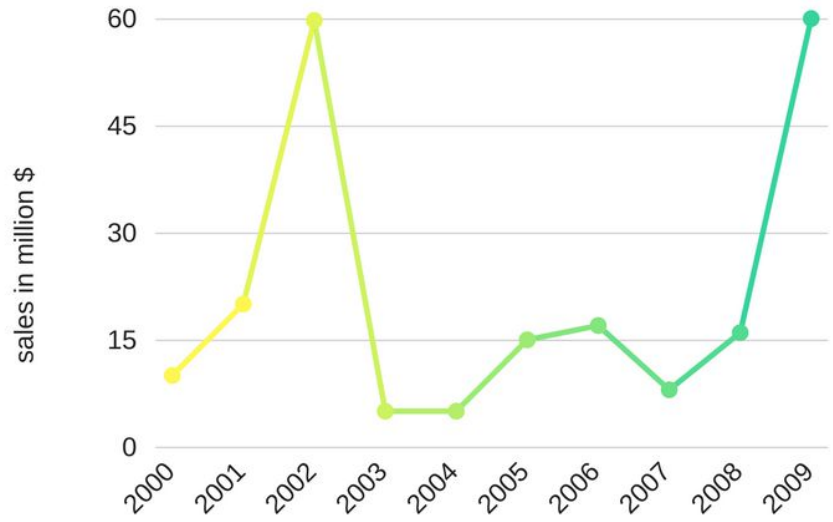
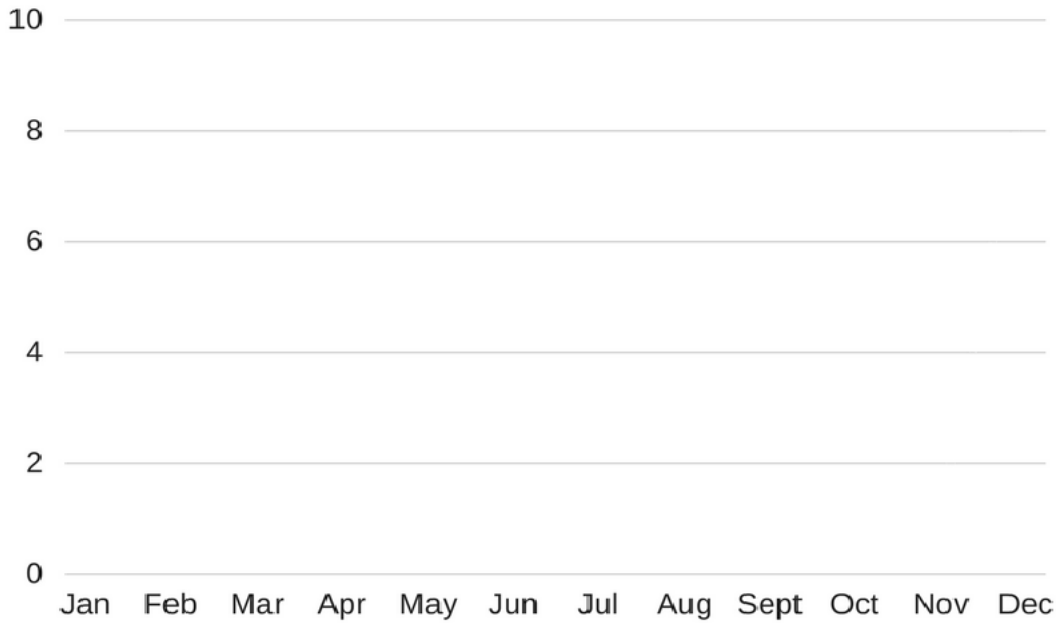
3. **Write a description for the graph showing the sales (in million $) of ABC Ltd company.**



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?