
IELTS Academic Writing Masterclass

By Beyond Band 6



Module 3: WT1 Examples and Analysis

Lesson 1: Line Graphs

Language Analysis

Before we move on to a different line graph, I want to go back to the graph we looked at in the previous module. Read my answer again, this time with some language highlighted for you:

*The graph shows how many people visited two new websites each day for a period of 15 days. Overall, Pop Parade **had more visits than** Music Choice on the majority of days and both websites **had their highest number of visits** within the final few days of the period shown.*

*During the first nine days, the number of visits to Pop Parade **declined significantly**, from around 120,000 to around 40,000. In contrast, visits to Music Choice **remained relatively stable** but **significantly lower**, usually between 20,000 and 40,000 visits, with a high of 60,000 on Day 3.*

*Both websites generally **had more visits after** Day 9. Visits to Pop Parade **rose dramatically** to around 150,000 on Day 11, **before falling** back to about 90,000 on Days 12 and 13. These were the only days it **got less visits than** Music Choice, which had around 110,000 visits on both days. Visitors to Music Choice **reached a peak** of just over 120,000 on Day 14, **before declining** back down to 70,000 on the final day, while visits to Pop Parade **increased** again to over 160,000 on Days 14 and 15.'*

What language structures are highlighted?

- **Green highlight** = _____
- **Yellow highlight** = _____
- **Blue highlight** = _____

Answers on the next page ...

Answers

- **Green highlight** = Comparisons: Past Simple Verbs + Comparison Structures
- **Yellow highlight** = Describing trends: Past Simple Verbs (+ some adverbs)
- **Blue highlight** = Subordinate clauses: After a comma, preposition + -ing

Describing Trends

You will have enough language to describe trends by remembering the verbs and adverbs in this table:

Trend	Verbs	Adverbs
Up	increased rose	dramatically sharply considerably significantly steadily gradually slightly
Down	decreased declined fell dropped	

In addition, here are a few more useful phrases for **describing trends**:

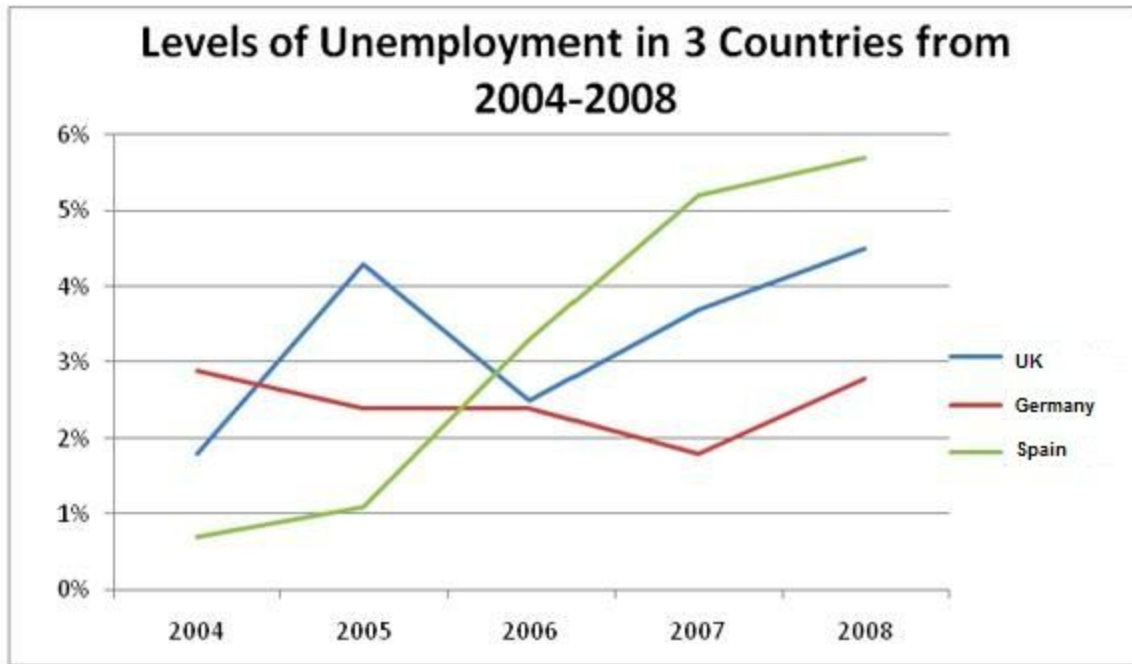
- Stay the same = remained (fairly / relatively) stable
- Up and down = fluctuated considerably / significantly / slightly
- Maximum = reached a high point / reached a peak
- Minimum = reached a low point

IMPORTANT: This language is ONLY useful for describing trends / changes over time. If the graph you are describing does NOT show a time range (e.g. 9am to 5pm, January to December, 2004 to 2008, etc.) then do NOT use this language!

Now let's try and use this language to describe a different line graph:

The graph below gives information about levels of unemployment in three countries from 2004 to 2008.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



Can you identify the key features of this graph AND write an introduction / overview? (Answers on the next page)

Answers

Key Features

- 3 countries - 3 completely different trends
- UK and Spain finish with higher levels in 2008 than 2004
- Germany highest in 2004, UK in 2005, Spain in 2006-08

Paragraph 1: Introduction and Overview

The graph illustrates unemployment levels in the UK, Germany and Spain between 2004 and 2008. Overall, the graph shows that the three countries had completely different trends, although both the UK and Spain had higher levels of unemployment at the end of the period shown than at the start.'

Test Yourself

Can you complete Paragraph 2 below with language for describing trends and making comparisons? (Answers on the next page!)

'Levels of unemployment in Spain, the UK and Germany followed very different trends. Spain had the _____ level of unemployment in 2004 and 2005 at around 1%, but this _____ to the _____ level of over 5% in 2007 and 2008. In contrast, the unemployment level in the UK _____ over the five years. It _____ from just under 2% in 2004 to over 4% in 2005, when it was _____ than both Spain and Germany. It then _____ back down to around 2.5% in 2006 before _____ again to 4.5% in 2008. Finally, Germany had the _____ level of unemployment in 2004 at just under 3%. It _____ over the next four years, reaching a _____ of under 2% in 2007. In 2008 it _____ back up to roughly the same level as in 2004, but at this point significantly _____ than both the UK and Spain.'

Answers

Paragraph 2: Key Features and Details

'Levels of unemployment in Spain, the UK and Germany followed very different trends. Spain had **the lowest level** of unemployment in 2004 and 2005 at around 1%, but this **rose dramatically** to **the highest level** of over 5% in 2007 and 2008. In contrast, the unemployment level in the UK **fluctuated significantly** over the five years. It **rose** from just under 2% in 2004 to over 4% in 2005, when it was **higher than** both Spain and Germany. It then **fell** back down to around 2.5% in 2006 **before increasing** again to 4.5% in 2008. Finally, Germany had **the highest level** of unemployment in 2004 at just under 3%. It **declined gradually** over the next four years, **reaching a low point** of under 2% in 2007. In 2008 it **rose** back up to roughly the same level as in 2004, but at this point significantly **lower than** both the UK and Spain.'

- **Making Comparisons** - Note the use of both comparatives (higher than, lower than) and superlatives (the lowest level, the highest level)
- **Describing Trends** - Note the variation between just a verb (rose, fell) and verb + adverb (rose dramatically, fluctuated significantly, declined gradually). Also the use of -ing forms (before increasing, reaching a low point).

Your Turn

Using everything you have learnt so far in this course, can you complete a Task 1 essay for the graph shown on the next page on your own? Here are a couple of tips:

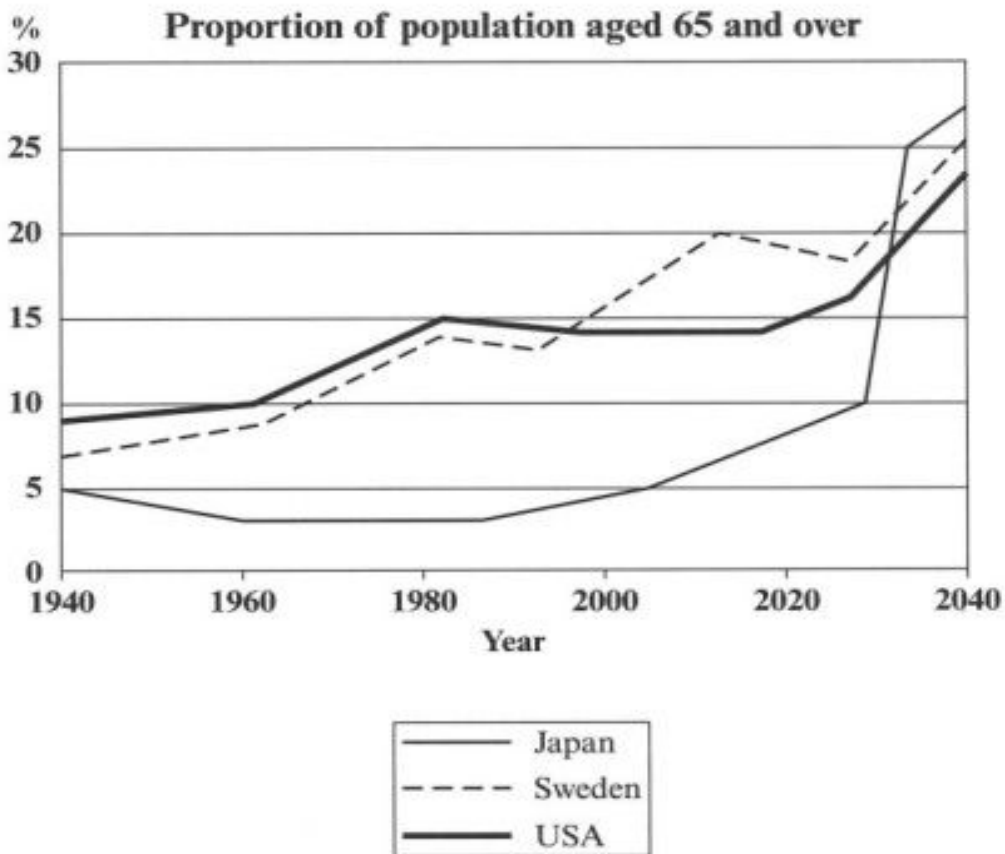
- The trends for the USA and Sweden are very similar but Japan is different, so describe the USA and Sweden in Paragraph 2 and Japan in Paragraph 3.
- The graph shows trends until 2040, so you will need to use language for future trends; 'is expected / projected / forecast to'.
- I've started each paragraph for you, like this _____.

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The graph below shows the proportion of the population aged 65 and over between 1940 and 2040 in three different countries.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Write Your Answer

Key Features:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The graph illustrates _____

The proportion of people aged 65 and over in Sweden and the USA _____

In contrast, the elderly population of Japan _____

Answers

Key Features:

- Sweden and the USA are very similar - rise from under 10% to around 25%
- Sweden higher than US from 1998 onwards
- Japan lower than the other two (under 10%) until 2030s
- Japan increases dramatically in the 2030s and ends the highest

The graph illustrates the percentage of the population aged 65 and over in Japan, Sweden and the USA from 1940 to 2040. Overall, the proportion of the elderly populations of Sweden and the USA rose from 1940 to the present day and the percentage in all three countries is projected to increase significantly in the future.

The proportion of people aged 65 and over in Sweden and the USA follow very similar trends. The percentage in both countries was under 10% in 1940, rising gradually to about 15% in the late-1990s. At this point the proportion of people aged over 65 became greater in Sweden than in the US, increasing to around 20% at present. It is expected to continue rising to about 25% by 2040 whereas the proportion in the USA is forecast to remain stable at just under 15% until around 2020. After this it is projected to increase significantly to about 23% in 2040.

In contrast, the elderly population of Japan actually declined over the first 20 years of the period shown from 5% to just 3% and then remained stable at this low level until the mid-1980s. After this it started rising gradually and is expected to continue doing so until it reaches 10% in 2030. It is then forecast to increase dramatically to 27% by 2040, higher than both Sweden and the US.

Answer Analysis

- **228 Words** (Again, well over the *minimum* word count of 150!)
- **3 Paragraphs:** 1. Introduction and Overview 2. Sweden and the USA 3. Japan
- **10 Sentences:** 1. Introduction 2. Overview 3-10. Key Features + Supporting Data

Notes

- In the key features I wrote the subject as 'Sweden', 'the USA' or 'Japan'. This is incorrect! I just wrote them like this to keep my notes short! Remember - write your key features on the question paper, under the graph.
- In the essay I wrote the correct subjects. For example;
'the proportion of people aged 65 and over in Sweden and the USA' or
'the elderly population of Japan'
However, it is better not to keep repeating the same subject, so I shortened it to *'the percentage'*, *'the proportion'* or *'it'* when possible. Using *'it'* as a subject is a particularly good idea as it will increase your score for Coherence and Cohesion: Using *'it'* makes an essay more cohesive because it refers back to the previous subject. See the **blue highlighting** in the essay.
- I've also highlighted a variety of phrases for future trends **in green**.
- And again, language for describing trends **in yellow**.

Check Your Essay

1. Did you use the correct subjects?
2. Did you use *'it'* as a subject when appropriate?
3. Did you use a variety of phrases for future trends?
4. Did you use a variety of language for describing trends?

That's it for line graphs! In the next lesson, we will look at charts in detail.