

Rules for Making Graphs:

1. Pencil only!
2. Use a straight-edge to draw each axis.
3. The independent variable goes on the horizontal (X) axis. The dependent variable goes on the vertical (Y) axis. (see note below)
4. You must label the units on each axis! This tells the reader what the numbers represent. [If your horizontal axis is labeled "TIME," you must put the unit in parentheses (hours, days, years, etc.)]
5. Lines must be smooth and solid and should not be thicker than the points they're connecting. This is not a "sketch" so lines should not be "hairy" or jagged.
6. Use an appropriate scale for each axis -- every space along that axis is worth the same amount.
 - If your data includes a zero, it MUST be at the origin of your graph (unless you also have negative numbers)
 - Use a scrunch (a.k.a. "heartbeat") sign only if you must and use it only at the origin and if you don't have a zero in your data (Remember, graphs don't HAVE to start at zero if your data doesn't contain zero)
7. All data must fit on the graph scale. If it doesn't fit, choose a more appropriate scale.
8. The graph should make the best use of all available space. (It should not be crammed into a quarter of the piece of paper).
9. A key must be provided if there is more than one independent variable.
10. The title must include both variables. (Do not try to be clever or creative as if you are choosing a title for a story.)

Note: When graphing some variable over depth or altitude, you may plot depth (increasing downward) or altitude (increasing upward) on the Y-axis.