

IELTS Academic Test - Types of Graphs

1. Line Graph
2. Bar Chart - OR - Column Graph
3. Pie Chart
4. Table
5. Multiple Charts
6. Process or Cycle
7. Describing Objects
8. Map

Now, this number seems big, but fortunately the vocabulary you need to learn falls in only four categories.

1. Line graph vocabulary also called the time graph vocabulary.
2. Percentage vocabulary.
3. Process vocabulary.
4. Maps vocabulary.

How to write a graph?

Introduction:

You need only one or two sentences describing the following:

The type of graph you are describing, the title of the graph, date of the graph and scale. You need not have all this information but you should report what you have.

Body:

What you need to do is to describe factually the graph. No specialized knowledge of your own is needed nor your opinion.

You do not need to analyze the data, for example you need not give the reason for why figures are high or low. Sometimes, when there is more than one graph, there is relationship between the two, and you can bring in some comparison between them but going beyond this is not necessary.

Ending:

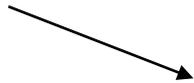
You need not write a long and analytical conclusion. The introduction and the ending should be more or less the same.

1. The line or time graph vocabulary

All graphs which show changes over time - whether they are line graphs or bar graphs or a table need this vocabulary. All line graphs are time graphs but all time graphs are not line graphs.

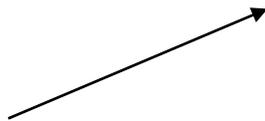
Useful language:

Go down



1. decreased
2. fell
3. dropped
4. declined
5. came down

Go up



1. increased
2. rose
3. climbed
4. grew
5. went up
6. escalated

No change



1. remained stable
2. levelled off
3. stabilized
4. remained the same

Fluctuation - fluctuated

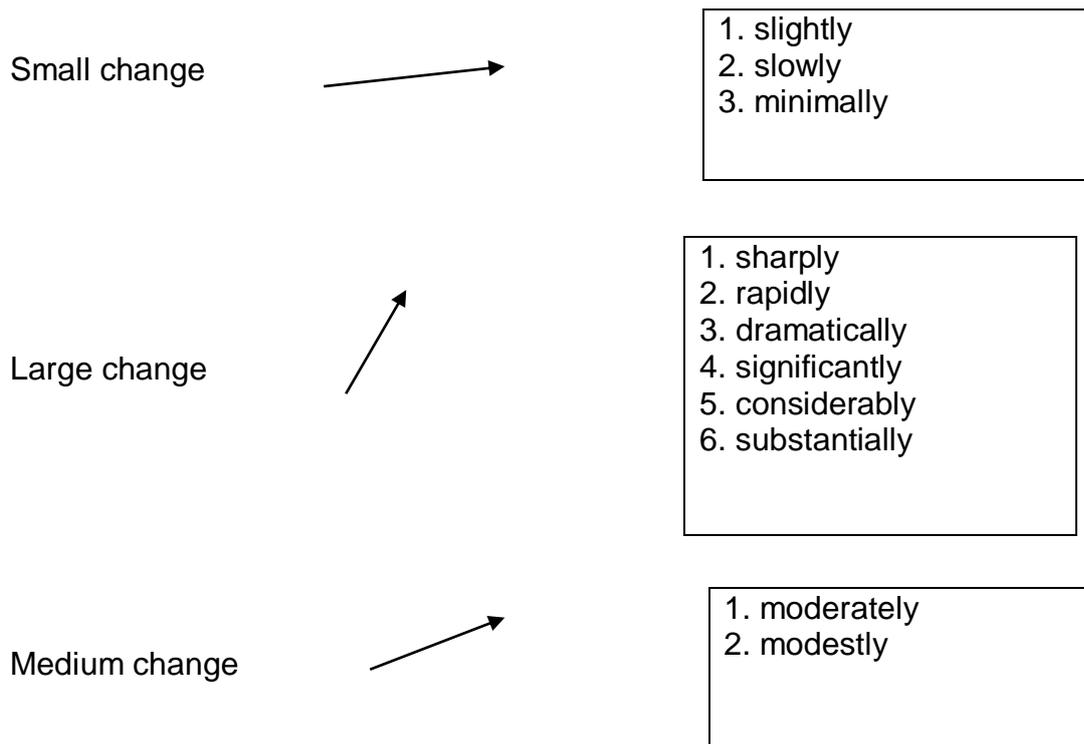


Peaked at OR reached a high of



Dipped OR reached a low of





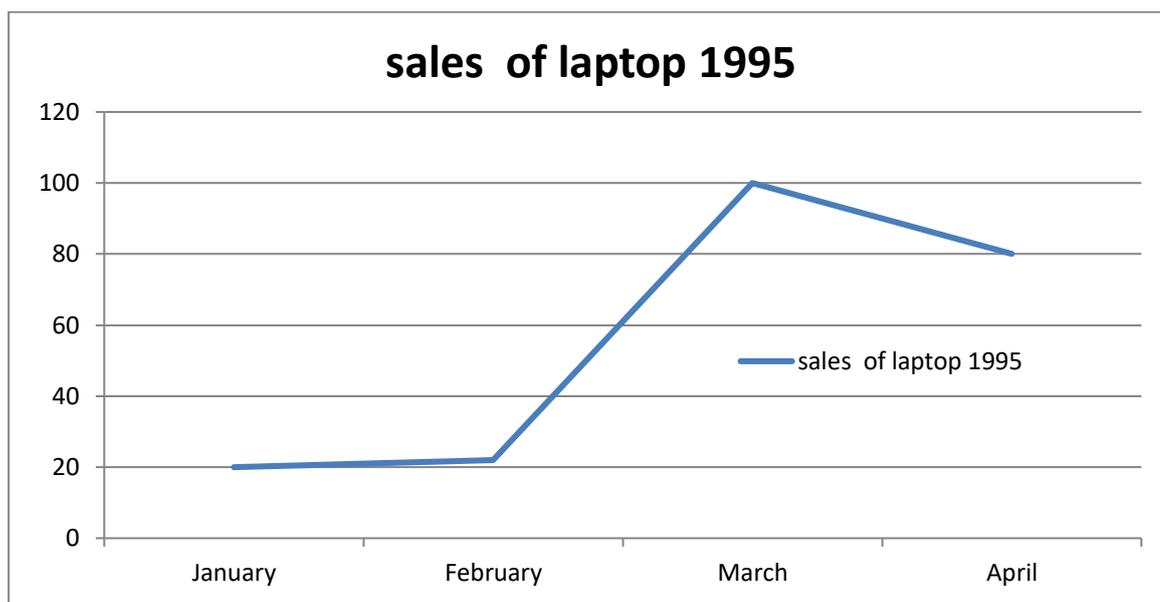
TIME PHRASES

It is important that you know how to use the common expressions of time.

Here are the common ones:

- In :
 - A. In 2000
 - B. In the 20th century
 - C. In the first ten years...
- For :
 - A. For the first six months...
 - B. For twenty years...
- During :
 - A. During the first six months...
 - B. During the first half of this century...
 - C. During the remainder of the year...
- From- to
 - A. From September to November...
 - B. From 2000 to 2005....
- Between - and
 - A. Between 1960 and 1970...
- Stood at / started at / finished at

Note that you can refer to a decade as the 1980s etc. There is no apostrophe before the s.



Two sentences to remember

From January to February, sales increased slightly.

From January to February, there was a slight increase in sales.

The above two sentences are foolproof sentences to get your sentence structuring right in the IELTS line graphs. Of course you must make these sentences longer by adding data and also make changes to words like January according to your graph (For e.g. there may be years in the graph you get) but the basic structure of sentence remains the same. When you use the adjective noun combination then the three words “there was an” always precedes the combination.

Talking about combinations - Only two types of word combinations can be used in the time graphs – The adjective noun OR the verb adverb. You must learn the relevant vocabulary by making a table like the one given **below:-**

<u>Verb</u>	<u>Adverb</u>	<u>Adjective</u>	<u>Noun</u>
increased	slightly	slight	increase
rose	rapidly	rapid	rise
decreased	moderately	moderate	decrease
grew	substantially	substantial	growth
escalated	sharply	sharp	escalation
dropped	dramatically	dramatic	drop
climbed	minimally	minimal	climb
Fell	Slightly	Slight	Fall

Remained stable - there was stability

Levelled off – there was a levelling off

USING THE RIGHT TENSES

It is important to select the correct tenses.

- For most graphs a specific time in the past will be given and you will need to use the past simple tense. If two things took place at the same time, you may use the past continuous tense for one of them. (While laptop sale was rising during this period, there was no change in cell phone sale).
- If you use since or recently it means that you are referring to events that have come up to the present. That means using the present perfect tense, (The use of the internet has risen enormously since the 1990s).
- With 'by' you will often need to use the past perfect or the future perfect tense. (By the end of the century the rate of urbanisation had doubled).

2. Percentage Vocabulary

You should not keep repeating the same structures. The key language of percentage graphs is proportions and percentages.

Common phrases to see are “the proportion of ...” or “the percentage of...”

This table presents some examples of how you can change percentages to fractions or ratios:

Percentage	Fraction
80%	four-fifths
75%	three-quarters
50%	half
25%	a quarter
20%	a fifth
10%	One in ten

If the percentages are not exact as above, then you can use qualifiers to make sure your description remains accurate. Here are some examples:

Percentage	Qualifier
77%	Just over three quarters
77%	Approximately three quarters
49%	Just under a half
49%	Nearly a half
32%	Almost a third

This table presents some examples of how you can change percentage to other phrases:

Percentage	Proportion / number / amount / majority / minority
75% - 85%	A very large majority
65% - 75%	A significant proportion
10% - 15%	A minority
5%	A very small number

The words above are interchangeable, though number is for countable nouns and amount is for uncountable nouns.

How to incorporate data in the graph?

There are two ways of incorporating data

1. by using brackets – (.....)
2. By using – which +
 - Is
 - Makes up
 - Constitutes
 - Accounts for

Example sentences

- White is considerably more common than blue.
- White (55%) is considerably more common than blue (20%).
- White, which is 55%, is considerably more common than blue, which makes up 20%.
- Red, which constitutes 28%, is almost twice as popular as blue, which is 13.8%.
- The **other** colours, which constitutes 8% are considerably less popular than blue (20%).

Grouping information

When you write a task 1, you should always group information in a logical way to make it easy to follow and read.

With an IELTS pie chart, the most logical thing to do is usually to compare categories together across the charts, focusing on similarities and differences, rather than writing about each chart separately.

If you write about each one separately, the person reading it will have to keep looking between the paragraphs in order to see how each category differs.

Language of comparison

Comparative form – when comparing 2 things

- Than
- In comparison with
- As compared to

As compared to / with / / than – used when comparing things or people, especially when comparing numbers or amounts:

Example:-

- This year`s profits are much higher as compare to (than) (in comparison with) last year`s.
- Mortality rates are lower for women as compared with (than) men.

As against / as opposed to conjunction used when you are comparing two figures or pieces of information, in order to show how they are different.

Example:-

- The company achieved sales of \$404 million, as against \$310 million in the previous year.
- One study predicted that 42% of female university graduates would remain single the rest of their lives, as opposed to just 5% of male graduates.

3. Process Vocabulary

The first step in learning to write about a process diagram is to see where the process starts and ends. This is important information as it will help structure your writing. The obvious thing to do is to start at the beginning and carry on until you get to the end.

Some of the most useful vocabulary for describing a process is the language of sequencing. This means that you need to find language to say in what order each thing happens. The key here is variation. Try not to use “and then” “and then” “all the time.

Here are some alternatives –

- The first
- The second
- The next
- A further
- Eventually
- This step involves
- After this stage is complete
- At the same time / Meanwhile

- Finally

Passives

When we describe an IELTS process, the focus is on the activities, NOT the person doing them. When this is the case, we use the passive voice, not the active.

This is a brief explanation of how to use the passive voice, but if you are new or unsure about using it, you should do some further study and practice.

Most sentences use this structure:

Subject + Verb + Object

(S) Reeta (V) makes (O) tea

When we use the passive voice, we make the object (tea) the subject, and make the subject (Reeta) the object. We also add in the verb 'to be' and the past participle (or Verb 3)

(O) Tea (be + V3) is made (S) by Reeta.

So throughout most of your description for IELTS process diagram, you should be using.

4. Maps Vocabulary

The knowledge of directions – north, east, south, and west, northeast, southeast, northwest and southwest is very essential.

