

TOP TIPS WHEN USING STATISTICS

Look for Trustworthiness, Quality and Value

Does it look right?

- Does it seem in line with what you already know about the subject?
- Is it an implausible number?
- If it's unusual, it could be wrong – what's behind the surprise?
- What exactly is measured and why?

Where is the data from?

- How are the statistics calculated – is the source reputable and did they show their working?
- Be curious about someone else's data – could more research help you understand it better?

How sure are you about this?

- Numbers contain uncertainty – how precise are yours?
- What led to what – is this really a causal relationship?
- Understand the assumptions – what happens if they are wrong?

Only compare the comparable

- Watch out for changes in definitions and different ways to measure the same thing
- Put things in context – what's the historical trend?