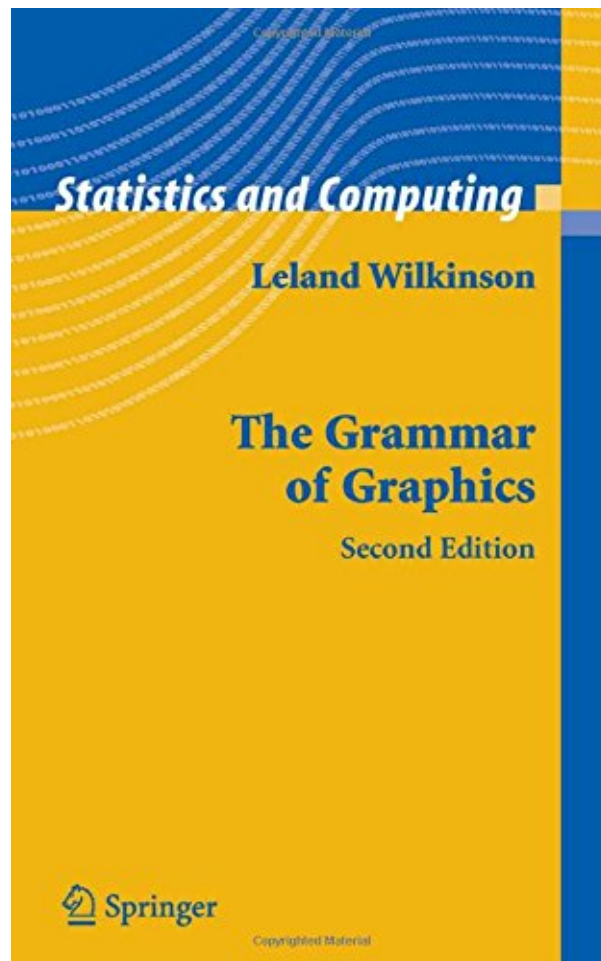
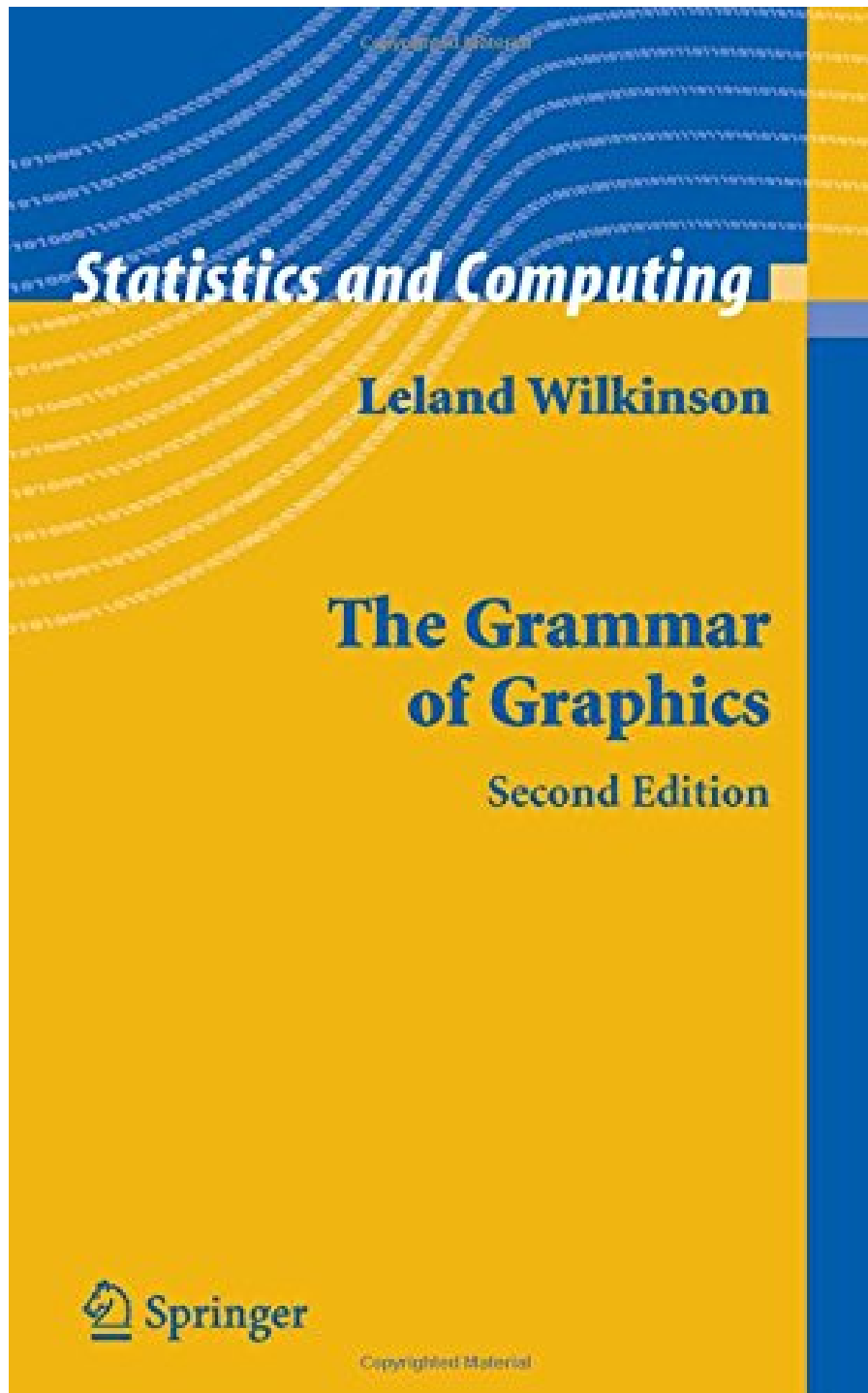


**THE GRAMMAR OF GRAPHICS
(STATISTICS AND COMPUTING) BY
LELAND WILKINSON**



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Presents a unique foundation for producing almost every quantitative graphic found in scientific journals, newspapers, statistical packages, and data visualization systems

The new edition features six new chapters and has undergone substantial revision.

The first edition has sold more than 2200 copies.

Four color throughout.

- Sales Rank: #684579 in Books
- Published on: 2005-07-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.20" h x 1.70" w x 6.10" l, 2.40 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 691 pages

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Most helpful customer reviews

48 of 50 people found the following review helpful.

For a select few, it is a fascinating read

By Keith McCormick

This is an unusual book. It should be of interest to those who have to display data in graphic form, but it is not a typical book of that kind. A subset of those who enjoy Tufte (*The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, 2nd edition) or Cleveland (*The Elements of Graphing Data*, *Visualizing Data*) will also enjoy this. This book does not attempt to coach you on how to make good graphics, but if that is your goal it attacks a related, important aspect: rules that connect the data and the graphic. Obviously then, it might be of great interest to computer scientists and theoreticians. The grammar described in the book is also object oriented in design which helps to make the code quite elegant. In my instance, I am a "power-user" of the SPSS statistics software package, and the ideas in this book have been partially implemented in SPSS since around 2005 (Version 14.0). This is absolutely not a user's guide or a how-to manual for using SPSS. If, however, you already have a working knowledge of the latest SPSS graphics and its related programming language then this book will put that whole approach in context, and massively increase your understanding of the technology "behind the scenes". Many technical audiences might benefit regardless of their using or not using SPSS Statistics.

Unlike Tufte, you will find no hand drawn graphics, or illustrations crafted in Adobe illustrator - they can be both beautiful and effective but such graphics would not belong in this book. All of the graphics here are created using a computer and a grammatical description and arise directly out of a data set. Making a graphic elegant and clear is the work of the designer, the purpose of the grammar is to insure that the graphic is tied to data, and to separate graphics that make sense from graphics that are non-sense. To paraphrase the book, graphics that are grammatically correct may or may not be ugly, but can never be meaningless.

In a brilliant final chapter the author explains that the famous Minard's Napoleon's march chart (see Tufte) has some incorrect data, and that Minard took some liberties with the data. The conclusion: a beautifully designed and crafted graphic does not assure 100% accuracy. Whereas to quote the author, "a graphic without a concept of a variable is not a statistical graphic". So, if you make the variables available (in a data set) to your audience you make it all that much harder to mislead with graphics. Although Tufte's books have a VERY different style, avoiding lying with graphics is an important, recurring theme.

So if you are technically inclined, and especially if you are an SPSS user, seek out this book. It is a great companion to the literature on chart aesthetics. Before you dive in, note that this book is several hundred

pages long. SPSS user's should look over the "GPL Reference" first to determine if this is a topic you are willing to dedicate time to.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

This book changes the way you think about statistical graphics

By Raphael D. Mazor

I boought this book because I am getting increasingly interested in data visualization. I've played around with ggplot2, and went to Edward Tufte's seminars, and eventually found my way to this book.

As the other reviewers mention, this is NOT a how-to book. It's a much deeper, fundamnetal treatment of how data and graphics connect, and how we represent them. So, it's not as much a "useful" book, except insofar as it changes the way you put together your next graph.

This book crystalized a lot of concepts I already understood, though only vaguely and intuitively. Like, a legend and an an axis are really the same thing, and that a stacked bar and a pie chart are identical except for the coordinate system used.

It's quite a dense slog to read this book, so I recommend you pick it up and read a few pages here and there, and follow through on the issues that catch your interest.

It's not for everyone, but I suspect it could make anyone communicate better through graphs.

29 of 38 people found the following review helpful.

skip details (esp. formalisms); instead get hiligher ready for principles, perspectives

By Mark A. Weiss

Most of what other reviewers say has factual accuracy. But first I must say that the "subset" of people who enjoy CLEVELAND (WILLIAM S.)'s works will enjoy the Grammar of Graphics book.

Sorry, but people who enjoy TUFTE are not potential candidates for this book because Tufte has way too little to say about graphics (despite his books, lectures, which ultimately are about \$\$\$ for Tufte). Tufte's main thing is his admonition "don't do chart junk" followed by his second favorite thing: join with him and disparage the "cognitive style" of PowerPoint. The former is true, but is not terribly subtle. As for the second, the tool of PowerPoint need not be used in the boring "cognitive style" with bullets and "branding". I for one have made plenty of PowerPoint presentations totally unlike these.

The summary of "subset"s of folks: William S. Cleveland followers: yes, you'll love this book; those who mistake Tufte for the ultimate graphical guru probably will find this book "too much". Note that the author of the Grammar of Graphics book literally says how Cleveland wins the citations contest in his book. No surprise, because Cleveland has made many creative developments for statistical graphics and has also studied graphical perception. (As just ONE of a myriad of examples: residuals are very badly "mis-read" by our perception when there is a steeply sloped curve; residual in y- direction may be very large, but we see only a very much shorter perpendicular distance.)

(Finally, in fairness, Tufte has had two good ideas -- but only two compared to Cleveland's several dozen. Tufte's tics-at-data (for x- and y- separate marginal distributions [essentially 1-D scatterplots made by tics]) and Tufte's white-grid-run-thru-of-bar-plots are his two contributions of any substance.)

OK. Thanks for bearing with my review which, thus far, has covered the Cleveland and Tufte subsets of readers. Time for the Grammar of Graphics book character itself --without context of being a Cleveland reader or a Tufte Reader.

If you have not experienced reading Cleveland's books (Elements of Graphing Data and/or Visualizing Data), I admit that this book will be more difficult for you.

The above point aside, you should know, like other reviewers said, that this book is not a how-to. Nor is it like Cleveland's books -- chock full of guideline principles. There are plenty of principles in the book, but with its size, the CONCENTRATION of principles to pages of text is low.

THE BEST PERSPECTIVE ON THIS BOOK: The best perspective is to not sweat consuming every little detail. Especially skip all the formalisms (even though this is ostensibly the topic of the book!) Instead, just enjoy. This is one book definitely to apply your highlighter to. Forget the formalisms completely. Concentrate on the important points made throughout -- but you'll need to highlight them. If you come to the book from Cleveland (William S.) it will be easier for you to spot the important points. Just don't think you have to learn details and formalisms.

One tip -- Cleveland reader or not -- whenever there is any text suggesting a perspective, that text may well be calling for your highlighter -- not always, but often.

Go for principles, perspectives and ignore formalisms. You'll be more at ease and enjoy the book.

If you think you might do both William S. Cleveland's books AND the Grammar of Graphics book -- no question, do Cleveland first (Elements of Graphing Data [more basic] and Visualizing Data [more advanced statistical questions addressed graphically]).

P.S. I don't recall if other reviewers mentioned it, but Wilkinson (author of Grammar of Graphics) is creator of the SYSTAT statistical software package.

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