

Chapter

**4**

*IELTS Writing Task 1:  
Academic Module*

The section of Writing Task 1 is different in IELTS Academic examination and IELTS General Training examination. This chapter intends to familiarise candidates with Writing Task 1 of IELTS Academic examination. In this module, test-takers for academic purpose are required to write a short description based on some given material. The material may be presented in diversified forms (diagram, table, chart, etc.). Pie charts, line charts, tables and bar graphs are more preferable than flow charts, maps and mixed graphs.

Material Types	
table	表格
line chart	线形图
pie chart	饼状图
bar graph	柱形图
flow chart	流程图
map	地图
mixed graph	组合图表
...	.....

## 1 IELTS Writing Task 1: Academic Module

This writing task is designed to assess your ability to organise, present and possibly compare data; to describe the stages of a process or a procedure; to describe an object or event or sequence of events; or to explain how something works.

You are supposed to spend a few minutes reading and understanding the figures in the chart before you begin to write. Before writing, you should

- ◆ read the instructions carefully—the instructions reveal what is going to be discussed and what is the focus of your writing.

- ◆ read the title of the chart carefully, if there is one—the title points out what is being shown in the chart and keeps you on the right track.

- ◆ learn about different types of charts—whether it is a table, line chart, pie chart, bar graph, flow chart or a map.

- ◆ distinguish between static chart and dynamic chart—static chart shows the situation at one point in time in which simple tense is needed (present tense or past tense) while dynamic chart shows the change of a situation over time in which a variety of tenses are used (simple past or past perfect, etc.).

- ◆ identify the important information in the figure—not all the information is needed in your writing. It is good for you to choose the most important or the most representative number in the figure.

## 2 Language Knowledge

The following words, structures and sentences will be very useful when describing different charts. A higher band depends on your familiarity with them, so it is strongly suggested that you practise and master the usage of them.

## 2.1 Useful Words to Express Different Trends

Diction refers to the choice and use of words. A learner who has studied English for a few years may have a large vocabulary. He should learn to make choices from his vocabulary to express himself. Sometimes he may choose the wrong words, but more often the words he chooses are not entirely wrong, but improper, inexact, or too stale to be interesting. It is therefore necessary for him to have a basic knowledge of diction, of the rules that direct the choice of words, so that the essay he composes will be more natural.

For example, instead of mechanically making use of *“increase”* or *“decrease”*, there are some other words or expressions that can be used to refer to the same meaning, that is, some other verbs or verb phrases, nouns or noun phrases, or even adjectives and adverbs can be skilfully exploited to express *“up”* or *“down”* (e.g. *“go up”* and *“skyrocket”* having almost the same meaning as *“increase”* in certain situations). The synonym replacement makes your writing more natural and flexible, giving the essay grader an impression that the test-taker has mastered a large English vocabulary, and thus helping to get a higher grade.

### Verbs or verb phrases to express “up” and “down”

Upwards	Downwards
increase	decrease
go up	go down
rise	fall
grow	decline
jump	plunge
skyrocket	slump
rocket	descend
climb	plummet
soar	drop
shoot up	diminish
leap	slide
surge	collapse
be on the rise	abate

### Nouns to express “up” and “down”

Upwards	Downwards
increase	decrease
rise	fall
growth	decline
jump	slump
leap	drop
soar	collapse

**Adjectives and adverbs to express “small” or “slow” changes**

Adjectives	Adverbs
slow	slowly
gradual	gradually
marginal	marginally
slight	slightly
insignificant	insignificantly
minimal	minimally

**Other words to express “small” changes or “no” change**

Verbs	Verb Phrases
stabilise	level off
fluctuate	remain constant/steady

**Adjectives and adverbs to express “big” or “fast” changes**

Adjectives	Adverbs
sharp	sharply
steep	steeply
rapid	rapidly
dramatic	dramatically
sudden	suddenly
significant	significantly
considerable	considerably
marked	markedly
remarkable	remarkably
wild	wildly
obvious	obviously
apparent	apparently

**Adjectives and adverbs for other changes**

Adjectives	Adverbs
steady	steadily
continuous	continuously
general	generally
occasional	occasionally
final	finally
initial	initially

**2.2 Useful Sentence Structures to Describe Charts**

The following sentence structures will be very useful when learning about how to describe a graph. Only when you master the “language” of graphs and learn to write “model” answers can you get a satisfactory score in your writing.

**Sentence structure 1:**

From Based on As is shown in According to As can be seen from	the chart, the graph, the bar, the line, the diagram, the table, the figure, the statistics, the information,	it can be concluded it can be deduced it can be inferred it can be seen it can be estimated	that...
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**Sentence structure 2:**

The figure is The percentage is The number is	exactly precisely just practically more or less nearly approximately almost	the same as	that in 2015.
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**Sentence structure 3:**

The figure The percentage The number	has nearly has almost has more than	doubled tripled quadrupled	compared with as compared with as against	that in 2015.
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**Sentence structure 4:**

The figure The percentage The number	has dropped has increased has decreased	almost more than about approximately markedly dramatically wildly	two and a half times four times six times 150 times	compared with that in 2015.
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**Sentence structure 5:**

There is There was There has been	a slight a marginal a small a gradual a slow a sharp	fluctuation rise increase decrease fall drop reduction	between 1990 and 2000. from 1990 to 2000. since 1990.
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**Sentence structure 6:**

March 2015 That autumn	saw experienced witnessed	the highest rate the lowest rate the first peak the lowest point its nadir	in history.
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**Sentence structure 7:**

The market The economy	saw experienced witnessed	an upward trend a downward trend	beginning in	January 2015.
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Apart from the structures introduced above, the following sentence structures can also be of great help to you.

The table shows the changes in the number of... over the period from... to...

The bar chart illustrates that...

The graph provides some interesting data regarding...

This is a curve graph which describes the trend of...

As can be seen from the diagram, great changes have taken place in...

The graph, presented in a pie chart, shows the general trend in...

As can be seen from the graph, the two curves show the fluctuation of...

In the 3 years spanning from 2010 through 2013...

The number of... remained steady/stable from... (month/year) to... (month/year)

The number sharply went up to...

The percentage of... stayed the same between... and...

The percentage of... is slightly larger/smaller than that of...

The graphs show a threefold increase in the number of...

The number decreased year by year while another number increased steadily.

The situation reached a peak of/a high point at...

The figures/situation bottomed out in...

From... to..., the rate of decrease slowed down.

### 3 Writing on Different Material Types

#### 3.1 Table

A table is a two-way tabulation of the relations between correlates, or in other words, it is a set of data arranged in rows and columns. When describing a table, you should firstly read the major information in the title of the table (if there is a title), examine what the row and the column represents respectively, study how the figures correlate with each other, and then search for the most

significant figures in the table. It is also very important that you should understand the “language” of the table and learn to write “model” answers.

### Example 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

*The table below shows the proportion of different categories of families living in poverty in Australia in 1999.*

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

You should write at least 150 words.

Household type	Proportion of people from each household type living in poverty
single elderly people	6% (54,000)
elderly couple	4% (48,000)
single, no children	19% (359,000)
couple, no children	7% (211,000)
sole parent	21% (232,000)
couple with children	12% (933,000)
<b>all households</b>	<b>11% (1,837,000)</b>

### Brainstorm before you write:

**Instructions:** From the instructions, you know that the writing centres on the proportion of different categories of families living in poverty. You are supposed to present, and compare the important data in the table.

**Title:** There is no title for the table.

**Type of chart:** It is a table displaying a lot of significant or insignificant statistics in order to show a whole picture of a situation. The information shown in the table is arranged in vertical columns and horizontal rows. The left column is about different family types and the right column is about the percentage of each household type living in poverty.

**Static or dynamic chart:** It is static, since it is about the situation in Australia in 1999, and as a result, past tense and present tense are possibly used in this writing.

**Important information:** The highest figures: single, no children (19%, 359,000) and sole parent (21%, 232,000); the lowest figures: elderly couple (4%, 48,000) and single elderly people (6%, 54,000); average: all households (11%, 1,837,000).

**Sample Writing:**

The table gives a report of the different types of families who were living in poverty in Australia in 1999.

On average, 11% of all households, being up to almost two million people, were in this position. However, the number of families which consisted of only one parent or a single adult almost doubled the proportion, with 21% and 19% respectively.

Couples generally tended to be better off, with lower poverty levels for couples without children (7%) than those with children. It is noticeable that for both types of households, the percentage of couple with children was higher and the percentage of couple without children was lower than the average proportion of households living in poverty at this time.

Elderly people were generally less likely to be poor. Even though the trend favoured elderly couples (only 4%) rather than single elderly people (6%), it was worth noticing that both numbers were much lower compared with other types of households.

In conclusion, it suggested that households of single adults and those with children were more likely to be living in poverty than those of couples.

**Example 2**

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

*The table below gives information about changes in modes of travel in England between 1985 and 2000.*

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

You should write at least 150 words.

**Average distance in miles travelled per person per year, by modes of travel**

Modes of travel	1985	2000
Walking	255	237
Bicycle	51	41
Car	3,199	4,806
Local bus	429	274
Long distance bus	54	124
Train	289	366
Taxi	13	42
Other	450	585
<b>All modes</b>	<b>4,740</b>	<b>6,475</b>



**Brainstorm before you write:**

**Instructions:** From the instructions, you know that the writing centres on the change of distance travelled by British people between 1985 and 2000. You are supposed to present, compare and summarise the important data in the table.

**Title:** The title shows that the table is about the average miles travelled by British people in different modes in 1985 and 2000.

**Type of chart:** Table. The left column is a list of different modes of travel; the middle and the right column show the average distance travelled by British people in 1985 and 2000 respectively.

**Static or dynamic chart:** It is dynamic, since it shows the change of travelling distance from 1985 to 2000. Simple past and past perfect are possibly used in this writing.

**Important information:** The highest figures: total distance travelled by each person in 1985 and 2000 (4,740 vs. 6,475). The average distance travelled by modes of walking, bicycle and local bus decreased from 1985 to 2000, while the average distance by modes of car, long distance bus, train and taxi increased over the same period. Compared with taxis and bicycles, British people preferred walking, local buses, long distance buses and trains in their daily life.

**Your Writing:**


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**3.2 Line Chart**

A line chart or line graph is a type of chart which displays information as a series of data points connected by straight line segments. Its measurement points are ordered (typically by their x-axis value) and joined with straight line segments. A line chart is often used to visualise a trend in data over intervals of time—a time series—thus the line is often drawn chronologically.

A line chart is found in many fields since it is an effective way to show the developing trend or change of some particular things, to reveal how one thing is affected by another, and to demonstrate how things are going by the rises and falls.

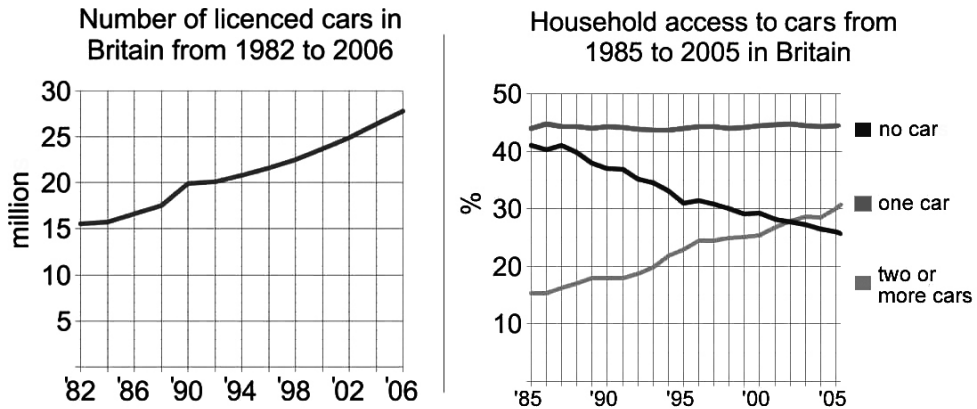
**Example 3**

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

*The graphs show the number of licenced cars in Britain from 1982 to 2006, and household access to cars from 1985 to 2005.*

*Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information shown below.*

You should write at least 150 words.



**Brainstorm before you write:**

**Instructions:** According to the instructions, your writing should include two aspects. One is about the total number of cars in Britain from 1982 to 2006, and the other is about the situation of household cars from 1985 to 2005. You are supposed to present, compare and summarise the important data in the graphs.

**Title:** There are two titles which respectively explain the change of the number of licenced cars from 1982 to 2006 and household access to cars over that period of time.

**Type of chart:** They are line charts, which provide continuing data and indicate how things are going by the rises and falls of time. The left graph shows the trend of licenced car numbers in Britain during the 25 years. The three lines in the right graph represent the situation of household access to cars in that period of time.

**Static or dynamic chart:** Dynamic, since the two graphs represent the development of car cultures in Britain for about 25 years. Simple past and past perfect tenses are recommended in your writing.

**Important information:** In the first graph, the number of licenced cars rose steadily from around 15 million in 1982 to roughly 28 million in 2006, but it was noticeable that the car number rose significantly from 1988 to 1990 and remained constant during the next two years from 1990 to 1992. It could be found from the second graph that the proportion of households having two or more cars almost doubled from 15% to 31%, while the proportion of households having no car went down gradually during this period of time. One point that had to be mentioned was that the proportion of households having one car remained the same.

**Sample Writing:**

The graphs show the total number of cars licenced, and the percentage of households with access to cars in Britain, over two and a half decades from the 1980s.

The number of licenced cars rose steadily from 15.5 million in 1982 to 27.8 million in 2006, an 80% rise. The most significant rise was from 1988 to 1990 after which the number remained constant for two years, before increasing as before.

This substantial increase was reflected in the proportion of households having access to two or more cars. In 1985, 41% of households did not have access to a car, and the figure had decreased sharply to 25% by 2005. The proportion of households having access to one car remained stable at around 45%. In contrast, the proportion of households with access to two or more cars almost doubled from 15% to 31%. This proportion exceeded that for households with no car in around 2002, and in 2005 the difference between these proportions was approximately 7% in favour of families with two or more cars.

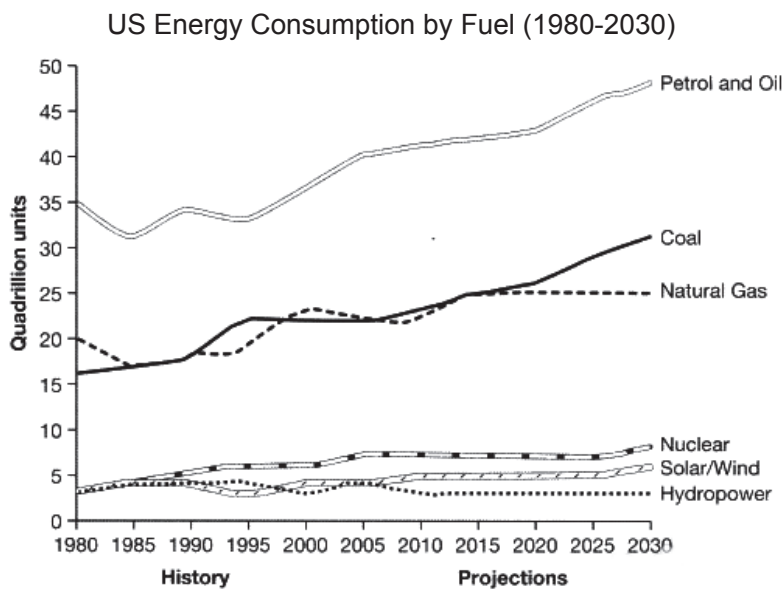
**Example 4**

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

*The graph below gives information from a 2008 report about consumption of energy in the US since 1980 with projections until 2030.*

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

You should write at least 150 words.



**Brainstorm before you write:**

**Instructions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Type of chart:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Static or dynamic chart:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Important information:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Sample Writing:**

The graph shows energy consumption in the US from 1980 to 2015, and predicts the energy consumption in the next 15 years.

Petrol and oil are the dominant fuel sources throughout this period, with 35 quadrillion (35q) units used in 1980, rising to about 42q in 2015. Despite some initial fluctuation, from 1995 there was a steady increase, and this is expected to reach 47q in 2030.

The consumption of natural gas and coal is similar over the period. From 20q and 16q respectively in 1980, gas showed an initial fall, reaching the lowest point at 17q in 1985 and went up gradually from then on, while coal increased mildly from 1980. One point that is worthy to be mentioned is that the two fuels equaled between 1985 and 1990. Consumption has fluctuated since 1990 but both now reach 24q. Coal is predicted to increase steadily to 31q in 2030, whereas after 2014, gas will remain stable at 25q.

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In 1980, energy from nuclear, hydro- and solar/wind power was almost equal at only 4q. Nuclear and solar/wind have risen steadily over the years and are expected to reach 7q and 5q respectively by the year of 2030. After slight increases, hydropower has fallen back to the 1980 figure in 2010 and it is expected to maintain this level until 2030, while the others will rise slightly after 2025.

### 3.3 Pie Chart

A pie chart (or a circle graph) is a circular chart divided into sectors, illustrating numerical proportion. In a pie chart, the arc length of each sector (and consequently its central angle and area), is proportional to the quantity it represents. While it is named for its resemblance to a pie which has been sliced, there are variations on the way it can be presented.

Pie charts are very widely used in such fields as the business world and the mass media, which visually and vividly show how a part of something relates to the whole.

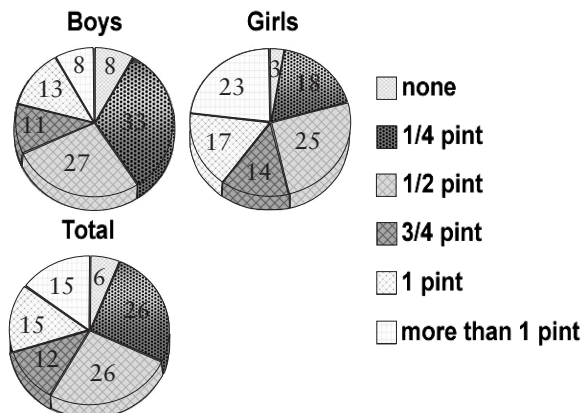
#### Example 5

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

*The charts show the quantity of milk, in pints, consumed daily by children in the UK in 1997. Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information shown below.*

You should write at least 150 words.

**Quantity of milk consumed daily by children in the UK in 1997**



#### Brainstorm before you write:

**Instructions:** From the instructions, you should write about the daily consumption of milk by British children in 1997. You are supposed to present and compare the important data in the chart.

**Title:** The title states clearly that the chart shows the quantity of milk consumed by British children,