

EDITORIAL GUIDE

Data Features

A concise, chart-led format for accessible economic analysis - [Economist Graphic Detail style](#)

What we are looking for: A discrete, self-contained data story built around one clear finding. The visuals should drive the analysis, and the writing should explain the pattern and add disciplined economic interpretation in a light, non-academic voice.

Discrete: “Cleveland’s rent growth has slowed faster than the national average.”

Too broad: “The state of Cleveland’s economy.”

Core constraints

- **Keep the scope narrow.** Should focus on one well-executed question.
- **Use a clear starting target.** Aim for roughly 500-1000 words, 1-2 primary visuals, and 1-2 supporting visuals.
- **Lead with the finding.** Don’t bury the lead; the headline, opening, and first visual should tell readers why the piece matters.
- **Make the data legible.** Name the measure, unit, geography, period, source, and any encodings readers need to understand the visual.
- **Separate evidence from interpretation.** State what the data shows before explaining what it may mean. Avoid causal language.
- **Write for a general reader.** Cut jargon and formulaic academic structure. Define necessary terms and explain any methodology intuitively but no math or regressions.
- **Try to be original.** Using local data, local research, and/or a local angle is an easy way to make the story distinctive. Other strategies for originality include looking at heterogeneous associations and challenging conventional wisdom.

Rough format

1. **Title.** If the main takeaway is straightforward, your title should directly state it (“[Millennials spend more time than past generations with their children](#)”). If it’s more nuanced, the title could ask a question (“[Which countries are adopting AI the fastest?](#)”) or frame the analysis around a topic or comparison (“[How Russia’s fatalities compare with Ukraine](#)”).
2. **Headline + short standfirst.** State the central finding and the complication or consequence.
3. **Primary visual near the top.** There should be a single visual that reflects the central finding you open the piece with.
4. **Describe, then interpret.** In separate moves, explain what the data is, what pattern appears, and what economic reasoning may account for it.
5. **Supporting evidence.** Add visuals and context that sharpen the main finding: a breakdown, comparison, mechanism, or caveat.
6. **Forward-looking close.** End with a useful implication or question.

*These pieces are intended to *not* be formulaic, and this format should be used as a guide but not as set-in-stone rules. For example, if your piece is seeking to explain what’s behind a notable trend—say, a fall in Ohio’s household incomes relative to the national average—you may want to open with that trend and then walk the reader through several potential explanations and their merits.