

Writing L4WLO2

Describing, Summarizing and Comparing Visual Data

Learning Outcome 2: Describe, summarize, and make relevant comparisons, in at least 150 words, of visual data such as graphs, charts, tables and processes

EXPLORING WRITTEN ENGLISH

LANGUAGE FOR WRITING Writing About Visual Data

When you write about visual data, start by saying what the graph or chart shows. Then write an overview of the key features of the graph or charts, which means pointing out the largest section of a pie chart or high points and low points in a line graph, for example. The rest of the text should then describe the patterns or trends in the graph or chart in more detail, for example, by saying how much something went up or down in a specific period. Make sure you use the correct words to describe the size of the sections of a pie chart or movements up or down in a line graph or bar chart. Finally, remember to use the correct tenses in your text.

A Read the sentences and look at the underlined phrases. Write *P* for the phrases you can use to describe pie charts and *G* for the phrases you can use to describe line graphs or bar charts.

1. The smallest section of the pie represents the number of people who can speak French. ____
2. The number of products sold increased significantly between 2022 and 2024. ____
3. The number of views these videos received has fallen dramatically over the last six months. ____
4. The amount of interest in this person reached a peak in March 2023. ____
5. The largest proportion of the people in the study read a book twice a week. ____

B Read the sentences. Check (✓) the ones that compare visual data. What do the other sentences describe?

1. The first chart shows a large fall in sales, whereas the second chart shows sales staying stable.
2. The amount of oil used rose more quickly than the amount of gas used.
3. This graph shows a sharper fall in number of students studying this subject than the second graph showing the number of students studying engineering.
4. The number of people doing this job remained the same for six years. __

EDITING PRACTICE Common Mistakes with Describing Visual Data

1. Make sure that you use the correct prepositions to give number data, especially when you're talking about how much something has increased or decreased by. You write: *Sales increased/decreased by 8%* or *There was an 8% increase/decrease in sales.*
2. Make sure that you use adjectives and adverbs correctly. For example, only use adjectives to describe nouns and use adverbs, which usually have *-ly* endings, to describe verbs.

C Think of an example of how you would use an adjective and an adverb to describe a trend that a chart or graph shows.

WRITING TASK

GOAL You are going to write text which describes and compares two charts or graphs.

PLANNING A Choose a topic or an area that interests you (e.g. the number of smartphones people own). Go online to find charts or graphs that compare this topic or area in your country and another country and shows how it has changed over time. Make notes on the trends in the two countries and how they are similar and different.
