

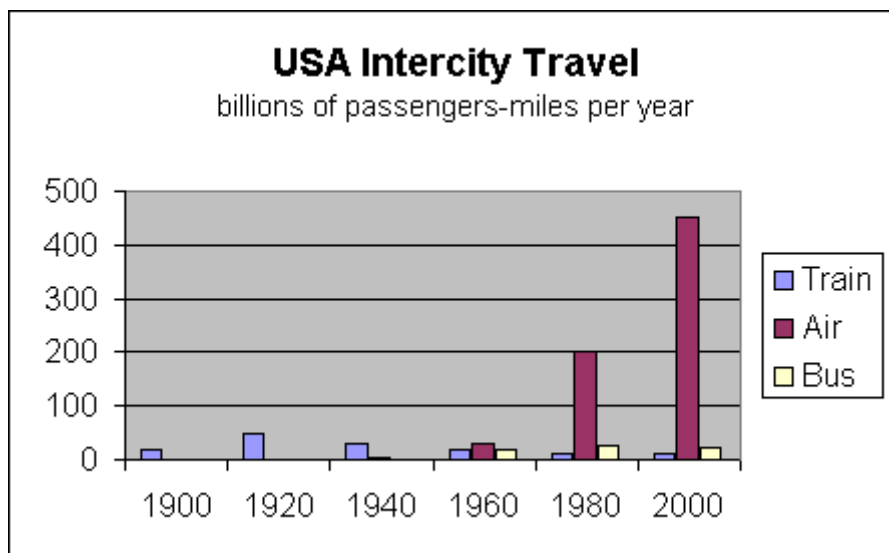
Writing Based on Graphs & Charts

Types of Graphs

You are likely to meet only two types of graphs in your everyday life. Even in IELTS or other intermediate English tests, this is also true - **time** and **comparison** graphs.

- In **time graphs** you have to describe changes over time.
- In **comparison graphs** you have to compare different items - countries, people, products, places, etc.

Here is a **time** graph.



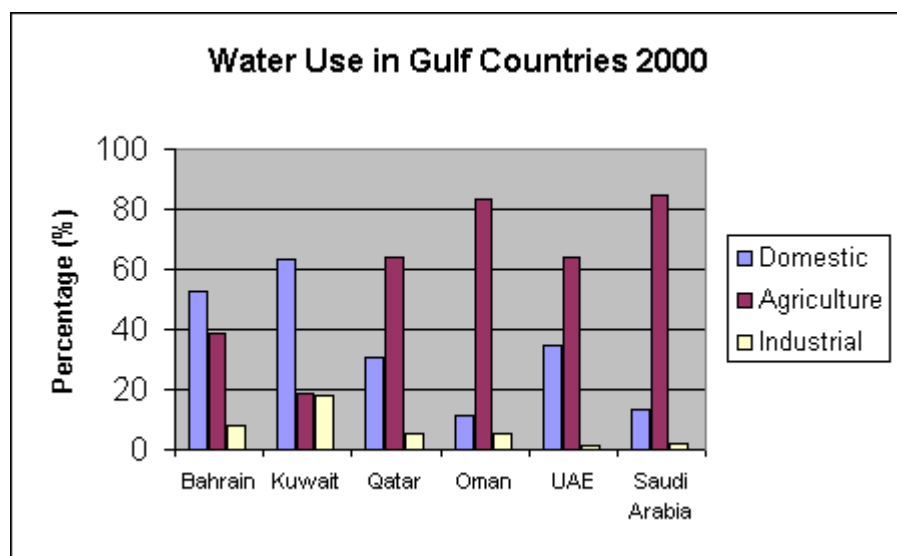
You have to compare different methods of transport used in the US over the last century - train, bus and air.

You could start with

- **train** (because it is the oldest method)
- by **air** (because it is the biggest method of public transport today.)
- However, **don't** start with bus because it is very small and not the main idea

The main trend with rail transport is that it rose to a peak in the 1920s and 1930s and then declined.

The main trend with air is that it started late, in the 1960s, but it has shot up to become by far the biggest carrier of passengers



You have to compare the amount of water used for domestic, agricultural and industrial purposes.

There are two ways to write about this graph:

- by **country** (make groups like Saudi Arabia and Oman which have mainly agricultural use, then Bahrain and Kuwait which have mainly domestic use, etc)
- by **use** (Agriculture, then Domestic, then Industrial.)

Start with Agriculture because it is the biggest user. **Group together** Saudi Arabia and Oman as the top users, and then group UAE and Qatar as the middle group of users, using 60% of water for agriculture. Finally mention Bahrain and Kuwait.

Your second paragraph should be about Domestic use, the use of water in the home, because it is the second biggest use. Start with Kuwait and Bahrain (**grouped together**) (more than 50%) and then write about Qatar and the UAE.

Writing about Graphs and Charts

You need to know some special **vocabulary** for describing graphs and charts.

If you are preparing for the IELTS exam, you know you have to write only

150 words; so it is important to show the variety of vocabulary you know.
Advice: Don't use the same word over and over again!

Prepositions

- between 2005 and 2006
- from 2005 to 2006
- **Common error:** from 2006 – 2008; in 2006 - 2008

Movement: Down

- fell
- declined
- dropped
- decreased
- sank
- went down
- plummeted

Movement: Up

- rose
- went up
- increased
- grew
- rocketed

Stronger Words (Use Carefully!)

- fell
- shot up
- rocketed
- surged
- plummeted
- plunged

Adverbs

- a little
- a lot
- dramatically
- gently
- gradually
- instantly
- markedly
- moderately
- quickly
- rapidly
- sharply
- significantly
- slightly
- slowly
- steadily
- steeply
- suddenly

No Movement

- remained steady
- were unchanged
- did not change
- remained constant
- remained stable
- stabilized
- levelled out

Tops and Bottoms

- reached a peak
- peaked
- reached their highest level
- fell to a low
- sank to a trough
- reached a bottom

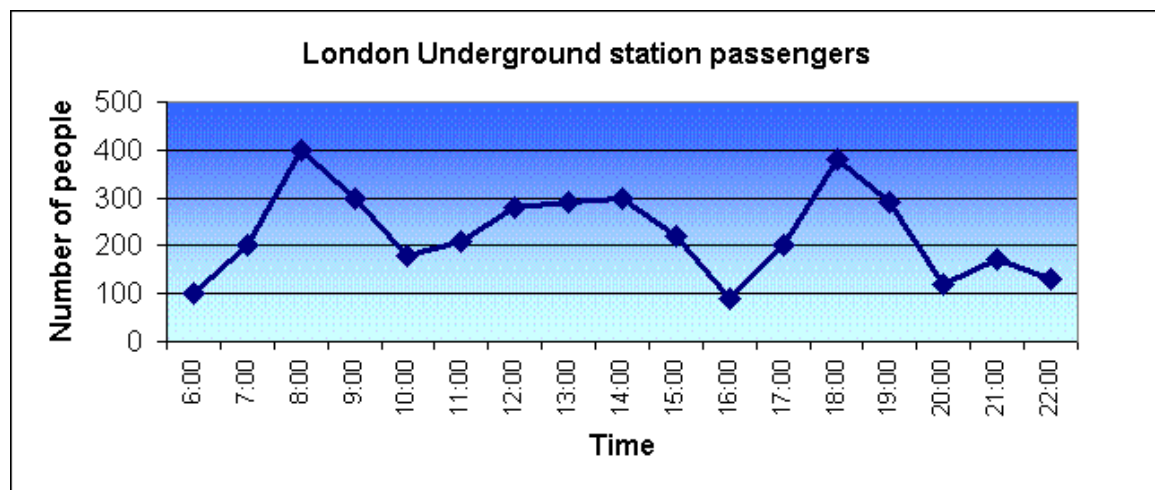
Noun phrases

- a sharp rise
- a significant increase
- a steady drop
- a rapid decline

Composition

- is made up of
- is composed of
- comprises
- consists of

Line Graph



Task 1 Look at the graph above, from the IELTS preparation text "Insight into IELTS" by Vanessa Jakeman and Clare McDowell, Cambridge University Press. Write a 150-word description of it.

Your version:

Task 2 The following is a sample description of the graph. Fill in each blank with a word or phrase.

London Underground Station Passenger Numbers

The graph shows the _____1_____ in the number of people at a London underground station over the course of a day.

The busiest time of the day is in the morning. There is a _____2_____ between 06:00 and 08:00, with 400 people using the station at 8 o'clock. After this the numbers _____3_____ to less than 200 at 10 o'clock. Between 11 am and 3 pm the number _____4_____, with a _____5_____ of just under 300 people using the station.

In the afternoon, numbers _____6_____, with less than 100 using the station at 4 pm. There is then a _____7_____ to a _____8_____ of 380 at 6pm. After 7 pm, numbers fall _____9_____, with only a _____10_____ again at 8pm, tailing off after 9 pm.

Overall, the graph shows that the station is most crowded in the early morning and early evening periods.

Tips

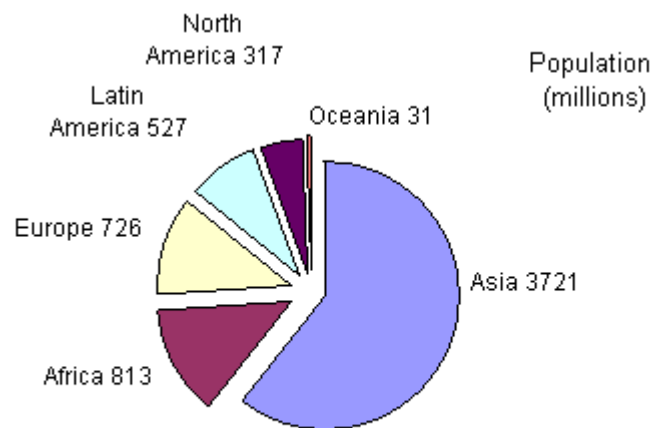
- Don't repeat verbs, if possible.
- Before you start to write, make a list of **synonyms** you need (words with the same meaning) for your own reference.
- See how many ways you can **rephrase** the title of the graph. Use one in the introduction and another in the conclusion)
- Be careful with prepositions. They can make a big difference in meaning. For example, "rose by" is very different from "rose to." Learn your verbs with the preposition that goes with them.

Pie Chart

Task 3 Gap Fill

about greatest far less behind almost quarter second biggest with

Pie-Chart: World Population 2001



The pie-chart gives information on the world population figures in 2001. Overall, _____ three-quarters of the world's population live in Asia and Africa.

Asia is by _____ the _____ region, _____ 3721 million people. The _____ largest area is Africa, with 813 million, less than a _____ of Asia's population. Europe has three quarters of a billion people. Together, Latin America and North America have _____ 840 million. Finally, Australia and New Zealand have _____ than 31 million.

As can be seen, the _____ concentration of the world's population is in Asia, with Africa far _____.

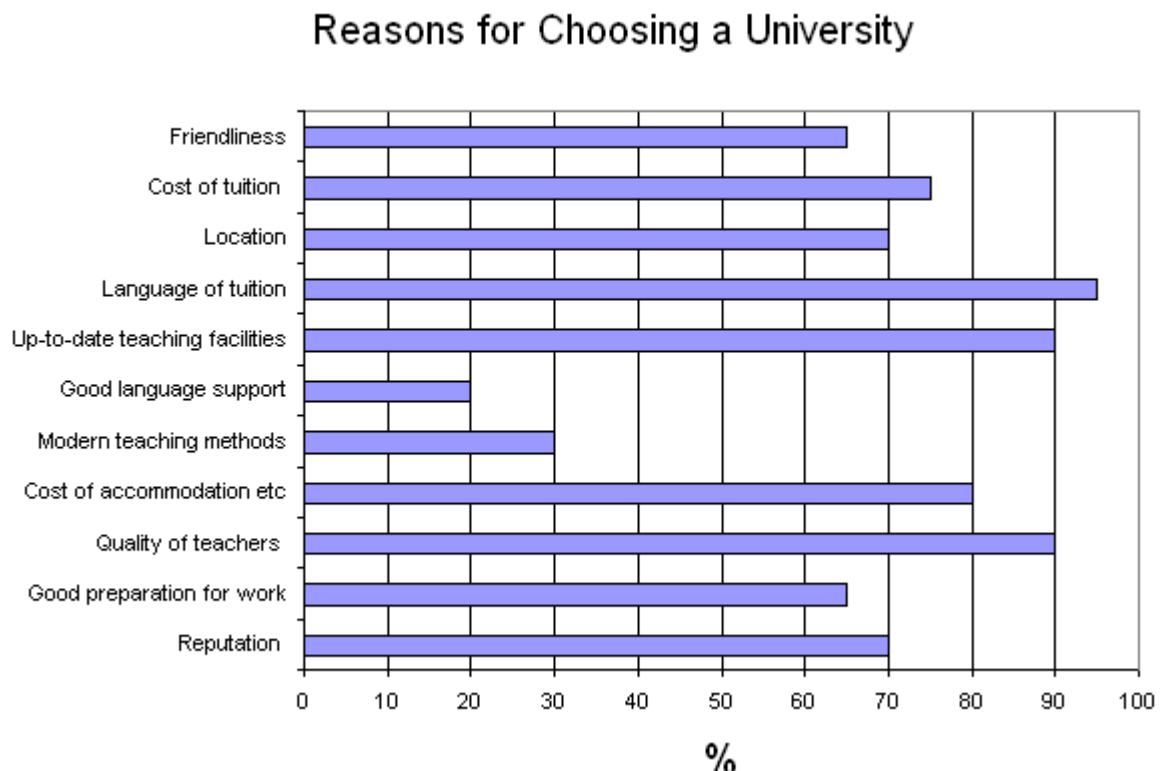
Bar Chart

Task 4 Unscramble the sentences

Here are the fifteen sentences. Rearrange them to produce an appropriate description for the bar chart shown. You will have to delete some, put them into paragraphs and add some extra or linking words.

Reasons for Choosing a University

How do foreign students choose which university to go to in the UK?



1. The chart shows 11 _____ first year students from overseas chose a particular university.
2. Good language support comes _____ at 20 percent.
3. Language of tuition is top of the survey _____ 95%.
4. At 95 percent of the sample, Language of tuition is the main _____ a university.
5. The survey of 1,000 first year overseas students _____ at universities in the UK.
6. Good language support at 20% is the factor _____ least when making a choice about which university to attend.
7. Language of tuition _____ a reason by nearly five times as many students as Good language support, at 95% and 20% respectively.
8. The top three reasons are Language of tuition, Quality of teachers, Up-to-date teaching facilities, _____.
9. According to the graph, the main reason _____ the language of tuition.
10. The various factors _____ into two groups, namely those related to teaching and non-teaching related.
11. While around 95 percent of the students gave the language of tuition as the main reason for choosing a university, _____ modern teaching methods.
12. The cost of accommodation at 80 percent _____ the cost of tuition at around 75 percent.
13. Eighty percent of the sample mentioned the cost of accommodation as a reason for choosing a university _____ for the cost of tuition.
14. _____ the cost of accommodation and the cost of tuition than Location at 80% and 75% respectively.
15. Good language support was stated by only 20 percent of the sample as a reason for choosing a university _____ at 30 percent.

Task 2 Suggested Answers

1. **fluctuation**
2. **sharp increase**
3. **drop quickly**
4. **rises**
5. **plateau**
6. **decline**
7. **rapid rise**
8. **peak**
9. **significantly**
10. **slight increase**

Task 3 Suggested Answer

The pie-chart gives information on the world population figures in 2001. Overall, **almost** three-quarters of the world's population live in Asia and Africa.

Asia is by **far** the **biggest** region, **with** 3721 million people. The **second** largest area is Africa, with 813 million, less than a **quarter** of Asia's population. Europe has three quarters of a billion people. Together, Latin America and North America have **about** 840 million. Finally, Australia and New Zealand have **less** than 31 million.

As can be seen, the **greatest** concentration of the world's population is in Asia, with Africa far **behind**.

Task 4 Suggested Answers

Reasons for Choosing a University

The chart shows 11 **reasons why** first year students from overseas chose a particular university.

The survey of 1,000 first year overseas students **was carried out** at universities in the UK. The top three reasons are language of tuition, quality of teachers, up-to-date

teaching facilities, **respectively**. Language of tuition **comes top** of the survey at 95%. Another important reason is teaching facilities. About 90% of students mentioned this as a reason. The third top reason **was** the quality of the staff. This also **accounted for** 90% of student choices. The reputation of the university was also **a crucial factor**. About 70% of the respondents picked this as a reason for their choice of school. Non-teaching related reasons were also important. Cost was **a major factor**. More than three-quarters of the students **said** that cost of tuition was an important reason for choosing a college. **A similar number** picked a college based on accommodation costs. The friendliness of a university **was given as a reason by** two-thirds of students. Some factors were **relatively unimportant**. These included good language support, at only 20% of students, and modern teaching methods, at 30%.

In conclusion, the reasons for choosing a particular university **can be divided into** teaching-related reasons and non-teaching reasons, but the **most important factors** are language, the quality of the staff and facilities, and cost.

Web Resources

Writing about Graphs

<http://www.admc.hct.ac.ae/hd1/english/graphs/#ex>

Line Graph Glossary: Animated graphs with descriptive language

http://adw.hct.ac.ae/site_ilc/sites_ielts/graphsite/index.htm