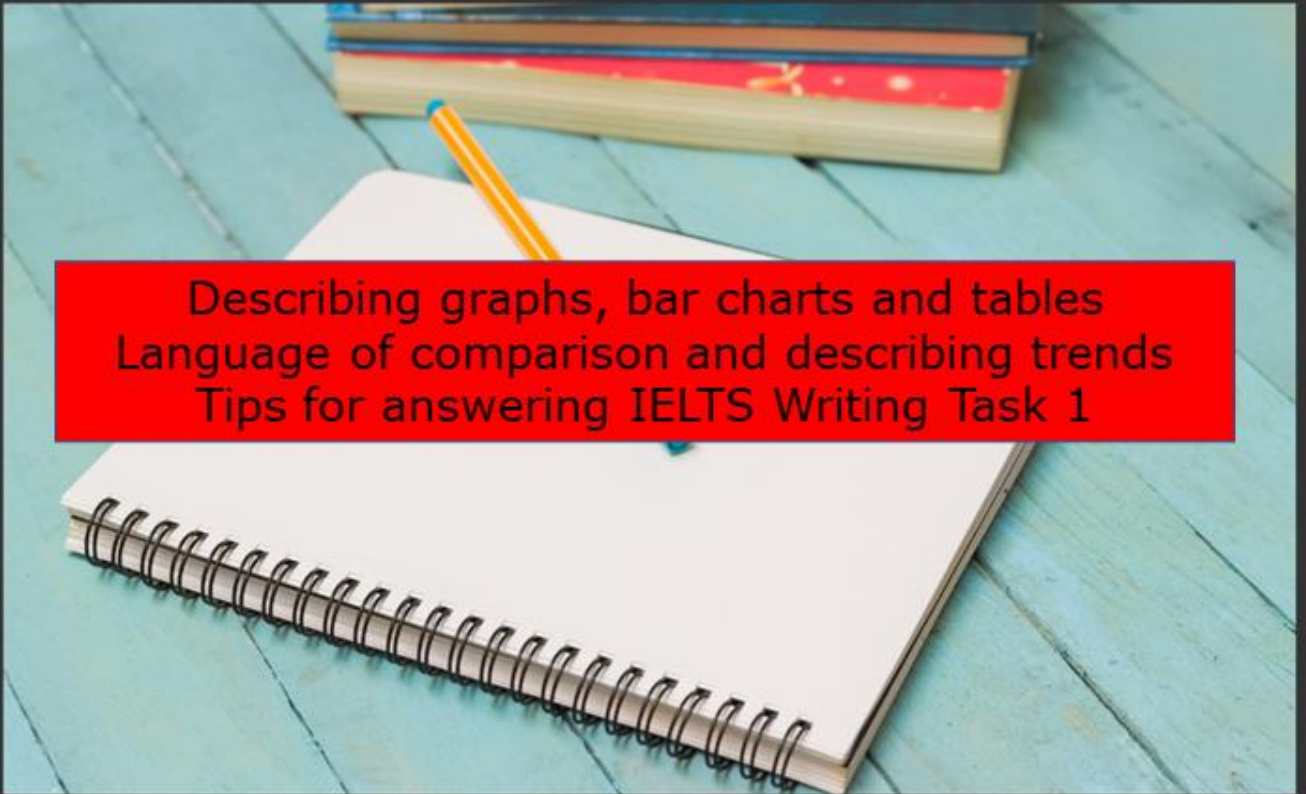


IELTS

WRITING TIPS



Describing graphs, bar charts and tables
Language of comparison and describing trends
Tips for answering IELTS Writing Task 1

IELTS Writing Task 1 - Academic

Key features of Writing Task 1

- Time about 20 minutes/write at least 150 words
- This task is worth 1/3 of the total writing score.
- Could be based on a graph, bar chart, pie chart, diagram, table, map
- Before you start writing understand the graph, chart etc- look at the legend, axis labels, units of measurement then look in more detail for general trends, significant changes or features – big jumps or differences.
- Describe the key features **only**
- Identify the key features and plan your structure before you start writing.
- To get a Band 7 for Task Achievement you need to present a clear overview of the main trends, differences or stages. The other criteria are the same as Writing Task 2

Structure

- The response requires 4 paragraphs.
- Paragraph 1 and 2 are short – one sentence for paragraph 1, and 2 or 3 sentences for paragraph 2.
- Most of the information goes into paragraph 3 and 4

Paragraph 1

Name and introduce the graph - paraphrase the key words from the question (one sentence)

The graph/table/pie chart/bar chart/diagram ...

- gives information about/on ...
- provides information about/on ...
- shows ...
- illustrates ...
- compares ...
- explains why ...
- describes ...
- draws the conclusion of (a survey) ...

Paragraph 2

Overview Write a general summary of what is shown (describe the main trends).

Overall

Body Paragraphs 3 and 4

Deciding how to organise the information is important here. How you organise your ideas will depend on the details given. There is no one right way but it must be logical and easy for the reader to follow.

Firstly identify specific features and group the data according to the features then describe each feature.

In paragraph 3 describe feature 1 – include some data

In paragraph 4 describe feature 2 – include some data

There is NO conclusion needed

Vocabulary for describing trends

NOUNS

a rise	a fall	a fluctuation
an increase	a decrease	a variation
a growth	a decline	a plateau
a peak	a dip	
a surge		

VERBS

to rise	to fall	to fluctuate
to increase	to decrease	to vary
to surge	to decline	to taper off
to grow	to drop	to plateau
to peak	to sink	to level out
to rocket	to dip	to remain stable
to soar	to dive	to stay constant
to surge	to plunge	to flatten out
to leap	to plummet	

ADVERBS

Big changes	Small changes
sharply	slightly
suddenly	gently
rapidly	gradually
abruptly	steadily

dramatically	modestly
significantly	marginally
considerably	minimally
markedly	
substantially	

ADJECTIVES

sharp	slight
sudden	gentle
rapid	gradual
abrupt	steady
dramatic	consistent
steep	modest
significant	marginal
considerable	minimal
marked	
substantial	
spectacular	

SOME USEFUL PHRASES

An upward trend, a downward trend

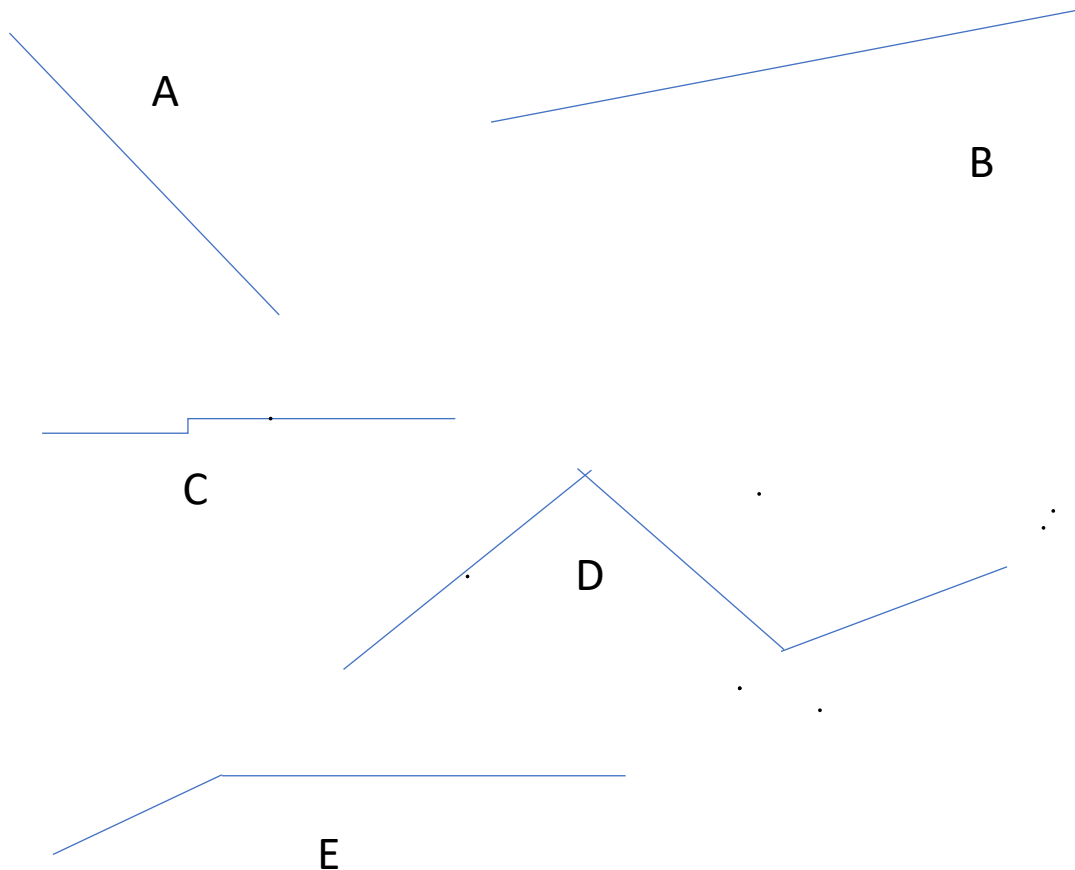
nearly a fifth, almost 10%, in region of 40%, more than a half,
over a quarter, around two thirds, more or less three quarters,
exactly one in ten, approximately a third

a small fraction, a small number, a small minority

a large portion, a significant majority

ACTIVITY 1

These simple line graphs represent house sales from January – December 2020. Write 2 sentences for each line describing the trend (1) using a noun and adjective (2) using a verb and adverb. A has been done as an example



A. There was a **sharp decrease** in house prices between January and December 2020.
House prices **fell sharply** between January and December 2020.

B _____

C _____

D _____

E _____

Language of Comparison

Comparatives (to compare 2 things)

_____ is greater than _____
 _____ is more expensive than _____
 _____ had a smaller increase than _____
 _____ is not as _____ as _____

Superlatives (to compare 3 things or more)

the highest /the lowest
 the most expensive/the least expensive

	Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
Words with one syllable	high	higher than	the highest
Words with three syllables or more	expensive	more expensive than	the most expensive
Words ending in Y	healthy	healthier	the healthiest
Words ending with vowel + consonant	hot	hotter	the hottest
Irregular words	good	better than	the best

Other useful phrases

Contrast

In contrast
 On the contrary
 _____ differs from _____

Similarities

Both X and Y have _____
 X and y are similar
 X is just as expensive as Y

It is clear that.....
 It is clearly evident that _____
 According to the bar chart _____

ACTIVITY 2 - Using the language of comparison

Natural Gas Consumption and Production, 2001

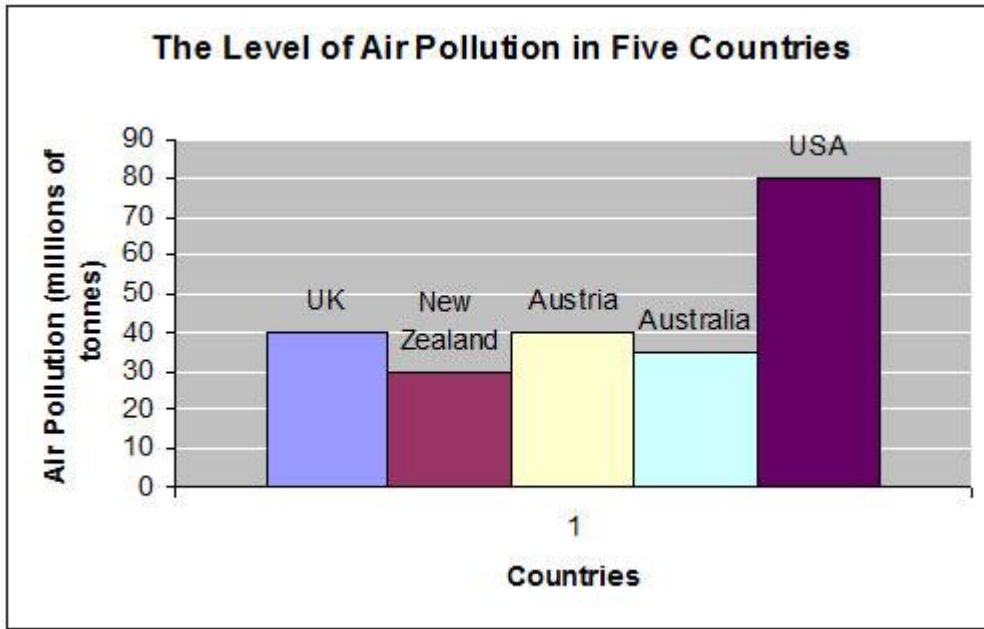
Country	Consumption*	Production*
The USA	588.9	500.0
The United Kingdom	86.1	97.3
The Former Soviet Union	7.1	0.4
The UAE	30.0	35.9
Australia	19.1	28.0
Japan	68.6	0
New Zealand	4.9	5.1
South Korea	18.9	0
China	24.3	25.0

Use the words in the box below to complete these sentences

1. New Zealand _____ the _____ gas at approximately 5 million tonnes.
2. The USA _____ the _____ gas at 500 million tonnes.
3. The USA was the _____ consumer and producer of gas at 600 million tonnes and 500 respectively.
4. The USA consumed and produced _____ natural gas than any other country.
5. China's consumption and production of oil were _____ at 24.3 and 25.0 _____.
6. The USA, the Former Soviet Union, Japan and South Korea all consumed more gas _____ they produced.
7. _____ Japan and _____ Korea produced any gas.
8. South Korea consumed 18.9 millions tonnes of gas; _____ it produced none.

similar	respectively	consumed	more	than	least
produced	biggest	although	most	neither	nor

ACTIVITY 3



Write 5 sentences to compare and contrast the level of air pollution in these 5 countries.

1. _____

2. _____

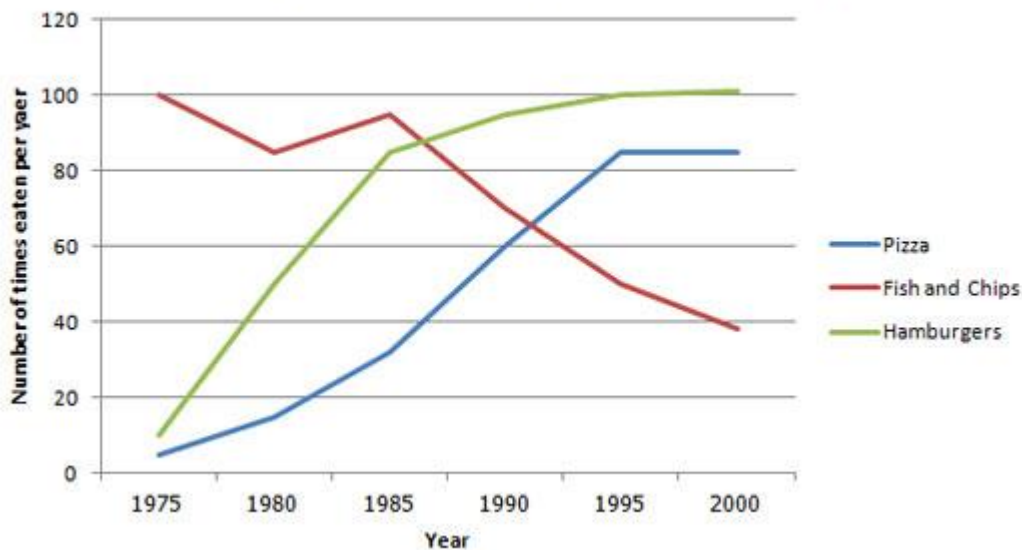
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

ACTIVITY 4

Consumption of Fast Food by Australian Teenagers



Using the verbs and adverbs in the box below, describe the key features of this graph.

decline	rise	stable	decrease	level off
fall	dip	increase	peak	grow
slightly	sharply	significantly	relatively	steadily

ACTIVITY 5 Practice Test

You should spend 20 minutes on this task

The table below shows the percentage use of four different fuel types to generate electricity in five Asian countries in 2005. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words

	Nuclear	Coal & lignite	Petroleum products	Hydro & wind	Other
Malaysia	19	61	2	5	13
Singapore	13	42	3	3	39
Thailand	0	3	36	19	42
South Korea	33	5	3	48	11
Japan	49	6	3	3	39

TEACHERS NOTES

The focus of this package is on 3 key elements of the IELTS writing Task 1

- The structure of the writing
- Language for describing trends in data – graphs, tables etc.
- Language for comparison

Although the focus is on the requirements of the IELTS exam, the lesson could be used in any other academic context.

There are many ways this package can be used:

- As a stand-alone package -The activities progress from guided to open ended so can be used as a complete package.
- In sections. There are also opportunities for differentiation.
- Online one to one or group teaching
- In person with PowerPoint presentation
- Homework package

Answers

Activity 1, 3, 4 and 5 - a variety of answers are appropriate

Activity 2

1. consumed/least
2. produced/most
3. biggest
4. more
5. similar/respectively
6. than
7. neither/nor
8. although