



How to Read a Chart, Table or Diagram

ESSENTIAL SKILLS DOCUMENT USE RESOURCE SHEET

CHARTS and TABLES

Learning to read charts and tables is another way to understand how information is collected and organized. It also helps you become skilled in gathering information quickly as well as categorizing information to develop your own charts and tables in a variety of subject areas.

- Charts and tables are ways that a great deal of information can be gathered and organized into a small space, often with pictures and/or symbols. Charts and tables are visual displays to give information, show processes, or make comparisons.
- Start by reading the **headings**. They will give you important facts and help you find key information. Often headings go *down* and *across*.
- Ask: What information do I need to find? Then, go to the chart or table to find it.
- To look up information, read down and across. Read carefully by using your finger or a ruler to help you read down to the correct row and across the correct column.

DIAGRAMS

Diagrams are used to illustrate how something works, how it is constructed or how parts relate to one another.

- Start by reading all **labels** or **captions**. They will give you important facts and help you find key information.
- Ask: What is this graphic trying to show me? What information do I need? Scan the diagram/s for the terms or information you need. Look for key information and possible sequencing.

