

Useful phrases for IELTS Writing Task One

With a partner, brainstorm at least two phrases into each of the categories below.

Explaining what the task shows (in the first sentence of the essay)

Explaining the paragraph structure

Selecting the most important information/ Giving overall information

Mentioning parts of what the page shows (= Giving details about the graph etc)

Upward trends

Downward trends

Going up and down

Not changing

Big changes

Small changes

Comparing

Contrasting

Sequencing

Starting the second main paragraph (= the second paragraph of the body of the text)

Conclusion/ Summary (only if you can't find another way of reaching 150 words)

Compare your answers as a class or with the suggested answers.

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Written by Alex Case for UsingEnglish.com © 2012/ 2022

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Suggested answers

Many other phrases are possible, so please check if you wrote something different.

Explaining what the task shows

The table/ pie chart/ bar chart/ line graph/ map/ flow chart/ diagram/ illustration/ figures...

... shows/ represents/ gives data on/ presents statistics on/ compares...

... information/ data/ figures...

The vertical axis/ y axis is...

The horizontal axis/ x axis represents...

Explaining the paragraph structure

These two sources of information will be examined in turn.

I will start by explaining.../ First, I will look at.../ First of all, I will focus on.../ Firstly, I will describe...

In the next paragraph I will.../ and the following paragraph will.../ and then I will.../ ... and after that I will.../ and the final paragraph will be on...

The information will be divided into... and... and looked at in that order.

Selecting the most important information/ Giving overall information

... stands out (because...)

The first thing you notice looking at the graph is...

The biggest/ largest/ most noticeable/ most important/ most obvious + difference/ similarity/ trend is...

Overall,...

The main trend...

Over the entire period shown,...

It can be said that in general,...

Mentioning parts of what the page shows

The left-hand column/ first column/ middle column/ second column/ third column/ last column/ right-hand column

The top row/ first row/ second row/ last row/ bottom row

stage of the process

in the North/ Northwest/ Southeast

top right/ bottom left/ middle/ centre

segment

arrow

axis/ axes

Upward trends

To rise/ go up/ increase/ escalate/ climb/ grow/ expand/ soar/ take off

(nearly) double/ triple

A rise/ An increase

Reach a new high

Plateau

Downward trends

To drop/ fall/ dive/ plunge/ crash/ decline/ decrease/ deteriorate/ plummet

A drop/ A fall/ A crash/ A decline/ A decrease/ A deterioration

Bottom out

Shrink

(nearly) halve



Going up and down

Fluctuate/ Be unstable

Reach a peak

Recover/ Bounce back/ Pick up

Not changing

Remain stable

Flatten out

Big changes

Significant(ly)/ Substantial(ly)/ Dramatic(ally)/ Considerable(/bly), Sharp(ly)

Dive/ Plunge/ Crash/ Plummet

Rocket/ Shoot up/ Soar/ Take off

Small changes

Slight(ly)/ Gradual(ly)

Creep up

Comparing

(far/ much/ substantially/ significantly/ slightly) ...er/ more/ less...

(not) as...as...

(very) similar/ almost the same/ almost identical

in some ways similar to...

Comparing the... with/ to...

Contrasting

While...,...

In contrast,...

... shows a rather/ very different pattern/ trend.

We can contrast this with...

... is almost the exact opposite.

... is (a/ the) (major) exception...

Sequencing

Some time later...

After that...

The next/ following stage is...

This is followed by...

This reoccurs...

In the following hours/ days/ weeks/ months/ years,...

Subsequently,...

..., after which...

As soon as...,...

Starting the second main paragraph (= the second paragraph of the body of the text)

Looking at...

Moving on to...

Turning our attention to...

In contrast to the... above,...

Conclusion/ Summary (only if you can't find another way of reaching 150 words)

We can therefore see that...

Together, the graph and bar chart show that...