

# Describing charts and graphs

## Task guide

- ▶ Tasks in the Writing Module will be marked according to the criteria described on page 84 – **content**, **organisation** and **use of language**.
- ▶ Many Task 1 questions involve statistical information in the form of bar charts, graphs or pie charts. Some tasks may involve a single chart or graph, others may involve more than one, and some may involve a combination of elements (for example, a graph and a bar chart).
- ▶ This task involves bar charts. You will find graphs, pie charts and combinations in the other tests in this book.
- ▶ You are required to **select the most important information and summarise it**. You should therefore begin by looking for the main points, the general trends or the overall message.
- ▶ **Do not list every fact and figure in your answer**. Include only the relevant main points, with relevant examples from the data. Do not include less important details.
- ▶ Do not become confused if there seems to be a lot of data. Even if there is more than one chart, graph, etc., there will usually be only one or two main points. Focus on finding these main points. Then decide which parts of the data best illustrate the main point or points.
- ▶ You are not required to do any mathematics for this task. Do not waste time adding and subtracting numbers. Concentrate on the general idea.
- ▶ If precise figures are not given in a chart or graph, do not waste time trying to decide what the precise figure is. Use words and phrases like: *approximately*, *about*, *roughly*, *(just) over*, *(just) under*, *nearly*, etc.
- ▶ Make sure that you write at least the minimum number of words specified in the instructions. Short answers will lose marks.
- ▶ On the other hand, do not write too much. If you write a very long answer, you may make mistakes and lose marks.

## Step-by-step guide

### ▶ Step 1 – Find the main point(s)

1 Compare the third bar chart with the first two. What do you notice?

**A** Some languages are spoken more by parents today than they used to be.

**B** The numbers of people in the third chart are lower.

**C** There has been little change for any of the languages.

2 a Which language was spoken to children the most in the past?

.....

**b** Approximately how many parents spoke this language to their children in the past?

habitually .....

occasionally .....

**c** Approximately how many people now speak that language to their children?

.....

3 a Which language is now spoken the most by adults to their children?

.....

**b** Approximately how many parents spoke that language to their children in the past?

habitually .....

occasionally .....

**c** How many people now speak that language to their children?

.....

4 Which language was spoken the least by parents to their children?

.....

5 Is the number of parents speaking that language to their children now higher than the number whose parents spoke that language to them?

.....

### ▶ Step 2 – Organise your answer

1 What should you begin your answer with?

**A** a sentence about one of the

languages

**B** a sentence comparing two or more of the languages

**C** a sentence comparing the tables in general

2 What should come next?

**A** comparisons between the numbers who spoke each language habitually and the numbers who spoke each language occasionally

**B** comparisons between each of the languages to indicate which were the most widely spoken in the past and which are the most widely spoken now

**C** comparisons between how widely spoken languages were in the past and how widely spoken they are now

### ▶ Step 3 – Language to use

Write a sentence based on the information in the bar charts, using one word or phrase from each of these lists:

#### Linking phrases

*although, even though, while, in the case of, as for, with regard to*

.....

.....

#### Grammatical structures: comparison

*a great deal lower than, not as many as, even greater than, far fewer than, not as high as*

.....

.....

#### Vocabulary: increase and decrease

*a rise in, a fall in, an increase in, a decrease in, rise, fall, go up, go down, drop, decline, be unchanged*

.....

.....

Use your answers for steps 1, 2 and 3 to plan your answer.

Now write your answer for Task 1.

**There is a sample answer on page 199.**



You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Present a written argument or case to an educated reader with no specialist knowledge of the following topic.

*In some societies, stress is now regarded as a major problem, and it is thought that people suffer from more stress than they did in the past.*

*However, others feel that the amount of stress people have today is exaggerated. They say that previous generations were under more pressure, but the idea of suffering from stress did not exist.*

*Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.*

You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.

Write at least 250 words.

## Giving your opinion (1)

### Task guide

- ▶ Tasks in the Writing Module will be marked according to the criteria described on page 86 – **content, organisation and use of language**.
- ▶ Task 2 requires you to give your opinion on an issue.
- ▶ The task consists of a statement or statements, followed by a question asking for your point of view.
- ▶ The instructions you are given are not always the same, and you must read them very carefully to make sure that you do exactly what you are asked to do.
- ▶ Some tasks focus on whether you agree or disagree with a statement. In tasks of this type, you may be asked the following questions:
  - (a) *Discuss both these views and give your opinion.*
  - (b) *Do you agree or disagree?*
  - (c) *To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?*In this case, Task 2 is an example of (a). There are examples of (b) and (c) in other tests in this book.
- ▶ You must concentrate on presenting a clear and logical argument that the reader can follow easily.
- ▶ Divide your answer into paragraphs. Start a new paragraph for each new topic.
- ▶ Make sure that your answer is not too short (minimum 250 words), but also do not write a very long answer.