Describing Charts and Trends in English



Course goal: explain charts, dashboards, and study data clearly and confidently in English.

By the end, you will be able to:

- Introduce a visual and describe movement accurately
- Compare values and highlight key figures
- Present a short data story and handle questions

Roadmap:

chart vocabulary → trend language → comparisons → data storytelling → hedging and forecasts → Q&A → guided practice → final presentation

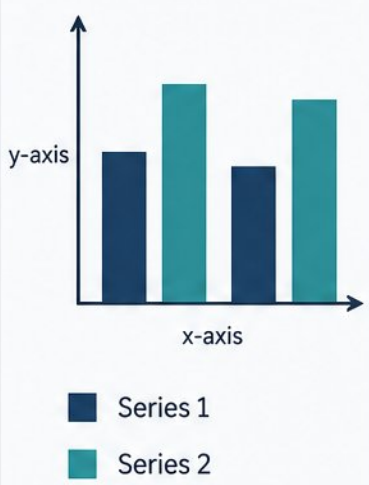
Where you will use this: quarterly reviews, KPI dashboards, survey results, financial updates, project metrics.

Chart Types and Essential Visual Vocabulary

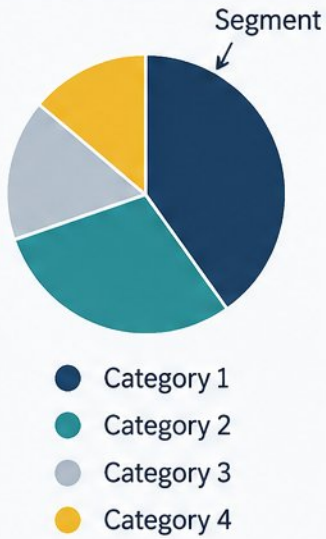
Line Graph



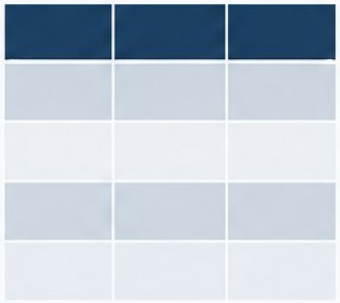
Bar Chart



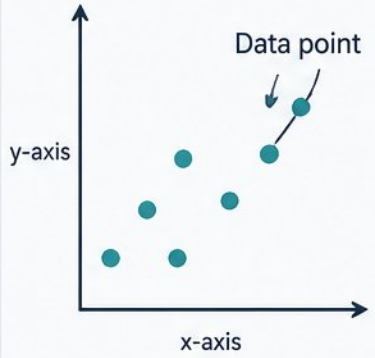
Pie Chart



Table



Scatter Plot



- Line graphs show change over time; bar charts compare categories.
- Pie charts show proportions; tables give precise values; scatter plots show relationships.
- Core nouns: axis (plural: axes), x-axis, y-axis, legend, scale, data point.
- Also: segment, category, series, percentage, proportion, average, median.
- Verbs that label the visual: ‘This line graph shows…’, ‘The blue line represents…’



The Introduce–Orient–Name–Highlight Routine

1 Introduce

“Let's have a look at this chart.”

2 Orient

axes and units — 'The horizontal axis shows the months."



3 Name

“The blue line represents online sales.”

4 Highlight

“What's interesting here is the jump in May.”

One opening, one key figure — don't read every value.

Describing Movement: Trend Verbs and Adverbs

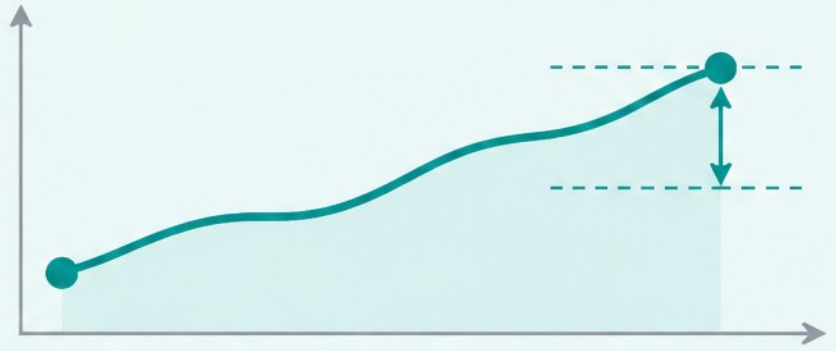


- **Upward verbs:** increase, rise, grow, climb, jump, surge, soar, skyrocket
- **Downward verbs:** decrease, fall, drop, decline, dip, slide, tumble, plummet
- **Stability and change:** remain stable, level off, plateau, fluctuate, recover, rebound, peak, hit a low
- **Adverbs of strength and speed:** sharply, dramatically, rapidly, significantly, steadily, gradually, slightly, marginally
- **Match intensity to the data:** profits didn't "surge" if they rose only 2%
- **"Surge" and "plummet"** are already dramatic — extra adverbs are redundant

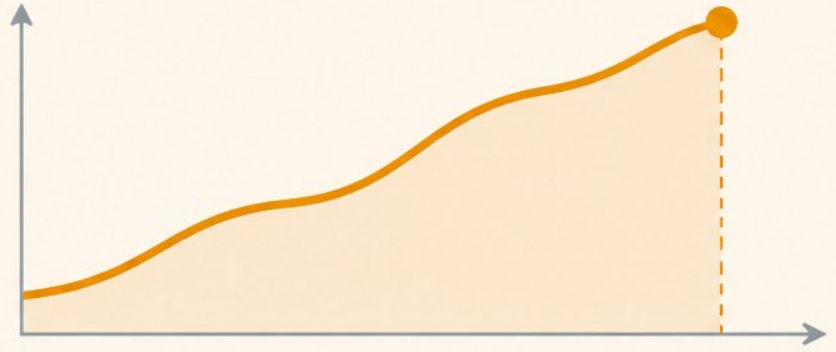
Grammar Patterns That Carry the Trend

- Verb + adverb: "Sales rose sharply in Q2."
- Noun pattern: "There was a sharp rise in sales."
- "By" = amount of change; "to" = final value.
- "from…to…" gives start and end points.
- "Rise by 20%" (amount) vs. "rise to 20%" (final value).
- "An increase in sales"; "an increase of 50% in sales."

Rise by 20% (amount of change)



Rise to 20% (final value)



Making Comparisons and Highlighting Extremes

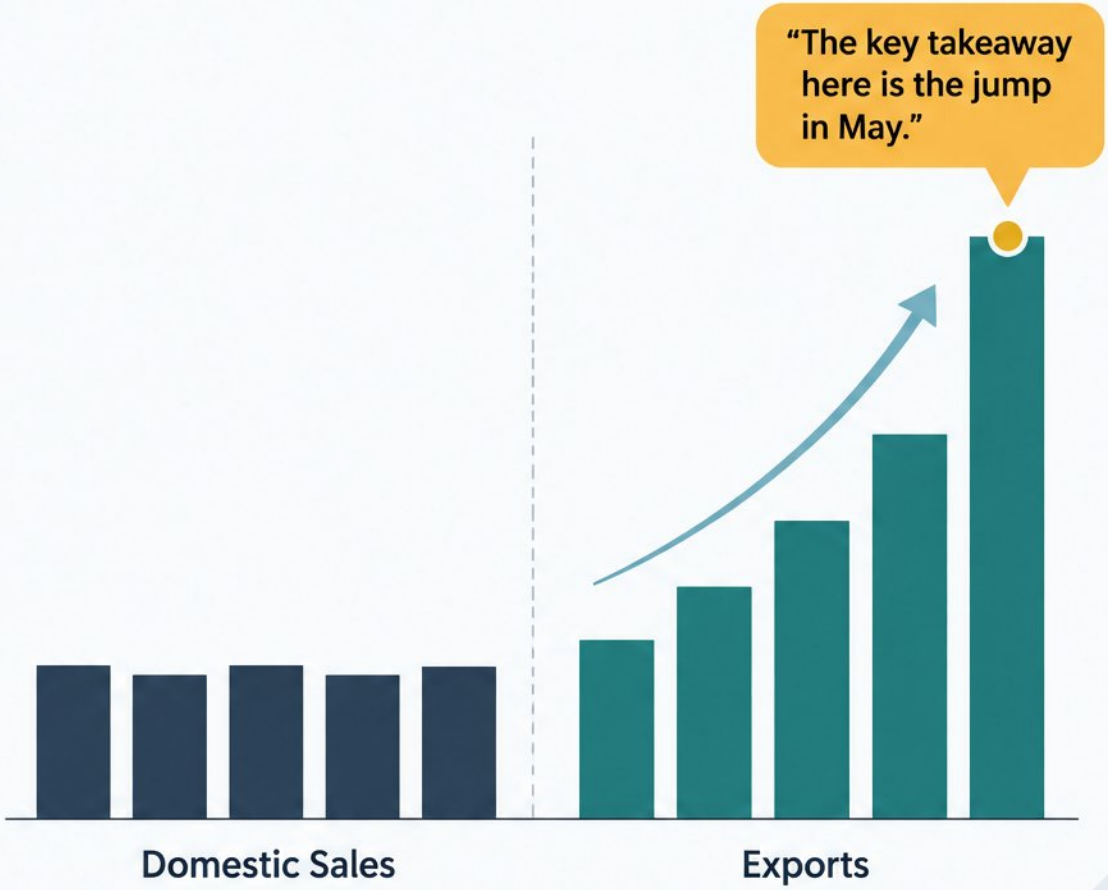
Comparatives
higher than, lower than,
by far the largest

Approximations
nearly, roughly, just over,
twice as high as

Proportion
around a third, half as much as,
accounts for 60%

Contrast
“While domestic sales stayed flat,
exports grew by 22%.”

Highlight
“The key takeaway here is
the jump in May.”



Structuring a Data Story: Opening, Signposting, Closing

TURN NUMBERS INTO A CLEAR, COMPELLING STORY

1 Open

"Let's look at the numbers for Q3."



2 Signpost

"If we look at the right-hand side…"



3 Narrative

context → main trend → contrast → conclusion



4 Close

"This suggests that…" / "Based on these figures, I'd recommend…"



- **Open:** "Let's look at the numbers for Q3."
- **Signpost** inside the chart: "If we look at the right-hand side…"
- **Narrative:** context → main trend → contrast → conclusion
- Don't list every number—guide attention instead
- Close with implications: "This suggests that…" / "Based on these figures, I'd recommend…"

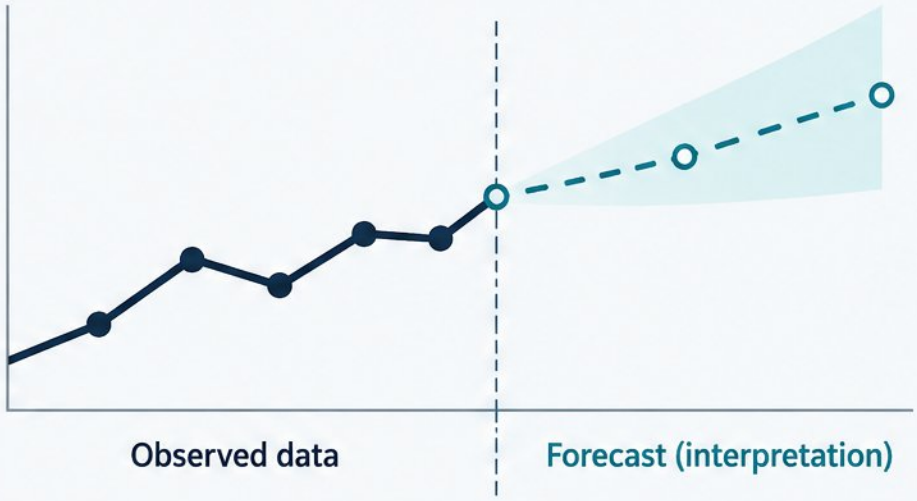
SAME DATA.
A STRONGER STORY.

Precision and Caution: Hedging, Forecasts, and Caveats

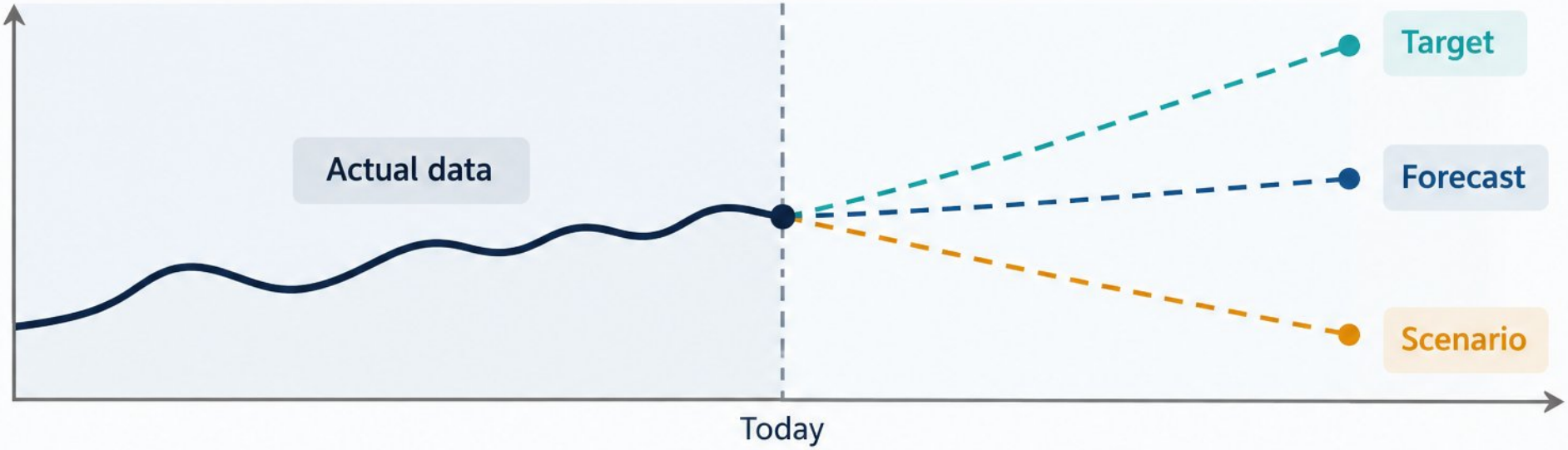
1. Hedge with modals (may, might, could) and adverbs (likely, roughly)
2. Use cognition verbs: suggests, appears, indicates, tends to
3. Separate fact from interpretation: "shows a 12% drop" vs. "could mean"
4. Label each number: actual, forecast, target, scenario, projection
5. Mark where observed data ends; date every forecast
6. Round to the evidence: "about 12,500", not "12,483"

Hedging Toolkit

Modal Verbs	Cognition Verbs	Cautious Adverbs
may, might, could	suggests, appears, indicates, tends to	likely, roughly



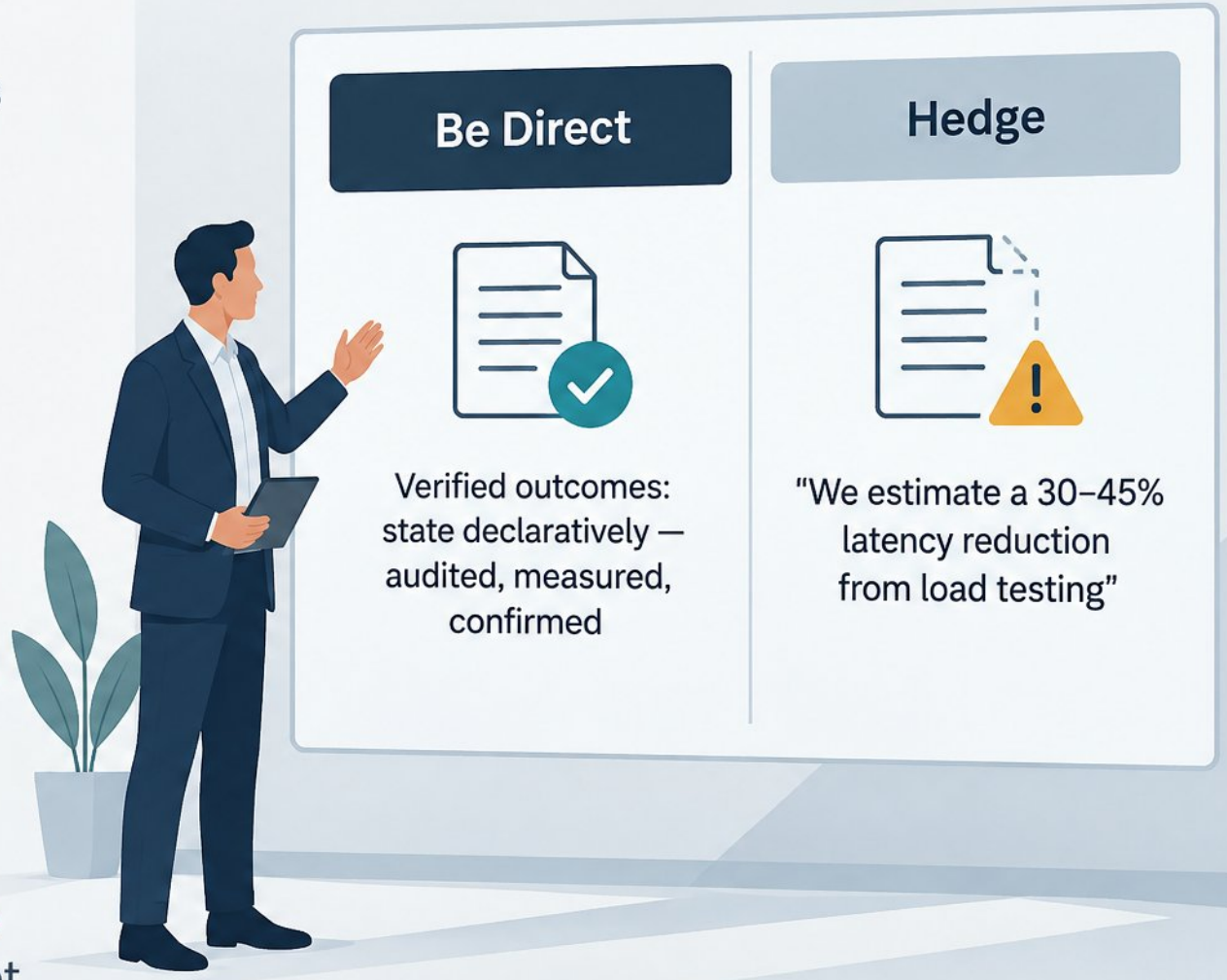
Talking About Forecasts and Projections Accurately



1. Forecast: expected given the evidence; target: what we want
2. Scenario: what could happen under stated conditions
3. Let the verb carry the label: expect, aim for, could reach
4. Mark where actual data ends; label both parts directly
5. Don't call a sensitivity range a "confidence interval"

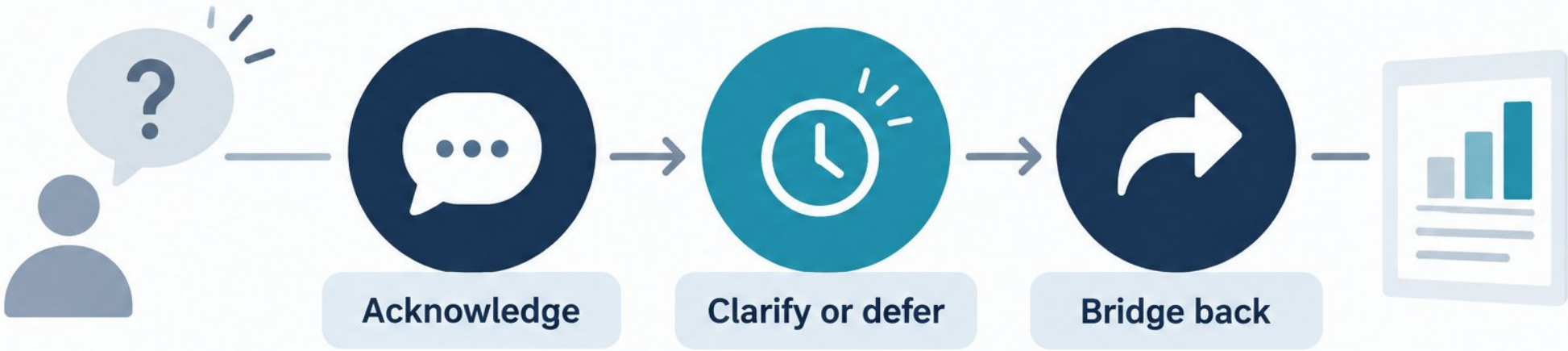
Calibrating Certainty:
When to Hedge and When to Be Direct

- Hedging signals precision and maturity, not weakness
- "We estimate a 30–45% latency reduction from load testing"
- Verified outcomes: state declaratively — audited, measured, confirmed
- Hedge forward-looking and model-based claims with caution
- One hedge per claim; name the constraint, not the doubt



Answering Questions About Data

Calm sequence: acknowledge, clarify or defer, bridge back



- **Acknowledge:** "That's a fair question" buys thinking time
- **Clarify:** "Am I right that you're asking about timing?"
- **Defer:** "I'll follow up with the figure straight after"
- **Set boundaries:** "That's outside today's scope" — friendly and specific
- **Say** "a question about slide three," never "a question to"

Accuracy Clinic: Common Errors to Fix

Small corrections. Clearer communication.



1. By = amount of change; to = final value. "Rose by 10%" vs "rose to 10%".
2. Adverb vs adjective: "Sales fell sharply" / "There was a sharp fall".
3. Say "higher than", never "more high than".
4. Use "fewer" for countables, "less" for uncountables.
5. Get the subject right: "the consumption of fast food rose", not "hamburgers rose".
6. Match tense to timeframe; check subject–verb agreement before speaking.

✗ Sales rose **to** 20%.	✓ Sales rose **by** 20%.
✗ Sales fell **sharply**.	✓ Sales fell **sharply**.
✗ Prices are more **high than** last year.	✓ Prices are **higher than** last year.
✗ We need less chairs.	✓ We need **fewer** chairs.

BETTER LANGUAGE.
BRIGHTER IDEAS.

Guided Practice: Describing a Real Dashboard

Four-step routine: identify chart type → main trend → compare → highlight one insight

Sequence: "Overall, … increased," then key figures, then one comparison sentence

Checklist: clear structure, accurate trend verbs, correct by/to/from, hedging, one takeaway

Executive summary: headline plus implication only; team update adds method and caveats

Use real dashboards: KPI cards, bar chart, time-series line, donut or stacked bar



Your Turn: Presenting, Feedback, and Action Plan

1. **Final task:** deliver a 2–3 minute chart description from your work or study
2. **Follow the routine:** introduce → orient → name → highlight
3. **Peer feedback:** trend clarity, comparisons, by/to/from, Q&A confidence
4. **Action plan:** three phrases, one error to monitor, one Q&A strategy
5. **Keep practising:** read business charts and annual reports weekly



PersonWise.

PersonWise • AI digital-human course platform



Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/748614a7/public