

Writing Task 1 language bank

The language you need to describe charts, tables, processes and maps, with an example of each. Learn a few from every section rather than all of one.

Overview starters

Start the second paragraph with the big picture: the main trend and the main comparison, with no numbers.

Overall, ...	<i>Overall, car ownership rose steadily, while bus use declined.</i>
It is clear that ...	<i>It is clear that Country A had the highest figures throughout.</i>
The most striking feature is ...	<i>The most striking feature is the sharp fall in coal use after 2000.</i>
In general, ...	<i>In general, younger people spent more time online than older people.</i>

Verbs of change

rise · increase · grow · climb	<i>The number of visitors rose to 2 million.</i>
fall · decrease · decline · drop	<i>Sales fell by 15% in the second year.</i>
fluctuate	<i>Prices fluctuated between \$40 and \$55.</i>
remain stable · level off · stay at	<i>Unemployment remained stable at around 6%.</i>
peak at · reach a peak of	<i>Demand peaked at 900 units in July.</i>
hit a low of · bottom out at	<i>Exports hit a low of 120 tonnes in 1995.</i>
double · halve · triple	<i>The population of the town doubled.</i>

Nouns of change

Use a noun to vary your sentences: there + be + a/an + adjective + noun + in.

a rise · an increase · growth	<i>There was a sharp rise in online sales.</i>
a fall · a decrease · a decline · a drop	<i>There was a slight decline in rainfall.</i>
a fluctuation · a peak · a low	<i>Prices reached a peak in 2008.</i>

How big, how fast

Adverb after a verb, adjective before a noun.

dramatically · dramatic	<i>rose dramatically / a dramatic rise</i>
sharply · steeply · significantly	<i>fell sharply / a significant fall</i>
considerably · substantially	<i>increased considerably / a substantial increase</i>
steadily · gradually · moderately	<i>grew steadily / a gradual increase</i>
slightly · marginally	<i>dropped slightly / a marginal drop</i>

Prepositions with numbers

from ... to ...	rose from 20% to 35%
by	rose by 15 percentage points (the size of the change)
at	remained at 40% / peaked at 900
of	an increase of 15%
over / during	over the period / during the decade

Comparing

higher / lower than	Spending on food was higher than spending on rent.
twice / three times as many ... as	Twice as many men as women cycled to work.
the highest · the lowest · the largest share	Country C had the lowest figure in every year.
whereas · while	Sales in Asia rose, whereas sales in Europe fell.
compared with · in comparison with	Bus use was low compared with car use.
similarly · likewise · by contrast	By contrast, coal use fell steadily.

Approximating and proportions

just over · just under · nearly · roughly	just over half (= 51–53%)
a quarter · a third · half · three quarters	a third of households (= about 33%)
the majority · a minority	The majority of students (= over 50%) walked.
a small / large proportion of	A small proportion of the budget went on training.

Processes

Use the passive and sequence words. Don't describe trends.

First, ... · Next, ... · After that, ... · Finally, ...	First, the glass is collected and sorted by colour.
once · after being · before being	Once it has been crushed, the glass is melted.
is + past participle	The mixture is heated to 1,500°C.
The process consists of ... stages.	The process consists of six main stages.

Maps

Describe what changed, using the passive and location words.

was replaced by · was converted into	The farmland was replaced by houses.
was built · was demolished · was extended	A car park was built next to the station.
to the north / south of · next to · opposite	A new school opened to the north of the river.
the most noticeable change is ...	The most noticeable change is the loss of the forest.