When you do any kind of research you need to think carefully about how to show what you have found. You need to think about how much data to include to make your point, what method of presentation will make the most sense for your reader/tutor and how the results will lead to a logical conclusion.

Your research may be primary (data you generate yourself) or secondary (using data that someone else has generated). Either way you will be dealing with data that will be qualitative (text) or quantitative (numbers).

Qualitative

This kind of data will usually be transcripts of participants comments, experiences and opinions. It is generated through interviews, focus groups, observation and some survey questions (open ended). When presenting this in your assignment you are very likely to need to summarise in some what has been said. It is very important, however, than you still keep the meaning of what has been said i.e. report the 'voice' of the participant. This can be tricky to achieve and may require some different analytical methods to see which is most suitable.

One method is to read each response and apply coding. This is where you summarise each response and then look for similarities so that even though the initial wording may be different, the opinion expressed can be categorised as the same. Below is an example:

Response	Initial coding	Focused coding
I would like more help with assignments because I struggle with writing	More help with writing	Help
Tutors should be available more so we can talk to them about assignments	More help from tutors	Help
There is too much work and it is too stressful, there should be fewer assignments	Fewer assignments	Less work

Quantitative

This type of data will usually be inputted into Excel so that tables and graphs can be created to highlight important or unexpected results. See our guide on which chart to use when. This kind of data will be generated from closed question questionnaires, experiments or observations where you count things.

This kind of data can be easier to analyse than text based results but you should be careful about using a suitable graph in order to make it clear for the reader to understand the significance of your results.

Below is the data from a questionnaire about items bought by men and women at Westminster Kingsway College.

Item	Number bought by men	Number bought by women
Hairdryer	2	14
Shampoo	17	22
Toilet paper	14	12
Toothpaste	22	14
Shower Gel	2	17
Plasters	17	6
Moisturiser	5	32

The most suitable graph is a bar chart however the 3D effect in this chart is making the data difficult to read.
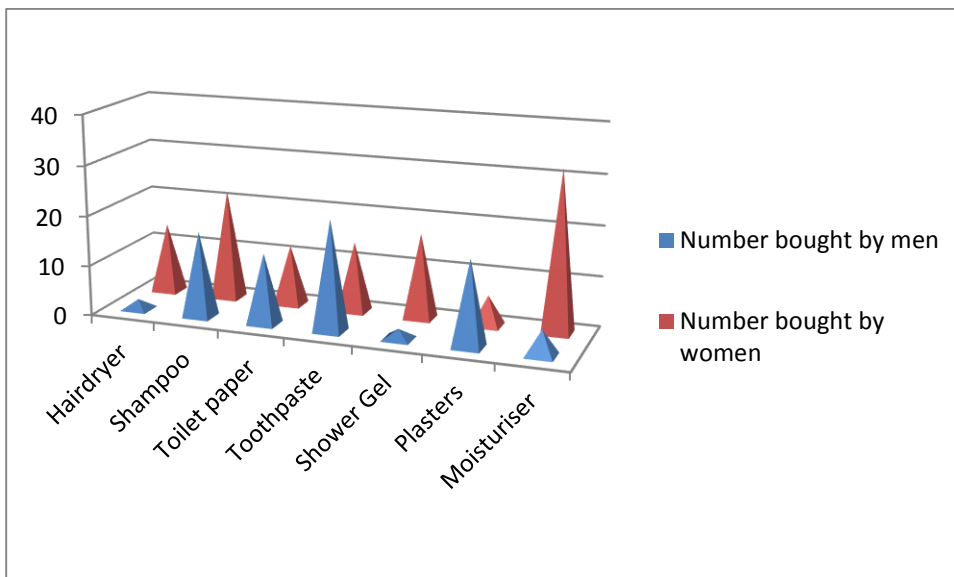
On a simpler style of bar chart it is much easier to see instantly that moisturiser was the best seller for women and toothpaste for men.