

How to Create a Scatter Plot with Lines in Google Sheets: A Simple Guide

Authored by
stats writer

November 30, 2025

RECOMMENDED CITATION

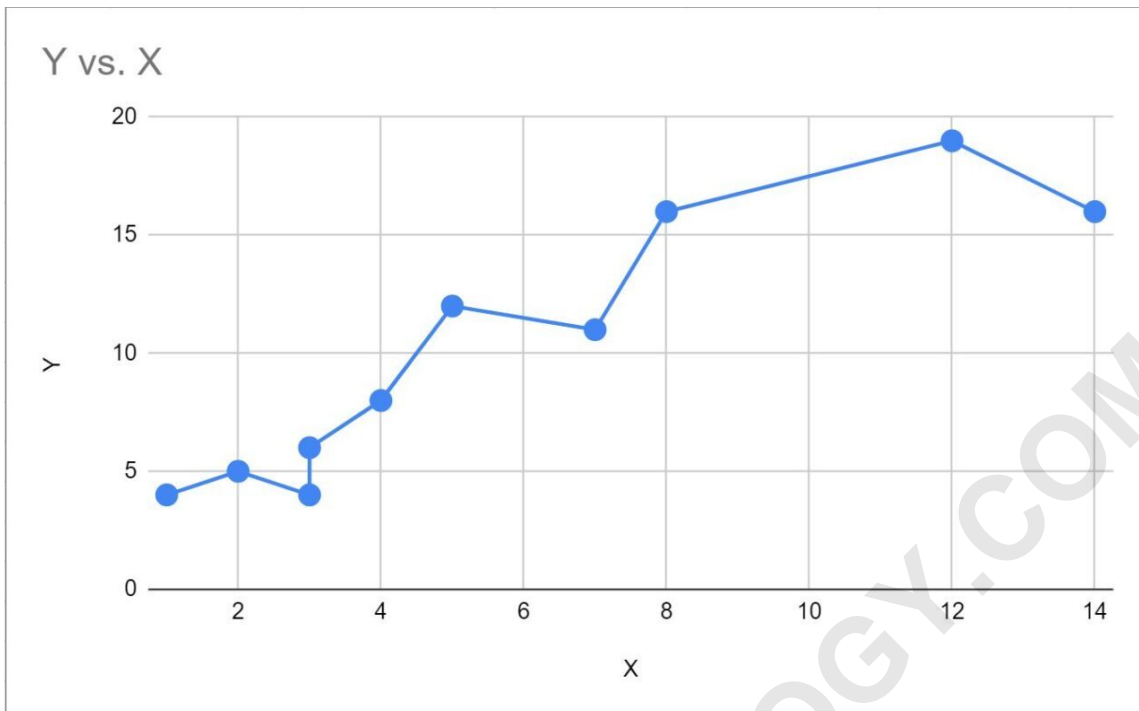
stats writer (2025). *How to Create a Scatter Plot with Lines in Google Sheets: A Simple Guide*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=102158>

The standard method for creating a chart that visually represents the relationship between two numerical variables in Google Sheets typically involves inserting a Scatter Plot. However, achieving a sophisticated plot where individual data points are clearly marked AND sequentially connected by lines requires a specific workaround, as this combined chart type is not natively available in the standard chart gallery.

While a basic scatter chart effectively displays the distribution and potential correlation between variables, it inherently lacks the sequential flow provided by connecting lines. Conversely, a standard Line Chart emphasizes trends over time or sequence but may obscure individual data points if not configured correctly. This comprehensive guide details the expert technique for merging the strengths of both chart types within the Sheets environment, resulting in a powerful tool for Data Visualization.

The traditional approach often involved inserting a simple scatter plot and then manually adding a trendline through the Chart Editor. Crucially, a trendline only provides a calculated regression line (e.g., linear or polynomial), designed to show the general direction of the data. It does not connect adjacent plotted points in the order they appear in the source data. The definitive solution we will explore leverages the inherent structure of the Line Chart and relies on meticulous customization to achieve the desired effect of a scatter plot with sequential connectors.

Users often require a chart that visually tracks the trajectory of data points across a sequential or ordered axis. Since Google Sheets does not include a pre-built "Scatter Plot with Lines" option, we must employ an intelligent workaround by modifying a standard line chart. This tutorial walks through the precise steps necessary to transform raw data into a visually compelling, connected plot, similar to the final output shown below:



Step 1: Preparing the Dataset for Sequential Plotting

Effective data visualization begins with a properly structured dataset. For this specific type of connected scatter plot, the data must be organized in columns where the X-axis values are placed in the first column, followed by the corresponding Y-axis values in the subsequent column(s). The order of the rows determines the sequence in which the points will be connected by lines.

To illustrate this process, we will use a small sample dataset. This dataset represents sequential measurements (perhaps experimental trials or time steps) where the relationship between two variables, X and Y, needs to be visualized with connectivity.

We begin by inputting the following sample values into the spreadsheet:

	A	B	C	D	
1	X	Y			
2		1	4		
3		2	5		
4		3	4		
5		3	6		
6		4	8		
7		5	12		
8		7	11		
9		8	16		
10		12	19		
11		14	16		
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					

It is important to ensure that the header row (A1 and B1) accurately labels the variables, as these labels will automatically populate the chart legends and axis titles, thereby enhancing the overall clarity of the final visualization. This foundational step is critical for ensuring the resulting plot accurately reflects the intended sequential relationship.

Step 2: Initiating the Chart Creation Process

Once the data is correctly entered into the sheet, the next phase involves instructing Google Sheets to recognize this range as the source for a new chart object. Although our ultimate goal is a connected scatter plot, we must initially insert a chart based on the selected data, allowing the system to default to its initial suggestion.

To commence, execute the following actions:

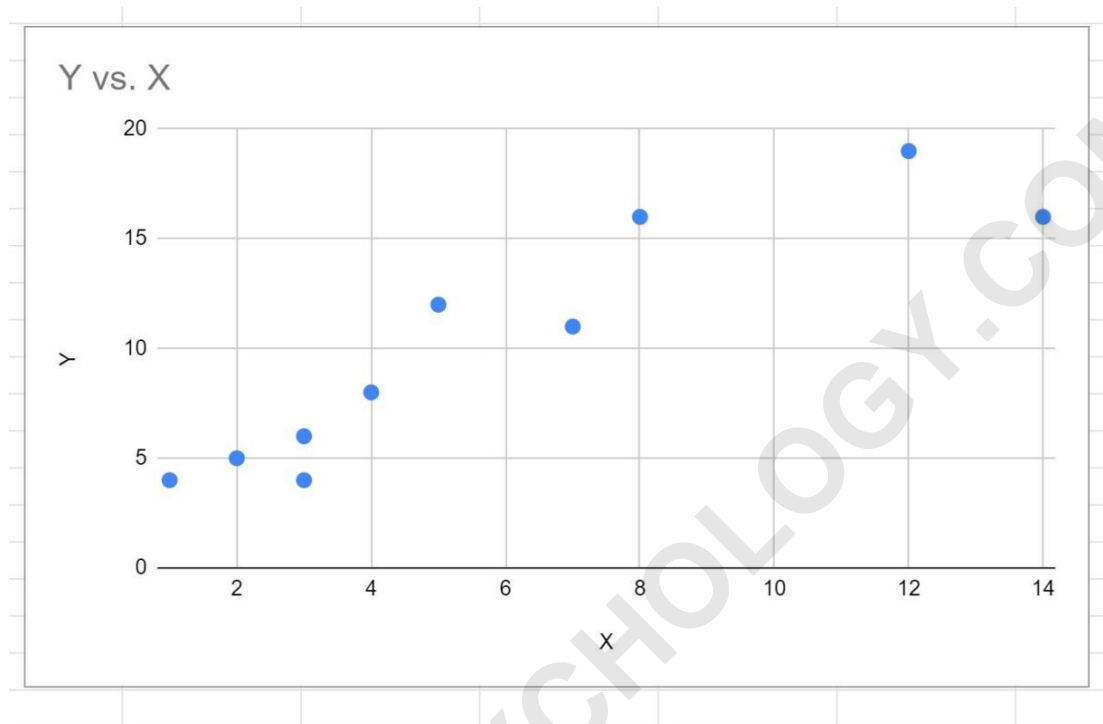
Highlight the entire dataset: Select the range of cells containing both the header row and all corresponding data points. For the example provided, this range is typically **A1:B11** (assuming the data extends down to row 11).

Access the Chart Tool: Navigate to the top menu bar, click **Insert**, and then select **Chart**.

Upon insertion, Google Sheets typically attempts to determine the best visualization type for the

selected data. Often, when numerical data is selected this way, the system defaults to inserting a basic Scatter Plot, especially if it recognizes two distinct numerical series. However, this default chart type does not include connecting lines, necessitating the following transformation steps.

The initial default visualization generated will resemble this standard output:



Simultaneously, the **Chart Editor** panel will appear on the right side of the screen, providing access to all necessary customization options. This panel is the command center for modifying the chart type and its aesthetic features.

Step 3: Converting the Default Chart to a Line Chart

Since the default scatter plot does not facilitate the sequential connection of points, we must switch the chart type to a Line Chart. The line chart inherently connects sequential data points, forming the basis of our desired visualization.

Within the **Chart Editor** panel, which should be open on the right, ensure you are on the **Setup** tab. Locate the **Chart type** dropdown menu. This menu presents a variety of chart categories and styles.

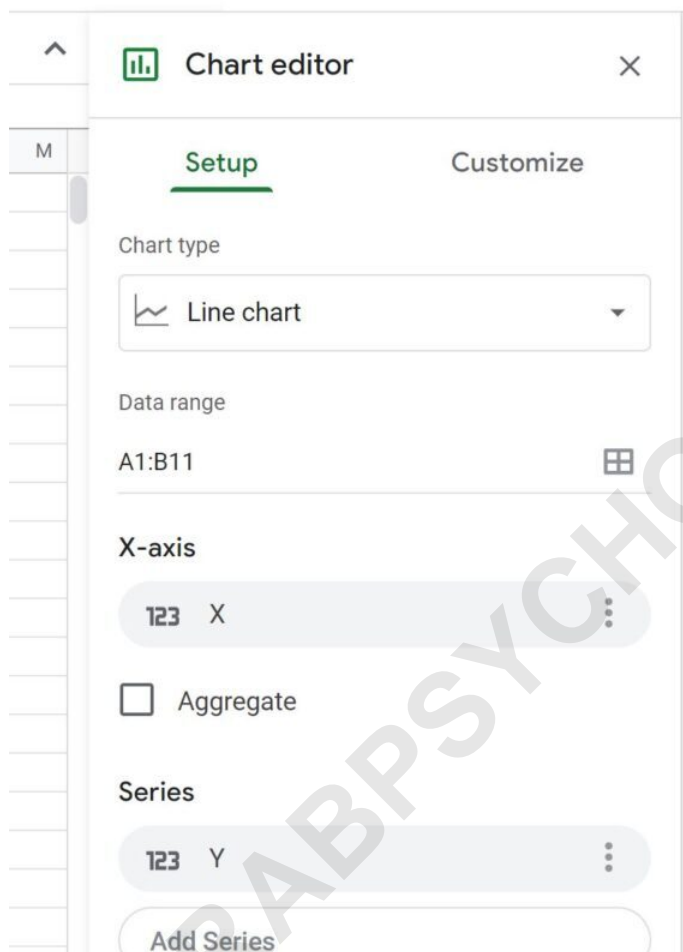
To convert the chart:

Click on the **Chart type** selector.

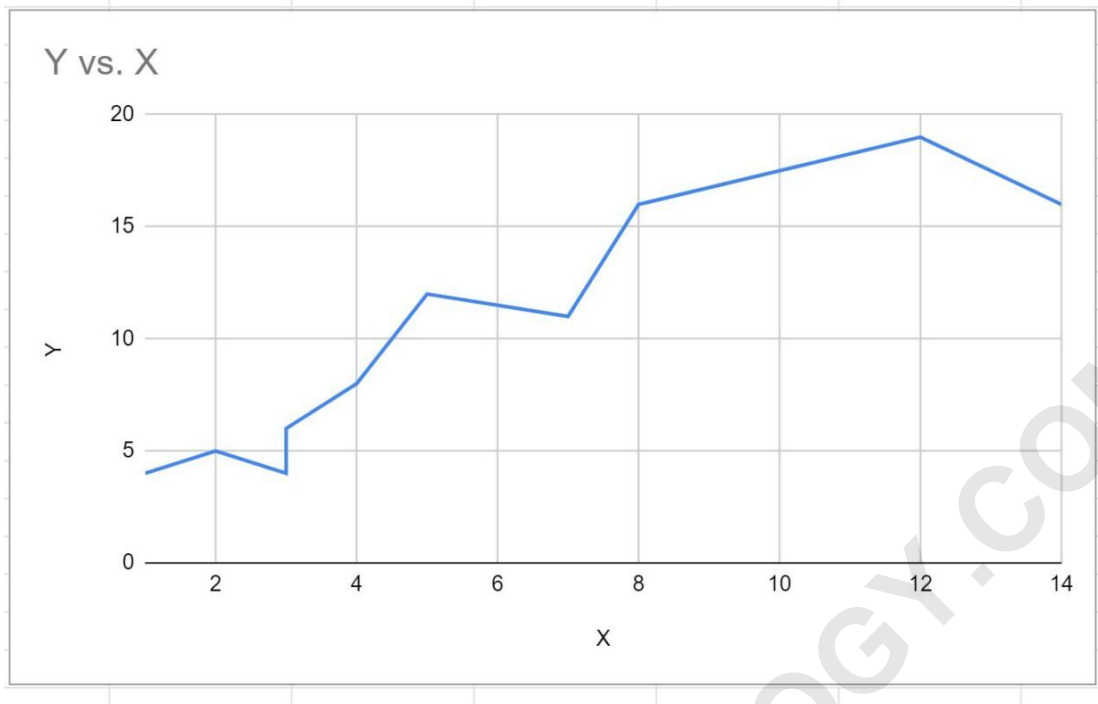
Scroll down through the available options until you find the **Line chart** icon under the "Suggested" or "Line" section.

Click the **Line chart** option to apply the change instantly.

This critical conversion utilizes the Line Chart's capability to draw segments between adjacent data points based on their order in the source table. If the data was correctly structured in Step 1, the lines will now accurately link the observations in sequence.



This action will immediately produce a standard line chart, which visually emphasizes the trajectory of the data but often minimizes or completely removes the visible markers for individual points, resulting in the following appearance:

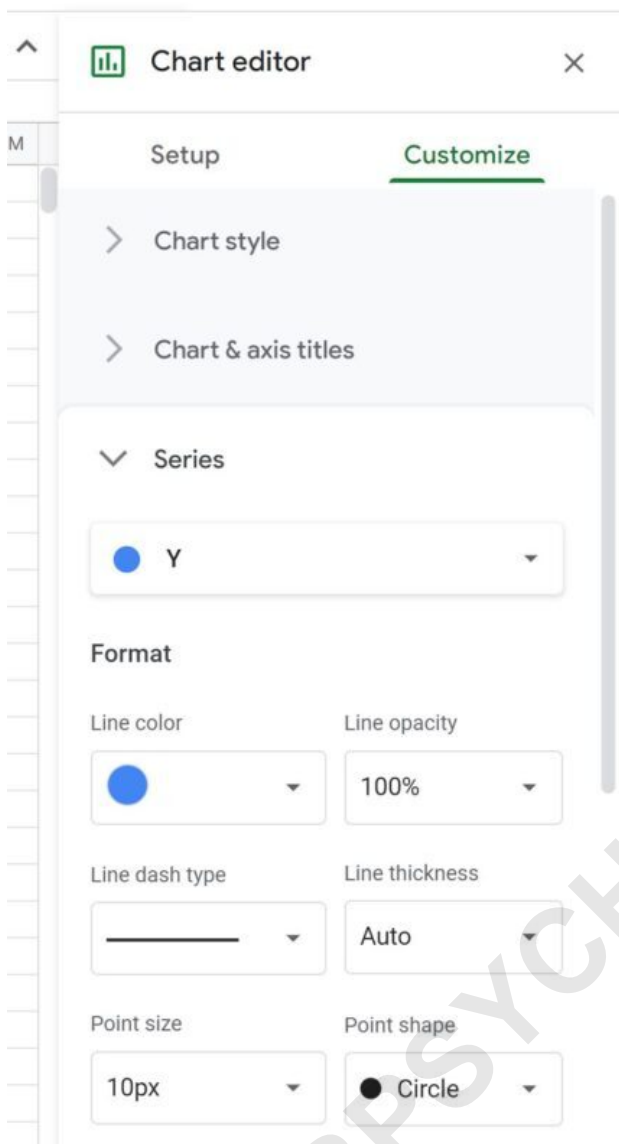


Step 4: Customizing the Line Chart for Point Visibility

The current line chart successfully connects the data points, but it fails to meet the "scatter plot" requirement because the individual markers are typically too small or nonexistent. The final step in this workaround involves enhancing the visibility of these markers, effectively turning the connected line chart into a scatter plot with lines.

To achieve this, we need to utilize the customization options available in the [Chart Editor](#), focusing specifically on the series formatting:

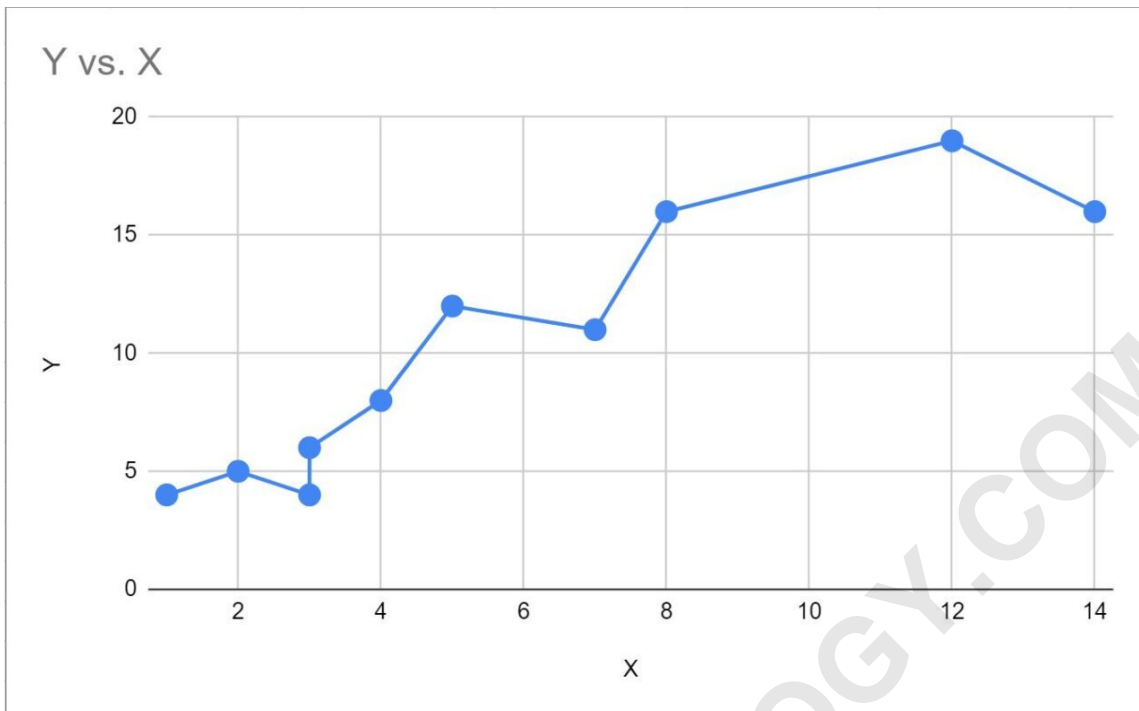
1. Navigate to the **Customize** tab within the Chart Editor panel.
2. Expand the **Series** settings group. If multiple data series exist, ensure the correct series is selected, although, in this bivariate example, only one series is present.
3. Locate the **Point size** option within the Series customization settings. By default, this may be set to 'None' or a very small size (e.g., 2px).
4. Click the dropdown menu next to **Point size**. A recommended size for clear visualization is **10px**, which provides a highly visible marker similar to those found in standard scatter plots. You may also experiment with other sizes (e.g., 7px or 12px) depending on the overall chart scale and density of the data.



By increasing the point size, distinct markers will be overlaid onto the existing connecting lines. This final modification combines the accuracy of individual data point representation (the scatter plot feature) with the sequential tracking capability (the line chart feature).

Step 5: Reviewing and Refining the Connected Scatter Plot

Once the point size is adjusted, the visualization will immediately update, showing clearly defined points connected by straight-line segments. The resulting chart now successfully represents a true scatter plot with lines, effectively solving the initial challenge:



This visualization method is highly valuable in fields such as engineering, finance, and experimental science where both the magnitude of individual observations and the trajectory between them are essential for analysis. The chart now clearly resembles a [Scatter Plot](#), yet retains the sequential connectivity provided by the underlying [Line Chart](#) mechanism.

Step 6: Advanced Customization and Styling

To optimize the chart for presentation and clarity, further refinement of the visual aesthetics is recommended. The **Customize** tab of the [Chart Editor](#) offers extensive options for fine-tuning the chart elements, including the lines, points, axes, and titles.

Key areas for advanced styling include:

Line Appearance: Within the Series section, you can modify the **Line thickness** and **Line color**. For instance, decreasing the line thickness slightly may help the points stand out more prominently.

Point Styling: Beyond size, the **Point shape** (e.g., circle, diamond, star) and **Point color** can be altered. Selecting a vibrant color for the points that contrasts with the line color can significantly boost the overall impact and readability of the [Data Visualization](#).

Axis Formatting: Adjusting the minimum and maximum values for the horizontal and vertical axes (under the Axis sections) ensures that the data is centered appropriately and that any outliers do not skew the visual representation unnecessarily.

Titles and Labels: Ensure that the chart title, axis titles, and any relevant data labels are

descriptive, concise, and professional.

Continuous experimentation with the **Format** options in the Chart Editor panel is encouraged to achieve an optimal blend of connectivity and point distinction, tailored specifically to the requirements of the data being analyzed.

Summary of the Connected Scatter Plot Workaround

In summary, while Google Sheets lacks a direct, dedicated chart type for a scatter plot with sequential lines, this robust workaround provides a professional and highly customizable solution. By intentionally selecting the Line Chart type and subsequently maximizing the visibility of the data points, analysts can create a combined visualization that leverages the best features of both standard chart types.

This technique is indispensable when the analyst requires visualization that not only shows the correlation (or lack thereof) between two variables, but also respects and depicts the chronological or indexed order in which the data was collected.