

Guidelines for Incorporating Visuals

I. Why Use Visuals?

You may incorporate **three to six effective visuals** (such as photographs, maps, charts, timelines, graphs, etc.) into your research paper. Why might you want to do so?

The purpose of using visuals in your paper is to make your topic clearer and more engaging for your reader.

II. When should you incorporate a visual?

Use a visual if it effectively illustrates a key idea or fact for your reader.

Ask yourself these questions:

*Is the visual relevant to my Research Questions, and does it help me **make a specific idea or fact about my topic clearer** for the reader?*

*Also, is the visual engaging to the reader, increasing the reader's **interest** in the topic and **understanding** of the topic?*

III. How to Incorporate Visuals into Your Research Paper

- In your essay, always place each visual as close as possible to the sentences that relate to it.
- Number each visual, beginning with "Fig.1."
- For each visual, find the *most appropriate sentence* in the text of your essay where you can *refer to this visual*. Then, at the end of this sentence, place a set of parentheses with this expression inside:
 - (see Fig. __). Write the number of the visual (1, 2, 3, etc.) in the blank next to "Fig."
- Follow the steps below to create each visual and its caption & citation.

1) Copy the image/visual from its original location.

2) Go into your essay document and select "Insert ---> Drawing."

3) Inside the checkerboard "Drawing" field, paste the image/visual.

4) To create the visual's caption, click the text-box tool, and then draw a text-box directly beneath the visual. Size the text-box **the same width** as the visual.

5) Inside the text-box, **type** the following caption information:

A. To begin your caption, type the figure number using the abbreviation "Fig." (e.g., "Fig.1" or "Fig.2").

B. After the figure number, concisely state the specific information that this visual *shows* the reader. (Also, capitalize the caption as you would capitalize a sentence.)

C. Finish the caption with a parenthetical citation. (Also, make sure that your Works Cited page includes an entry that corresponds to the source of this visual.)

For sources *with an author*, place the author's last name in parentheses. For sources with *no author*, use the title of the article/web-page inside quotation marks. **See the examples below:**

- Fig.1 Location of the Ogallala Aquifer ("Aquifer Basics").
- Fig.2 Timeline of World War I ("Interactive WWI Timeline").
- Fig.3 Number of concussions per year in the NFL ("NFL Concussions Fast Facts").
- Fig.4 A Chinook salmon bar-coded for a genetic study (Thiele).

Note: See the last page of this document for a full **Works Cited** list of all the above sources.

6) If necessary, use the editing tools to modify the caption's font size and type. Then when your caption is complete, click "**Save & Close**."

7) When your visual shows up on your essay, **click on the visual and select "Wrap Text."** Then drag your visual to its proper location and re-size it appropriately.

8) To make sure that your visuals are incorporated appropriately, **see how the three visuals were incorporated into the [Example A++ Research Paper on Ogallala Aquifer](#)**.

Go on to the next page to see a full Works Cited list of the four sources listed above.

Works Cited

- “Aquifer Basics.” *USGS Groundwater Information*. United States Geological Survey. 8 December 2016, <https://water.usgs.gov/ogw/aquiferbasics/>. Accessed 14 January 2017.
- “Interactive WWI Timeline.” *National World War I Museum and Memorial*. 2017, www.theworldwar.org/explore/interactive-wwi-timeline. Accessed 15 April 2017.
- “NFL Concussions Fast Facts.” *CNN*. 1 August 2016, www.cnn.com/2013/08/30/us/nfl-concussions-fast-facts/. Accessed 10 April 2017.
- Theile, Rebecca. “King Salmon Decline Makes Fishing Industry Nervous, Researchers Happy.” *WMUK 102.1*. Western Michigan University. 24 June 2016. www.wmuk.org/post/king-salmon-decline-makes-fishing-industry-nervous-researchers-happy. Accessed 10 April 2017.