

3 Describing visuals

Although visuals do largely speak for themselves, it is common to help the reader interpret them by briefly commenting on their main features.

The graph map diagram	shows illustrates displays	the changes in the price of oil since 1990 the main sources of copper in Africa the organisation of both companies
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■ (a) Read the following descriptions of the chart below. Which is better, and why?

- The chart shows the quantity of tea consumed by the world's leading tea consuming nations. India and China together consume more than half the world's tea production, with India alone consuming about one third. Other significant tea consumers are Turkey, Russia and Britain. 'Others' includes the United States, Iran and Egypt.
- The chart shows that 31 per cent of the world's tea is consumed by India, 23 per cent by China, and 8 per cent by Turkey. The fourth largest consumers are Russia, Japan and Britain, with 7 per cent each, while Pakistan consumes 5 per cent. Other countries account for the remaining 12 per cent.

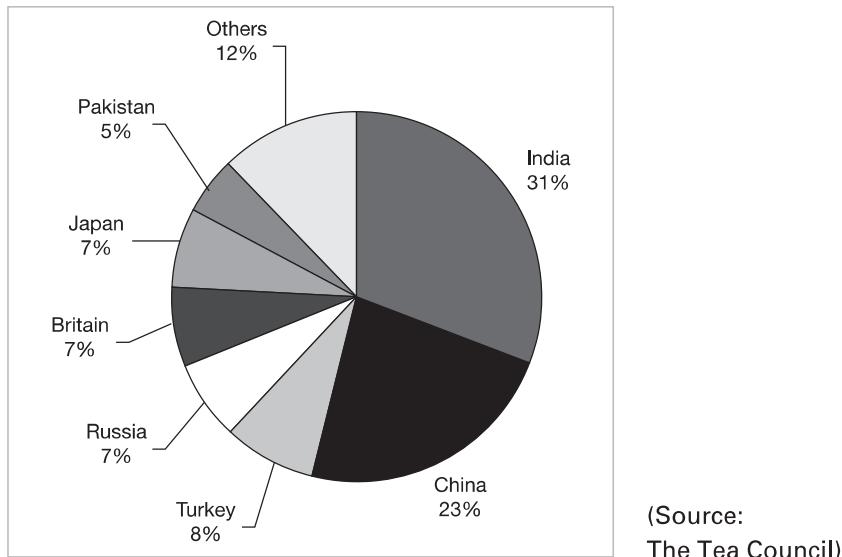


Figure 1 World tea consumption

■ (b) Complete the description of the chart below.

The bar chart shows population (a) _____ in a variety of countries around the world. It (b) _____ the extreme contrast (c) _____ crowded nations such as South Korea (475 people per sq. km.) and much (d) _____ countries such as Canada (3 people per sq. km.). Clearly, climate plays a major (e) _____ in determining population density, (f) _____ the least crowded nations (g) _____ to have extreme climates (e.g. cold in Russia or dry in Algeria).

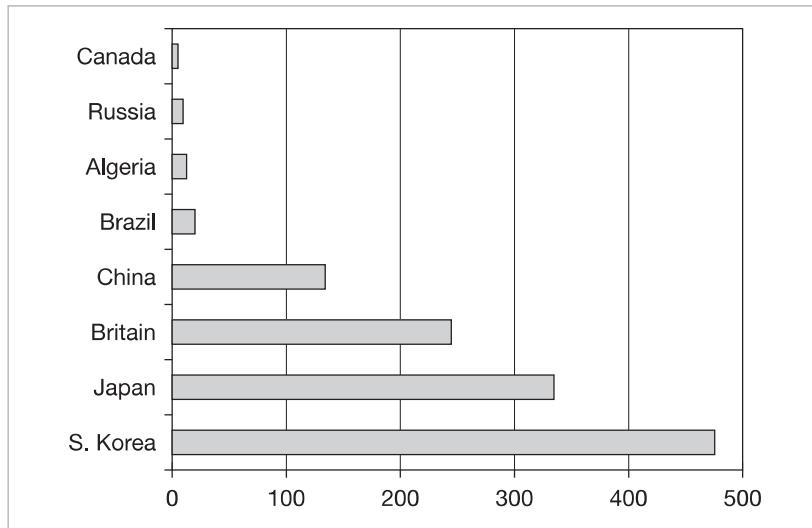


Figure 2 Population density (people per square kilometre)

(Source: OECD)

4 Labelling

- When referring to visual information in the text, the word 'figure' is used for almost everything (such as maps, charts and graphs) except tables (see examples above).
- Figures and tables should be numbered and given a title. Titles of tables are written above, while titles of figures are written below the data.
- As with other data, sources must be given for all visual information.
- If you are writing a lengthy work such as a dissertation you will need to provide lists of tables and figures, showing numbers, titles and page numbers after the contents page.

