

Week 14: *Story Telling*

🏛️ EMSE 4572 / 6572: Exploratory Data Analysis

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📅 December 03, 2025

Week 14: *Story Telling*

1. Telling a story
2. Designing slides
3. Giving a talk
4. "Final" thoughts

Download [this cheetsheet](#) for today's content

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What is a story?

A story is a set of observations, facts, or events...that are presented in a specific order such that they create an **emotional reaction** in the audience.

- Clause O. Wilke (2019), Chp. 29

ecstasy



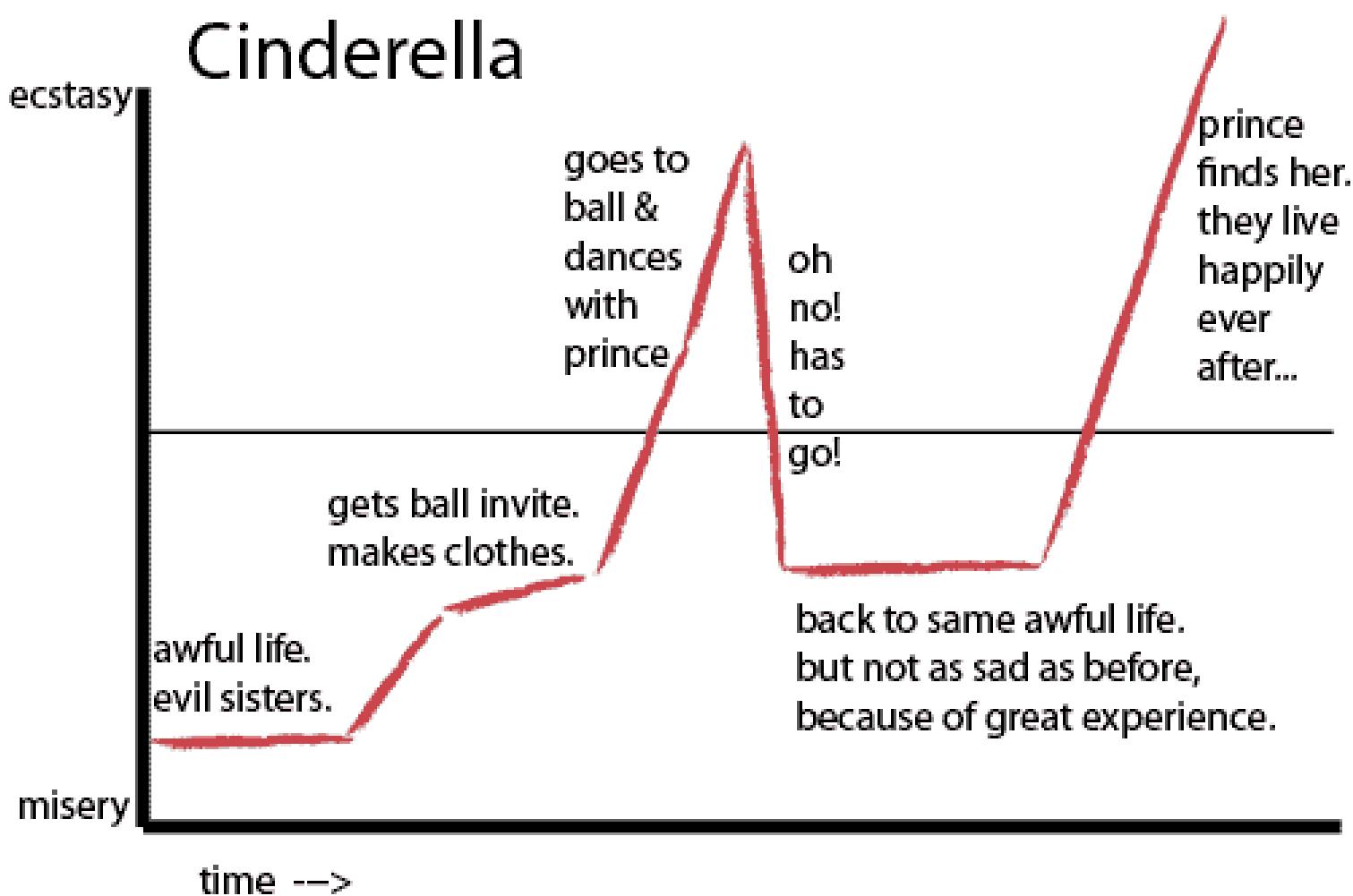
time -->

misery

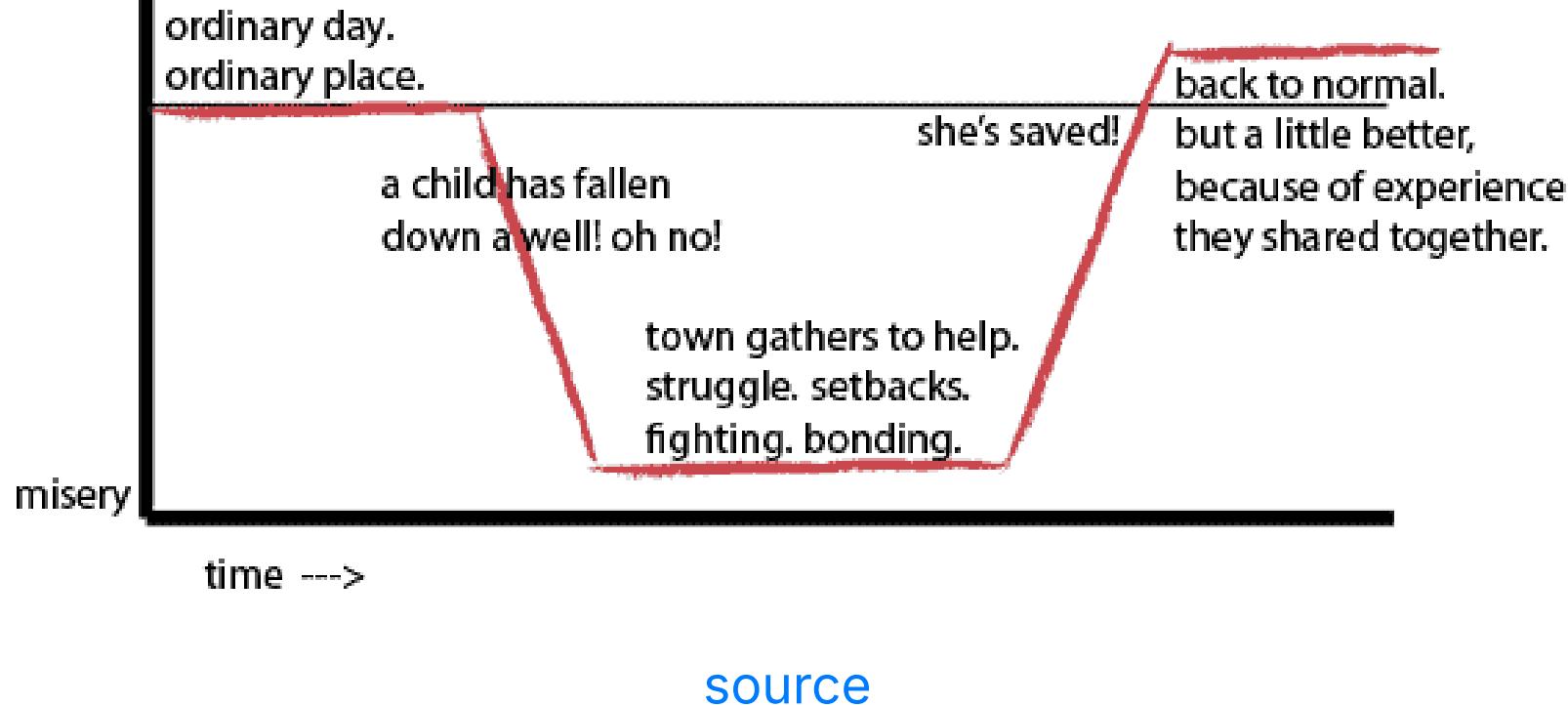


source

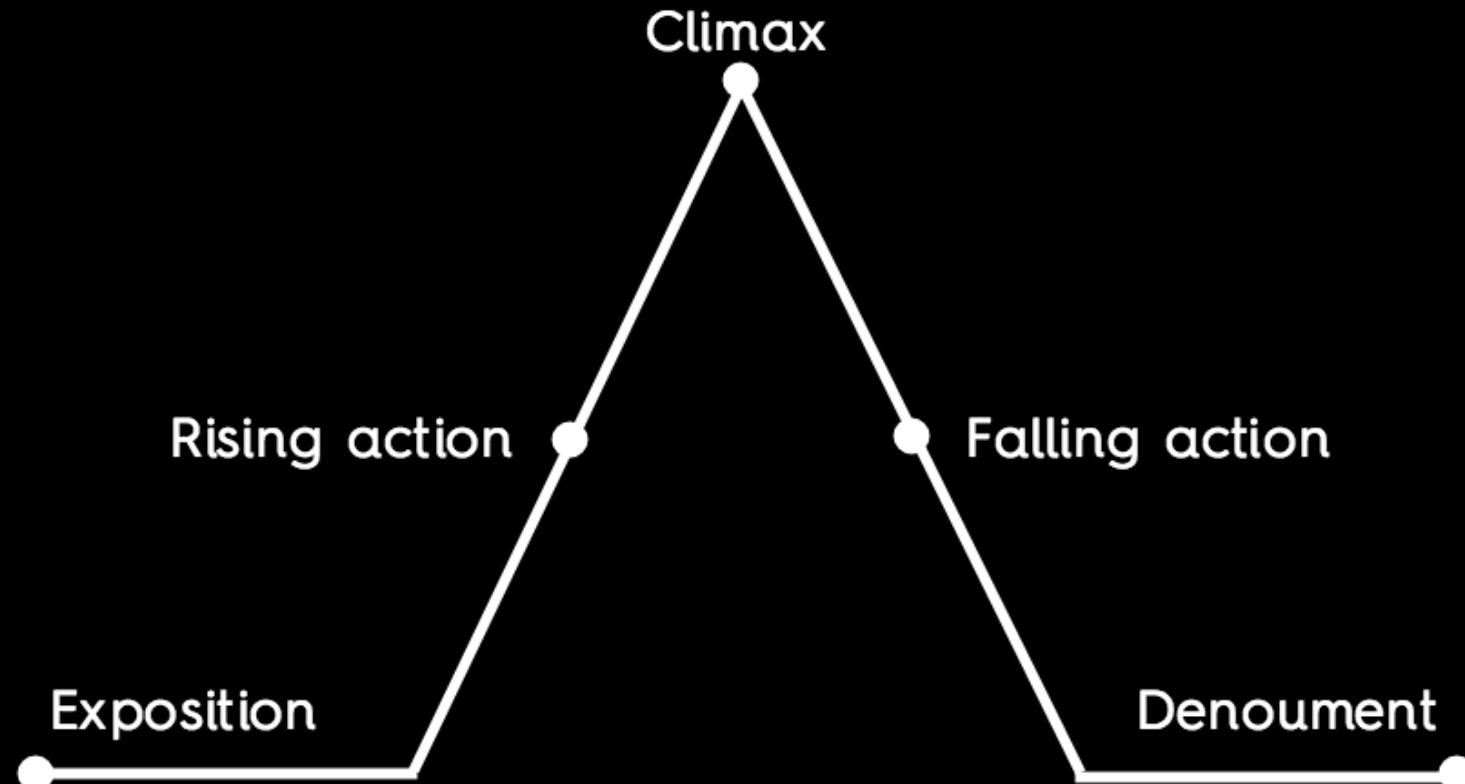
Cinderella



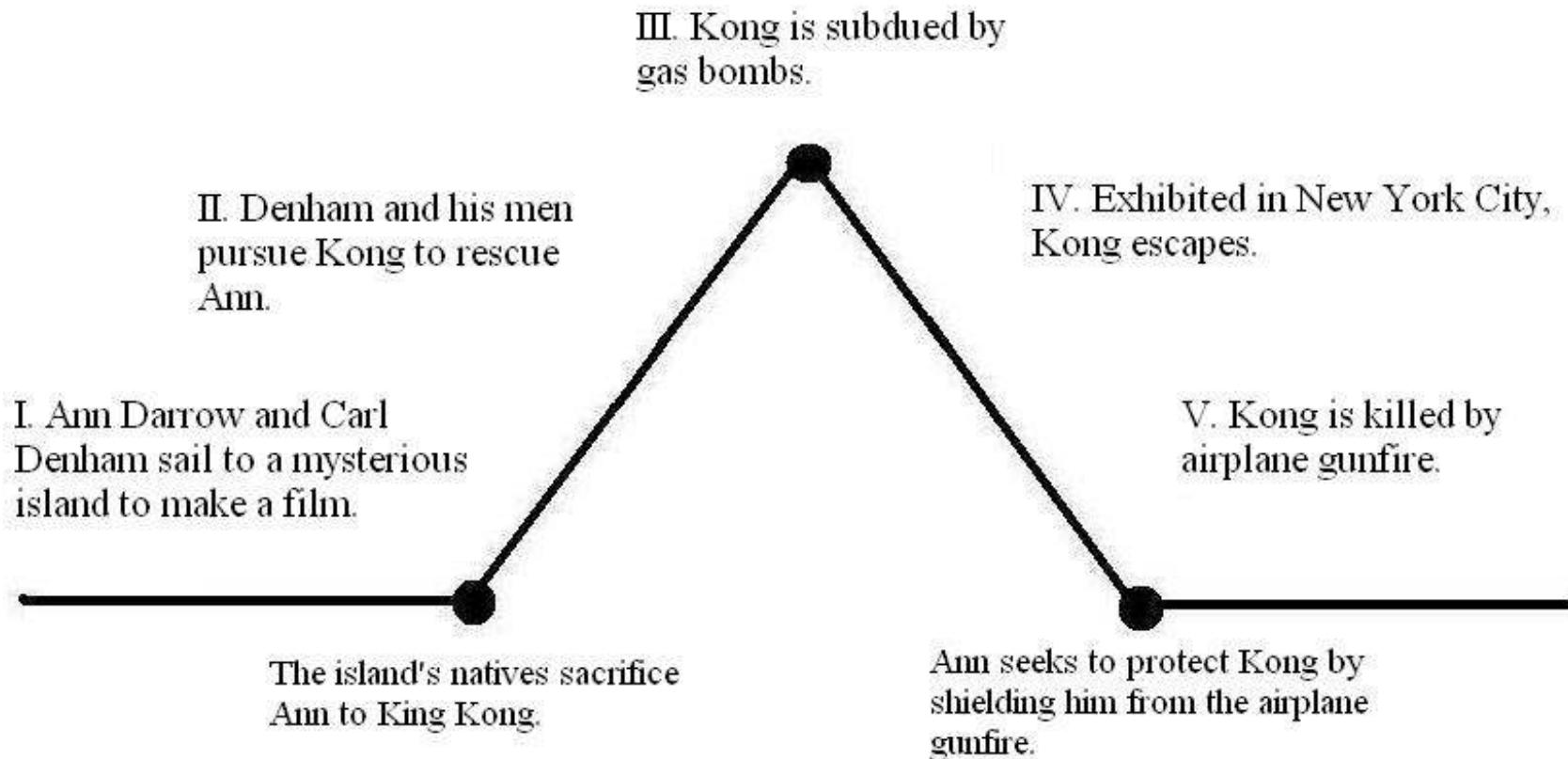
common disaster story



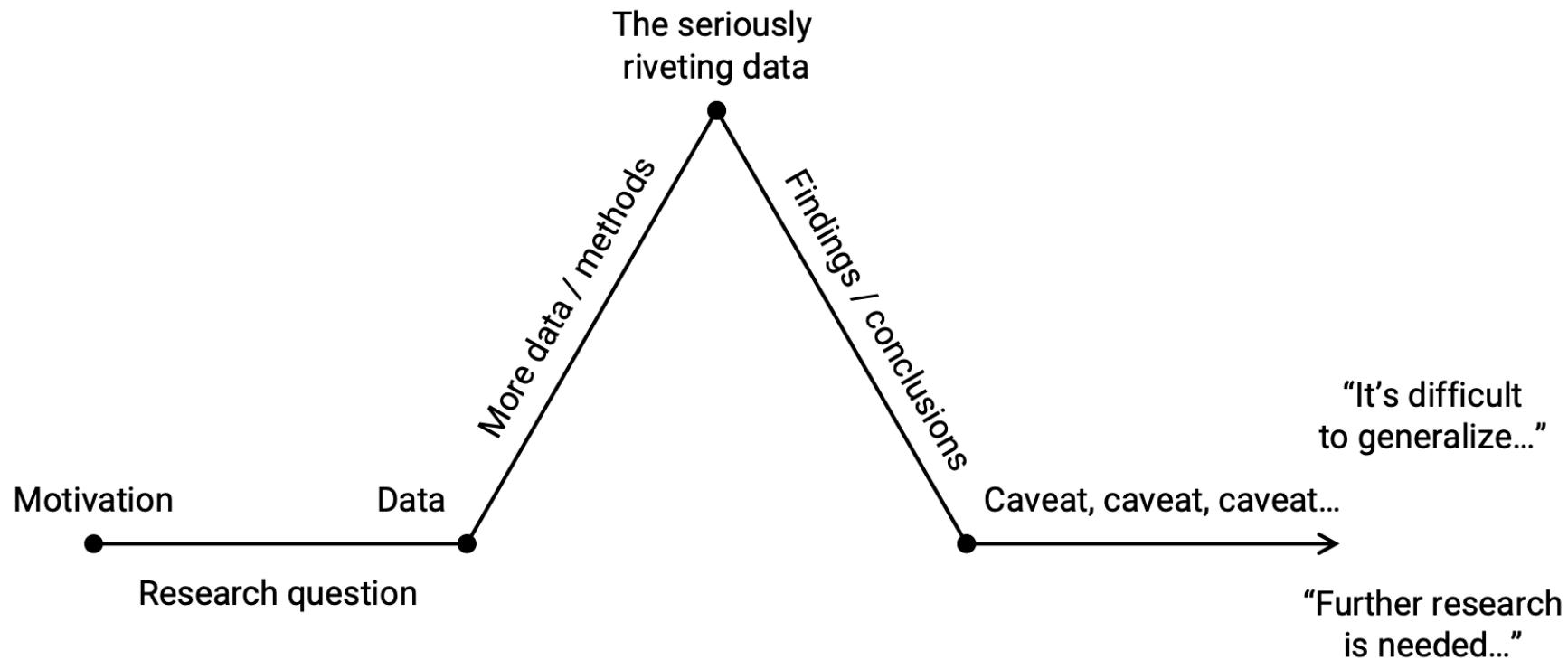
Freytag's Pyramid



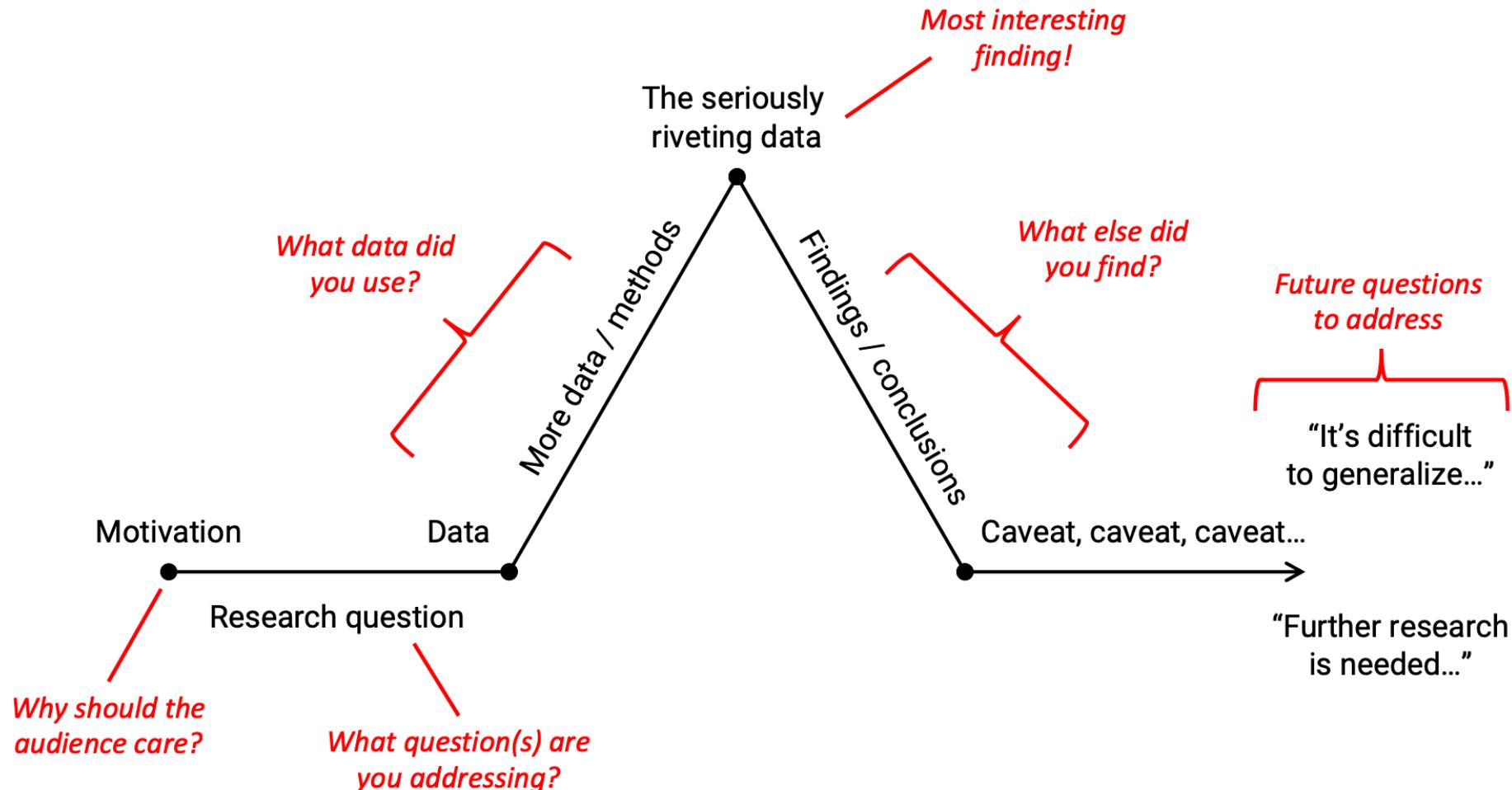
Freytag's Pyramid: **King Kong**



Freytag's Pyramid: **Research Project**



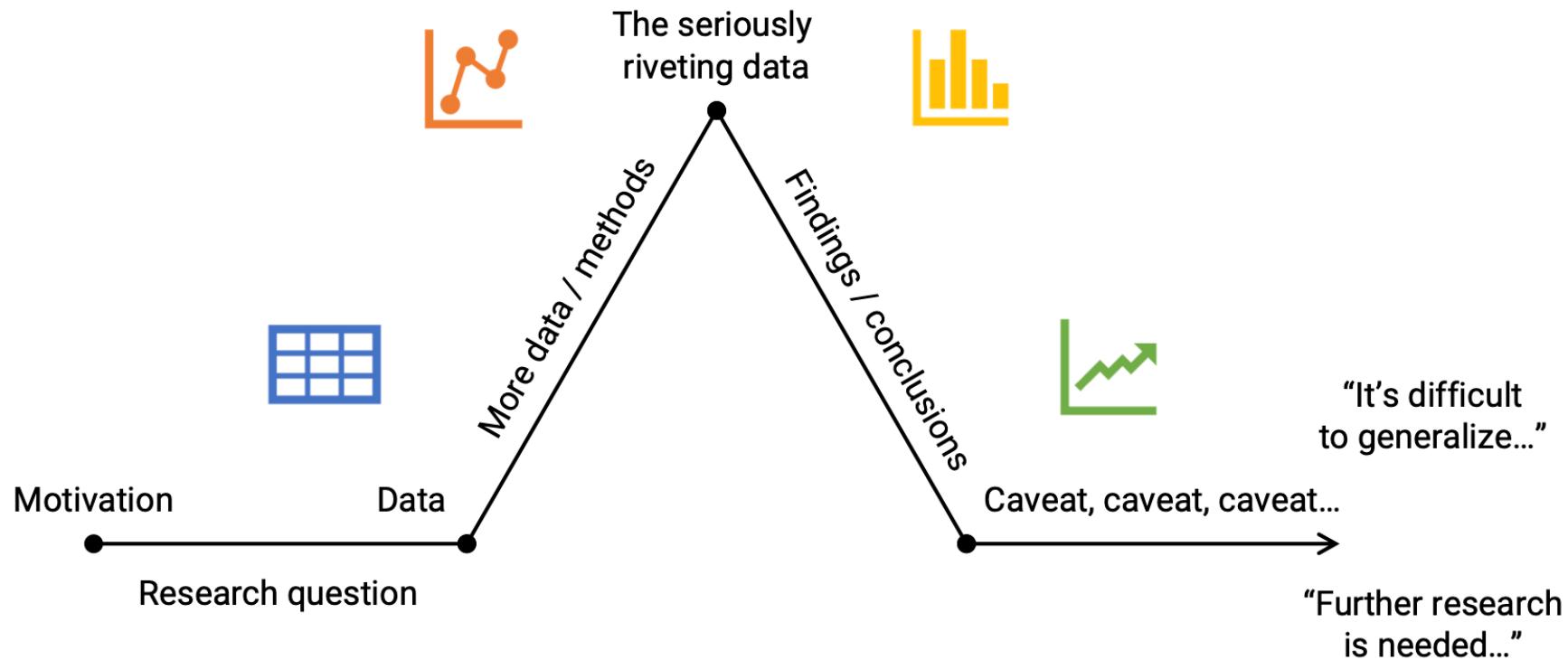
Freytag's Pyramid: Research Project



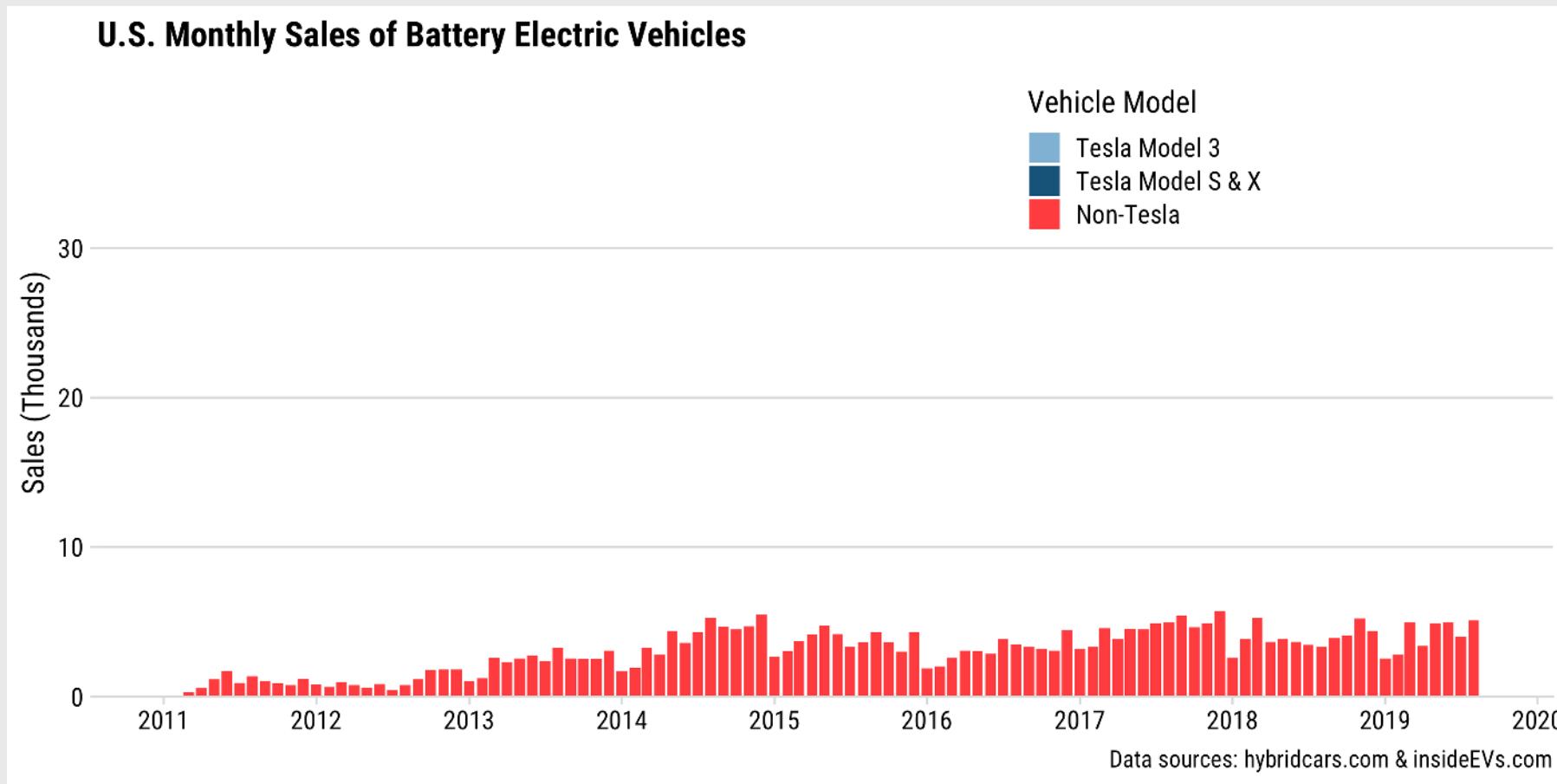
"A single (static) visualization will rarely tell an entire story"

- Clause O. Wilke (2019), Chp. 29

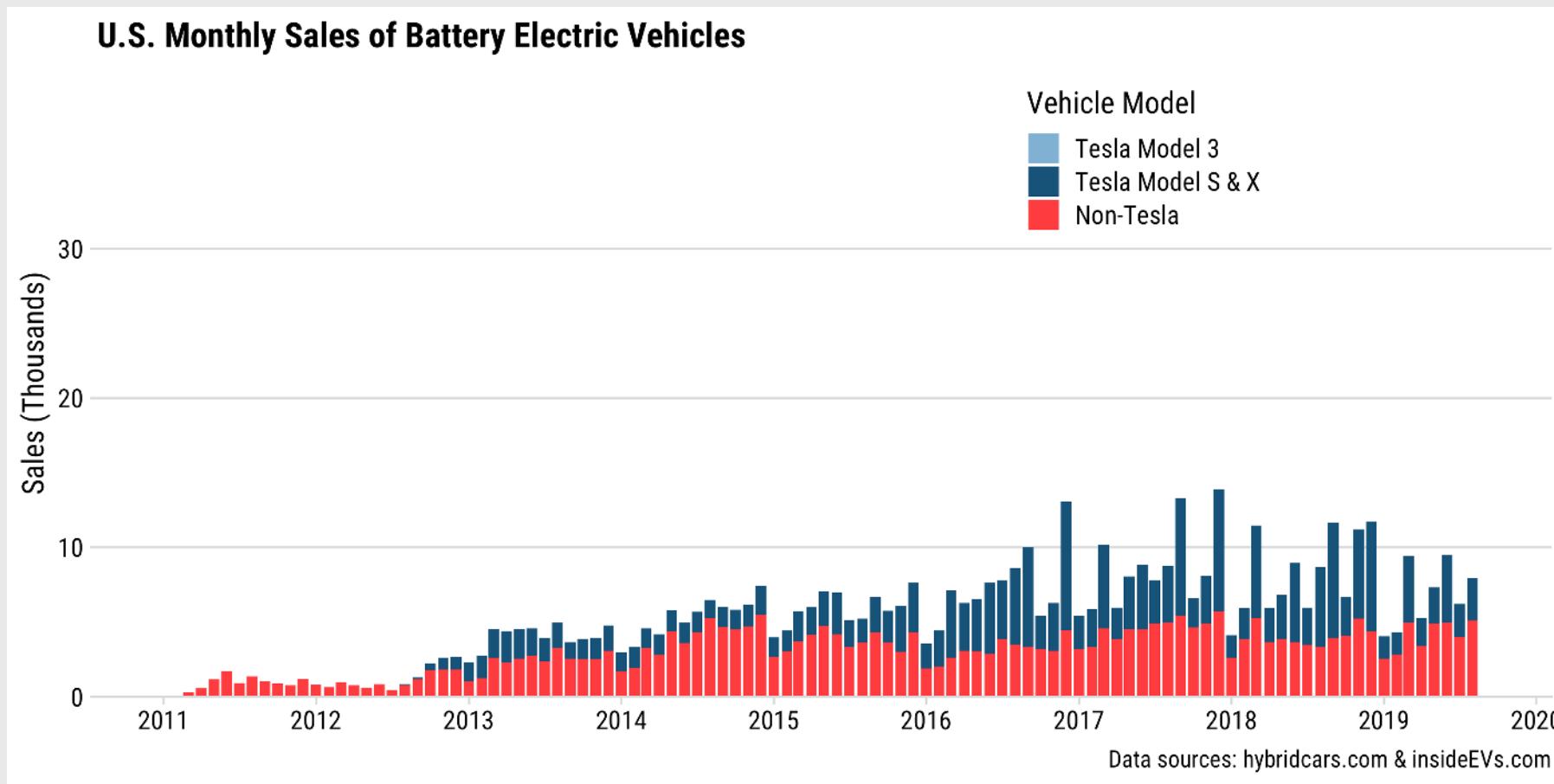
Freytag's Pyramid: Research Project



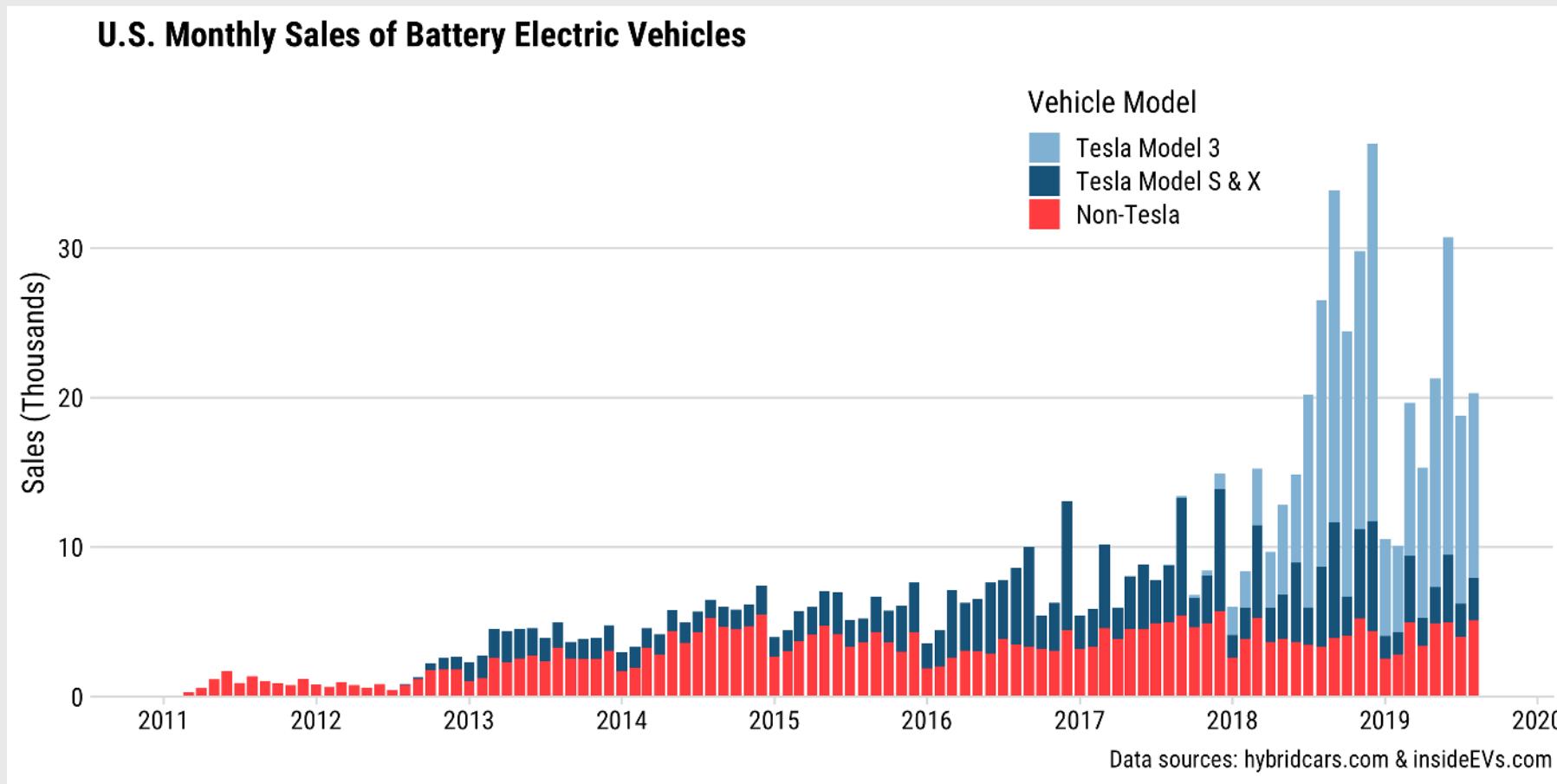
Use **layers** to build tension / provide context



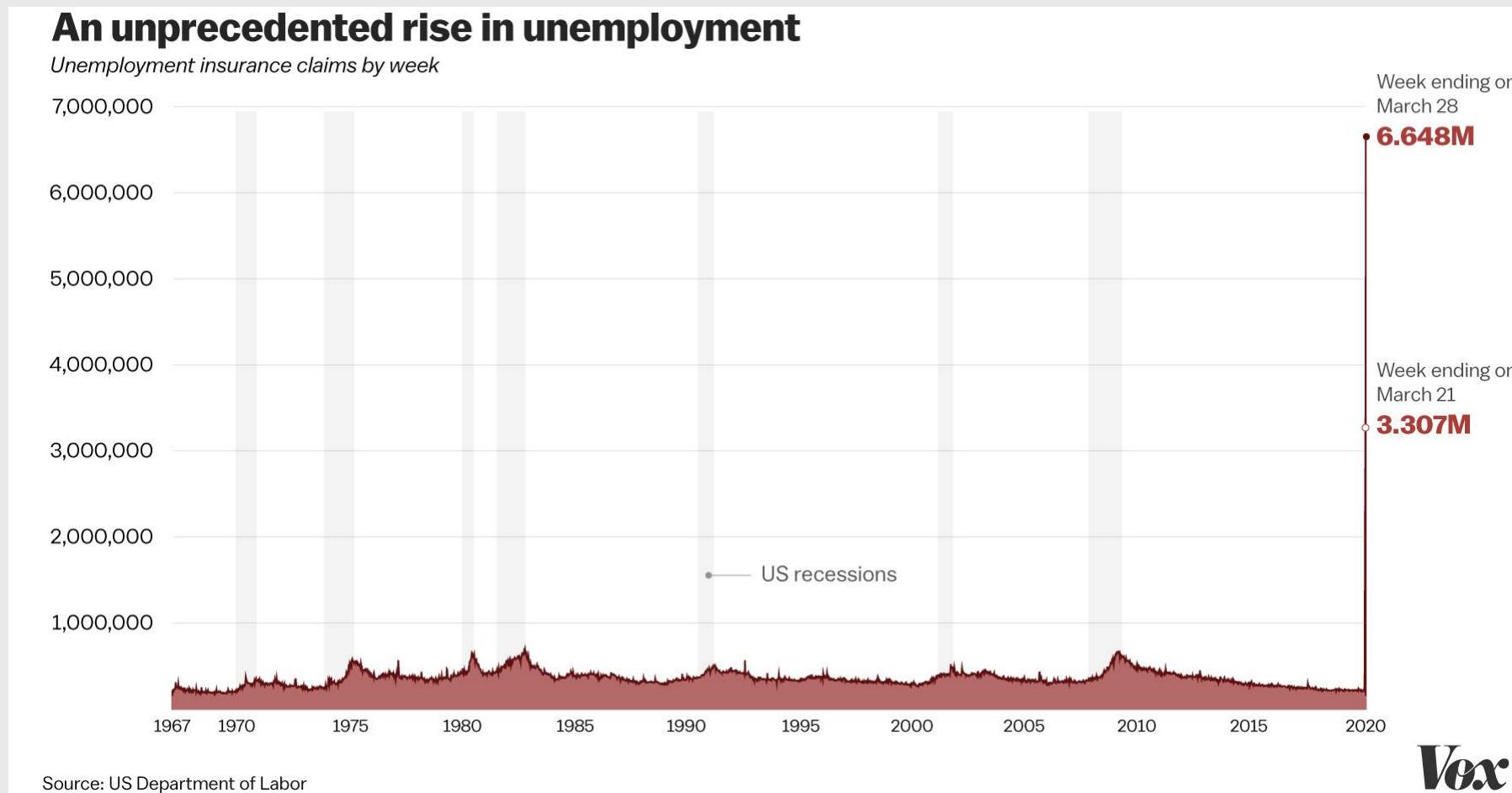
Use **layers** to build tension / provide context



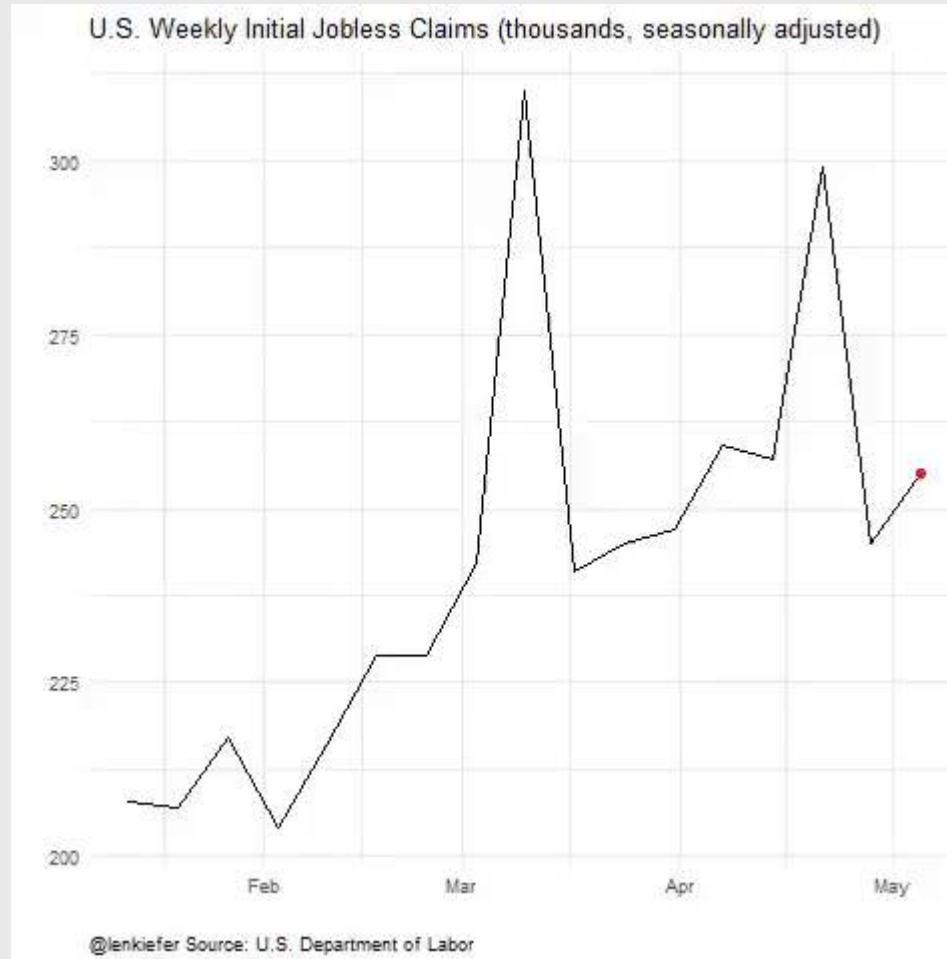
Use **layers** to build tension / provide context



Use **animation** to build tension / provide context

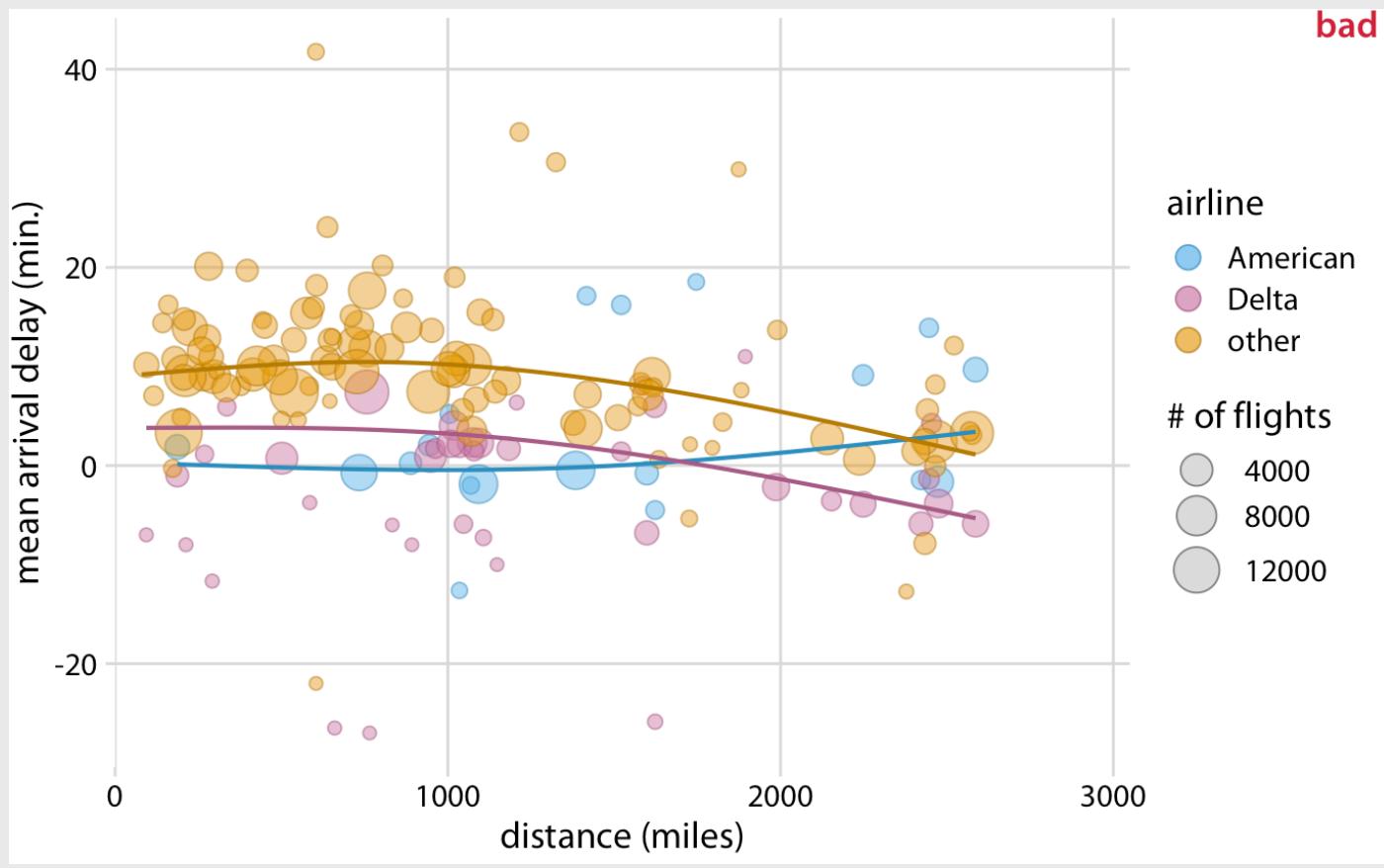


Use **animation** to build tension / provide context

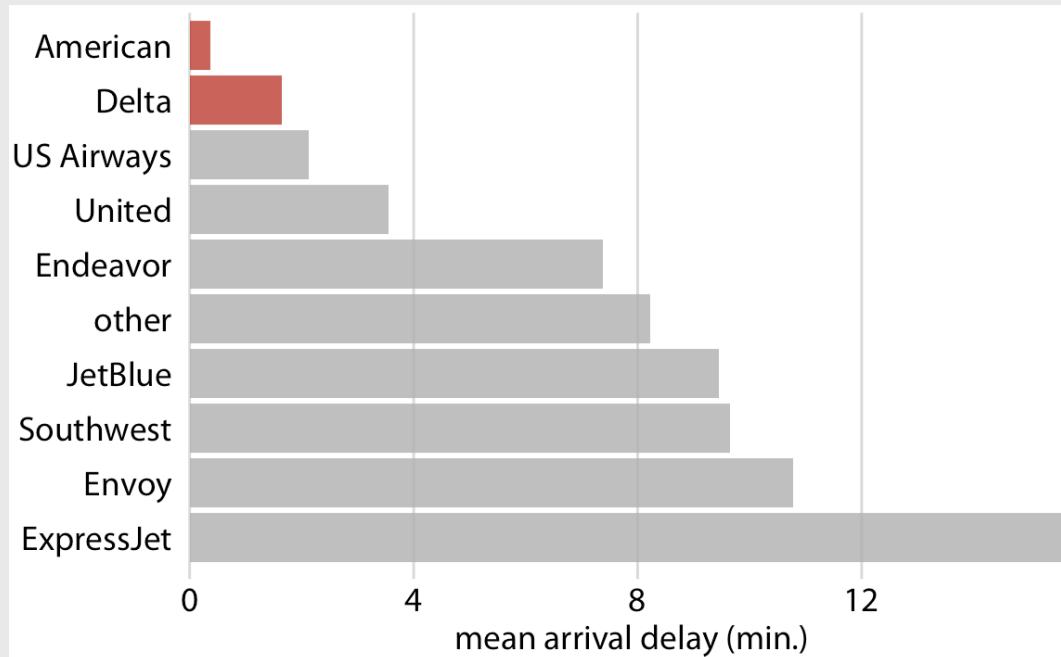


Make charts for the generals

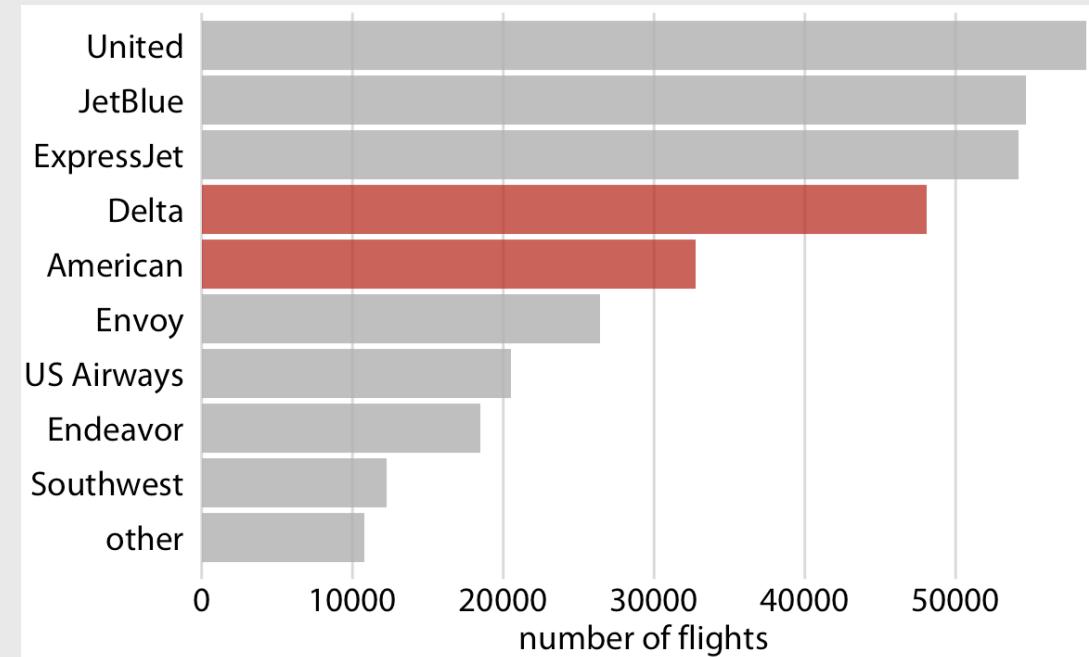
(i.e. keep it simple)



Make charts for the generals (i.e. keep it simple)

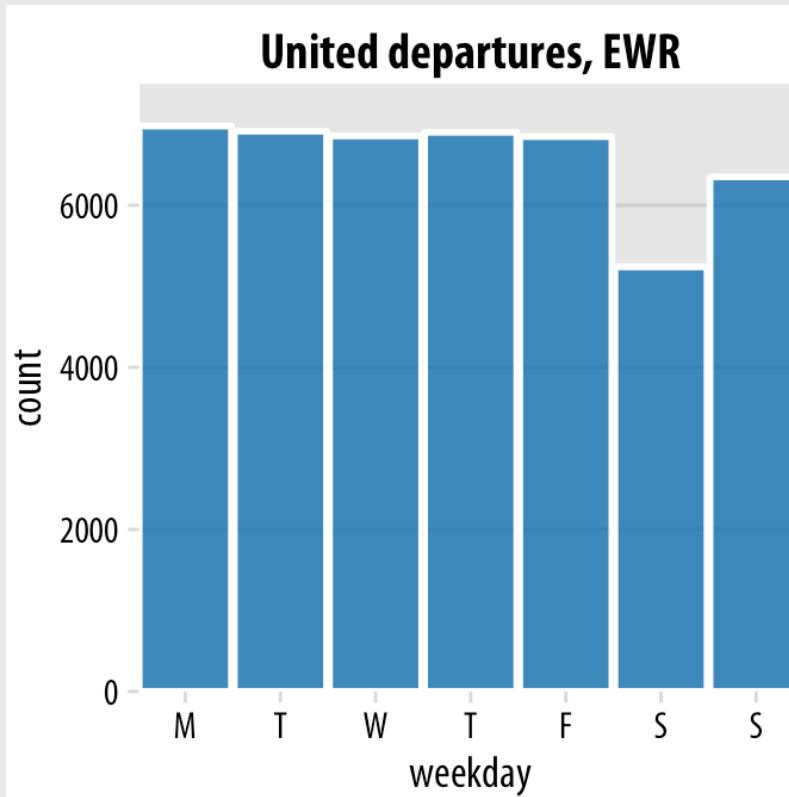


source



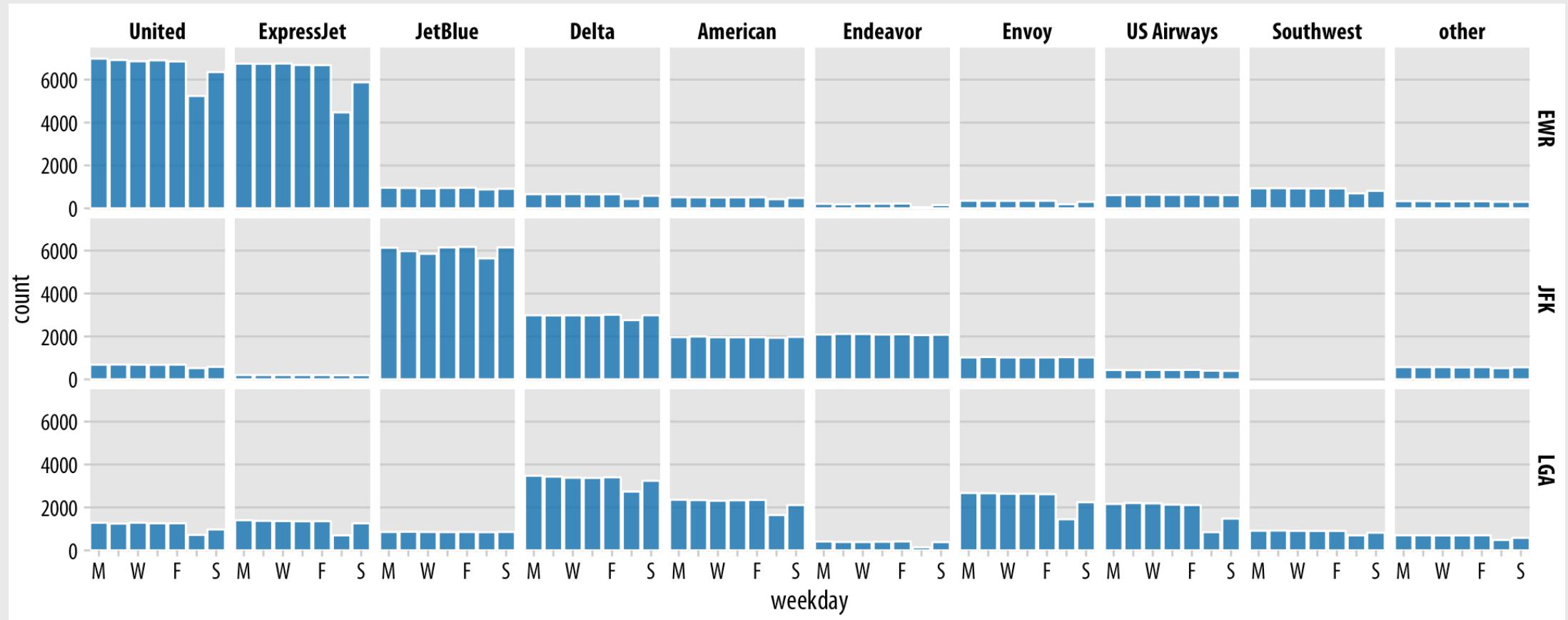
source

Build up towards complex figures



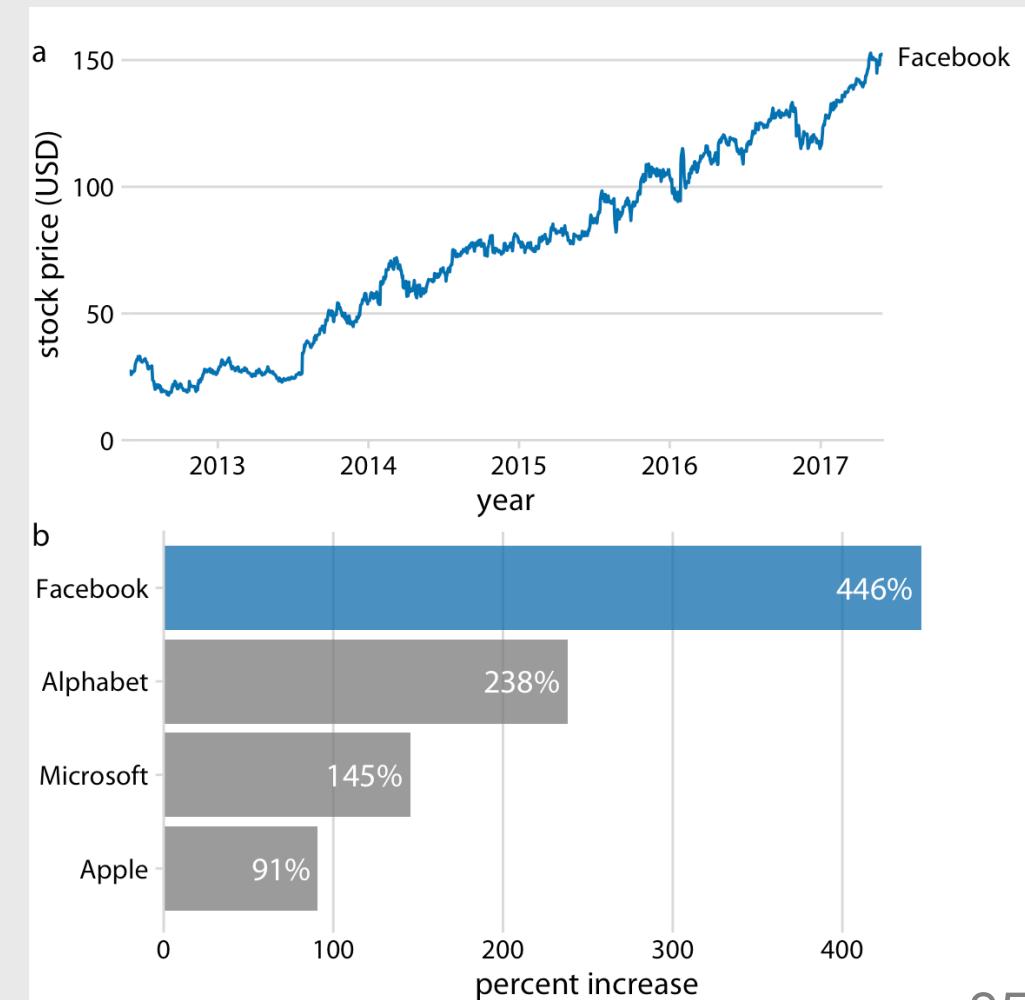
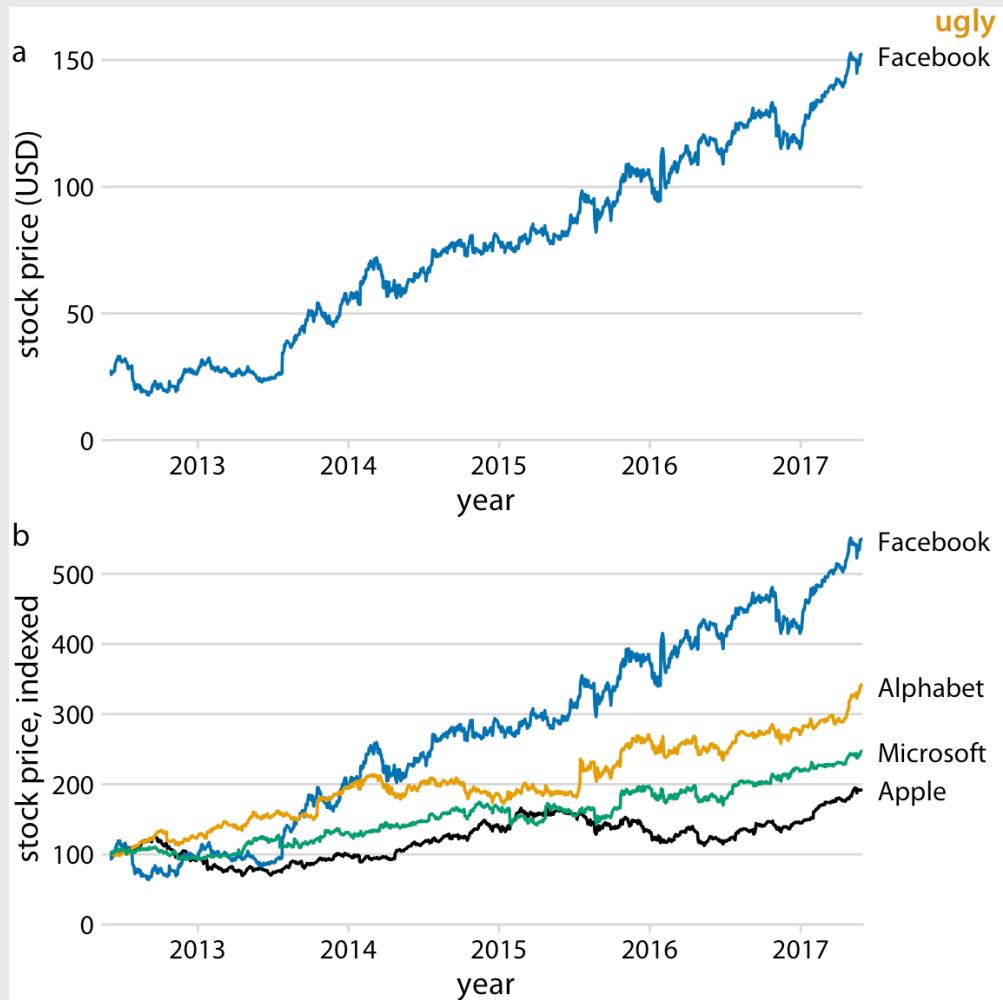
source

Build up towards complex figures



source

Be consistent, but don't be repetitive



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Hitchcock's rule



Hitchcock's rule

The size of any object in your frame should be proportional to its importance to the story at that moment

[Watch this example](#)

Hitchcock's rule

The size of any object in your ~~frame~~ **slide** should be proportional to its importance to the story at that moment

...and finally you will read this

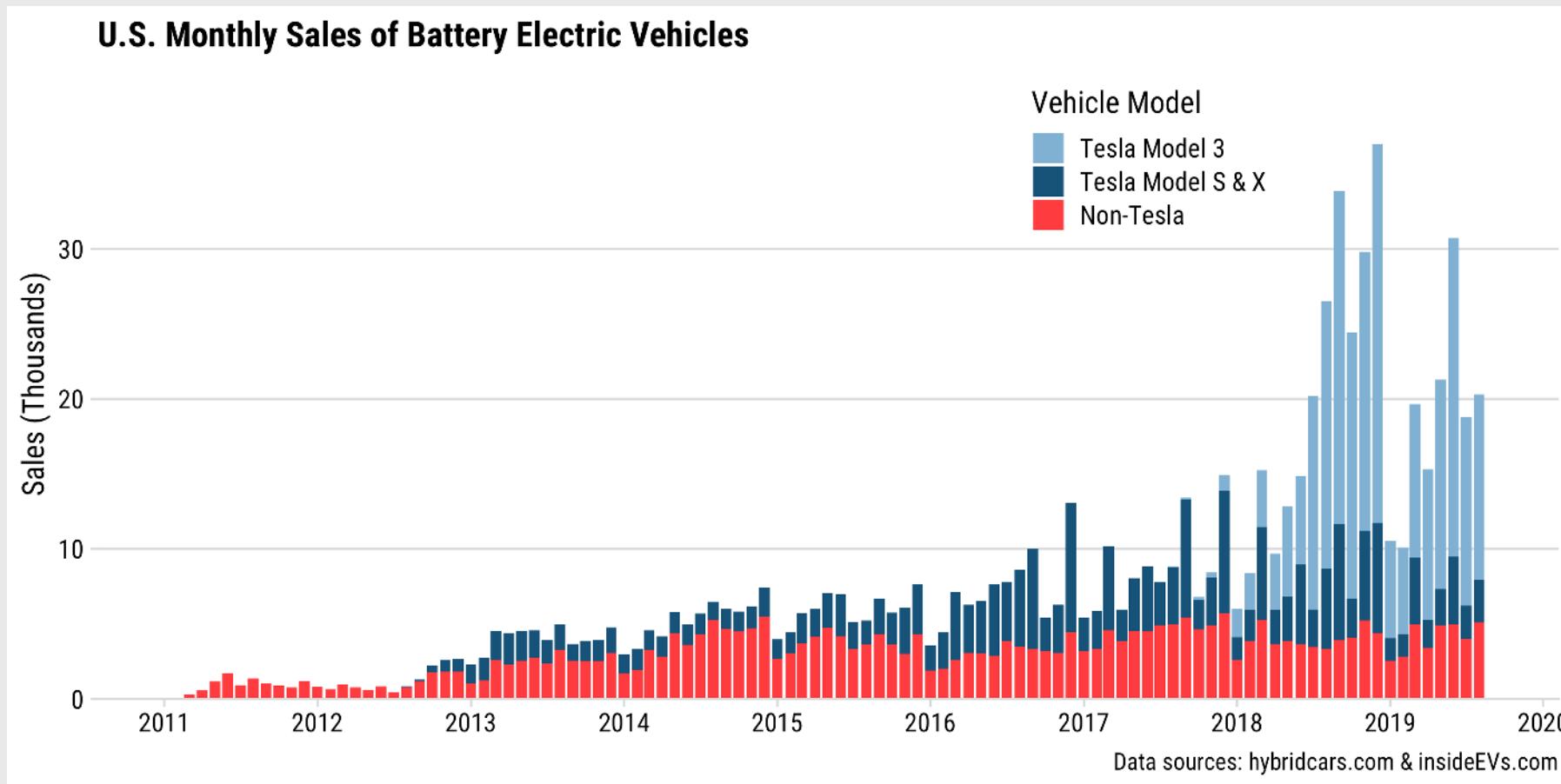
You will read this first

and then you will read this

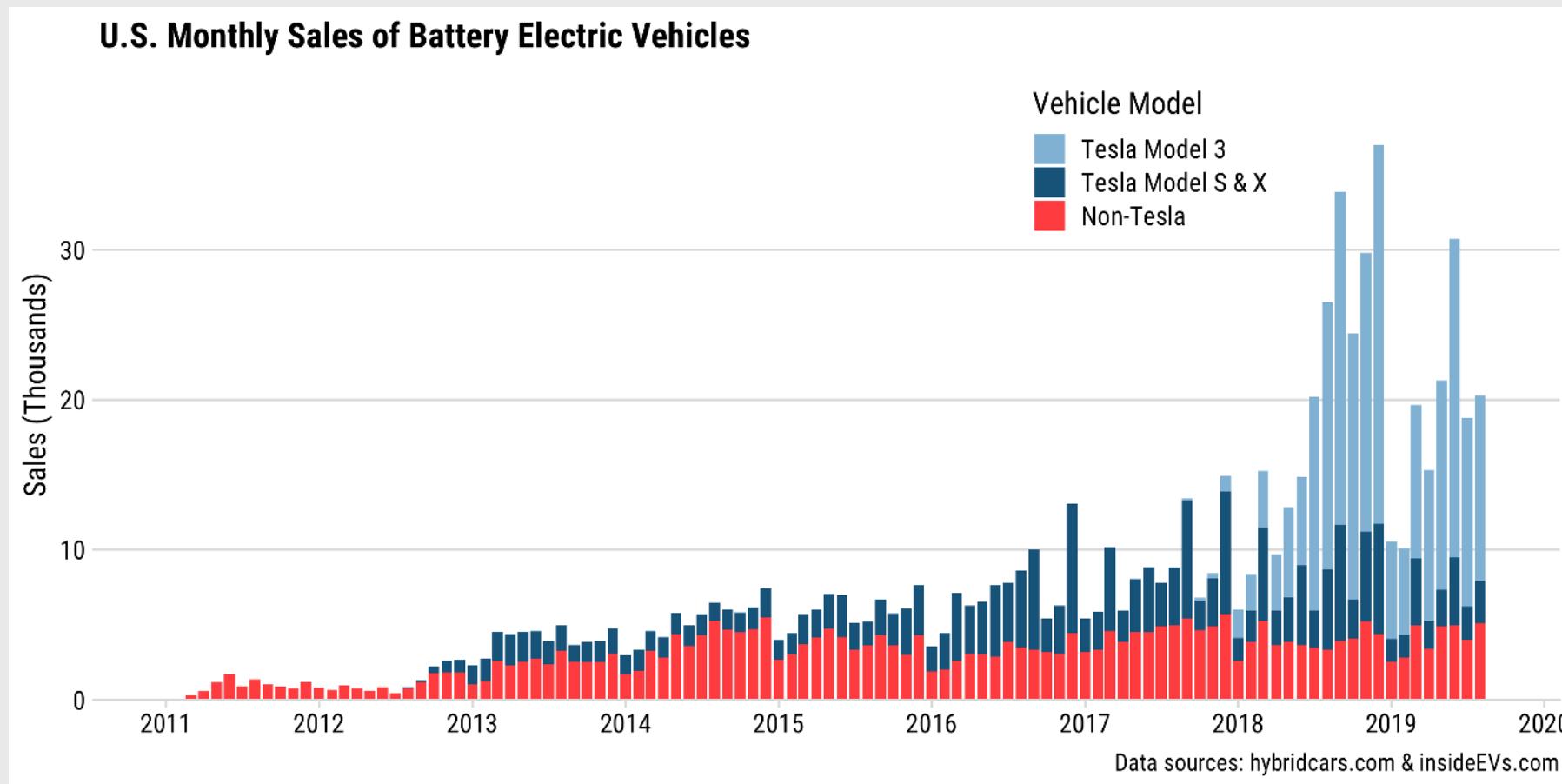
Put main point at top and use big font size!

(see Stephanie Evergreen's blog post "[So What?](#)")

Except for Tesla, EV adoption in the U.S. is **flat**



Tesla's Model 3 is a Game Changer for EVs



> 40pt font for titles

> 24pt font for all other text

(Exception: footer text can be small)

Think of fonts as pre-attentive attributes

San-serif fonts for most text

"Italic, serif fonts for quotes"

- Prof. Helveston

Consider using a light-colored background
(tan / gray)

Use high contrast between font and background color

Dark text on a
light background
works well

Light text on a
dark
background also
works well

Use high contrast between font and background color

Yellow text on a
white background
is horrible

Blue text on a black
background is
horrible

Use high contrast between font and background color

821134907856412043612
304589640981709812734
123450986124790812734
029860192837401489363
123479827961203459816
234009816256908127634
123459087162342015237
123894789237498230192

8211349078**5**6412043612
304**5**89640981709812734
1234**5**0986124790812734
029860192837401489363
1234798279612034**5**9816
2340098162**5**6908127634
1234**5**908716234201**5**237
123894789237498230192

Avoid fonts like

Comic Sans

Papyrus

They make your work look amateurish

1 slide, 1 idea

Break up main points into multiple slides

Number your slides!



Remove “chart junk” from your slides

Exceptions in slider footer:

- References / data sources
- © Symbol

Example of an acceptable slide footer



If you are in person, consider using handouts
(1-2 pages)

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What are the first words
you should say in a speech?

Watch [this video](#) to find out

How to start a speech

3. With a question that matters to the audience ("Have you ever...?")
2. With a shocking factoid ("There are more people alive today than have ever lived...").
1. Tell a story, talk about **people** ("Imagine...")

Development and Adoption of Plug-in Electric Vehicles in China

Presented by:

John Paul Helveston, Ph.D.

Postdoctoral Fellow

Institute for Sustainable Energy

Boston University



January 26, 2018



3) With a question that matters to the audience:

"What's the current federal subsidy for buying an electric car in the US?"

2) With a shocking factoid

"50% of the world's EVs are made by Chinese automakers"

1) Tell a story, talk about **people**

"Whenever I talk with people about electric cars, they usually ask about Tesla..."

Your turn

05:00

Brainstorm different strategies for how to start your presentation for your projects:

1. Tell a story, talk about **people** ("Imagine...").
2. With a shocking factoid ("There are more people alive today than have ever lived...").
3. With a question that matters to the audience ("Have you...?").

Afterwards, we will go around the room and one person from each team will practice giving their start to their presentation.

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Final Reports due 12/07 (You have 4 days left!)

- Read prompt carefully
- Be sure to include a copy of the data you're using
- Use a theme 
- Check for spelling errors:

```
spelling::spell_check_files("report.qmd")
```

Final Presentations (Slides Due 12/09)

- We'll watch these during class period on Dec 11
- 10 mins each
- At the end, we'll announce awards:
 -  **Janitor Award:** For most intense wrangling of messy data
 -  **Shiny Award:** For single most impressive visualization

Final Interviews (12/08 - 12/09)

- Schedule for a 10-minute interview using [this link](#)
- Suggestions (from Prof. Mazzuchi):
 1. Bring water to drink - it will calm you when you are nervous and your mouth dries up. You can also pause and think while you drink.
 2. Don't answer right away - think a bit.
 3. Answer the question asked. Don't try to impress or I will ask more questions.
 4. Don't say "I don't know." Try and I will help you.