

# 08 Visual Encoding

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<http://info-design-lab.github.io>

**Visualization helps humans  
solve analytical problems  
quickly and accurately**





## 28 day summary with change over previous period

Tweets

**66** ↓21.4%



Tweet impressions

**1.4M** ↑5.1%



Profile visits

**21.9K** ↓9.1%



Mentions

**447** ↓9.3%



Followers

**56.8K** ↑1,143



October 2015 • 3 days so far...

glucose 6.6

glucose 6.6

 glucose 6.6

glucose 6.6



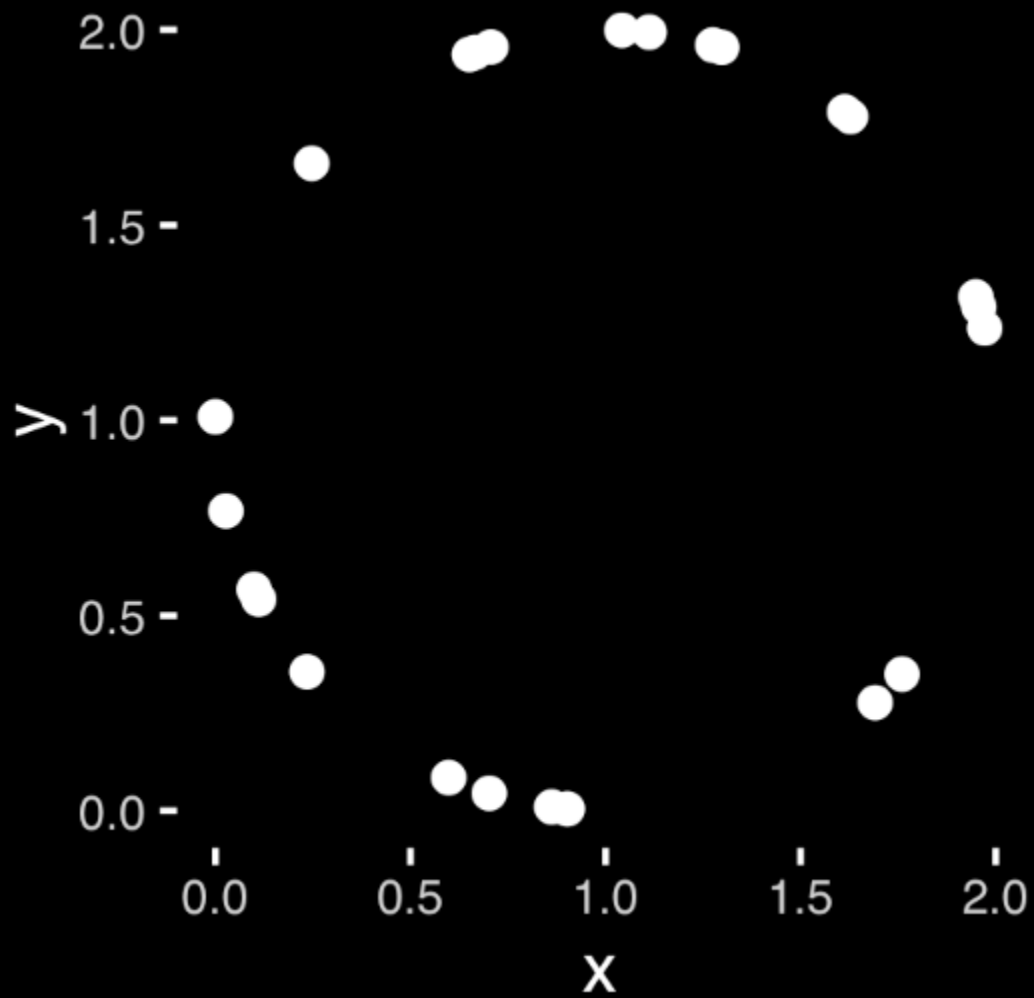


glucose 6.6

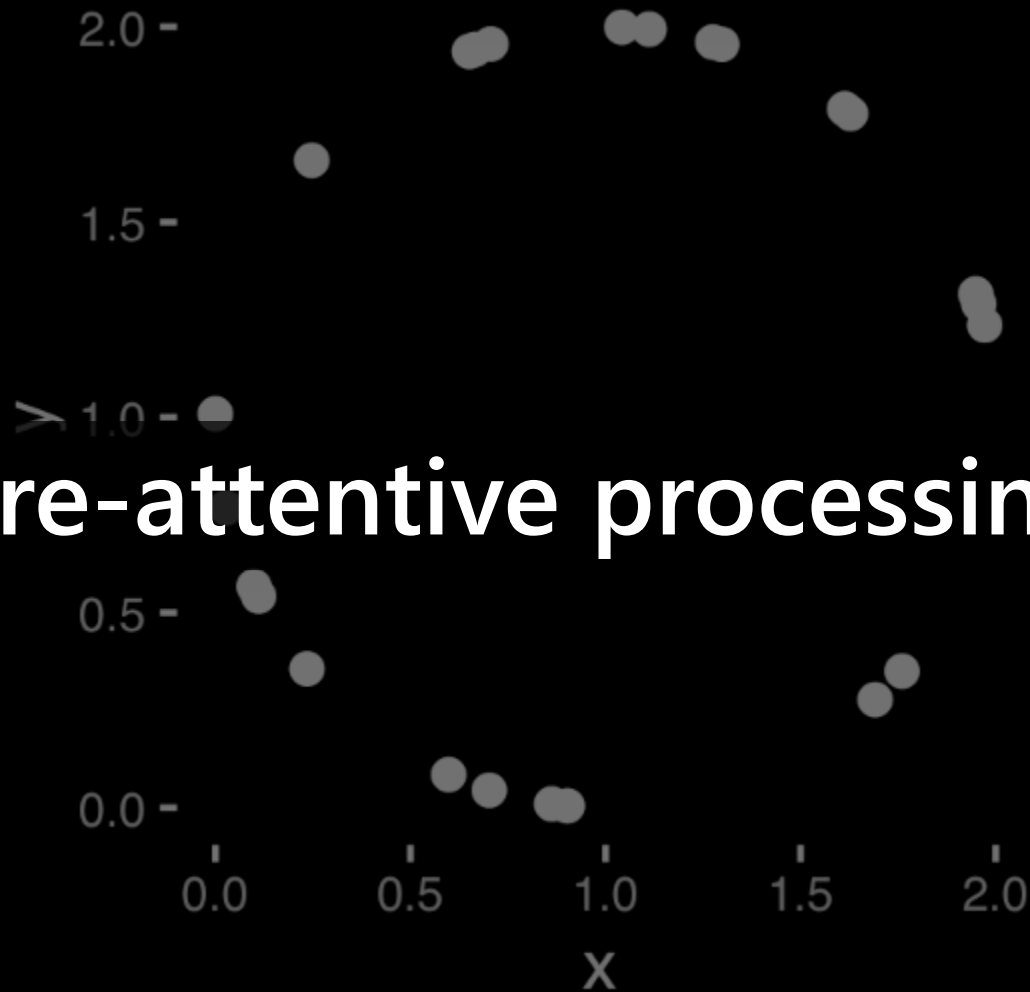


x	y
1.972	1.236
1.112	1.994
0.000	1.009
0.665	1.942
0.235	0.356
0.247	1.658
1.275	1.961
0.702	0.045
1.760	0.350
1.691	0.277
1.628	1.778
1.957	1.290

x	y
0.111	0.542
0.902	0.005
0.598	0.085
1.613	1.790
1.298	1.955
0.651	1.937
1.949	1.316
0.099	0.567
0.862	0.010
0.027	0.768
0.706	1.956
1.042	1.999



pre-attentive processing



141692653289793238462643383279  
302884197169399375104820974944  
792307816406286208998628053482  
342117067982148086513282306647

14169 26532 89793 23846 26433 83279  
30288 41971 69399 37510 48209 74944  
79230 78164 06286 20899 86280 53482  
34211 70679 82148 08651 32823 06647

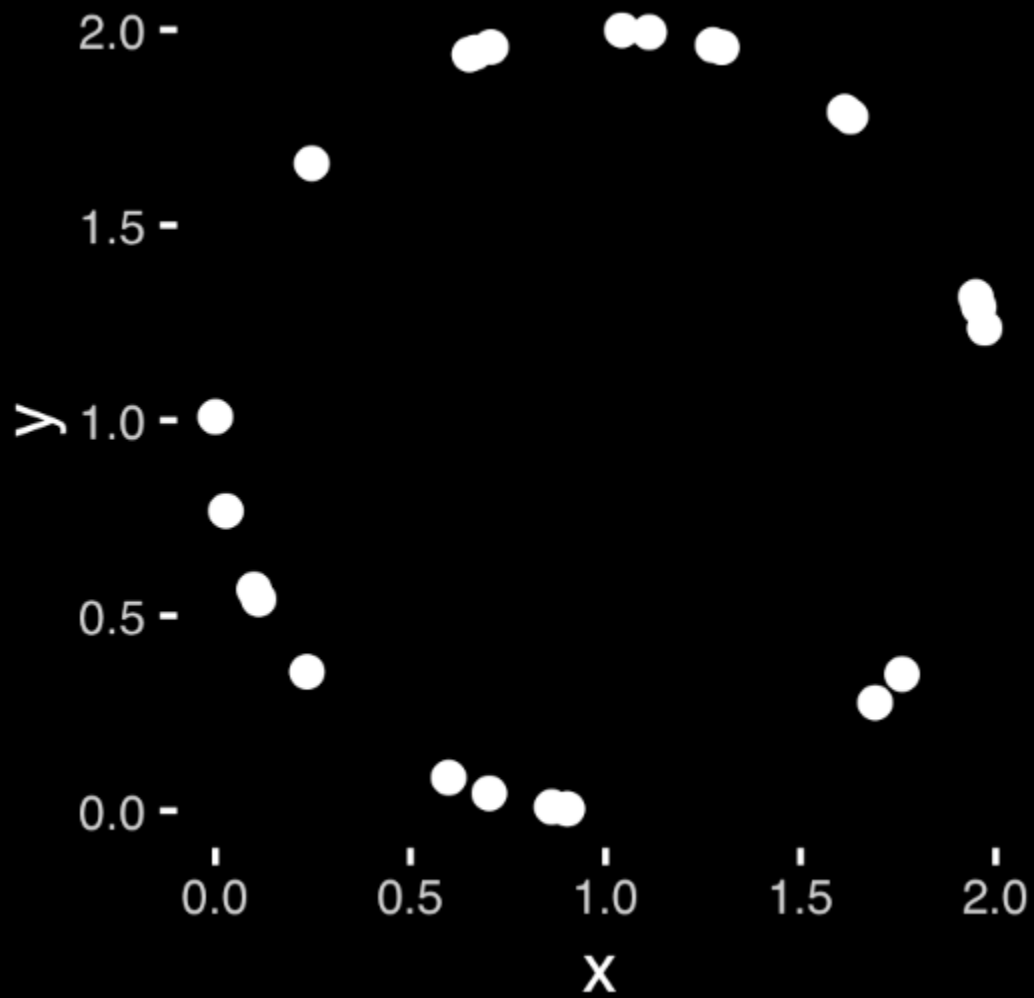
141692653289793238462643383279  
302884197169399375104820974944  
792307816406286208998628053482  
342117067982148086513282306647

A graph is an **encoding**  
of the data

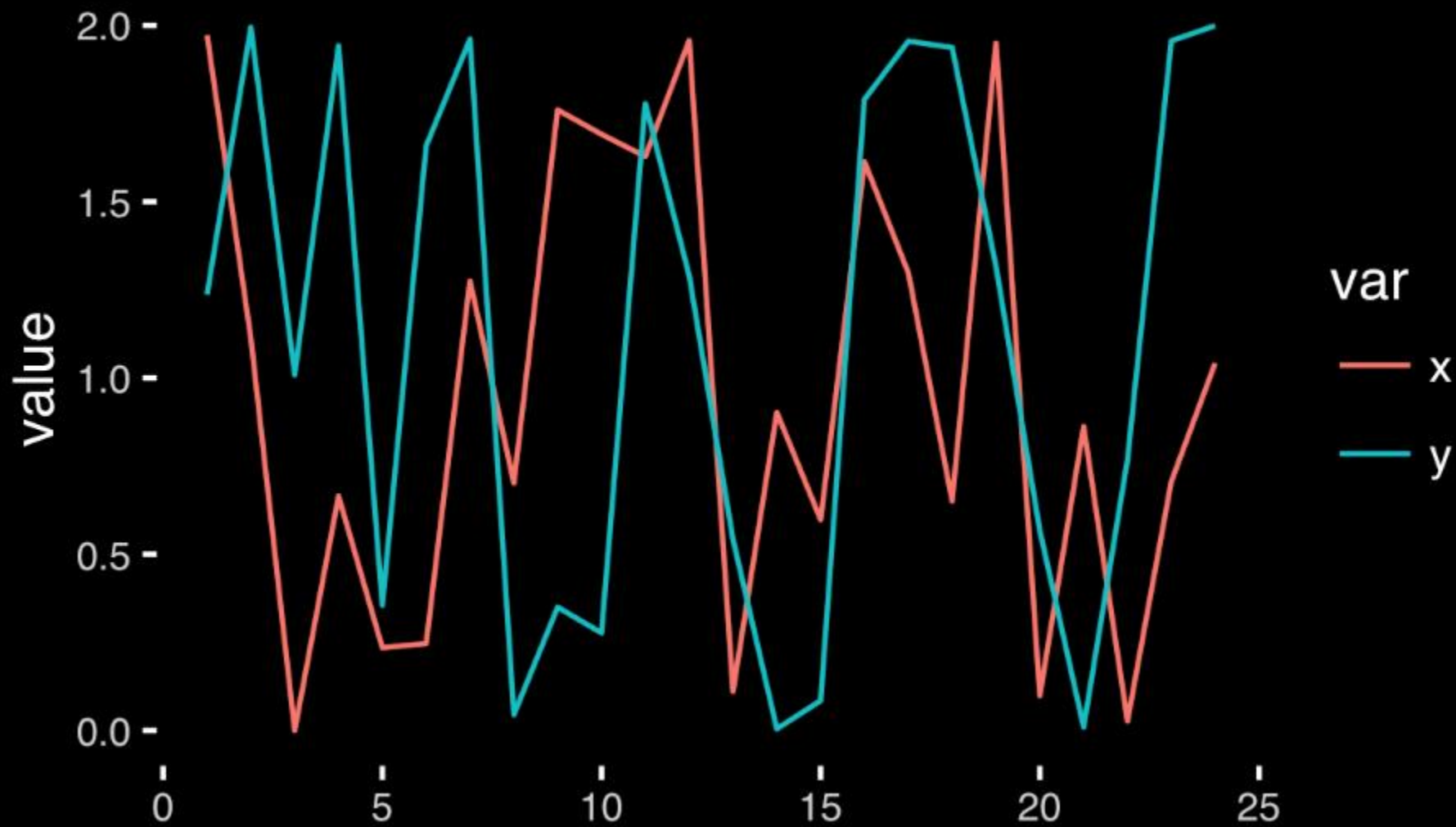


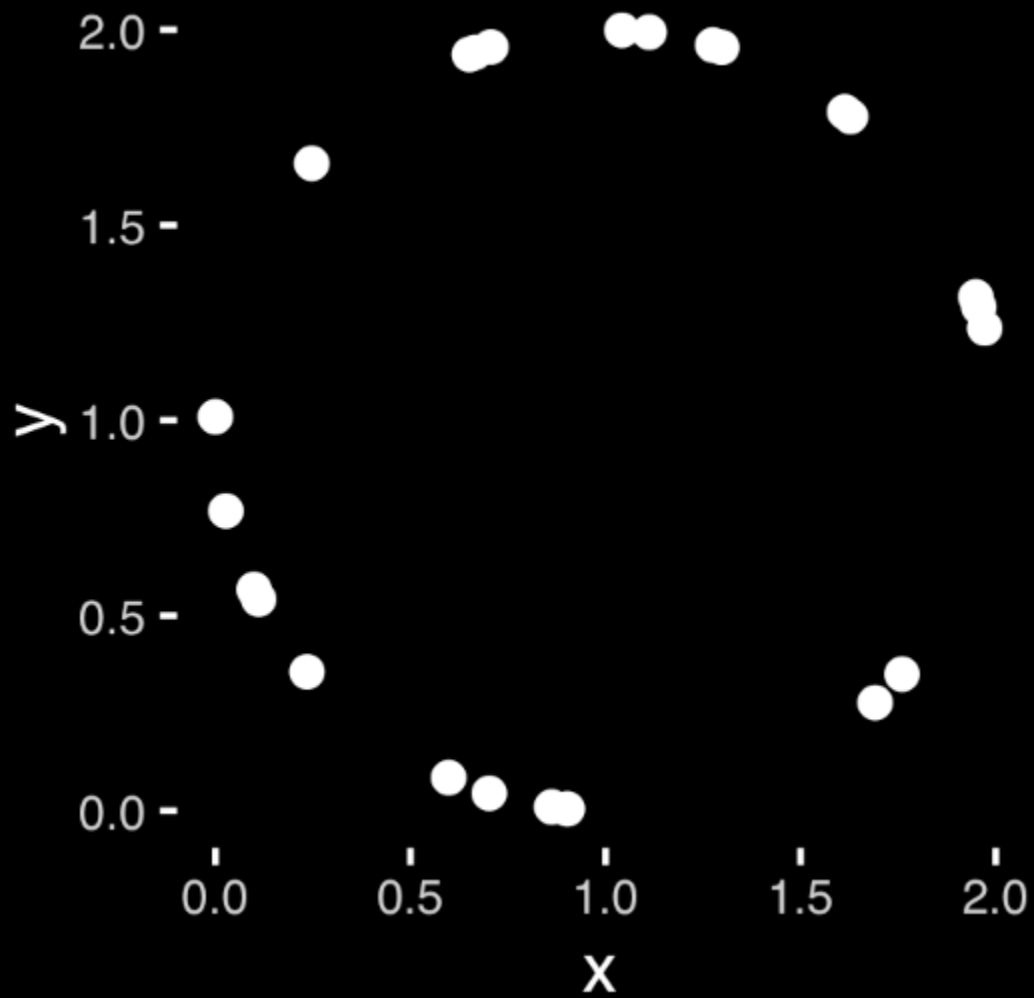
x	y
1.972	1.236
1.112	1.994
0.000	1.009
0.665	1.942
0.235	0.356
0.247	1.658
1.275	1.961
0.702	0.045
1.760	0.350
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0.099	0.567
0.862	0.010
0.027	0.768
0.706	1.956
1.042	1.999

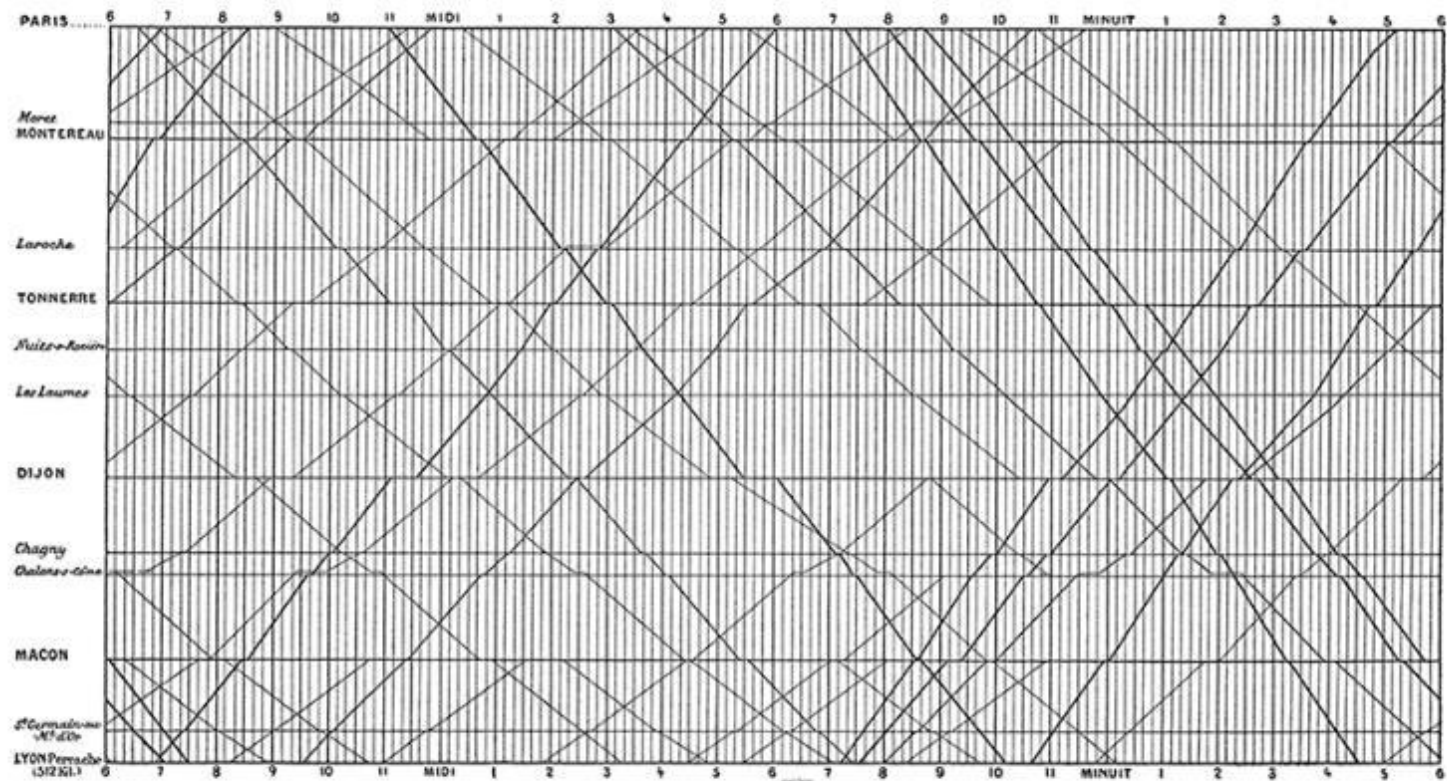


n	x	y	n	x	y
1	1.972	1.236	13	0.111	0.542
2	1.112	1.994	14	0.902	0.005
3	0.000	1.009	15	0.598	0.085
4	0.665	1.942	16	1.613	1.790
5	0.235	0.356	17	1.298	1.955
6	0.247	1.658	18	0.651	1.937
7	1.275	1.961	19	1.949	1.316
8	0.702	0.045	20	0.099	0.567
9	1.760	0.350	21	0.862	0.010
10	1.691	0.277	22	0.027	0.768
11	1.628	1.778	23	0.706	1.956
12	1.957	1.290	24	1.042	1.999





**Good visualizations optimize  
for the human visual system**



E. J. Marey, *La méthode graphique* (Paris, 1885), 20. The method is attributed to the French engineer, Ibry.

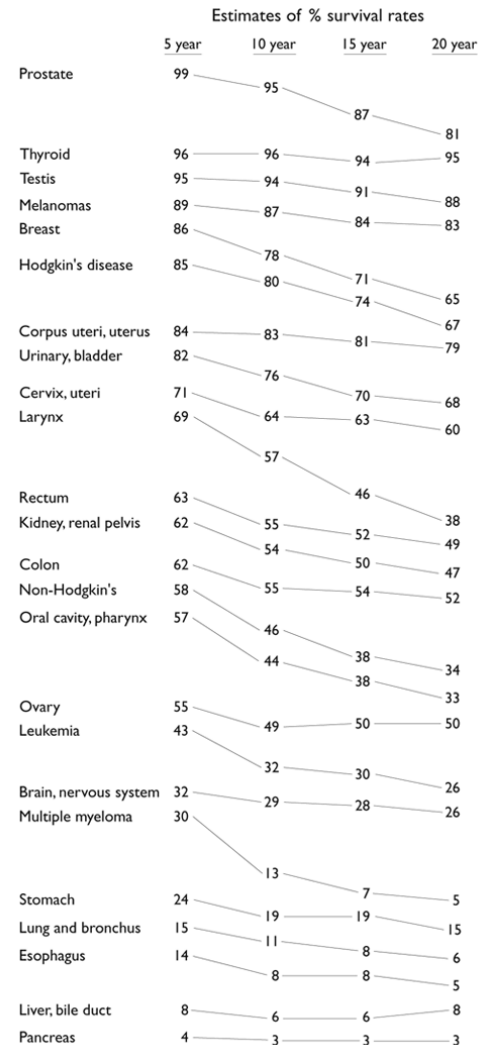
## Estimates of relative survival rates, by cancer site

	% survival rates and their standard errors							
	5 year		10 year		15 year		20 year	
Prostate	98.8	0.4	95.2	0.9	87.1	1.7	81.1	3.0
Thyroid	96.0	0.8	95.8	1.2	94.0	1.6	95.4	2.1
Testis	94.7	1.1	94.0	1.3	91.1	1.8	88.2	2.3
Melanomas	89.0	0.8	86.7	1.1	83.5	1.5	82.8	1.9
Breast	86.4	0.4	78.3	0.6	71.3	0.7	65.0	1.0
Hodgkin's disease	85.1	1.7	79.8	2.0	73.8	2.4	67.1	2.8
Corpus uteri, uterus	84.3	1.0	83.2	1.3	80.8	1.7	79.2	2.0
Urinary, bladder	82.1	1.0	76.2	1.4	70.3	1.9	67.9	2.4
Cervix, uteri	70.5	1.6	64.1	1.8	62.8	2.1	60.0	2.4
Larynx	68.8	2.1	56.7	2.5	45.8	2.8	37.8	3.1
Rectum	62.6	1.2	55.2	1.4	51.8	1.8	49.2	2.3
Kidney, renal pelvis	61.8	1.3	54.4	1.6	49.8	2.0	47.3	2.6
Colon	61.7	0.8	55.4	1.0	53.9	1.2	52.3	1.6
Non-Hodgkin's	57.8	1.0	46.3	1.2	38.3	1.4	34.3	1.7
Oral cavity, pharynx	56.7	1.3	44.2	1.4	37.5	1.6	33.0	1.8
Ovary	55.0	1.3	49.3	1.6	49.9	1.9	49.6	2.4
Leukemia	42.5	1.2	32.4	1.3	29.7	1.5	26.2	1.7
Brain, nervous system	32.0	1.4	29.2	1.5	27.6	1.6	26.1	1.9
Multiple myeloma	29.5	1.6	12.7	1.5	7.0	1.3	4.8	1.5
Stomach	23.8	1.3	19.4	1.4	19.0	1.7	14.9	1.9
Lung and bronchus	15.0	0.4	10.6	0.4	8.1	0.4	6.5	0.4
Esophagus	14.2	1.4	7.9	1.3	7.7	1.6	5.4	2.0
Liver, bile duct	7.5	1.1	5.8	1.2	6.3	1.5	7.6	2.0
Pancreas	4.0	0.5	3.0	1.5	2.7	0.6	2.7	0.8



## Estimates of relative survival rates, by cancer site

	% survival rates and their standard errors							
	5 year		10 year		15 year		20 year	
Prostate	98.8	0.4	95.2	0.9	87.1	1.7	81.1	3.0
Thyroid	96.0	0.8	95.8	1.2	94.0	1.6	95.4	2.1
Testis	94.7	1.1	94.0	1.3	91.1	1.8	88.2	2.3
Melanomas	89.0	0.8	86.7	1.1	83.5	1.5	82.8	1.9
Breast	86.4	0.4	78.3	0.6	71.3	0.7	65.0	1.0
Hodgkin's disease	85.1	1.7	79.8	2.0	73.8	2.4	67.1	2.8
Corpus uteri, uterus	84.3	1.0	83.2	1.3	80.8	1.7	79.2	2.0
Urinary, bladder	82.1	1.0	76.2	1.4	70.3	1.9	67.9	2.4
Cervix, uteri	70.5	1.6	64.1	1.8	62.8	2.1	60.0	2.4
Larynx	68.8	2.1	56.7	2.5	45.8	2.8	37.8	3.1
Rectum	62.6	1.2	55.2	1.4	51.8	1.8	49.2	2.3
Kidney, renal pelvis	61.8	1.3	54.4	1.6	49.8	2.0	47.3	2.6
Colon	61.7	0.8	55.4	1.0	53.9	1.2	52.3	1.6
Non-Hodgkin's	57.8	1.0	46.3	1.2	38.3	1.4	34.3	1.7
Oral cavity, pharynx	56.7	1.3	44.2	1.4	37.5	1.6	33.0	1.8
Ovary	55.0	1.3	49.3	1.6	49.9	1.9	49.6	2.4
Leukemia	42.5	1.2	32.4	1.3	29.7	1.5	26.2	1.7
Brain, nervous system	32.0	1.4	29.2	1.5	27.6	1.6	26.1	1.9
Multiple myeloma	29.5	1.6	12.7	1.5	7.0	1.3	4.8	1.5
Stomach	23.8	1.3	19.4	1.4	19.0	1.7	14.9	1.9
Lung and bronchus	15.0	0.4	10.6	0.4	8.1	0.4	6.5	0.4
Esophagus	14.2	1.4	7.9	1.3	7.7	1.6	5.4	2.0
Liver, bile duct	7.5	1.1	5.8	1.2	6.3	1.5	7.6	2.0
Pancreas	4.0	0.5	3.0	1.5	2.7	0.6	2.7	0.8



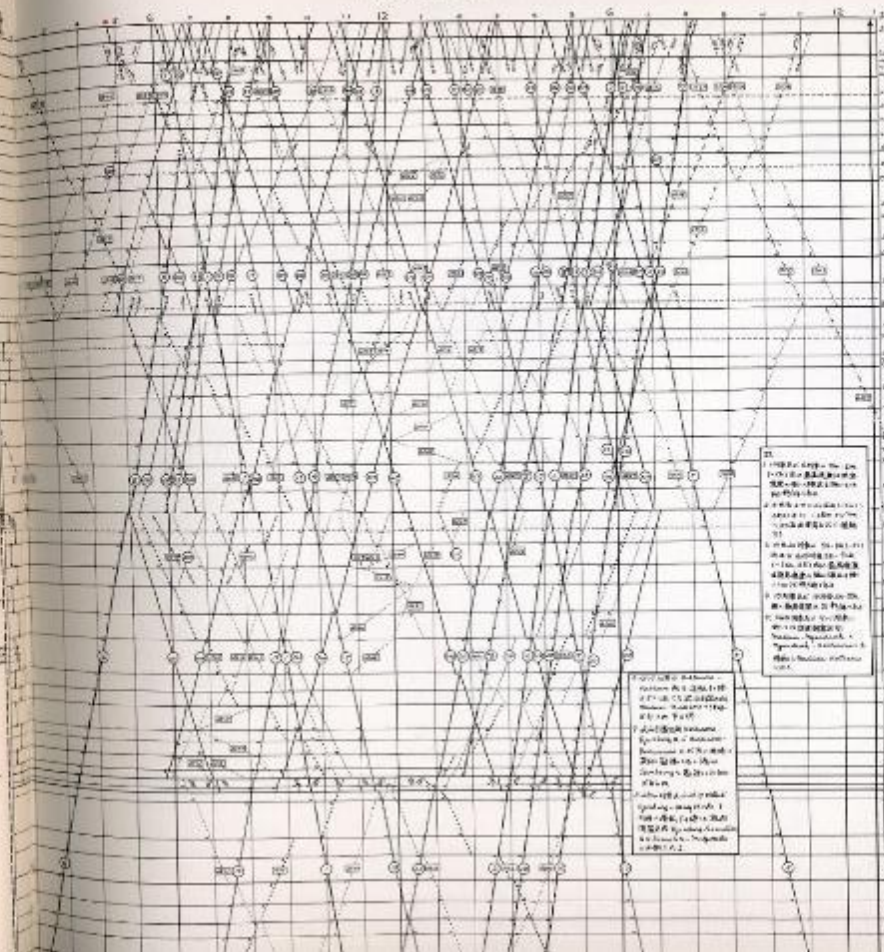
Sourabaya - Djakarta.

スラバヤ - ジャカルタ

(1937年4月現在)

路線記号  
No. 1000  
No. 1001  
No. 1002  
No. 1003  
No. 1004  
No. 1005  
No. 1006  
No. 1007  
No. 1008  
No. 1009  
No. 1010  
No. 1011  
No. 1012  
No. 1013  
No. 1014  
No. 1015  
No. 1016  
No. 1017  
No. 1018  
No. 1019  
No. 1020

Vertical table on the left side of the page, listing station names in Japanese and Indonesian, along with their corresponding grid coordinates. The names include stations like Surabaya, Malang, Kediri, Blora, Semarang, and Jakarta.



Vertical table on the right side of the page, providing detailed information for each station, likely including arrival and departure times for different train services. The text is small and dense, organized in a columnar format.

Timetable for Java Railroad line, 1937. In Tufte 1990

standard slope %

cross section  
height in meters  
1/3000

standard slope %

minimum radius  
distance  
maximum speed  
normal speed

distances between  
stations and  
cumulative distance

town names  
major stops  
underlined

標準勾配 %	縦断面図 高さメートルに示す 縮尺 $\frac{1}{3000}$	標準勾配 %	最小曲線半径	最高許容速度		距離 メートル	
				区間 料率	制限 帯	駅間 距離	累計 距離
				50		3176	4299
				50		4906	7075
				70		6000	7281
				70		7281	17361
		4				28167	35528
						4180	29707
						4180	33887
			800		90	4063	28320

Soerabajakokka  
スラバヤコッカ

Soerabagoebeng  
スラバヤ フウベン

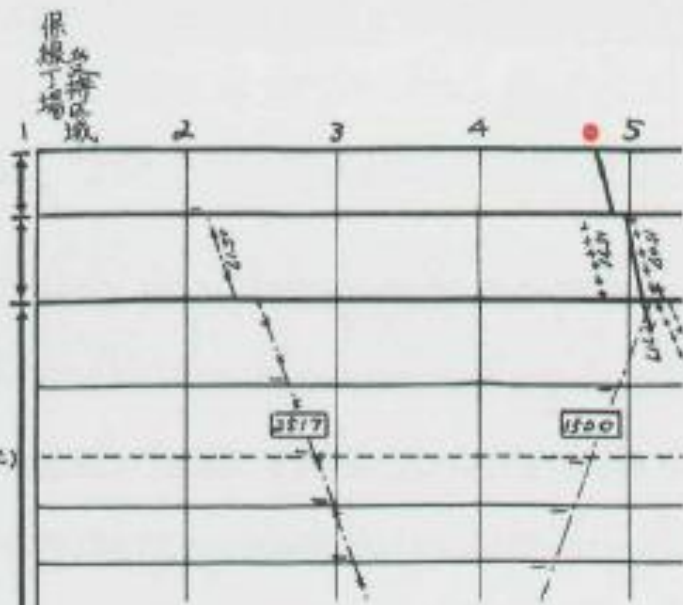
Wonokromo  
オノクロモ

Sepandjang

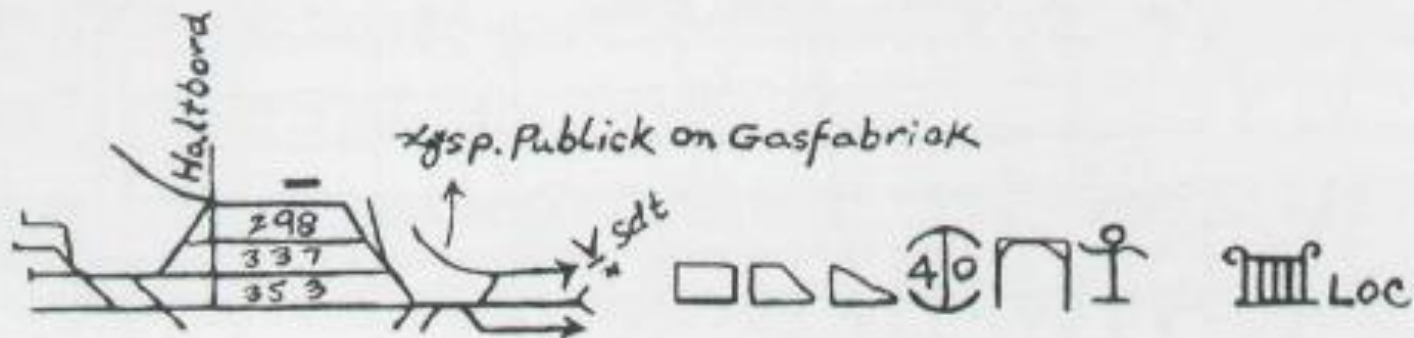
Koemandaeng (Stoppel C)

Beharan

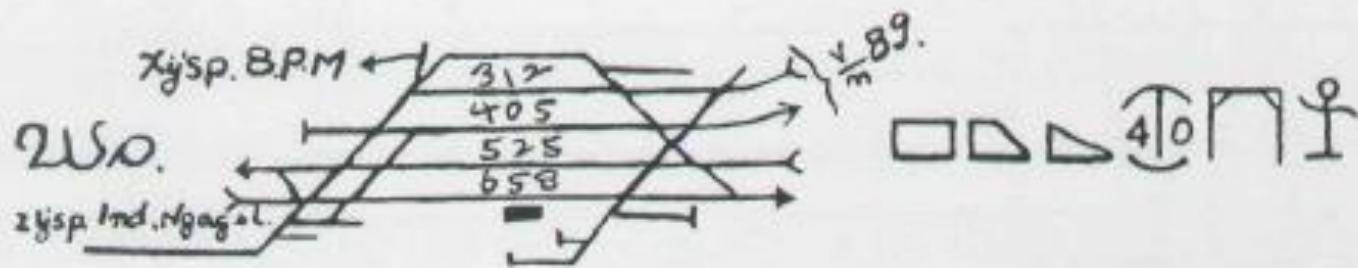
Blisan



SB.



W.D.



Sgo.



regular

seasonal

irregular

special

定期列車

季節列車

不定期列車

臨時列車

super express

特急列車



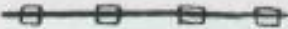
express

急行 "



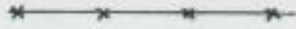
passenger

旅客 "



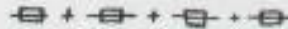
mixed

混合 "



special

" (特殊)



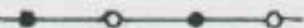
cargo

貨物列車



preferential

職用 "

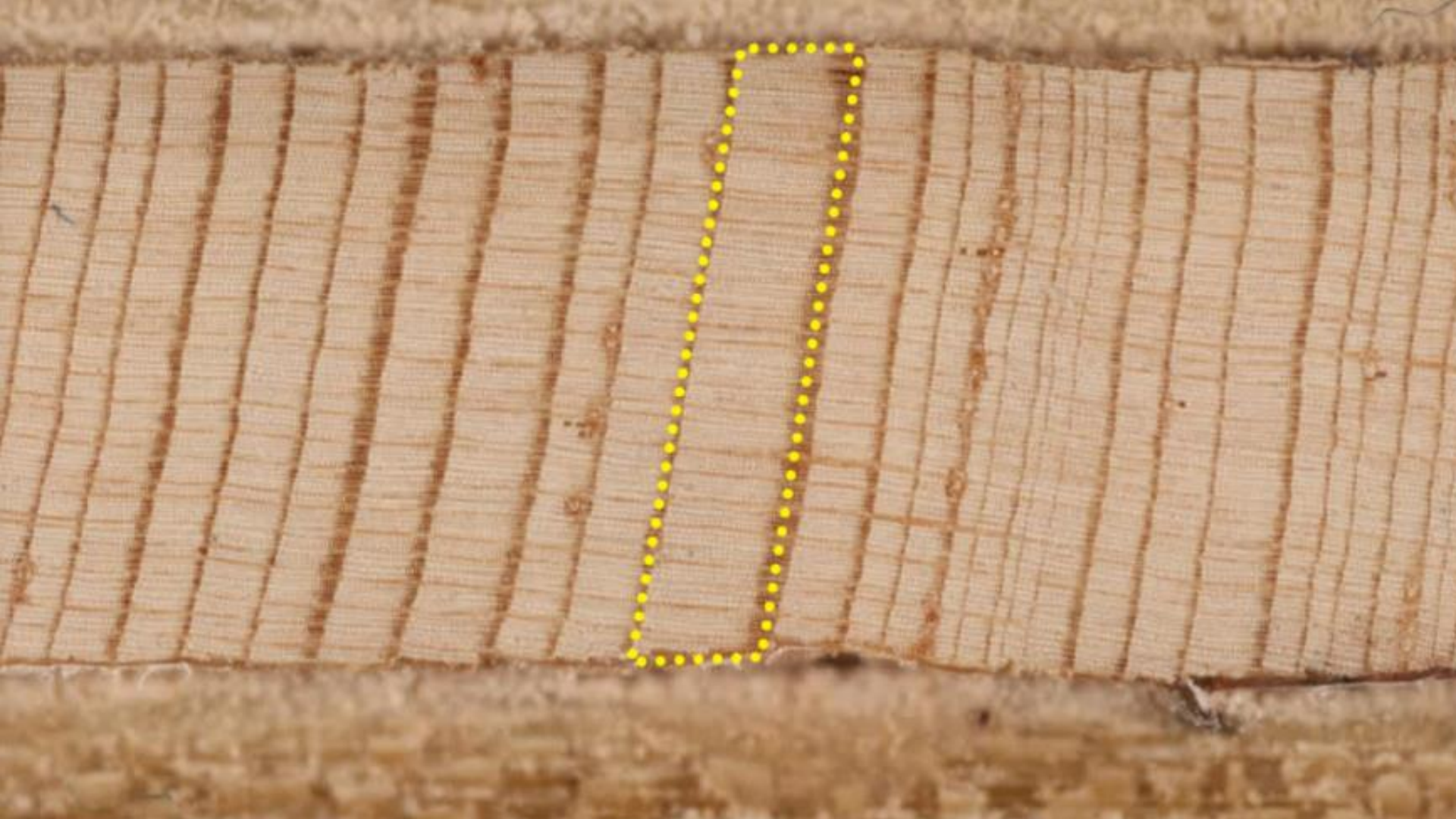


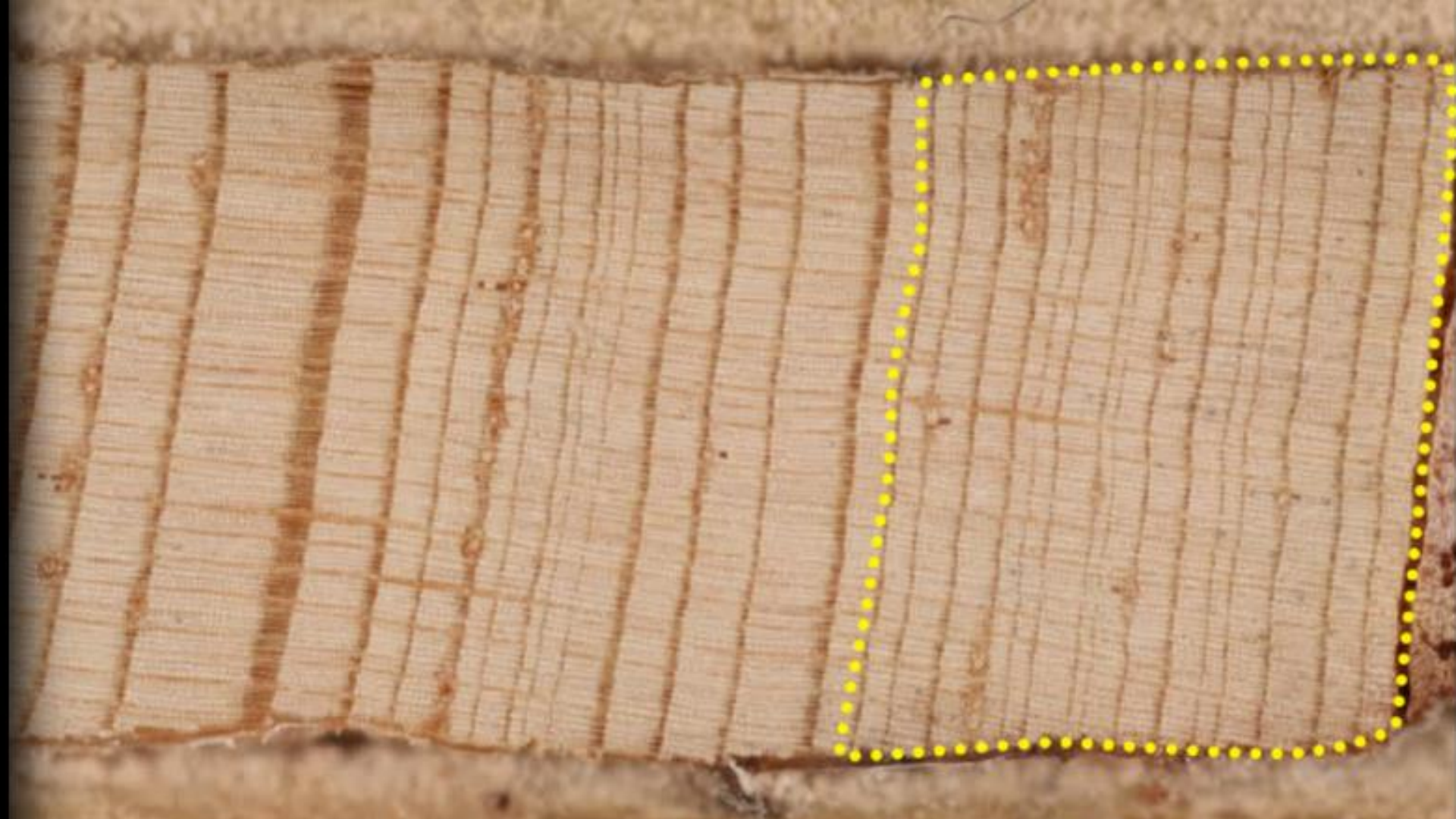
night cargo

夜間貨物 "







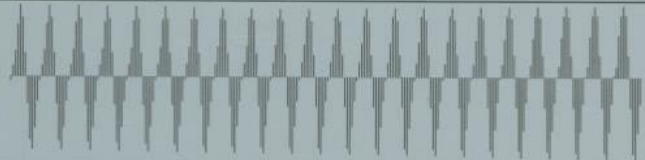






**How do the human  
visual & cognitive  
systems work?**

How do humans decode a  
graph?



# The Elements of Graphing Data

William S. Cleveland

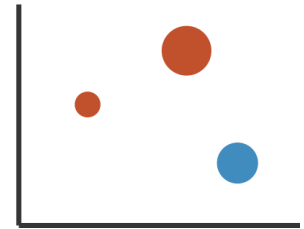
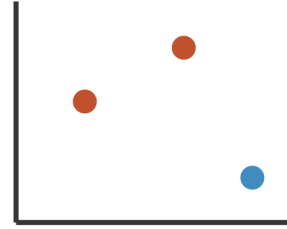
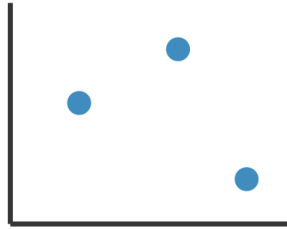
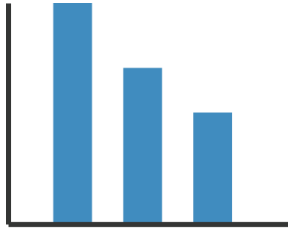


# Cleveland's three visual operations of pattern perception:

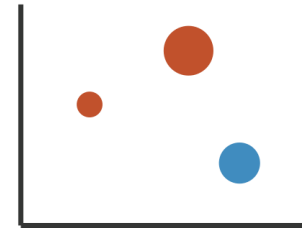
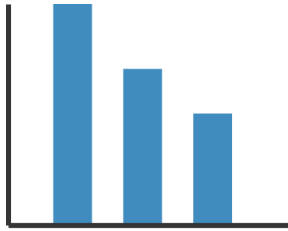
1. Detection
2. Assembly
3. Estimation

# 1. Detection

- Detection is the operation of recognizing that a geometric object encodes a physical value



- Detection is the operation of recognizing that a geometric object encodes a physical value



- marks & channels
  - marks: represent items or links
  - channels: change appearance of marks based on attributes



# Marks for items

- basic geometric elements

➔ Points



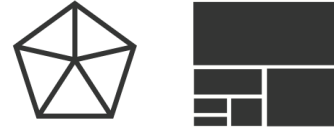
0D

➔ Lines



1D

➔ Interlocking Areas

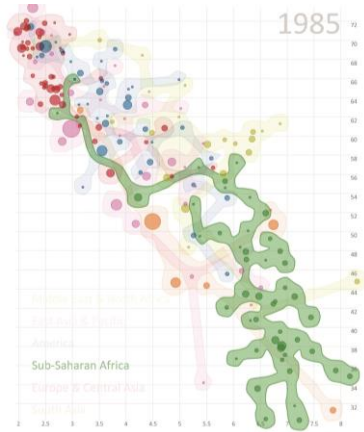


2D

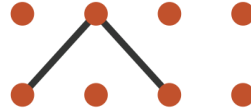
- 3D mark: volume, rarely used

# Marks for links

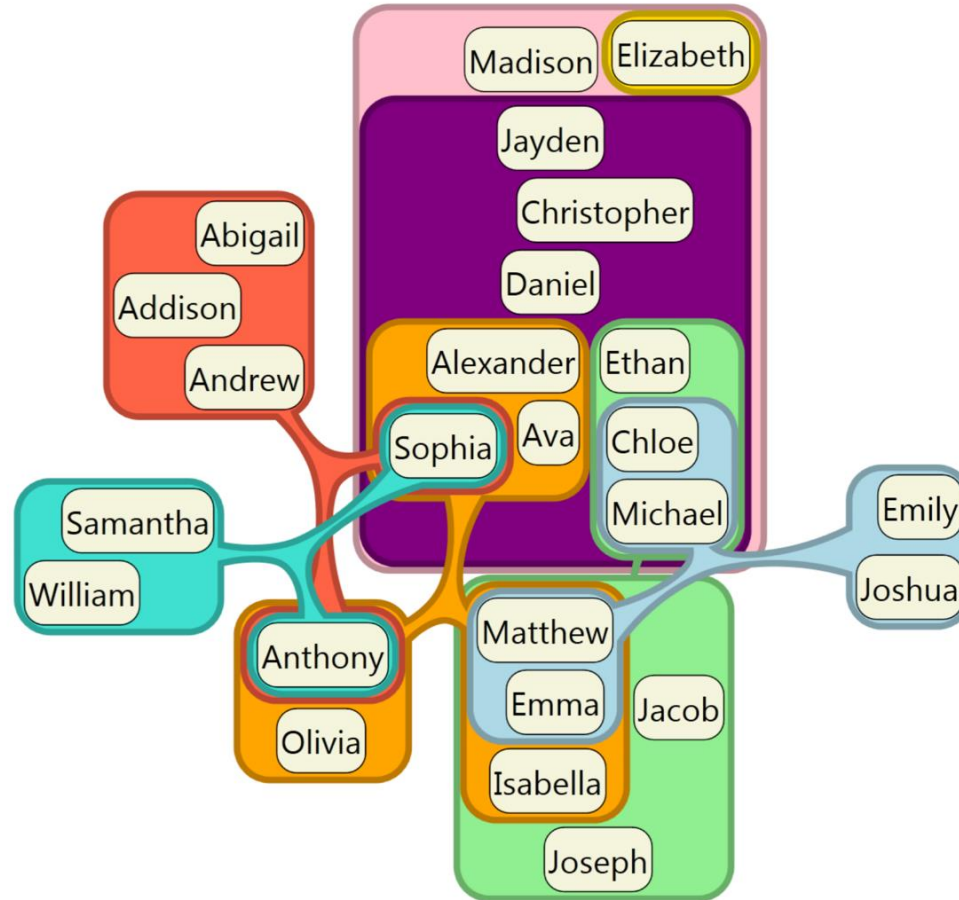
## ➔ Containment



## ➔ Connection



# Containment can be nested



# Channels

- control appearance of marks

- proportional to or based on attributes

- many names

- **visual channels**
- visual variables
- retinal channels
- visual dimensions
- ...

## → Position

→ Horizontal



→ Vertical



→ Both



## → Color



## → Shape



## → Tilt



## → Size

→ Length



→ Area



→ Volume



# Definitions: Marks and channels

- marks

- geometric primitives

→ Points



→ Lines



→ Areas



# Definitions: Marks and channels

- marks

- geometric primitives

- channels

- control appearance of marks

→ Points



→ Lines



→ Interlocking Areas



→ Position

→ Horizontal



→ Vertical



→ Both



→ Color



→ Shape



→ Tilt



→ Size

→ Length



→ Area



→ Volume



# Definitions: Marks and channels

- marks

- geometric primitives

- channels

- control appearance of marks

- channel properties differ

- type & amount of information that can be conveyed to human perceptual system

→ Points



→ Lines



→ Interlocking Areas



→ Position

→ Horizontal



→ Vertical



→ Both



→ Color



→ Shape



→ Tilt



→ Size

→ Length



→ Area

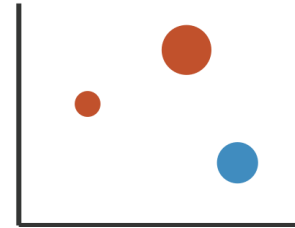
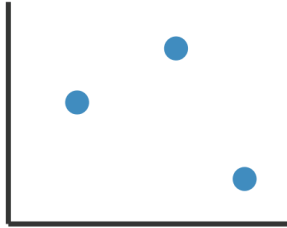
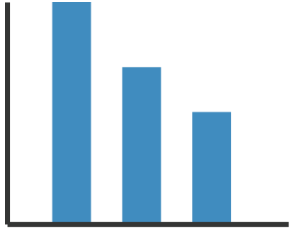


→ Volume



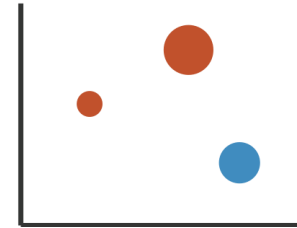
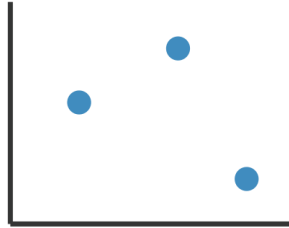
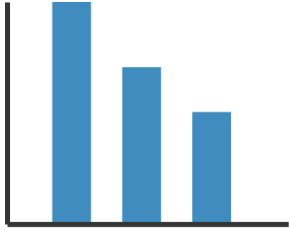
# Visual encoding

- analyze idiom structure as combination of marks and channels





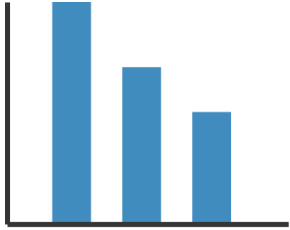
# Visual encoding



1:  
vertical position

mark: line

# Visual encoding



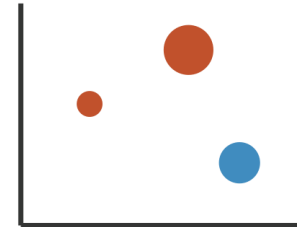
1:  
vertical position

mark: line

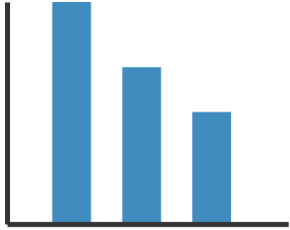


2:  
vertical position  
horizontal position

mark: line



# Visual encoding



1:  
vertical position

mark: line



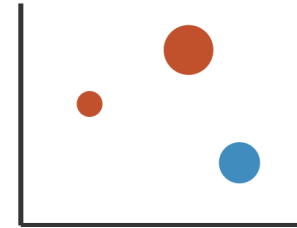
2:  
vertical position  
horizontal position

mark: line

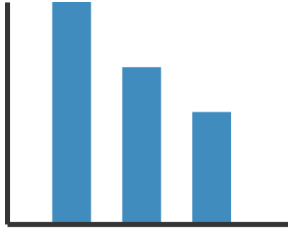


3:  
vertical position  
horizontal position  
colour hue

mark: line

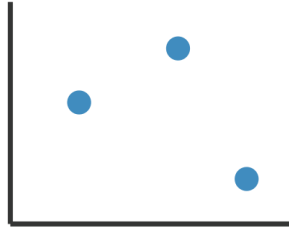


# Visual encoding



1:  
vertical position

mark: line



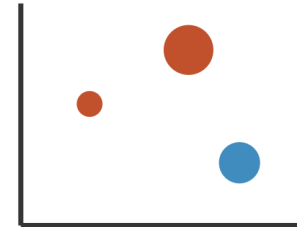
2:  
vertical position  
horizontal position

mark: line



3:  
vertical position  
horizontal position  
colour hue

mark: line

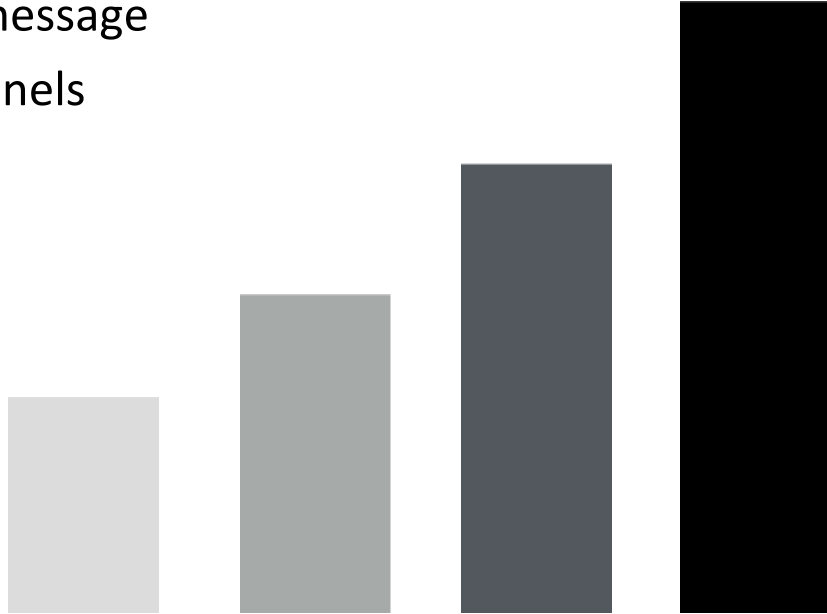


4:  
vertical position  
horizontal position  
colour hue  
size (area)

mark: line

# Redundant encoding

- multiple channels
  - sends stronger message
  - but uses up channels



# The Eye

---

- 70% of body's sense receptors reside in our eyes
- The eye and the visual cortex of the brain form a massively parallel processor that provides the highest-bandwidth channel into human cognitive centers.”  
— *Colin Ware, Information Visualization, 2004*
- Important to understand how visual perception works in order to effectively design visualizations

# The Eye

---

- The eye is not a camera!
- Better metaphor for vision: "dynamic and ongoing construction project"  
— *Healey, 1995*
- Attention is selective (Filtering)

# The Eye

---

- **Cameras**
  - Good optics
  - Single focus, white balance, exposure
  - “Full image capture”
- **Eyes**
  - Relatively poor optics
  - Constantly scanning (saccades)
  - Constantly adjusting focus
  - Constantly adapting
  - Mental reconstruction of image

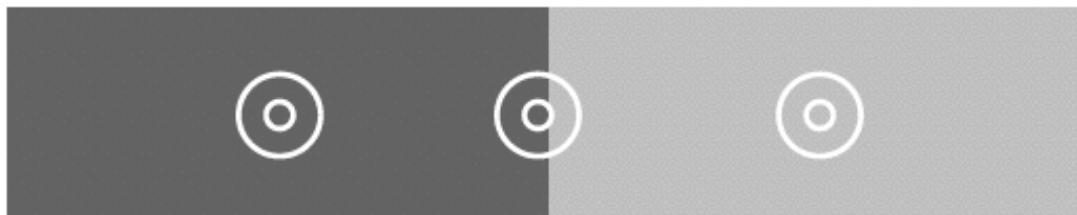


## How the eye detects information

---

- Our visual system sees differences, not absolute values, and is attracted to edges.
- Maximize the contrast with the background if the outlines of shapes are important.
- Our visual system constructs surface colour based largely on edge contrast information.
- We have higher contrast sensitivity in the luminance than in the chrominance channel.
- Our visual system corrects (misreads) information based on perceived visual properties

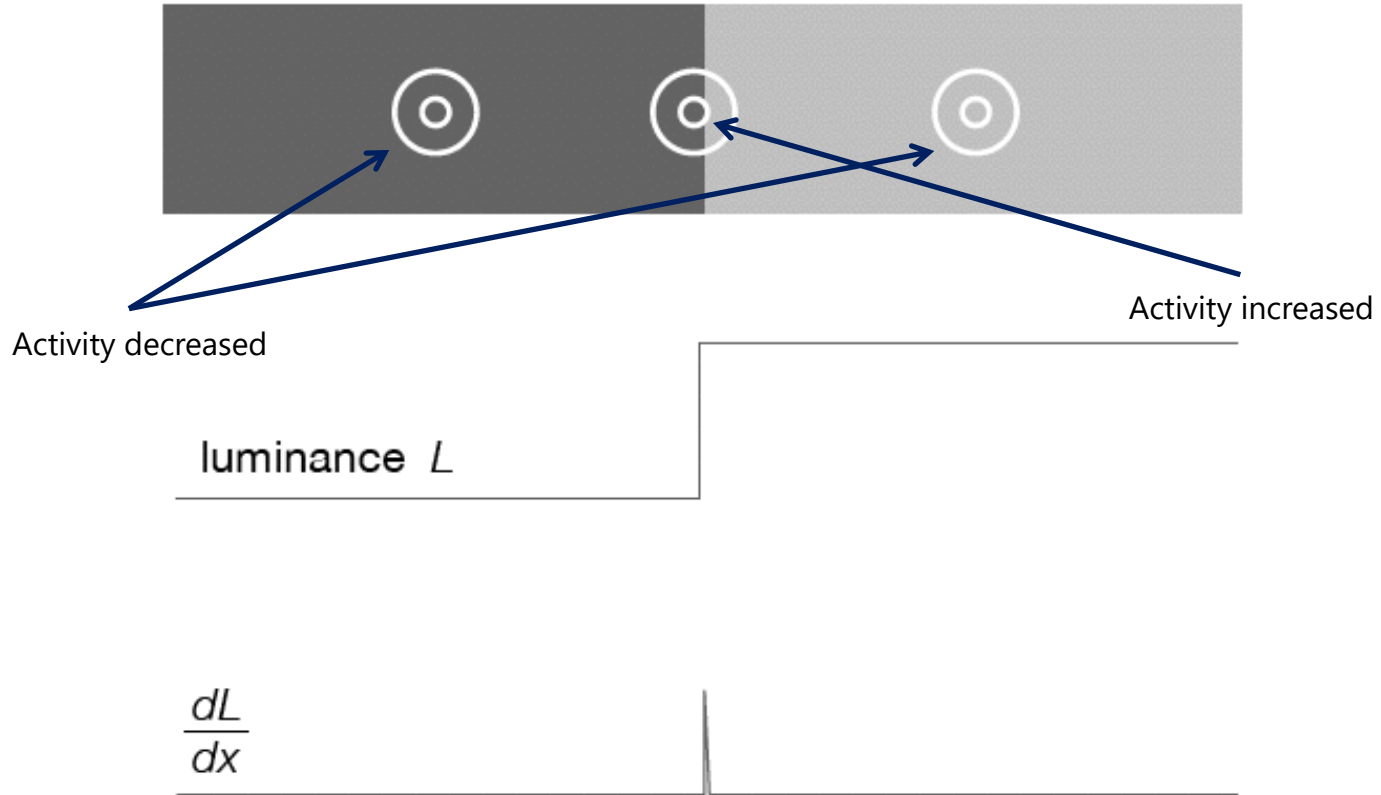
# The Eye – Edge detection

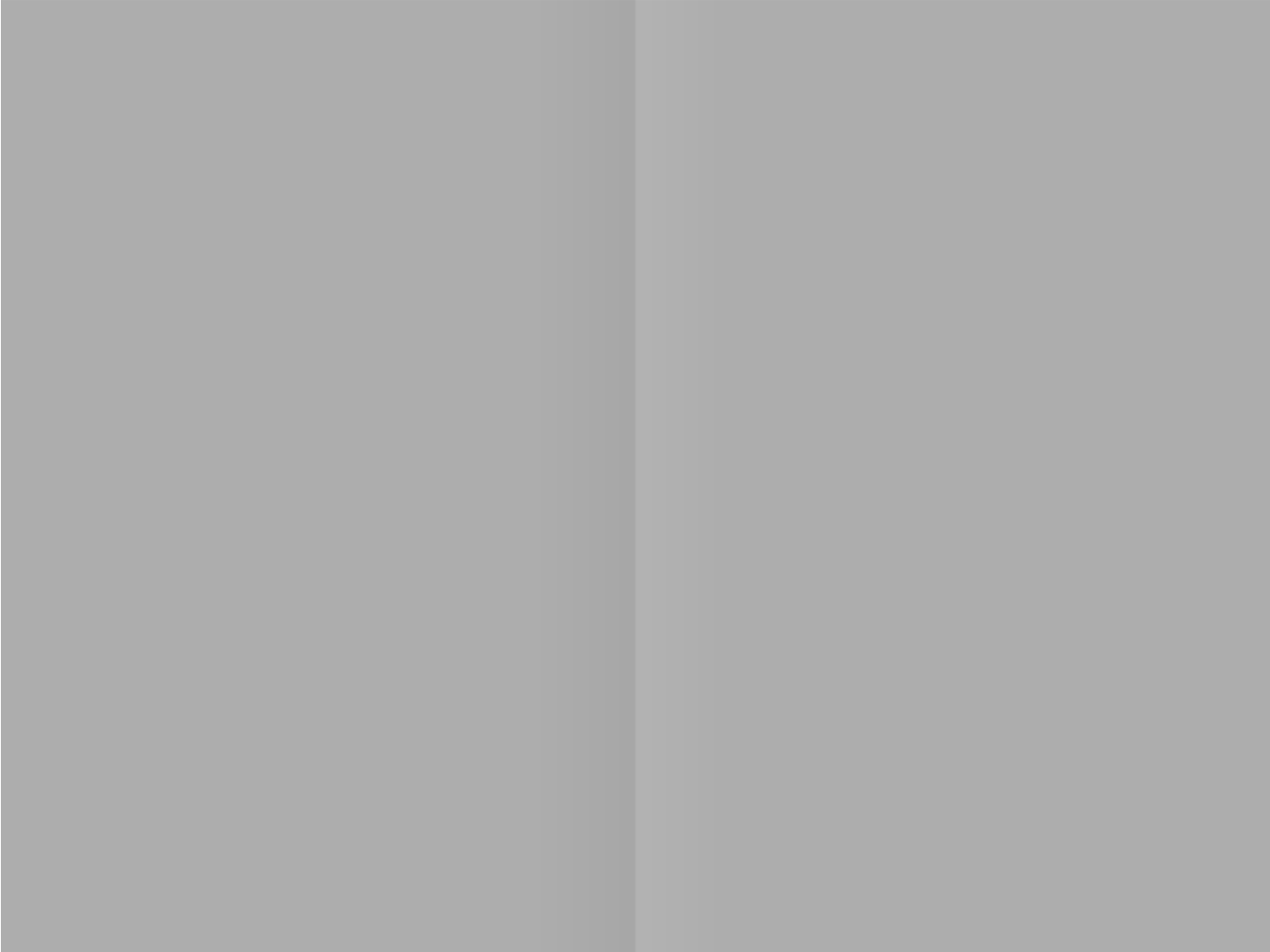


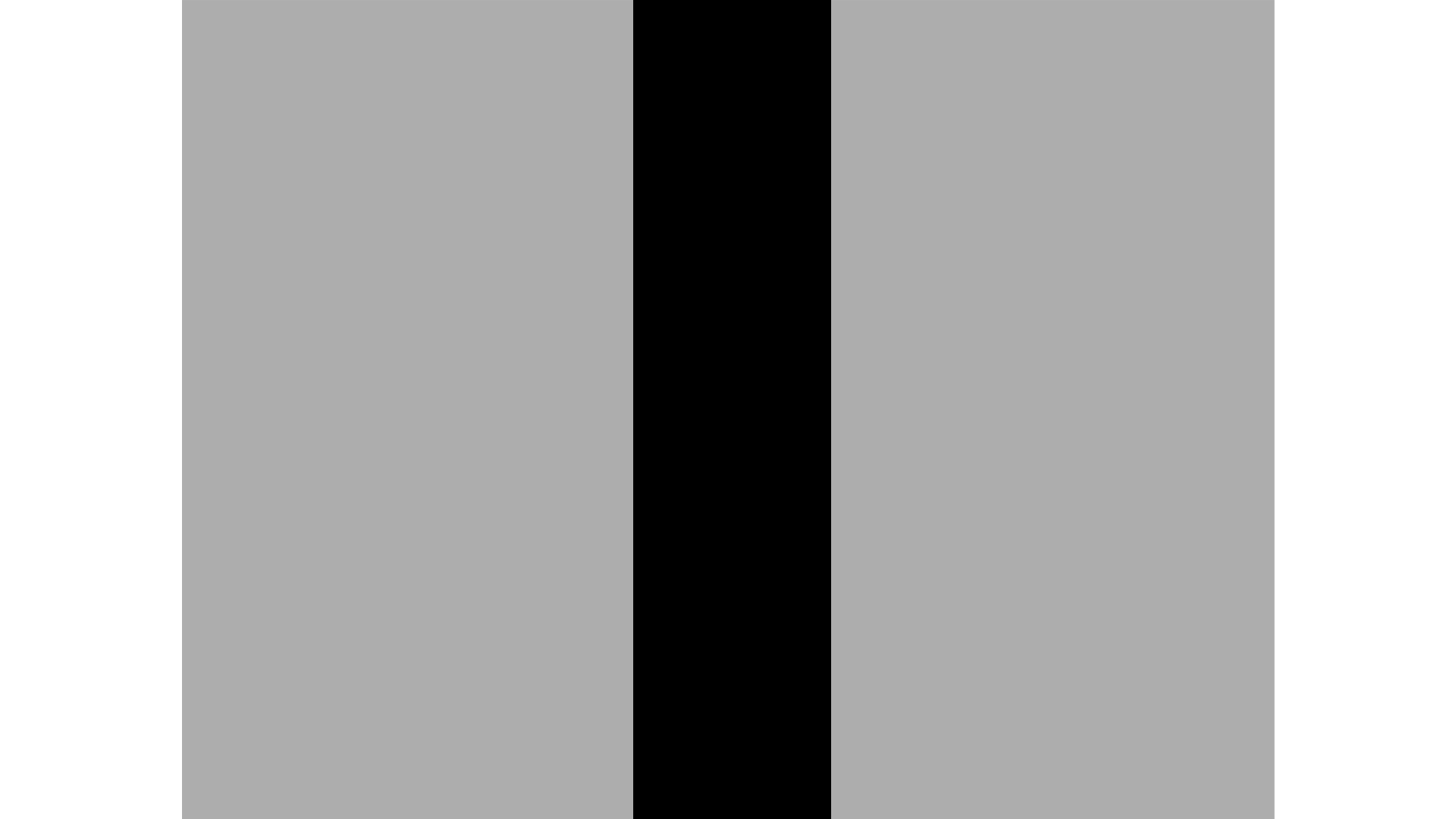
luminance  $L$

$$\frac{dL}{dx}$$

# The Eye – Edge detection

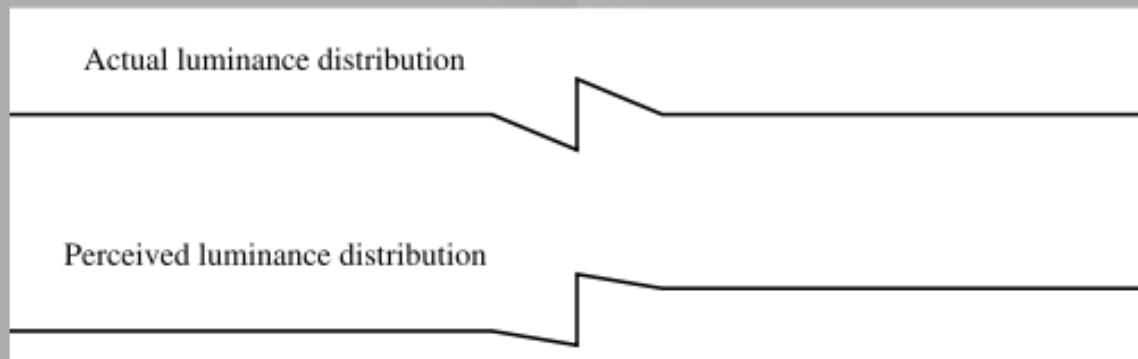






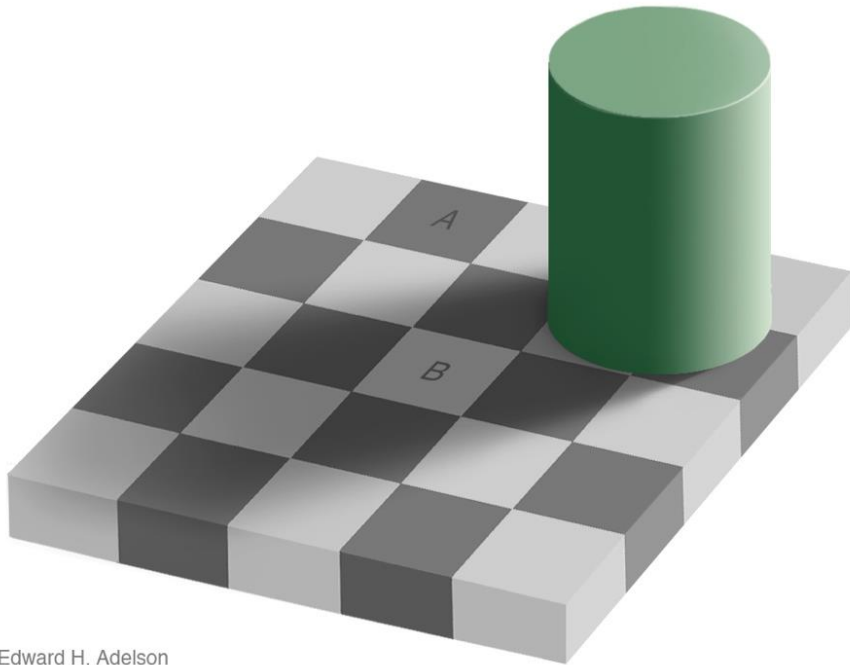
Actual luminance distribution

Perceived luminance distribution



# Relative luminance judgements

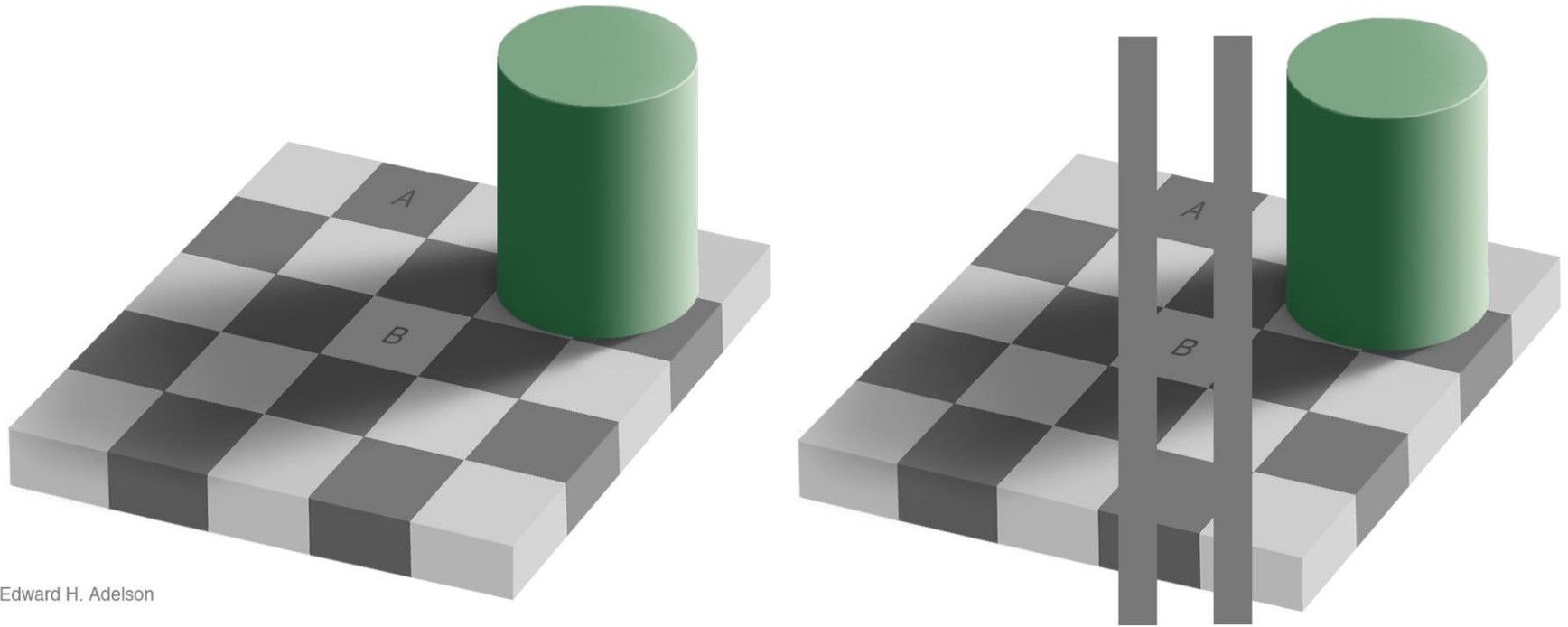
- perception of luminance is contextual based on contrast with surroundings



Edward H. Adelson

# Relative luminance judgements

- perception of luminance is contextual based on contrast with surroundings

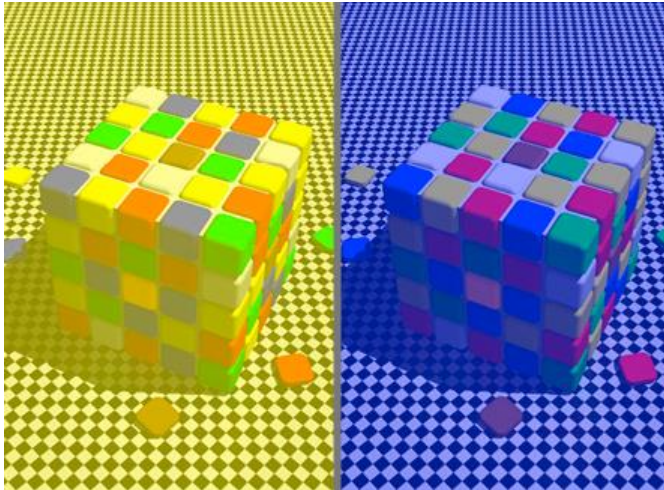


Edward H. Adelson



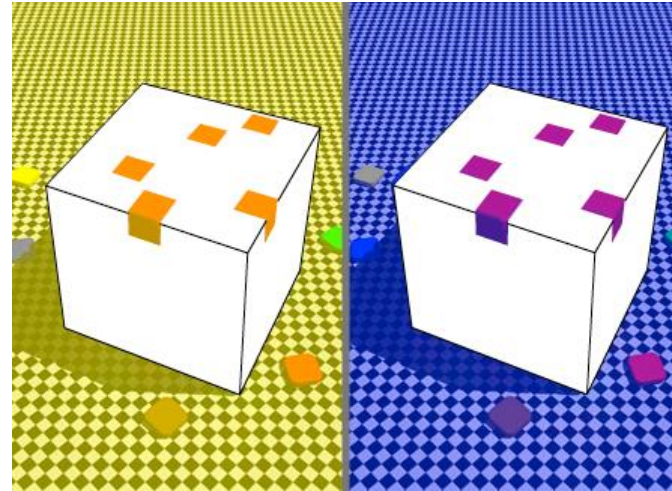
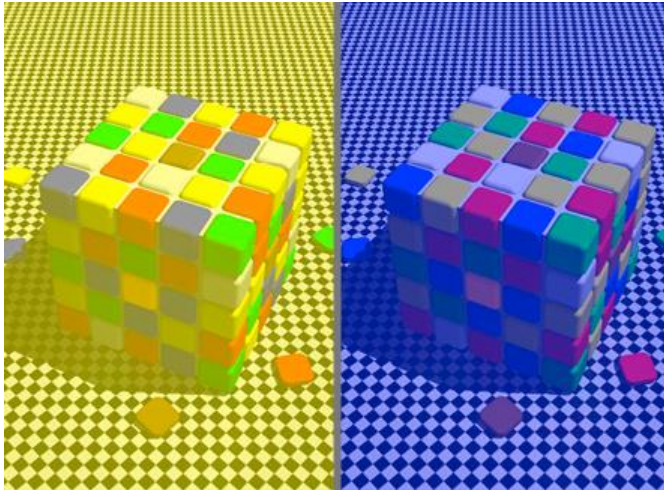
# Relative color judgements

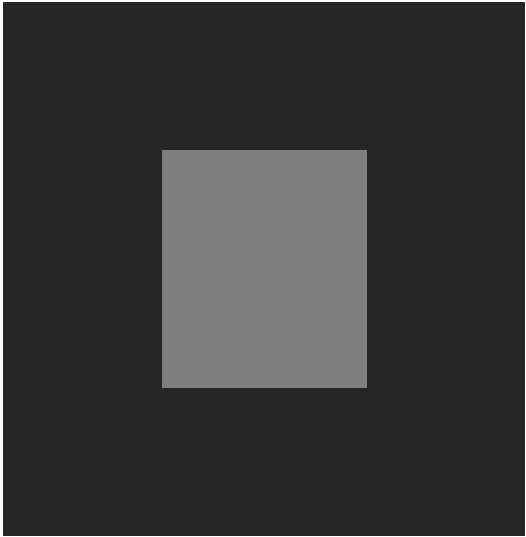
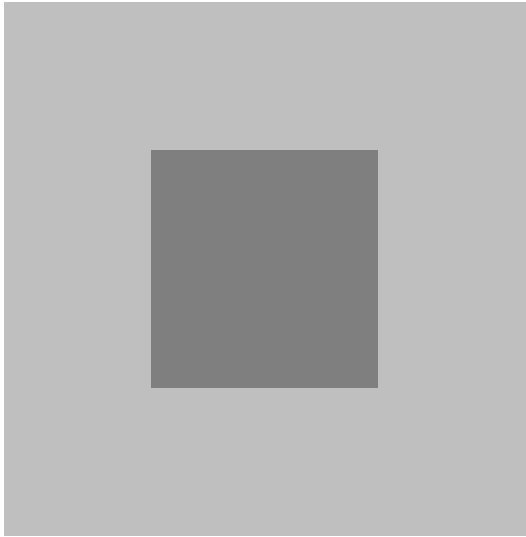
- color constancy across broad range of illumination conditions

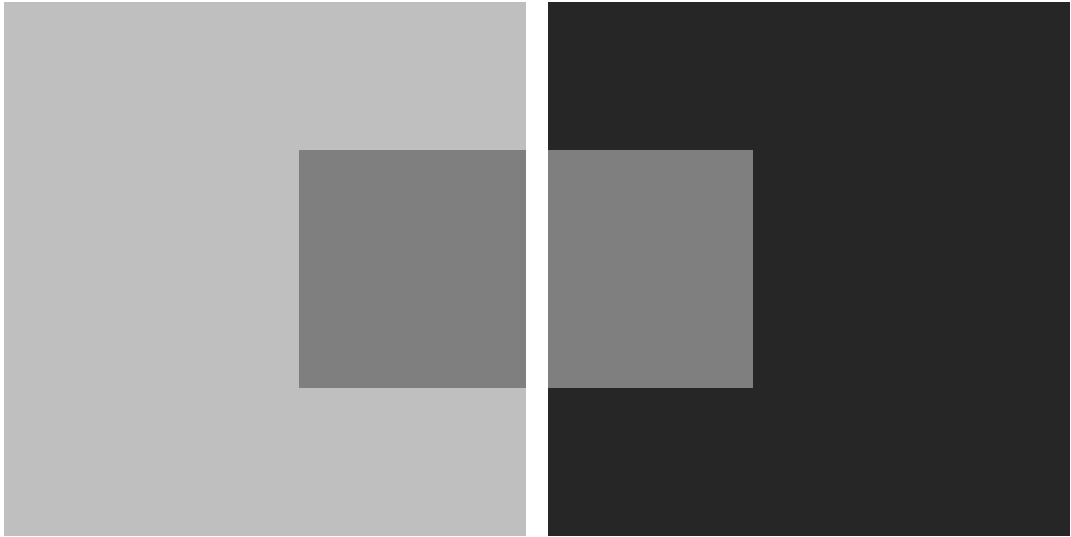


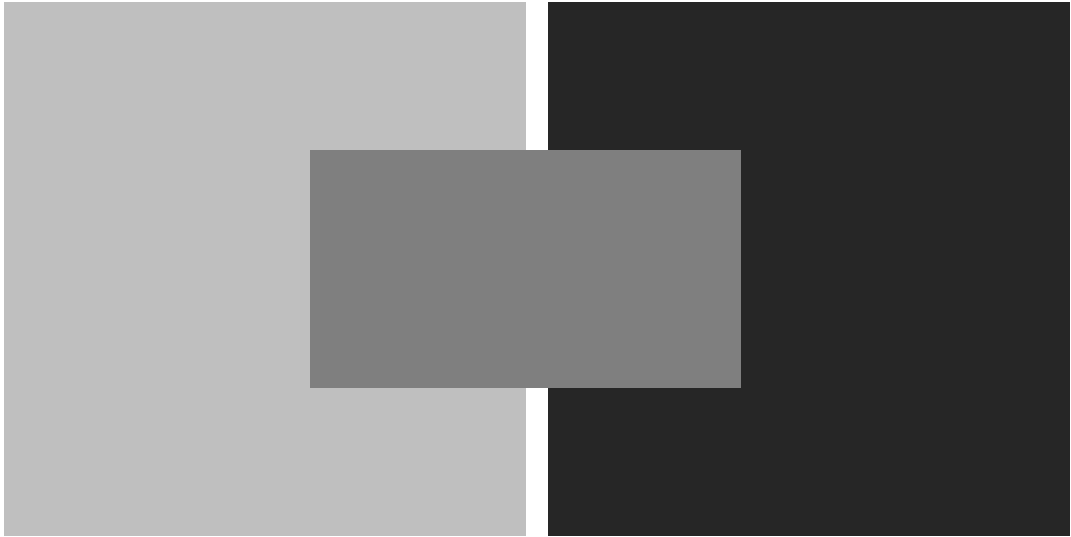
# Relative color judgements

- color constancy across broad range of illumination conditions

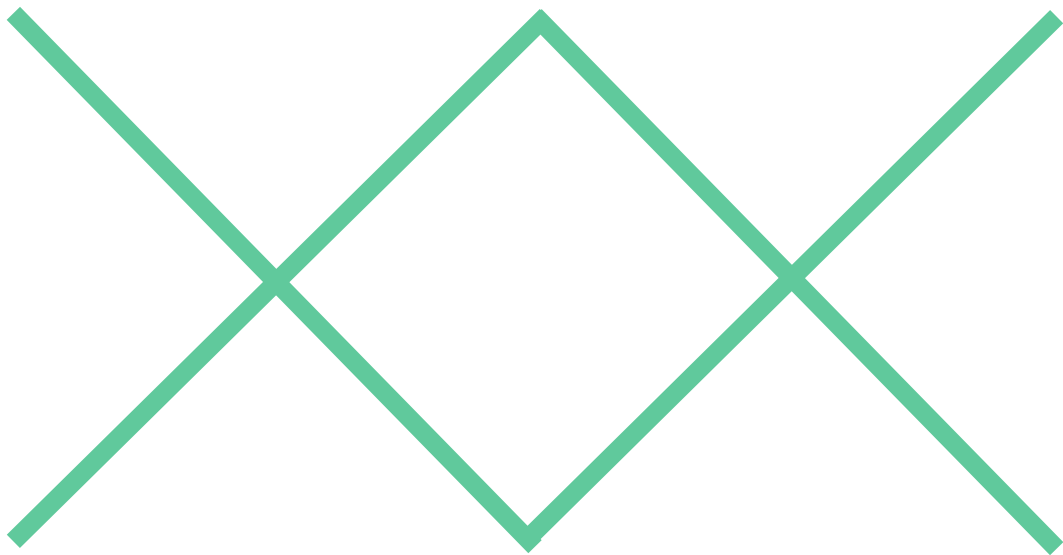


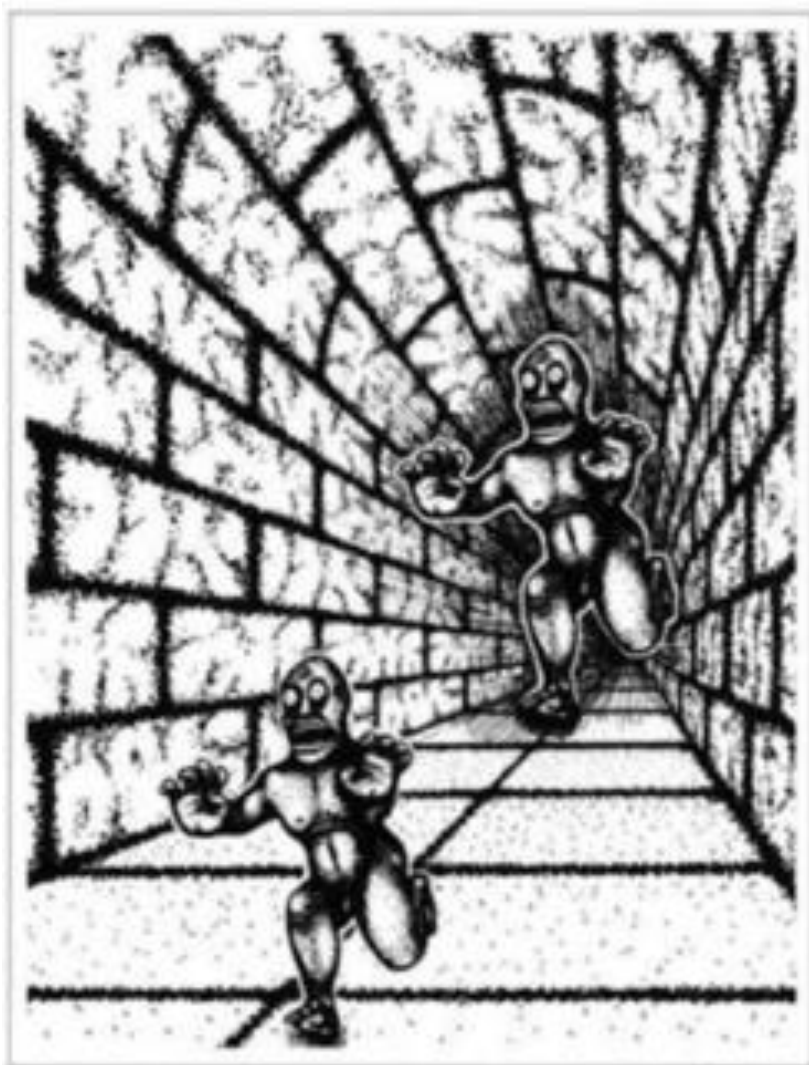




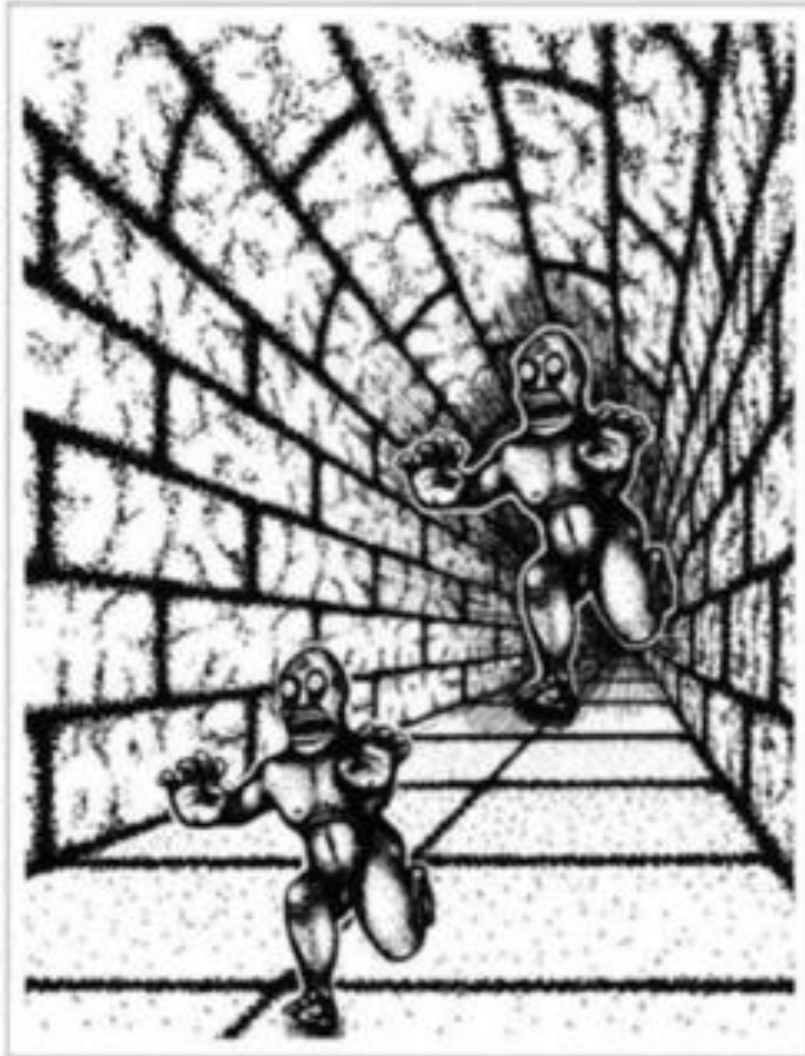












# Cleveland's three visual operations of pattern perception:

1. Detection
2. **Assembly**
3. Estimation

## **2. Assembly**

# Gestalt psychology of perceptual organisation

---

- Based on the work of Kurt Koffka, Max Wertheimer, and Wolfgang Köhler
- Law of Prägnanz (pithiness, goodness)
- Things are organized spontaneously and assumed to be in the simplest configuration
- Perception as organized and structured wholes rather than the sum of their constituent parts
- Emergent, holistic, interdependent, and in context

# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

1. **Emergence:** The mind sees the whole and then the parts. It often sees more than what is specifically stated by its individual parts.

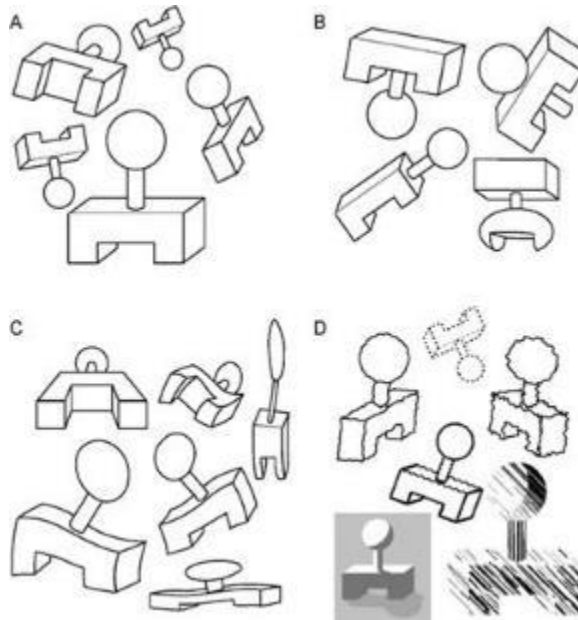


MOSLEEP

# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

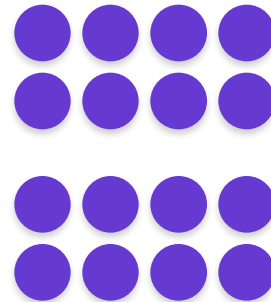
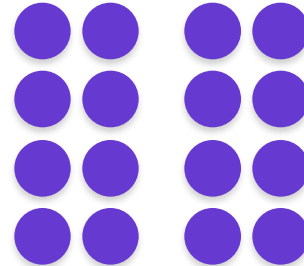
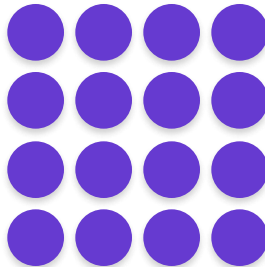
**2. Invariance:** The mind recognizes simple objects independent of rotation, translation, scale, deformations and lighting



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

3. **Proximity:** Elements that are closer together are perceived to be more related than elements that are farther apart



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

**3. Proximity:** Elements that are closer together are perceived to be more related than elements that are farther apart

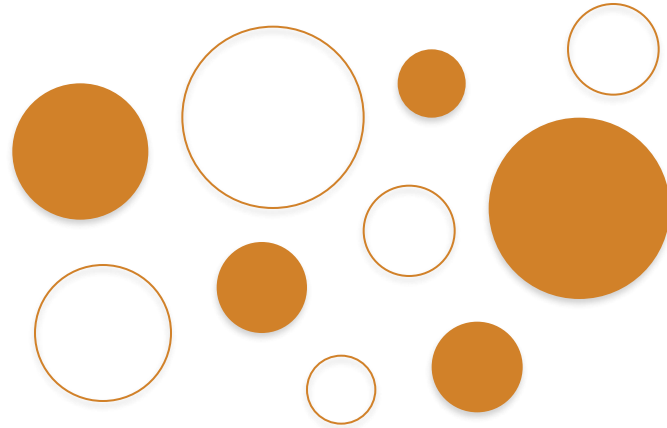
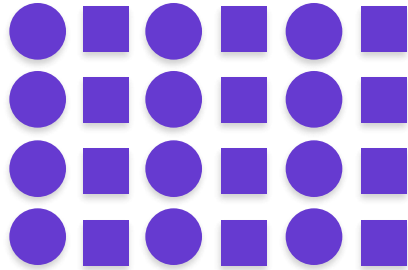




# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

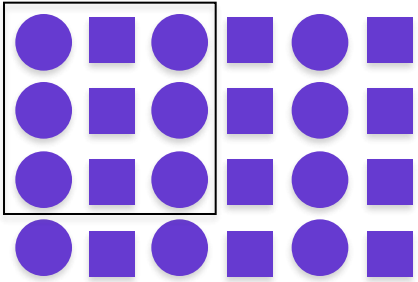
---

4. **Similarity**: Elements that are similar are perceived to be more related than elements that are dissimilar



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

5. **Enclosure:** Elements that are enclosed by anything are perceived as belonging together



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

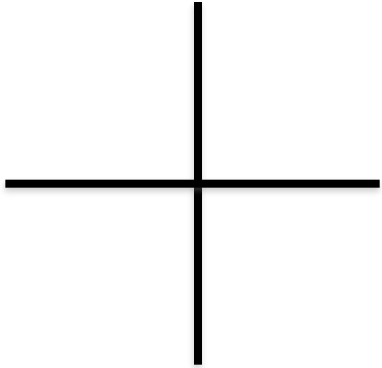
**5. Enclosure:** Elements that are enclosed by anything are perceived as belonging together




# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

6. **Continuity**: The mind continues visual, auditory, and kinetic patterns



REUTERS 

# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

6. **Continuity:** The mind continues visual, auditory, and kinetic patterns



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

**7. Closure:** The mind perceives a set of individual elements as a single, recognizable pattern



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

**7. Symmetry:** The mind perceives objects as symmetrical shapes that form around their center

[ ] { } [ ]

# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

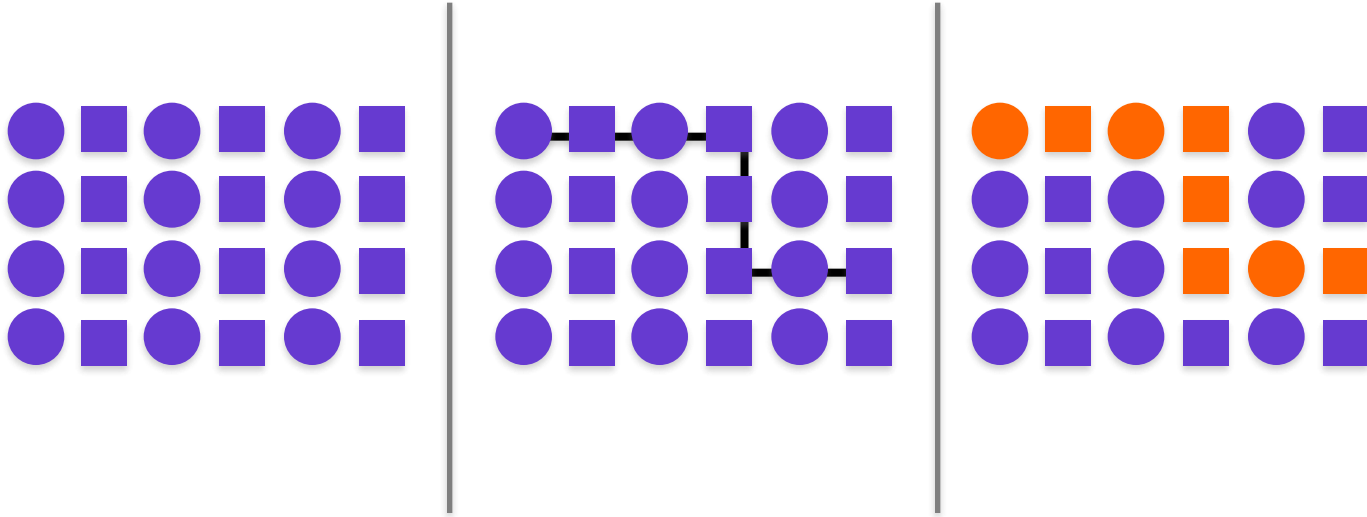
**8. Figure-ground:** Elements are perceived as either figures (objects of focus) or ground (the rest of the perceptual field)





# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

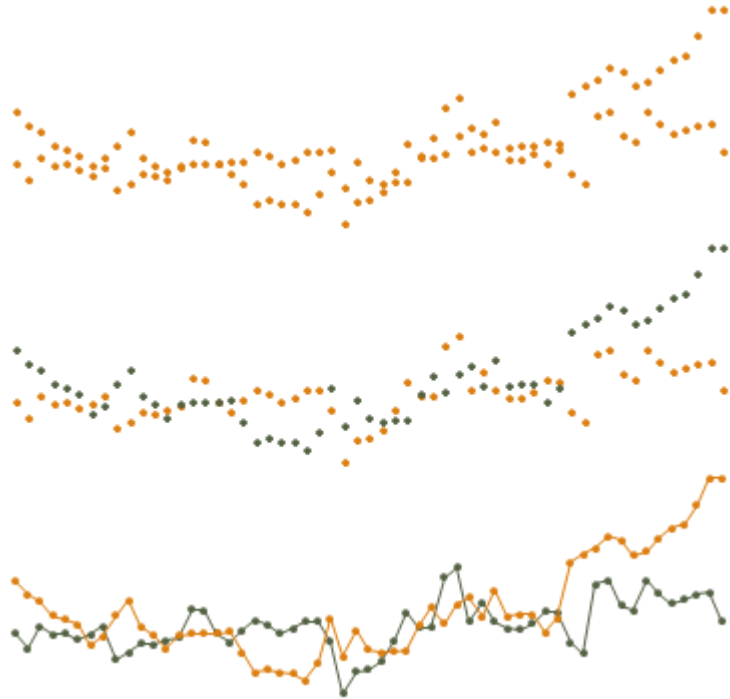
9. **Connection:** Elements that are connected (e.g. by a line) are perceived as belonging together



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

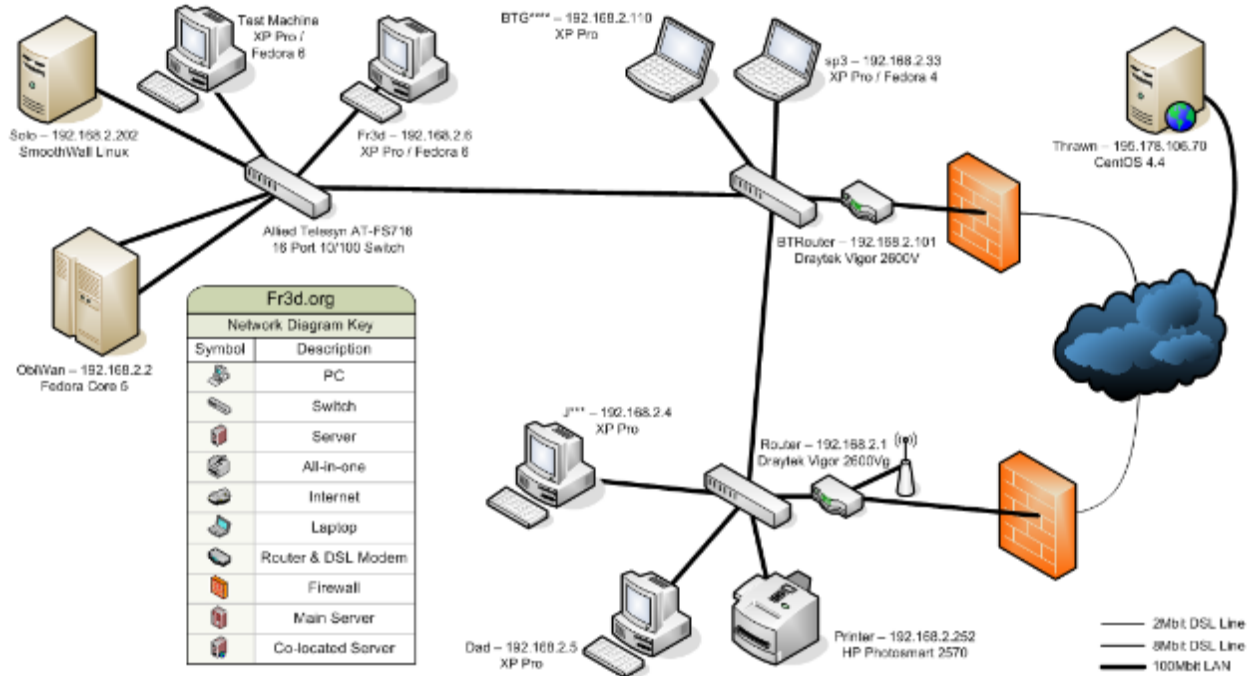
---

**9. Connection:** Elements that are connected (e.g. by a line) are perceived as belonging together



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

**9. Connection:** Elements that are connected (e.g. by a line) are perceived as belonging together



# The gestalt laws of perceptual organization

---

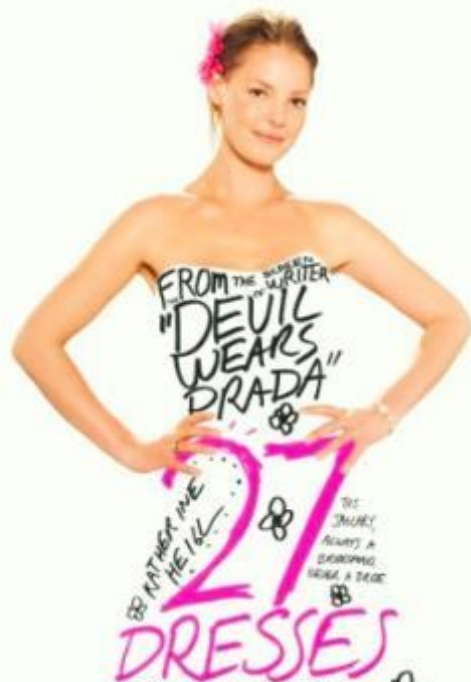
**10. Common-fate:** Elements that share a common fate (e.g., moving in the same direction) as belonging together



**MELBOURNE**  
**2010 CYCLING**  
UCI Road World Championships



Edward Weston, 1886-1958



# DRESSES

FOX 2000 PICTURES, A FOX

SPYGLASS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT

A BIRNBAUM/BAMBER PRODUCTION

KATHERINE HEIGL "27 DRESSES"

JAMES MARJON MALIN AKERMAN JUDY GREER

AND EDWARD BURNS MUSIC BY RANDY EDELMAN

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BUCK DAMON CATHERINE MARIE THOMAS

CO-PRODUCED BY ERIN STAFF EDITOR PRISCILLA NEED FRIENDLY, A.C.E.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER SHEPHERD FRANKEL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PETER JAMES, A.C.S. / A.S.C.

EDITING BY BOBBY NEWMYER DECKI CRAIG TRULLY MICHAEL MATER

PRODUCTION MANAGERS ROGER BIRNBAUM GARY BARBER JONATHAN GLICKMAN

WRITTEN BY ALINE BROSH McKEOWN DIRECTED BY ANNE FLETCHER



LIMA



MOROCOCHA



The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo, fresco Sistine chapel, 1512





Marc Riboud, 1923-

*Portrait of Adele  
Bloch-Bauer.*  
1907  
by Guastav Klimt







Marc Riboud, 1923-

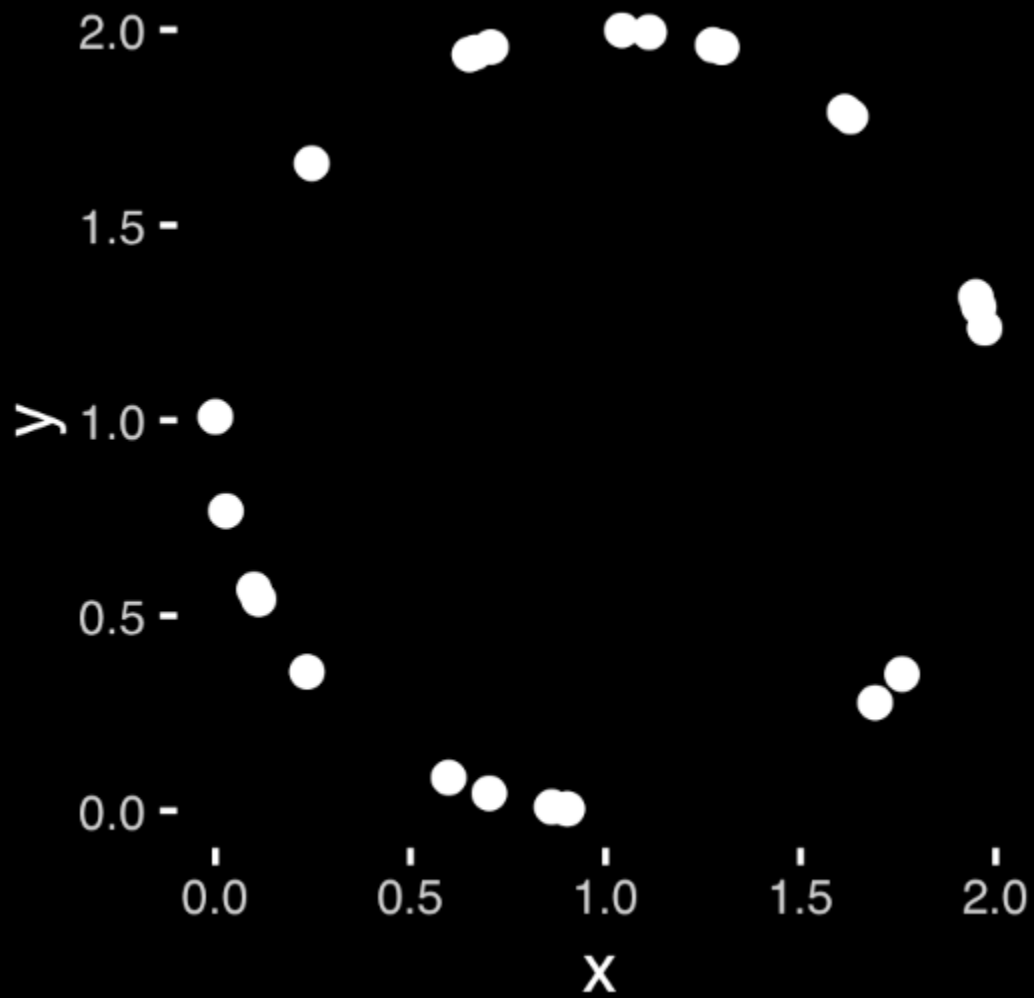


MŠTEFANEK NS 48/50

III-51

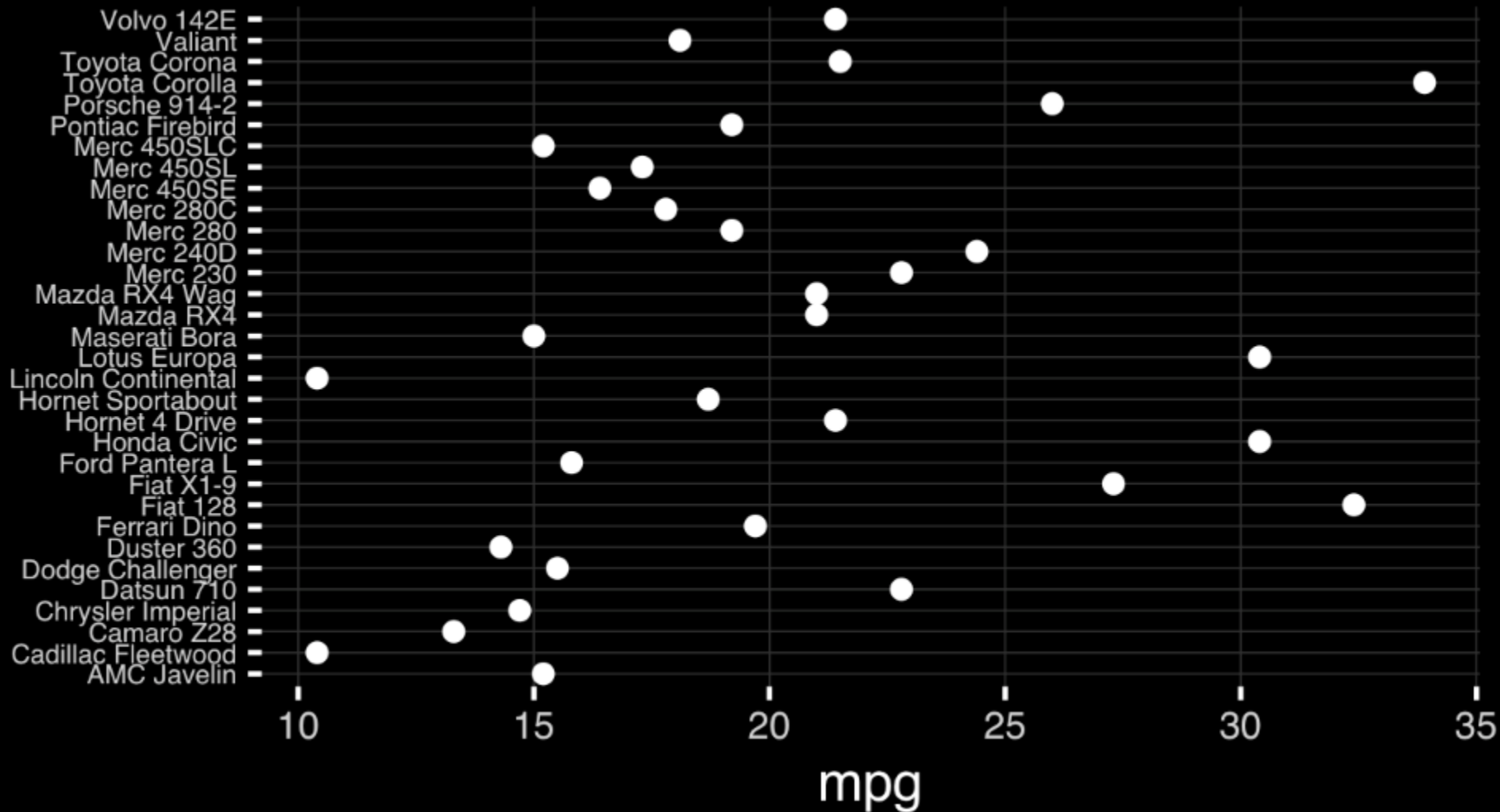
ejun druk

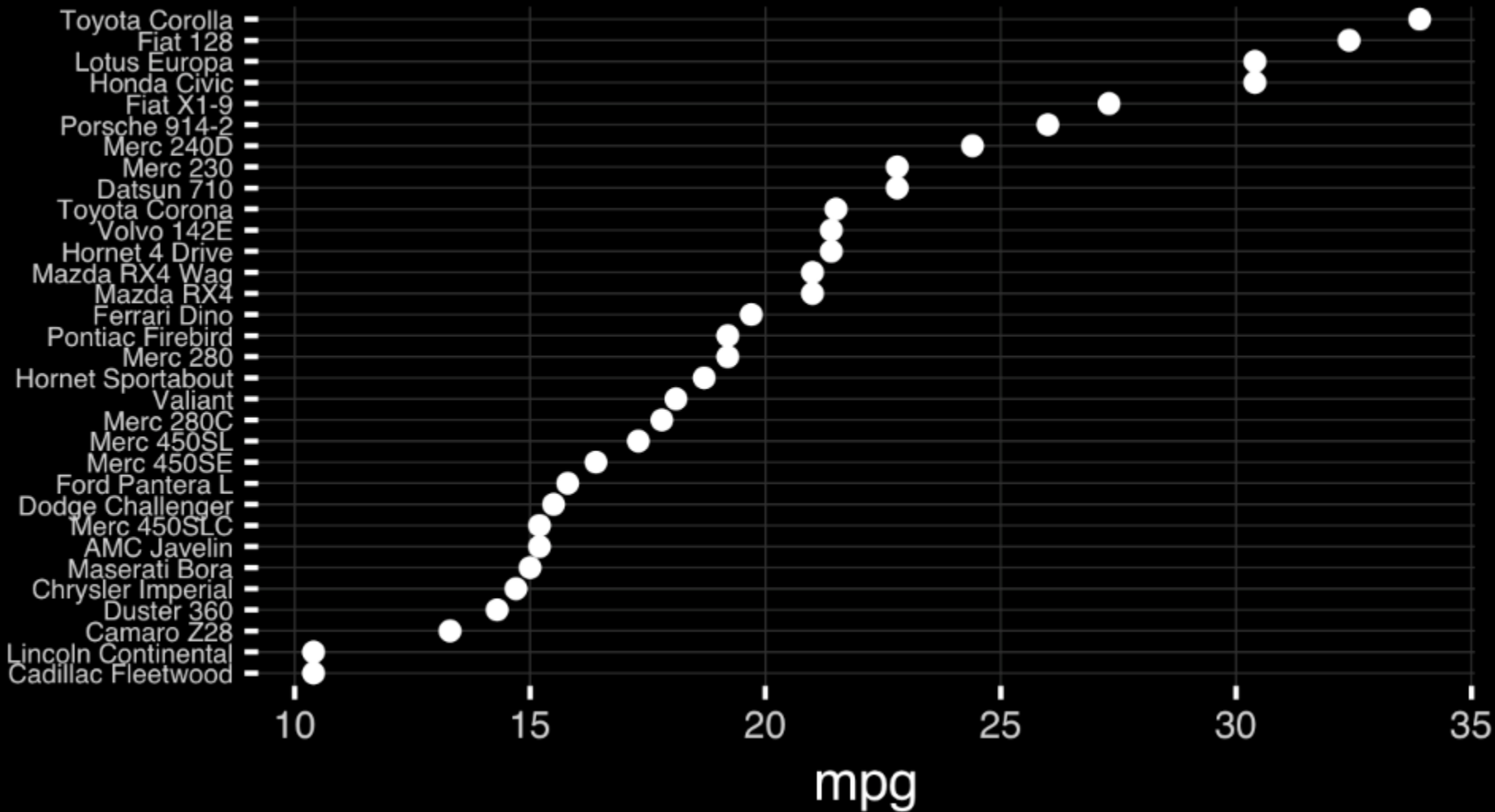




# Law Of Continuity



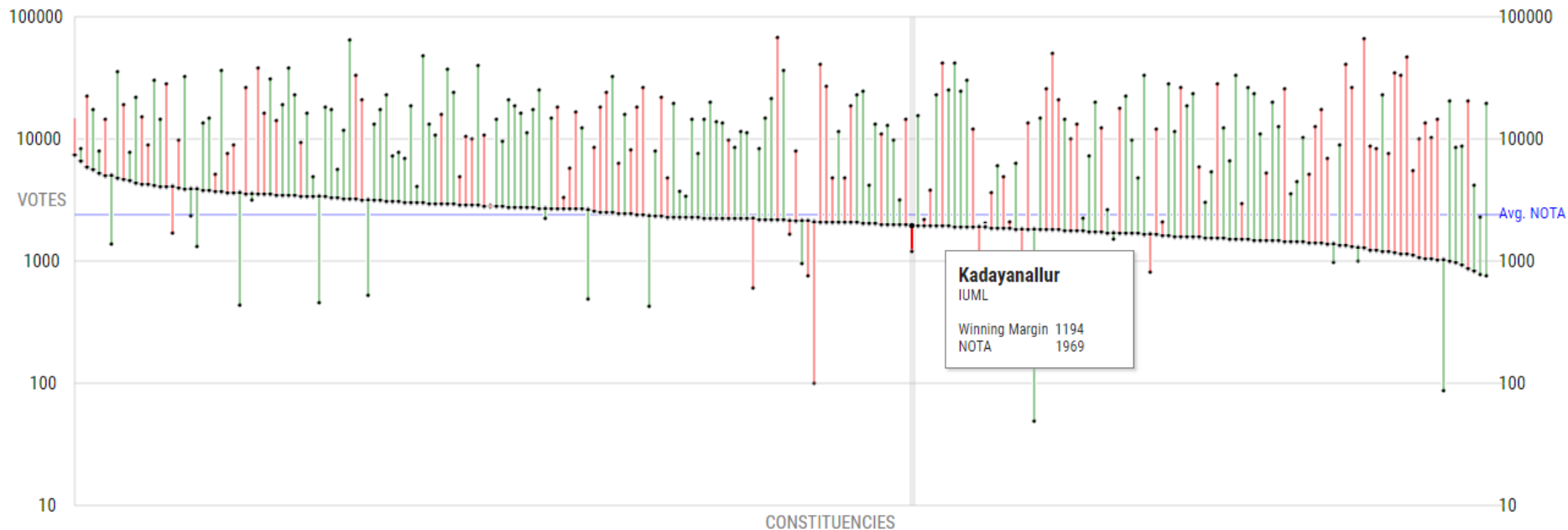




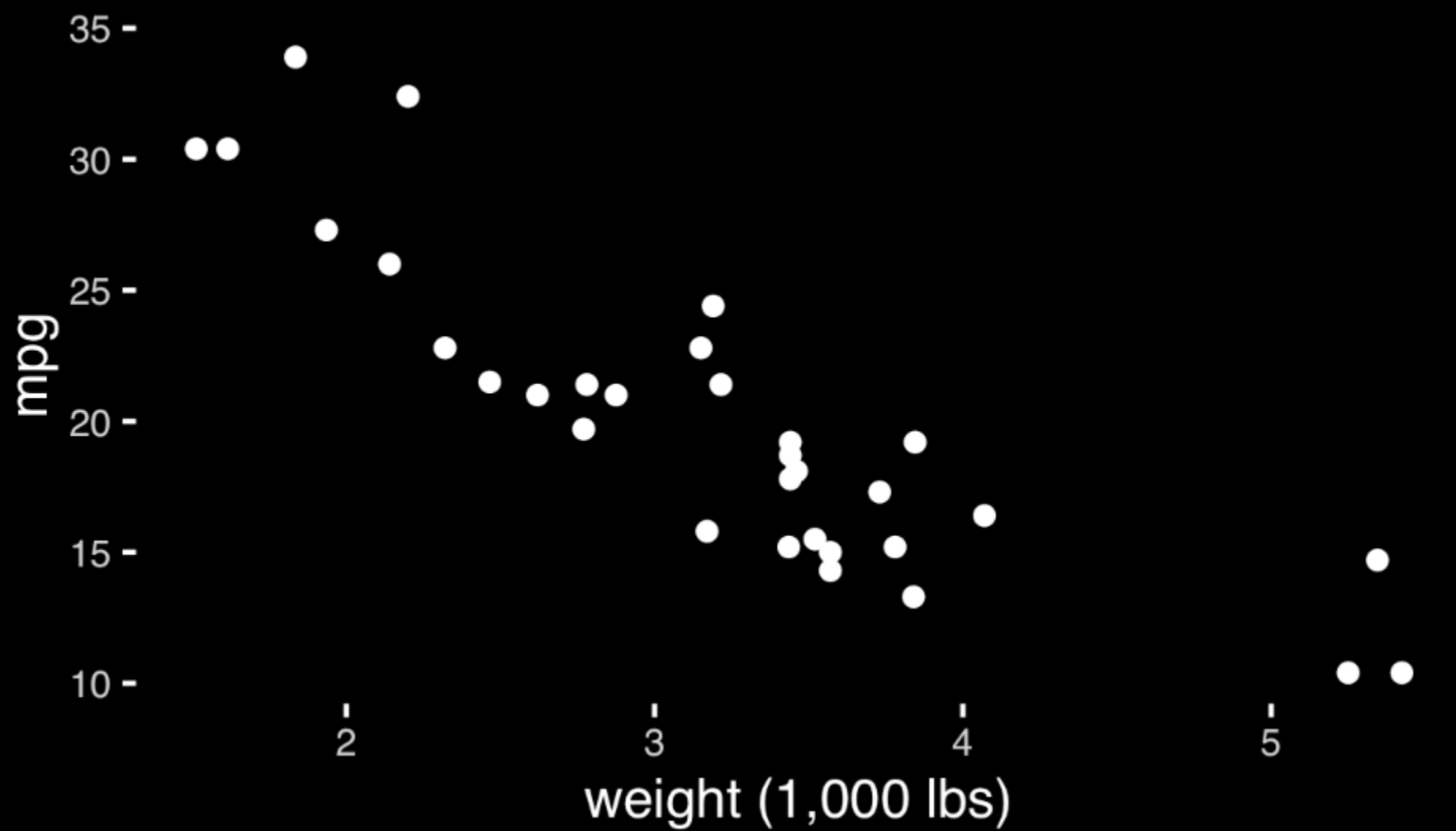
## CONSTITUENCY-WISE EFFECT OF THE NOTA

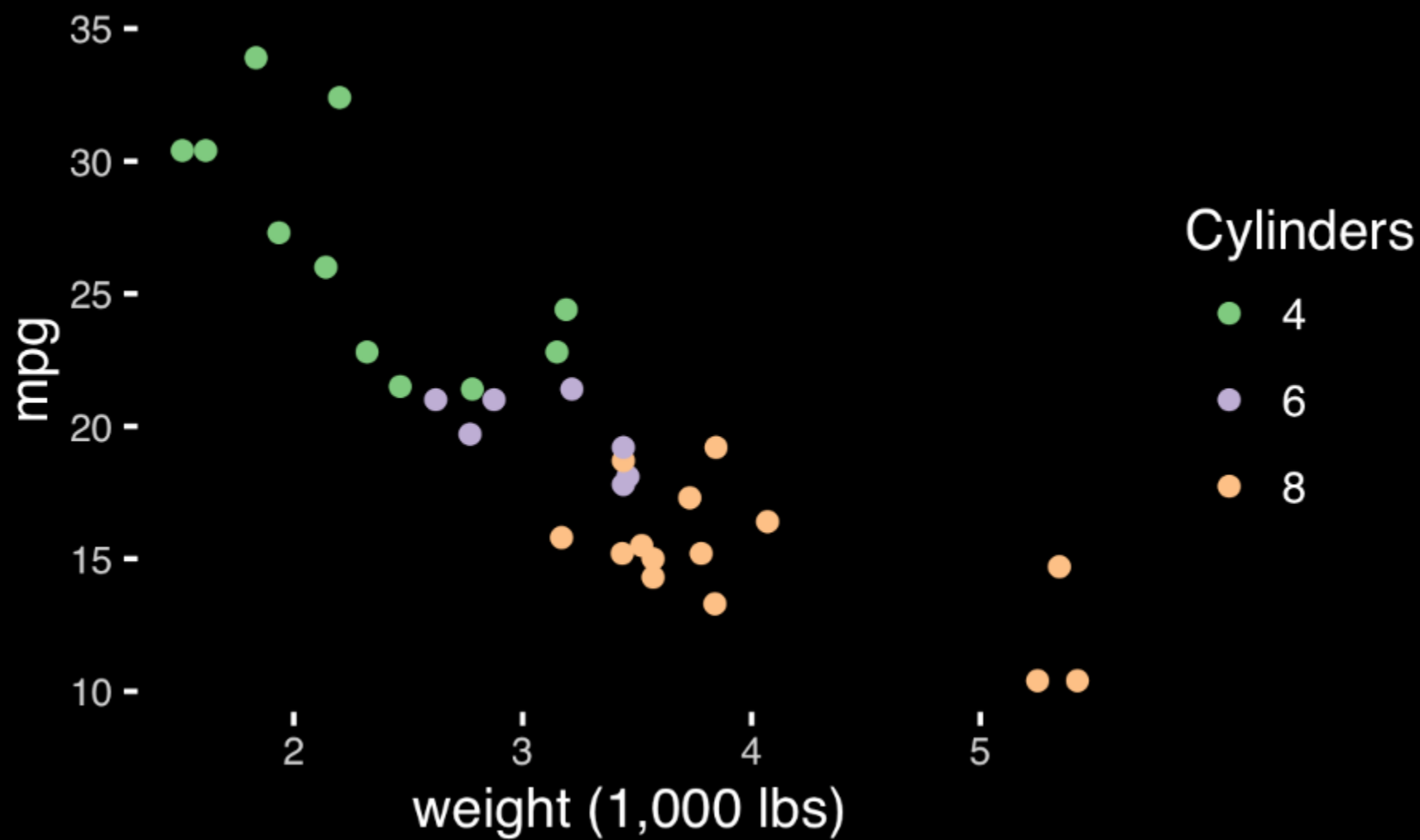
The chart shows the number of votes that the NOTA votes polled in each constituency in descending order of magnitude. The points above the curve indicate the constituencies where the victory margins are more than the NOTA votes polled, while the points below the curve, vice-versa. The length of the lines indicate the quantum of the difference. Votes along the Y-axis are shown on a logarithmic scale to allow for comparison. [Hover mouse cursor over the chart to explore constituency details.](#)

■ AIADMK+  
■ DMK+

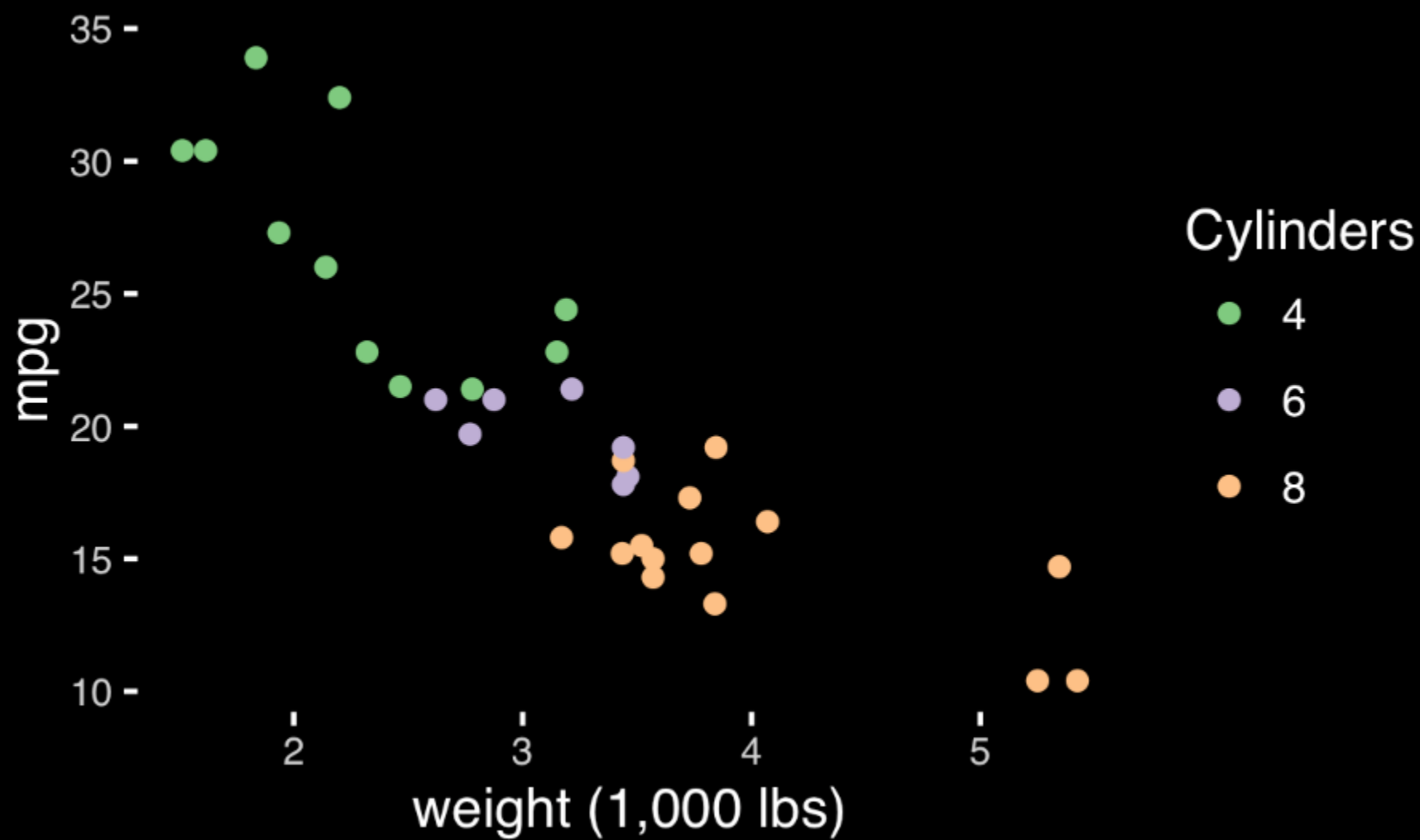


Observation: Good plots leverage the **law of continuity** to assist with assembly.

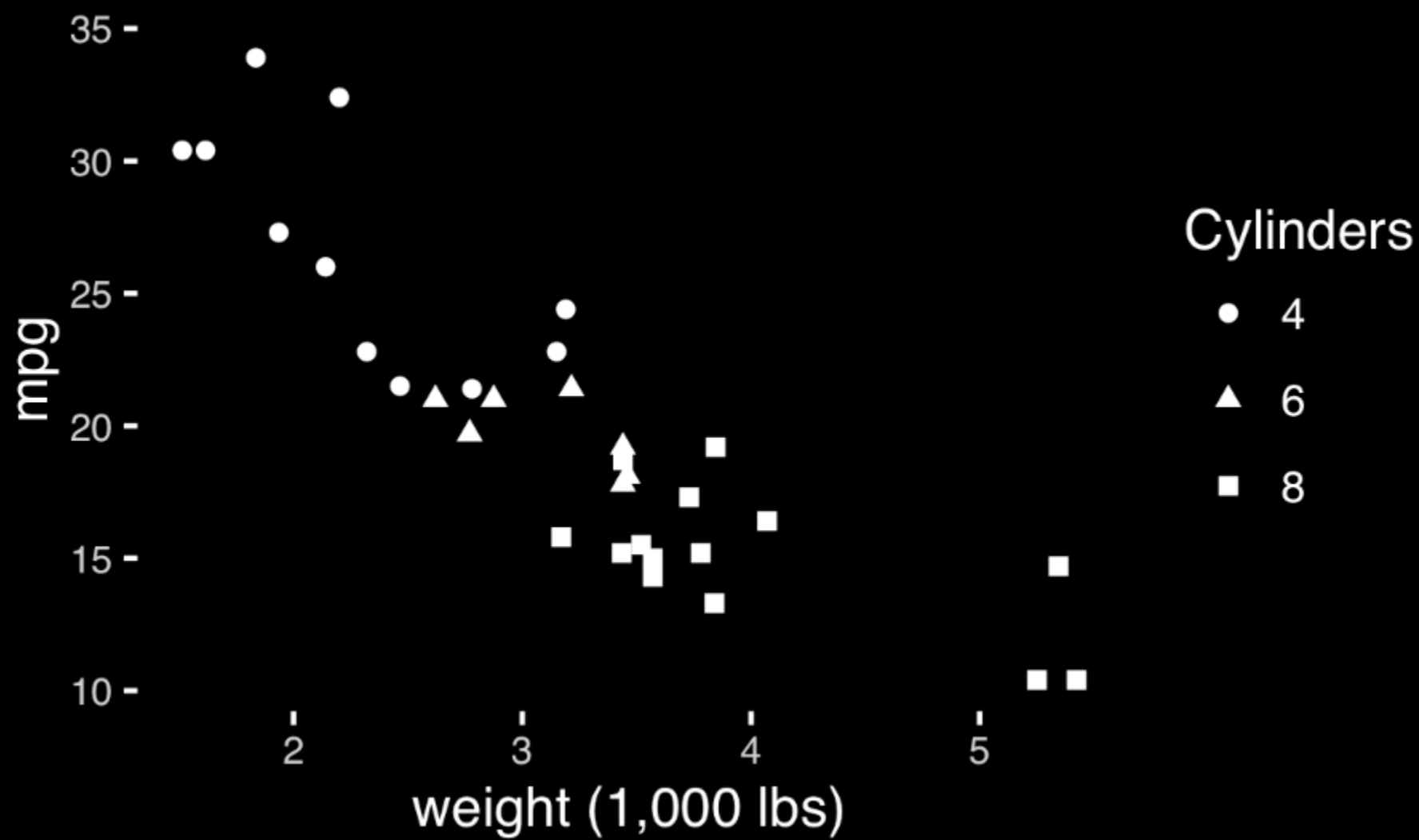


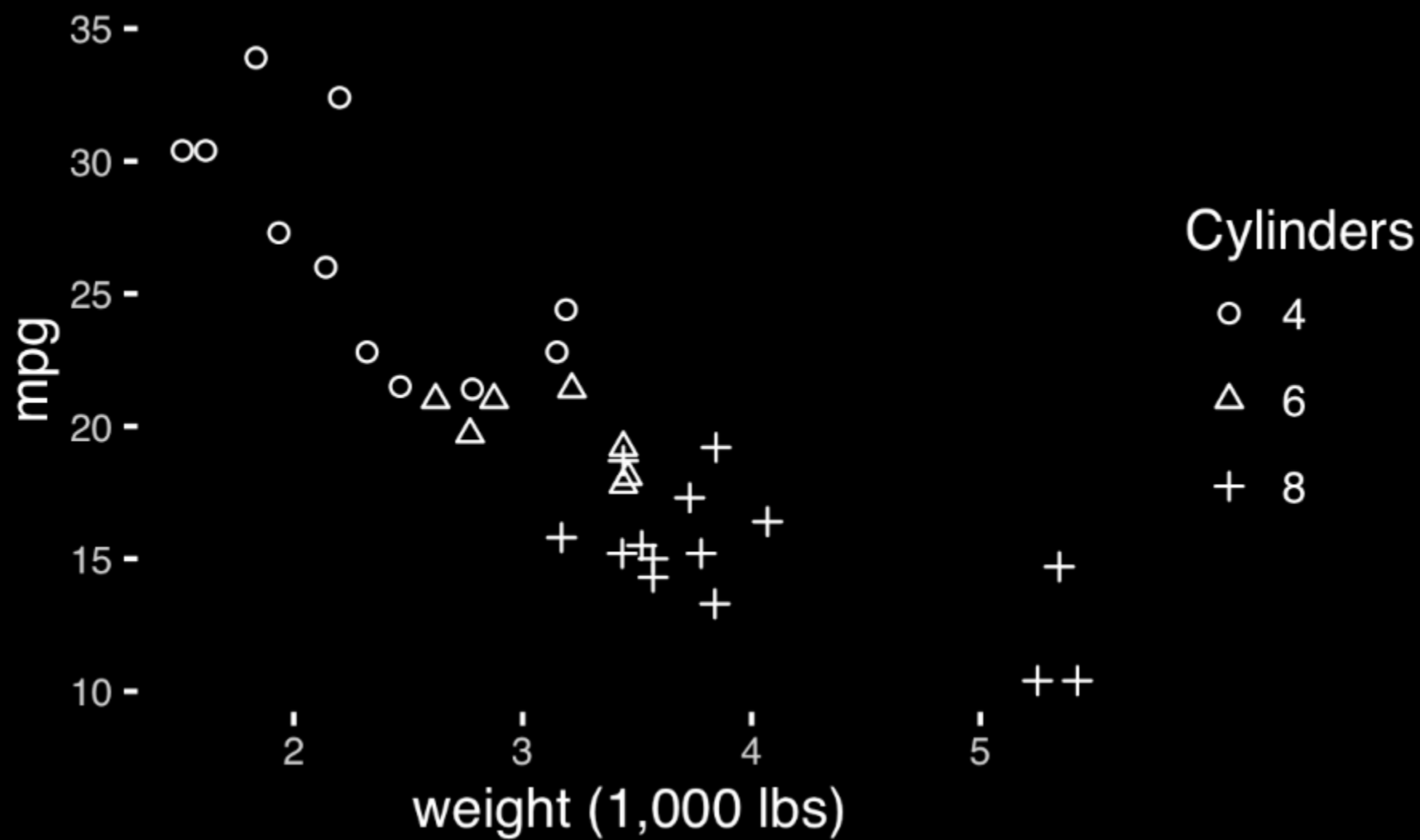


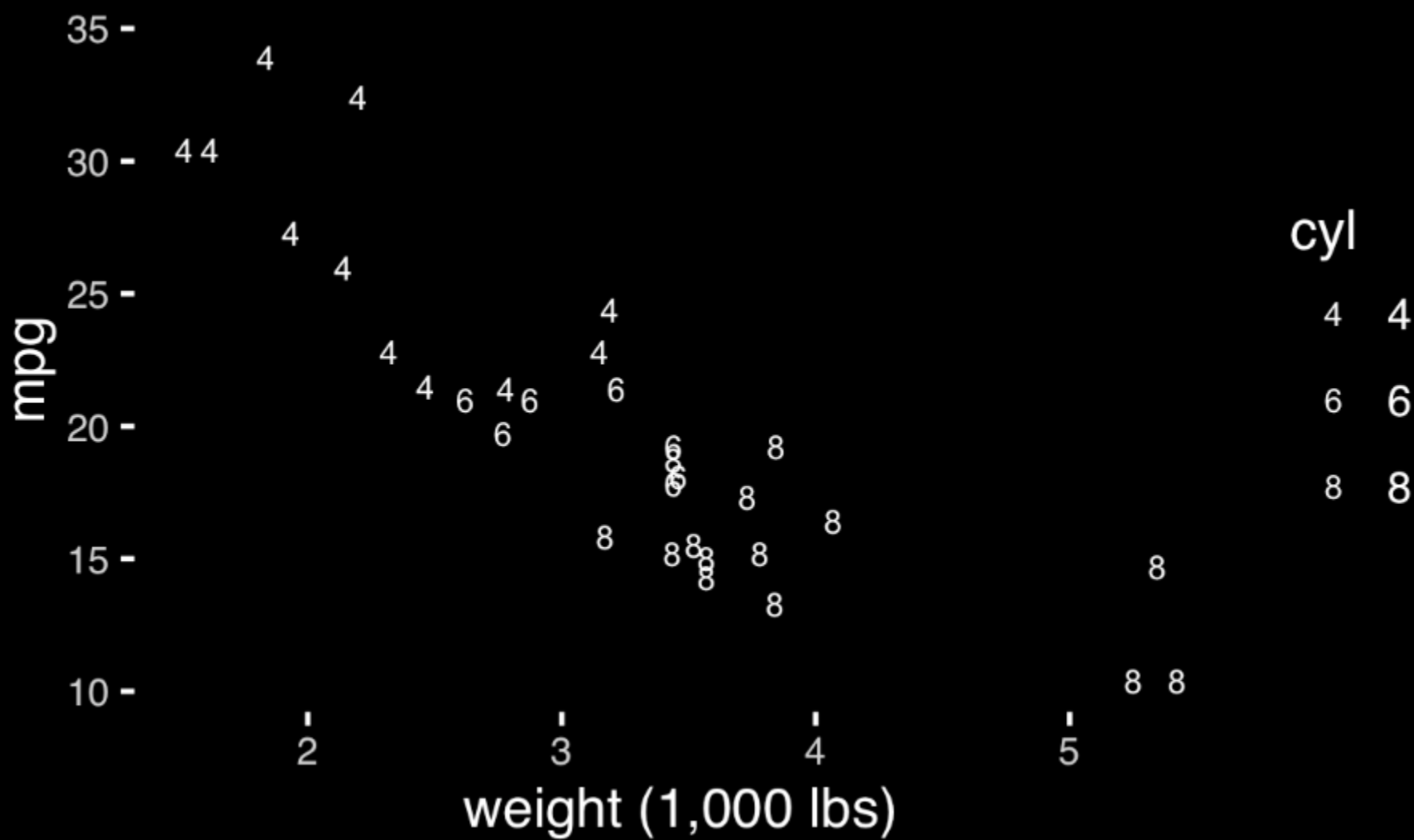
# Law of Similarity

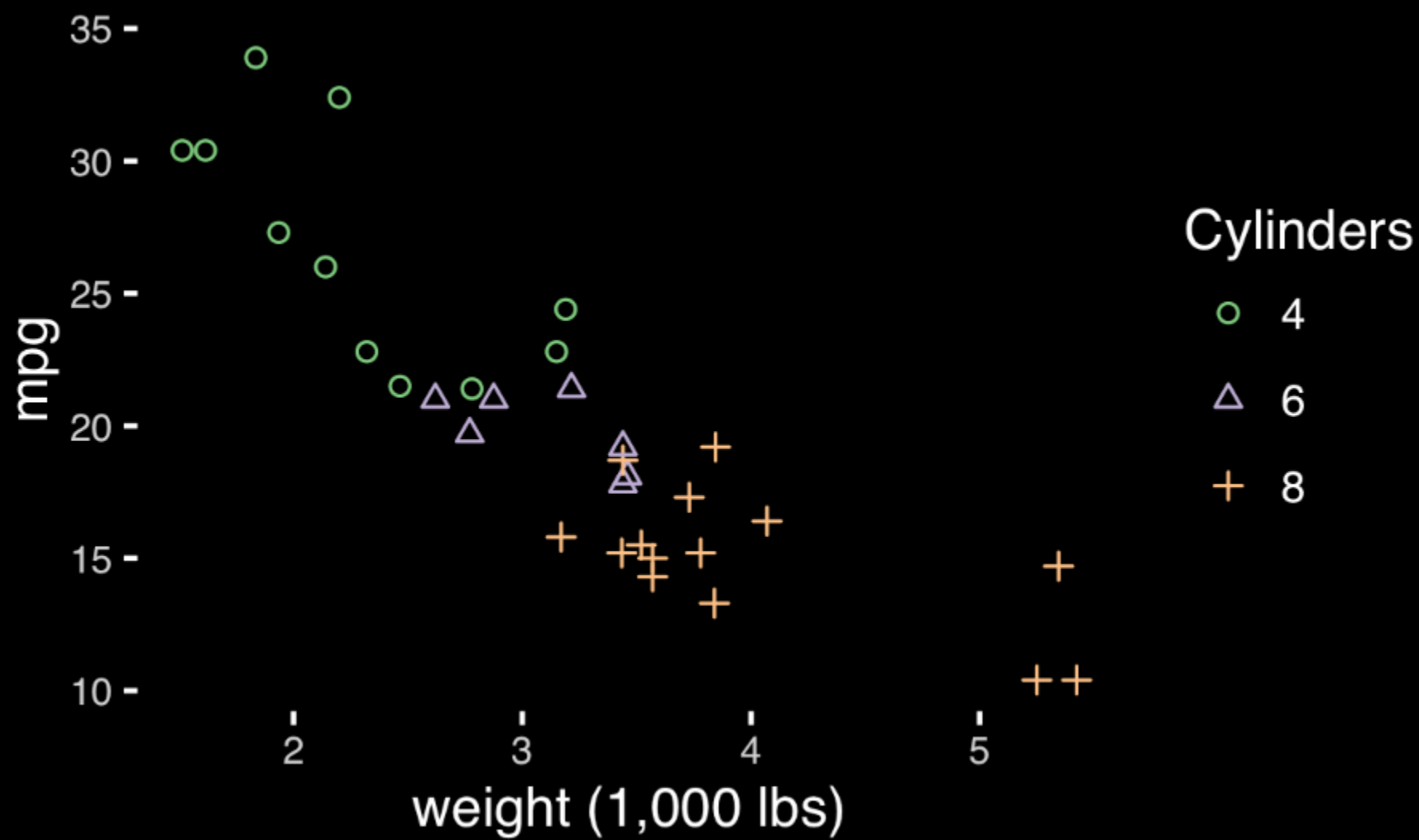


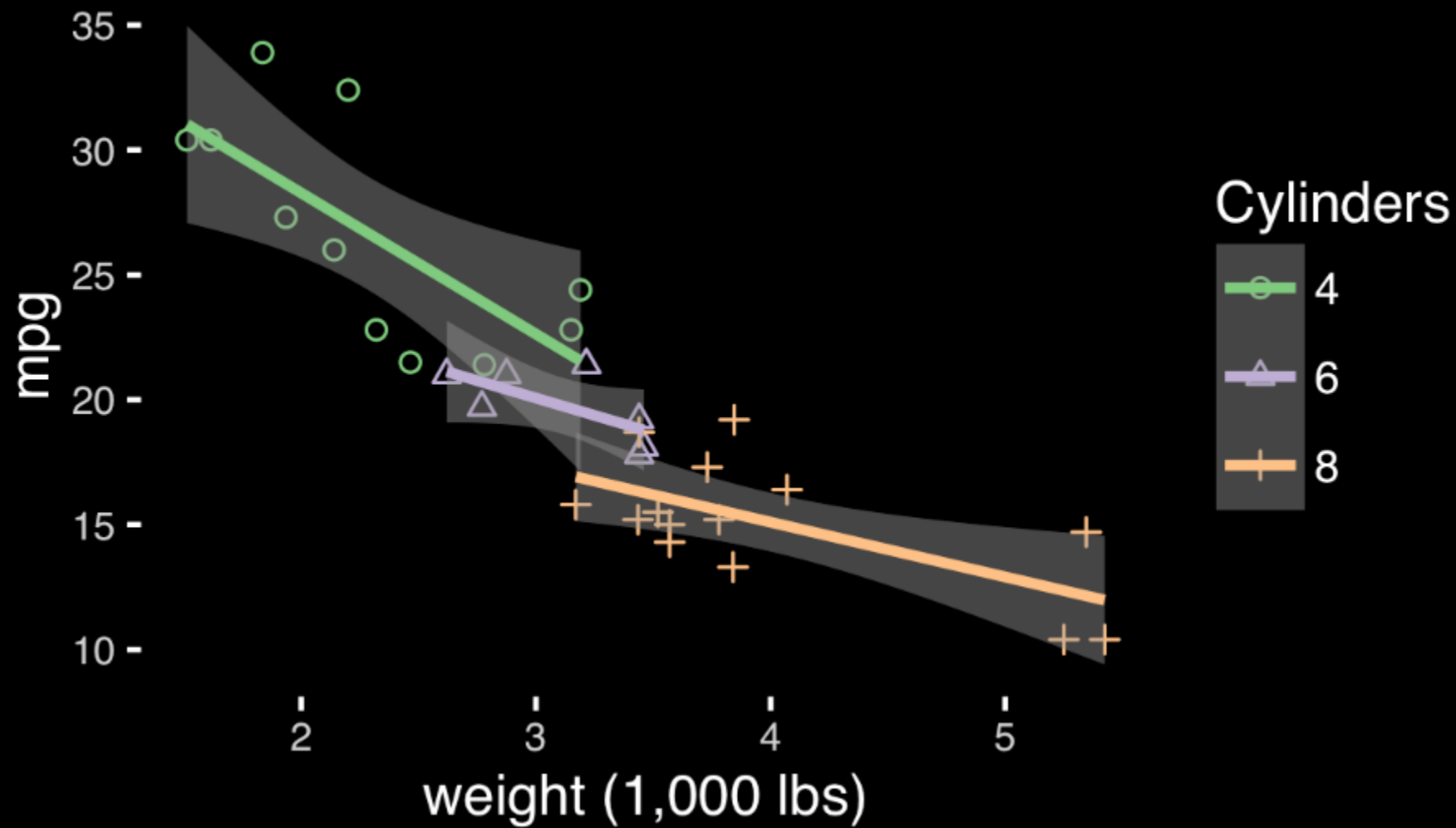












# Cleveland's three visual operations of pattern perception:

1. Detection
2. Assembly
3. Estimation

# 3. Estimation

# Three levels of estimation

- a. discrimination      $X=Y$      $X \neq Y$
- b. ranking             $X > Y$      $X < Y$
- c. ratioing             $X / Y = ?$



**At the heart of quantitative reasoning is a single question:  
Compared to what?**

**- Tufte, Envisioning Information**

# Three levels of estimation

- a. discrimination     $X=Y$      $X \neq Y$
- b. ranking             $X > Y$      $X < Y$
- c. ratioing             $X / Y = ?$

# Graphical Perception and Graphical Methods for Analyzing Scientific Data

William S. Cleveland and Robert McGill

Graphs provide powerful tools both for analyzing scientific data and for communicating quantitative information. The computer graphics revolution, which began in the 1960's and has intensified during the past several years, stimulated the invention of graphical meth-

ods for analyzing scientific data and for communicating quantitative information from graphs; theory and experimental data are then used to order the tasks on the basis of accuracy. The ordering has an important application: data should be encoded so that the visual decoding involves tasks as high in the ordering as possible, that is, tasks per-

---

*Summary.* Graphical perception is the visual decoding of the quantitative and qualitative information encoded on graphs. Recent investigations have uncovered basic principles of human graphical perception that have important implications for the display of data. The computer graphics revolution has stimulated the invention of many graphical methods for analyzing and presenting scientific data, such as box plots, two-tiered error bars, scatterplot smoothing, dot charts, and graphing on a log base 2 scale.

al field that comes without apparent mental effort. We also perform cognitive tasks such as reading scale information, but much of the power of graphs—and what distinguishes them from tables—comes from the ability of our preattentive visual system to detect geometric patterns and assess magnitudes. We have examined preattentive processes rather than cognition.

We have studied the elementary graphical-perception tasks theoretically, borrowing ideas from the more general field of visual perception (7, 8), and experimentally by having subjects judge graphical elements (1, 5). The next two sections illustrate the methodology with a few examples.

## Study of Graphical Perception: Theory

Figure 2 provides an illustration of theoretical reasoning that borrows some ideas from the field of computational vision (8). Suppose that the goal is to judge the ratio,  $r$ , of the slope of line segment BC to the slope of line segment AB in each of the three panels. Our visual system tells us that  $r$  is greater than 1 in each panel, which is correct. Our visual system also tells us that  $r$  is

Table 1. Ordering elementary tasks by accuracy, according to theoretical arguments and experimental results. Graphs should exploit tasks as high in the ordering as possible. The tasks are ordered from most accurate to least.

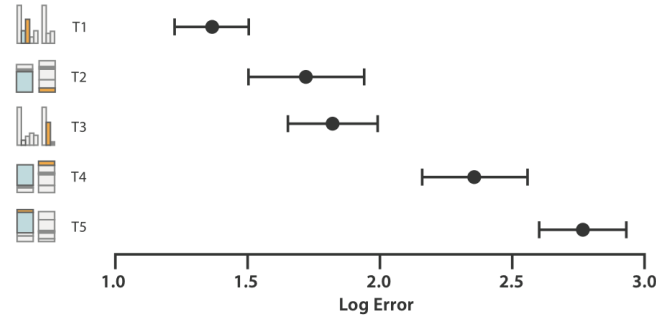
Rank	Aspect judged
1	Position along a common scale
2	Position on identical but nonaligned scales
3	Length
4	Angle
	Slope (with $\theta$ not too close to 0, $\pi/2$ , or $\pi$ radians)
5	Area
6	Volume
	Density
	Color saturation
7	Color hue

The most important measurement should exploit the highest ranked encoding possible.

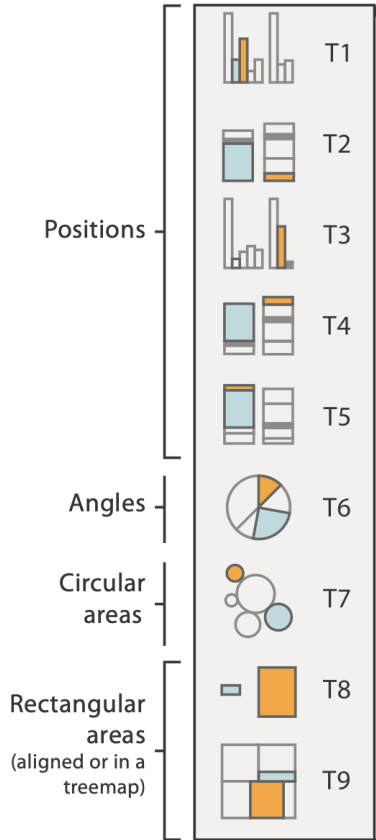
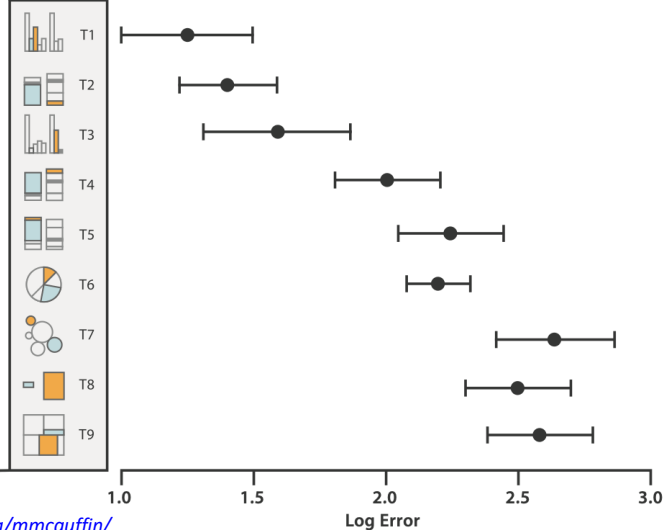
- Position along a common scale
- Position on identical but nonaligned scales
- Length
- Angle or Slope
- Area
- Volume or Density or Color saturation
- Color hue

# Accuracy: Vis experiments

Cleveland & McGill's Results



Crowdsourced Results



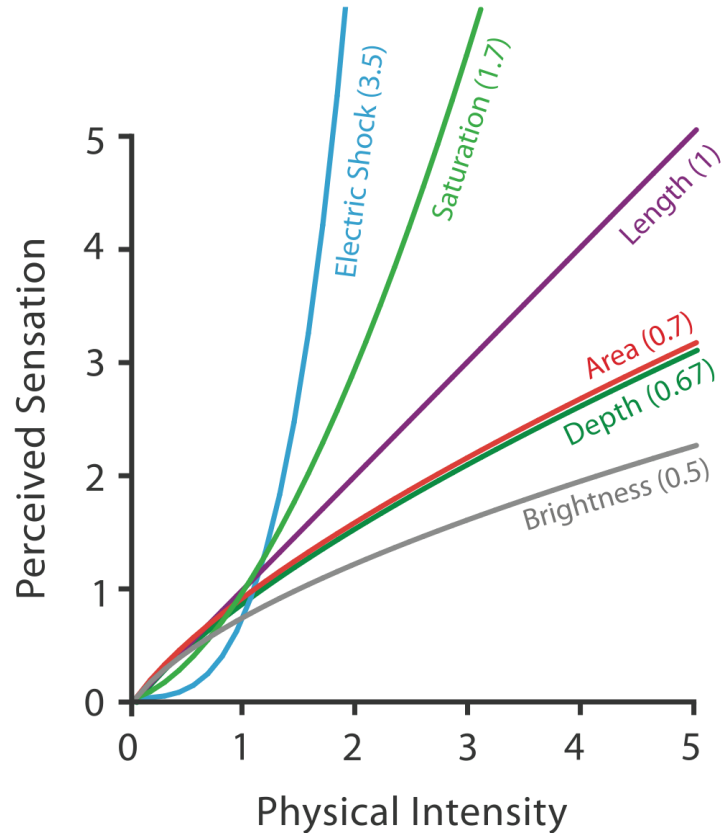
*[Crowdsourcing Graphical Perception: Using Mechanical Turk to Assess Visualization Design. Heer and Bostock. Proc ACM Conf. Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI) 2010, p. 203–212.]*

# Channel effectiveness

- accuracy: how precisely can we tell the difference between encoded items?
- discriminability: how many unique steps can we perceive?
- separability: is our ability to use this channel affected by another one?
- popout: can things jump out using this channel?
- Semantics: can data attributes be meaningfully mapped to channels?

# Accuracy: Fundamental theory

- length is accurate: linear
- others magnified or compressed
  - exponent characterizes



$S$  = sensation

$I$  = intensity



# Factors affecting accuracy

- alignment
- distractors
- distance
- common scale / alignment



## Relative vs. absolute judgements

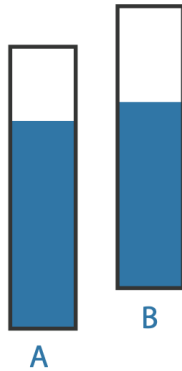
- perceptual system mostly operates with relative judgements, not absolute

# Relative vs. absolute judgements

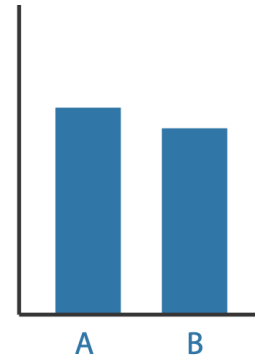
- perceptual system mostly operates with relative judgements, not absolute
  - that's why accuracy increases with common frame/scale and alignment



length



position along  
unaligned  
common scale



position along  
aligned scale

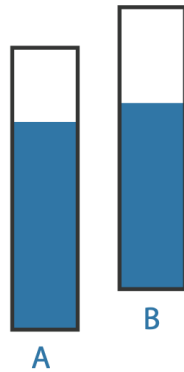
*after [Graphical Perception: Theory, Experimentation, and Application to the Development of Graphical Methods. Cleveland and McGill. Journ. American Statistical Association 79:387 (1984), 531–554.]*

# Relative vs. absolute judgements

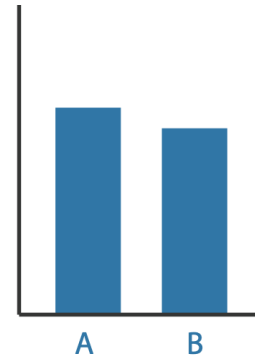
- perceptual system mostly operates with relative judgements, not absolute
  - that's why accuracy increases with common frame/scale and alignment
  - Weber's Law: ratio of increment to background is constant



length



position along  
unaligned  
common scale



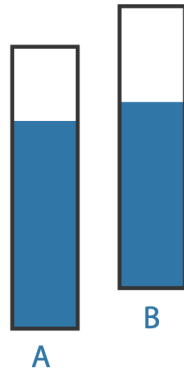
position along  
aligned scale

# Relative vs. absolute judgements

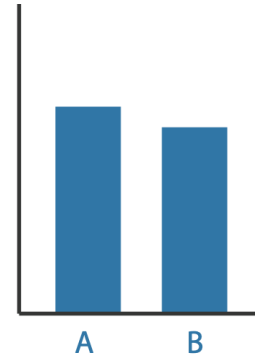
- perceptual system mostly operates with relative judgements, not absolute
  - that's why accuracy increases with common frame/scale and alignment
  - Weber's Law: ratio of increment to background is constant
    - filled rectangles differ in length by 1:9, difficult judgement
    - white rectangles differ in length by 1:2, easy judgement



length



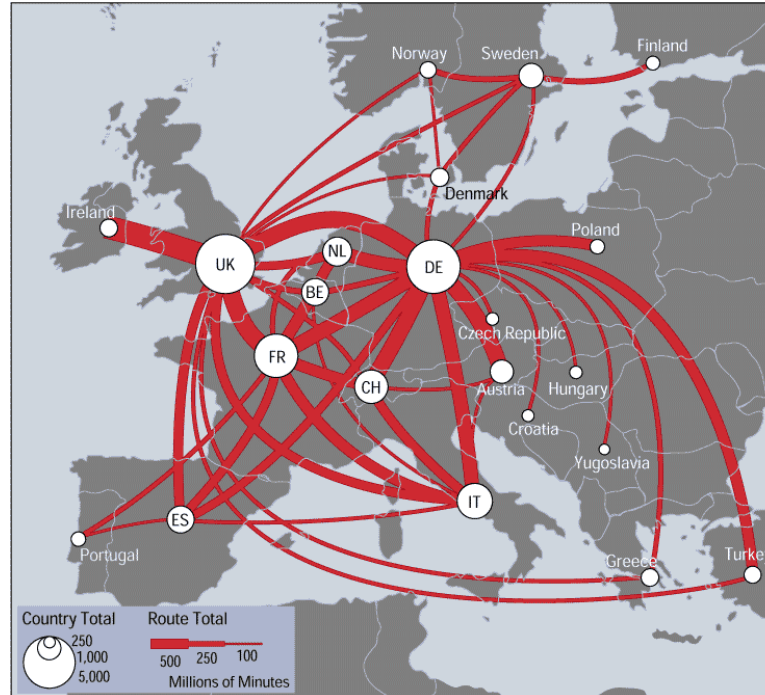
position along  
unaligned  
common scale



position along  
aligned scale

# Discriminability: How many usable steps?

- must be sufficient for number of attribute levels to show
  - linewidth: few bins

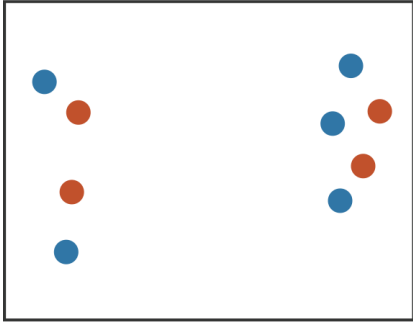


[[mappa.mundi.net/maps/maps\\_014/telegeography.html](http://mappa.mundi.net/maps/maps_014/telegeography.html)]

# Separability vs. Integrality

Position

+ Hue (Color)

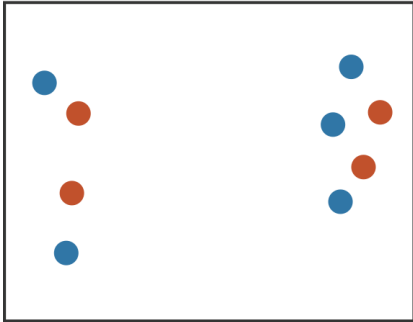


Fully separable

2 groups each

# Separability vs. Integrality

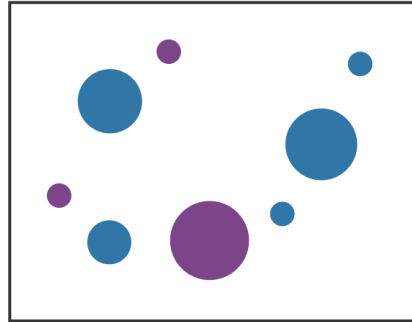
Position  
+ Hue (Color)



Fully separable

2 groups each

Size  
+ Hue (Color)



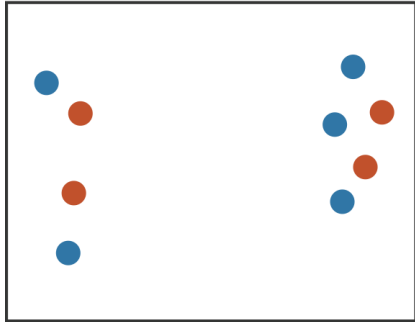
Some interference

2 groups each



# Separability vs. Integrality

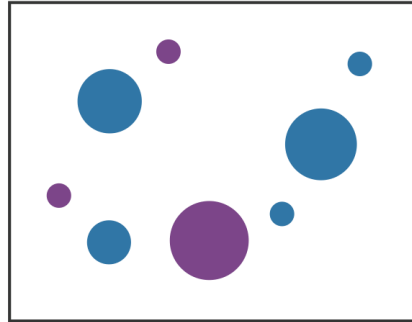
Position  
+ Hue (Color)



Fully separable

2 groups each

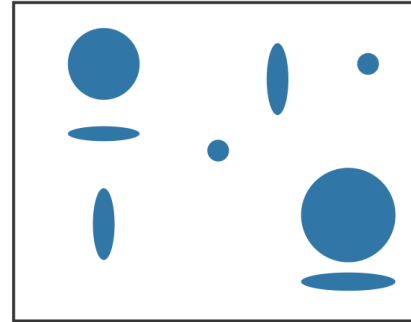
Size  
+ Hue (Color)



Some interference

2 groups each

Width  
+ Height

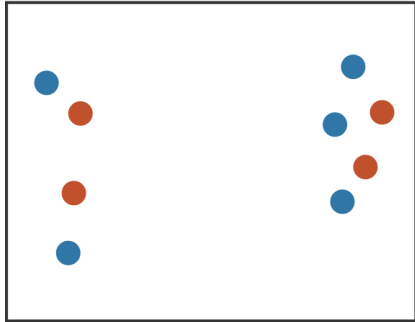


Some/significant  
interference

3 groups total:  
integral area

# Separability vs. Integrality

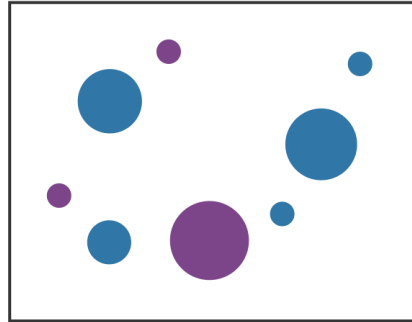
Position  
+ Hue (Color)



Fully separable

2 groups each

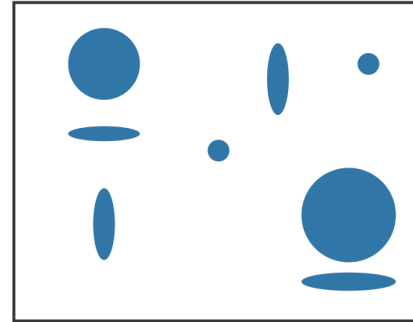
Size  
+ Hue (Color)



Some interference

2 groups each

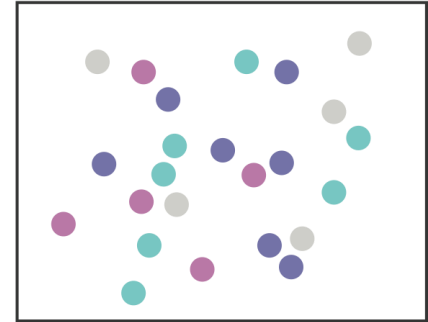
Width  
+ Height



Some/significant  
interference

3 groups total:  
integral area

Red  
+ Green



Major interference

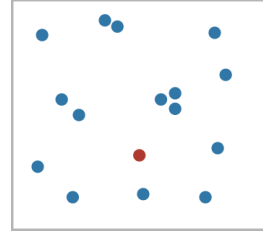
4 groups total:  
integral hue

# Popout

- find the red dot
  - how long does it take?

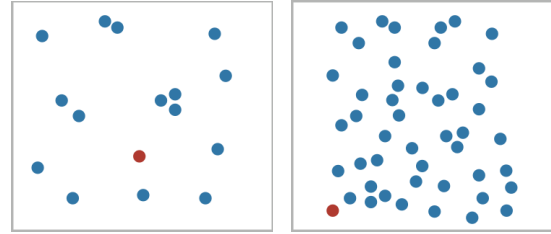
# Popout

- find the red dot
  - how long does it take?



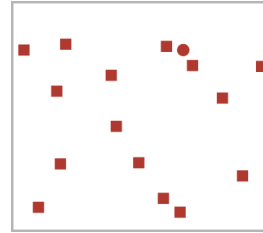
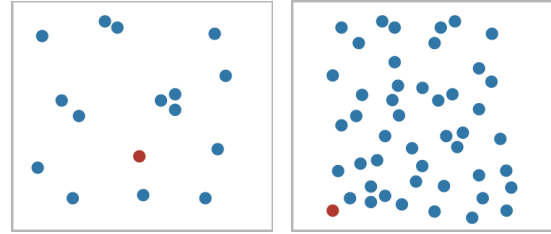
# Popout

- find the red dot
  - how long does it take?



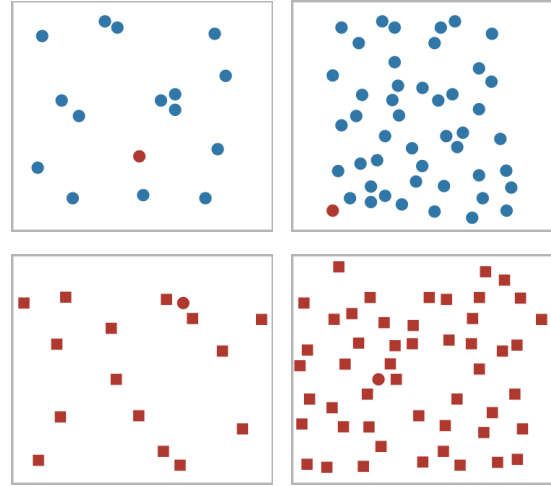
# Popout

- find the red dot
  - how long does it take?



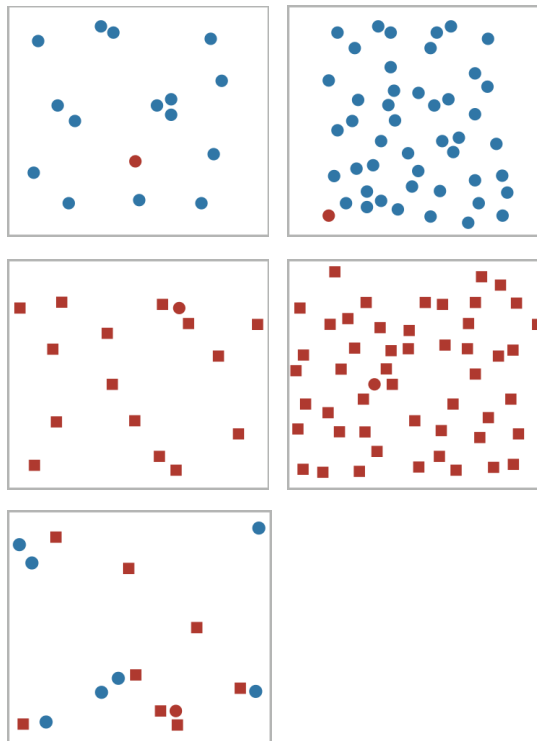
# Popout

- find the red dot
  - how long does it take?



# Popout

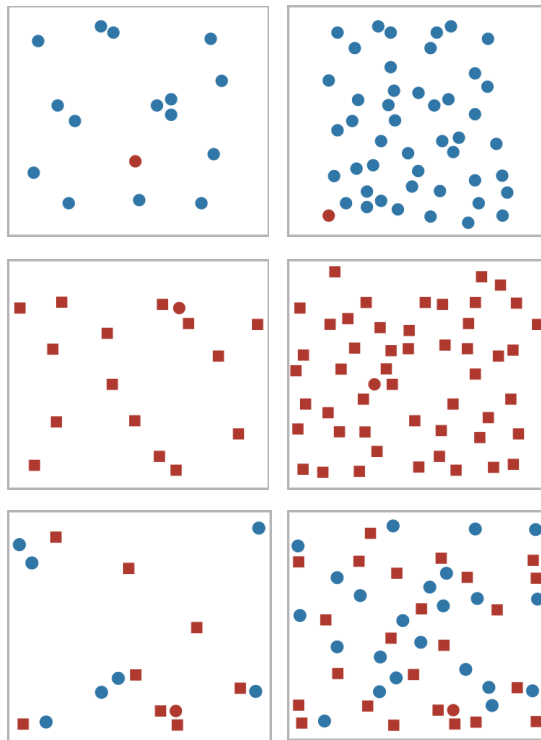
- find the red dot
  - how long does it take?





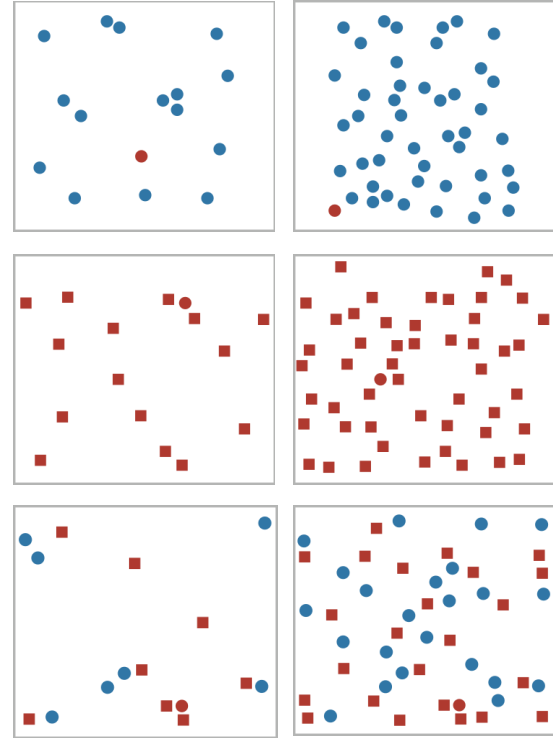
# Popout

- find the red dot
  - how long does it take?

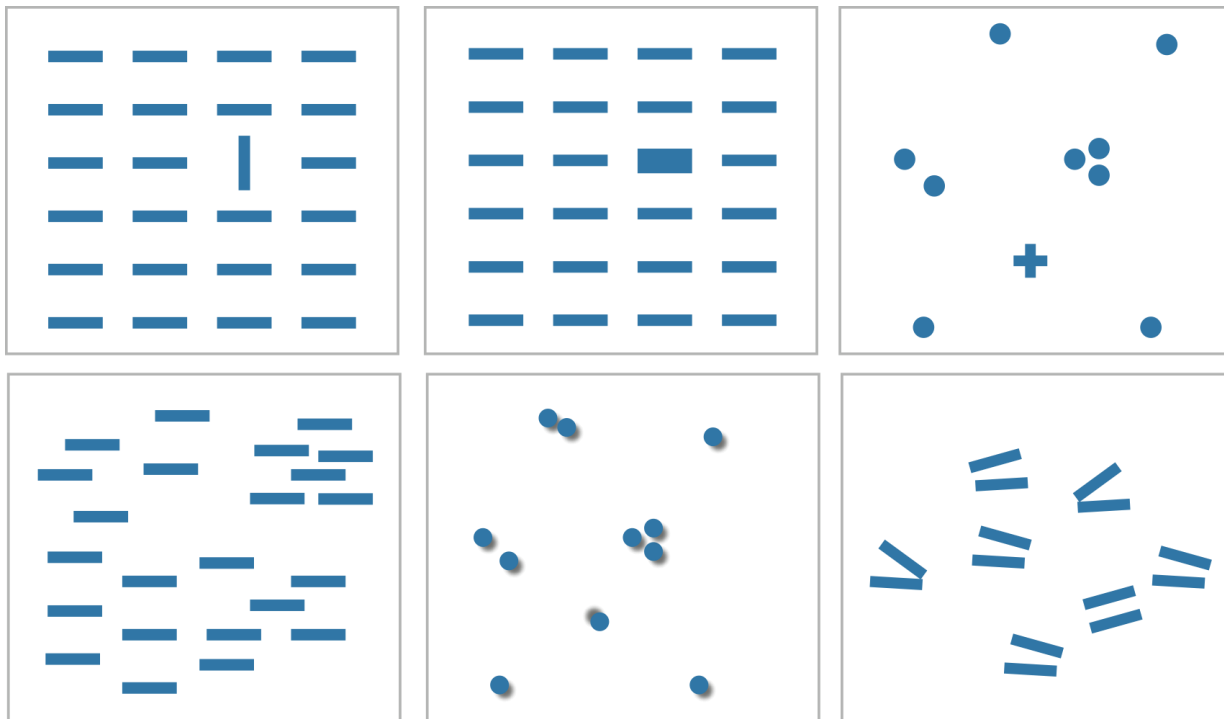


# Popout

- find the red dot
  - how long does it take?
- parallel processing on many individual channels
  - speed independent of distractor count
  - speed depends on channel and amount of difference from distractors
- serial search for (almost all) combinations
  - speed depends on number of distractors

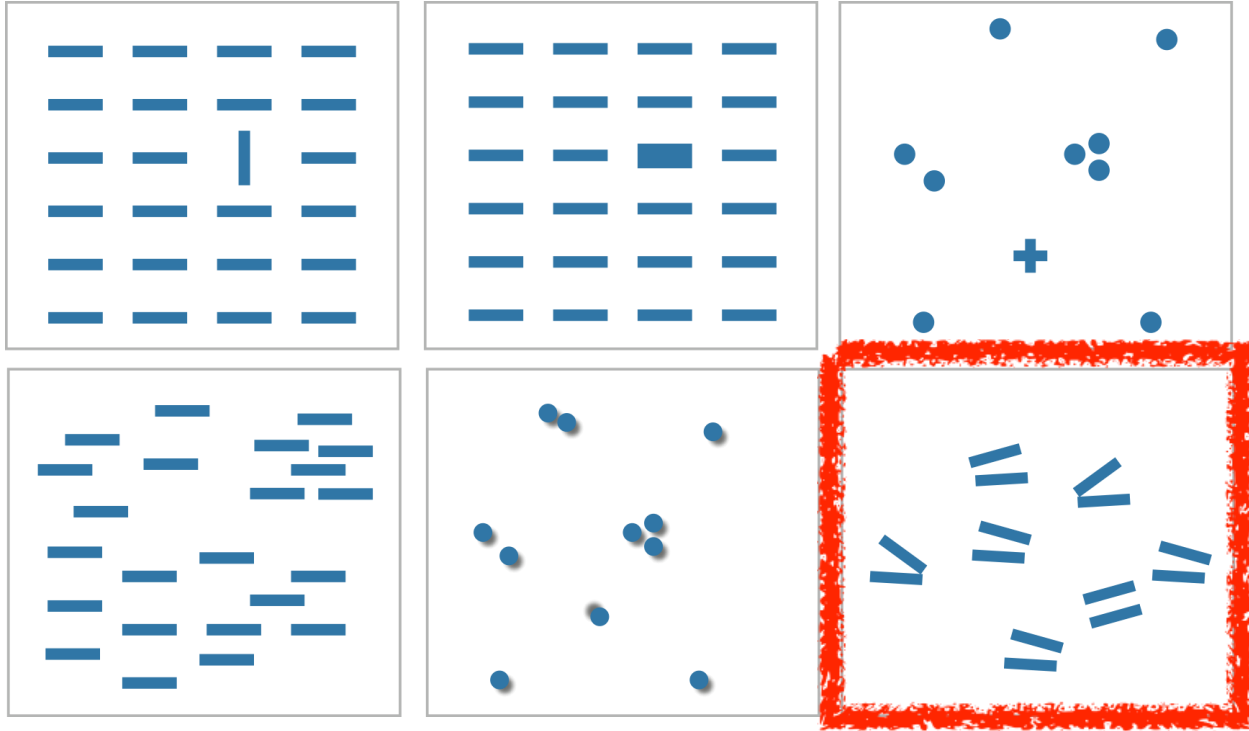


# Popout



- many channels
  - tilt, size, shape, proximity, shadow direction, ...

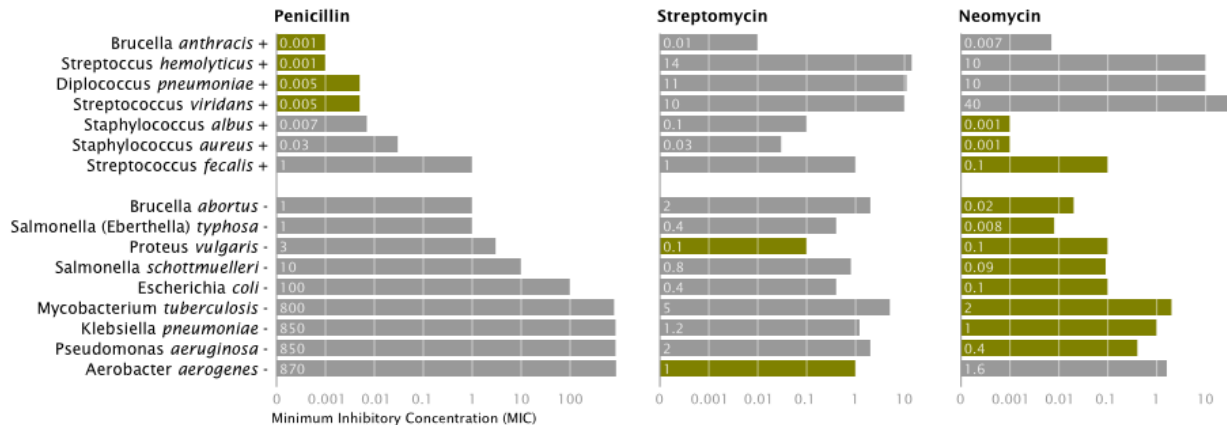
# Popout

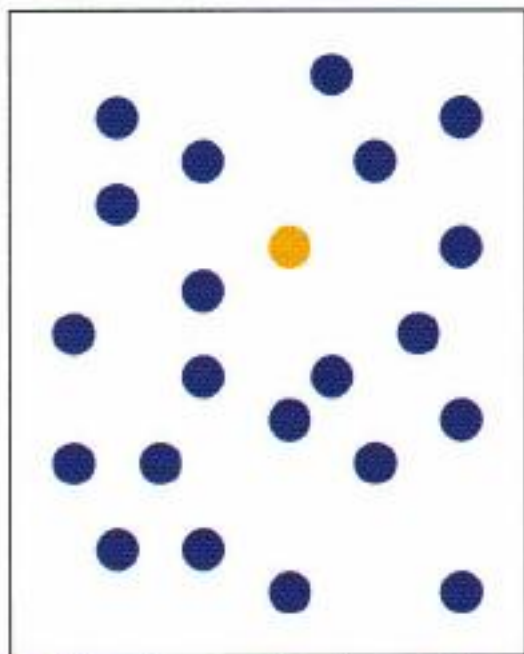


- many channels
  - tilt, size, shape, proximity, shadow direction, ...
- but not all!
  - parallel line pairs do not pop out from tilted pairs

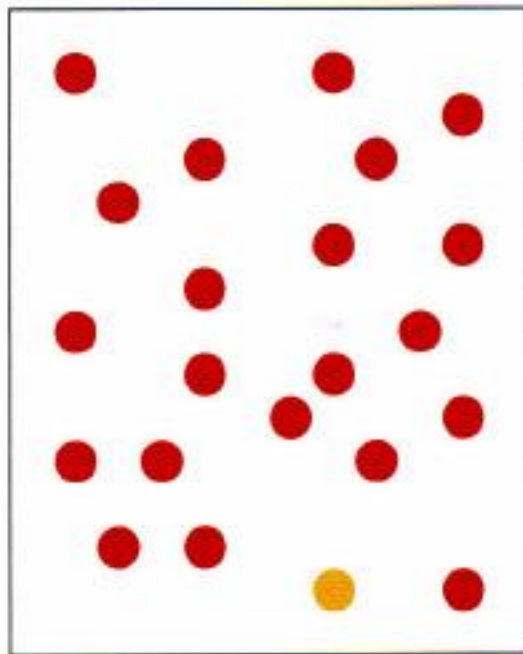
# Popout

- We can easily see objects that are different in colour and shape, or that are in motion
- Use colour and shape sparingly to make the salient information pop out

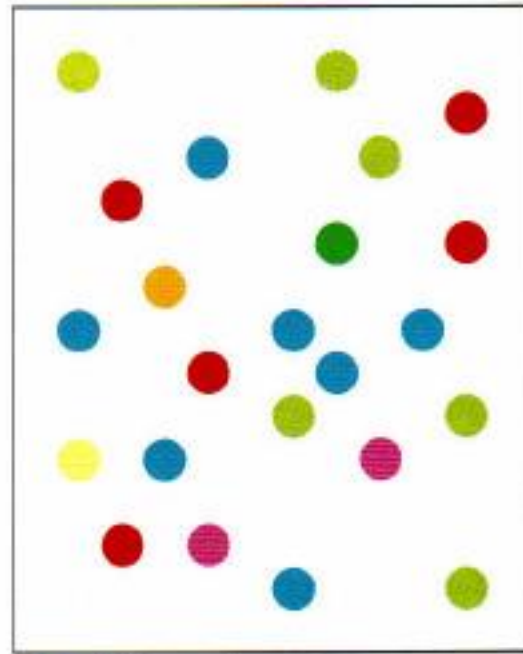




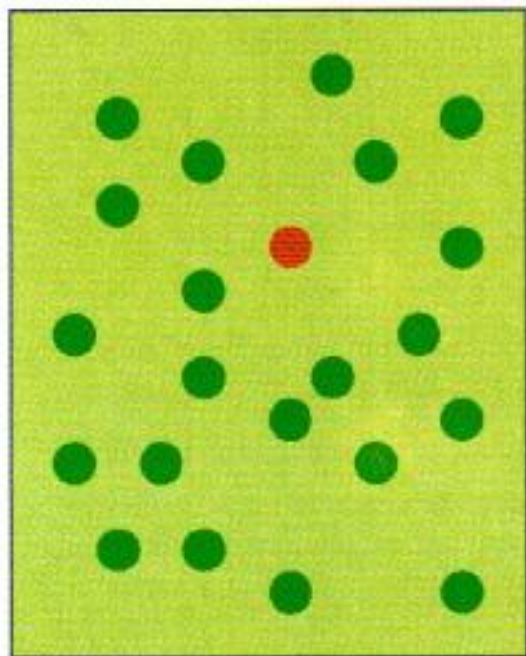
● The larger the chromatic difference between the target symbol and the other symbols, the easier the search.



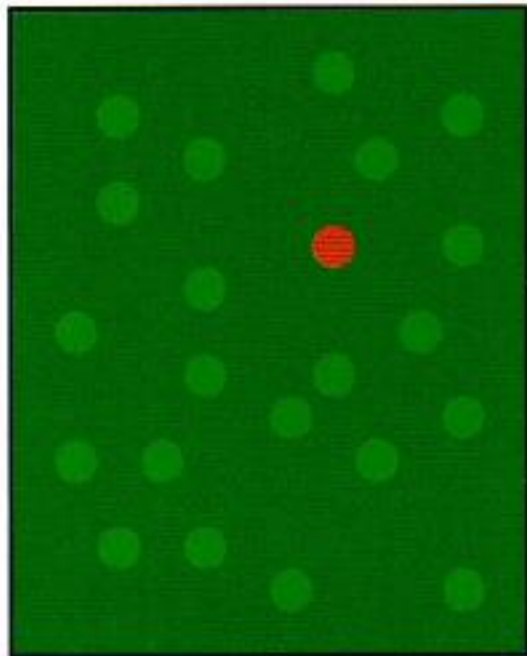
● When there is only a small color difference from non-target symbols, the search is difficult.



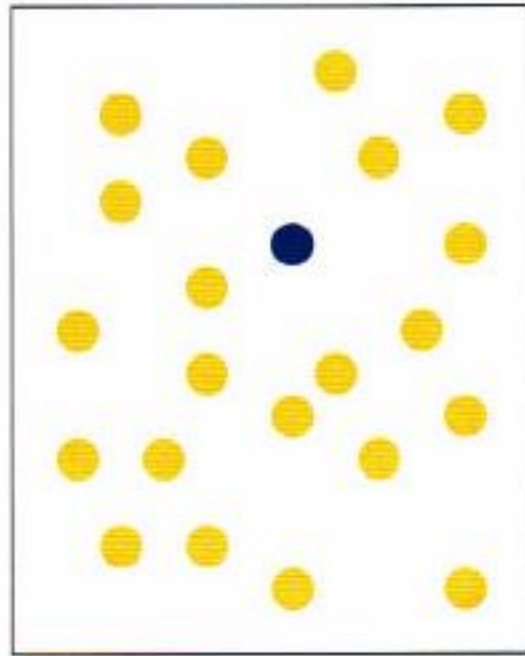
● When there are many non-target symbol colors, the search is the most difficult.



● If non-target symbols are similar to the background, they are easy to exclude from the visual search.

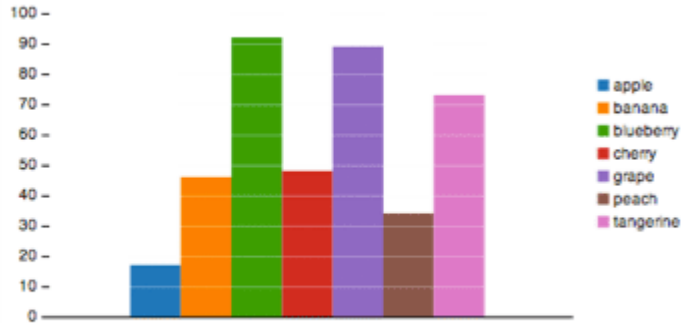


● A luminance difference plus a chromatic difference from other symbols and the background leads to the easiest search.

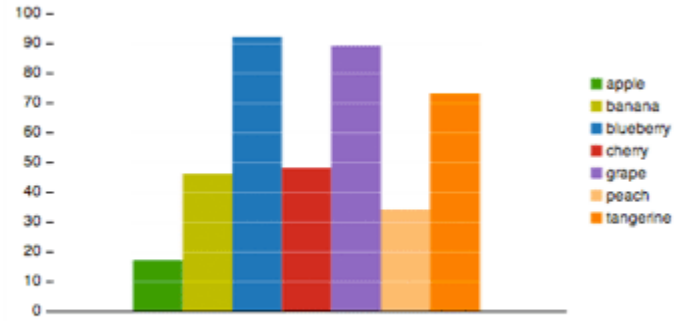


● A dark target on a light background with light non-target symbols can be as effective as the reverse.

# Semantically Resonant Colour Assignments



Default color assignment



Semantically resonant color assignment

Semantically-resonant colours improve speed on chart reading tasks compared to a standard palette



# Stroop Effect

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**Stroop Effect:** interference in the reaction time of a task

Green Red Blue Purple Blue Purple

# Stroop Effect

---

**Stroop Effect:** interference in the reaction time of a task

Green Red Blue Purple Blue Purple












Blue Purple Red Green Purple Green

## Stroop Effect

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- brain's ability to recognize the colour of the word since the brain reads words faster than it recognizes colours
- colour recognition as opposed to reading a word, requires more attention
- recognizing colours is not an "automatic process" there is hesitancy to respond; whereas, the brain automatically understands the meaning of words as a result of habitual reading

# Encoding semantics

Graphical Code		Semantics
Small shapes defined by closed contour, texture, color, shaded solid.		Object, idea, entity, node.
Spatially ordered graphical objects.		Related information or a sequence. In a sequence the left-to-right ordering convention borrows from the western convention for written language.
Graphical objects in proximity.		Similar concepts, related information.
Graphical objects having the same shape, color, or texture.		Similar concepts, related information.
Size of graphical object Height of graphical object.		Magnitude, quantity, importance.
Shapes connected by contour.		Related entities, path between entities.
Thickness of connecting contour.		Strength of relationship.
Color and texture of connecting contour.		Type of relationship.
Shapes enclosed by a contour, or a common texture, or a common color.		Contained entities. Related entities.
Nested regions, partitioned regions.		Hierarchical concepts.
Attached shapes.		Parts of a conceptual structure.

## When to use which channel?

Expressiveness

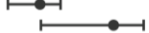
match channel type to data type

Effectiveness

some channels are better than others

# Channels: Rankings

Position on common scale 

Position on unaligned scale 

Length (1D size) 

Tilt/angle 


Area (2D size) 

Depth (3D position) 

Color luminance  Same

Color saturation  Same

Curvature  Same

Volume (3D size)  Same

Spatial region 

Color hue 

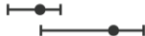
Motion 

Shape 

# Channels: Rankings

## ➔ Magnitude Channels: **Ordered** Attributes

Position on common scale 

Position on unaligned scale 

Length (1D size) 

Tilt/angle 

Area (2D size) 

Depth (3D position) 

Color luminance 

Color saturation 

Curvature 

Volume (3D size) 

Same  
Same

## ➔ Identity Channels: **Categorical** Attributes

Spatial region 

Color hue 

Motion 


Shape 

- expressiveness
  - match channel and data characteristics

# Channels: Rankings

## ➔ Magnitude Channels: Ordered Attributes

Position on common scale 

Position on unaligned scale 

Length (1D size) 

Tilt/angle 

Area (2D size) 

Depth (3D position) 

Color luminance 

Color saturation 

Curvature 

Volume (3D size) 

Same

## ➔ Identity Channels: Categorical Attributes

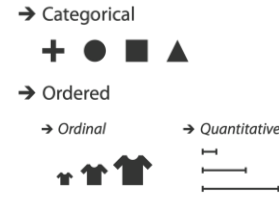
Spatial region 

Color hue 

Motion 

Shape 

### ➔ Attribute Types




- expressiveness
  - match channel and data characteristics
  - magnitude for ordered
    - how much? which rank?
  - identity for categorical
    - what?




# Channels: Rankings

## ➔ Magnitude Channels: Ordered Attributes

Position on common scale 

Position on unaligned scale 

Length (1D size) 

Tilt/angle 

Area (2D size) 

Depth (3D position) 

Color luminance 

Color saturation 

Curvature 


Volume (3D size) 

Best

Effectiveness

Least

## ➔ Identity Channels: Categorical Attributes

Spatial region 

Color hue 

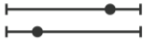
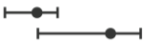
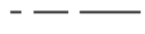
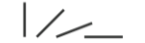






Motion 

Shape 

- expressiveness
  - match channel and data characteristics
- effectiveness
  - channels differ in accuracy of perception

# Channels: Rankings





➔ **Magnitude Channels: Ordered Attributes**

Position on common scale	
Position on unaligned scale	
Length (1D size)	
Tilt/angle	
Area (2D size)	
Depth (3D position)	
Color luminance	
Color saturation	
Curvature	
Volume (3D size)	

Same

Same

➔ **Identity Channels: Categorical Attributes**

Spatial region	
Color hue	
Motion	
Shape	

Effectiveness

Best

Least

- expressiveness
  - match channel and data characteristics
- effectiveness
  - channels differ in accuracy of perception
  - spatial position ranks high for both

# Grouping

- containment
- connection

- proximity
  - same spatial region
- similarity
  - same values as other categorical channels

## Marks as Links

→ Containment



→ Connection



→ Identity Channels: **Categorical Attributes**

Spatial region



Color hue















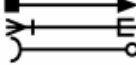

Motion



Shape



# Properties and Best Uses of Visual Encodings

Example	Encoding	Ordered	Useful values	Quantitative	Ordinal	Categorical	Relational
	position, placement	yes	infinite	Good	Good	Good	Good
1, 2, 3; A, B, C	text labels	optional (alphabetical or numbered)	infinite	Good	Good	Good	Good
	length	yes	many	Good	Good		
	size, area	yes	many	Good	Good		
	angle	yes	medium/few	Good	Good		
	pattern density	yes	few	Good	Good		
	weight, boldness	yes	few		Good		
	saturation, brightness	yes	few		Good		
	color	no	few (< 20)			Good	
	shape, icon	no	medium			Good	
	pattern texture	no	medium			Good	
	enclosure, connection	no	infinite			Good	Good
	line pattern	no	few				Good
	line endings	no	few				Good
	line weight	yes	few		Good		



# Questions?

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