

IELTS

2nd
Edition

Writing

Academic
Module

Task One

Andrew Guilfoyle

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Practical IELTS Strategies 3

IELTS Writing Task One [Academic Module] 2nd Edition

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ISBN 978-957-445-713-7

Published by Bookman Books, Ltd. 2017
3F, 60 Roosevelt Rd. Sec. 4, Taipei 100, Taiwan

English Editor: Lynn Sauvé
Administrative Editor: Emma Liu

Printed in Taiwan

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Task One

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關於本書

本書為《雅思實用策略》（*Practical IELTS Strategies*）系列中的第三冊，在進入主題前，我們先來了解下面兩個關鍵字是什麼意思：

「實用」：與實際情況有關；正確或合理；切實可行

「策略」：用來達成特定目的的計畫；技巧地執行計畫的過程

本書乃針對「雅思」測驗的寫作 Task One 部分；本書不僅涵蓋文法、試題練習，以及單字，更如書名所強調，提供符合實際考試狀況的實用策略，讓考生在能力範圍內得到最高的分數。

《雅思實用策略》（*Practical IELTS Strategies*）系列還包含：

第一冊：閱讀

第二冊：口說

第四冊：寫作測驗 Task Two（學術組）

第五冊：雅思 6 回全真測驗

讀這本書的人得先對我有信心，還必須了解兩個事實；第一是我的資歷；只有具豐富資歷的作者寫的雅思測驗準備用書才值得信任，請讀者詳讀我的資歷。第二是我為何要寫這個系列的書？首先，時常有學生問我：「怎樣才能通過雅思測驗呢？」這個問題很矛盾，因為考生並不會得到通過或是不及格的結果，而是獲得級分。其實我知道他們想問什麼——如何考到所需的級分，通常是平均 6.5 或 7.0 級分。

那我怎麼回答他們呢？我通常會說，要在雅思中拿高分沒有神奇秘訣。雅思是一項英語能力檢定，所以能力越好，分數自然越高。若想要加強實力，當然要好好努力練習聽說讀寫，不過，就算英文再好，如果準備不足、練習不夠，考試時當然也有可能搞錯方向，最後拿到的分數比應得的分數還低。因此，考前的準備和練習相當重要，我也一直向我的學生強調這一點，但是我知道他們要一個更明確的答案。

市面上充斥許多雅思準備教材，我的學生常常會買來閱讀、使用，可是這些教材提供的建議和方法一定有效嗎？當然不是。學生們必須了解其實沒有所謂的神奇秘訣，想要在雅思中拿高分，考前的練習和準備相當重要。當然，學生想要也需要一些實用策略，只是他們在準備時往往都太過依賴這些不良教材。

正因如此，我才寫了這系列的書。簡單來說，這幾本書就是教導考生如何「通過」雅思的最佳工具書，重點就是牢記書中秘訣。本書有二十個學習秘訣和四十多回練習，每個秘訣都可靠且經過驗證，讓考生循序漸進、確實地學習，並且附上雅思中心公佈的級分說明。書末附有解答，所有學習重點也都寫成摘要，架構清晰，學習目標明確，考生定能藉由閱讀此書通過雅思測驗。

關於英文學習用書的中文翻譯

雅思是一項英文能力檢定，參考書籍當然不能用中文來寫，這樣無法學習英文或加強英文實力。任何英語考試用書如果附有中文翻譯，反倒害了考生。

本書針對中級程度的學生，全書附有文法和單字練習，讀者應能輕易抓住精髓。閱讀以英文寫成的書是準備雅思的必經之途，唯有如此，讀者才能掌握學習要領，太依賴中文翻譯只會適得其反。

本書只有前言有中文翻譯，目的是要清楚傳達剛才所說的要點，接下來，各位就只能使用英文，努力增進英文能力了。

讓我們開始這段全英文的學習之路吧，就從第 iv 頁的 vocabulary 開始。

About this Book

So, you have Book Three of the *Practical IELTS Strategies* series. Let us first be sure we know the meaning of those two key words.

- Practical = connected with *real situations*; right
or sensible; likely to be successful
- Strategy = a plan that is intended to achieve a *particular purpose*;
the process of putting a *plan* into effect in a skilful way

This book—Book Three—is for Task One of the IELTS Writing Test (Academic Module). This is not a grammar book; not a test practice book; not a vocabulary book, although all of those elements are here. Overall, this book is practical and strategic, exactly as those definitions tell us. The *real situation* is the IELTS test, and the *particular purpose* or *plan* is to give you the highest score that you can achieve.

My other ‘Practical IELTS Strategies’ books are:

- Book 1: Reading
- Book 2: Speaking
- Book 4: Writing Task Two [Academic Module]
- Book 5: IELTS Test Practice Book

Now, it is very important at this stage for you to trust me, and for this to happen you need to know two facts. The first concerns my *credentials*. In order for you to trust someone who writes an IELTS preparation book, they must be fully qualified to do so. Please look at the back cover of this book, and read my credentials carefully. The second fact concerns *why* I wrote these books. Let me begin this by saying that students of English often come to me and ask, ‘How do I pass the IELTS test?’ This is the wrong question—you do not *pass* or *fail* the test; you just receive band scores. However, I know what the students mean. They mean how do they achieve the band score they need—usually 6.5 or 7.0 overall.

So what do I say to these students? I usually say that there are *no magic answers* to obtaining higher band scores in the IELTS test. It is a test of English language ability, so, of course, you obtain higher scores by having higher ability. The best way to raise your ability is simply to practise your listening, reading, writing, and speaking. However, no matter how good your English may be, it is certainly possible for you to be unprepared, unpractised, and to try to do parts of the IELTS test in the wrong way, and thus to receive a result lower (or far lower) than

what your English ability deserves. This is why it is also important to prepare and practise. I say this, too, to my students. However, I know that they want a more definite answer.

This is why there is so much 'IELTS Preparation' material available, and my students often have, read, and use some of it, but does this material always provide the best advice and approaches? The answer is no. Students should know that there are no magic answers, and that practice and preparation are important to achieving a high IELTS band score, but they clearly want and need some practical and strategic approaches showing how, and they are too often relying on unsatisfactory material to find this.

So that is why I wrote these IELTS books. In short, these books are the answer to that question about how to 'pass' the IELTS test. The answer is to follow the tips in these books. In this one, there are twenty tips and over forty exercises. Each tip builds on the previous. Each tip is solid, proven, and supported. There are answers to all exercises. All the knowledge is summarised and demonstrated at the end to make a clear and achievable framework. This book *is* how you 'pass' the test. So, let us then begin on this road.

Some Words

To help in understanding this book, let us first look at some of the more uncommon words that will be used

A. Do you know the meaning of the following? If not, look them up in a dictionary.

an approach	a cross -section	to identify	a quiz
to be appropriate	a detail	italics	to be relevant
to avoid	to be dynamic	to be limited	a sequence
a category	to export	to list	to be significant
to be coherent	a fact	to be mature	a signpost
to be cohesive	financial	an opinion	to speculate
to be consistent	fluff	a profile	a trend
a correlation	a fraction	a proportion	violence

B. Fill the spaces with one of the previous words. Use the right tense and grammar. The answers are given in Appendix 1.

1. I can see his _____ against the window.
2. I have only a _____ of the money that I had a week ago.
3. There is no _____ at all between your work and our rise in profits.
4. Look at this old table. It's got lots of dust and _____ all over it.
5. He's a very lively and _____ person – always talking and moving.
6. By looking at a _____ of the tree trunk, we can determine the age of the tree.
7. You get paid per day, or whatever _____ of the day you work.
8. Tell me exactly what happened. Give me all the little _____.
9. One minute you want this! Then you ask for that! You're not _____.
10. I don't know where I am. Can you see any _____?
11. If you study the figures, you can clearly see a rising _____.
12. Last year, Australia _____ most of its coal to China.
13. I didn't understand what he was saying. He was not _____ at all.
14. I tried the _____, but only got 11 out of 20.
15. I know what you're saying, but it's not _____ to the issue.
16. I want you to sort these applications into three _____.
17. I'm afraid that your behaviour is simply not _____.
18. He's very _____ for his age.
19. Parts of your writing don't fit together well; it isn't _____ at all.
20. I think we should _____ this problem in a different way.
21. I never see you. Are you trying to _____ me?
22. Okay, write everything down. Just make a _____ of what you want.
23. That word must be special because it is written in _____.
24. I'm afraid I only have a _____ knowledge on that subject.
25. I had to _____ the dead body; it was horrible.

Practical IELTS Strategies 3 Writing Task One

C. Complete the following table.

Noun	Adjective	Noun	Adjective
speculation			cohesive
	mature	fraction	
proportion			fluffy
	coherent	detail	
fact			significant
	financial	limit	
violence			sequential
	relevant	signpost	

About the IELTS Writing Test

Before looking at any tips, let us first make sure we know everything we can about the IELTS Writing test, and Writing Task One. This will also make the tips in this book clearer.

We can perhaps best look at these by using the following quiz, and then discussing the answers.

IELTS Writing One Quiz: True or False

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. The Writing Test is one hour. | T / F |
| 2. There are four parts to the test. | T / F |
| 3. There is a separate answer sheet. | T / F |
| 4. You must make sure your answer is reasonably long. | T / F |
| 5. You can write anything you want. | T / F |
| 6. Grammar/accuracy is most important. | T / F |
| 7. Writing in simple sentences is better. | T / F |
| 8. Writing Task Two (W2) is more important than Task One (W1). | T / F |
| 9. Longer answers are always better than shorter ones. | T / F |
| 10. It does not matter which writing (W1 or W2) you do first. | T / F |
| 11. Memorising long pieces of writing is a good idea. | T / F |
| 12. Neat handwriting receives better scores. | T / F |

We can now discuss the answers.

Question 1 is true. The Writing Test is indeed one hour, but there are different tasks.

Question 2 is false. There are two writing tasks, which are known as Task One, and Task Two. Since the test is one hour, it is recommended that you spend 20 minutes on Task One, and 40 minutes on Task Two. As for **Question 3**, it is true. There are two separate A4 Writing Answer sheets, one for Task One, and one for Task Two.

Question 4 is true, while **Question 5** is false, of course. Task One and Two are very specific and very different. We can summarise them as follows:

Practical IELTS Strategies 3: Writing Task One

Task One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is a summary/description of a graph [line, bar, pie], table of figures, or diagram/map. - requires at least 150 words. - is recommended to take 20 minutes.
Task Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is an academic essay. - requires at least 250 words. - is recommended to take 40 minutes.

Question 6 is false. Grammar and accuracy are certainly important, but there is much more to a good piece of writing. The writing is actually judged on four categories, as shown.

1. Task Achievement

(Does the answer achieve the task fully and well?)

2. Coherence & Cohesion

(Does the answer make sense as a whole, and do all the sentences and paragraphs fit together well?)

3. Lexical Resource

(Does the answer have mature and appropriate words?)

4. Grammatical Range & Accuracy

(Does the answer have a good range of grammar, and use it accurately?)

Question 7 is false. Simple sentences may well be easier and therefore are likely to be more accurate, but to achieve higher band scores, the grammar must also be mature and show variety. As for **Question 8** it is true. Task Two is longer, and takes more time than Task One, so it must be more important in determining your score; however, this does not mean you should not treat Task One seriously – it is important also.

Question 9 is false. The word ‘always’ should tell us that the statement is unlikely to be correct. Length by itself, of course, does not show how good an answer is. A longer answer may well be quite bad; however, **Question 10** is true. It does not matter which writing (W1 or W2) you do first, unless it can help you manage the test, or the timing, better [See Tip 2].

Question 11 is based on opinion, and my opinion is that memorising long pieces of writing is most definitely a bad idea. Tip 6 will look at this in more detail. As for **Question 12**, it is false. Examiners do not judge handwriting. However, the handwriting must be clear enough so that the examiner can read it. Furthermore, being human, they can be affected in their scoring, even if

they do not realise this. Clear handwriting has a good effect on the eyes, and on the mind, so aim towards writing clearer. Work on your handwriting skills.

About IELTS Writing Task One

Writing is a ‘productive’ skill. It is different from listening and reading, where we receive the message. In writing, we are *producing* it. The first point to realise is that this gives us *control* over the message. The second point is that a written text, by its nature, must give context, and is usually formal in organisation, grammar, and words. The third point is that the IELTS Writing is a definite type of writing, and we can predict its nature and requirements.

The combination of these three factors (control of the message, writing’s natural complexity, and its predictable type in IELTS) mean that we can create many tips to help ourselves. However, the disadvantages come from Point Two – writing is indeed complex, for both students and even native users of language, and, in the IELTS test, involves handwriting.

The band score is decided by the IELTS examiner. This person uses a set of descriptions for each score. These are not available to the public. There is, however, a *public*-version of these ‘descriptors’ available at www.ielts.org. By referring to these, we can know that the writing is scored under four categories, as we saw in the IELTS Quiz. One of these is called ‘Task Achievement’ because in Task One, you have to *achieve* a specific and defined task. This task is a summarising *description* of either a:

1. graph [line, bar, or pie],
2. table of figures,
3. diagram [usually a process] or map.

In other words, the task is *information transfer*: transferring the information from Task One, onto your piece of paper. These public-version IELTS descriptors allow us to work out ourselves that the categories can all be divided into two or three *sub*-categories, as follows.

Category	Sub-category
Task Achievement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summarises the information fully and relevantly 2. Gives an overview 3. Describes key features [Identifies, & gives data]
Coherence & Cohesion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organises the writing, showing progression 2. Makes the sentences and parts fit together
Lexical Resource	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uses a range of words 2. Uses those words accurately

Grammatical Range & Accuracy	1. Uses a range of grammar 2. Uses that grammar accurately
---------------------------------	---

Take a careful look at these, as I will refer to them many times throughout this book. The IELTS band score for these categories go higher as your writing describes the task better and more fully, and becomes *more* relevant, clearer, appropriate, mature, and shows *fewer* signs of repetition or errors.

One important point to understand is that you need to achieve *all* sub-categories to achieve the matching IELTS band score. For example, to score an IELTS Six for ‘Task Achievement’, the writing must 1. summarise the information fully and relevantly, *and* 2. give an overview, *and* 3. describe key features, *all* according to the IELTS Six description. All categories are connected, and we must look at them all.

Now, let us begin traveling on the journey through the tips to help you in Task One of the IELTS Writing Test.

The IELTS Band Descriptors

Band Nine – Expert User

Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate, and fluent, with complete understanding.

Band Eight – Very Good User

Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.

Band Seven – Good User

Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies, and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well, and understands detailed reasoning.

Band Six – Competent User

Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

Band Five – Modest User

Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

Band Four – Limited User

Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.

Band Three – Extremely Limited User

Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.

Band Two – Intermittent User

No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations, and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.

Band One – Non User

Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

FUNDAMENTAL TIPS: 1-9

[illegible]

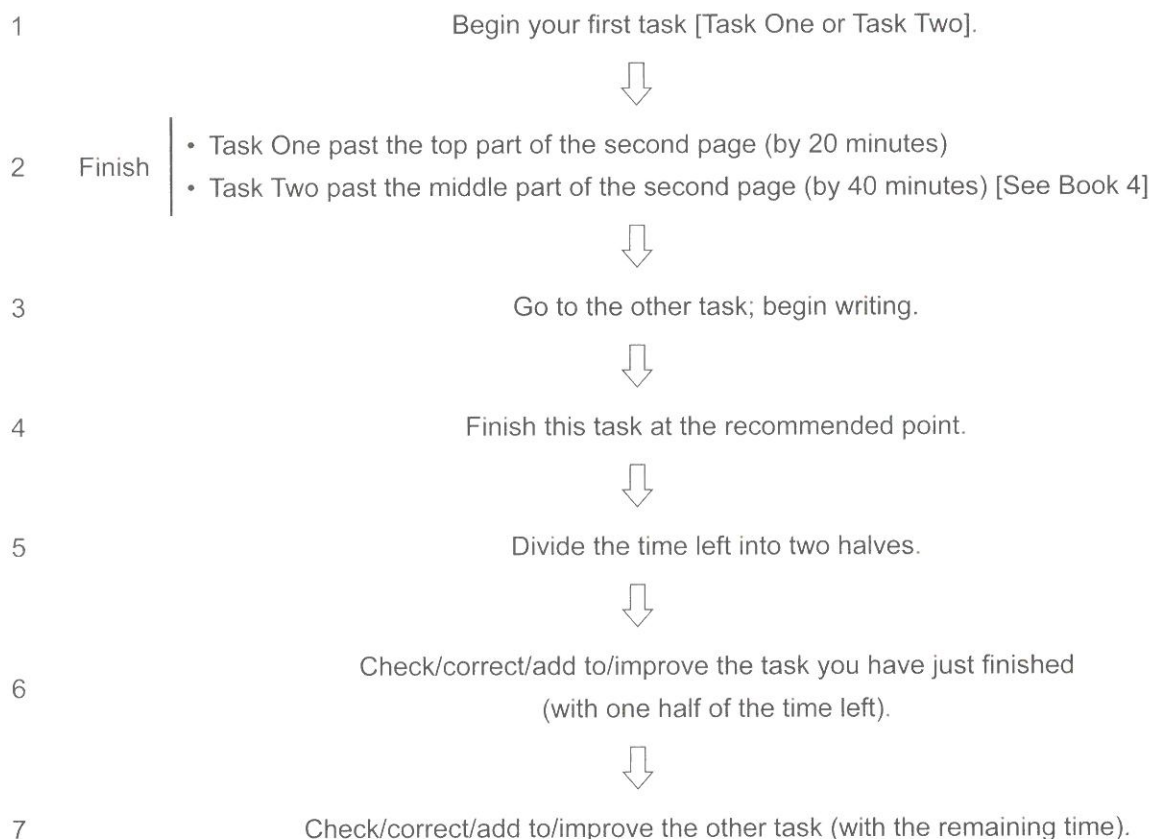
- add five or six lines to the number of lines for Task One, to allow for the paragraph breaks and extra length.
- Now, count this total number of lines on the writing answer sheet in the previous diagram.
- Now, mark the point on the second page at which you end.

So, with 10 words per line (and wider margins), there would be 15 lines. Adding six lines for paragraph breaks and extra length gives about 21 lines for Task One. Counting these through the writing answer sheet gives the result, as shown.



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Start Test



End Test

Note

If you still have some time, you need to make a judgement about whether your answer will be improved, or not, by extra writing, since this may take away the chance to sufficiently complete the *other* writing task.

For Task One, if your extra writing will consist only of fluff [See Tip 6], or a repetitive 'conclusion' [See Tip 5], or badly-written final thoughts [See Tip 18], then your answer is *not* improved at all, and you *should finish the sentence, and move to the other task*. However, if your extra writing will consist of further summarising, or well-written final thoughts, then the answer is improved.

Nevertheless, as the previous procedure shows, if you have reached the Task-One 20 minute, or Task-Two 40 minute, time limit, *and* have written to the recommended points, you should not try any long writing additions until the other task is dealt with.

Tip 2

Which Task to Do First

There are three ways to think about this. I will call them Arguments 1, 2, and 3.

Argument 1: Do Task One First

This argument says that Task One is shorter, requires less words, and so you will finish it quicker. This gives you a good feeling, which will help you in the second task, Task Two. You should do Task One first because it was made Task One for this reason. One comes before Two; the 'easier' task comes before the 'difficult' one.

This argument – Argument One – sounds simple enough, but too simple, since it is affected by:

1. the next argument, Argument 2,
2. the fact that Task One is not always easy or straightforward for all students.

Argument 2: Do Task Two First

Task Two requires *twice* the time as Task One. In the one-hour test, you are recommended to spend 1/3 of the hour (20 minutes) on Task One, and 2/3 of the hour (40 minutes) on Task Two. Mathematically, then, if you receive Band Score *Five* on Task One, and *Six* on Task Two, your score is likely to be:

$$(1/3 \text{ of } 5) + (2/3 \text{ of } 6) = 1.67 + 4 = 5.67$$

This would certainly be put down to 5.5, since you cannot receive quarter scores.

However, if you achieve Band Score 5.5 on Task One, and *Six* on Task Two, the maths gives an overall score of six. So, if the difference between your Task One and Task Two score is *half* a band score, it is your Task *Two* score which will determine your overall score.

Also, many students are slow writers, and go over-time, leaving less time to complete their *second* writing task. On which task would you prefer to have *less* time: the one that has more weight (Task Two), or the one that has less weight (Task One)? Obviously, if you had to write a hurried answer, under time pressure, you should do that on Task One, since it has *less* weight.

This argument, Argument Two, recommends that you do Task Two first. This is a good argument,

but it is affected by the fact that the maths that we did only works if ...

1. the difference between your Task One and Task Two score is *half* a band score,
2. you are good enough at Task Two to score a reasonable score. As we found out, if the difference between scores is one full band score, then it makes no difference which task you do first.

Argument 3: Do the Easier Task First

If we do the easier task first, we:

1. make efficient use of the time, by completing the writing task quicker,
2. gain a good feeling, which will help us for the next writing task.

So, this argument, Argument 3, suggests that if you feel more able to do Task One, do Task One first. Similarly, if you feel more able to do Task Two, do Task Two first.

This is a strong argument, but it is affected by:

1. Argument Two,
2. the difficulty in knowing which task you are naturally better at. Remember also, this may depend on the exact tasks on the day you do the IELTS test, meaning you need to spend some time examining them both, since their content and nature may affect your decision about which one is likely to be easier for you.

Conclusion

The conclusion is that it is *your* decision. Practise some systems, and see what works for you.

Tip 3

Study the Item/Read the Axes

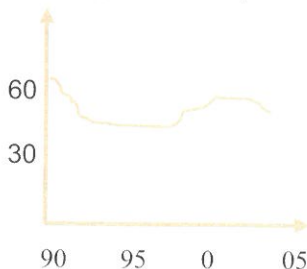
Of course we should study the item carefully, but also, in the case of graphs, bar charts, and tables of figures, we should immediately read the *axes*. Axes, pronounced 'ak-sees' is the plural for *axis*, and refers to the Y (up/down) and X (left/right) sides of the task. Keep in mind that there is another word 'axes', pronounced 'aksez', which is the plural of the wood-cutting tool 'axe', pronounced 'aks'. Perhaps you should check them both in a dictionary right now.

By reading the axes, we will know exactly what we are dealing with, and this is necessary to a good understanding and a good answer. As simple as this tip sounds, students often make mistakes.

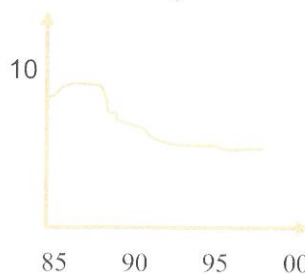
Exercise 2

Look at the following Task-One items, and decide what is *wrong* about the sample introductions.

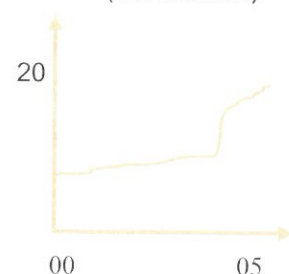
A. Bankrupt Businesses
(thousands)



B. Population of
Murrabit (thousands)



C. New Houses
(thousands)



D. Visitors to Byron Bay in One Day

Destination	Age Category			
	20 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60
Beach	65	40	33	22
Bar	75	56	24	12
Museum	20	35	58	65
Cinema	55	45	56	51
Art Gallery	17	34	54	57

Graph A

The graph shows how the bankrupt businesses change from 1990 to 2005.

Graph B

Here is a summary of how the people of Murrabit varied in the period 1985 – 2000.

Graph C

The graph compares the growth in new houses from 2000 to 2005.

Table D

The variation in the tourists in Byron Bay can be summarised as follows.

The problem with all these introductions is that they do not exactly describe the axes. Graph A does *not* show how the bankrupt businesses change; it actually shows how the *number* of these businesses change (or the degree of *bankruptcy/business failure*).* Similarly, Graph B does not show how the people varied; it shows how the *population*, or *number* of people varied (or the fluctuation in *demographic size*).* Graph C gives information on the *number* of new houses (or degree of/variation in, *residential construction*),* while Table D makes a comparison of the *number* of tourists by age who visit specific destinations (or rates of *customer patronage*).*

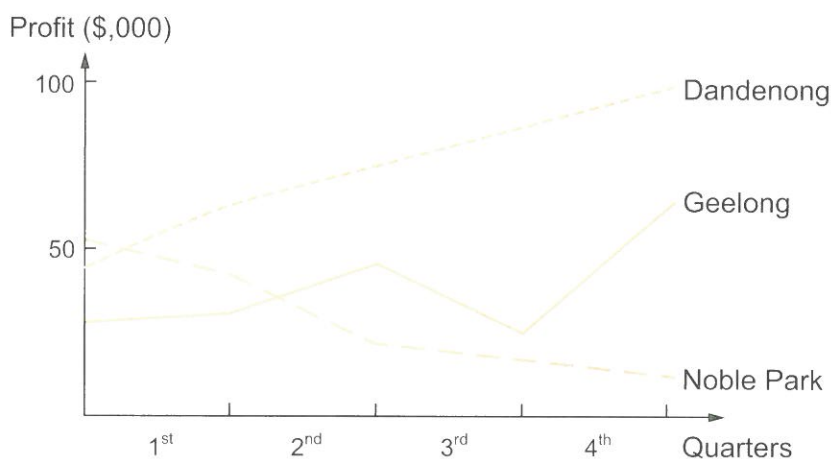
Students of English often write misleading (and sometimes funny) sentences such as, ‘The tourists had sharp fluctuations’, or ‘The largest people complained’, or ‘The houses fell down’, or ‘The bankrupt businesses grew strongly’. These students did not read the X and Y axes properly. Read these axes and study the item carefully.

* As Tip 10 and 11 will explain, we can begin increasing our variety of words from the beginning.

Tip 4

Write in Formal Style

Let us begin with a sample Task One question – a line graph, as shown.



The graph shows the profit figures for three football clubs – Dandenong, Geelong, and Noble Park – over a year.

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

Exercise 3

Part One

The following short description is grammatically correct and in some ways it is well-written, but in many other ways it is *not*.

1. What is the major problem with this description (as shown in *italics*)?
2. How can you fix it?

According to the graphical data, we can discern that this *thing* shows some *stuff* about three *footy* clubs – Dandenong, Geelong, and Noble Park – over a year. *Anyhow*, Dandenong's profit *starts off* at 44 thousand dollars. *Meanwhile*, we can see Dandenong's profit *shoots up a lot*, to 63 thousand dollars in the first quarter. Noble Park's *cash* falls *pretty much* evenly *the whole time*. The profit went *down* from 53 thousand dollars. Geelong football club *heads right up* in this first quarter. *Take a look at*

Dandenong football club. Dandenong football club *really* increases, *like a plane*. Making a comparison of all the data generally shows that Dandenong increases throughout the next few quarters. Geelong football club grows. Geelong falls. Noble Park football club falls. Dandenong *ended up* at 98 thousand dollars. *You can really notice this.* All the figures indicate that Noble Park *got to* about 9 thousand dollars. Geelong football club *does okay*. It clearly shows by comparing all the figures that the profit for Geelong *got to* 61 thousand dollars. In conclusion, the profit for Noble Park Football Club goes down a *lot*. This's *really* bad since it'll affect the people in the club. Some of them may lose their jobs, and even their *kids* can suffer, so *you* should support sporting clubs more.

Tip 4 is that we should write *formally*. This means:

1. We should write in paragraphs. It is better to use the modern style of paragraphing, leaving a line between each one so that it *looks* clearly paragraphed.
2. We should try *not* to use:
 - informal words, such as 'a lot of' and 'okay',
 - general, common, or less defined words, such as 'things' or 'stuff',
 - informal grammar, such as first person plural pronouns ['we' and 'us'], the second person pronoun ['you'], 'have got', 'pretty' as an intensifier, and 'like' as a preposition,
 - spoken English phrases, such as 'anyhow' and 'take a look at',
 - multiple-word verbs, such as 'goes up' and 'ends up'. These verbs can usually be replaced with a more formal single word.

How do I know all this? Well, the task is a serious and factual transfer of academic data, and the word 'appropriate' is used several times in the public version of the IELTS band descriptors, as well as the words 'style', 'flexibility', and 'collocation' [= putting words *together* well]. But mostly, formal words/grammar results in a greater *range* of words and grammar. The Vocabulary-Range descriptors (shown just before Tip 10), and the Grammatical Range descriptors (shown at the start of Tip 12) tell us how important this is.

It is also better not to use *contractions*; that is, do not join two words into one word with an apostrophe – for example, 'does' and 'not' into 'doesn't'. This is because contractions are not always considered formal, and also because they are only counted as one word, whereas the full form is obviously two words, helping us to reach the writing length requirement in a quicker time.

Part Two

Complete the following table, changing the inappropriate informal English (in italics), with formal English more suitable to IELTS writing. Then compare your answers to those in Appendix 2.

	Informal English	Appropriate Formal English
1.	Noble Park <i>footy</i> club	
2.	<i>has got</i> a big decline	
3.	... <i>eg</i> ... at the end, ...	
4.	just <i>like</i> Geelong in the third quarter.	
5.	You can see that it sinks <i>like a rock</i> ...	
6.	to about 9,	
7.	while Geelong is about 58 -	
8.	49 units higher than Noble Park,	
9.	but about 41 units lower than Dandenong.	
10.	But <i>take a look at</i> Dandenong.	
11.	<i>It's pretty much</i> different all over.	
12.	<i>It's wonderful, actually, that's for sure,</i> ...	
13.	... <i>obviously going up lots.</i>	
14.	<i>And it increases more and more</i> ...	
15.	, <i>and in the end it tops them all.</i>	

Now, let us move back to the short answer that we gave in Exercise 3, Part One. Remember, we had to make the words and phrasing more formal. It should be easier for you now. Try again, and put in logical paragraphing, and then look at the sample answer at the beginning of the next tip, with all the changes shown in italics.

Tip 5

Do Not Give Opinions

Part One: Opinions

Straight into an exercise.

Exercise 4

A. Look at our ‘football clubs’ answer one more time. It is now paragraphed, and formally written, but what is wrong with the last paragraph? Do we ‘conclude’ in Task One?

According to the graphical data, we can discern that the *graph* shows the *profit figures* for three *football clubs* – Dandenong, Geelong, and Noble Park – over a year.

Dandenong's profit *begins* at *about 45* thousand dollars. Dandenong's profit *rises strongly* to *about 60* thousand dollars in the first quarter. Noble Park football club's *profit falls fairly evenly throughout the year*. The profit *fell* from *just over 50* thousand dollars. Geelong football club *grows* in this first quarter. *Regarding Dandenong football club*, Dandenong football club *continues to increase*. Making a comparison of all the data generally shows that Dandenong increases throughout the next few quarters.

Geelong football club *grows*. Geelong *falls*. Noble Park football club *falls*. Dandenong *finished noticeably high*, and *more than doubled to almost 100* thousand dollars. All the figures indicate that Noble Park *finished at just under 10* thousand dollars. Geelong football club *grows*. It clearly shows by comparing all the figures that the profit for Geelong *ended at about 60* thousand dollars.

In conclusion, the profit for Noble Park Football Club goes down *greatly*. This *is very bad* since it *will* affect the people in the club. Some of them may lose their jobs, and even their *children* can suffer, so *people* should support sporting clubs more.

B. Is this final sentence better?

In conclusion, there were dramatic differences between the three football clubs.

C. What is wrong with the following part of an answer?

First of all, Dandenong has mostly high profits. Moreover, Dandenong's profits are far above the other two clubs. On the other hand, Noble Park follows an approximately opposite path, falling fairly evenly throughout the year, and so on. Secondly, I believe that Geelong performed fairly well because, for example, it grows in the last quarter. In conclusion, Dandenong was by far the most successful club.

The task is to *describe* and *summarise* the graph, not to give comment, explanations, or opinion on it. These belong in Writing Task Two. In Task One they are not considered relevant. The IELTS band descriptors are quite clear.

The public version reads:

Task Achievement: 1. Summarises the information fully and relevantly		
5	6	7
generally addresses the task; the format may be inappropriate in places	addresses the requirements of the task	covers the requirements of the task

Extracted from the complete IELTS WRITING Band Descriptors (public version).

As these descriptors tell us, a piece of writing may be very good, but if it does not look at the requirements of the task, it will be scored lower. So, do not give opinions. This also means not using any words which *assume* or *judge* or *explain*. For example:

1. The profit for Noble Park is *too* low.
2. Gold is the most *important* export.
3. The station is *packed* in the morning.
4. The city centre is very *crowded*.
5. Local government *did not want to* develop the west.
6. The company *preferred* to hire men.
7. Young people were *enthusiastic* about the cinema.
8. Solar energy will become mainstream *because it is environmentally-friendly*.
9. Most people choose money as most important *because we live in a materialistic society*.
10. Gyms are more visited *because people want to stay healthy*.

In the first sentence, the word ‘too’ gives a negative opinion to the sentence. As for the second, perhaps tea, which has the lowest percentage, could be more important for certain reasons. In the next two sentences, perhaps the station and city centre are very big, and so never crowded, and so on. Better sentences, which are *definitely* true, factual, and correct, are:

1. The profit for Noble Park is *relatively* low.
2. Gold is the *biggest* export.
3. The station is *busiest* in the morning.
4. The city centre is the *most densely populated area*.
5. Local government *opted to not* develop the west.
6. Men *constitute the majority* of employees.
7. Young people showed *considerably more interest* in the cinema.
8. The *environmentally-friendly* solar energy will become mainstream.*
9. *Concordant with the materialistic ethos*, most people choose money.
10. *In keeping with a health-conscious age*, gyms are more visited.

* See also Tip 7, The Overview, ‘Real World?’ where it is explained that sentences and nouns can be modified with adverbial or adjectival phrases, thus *describing*, whilst not explaining cause and effect.

Furthermore, since Task One is not an essay, since it is factual and descriptive, *we do not conclude*. Many books and teachers may say the opposite, but they say that without considering the nature of Task One. Here are another two reasons why you should not conclude.

1. Conclusions often leads students to write meaningless sentences, such as in Exercise 4, Part B, or irrelevant essay-style additions, such as:

To conclude, although Dandenong is good, it needs to work harder to maintain that success, while the other clubs should see how they can improve.

2. a. If students have already given an ‘overview’ earlier in the answer, writing ‘To conclude, ...’ at the end often leads them to *repeating* this. This is a very common problem, and can result in an IELTS Five for Coherence & Cohesion (‘lack of over-all progress’ and ‘may be repetitive’).
- b. If students have *not* already written this ‘overview’, then writing, ‘To conclude, [Overview]’ at the end *is* necessary – but it is *at the end*. As Tip 8, Exercise 13 will show, leaving the overview for the end of your answer is dangerous.

Similar to 'In conclusion', Exercise 4, Part C, shows other Task Two forms of language which do not belong in Task One. Words such as 'moreover' and 'furthermore' are used for adding *ideas*, and not sequencing trends. The phrase 'on the other hand' is spoken English, contrasting such ideas, while 'firstly' and 'secondly' as used in this example are for placing those ideas in order. 'And so on' and 'for example' are essay language, and 'I believe', 'I think', and 'In my opinion' all suggest an opinion, and should not be used. 'Because (of)' should always be avoided.

Part Two: Natural Reactions

This leads to the issue of 'natural reactions'. Some Task Ones concern concepts (such as absenteeism from school or shopping), locations (such as railway stations or named countries), or objects (such as schoolbooks) about which we may have some real world knowledge and awareness. Can we then give some thoughts or impressions about the information? For example, if a 'death rate' increases, can we add the adverb 'sadly' to an answer?

The public version of the IELTS descriptors says that you are rewarded according to your word range, flexibility, and style. Writing down *appropriate* reactions can add to this. The descriptors punish you for 'inappropriate format' and 'irrelevant detail', but IELTS examiners are not IELTS *robots* or IELTS *police*. If something *is* sad to everyone, or can very naturally invite a response or extra information, and our words are reasonable, intelligent, and well-written, then they can be considered simply part of a fuller description.

But, if you do introduce natural reactions, do it...

1. with honesty,
2. with *caution*, and *in your own voice*,
3. only a *little*.

Rule 1 will help make sure that the feature *is*, in fact, surprising or interesting or invites speculation. Rule 2 means that you should not write natural reactions as facts. For example, do not write:

The profit profile for Noble Park is not good, decreasing from...

Instead, make sure it is in your own voice, and this is often done by using adverbs.

The profit profile for Noble Park is *surely* not good, decreasing from...

This makes it clear that you are *not* mis-reading the item, but instead reacting intelligently (which is *not* the same as giving opinion). Rule 3 will make sure that your Task Achievement score is not affected. So, following these rules, sentences such as in the following exercise are possible.

Exercise 5

Put the words and phrases on the right into the sentences on the left.

1. Reactions Using Adverbs

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 | _____, people were keen on the cinemas, shown by the high and rising... | A | <i>Coincidentally*</i> |
| 2 | _____, all three profiles cross at this point. | B | <i>ironically*</i> |
| 3 | _____, the number of tourists from Japan shows no variation at all. | C | <i>anomalously*</i> |
| 4 | Noble Park begins, somewhat _____, at the highest point [but falls to the lowest]. | D | <i>sadly /
unfortunately</i> |
| 5 | Gold is the highest, and _____ most important, export. | E | <i>Apparently*</i> |
| 6 | The death rate, _____, rises consistently in this part of the world. | F | <i>Interestingly</i> |
| 7 | The price for children's books, somewhat _____, remains level [while all the others rise]. | G | <i>surprisingly</i> |
| 8 | Somewhat _____, the profit plummets in 2008 [after rising steadily]. | H | <i>presumably*</i> |

2. Reactions Using Adjectives

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | The number of visitors shows a _____ increase. | A | <i>usual</i> |
| 2 | Galleries show the _____ low attendance. | B | <i>alarming / worrying</i> |
| 3 | However, _____ growth is in monetary spending. | C | <i>healthy</i> |
| 4 | This line is _____ for its steady growth. | D | <i>uninspiring</i> |
| 5 | Then, there is quite an _____ rise [in crime]. | E | <i>doubtlessly
disappointing</i> |
| 6 | After an _____ start, the profit rises considerably. | F | <i>the most impressive</i> |
| 7 | ... showing an _____ growth (considering the long time period involved). | G | <i>unpromising</i> |
| 8 | ... leading to a low and _____ finish of five [in annual profit]. | H | <i>remarkable</i> |

3. Reactions Using Real-World Knowledge

1	The town shows a rather _____ transition.	A	<i>in defiance* of inflationary trends</i>
2	Men, _____, do considerable amounts of shopping.	B	<i>Not surprisingly / Unsurprisingly</i>
3	The price, _____, remains constant.	C	<i>typical / predictable</i>
4	_____, the life expectancy in Europe is far higher [than Africa].	D	<i>the more culturally diverse</i>
5	_____, Japan spends far more on education [than Indonesia].	E	<i>contrary to stereo- typical* assump- tions*</i>
6	The _____ USA favours collaborative* communi- cation styles.	F	<i>Predictably / As expected</i>
7	Higher class sizes occur in _____ Japan.	G	<i>in a manner which would please any stakeholder*</i>
8	The profit increases _____.	H	<i>densely populated</i>

4. Reactions Using Geographic Real-World Knowledge

Many IELTS Task Ones involve countries of the world, allowing the some 'geographic real-world knowledge' to be introduced as adjectival modifiers, particularly when grouping countries together, or paraphrasing their names.

1	Moving onto _____, ... [Africa]	A	<i>two Asian nations</i>
2	As for its _____, ... [Europe]	B	<i>the geographically separate</i>
3	These _____ lead the field. [Japan and South Korea]	C	<i>given the extent of coastline available</i>
4	... yet _____ Germany shares similar working times.	D	<i>northern neighbour</i>
5	This _____ shows little progress. [Mexico]	E	<i>culturally and geo- graphically distant</i>

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
| 6 | The _____ dominates tourist revenue. [coastal NSW and Queensland] | F | <i>this southern continent*</i> |
| 7 | Fishing is <i>surprising</i> low, _____ [in Australia]. | G | <i>north-eastern sea-board*</i> |
| 8 | These two _____ countries nevertheless have similarities. [France and China] | H | <i>Central-American nation</i> |

Note

With every sample Task One answer, or parts of an answer (as in this exercise), difficult words in the text are ‘asterisked’ – that is, marked with a *. Definitions to these words are given at the end as a matching exercise, titled ‘Word Learning Time’. Do these exercises, and study and remember the words, as this is an ongoing and very important part in developing your English skills. All the answers are given at the end of the book.

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous sentences) with their meaning on the right.

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-------|---|
| 1 | coincidentally | (adv) | seeming to be so according to appearance or initial evidence |
| 2 | ironically | (adv) | a refusal to obey sb./sth., sometimes in an aggressive way |
| 3 | anomalously | (adv) | relating to a fixed idea/image of a type of person or thing |
| 4 | apparently | (adv) | being strange/amusing because it is different from expected |
| 5 | presumably | (adv) | a feeling that sth. is true or will happen, but without proof |
| 6 | defiance | (n) | one of the large landmasses of the earth |
| 7 | stereotypical | (adj) | relating to two or more events taking place at the same time |
| 8 | assumption | (n) | involving, or done by, people or groups working together |
| 9 | collaborative | (adj) | the part of a country that is along the coast |
| 10 | stakeholder | (n) | relating to sth. that you think is true, although there is no proof |
| 11 | continent | (n) | a person/company involved in a sth., esp. through investment |
| 12 | seaboard | (n) | relating to a difference from what is normal or expected |

Be Honest

Did you have the following answers for the previous exercise?

1		2		3		4	
1.	E	1.	C	1.	C	1.	F
2.	A	2.	A	2.	E	2.	D
3.	F	3.	F	3.	A	3.	A
4.	B	4.	H	4.	F (or B)	4.	B (or E)
5.	H	5.	B	5.	B (or F)	5.	H
6.	D	6.	G	6.	D	6.	G
7.	C	7.	D	7.	H	7.	C
8.	G	8.	E	8.	G	8.	E

Such correct answers are achieved by following Rule 1, being honest. This is very important. Just using the word ‘interestingly’ when the feature you are describing is of no interest at all, is a *bad* use of words. Thus, ...

1. *Surprisingly*, women do more dish-washing than men.
2. In *stark* contrast, the profit increases slightly.
3. A *glance* at the chart shows that teacher numbers are higher.
4. It is *crystal clear* that the profit rose.
5. One of the first things that should be noted is that
6. An interesting point that should be observed Dandenong is 50.
7. It is certainly worth mentioning that

... are typical mistakes. The first is actually *un-surprising* (or *predictable*). With the second, nothing can be ‘stark’ if it is slight. With the third, it would need a ‘careful study’, not a quick glance, to find the information. With the fourth, nothing is ever *that* clear in a Task One (and the phrase is spoken English, used mostly in speeches). The last three are wasting words that are needed to give the real message, and the fact that Dandenong is 50 is *not* worth noting, *not* interesting, and *not* worth mentioning at all.

These sentences simply tell the IELTS examiner that the students either *do not* know these simple words, or are using memorisation. Is that a good idea? This leads us to the next tip.

Tip 6

Cut the Fluff

Exercise 6

1. What is wrong with the following parts of an answer?
2. How could you fix them?
3. How many words could you take out, and still leave the main message?

Answers 1 [Parts]

- a. It can see easily from the those supplied informations to discus.
- b. The general supplying comparisons makes data evidentially.

Answers 2 [Parts]

- a. We can know very much information from this chart.
- b. It is exceedingly apparent that the changes of the data are revealed in the figures.
- c. From the information given in the chart, over the period as a whole, by and large, it can be clearly seen that, more or less, there are substantial and significant *changes*. According to the chart, it can also be seen that there are many *variations* in the figures.

Answers 3 [Parts]

- a. It is strikingly apparent that Dandenong's profit increases by 1%.
- b. It is exceedingly obvious that the profit decreases a little.
- c. It is surprising to see that the sales figures increase.

Answer 4 [Part]

It is evident from the information supplied, that, overall, firstly, if we compare the profit for

Noble Park over the four quarters, the figures show that Noble Park's profit in all quarters decreases; and secondly, if we make a comparison of the three clubs, the numbers generally indicate that the profit for Dandenong and Geelong is higher.

Answers 5 [Parts]

- a. From the chart we can see that...
- b. According to the graphical data, we can discern that...
- c. It is very evident from the information supplied that... [small piece of real message] .
- d. It can be easily seen from the given statistics which need to be discussed that...

You can probably guess that these answers are 'model' sentences given from many sources for you to write, but can good writing be produced by just using memorised material? This is what many people are leading you to believe. Candidates want easy answers; many people want easy money – but does the 'memorisation' approach work? Here are seven reasons why it does not.

Reason 1: Junk Input

Why should anyone trust such material? It is often *very* badly written, with many mistakes in grammar, logic, and appropriateness. With so much junk around, it is very risky accepting material from people you know nothing about.

Reason 2: Misremembering

Memorised sentences are often remembered wrongly, particularly under the pressure of the actual IELTS test, resulting in the sentences in Answers One, which make no sense at all. They give no message. What band score do you think this could achieve?

Reason 3: Meaninglessness

Answers Two shows another problem. Memorised sentences are often so general that they have little meaning and little 'voice' of the writer. They are just long sentences of 'nothing'. They are fluff – sentences which can be written about *anything* and *everything*, and that is why some sources give them to you. But if these sentences give no message at all, are they *good* writing? Do they help 'achieve the task'?

Reason 4: Untruths

There is another problem, as shown in Answers Three. As we discussed in the previous tip, such ‘natural reactions’ are *not* true. When students write, ‘It is remarkably evident that...’, *is* it remarkably evident? When they write, ‘Surprisingly, the profit grows...’, *is* it surprising? Often it is not. Such untrue sentences simply ‘prove’ the memorisation? Do you think this is a good message to give?

Reason 5: Dishonesty

When students write, ‘It is crystal clear that...’ or ‘It can be easily seen from the supplied information...’ or ‘One interesting feature is...’, do they actually believe it is clear, easily seen, or interesting? Do you think such dishonesty is a good message to give?

Reason 6: Disregarded Passages

IELTS examiners can recognise fluff. When the students’ *real* writing skills are shown in the rest of the answer, which pieces do you think examiners use to decide upon the score?

Reason 7: Incoherence

By introducing a large amount of memorised material, the description is not written from a single mind, but from many people. Do you think these parts fit together as a whole? Look at the Coherence & Cohesion Descriptors at the beginning of Tip 9, Part Two. If the writing is inaccurate or states the obvious too often, what band score does the student receive?

How can I prove all this? Well, using common sense, you have just 20 minutes, and *one* attempt, to write a *full* summary, covering *all* features of the task. Specifically, you are asked to ‘summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.’ Can fluff help do this? Not at all.

Using the IELTS band descriptors, the public version tells us that your score goes higher when you:

- address the requirements of the task.
- use non-mechanical approaches.
- fit the parts together clearly.
- show (clear) progression.
- do not repeat.
- have appropriate vocabulary.
- give appropriate data.
- mention key features.
- describe key features.
- show clear meaning.

Does fluff do this? No, it does not do *any* of this *at all*. So, Tip 6 is to cut the fluff. Remember – your goal is not to reach 150 words by adding fluff. An answer of 150 words can still receive IELTS Four! By following this advice, we can similarly change Answer 4 to...

~~It is evident from the information supplied that overall, firstly, if we compare the profit for Noble Park over the four quarters, the figures show that Noble Park's profit in all quarters decreases; and secondly, if we make a comparison of the profit for the three clubs, the numbers generally indicate that the profit for Dandenong and Geelong is higher.~~

By cutting the fluff, I have given the same message in less than one third of the words! Now I have time to mention and explain *key* features and *important* information in a *non-mechanical* way, which is what I am *asked to do* in the first place. [See also Tip 10, Exercise 18, Part Three].

The 'We can see from the chart' Problem

Let us look at Answers 5, which all refer to 1. 'seeing' and 2. the chart/task. All these 'fluffy' beginnings are common among students and bad IELTS material, used again and again (and again) in a single answer. Even IELTS books from western publishers will use these. Here are three reasons why they do not help.

These beginnings...

1. ... state the obvious, and say nothing.

How can that be good writing? The *real* message is at the end.

2. ... are very repetitive.

The chart has been introduced already in the introduction.

Why do we need to keep referring to it?

3. ... are NOT logical or appropriate to the task.

These statements belong in a boardroom, when a presenter is pointing to a chart before an audience. They assume the task *is being studied* by others. However, IELTS Task One is *information transfer*: transferring information from one piece of paper to another. The answer should therefore be *independent* of the actual task, as if the reader is *not* studying it. It could refer only to *your* observation ('The chart shows', 'clearly', 'by far').

In short, the ‘we can see from the chart’ syndrome is just more fluff. Good writers simply concisely write:

~~According to the graphical data, we can discern that Dandenong’s profit increases.~~

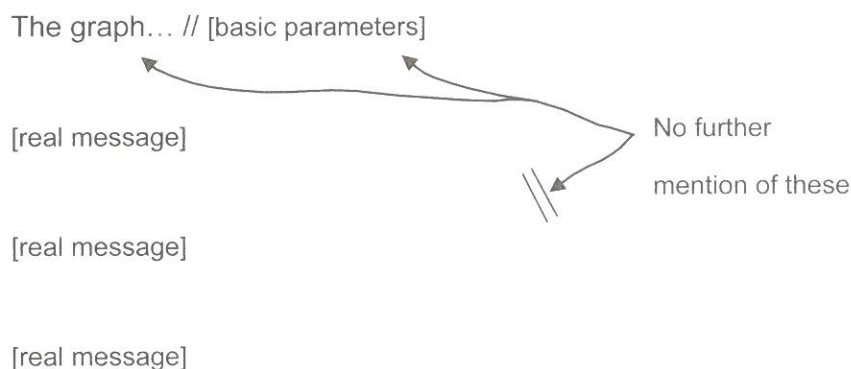
So, your answer can mention the graph/chart/figure *one time only* in the introduction (to connect it to the real world/actual task), and never again. As Tip 10 will explain, we could even make the stylistic choice to remove *all* mention of the task, making the description completely independent.

Conclusion

Similarly, all basic ‘parameters’ can be established in the introduction, and need not be repeated, or perhaps just repeated once to clarify the context as required. These parameters may be the:

- whole time period (‘2000 to 2010’),
- units (‘in thousands of dollars’),
- nouns or adjectives of location (‘in *European* countries; among *Japanese* tourists’).

That is, our answer is structured as follows:



So, avoid all the fluff, and get to the point. Study *every* sample answer in this book to see how they follow this approach. [See also Tip 11, Exercise 20, Part One]. These answers can go *over* 250 words, and they do not use fluff. Good writing is full of *meaning*, conveying a message that *you* want to say. There is *much* that can be written which is *rewarded* by the band descriptors. The following tips will show you how.

Exercise 7

Look at our sample ‘football clubs’ graph at the beginning of Tip 5.

1. Cut the conclusion/opinion out of it.
2. Cut the fluff out of it.

The ‘fluff-less’ version is shown at the beginning of the next tip.

Tip 7

Include a Forest-View

Preliminary

Let us look at the question requirements in greater detail. The question says:

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

Keep this in mind when doing the following exercise.

Exercise 8

Part One

Look at the following two 50-word descriptions, A and B?

1. How are they different?
2. What do you think they are describing?
3. Which one - made this clearer?
4. - tells you more?
5. - is most useful?
6. - allows better vocabulary and grammar?
7. - allows some 'style' in the writing?
8. - do you prefer?

Description A

There are some insects on a branch, and a puddle at the front, and some small plants there as well. There are some water drops and dirt at the left, and visible also are some roots and rocks on the right, among the trees, and next to assorted leaf litter.

Description B

This forest is quite dense, and temperate, as shown by the predominantly thin trees covering all places except for a small clearing, and possibly a path, in the foreground. Apart from the tree trunks and rare patches of earth, the colour is an overwhelming and rather monotonous single shade of green.

Part Two

Our ‘football clubs’ answer is now ‘fluff-less’ and reaches the point quicker, but there are still several problems with it. Thinking about the task requirements, and Part One of this exercise, what is the most obvious problem?

The graph shows the profit figures for three football clubs – Dandenong, Geelong, and Noble Park – over a year.

Dandenong’s profit begins at about 45 thousand dollars. Dandenong’s profit rises strongly to about 60 thousand dollars in the first quarter. Noble Park football club’s profit falls fairly evenly throughout the year. The profit fell from just over 50 thousand dollars. Geelong football club grows in this first quarter. Regarding Dandenong football club, Dandenong football club continues to increase. Dandenong increases throughout the next few quarters. Geelong football club grows. Geelong falls. Noble Park football club falls. Dandenong finished noticeably high, and it more than doubled to almost 100 thousand dollars. Noble Park finished at just under 10 thousand dollars. Geelong football club grows. The profit for Geelong ended at about 60 thousand dollars.

Looking at Part One, it should be obvious that Description B is the one we would pick for Questions 3 to 8. This description makes it clear we are looking at a *forest*, giving the ‘forest’ view (the big picture, by connecting all the parts in a meaningful way). This description can stand alone, without anything else, and be clear and informative.

In contrast, Description A just looks at the trees (the small picture), and on its own, would be somewhat confusing and *completely* unsatisfactory. This description has lost the ‘forest’ by looking only at the ‘trees’.

Of course, a complete description needs both forest and trees, but this ‘forest-view’ is certainly important, and the most interesting, more varied and informative part, and thus it should form a *considerable* part of any Task One writing. Yet our ‘football clubs’ answer shown in Exercise 8, Part Two, has no ‘forest-view’ at all. It looks only at detail, and nothing else, and certainly not the *wider* view, or the view of the graph as a *whole*. As Part One shows, we must therefore consider this answer also *completely* unsatisfactory.

We can also realise this from the task itself. It asks us to ‘summarise’, ‘select main features’, and ‘make comparisons’, which suggests a clear element of forest. Finally, the IELTS band descriptors themselves are very specific on this issue. They use the term ‘Overview’, and the public version of these descriptors reads:

Task Achievement: 2. Gives an overview		
5	6	7
(A) recounts detail mechanically with no clear overview; there may be no data to support the description	(A) presents an overview with information appropriately selected	(A) presents a <u>clear overview</u> of main trends, differences or stages

Extracted from the complete IELTS WRITING Band Descriptors (public version).

(A) signifies *Academic-Module* writing.

Clearly then, to achieve a Band Score Six or higher, you must have this ‘overview’, and the clearer it is, the better. Not having this ‘overview’ will limit your Task Achievement score to Five! So, we need to think carefully about how to deal with this.

Some books suggest breaking up this overview into pieces, following a model:

[Part of overview] → [Smaller view] → [Part of overview] → [Smaller view] ...

But is this *really* clear? Is it IELTS Seven (or higher) clear? I would say this is complicated and mixed up, and could easily become confusing. Obviously the simplest and clearest method would be to grab *all* the overview parts, putting them *all* together as one, and making it a *separate* paragraph – the overview paragraph – and writing a few words at the beginning of this paragraph giving the message, ‘This is an overview!’ Now, that *would* be clear indeed. That would be IELTS Seven (or higher) clear, and that is the approach I recommend.

The Overview (Forest-View)

In Exercise 8, Part One, this ‘forest’ is the ‘overview’, and I will use this more colourful term, ‘forest-view’, from now on. Task Ones can all have this, and follow these three steps to work it out.

Procedure

1. Ignore the axes, words, and information.¹

Just look at the item, and think simply!

Think about how you describe a forest.
Look at the task generally, and see what features* 'hit you in the face'.

- 'Wow, there are two really big sharp things there.'
- 'Look at that big thing rising up above all the others.'
- 'All of them are going up, and only that one goes down.'
- 'Look at that big black section, in both charts.'
- 'There are heaps of new things on these two parts of the map.'

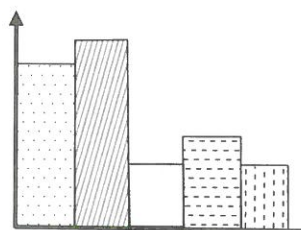
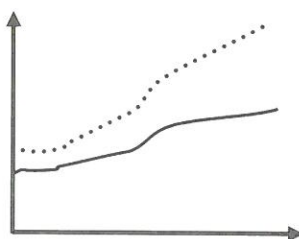
Group these features* logically, trying to include the whole task.

Example

4 Observations for the 2 Charts:

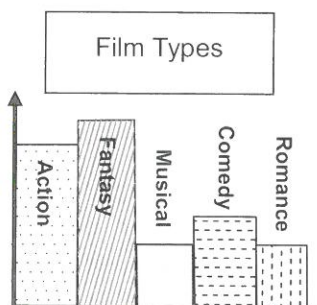
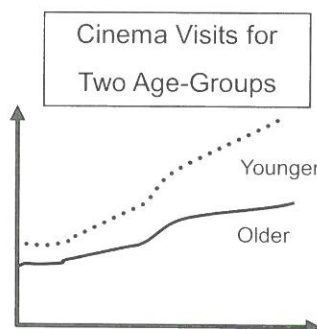
- One line is always higher than the other.
- Both lines go up.
- The gap between the lines widens.
- There are two big, and three small, bars.

[Notice how these observations cover *all* lines, and *all* bars, over the *whole* period. They are indeed forest-views.]



2. Look at the axes and/or information to see what these features* means.

- 'That means the number of people is high at those two points, and fairly high in the middle.'
- 'That means more hamburgers are sold then, at that time of the year.'
- 'That means their prices are going up, but that one isn't.'
- 'That means coal* is really big in both years.'
- 'That means the town has many new tourist facilities*', and has certainly grown a lot.'



- More younger people than older people go to the cinema.
- Both younger and older people go there in increasing numbers... but...
- ...especially younger people.
- Action and fantasy* movies are far higher than the three other types.

¹ But for tables of figures, the approach is the opposite [axes first!], since tables lack the visually-clear lines and shapes of all the other Task-One items. [See Tip 15.]

3. Decide if some or all of this can be expressed in 'real-world' language, that is, normal everyday language, and not the special language used in describing graphs.

- 'So, the station is *busiest* at those times; ah, the *rush* hours, but there is also *considerable* activity over lunch time.'
- 'So, Fat Fred's Hamburgers *achieves their highest sales* in the summer season.'
- 'So, those books are more *expensive*, but that one is *cheaper*, going completely against the *inflationary** trend.'
- 'So, coal *dominates** the export market.'
- 'So, the original *rural** *agricultural* town has *transformed* into an apparently *thriving** tourist centre.'

'Cinemas' Forest View

These establishments experience a *growing popularity* among all ages, but it is the younger generation who always have the *greatest predilection** for this form of entertainment. Additionally, the *livelier and faster-moving action and fantasy genre** have, by far, the *greatest pulling power**, certainly generating the *highest box office** attention.

... Or...

Cinema-goers of all ages, but particularly the youth, show an *active and increasing predilection** for this form of entertainment. Additionally, the *drawing power** of action and fantasy clearly *prevails over the other genres*, seeing the former *garner** a much greater proportion of viewers.

Real World?

Regarding Step 3, some tasks relate to interesting and everyday experiences (such as our 'cinema' task), allowing much easier real-world perspectives. Other tasks are academic and 'dry' (such as our 'football clubs' profit task), limiting such chances. Whatever the case, if all we do in the forest-view is describe mechanically, it can lead to a limited range of words (since these words are likely to be repeated in the trees-view. Most graphs (including the ones in this book) do not allow much real-world perspectives, but there can usually be *some*. Just try your best, and always be honest.

Notice in the 'cinemas' forest view, I did not write 'because'. It would be a mistake to write:

The action and fantasy genre* have the greatest pulling power* *because* they are livelier and faster-moving.

... since this is speculation, which you were *not* asked to give, and it may be wrong anyway. However, I managed to include the phrase 'livelier and faster-moving' as an incidental* description of the movie types, not as a cause and effect relationship. In the same way, I did not write, '... and *this results in* greater box office* attention', which is again moving outside the task. Instead I mentioned it incidentally*, with an adverb (revealing it is my voice), and using a

participial phrase (explained in Tip 12, Part Seven). [See also Tip 16, Hint 5, Warnings].

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous sentences) with their meaning on the right.

1	feature	(n)	buildings, services, or equipment that provide a purpose
2	coal	(n)	a general rise in the price of goods and services
3	facility	(n)	being strong, healthy, or successful
4	fantasy	(adj)	to control or have a lot of influence over sb./sth
5	inflation	(n)	a hard black mineral that is burnt to produce heat
6	to dominate	(v)	connected with, or like, the countryside
7	rural	(adj)	something important, interesting, or typical of a place or thing
8	thriving	(adj)	ability to attract customers or interest
9	predilection	(n)	relating to the imagination, or things unlikely or impossible
10	genre	(n)	happening in connection with sth. else, but not as important
11	pulling power	(n)	the place at the cinema where the tickets are sold
	drawing power		a very great liking for something
12	box office	(n)	a particular type or style of literature, art, film, or music
13	to garner	(v)	to obtain or collect sth., such as information or support
14	incidental	(adj)	

Think Both Ways

As our two different forest-views for our cinema task shows, there can often be different ways of expressing the same concept, looking in either direction (A/B). Before writing, think about which sounds more stylish. Some simple examples follow.

- A. Most of the firm's customers are females.
- B. Females constitute most of the firm's customers.
- A. Absenteeism was higher at Melside.
- B. Melside saw a greater degree of absenteeism.

Practical Tests Strategies 3: Writing Task One

- A. Most people complained about the service.
- B. The service area is the one which generated most complaints.
- A. Fat Fred's Hamburgers sell most of their product in the summer season.
- B. Fat Fred's hamburgers are most popular in the summer season.
- C. It is the summer season in which most of Fred Fred's hamburgers are sold.
- A. Tourists were generally satisfied with their visits to Australia
- B. Visits to Australia prompted generally positive responses.
- A. The majority of cinema-goers opted for the action and fantasy genre.
- B. The action and fantasy genre proved far more popular among cinema-goers.

Exercise 9

Look again at the 'football clubs' line graph at the start of Tip 4. Try to work out the overall message, or forest-view. Try to phrase it in real-world terms.

Doing the previous exercise could give an observation such as:

*Looking first as a whole, Dandenong's profit is higher than the profit of its two rivals. It is not higher in the beginning. Dandenong football club generates increasingly higher earnings throughout the year. This makes Dandenong football club the **most financially successful club**.*

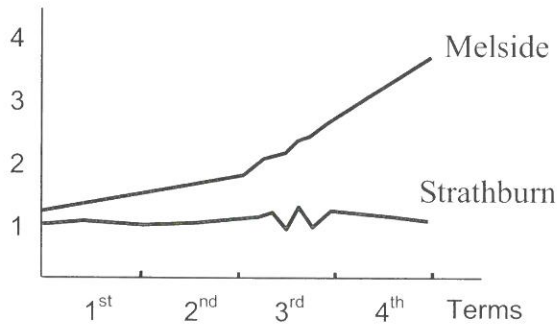
This is not so well-written (since I have put in mistakes which will be corrected by further tips), but it does look at the graph as a whole, and manages to use some 'real-world' words. The terms 'rival' and 'most financially successful' do not appear on the graph at all, but that is what the graph shows in real world English.

Exercise 10

There are three Task Ones in this exercise. Try to think of one or two sentences to describe their *overall* message. Think about how these messages could be expressed more meaningfully in *real-world* words. Sample answers are shown in Appendix 3.

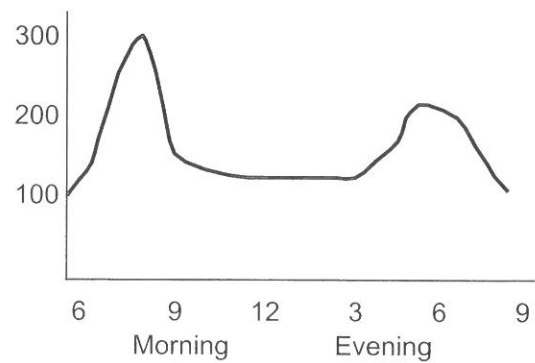
Task A

Absenteeism at two High Schools (%)



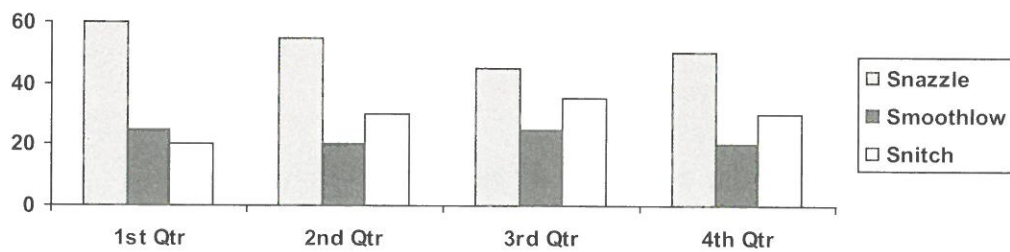
Task B

People entering Noble Park Railway Station over a 15 Hour Period



Task C

Sales of Chunky Chocolate Bars (in units) in 2010



So remember, the need for a forest-view is specifically mentioned in the descriptors, so make sure you write it. But how, and where? Read on.

Tip 8

Structuring the Forest-View

Part One: Inside the Forest-View

Well, we know that we need the forest-view, but how do we organise it? Try the next exercise.

Exercise 11

Look at the following forest-view.

Forest-View A

Between 2001 and 2005, the number increases dramatically from 20 to 80, and then from 2006 to 2010, decreases slightly by five.

1. Is this forest-view actually a forest-view? How do you know?
2. Should it have figures? How should you organise it?
3. Are the following (B and C) better?

Forest-View B

The main message is that there are many changes, resulting in considerable differences. Furthermore, this reveals that there are many variations which exist.

Forest-View C

Overall, Dandenong was highest in the fourth quarter, and Geelong was low at the start.

Here are six hints about forest-views.

Hint 1

It is very important to introduce the forest-view *as* a forest-view. You need to tell the readers (and IELTS examiners) *what* they are reading. In Exercise 11, Forest-View A, the readers would have no idea that they are reading a forest-view, and the Task Achievement band score could be affected. Here are some ways to introduce a forest-view. They are all similar enough to be used without any problem, although some explanation is provided.

1. Generally speaking,¹ ...
2. In general,¹ ...
3. Overall,² ...
4. On the whole,¹ ...
5. The main message is [that]³...
6. Looking [first⁴] as a whole, ...
7. Over the whole period,⁵ ...

[Forest-view]

[eg. 'Dandenong is the most financially successful club, achieving a consistent rise...']

¹ Meaning not always, but mostly, and best used when the trends are not totally clear.

² Meaning comparing the beginning with the end, and used as above.

³ This is best used when the introduction mentions the task (eg. 'The graph shows...').

⁴ If using this, the next paragraph – that is, the first tree-paragraph – could then use the *topic phrase* phrase, 'Looking *now* at [Topic]' as Tip 9, Part One will show. [See Appendix 14, as an example.]

⁵ This does not have the 'general' meaning of the first six, and is best used for clear trends – that is, trends which are consistent throughout the time period. For our 'football clubs' task, you cannot say, 'Over the whole period, Noble Park is more profitable than the other two clubs' [since it is actually lower in the first few months]. However, for Exercise 10, Task A, you *can* say, 'Over the whole period, Melside suffers from higher absenteeism' [since this trend *is* indeed over the whole period].

Hint 2

Try *not* to use figures in forest-views, since the 'danger' is that your forest-view will actually change into a 'tree'-view. Specific figures can go in the 'tree-view' paragraphs which follow. You could even not mention dates, allowing only your *words* to give the message.

Hint 3

Make sure that this forest-view is, in fact, a forest-view. In Exercise 11, Forest-View A is not 'forest' at all. It is just a detailed description following the profile of a graph line. This obviously cannot be written in real-world English, and this information will be repeated anyway in the trees-view. IELTS Five is the result.

If you just write, 'Generally speaking' and then write *anything*, you are *not* writing a forest-view, and *not* fooling the IELTS examiner, since the descriptors say that the Task Achievement 6 forest-view has 'information *appropriately* selected'. Without this, the Task Achievement Band Score again can only be 5, or lower.

Hint 4

Similarly, make sure that this forest-view has *meaningful* information. In Exercise 11, Forest-View B tells us that there are 'changes', 'differences', and 'variations'. This is vague and meaningless, and should not trick an (experienced) examiner. This sort of 'fluff' exists in many books for memorisation. Tip 6, Exercise 6, Answers 2 show similar examples. Such meaninglessness only proves that the writer can *not* find an overall message, so the Task Achievement Band Score again can only be 5, or lower. The Lexical Resource Band Score can also be affected.

Hint 5

Exercise 11, Forest-View C tries to have meaning, but just selects a few points of the graph. It does not cover *the whole* task, so how can it be forest? If you want to say Line A is highest, compare it to the *other* lines.

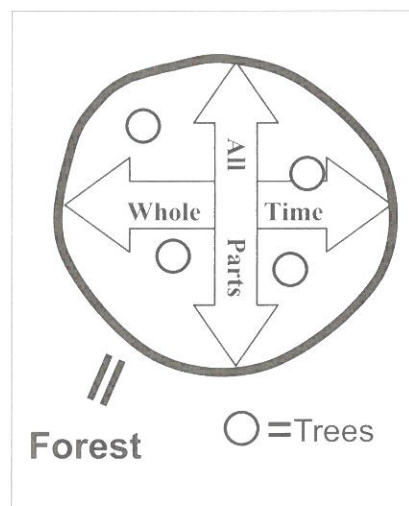
Most people prefer Snazzle chocolate bars over Smoothlow and Snitch.

If you notice Line B rises, see if the *other* lines also do so.

All the companies generate increasing profits.

If you notice a trend in the first part of the time axis, *compare it to the rest* of the time period.

French travellers generally take domestic holidays, *apart from the last few years*, when they prefer European package tours.



A forest is a forest, and should attempt to be as broad as possible, as indicated by the diagram.

Hint 6

If there are two or more trends which ‘hit you in the face’, *and* they need several sentences to be described, then one approach is to ‘announce the count’, then give the trends. Here are three models to do this:

- | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| 1. | Firstly, | | The second trend is | |
| 2. | Overall, there are two/three trends. | One is | The other (trend) is | |
| 3. | | [1 st Trend]. In addition/Additionally, | | |

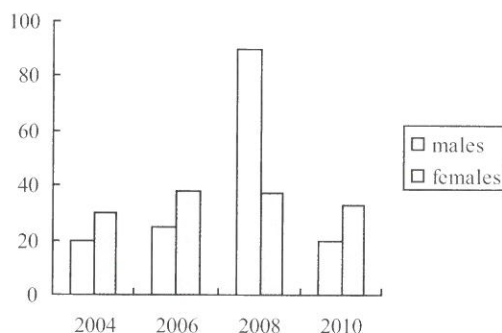
This model is used in the sample Task One answers in Appendix 12 and 20. When using this, it might be better not use the longer forest-view introductory signposts 4, 5, 6, or 7 [For example, ‘Looking first as a whole, there are two trends’], since the signpost is quite long. Use the 1, 2, 3 signposts instead.

Exercise 12

Look at the following six Task Ones: A-F. Think of their forest-views, and try writing them using all of the hints in Part One of this tip. Sample answers are shown in Appendix 3.

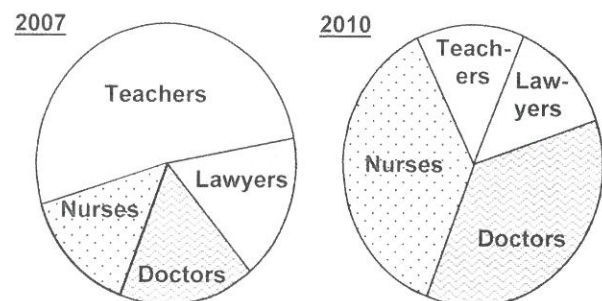
Task A

Teacher Numbers at CMT University



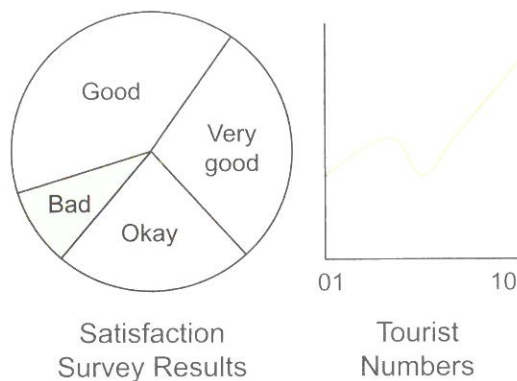
Task B

AAA Employment Agency: Percentage of Recruitment, by Profession Type



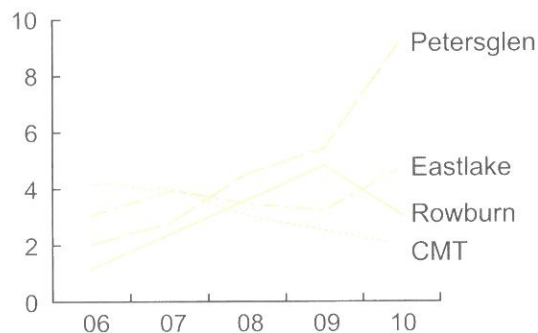
Task C

**Number of Tourists to Victoria,
and Satisfaction Ratings for 2010**



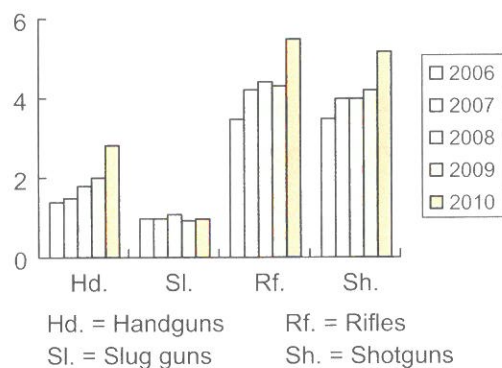
Task D

**Number of Students (000s) Enrolled at
Four Australian Universities (06 to 10)**



Task E

**Average Price of Guns (\$00s)
Sold at Johnson's Gun Shop**



Task F

**Number of Visitors to Byron Bay's
Facilities in a Typical Day by Age.**

Destination	Age Category		
	20-35	36-50	50+
Beach	65	40	33
Bar	75	56	24
Museum	20	35	58
Cinema	55	45	56
Art Gallery	17	34	54

Part Two: Inside the Answer

Alright. We know that we should put in a forest-view, written as a separate paragraph, with a clear introduction (as Part One, Hint 1 explained), since paragraphs with clear introductions give better cohesion. But where does this paragraph go in the whole answer?

Exercise 13

Two possible Task One structures could be:

Structure A	Structure B	
Brief Introduction	Brief Introduction	
Forest-view	Tree-view	No time left 1 ▼
Tree-view	Tree-view	No time left 2 ▼
Tree-view	Forest-view	

Consider

Which structure - A or B - would produce a better answer if you ran out of time at Point 1, as shown? What about if you ran out of time at Point 2?

Both of these structures are good, can be used, and there is a logic to using Structure A, where the forest-view at the end concludes the description. However, remember that this forest-view is probably the most important part of the answer, since it covers the graph completely, gives the main message, and often gives an opportunity to use different (real-world) grammar and words. This means that, as a test strategy, Structure A is probably the best model to follow, since even if you run out of time, this important forest-view still appears in the answer.

Now, we know enough about the forest-view. Let's move on to the tree-views.

Tip 9

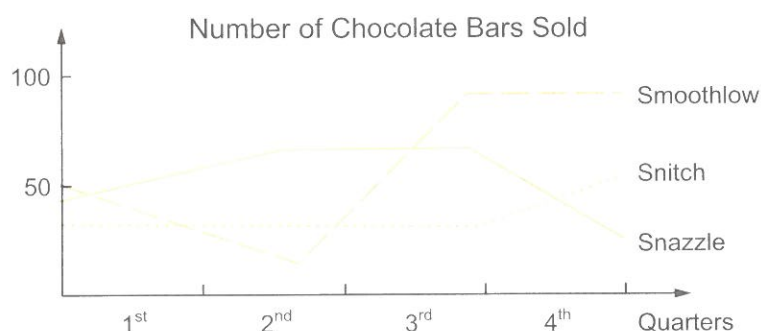
Structuring the Tree-View

Part One: The Big Picture (Topic Phrases)

Let us now go a little deeper into structuring an answer using the following exercise.

Exercise 14

1. Look at this line graph, and the two answers: A and B. How are they different?



Answer A

[Brief Introduction]

[Forest-view]

In the beginning, Snazzle rises, but Smoothlow falls, while Snitch stays the same.

In the next part, Snazzle stays the same, whereas Smoothlow increases. Snitch still stays the same.

In the last part, Snazzle falls, but Snitch rises, while Smoothlow stays the same.

Answer B

[Brief Introduction]

[Forest-view]

With respect to Snazzle, it first rises. Then it stays the same, after which it falls.

As for Snitch, it stays the same for the first two periods, followed by an increase.

Regarding Smoothlow, after falling, it increases, and then stays the same.

2. Which of these answers better follows the public version of these IELTS band descriptors?

Coherence & Cohesion: 1. Organises the writing, showing progression		
5	6	7
presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression	arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression	logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout

Extracted from the complete IELTS WRITING Band Descriptors (public version).

Answer A looks at *one* time period, then describes the trend of *all three* lines for that period. This can be difficult. For a less-skilled writer, this often results in answers with ‘unclear progression’, which in turn suggests a Coherence & Cohesion Band Score 5 (or lower).

In contrast, Answer B looks at *one* of the lines, and follows it over the *whole* period of the graph. This usually gives ‘clear organisation and progression’ which suggests a Coherence & Cohesion Band Score 6 (or higher). This is because the organisation allows a single and straightforward topic for each paragraph. Thus, the organisation of Answer B is probably better.

This organisation also allows us to use ‘topic’ or ‘transition’ phrases to make the progress even clearer. A ‘phrase’ is a group of words *without* a verb. Look at Answer B one more time, and notice how the last three paragraphs begin. They use the phrases:

With respect to Snazzle, ...

As for¹ Snitch, [Subject + Verb]...

Regarding Smoothlow, ...

There are no verbs in these topic phrases, just words introducing a new subject. A clause [Subject + Verb] follows. Other examples of these sorts of phrases are:

Looking (now) at [Line A],

Looking (now) at [Line B] [more specifically],² ... [Subject + Verb]...

Examining [in more detail],²

Considering [Line C],

Moving (on) to¹ [Line D],

Comparing this to¹ [Line E],

Focussing on [Line F],

Turning to [Line G],

¹ These cannot *begin* the *first* tree-paragraph; they must come *after* another topic has been discussed.

² These additions can only be used if the leading noun [Line B] has already been discussed in a previous paragraph (e.g. the forest).

Practical IELTS Strategies 3: Writing Task One

We could still use topic *sentences*, such as:

[Line A] has a very different profile.

... or (using a topic phrase to begin) the sentence:

As for [Line A], it has a very different profile.

These are satisfactory, but shorter topic phrases are usually better for Task One, since this task is shorter and must only describe statistical facts. Thus, this tip – Tip 9 – is: when dealing with ‘tree’ paragraphs (after the ‘forest-view’), you should...

1. make sure that each paragraph has a consistent theme (such as ‘Line B’, ‘1982’, or ‘Australian men’),
2. begin that theme using topic phrases, such as the ones given in this tip,
3. select the topic phrases allowing an organisation of only *two* or *three* tree-paragraphs.

Looking at Point 3, remember that Task One is rather short, so it cannot have too many paragraphs, yet we still need a single theme in each tree-paragraph. This means we have to think carefully about which topic phrases to use.

Exercise 15

Look again at the six Task Ones in Tip 8, Exercise 12. Look also at Tip 7, Exercise 10, Task B. How would you organise the tree-paragraphs for each one?

Try to Divide

Let us consider how to organise the ‘trees’. In Exercise 12, **Task A**, we could organise each tree-paragraph with a date, writing, ‘Looking at 2004, ...’, ‘Regarding 2006, ...’ and so on, but this would result in *four* paragraphs. Too many! Also, it is not logical, as we know from Part One of this tip. So, it would be better to use,

Regarding males, ...

As for females, ...

... since this gives *two* paragraphs, which is more appropriate for the short nature of Task One. It is also more logical because the bar chart is the same as two graph lines, one for men, and one for women.

In Exercise 12, **Task B**, we could try, ‘Looking first at doctors, ...’, ‘Moving onto nurses, ...’ and so on, but this again would result in *four* paragraphs. Too many! It would be better to use the

topic phrases,

Looking ~~first at 2007~~ *at the first year*, ...

Moving ~~onto 2010~~, *ahead four years*, ...

This gives two paragraphs, which is much better, and it also follows the *natural* division that the task has already created.

IELTS Task Ones are sometimes *two* smaller items, as in Exercise 12, **Task C**. You should *definitely* use this to your advantage. Clearly, the simplest approach for the tree-paragraphs in Task C is:

Considering the ~~pie chart~~ *satisfaction of tourists*, ...

With respect to ~~the line graph~~ *their numbers in this state*, ...

Notice, I have not repeated '2007', '2010', 'pie chart' or 'line graph' (all shown crossed out). Remember my rule: the graph/chart/diagram is only mentioned *once*, if you want, in the introduction, and repetition should be reduced. [See Tip 6: 'We can see from the chart' problem.]

So remember, if you have *two* parts for any task: two pie charts, two graphs, two maps, a graph and a flow chart, or two groups of information, *use this 'two-ness' to your advantage*, and make them the topics of your topic phrases.

Let us jump to the graph in Exercise 10, **Task B**: a line graph with a single line. How can we make *two-ness* from *one* line? It is easy! Simply break up the time axis into *two* logical periods. For example:

Regarding the first half of the day, ...

As for the remaining time, ...

The same technique can be used for process diagrams (as in Tip 16), which are also 'linear' (= like a line). So, in general, try to *divide the task* into two (or perhaps three) parts.

Group For Two

In Exercise 12, **Task D**, we could try, 'Looking first at Petersglen, ...', 'Moving onto Eastlake, ...' and so on, but this again would result in *four* paragraphs. We could try, 'Regarding 2006', 'As for 2007', but we already know this is bad. So what do we do? The answer is to *group* the lines to create fewer paragraphs, preferably two. For example, since Petersglen and Rowburn both increase significantly overall, they could be *grouped* together in one paragraph, leaving Eastlake and CMT to be grouped together in the second.

Practical IELTS Strategies 3 Writing Task One

Examining Petersglen and Rowburn, ...

Comparing these to Eastlake and CMT, ...

When grouping *many* topics into *one* paragraph, you can follow the model:

[Topic Phrase] [Group Members], the first one [Trend] ...(whereas) the

[Second Group Member] [Trend]. The [Third Group Member] [Trend].

For example:

Looking at Eastlake, Rowburn, and CMT, the first university fluctuates evenly at around three (thousand), whereas the second, Rowburn, starts at one, then over the next three and a half years, increases steadily to a peak of almost five, which is the highest point achieved by any of the three, after which it decreases in the last year. In contrast, CMT only decreases over the period, from four to two.

In Exercise 12, **Task E**, again, we have too many dates (five of them), and too many sets of bars (four of them). So, as with Task D, we again need to *group* some sets together so as to *divide* the trees into paragraphs, preferably two. You could group rifles with shotguns (since they are both high), and handguns with slug guns (since they are both low). You could also put rifles in one paragraph, and group the others in another, since the former is more interesting. Your topic phrases could then be:

Looking first at rifles, in 2006, their average price was...

Focussing on the other types of weapons, hand guns began at...

As for Exercise 12, **Task F**, it also has many subjects. So, again, we need to group them together. The most logical topic phrases would probably be:

Considering first beaches and bars, ...

Moving onto the other three *venues*, ...

Notice the use of the word 'venues' (= places where people meet). Grouping can sometimes (but not often) allow the introduction of new or real-world vocabulary. This follows Tip 11 [See Exercise 21], where the point is made that in a 'dry' Task One, you need to take every opportunity to put some variety in your vocabulary. At its simplest, this could be:

Moving onto the other two clubs , [Subject] + [Verb] ...
other institutes
rest of the time period
remainder of the day
remaining years

Thus, there are two methods when grouping data, shown as follows.

1. With respect to [X] and [Y] , the first/[X] ...
(whereas) The second/[Y] ...

e.g. With respect to rifles and shotguns , the first starts at over three, ...
The second shows a similar trend, ...
2. Examining general/real world term for [X] & [Y] , [X] ... [Y] ...

e.g. Examining the heavy weaponry , rifles start at over three, ...
Shotguns show a similar trend, ...

The Summarising Exercise, Final Version of the answer uses *both* these methods in the one answer (Paragraphs Three and Four), while the Writing Task One Practice IV answer uses the second method.

So, when working out the topic phrases for the trees paragraphs, *try to divide* the task into two (or perhaps three) parts, and *group* the data, if necessary, to do this.

Part Two: The Small Picture (Trends, Sequence, & Order)

Preliminary

We now know to use topic phrases, but, as usual, knowing this alone does not mean it is easy to write tree-paragraphs. We need to write them so that all their parts fit together well, or in other words, 'cohere' or show 'cohesion'. We do this with a variety of smaller 'signpost' and 'pointer' words and methods, known as 'cohesive devices'. The IELTS band descriptors are specific about this. The public version says:

Coherence & Cohesion: 2. Makes the sentences and parts fit together		
5	6	7
makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices	uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical	uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use

Extracted from the complete IELTS WRITING Band Descriptors (public version).

Exercise 16

1. What is the problem with the following tree-paragraph?

As for Noble Park, throughout the entire period, their profit declined steadily, particularly in the second quarter, from just over 50 to end at about 10; *however Dandenong increased the most.*

2. What is the problem with the following tree-paragraph?

With respect to Snazzle, in the first half of the first quarter it *rises* fairly steadily. In the second half, it continues to *increase*. In the second quarter, it *grows* gradually. In the middle of the second quarter, it *stays the same*. In the second half of the second quarter, it *remains constant*. In the third quarter, it *stays stable*. For some more months it *keeps staying at the same level*. Near the end of the third quarter it begins to *fall*. In the fourth quarter it *decreases* gradually. Then it *falls* steadily until the very end of the year.

3. What is missing from this text?

With respect to Snazzle, it rises. It stays the same. It falls.

As for Snitch, for two periods it stays the same. It increases.

Regarding Smoothlow, it falls, but increases, and stays the same.

4. What is the problem with the following tree-paragraph?

Firstly, the profit rises. *Moreover*, in the second quarter it continues to rise. *Furthermore*, it stays the same. *In addition*, in the last quarter, it falls.

5. What is awkward about the following two sentences?

- A. From 2003 to 2007, the pollution in Poland fell rapidly to 100. It then stayed the same for three years. It had a large amount in 2003.
- B. Next, in the fourth quarter, it declined to a very low point; however, in the first quarter it was high.

6. Which of the following sentences reads better and more smoothly?

- A. The profit increases steadily from about 60 to 95 between the second and fourth quarter for Dandenong.
- B. Between the second and fourth quarter, the profit for Dandenong increases steadily from about 60 to 95.

What is the problem with the following sentence?

- C. The price rose from 90 to 99 from 95 to 96.

Hint 1: Keep the Topic the Same

The first example in the previous exercise uses the topic phrase: 'As for Noble Park'. This means that the topic *must stay* Noble Park. In the last sentence, the student has introduced *Dandenong* as a main topic, and this makes the organisation unclear. As Tip 13 will say, it is certainly good to make comparisons by introducing other subjects, but they must not be introduced in a *leading* way. The paragraph is much clearer written as:

As for Noble Park, throughout the entire period, their profit declined steadily, particularly in the second quarter, from just over 50 to end at about 10, *which was only a tenth of Dandenong's profit at that time*.

Now we have a relative clause [good], and the *subject* of the clause ['which'] is *Noble Park's* profit, keeping the subject the same as the topic phrase [good again].

Hint 2: 'Chunk' into Major Trends

In Exercise 16, Example 2, the student has described *everything* in detail – *too* much detail, needing 100 words. This leads to repetitive grammar and words, and does not meet the task requirements ['summarise the information']. You need to break the line into *major* trends. So, ...

Snazzle could be described from	[1 st	to	Mid 2 nd quarter],
... then...	[Mid 2 nd	to	End 3 rd quarter],
... then...	[4 th quarter].		

Writing Task One

This could give the much better and concise (40 word) description:

With respect to Snazzle, from the start of the year to the middle of the second quarter, its sales gradually rise, remaining level for the next one and a half quarters. Then, for the rest of the year, it declines.

... allowing the 'extra' 60 words to be better used for giving the forest-view and key features.

Look at the graph line in Tip 12, Exercise 24. How would you break up that graph line? The answer is in the answer to that exercise.

Hint 3: Use (Correct) Sequencers

In Exercise 16, Example 3, what is missing are some 'sequencers' – that is, words that put events in order of *time*. In Example 4, the writer has used *conjunctions* instead of sequencers. [See also Tip 5, Exercise 4, Part C]. The words you should use are *time* sequencers.

We can use many *verbs* to show time sequence ('to start/begin, to continue, to end/finish'). We can also do this with specific phrases. Here are five models.

1 At the start/beginning, in [Specific Point of Time]*1 ,

2 In the

first	second
next	subsequent
following	final / last

[general time period] ,
'three years'

3 [Subject + Verb]
'It fluctuates for two years'

. Next,	. Then,
. Following this,	
. After that,	
, after which	

[Subject + Verb]...

4 After

[Noun Phrase] ,
'reaching a peak'
'a small dip'
'some fluctuations'
'a promising start'

5*2 [Subject + Verb + Object] ,
'There is a significant growth',

followed by
before

[Noun Phrase]...
'a period of instability.'

^{*1} Remember that the 'start/beginning' refers to a specific starting point probably already mentioned in the introduction, so repeating it here is usually unnecessary. Also, the 'subject + verb' which follows gives a starting figure – for example, 'the profit was 25.' [See also Tip 19, Item 9a]

^{*2} This grammar works best when there is an object ('growth' in the example, or 'high point', 'peak', or downturn') in the first trend, to contrast the noun phrase of the second trend.

Be careful that you use these words only when there are events or periods that need to be put *in order of time* – that is, when following the X axis. Bar and pie charts may not have a time axis, but instead refer to specific years. In these cases, you will not need these sequencers [See Tip 14, Exercise 32].

Finally, in Exercise 16, Example 5, we have some sequencers ['then', 'next' and 'however'] but the problem is in the sequencing itself. Generally, describe the graph in *order of time* (known as 'chronological order'). Start from the earliest point, and go through to the final point – if you do *not*, your answer can become very confusing. So, Sentence 5A should be written:

In 2003, Poland had a large amount of pollution. From this point to 2007, the figure fell rapidly to 100, after which it stayed the same for three years.

Hint 4: Ordering Information

In Exercise 16, Example 6, when we read Sentence A, we begin to follow the description of a trend. However, you probably began wondering *which* of the football clubs this trend applied to. This answer was not given until the end of the sentence, and this can be confusing.

In Sentence (B), the time period and full subject are given first, and this is better because ...

1. these are the most *important* pieces of information, best given at the *beginning* of the sentence,
2. this time period is separated from the 'Y' data (which is at the end), thus avoiding confusing finishes such as shown in Example Six, Sentence C.

As a general rule, in order to have the clearest answer, give information in the following order:

[Sequencer], [Time period], [Y] [Trend]. [= (SP)YT]

You can remember this by the word '(SP)YT', pronounced 'spit'. Just think about how you would really like to *spit* on the question. The sequencer and the time period are often written as one. For example:

In the **first five years**, the profit increased.

A group of sentences following the (SP)YT order reads very clearly. For example:

In the **first one and a half quarters**, Line C's profit decreases from 50 to about 10. **However**, from this point to the end of the third quarter, the profit increases substantially, to almost 100, which is the highest achieved, **after which** the figure shows no change.

However, it is usually better to not break up a 'Preposition + Noun' phrase (for example: 'followed by a fall'; 'before a small increase'; 'after some fluctuations'). In these cases, the time period is more naturally written at the end (rather than the beginning).

After rising steadily *for a year*, the profit experienced a three month period of instability, followed by a fall *in the last two years*.

Similarly, participial phrases are best not broken (See Tip 12, Part Seven). Notice that in the previous SPYT sentences, I *varied* the leading noun, from 'Line C's profit' to 'the profit' and then to 'the figure'. I also varied the grammar in the third sentence, compared to the first two. This is very important, and leads us to the next two tips. Travel on, but first do the next exercise.

Exercise 17

Part One

Rewrite the following paragraph using the (SP)YT order, in logical 'time' order, using sequencers as required.

There was a three year period of stability in the middle of the period. The profit fluctuated near the beginning, for months. It experienced a descent to about 30 from 03 to 05. There was a fall to a low point of 10 in the last year. The profit rose steadily in the first three years.

Part Two

Here is a description of our 'Chocolate Bars' line graph in Tip 9, Part One, Exercise 14. Fill in the gaps using the correct topic phrase or sequencer.

_____, the number remains constant for almost three quarters,
_____ there occurs a slight rise.

_____, in the _____ third of the year, sales fall to the lowest point. In the _____ few months, they experience a pronounced and steady rise. _____, there is a period of stability.

_____, the number sold rises slightly in the _____ one and a half quarters. _____, there is a three month period of stability, _____ a significant fall.

Part Three

Connect the left pieces with the right to make logically and grammatically correct sentences.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. After an unpromising start, | A. Following this, there were fluctuations. |
| 2. At the beginning, | B. followed by a period of stability. |
| 3. The profit rose substantially. | C. the profit rises rapidly. |
| 4. There is a substantial rise, | D. the profit is 50. |
| 5. The sales experienced a significant fall, | E. the figure remains the same. |
| 6. From 02 to 05, it increased steadily to 45, | F. after which it rose by five units. |
| 7. In the last decade, | G. at which point it stabilised. |

The answers to Parts One to Three are shown in Appendix 4.

Part Four

Look at our 'football clubs' answer at the beginning of Tip 7. This answer needs a forest-view, which we wrote in that tip. However, the tree-view paragraph is a disorganised mess.

It needs to be broken up and re-organised with consistent topics, introduced by topic phrases, as we have discussed in this tip.

1. Put in the forest-view, in the recommended position.
2. We know it is best to divide the trees into two (or three) tree-paragraphs. We have *three* graph lines, so we can perhaps re-organise the tree-view(s) into three paragraphs, each one looking at a football club.
3. Introduce the subject of these paragraphs with a topic phrase.

We will apply the (SP)YT rule later. The answer is shown in Tip 11, Exercise 22.

VARYING THE WORDS & GRAMMAR TIPS: 10-11

In our Writing Task One (and Task Two), one quarter of the score is based on the words we use. It is thus important to use mature and appropriate words, and always with few mistakes. We also need to have a variety or 'range' of words. The IELTS band descriptors are quite clear on this. The public version reads:

Lexical Resource: 1. Uses a range of words		
5	6	7
uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task	uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task	uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision

Extracted from the complete IELTS WRITING Band Descriptors (public version).

In Tip 10, we will look at how we can vary the words and the grammar in the introduction of an answer, and in Tip 11, we will see how we can do this in the body text.

Tip 10

The Introduction

Do we write an introduction? Well, we do *not* write an essay-style introduction. There is no background or opinion to write, since the task is *not* an essay, but instead a *summary* of facts.

So, again, do we write an introduction? The answer is probably yes because by giving the subject and range of the graph, table, chart, map or diagram, it can:

1. connect the description to a real item (the Task One), or the task concept (a summary),
2. help us avoid repetition of long noun phrases, time references, or other 'parameters'.

These long noun phrases and the time period will have to be written at *some* stage in the answer, so it is logical to establish them all at the beginning. Let us explore this.

Exercise 18

Part One

Tip 8, Exercise 12, Task E is a bar chart, showing the price of handguns, rifles, slug guns, and shotguns, over the period 2006 to 2010. If these are made clear in the introduction, then we can use synonyms (words with the same meaning), other phrasing, or pronouns, to refer to them more efficiently, giving us greater variety in our vocabulary. Fill in the gaps.

The parameters...

handguns, rifles,
slug guns, and
shotguns

2006 to 2010

2006

2010

... mentioned in the introduction
can later be referred to in the
body of the answer with terms
such as ...

Synonyms/Phrasing

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Part Two

Let us look at the introduction we have for our ‘football clubs’ graph description. It is now more formal in grammar and words, but there is still a problem. Compare our introduction (shown next) with the actual introduction *used in the question paper*, shown at the beginning of Tip 4. What is the problem with *ours*?

The graph shows the profit figures for three football clubs
– Dandenong, Geelong, and Noble Park – over a year.

Part Three

Is this introduction better?

A quick glance at the range and extent of all the information supplied by the graphical data reveals that there are three clubs involved in the physical game of football, and the profit that they manage to acquire is also represented on the vertical axis in the units of thousands of dollars, over the course of a whole year. This year is shown on the horizontal axis, which is divided into four quarters, being the first, second, third, and fourth.

Part Four

And now for some grammar. Fill in the two tables.

Verb	Noun	Verb	Synonyms
• change	•	show	
• vary	•		
• compare	•		
• fluctuate	•		

Part Five

1. Can you analyse the part of speech in the noun phrase:
‘the profit figures of three football clubs’.
2. In how many different ways can you (re)write this?
Try to think of some ‘real-world’ vocabulary.

Some Issues

In Exercise 18 Part One, we can refer to:

guns		the four types of weaponry // these small arms these devices // these four defensive items
2006 to 2010	as	the period in question // these years // the given time // the time frame
2006		the beginning // start // initially // originally
2010		the finish // end // finally // ultimately

So, using introductions allows more variety in the vocabulary, but there is one big issue about them. They need to have *original* words. The introduction we have used in Part Two of the previous exercise is *almost the same* as the introduction used in the *question* paper. This is bad since:

1. the words are not considered part of *your* answer.
2. as a result of this, you must logically be *penalised*.

Does this mean the introduction in Exercise 18, Part Three is better? No! It is 80 words, possibly over one half of an answer! Remember, the introduction is *repeating* information already *clearly* given by the task. The introduction is the *least* interesting part of any answer, and adds the *least* towards Task Achievement, and your overall score. It is also 'open' for much fluff.

Do *not* waste too many words on an introduction. Move to the point as quickly and simply as you can. [See also Tip 6, Exercise 6, Answer 4] The example introduction is much better written in 16 words:

~~A quick glance at the range and extent of all the information supplied by the graphical data reveals that there are three (football) clubs involved in the physical game of football, and (their) profit that they manage to acquire is also represented on the vertical axis in the units of thousands of dollars, over the course of a whole year. This year is shown on the horizontal axis, which is divided into four quarters, being the first, second, third, and fourth.~~

Noun Phrases [Y]

Of course, we often *have to* use the key nouns (for example: 'football clubs') but we should not use the *long* noun phrases word for word that are reflected on the Y axis [Y]. We must change

the word order, grammar, and (if we can) introduce some new vocabulary, in order to make the writing *ours*. This process is called ‘paraphrasing’.

Noun phrases are just long nouns, and can take three basic forms.

1. **Adj** [**Adj**] **Noun**
2. **Noun** **Prep.** **Noun** [**Prep.** **Noun**]
- 3 a. **Noun** Relative
Pronoun **Verb**
- Noun** **Prep.** Relative
Pronoun **Subj. + Verb**

- b. For example. You are
1. my (IELTS) students,
 2. students of mine (in IELTS),
 - 3 a. students who study under me,
 - b. students to whom I feel some responsibility.

These can be mixed together to make longer noun phrases, especially the second. For example, ‘Level *of* education *by* gender *in* Britain *among* age groups’. Let us look at the noun phrase:

the profit figures for three football clubs

... which is...

adj. + n. + prep. + adj. + adj. + n.

This basically uses the second grammar, but this could be changed to...

1. three football clubs’ profit,
- 3a. the profit which three football clubs make.

For 3a, if the passive voice is used, then the subject disappears, and we often do not use the ‘be’ verb either. For example, ‘the money [which is] earned’, ‘modes of transportation [which are] taken’, and ‘types of products [which are] stocked’.

More Grammar

So, we need to write a ‘to the point’ introduction using original words. Let us think for ourselves. The standard grammar is:

The graph shows + [Something]/[Noun Phrase].

Let us call this 'Pattern 1', but can we change it to be more original? Well, Exercise 18 Part Four gave us two synonyms for the verb 'show' ['reveal' and 'display'], and we now know how to paraphrase noun phrases. This could give a basic model:

Pattern 1A

	Noun Phrase		
	Basic Paraphrasing of [Y]	Prep. Phrase	Noun Phrase
[The item] reveals	- [Noun] + [Prep.] + [Noun]	- in relation to	[different factors or aspects].
The following	- [Adj.] + [Adj.] + [Noun]	- with respect to	
summarises*	- [Noun] which [Clause]		

* the paraphrasing which follows must suggest change. For example, not 'the number of people', but 'the change in the number of people'.

For example:

The graph reveals	the financial performance of three football clubs	in relation to	a calendar year.
	the profit which three football clubs earned		
The chart displays	three football clubs' net earnings	with respect to	
	the net monetary gains of three football clubs		

Some other examples, using different tasks, could be:

The bar chart displays	the population density of three countries	with respect to	urban and rural areas.
The table shows	the distribution of on-line ticket purchasing of two age-groups (15-30, and 31-60)	in relation to	the UK, Australia, and Malaysia.

Looking for different grammar, Task-One items usually show how something 'changes', 'varies', or 'fluctuates', so we can make a 'Pattern 2' from this. Finally, if the items do not present 'change over time', they will at least have two or more subjects, thus they 'compare', so we can

make a 'Pattern 3'. In Part Four of the previous exercise, did not we change these previous verbs into nouns? Try to work out yourself how all these words could be used in introductions.

Using these words, here are some introductory grammar patterns. Remember that [Y] must be a *paraphrasing* of the actual Y-axis information, and if there is no change over time, you cannot use 'change' verbs, but must instead use the 'compares' patterns.

Mentioning the Task

Pattern 1B			
[The item]	- makes		
	- presents	a comparison of [Y (to Y)]	
		- changes	
		the - variations in [Y]	
		- fluctuations	
	shows		
Pattern 2			
[The item]	reveals		
	displays	- how	
		- the manner in which	
		[Y]	
		- changes	- from... to...
		- varies	- in the period... to...
		- fluctuates	- among nine different...
		- is/are + V3*	- for men and women...
			- between universities in...
Pattern 3			
	compares [Y1] to [Y2]		
	compares [Ys]		

* A passive construction for diagrams.

Not Mentioning the Task

Another idea is to *not* mention the task item. Remember, as the final part of Tip 6 explains, the task is 'information transfer': just transferring the information from the item to the paper. We could therefore make the stylistic choice to completely remove all reference to the actual item itself. Here are some models to do this, using Patterns 1 and 2.

Pattern 1

The [Y + its parameters] as follows.
 - change(s)
 - variation(s)
 - fluctuation(s)
 - difference(s)¹
 - are (is)
 - can be summarised

Pattern 2

What follows is a summary of [Y] [Other Para-meters]
 Here - how - changes
 - varies
 - fluctuates
 - is/are + V3²
 The following summarises - the manner in which
 - the differences¹ in

¹ for when there is no change over time

² a passive construction, usually for diagrams

Exercise 19

- Re-write the following noun phrases in at least two different ways.
 - Breakdown of Education Levels of AAA Electronics Employees
 - Average Price of Guns at Johnson's Gun shops
 - Source of World News for Males and Females in Britain
 - Water Supply and Sanitation in Urban and Rural Areas
 - Development of the Town of Walgett
 - Process of Water Purification
 - Units of Electricity by Fuel Type in Japan and China
- Go back to Tip 7, Exercise 10, where there are three simplified Task Ones – A, B, and C – and try writing some introductions to these. Look at Appendix 4 to see my answers.

Tip 11

The Body Text

Straight into an exercise.

Exercise 20

Part One

- Are the following good additions to an answer?
- It can be seen from the *graph* that...
 - It is evident from the *graph* that...
 - The information in the *graph* also reveals that...
 - Upon closer examination of the *graph*, it is clearly obvious that...

Part Two

- Consider:
1. What is wrong with the following three sample answers?
 2. How could you fix them?

Sample Answer 1 [Part]

The graph shows how the profit varies for Geelong football club in one year, in thousands of dollars. The profit for *Geelong football club* grows from 35 to 40. In the second quarter, *the profit for Geelong football club* continues to grow. In the third quarter, *Geelong football club's* profit decreases, then the *football club's* profit increases again.

Sample Answer 2 [Part]

The profit was 50 thousand dollars. In the first quarter, it rose to 65 *thousand dollars*, but then fell to 20 *thousand dollars*. In the last two quarters, it gradually declined to five *thousand dollars*.

Sample Answer 3 [Part]

The profit for Dandenong increases. In the last period, it continues this *increase* at the same rate. The profit for Noble Park *decreases* in the first quarter. In the second quarter it *decreases* again, continuing this *decreasing* trend for the whole period.

Sample Answer 4 [Part]

Snazzle increases, Snitch also rises, Smoothlow grows, Sitboy shows a positive trend, but Sperlza decreases.

The sentences in Part One are very *very* common. Remember, the introduction of our answer has already *made it clear that we are looking at a graph* (or pie/bar chart, table of figures, map or diagram), and as Tip 10 tells us, the purpose of this introduction *is to avoid repetition*.

So, as the explanation to Tip 6, Exercise 6, Answer 5 tells us, any further mention of the ‘graph’ is a form of repetition. At its worst, it is just unnecessary fluff, filling our answer with words, and taking us nowhere. Avoid this.

Eliminating Repetition

Well, if we want a *range* of words, we should not repeat them. In Exercise 20, Part Two, Sample **Answer 1**, the leading noun ‘Geelong Football club’ is repeated. In **Answer 2**, ‘thousand dollars’ is repeated. In **Answer 3**, the verbs ‘increase/decrease’ are repeated.

Such repetition also affects Coherence & Cohesion (since the parts do not fit well together), and affects Task Achievement (since we are ‘wasting words’ that we need to really do the task). As we learnt from the previous tip, axes information such as ‘football club’ or ‘thousand dollars’ could always be put in the introduction.

- This profit is shown in *thousands of dollars*.
- ... shows the profit (in *thousands of dollars*)...

This would allow just the figures to be used, perhaps with just one ‘reminder’ of these units when you give the first figure:

Dandenong's profit begins at 50 (thousand dollars).

... or you could use the general term, ‘units’.

Dandenong's profit begins at 50 units.

In Exercise 20, Part Two, Sample **Answer 4**, no words are repeated, but the sentence is an overwritten list. *Avoid listing*. Try to be concise (giving the message in as few words as possible), to allow you to write more later. This passage (a forest-view) could be *much* better written:

All chocolate bars apart from Sperlza increase.

Moving onto repeated nouns and verbs, we also need to *change* them into other words with the same or similar meaning. This is sometimes known as ‘lexical chaining’, where the different words form a chain (‘Geelong Football Club – ‘the club’ – ‘this team’ – ‘it’), all connecting together through the text, and referring back to the first noun.

Synonyms and Paraphrasing for Style

Tip 10 showed how the basic parameters (Y feature, time-frame, start and end dates), once they are established in the Task One Introduction, should not be repeated. That is one of the purposes of the introduction.

Similarly, try to use synonyms (words with the same meaning) when writing the key nouns in your answer. Paraphrasing (using a few words giving the same meaning) can show the beginnings of ‘collocation and style’ (= IELTS Seven). The short factual nature of Task One limits the chances to do this, so it is important to take the opportunity if possible.

For example, in my sample answers in this book, you will notice such lexical chains as:

	Key Noun	Synonym	Synonym/Paraphrasing
1.	deaths/fatalities	lethal events	untimely ends
2.	cars	automobiles	takers of life*
3.	universities	institutes	centres of learning
4.	museums	places	recreational centres
5.	cinema	establishments	form of entertainment

* in the context of car accidents

Exercise 21

Part One

Complete the two following tables by making lexical chains.

Practical IELTS Strategies 3 Writing Task One

Chain One From [X1] to [X2]	Chain Two Geelong's	Chain Three profit	Chain Four increases	Chain Five a great deal.
Chain Six Then, from [X1] to [X2],	Geelong's profit	Chain Seven decreases	Chain Eight ... slightly.	Chain Nine ... stays the same.
Words of Specific Time				

Part Two

This will be an important way to add variety to your writing, so let us have a long practice exercise. Try completing the following table (creating 30 short lexical chains for the key nouns given). Try to paraphrase for style where possible.

	Key Noun	Synonyms or Paraphrasing		Key Noun	Synonyms or Paraphrasing
1.	the area		10.	(share) price	
2.	the company		11.	tourist destinations	
3.	exports		12.	transport	
4.	production		13.	firing of staff	
5.	customers		14.	hiring of staff	
6.	(electricity) demand		15.	having children	
7.	level of education		16.	Japan	
8.	international tourists		17.	petrol	
9.	unemployment rate		18.	medical complaints	

19.	changing accommodation	25.	school subjects
20.	leisure time	26.	the USA and Europe
21.	household goods	27.	management styles
22.	visits abroad	28.	study hours
23.	imprisonment	29.	migration
24.	reasons for complaint	30.	chores

Sample answers to these two exercises are in Appendix 5. Also study the sample writing answers in this book to learn more about this.

Exercise 22

Look at our 'football clubs' answer. The writing is more formal, has no opinion or fluff, and is to the point. The introduction is original, and the forest-view and tree-view organisation make the answer clearer and easier to follow. However, there is a great deal of repetition in words and grammar.

The graph makes a comparison of the **profit** gained for Noble Park, Dandenong, and Geelong football clubs over a calendar **year**.

Looking first as a whole, **Dandenong's profit** is **higher** than the *profit* of its two rivals. [...] It is not *higher* in the beginning. [...] Dandenong football club generates increasingly higher earnings throughout *the year*. This makes *Dandenong football club* the most financially successful club.

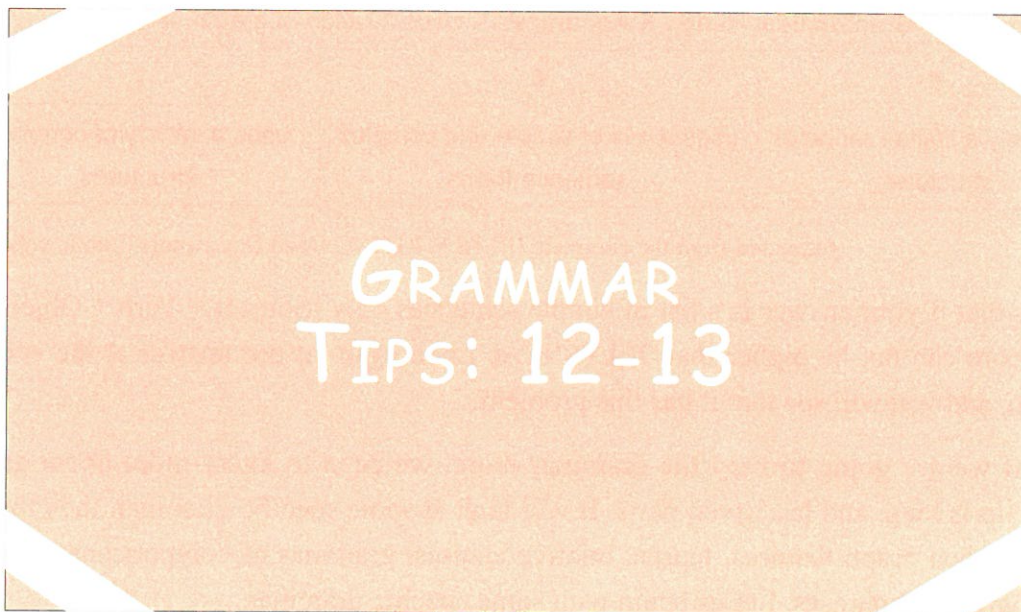
Now considering **Dandenong** in more detail, their profit begins at about 45 **thousand dollars**. *Dandenong's profit rises strongly to 60 thousand dollars in the first quarter. Regarding Dandenong football club, [...] Dandenong football club continues to ascend. Dandenong increases throughout the next few quarters. Dandenong finished* noticeably high, and it more than doubled to 100 *thousand dollars*.

As for **Noble Park football club**, *Noble Park football club's profit falls* fairly evenly throughout *the year*. The *profit fell* from just over 50 *thousand dollars*. *Noble Park football club falls*. *Noble Park finished* at just under 10 *thousand dollars*.

Moving to **Geelong football club**, *Geelong football club grows* in this first quarter. *Geelong grows*. [...] *Geelong falls*. *Geelong football club grows*. [...] The profit for *Geelong* ended at 60 *thousand dollars*.

1. Begin varying the *words* (and avoiding repetition) by removing or changing the *italicised* words into those having a similar or the same meaning as the original (shown in **bold**) – that is, form some lexical chains in the writing, as we did in Exercise 21.
2. Put the first mention of ‘thousand dollars’ in brackets, thus allowing us to remove all further repetition of these words.
3. Similarly, since the fact that we are dealing with (a.) football clubs and (b.) their profit, is clear in the introduction, remove all further repetition of these words from the rest of the answer.
4. Begin varying the *grammar* (and avoiding repetition) by combining the sentences over the underlined parts.
5. Also combine sentences by putting in simple conjunctions or sequencers in the square brackets ([...]).
6. Change the dashed underlined phrase with a more original term.

The answer is shown in Tip 12, Part Seven, Exercise 27, Part Two.



Tip 12

Grammar Issues

Preliminary

We have looked at varying the words, but we still need to look more at varying the *grammar*. The IELTS band descriptors are quite clear on this. The public version reads:

Grammatical Range & Accuracy: 1. Uses a range of grammar		
5	6	7
uses only a limited range of structures	uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms	uses a variety of complex structures

Extracted from the complete IELTS WRITING Band Descriptors (public version).

This means that if your answer is a list of simple sentences only [Subject + Verb + Object], your grammar score can not be higher than IELTS Five. Look again at our answer at the end of the previous tip, and you will see that it has this problem.

However, if we are going to vary the grammar more, we need to know more about grammar itself. This tip is long, and has seven parts. It will look at some specific grammar, then the use of prepositions, then graph features, tenses, relative clauses, grammar of comparisons, and finally the use of participial phrases. Let us begin with some specific grammar.

Part One: Two Grammars

When describing change over time, there are two main grammars that we can use. These are 1. a verb grammar, or 2. a noun grammar. Although I call the second one a noun grammar, we still need a verb to make a sentence, but this verb just introduces the noun phrase.

1. [Something] + verb + adverb...

... or ...

2a. [Something] has/shows/experiences a + adjective + noun.

... or ...

2b. There is a + adjective + noun in [something].

These grammars, 1 and 2, are the same in meaning, and can be changed around. For example:

1. The profit increases sharply.

2a. The profit shows a sharp increase.

... or...

2b. There is a sharp increase in the profit.

Grammar 2a can often be better than 2b because 2a puts the subject *before* the trend, allowing us to follow Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 4.

Since we know that we should vary the grammar, then after using a verb grammar for one or two sentences, the next sentence could use a noun grammar, but they each have their own use of prepositions. Read on.

Part Two: Prepositions

Prepositions can be difficult. To remember how to use them correctly, follow these four rules. They deal with all the prepositions that you will need to use.

Rule 1

After both Grammar 1 (verbs/verbs phrases), and Grammar 2 (nouns/noun phrases), you can use: 'from [start point] to [end point]'.

The profit rose *from* 44% *to* 65%.

The profit showed a rise *from* 44% *to* 65%.

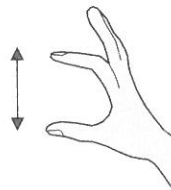
Often the 'from' is not written, leaving just the preposition 'to'. For example:

[Time Reference] the profit started *at* 50%. [Time Period] it rose *to* 65%, then [Time Period] fell *to* 25%.

Rule 2

After all verbs of change, you can use 'by (figure)'. Here the figure shows the amount of change.



	Verb	
	rose	
The profit	fell	by (figure) [= amount]
	grew	



Remember this by thinking ‘by *that* much’ with the hand gesture shown.

Rule 3

Almost all nouns/noun phrases can be followed by ‘of (figure)’. Here, the ‘of (figure)’ phrase acts in the same way as an adjective – that is, it is *adjectival*. For example, instead of saying [Adjective]+[Noun], as in ‘*Japanese* product’, ‘*beautiful* woman’, or ‘*intelligent* man’, we can say ‘product of *Japan*’, ‘woman of *beauty*’, and ‘man of *intelligence*’ respectively. Similarly, in our answer, a ‘35 *dollar* increase’ becomes ‘an increase of 35’; a ‘2500 *unit* low point’ becomes a ‘low point of 2500’. The figure is, logically, either an amount of change (when used with a change noun), or a level (when used with a point on the graph).

The profit showed a	Noun	of (figure)	[which logically must be an amount] 
	rise		
	decrease growth		
The profit went to	a peak	of (figure)	[which logically must be a level] 
	a low point		
	the highest point		

We can use other adjectival phrases with key nouns, following the model ‘[noun] of [noun]’. For example:

There was a	Noun	of	Noun
	one-year period		(in)stability
	rise		some significance
	decade		fluctuations

This rule is not always followed for a noun or noun phrase *introducing* the Y axis. In this case, the preposition ‘in’ is often better. For example,

The graph displays the growth *in* the number of mobile phone users.

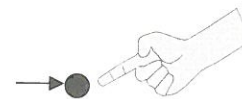
The bar chart reveals the change *in* the profit of three football clubs.

The preposition ‘of’ *can* be used here, but sounds less natural.

Rule 4

When the verbs used are *not about overall change*, we refer to the *levels* using the preposition ‘at’.

The profit <u>started</u>	45 units.
It <u>remained</u> level	about 60.
The number <u>peaked</u> at	89.
The figure <u>fluctuated</u>	around 50.
The profit <u>finished</u>	40.



Remember Rule 1, and use 'to' (not 'at') when *the verb is about change*, as in 'The profit rose to 76, then fell to 40.' As Rule 1 explained, this is actually a 'from... to...' structure, without the 'from' part. The verb 'fluctuate' involves change, but no *overall* change, so it too follows Rule 4.

Exercise 23

By comparing the sentences (1 to 1, 2 to 2, and so on), and changing the grammar, complete the spaces in the following tables. Let us use Present Simple tense for now, although tense is not such a straightforward matter, as Part 4 will explain. The answers are in Appendix 6.

Verb Grammar

	Verb	Adverb
[Y]	1. increases	_____
	2. _____	rapidly
	3. rises	_____
The number	4. _____	moderately
	5. ascends	_____
The figure	6. [any of the above five verbs]	_____ fold
	7. _____	steeply
The amount	8. _____	substantially
	9. decreases	_____
	10. _____	gradually
It	11. drops	_____
	12. _____	slightly

[Time period, often best put first]

Noun Grammar

		Adjective	Noun
There is	1.	dramatic	_____ in [Y].
	2.	_____	growth
[Time sees ¹	3.	sharp	_____
period] witnesses ¹	4.	_____	climb
	5.	marginal	_____
	6.	_____ fold	[any of the above five nouns]
has ²	7.	_____	fall
[Y] shows	8.	_____	_____
undergoes	9.	steady	_____
experiences	10.	_____	descent
	11.	slow	_____
	12.	_____	decline

¹ These cannot be used with time periods defined with a preposition 'From... to...' or 'In 1980', which must instead be followed by a comma, then a clause [Subject + Verb]. For example, '1980 to 1990 saw a steady growth' but 'From 1980 to 1990, there was a steady growth.'

² This is best used with [Y]s which can show possession – for example, countries (Japan), organisations (Chunky Chocolate), rather than concepts (number, profit, and others).

Part Three: Features

Change over time introduces many specific features, and you need to know the words to describe them. Quantities can rise to peaks, fall to low points, fluctuate, and remain stable. Try the next exercise.

Exercise 24

- Check that you know these graph features, as well as our two grammars by filling the gaps (with Grammar 1 [verb] and 2 [noun] indicated by the '1' and '2'). The answers are shown in Appendix 7.



Now, look once again at Task C in Tip 7, Exercise 10. Write a simple description of the trends shown, but use only the verb grammar. Then, do the task again using only the noun grammar. Remember though, this is just an exercise only, and in the real test, you should mix the grammar (verb and noun) in the same answer. Two possible answers are given in Appendix 7.

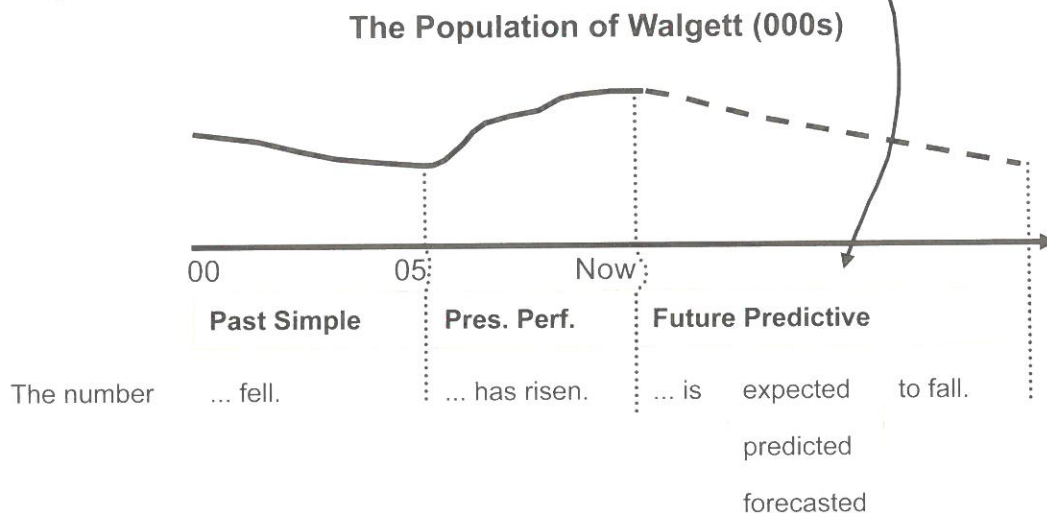
If the time axis of a graph, bar chart, or table of figures is general, typical, or not written, then it is possible to use Present Simple tense. For example, our ‘football clubs’ graph shows four quarters of a year, and we do not know which year. In a similar way, Task B in Tip 7, Exercise 10, shows typical trends. Thus, Present Simple tense is possible, and is, in fact, used in the sample answer to this graph. However, Past Simple tense is also possible, since, strictly speaking, we *are* looking at figures from past events.

If the time axis reaches ‘now’ or ‘the present’, then the time chunk from the past to the present is in *Present Perfect* tense, the time chunk before that is in Past Simple, while the final ‘now’

Practical IELTS Strategies 3: Writing Task One

figure is, of course, in *Present Simple* tense, and the future needs predictive language. In the introduction, this future can be referred to as a *projection/forecast/estimation for the next... years*.

Representing all this on a graph gives:



Other examples are:

From 2000 to 2005, the number *fell*;

however,

- from 2005 to *now*,
- *since* that time, it *has risen*.
- in the last period,
- the figure *finishes* at 30 units.

In 2005, there *was* a supermarket;

however,

- it has since *been replaced* with apartments.
- apartments *have been* built on that site.
- apartments *now stand* in its place.

The next question is which tense we should use for a graph the time axis of which is in the past (for example, 2005 to 2010). Some IELTS books will say you *must* use past tense; however these books are being 'safe', deciding not to think about *style*. Let us look at an example of both tenses: present simple and past simple.

Using a verb grammar:

From 2005 to 2010, the sales volume *increased* // *increases* sharply.

... or a noun grammar...

From 2005 to 2010, the sales volume *shows* // *showed* a sharp increase.

Here, the use of Present Simple tense describes the graph as we follow it *right now*, similar to the ‘sports commentator’ use, when describing a football match. In other words, tense is more a matter of our *attitude* to the graph (and not something decided by grammar books). Past Simple tense can give *formality*; Present Simple tense can give *immediacy*; however, being students of English, you might decide it is simpler and safer to write all past time axes in past tense.

The more important point is to be *consistent* in the use of tenses. In other words, if we use past simple tense to describe one part of the graph line, then we should continue with that tense for the rest of that line. Make sure you do know the correct past tense (V2) and the past participle (V3), of the ‘graph’ verbs. Some of them are irregular. Fill in the following table for revision.

Base Form (V1)	Past Form (V2)	Past Participle (V3)	Base Form (V1)	Past Form (V2)	Past Participle (V3)
increase			decrease		
grow			drop		
rise			fall		
climb			decline		
ascend			descend		

There can still be a mixture of tenses in our answer. For example, if we are using past simple, we would still use present simple for introductions or topic sentences [‘The graph shows ...’, ‘Geelong has a different trend’, ‘... which is impressive compared to...’].

Now, it *is* possible to mix a little Past Simple narrative tense with the Present Simple ‘commentators’ use, such as ‘Since coal *rose* to such a dominant position, there *is* a decrease in most other products’. However, this becomes a ‘stylistic’ issue, and as a student of English, you should perhaps follow the rule of using consistent tenses.

Since we should try using mature grammar, a very good idea is to use a *Past Perfect* tense in a sentence, which is very often possible. We can use this tense by following the model:

In [past time reference] it was [figure].

By [a later past time reference] it *had* [V3] to [figure].

For example:

In 1995, the sales volume was 40%; but *by* 2005, it *had risen* to 59%.

This grammar is good since Past Perfect is an uncommon and difficult tense. If we are describing the graph in Present Simple tense, the model shifts ‘one tense forward’. For example:

In July, the rainfall *is* 40; but *by* August, it *has risen* to 59%.

Study how these tenses are used in every sample answer given in the appendices of this book.

Part Five: Relative Clauses

Straight into an exercise.

Exercise 26

Combine the following pairs of sentences (using relative clauses).

Main Part

Dandenong increases greatly.

It rises to 100, ...

... showing no downturns.

Extra, and Non-important Information

It starts low.

This is 30 units higher than Geelong.

This is, in fact, a mirror-image of Noble Park.

Combining these pairs of sentences using relative clauses gives the smooth and well-written text:

Dandenong, which starts low, increases greatly. It rises to 100, which is 30 units higher than Geelong, showing no downturns, which is, in fact, a mirror-image of Noble Park.

Notice that the 'extra' parts (underlined) are separated from the 'main parts' using commas. As a general rule, you will almost *always* need commas for your relative clauses in Writing Task One.

This is only a brief introduction to the subject. You need to do a great deal more grammar study and practice, but we *will* look at relative clauses in more detail in Tip 13.

Part Six: Grammar of Comparison

You need to make comparisons in Task One, since the task instructions specifically ask for this. Here are some grammar patterns that you could use.

General Adjectival Comparisons of Two Nouns [A and B]

				[B].	
[A] is	slightly	greater higher smaller less	than	that	* figure the number amount of [B].
	marginally				
	somewhat				
	distinctly				
	significantly				
	substantially				
	much				
	very much				
	far				

Specific Comparisons: With Higher Amounts

[A] is	more than over	two	-times fold	higher	than	* used to avoid repeating parts of the noun phrase of [A]
		three		more		
		four		greater		
		five				
		[and so on]				

Specific Comparisons: With Lower Amounts

			of [A].		
[B] is	just	half	that	*	figure of [A]. the number amount
	only	quarter			
	merely	one fifth			
	less than	sixth			
		[and so on]			
		[specific fraction]			

* used to avoid repeating parts of the noun phrase of [B]

Some example sentences are:

At the beginning, Noble Park is slightly higher than the others.

At the end of the year, the profit of Dandenong is over four-times that of Geelong.
Geelong's profit is only two-thirds the amount of Dandenong.
Mining is less than a half the figure of agriculture.

Part Seven: Participial Phrases

These are closely related to relative clauses, a good 'complex structure', and the concept can often be used in Writing Task One. Thus, it is worth trying to use these. Consider the sentences:

1. The profit sank to 60, and it remained at that level for the next four years.
2. The figure rises to 100. It shows no downturns at all.
3. It is the highest point. It is 67%.

In the first sentence, these two incidents ('sinking to 60' and 'remaining level') happen one after the other *to the same subject*. In the rest of the sentences, the two incidents happen at the same time, and also *to the same subject*. When two actions happen one after the other with the second forming *part of the first*, or being a result of the first, or happening at the same time, the sentence(s) can be more smoothly written using the present participle ('ing' form) to replace one of the clauses. Since this 'ing' form is no longer a clause (thus being a *phrase*), this grammar can be called a *present participial phrase*. It usually follows the model:

Subj. + Verb + Object , [Verb]ing ...

... giving:

1. The profit sank to 60, remaining at that level for the next four years.
2. The figure rises to 100, showing no downturns at all.
3. It is by far the highest point, *being* 67%.

The answer to Exercise 26 uses this second sentence, together with a relative clause. This is a good grammar, but if there are time periods with the participial phrase (the *second* part), you cannot always use the (SP)YT rule here [Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 4] since it is awkward to break up participial phrases. The time period is usually better *at the end* of the sentence. Thus,

1. The profit rose to 60, *for the next four years* remaining at that level.

... does not sound as natural as putting the time period at the end of the sentence. Time period, however, can be put into the clause (the *first* part).

The profit remained constant for three years, falling only at the end.

To repeat, Writing Task One often involves describing the *related* effects that happen to the *same* subject, meaning that participial phrases can often be used.

Practical IELTS Strategies Writing Task One

The graph makes a comparison of the profit gained for Noble Park, Dandenong, and Geelong football clubs over a calendar year.

Looking first as a whole, apart from the beginning, Dandenong is more profitable than its two rivals, and, additionally, generates increasingly higher earnings throughout this time. [...] This makes this team the most financially successful.

Now considering Dandenong in more detail, it begins at 45 (thousand dollars). This rises strongly to 60 in the first quarter, then continues to ascend throughout the rest of the year, and it finishes noticeably high, and it more than doubled to 100.

As for Noble Park, it *falls* evenly throughout this period. It **decreased** from just over 50, and **finished** at just under 10.

Moving to Geelong, it *grows*, then *falls*, then *rises*, but **ended** at 60.

1. Introduce more grammatical variety by changing the *italicised* verb grammar into a noun grammar, and the dashed-underlined clauses into participial phrases.
2. Similarly, begin adding relative clauses or participial phrases, combining the last sentence in the forest-view with the previous sentence.
3. Make the tenses consistent, changing the **bold** verbs into Present Simple tense (or removing the conjugated tense form through a participial phrase). In the Noble Park tree-paragraph, we can actually combine the two sentences.
4. Following our '(SP)YT' rule, put the underlined time periods first. [Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 4]

The improved version is shown at the beginning of the next tip.

Tip 13

Include Significant Features (and Figures)

Straight into an exercise.

Exercise 28

A. What is the problem with the following three sentences?

1. From the year 1990 to 1995, the volume remains constant.
2. The profit rises rapidly to 85.
3. The number of house owners decreases to the lowest point. Then, it increases substantially.

B. Look at our ‘football clubs’ graph tree-paragraphs. They have a single subject, and the subject is well announced using topic phrases, but what still might be a problem with them? Remember, the task is to ‘summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and to make comparisons where relevant’.

Looking first as a whole, apart from the beginning, Dandenong is more profitable than its two rivals, and, additionally, generates increasingly higher earnings throughout this time, making this team the most financially successful.

Now, considering Dandenong in more detail, it begins at 45 (thousand dollars). In the first quarter, this rises strongly to 60, then throughout the rest of the year continues to ascend, finishing noticeably high, more than doubling to 100.

As for Noble Park, it shows an even fall throughout this period, from just over 50, finishing at just under 10.

Moving to Geelong, it has a grow-fall-grow profile, but ends at 60.

The problem with the sentences in Part One of Exercise 28 is that they do not have enough *figures*. The figures are needed since the sentences deal with *significant* features. If the volume remains constant, we need to know *at what level*. If the profit rises to 85, we need to know *from what level*. If the number decreases to the lowest point, we need to know *what that point is*. The figures are necessary to support the description. The IELTS band descriptors are specific about this, saying:

Task Achievement: 3. Describes key features: Data		
4	5	6
may confuse key features/bullet points with detail; parts may be unclear, irrelevant, repetitive or inaccurate	(A) recounts detail mechanically with no clear overview; there may be <i>no data</i> to support the description	(A) presents an overview with information appropriately selected

Extracted from the complete IELTS WRITING Band Descriptors (public version).

(A) signifies *Academic-Module* writing.

Moving onto Exercise 28, Part B, our tree-paragraphs *do* have ‘significant figures’, and this is good. However, there is another problem. The task requirement is to ‘summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant’. Have we done this? True, we *have* used a forest paragraph to report main features, and this paragraph *has* made comparisons. This is a *very* important part of our answer, but the remaining tree-paragraphs are still very much the same in their content and grammar.

An IELTS Task One can be quite complex, and this means that describing each graph line in too much detail is *not* a good idea. It can lead to very mechanical and boring answers. Again, the IELTS band descriptors are clear on this point. The public version uses the term ‘key features’, and reads:

Task Achievement: 3. Describes key features: Identification		
5	6	7
presents, but inadequately covers, key features/bullet points; there may be a tendency to focus on details	presents and adequately highlights key features/bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate	clearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended

Extracted from the complete IELTS WRITING Band Descriptors (public version).

So, we can see that these descriptors use *two* terms when asking for broader descriptions of the task. They use:

1. main trends (or differences or stages).
2. key features.

The main trends can be given in the Forest-View paragraph [Tips 7 & 8], and the key features can be given in the Tree-View paragraphs. But what are *key features*?

Exercise 29

1. Quickly look at the following temperatures in various cities of the world. If some friends asked you about these figures, what would you tell them? What would be the first features you notice? What would you comment upon to keep your friends interested in listening to you?

Washington	15	Madrid	29	London	16	Singapore	37
Ottawa	-3	Cape Town	27	Rome	27	Lima	22
Bogota	23	Moscow	-5	New Delhi	49	Buenos Aires	33
Bangkok	27	Paris	15	Cairo	45	Tokyo	25

2. Would the following description keep your friends listening?

Washington is 15, Ottawa is -3, Bogota is 23... [and so on].

If you just looked quickly at this table, running your eyes over all the figures for interesting features, you would probably tell your friends that Ottawa is only -3 [freezing cold!] but Moscow is worse at -5 [the coldest!], while New Delhi is 49 [roasting hot!], although Cairo, at 45, is really hot too [you don't want to be there]. All the others are between these figures [not that interesting at all], but you might notice that Moscow and Ottawa are the only ones below zero, and, coincidentally, Rome, Cape Town, and Bangkok all have the same temperature. So, that's about it.

So what actually happened then? What did we actually notice and tell our friends? We noticed ...

1. **highs and lows,** [Ottawa is -5; New Delhi is 49.]
2. **similar features,** [Rome, Cape Town, Bangkok are all 27]
3. **interesting points,** [Only two of them are below zero]
4. **points of comparison.** [Moscow & Ottawa; New Delhi & Cairo]

The last key feature would include '**starts and finishes**' if there was change *over time* involved (a common Task One concept). For example:

Moscow was -5 in the morning, but one degree warmer by the end of the day.

So, instead of just listing everything (Washington is 15, Ottawa is -3, Bogota is 23... [and so on]), which would make our friends bored and walk away, we naturally noticed the previous four features. We can thus conclude that these are key features.

So, this tip, Tip 13, is to...

Writing Task One

1. look for, and comment on, these key features,
2. say *why* they *are* key features,
3. and support them with figures.

The following examples will make this clearer. Consider the sentence:

Dandenong's profit reaches very high.

Here, the grammar is good, but the sentence does not say *why the information is worth mentioning*. The information just 'hangs' in the answer, alone and unexplained. It needs connection with some facts and figures. Thus, we could add a figure, giving:

Dandenong's profit reaches *nearly 100*.

Better, but the sentence still hangs alone. When did this happen?

At the end of the year, Dandenong's profit reaches nearly 100.

This seems good, but the question is: why is the writer saying this? The sentence still hangs. It is better to think about the *reason* for everything we write, and make sure this is clear to the readers. This reason can be introduced using *relative clauses*, making our grammar more varied and mature – and these 'complex sentences' are very good for IELTS writing. Thus:

At the end of the year, Dandenong's profit reaches nearly 100, *which is the highest overall*.

Right. This is better – the student gave the figure of 100 because it was the highest (= key feature), and used a relative clause (= complex sentence). However, the sentence could be made even more interesting by *comparing* this highest figure with something else. By *how much* was it the highest? By a great deal, or by a little? Thus:

At the end of the year, Dandenong's profit reaches nearly 100, which is the highest overall *by far, being almost 30 units above the nearest competitor, Geelong*.

Compared to the first sentence, this sentence now has some mature grammar (relative clauses and participial phrases), some real-world words ['competitor'], better describes the graph, and has appropriate figures (100 and 30). That is four advantages at once!

Remember, however, in Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 1, we said that the topic phrase gives the topic of the paragraph, and you *must* stay with this topic to keep your organisation clear. So, try not to introduce *new* subjects as *leading* nouns. Do not write...

Geelong, the nearest competitor, was 30 units lower.

... but make the new subject as sentence *objects*, and *less* noticeable in the phrasing. You could write...

Dandenong's profit was clearly above *Geelong* at this time.

Exercise 30

Look again at the 'football clubs' graph at the beginning of Tip 4, *and* look also at the line graph in Tip 9, Exercise 14. For both of these graphs, note down some:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Highs and Lows | 3. Interesting Points |
| 2. Similar Features | 4. Points of Comparison. |

Then you can compare your answers to those given in Appendix 8.

Appendix 8 shows that we can write many words by looking at these key features and how much variety in words, grammar, and content, we can put into a 'simple' set of graphs, and how we do not need the fluff that we looked at in Tip 6.

These significant features could be mixed through the answer. If they are *highly* significant features, then they belong in the forest-view, as an overall trend. Less significant, but still notable features belong in the tree-views.

Exercise 31

Let us look at the 'football clubs' graph description, but let us put in *questions* (shown in brackets). These are the sorts of questions you should ask yourself as you write the description.

The graph makes a comparison of the profit gained for Noble Park, Dandenong, and Geelong football clubs over a calendar year.

Looking first as a whole, apart from the beginning [*Can you say this with better style?*], Dandenong is more profitable [*In what manner?*] than its two rivals, and, additionally, generates increasingly higher earnings over this time [*What did the other clubs do?*], making this team [*By what degree?*] the most financially successful.

Now considering Dandenong in more detail, it begins at 45 (thousand dollars) [*compare this with the others*]. In the first quarter, this rises strongly to 60 [*Why is this significant?*], then throughout the rest of the year* continues to ascend [*Is there anything interesting about it? Could we use some natural reaction that we used in Tip 5, Exercise 5, Part Three?*], finishing noticeably high, more than doubling to 100 [*Why is this significant? How does it compare with other figures at this time?*].

As for Noble Park, it *[How does it compare to Dandenong?]* shows an even fall throughout this period, from just over 50 *[What is significant about this?]*, finishing at just under 10 *[What is significant about this?]*.

Moving to Geelong, it has a grow-fall-grow profile *[What does it do generally?]*, but ends at 60 *[Why is this significant?]* *[How does this profile compare with the other two?]* *[They are not affected; could you give some natural reaction about this?]*.

* Is this necessary? Try to remove all unnecessary words. This gives you more time to give key features.

Now write your final answer by answering the questions, and putting these answers into the summary.

With this exercise, we can complete some sample answers. A full sample answer to the two line graphs in Tip 7, Exercise 10 (Tasks A and B) is given in Appendix 9.

A full sample answer to the 'football clubs' line graph shown at the beginning of Tip 4 (and described in the previous exercise), is given in Appendix 10. This answer, however, still could have one extra part, and that will be discussed in Tip 18.

TIPS FOR SPECIFIC TASK TYPES: 14-17

We can now move onto some of the other forms of Task One. One of these is bar charts, but we do not need to look at them in detail. If bar charts have a time axis, they are similar to line graphs. If they do not have a time axis, they are similar to 'non-time' pie charts and tables, which we will look at.

Not having a time axis means the description does not involve change over time, but *comparisons* and groupings in a fixed *moment* of time, for example, the year 2010. As we will see, this may affect the adverbs and sequencers used, but all the logic, structuring, and grammar hints remain the same. However, we need to look at:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. pie charts, | 3. diagrams, and ... |
| 2. tables of figures, | 4. maps. |

... since they have some special issues. The next four tips will look at these four types of Task-One items in turn.

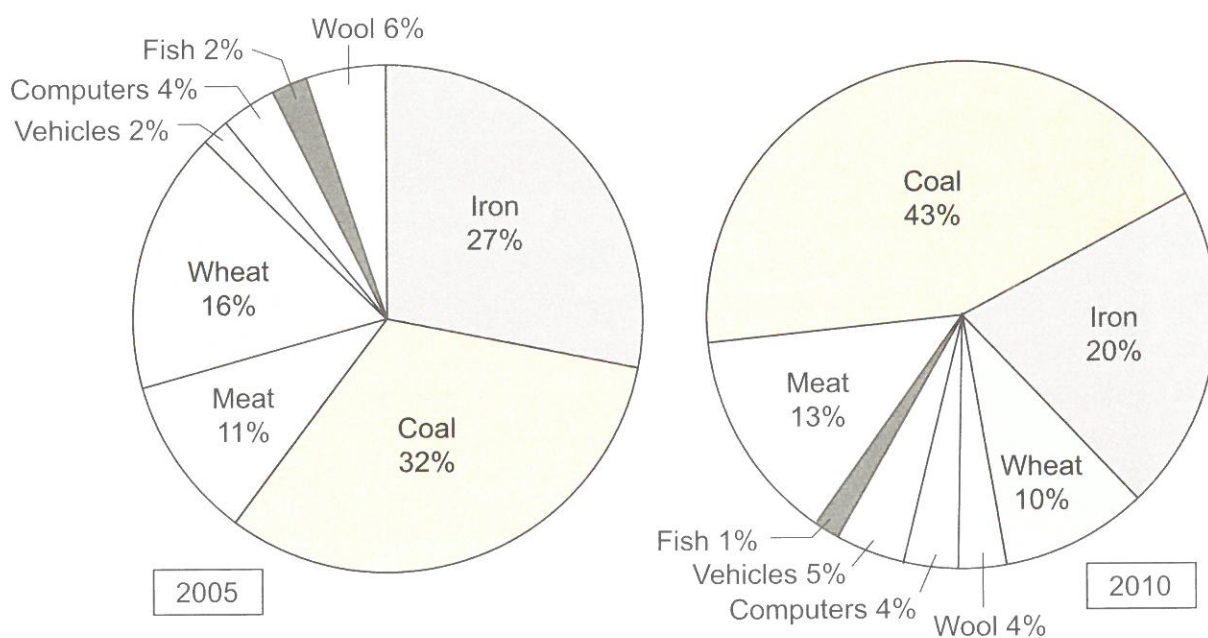
Tip 14

Approaching a Pie Chart

Let us look at an example.

The two pie charts show the exportation of products from Australia over two years.

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



There are two points to remember with pie charts. The first is that they are different from line graphs. Pie charts are not as 'dynamic'. In other words, they do not show change *over* time. They are a 'freeze frame' of *proportions* [do not use the word 'ratio'], usually given in percentage points. They show *fractions* of a whole at a single given time. This is why in the IELTS test, a pie chart would usually be used with another pie chart, or with another type of graph, so that you could compare the two to each other.

The second point with pie charts is that Tip 13 [Significant Features] is particularly important (and also important with tables of figures, as we will see in the next tip). Keep these two points in mind when doing the following exercise.

Exercise 32

Look at the previous two pie charts again. What is wrong with the following four sample answers?

Answer 1 [part]

From 2005 to 2010, the export of coal increased steadily from 32 to 43%, while the export of iron decreased gradually from 27 to 20%. Computers remained steady in this period, at about 4%.

Answer 2 [part]

In 2005, coal was 32%, iron was 27%, wheat 16%, meat 11%, wool 6%, and computers, fish, and vehicles were 4%, 2%, and 2% respectively. But in 2010, coal was 43%, iron was 20%, and meat 13%. Wheat was 10%, vehicles were 5%, and wool and computers were 4%. Fish was 1%.

Answer 3 [part]

In 2010, coal was 43%, then iron was 20%. After that, fish was the lowest, at 1%, and finally computers were the same as before.

Answer 4 [part]

Iron decreased to 20% in 2010.

Hint 1: Be Careful with Adverbs

The problem with the first answer is that, as we discussed, pie charts are not that dynamic. The two charts do *not* show the change *from 2005 to 2010*; they show the figures *in 2005 and 2010*, which can be compared. This means that we cannot use many of the standard 'change over time' phrases such as, 'From 2005 to 2010, the amount of coal shows a *steady* increase' since we actually do *not* know whether it did, in fact, *steadily* increase. Perhaps it rose in 2006, then fell in 2007, then rose and fell again from 2008 to 2009. All we know is that in 2005 it *was* 32%, and in 2010 it *was* 43%.

This means you should not use adverbs/adjectives that show the *manner* of change, such as: smoothly/smooth, steadily/steady, gradually/gradual, and others. However, we can use the adverbs/adjectives that describe the *overall* change: dramatically/dramatic, significantly/

Practical IELTS Strategies 3: Writing Task One

significant, slightly/slight, moderately/moderate, and others.

A good grammar to put in our answer is the past perfect, as we discussed in Tip 12, Part Four. For example: 'In 2005, coal exportation *was* 32%; however, by 2010, it *had risen* to 43%' – or we could move the tenses 'forward' to use present perfect. Look for this use in the sample answer.

Hint 2: Do Not List

Answer 2 just lists figures. Pie charts (and tables of figures) often lead to such lists, which produce very unsatisfactory answers. Tip 13: Significant Features, suggests that you look for highs and lows, similar or interesting features, and points of comparison.

So, think about these. Think about comparing the figures across the two separate years. Think about real-world English. Remember too that those significant features need their significance explained, and this can be done with relative clauses and participial phrases. For example:

In 2010, coal was 43%, *which was the highest proportion*, having increased 11 percentage points over the 2005 figure.

Here we have a significant feature, explained with a relative clause, followed by a comparison with the past figure using a participial phrase. Great!

Hint 3: Be Careful with Sequencers

The problem with Answer 3 is the use of time sequencers. Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 3, mentioned time sequencers, but that was for Task Ones with *time axes*. Pie graphs do not have such axes, which means you do not use these sequencers. All the figures on a single pie chart are related to the *same* time.

Sequencers *can be* used for making a logical order – for example, from highest to smallest, but only do this a little, since Hint 2 tells us not to list.

In 2005, coal was the highest, at 32%, *followed* by iron, which was significantly lower, at 27%. *Next* was wheat, at 16%, with the rest all substantially lower again.

Hint 4: Be Careful with Time Periods

The problem with Answer 4 is a common lack of clarity, but it is much more common with pie charts. The sentence suggests that iron decreased *in* the year 2010. It actually decreased *over the*

five year period 2005 to 2010. Remember the (SP)YT rule (but without the S = Sequencer, as Hint 3 has shown). **Period – Y – Trend**. The sentence is clearer when written:

From 2005 to 2010, iron decreased to 20%.

[See also Tip 19, Exercise 40, Sentences 19].

Exercise 33

Look again at the example Task One in this tip. Try to work out the forest-view, any real-world words, logical topic phrases, and the significant information which could go in the tree-views. Write an answer and compare it to the sample one in Appendix 11.

Tip 15

Approaching a Table of Figures

Look at the following table of figures.

Australia's Iron Production (millions of tons)					
	Vic.	NSW	Qld.	SA	WA
<u>Year</u>					
1975	2.4	11.3	2.6	2.4	2.8
1980	2.4	14.7	2.9	2.6	2.9
1985	2.4	17.6	3.4	2.9	2.9
1990	2.2	24.4	4.6	3.9	3.2
1995	2.3	34.8	12.8	3.7	3.3
2000	2.4	41.3	31.7	3.7	4.2
2005	2.3	56.9	41.6	3.8	4.9
2010	2.6	77.0	83.0	4.1	5.7

Tables of figures are very different from all other tasks in one key aspect: they are *only* figures. There are no shapes, lines, heights, or proportions to allow easy visual identification of trends. This often leads students to write answers such as, 'In 1975, iron production in Vic. Was 2.4%, and in NSW 11.3 %, Qld. 2.6%, SA 2.4%, and WA 2.8%. Iron production increased in NSW from 11.3 to 14.7, then to 17.6...'; but we now know that just writing a list of figures is *not* good.

In *Tip7: The Overview (Forest View)* we said that the first step is to ...

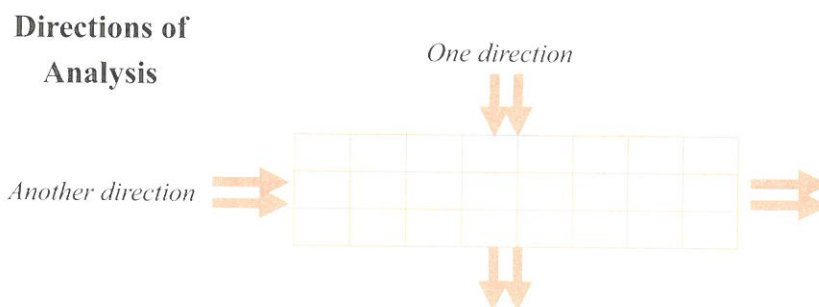
Ignore the axes, words, and information. Just look at the item.

However, without visual trends to identify, with only a mass of figures, we have to change our approach completely, and *start with the axes*.

To find the major trends, use the following procedure.

- Initial Step: Read the axes.
- Step One: Analyse the table along the up/down (and left/right) view.
- Step Two: Work out what such an analysis means. This is very important, since the axes of every table are different.
- Step Three: Work out any trends.

In other words, take 'cross-sections' from top to bottom, then left to right.



Thus, looking at our example table of figures, for **Step One**, we find cross-sections such as:

Vic.	Qld.	WA
2.4	2.6	2.8
2.4	2.9	2.9
2.4	3.4	2.9
2.2	4.6	3.2
2.3	12.8	3.3
2.4	31.7	4.2
2.3	41.6	4.9
2.6	83.0	5.7

Step Two tells us that, in this table, such an analysis is a comparison of how production changes in *specific states over time*. Looking at *all* of these vertical cross-sections, for **Step Three**, we can see that iron production increased steadily in NSW, but in Qld., production increased particularly quickly, to finish at the highest figure overall. SA and WA increased somewhat, but not significantly, while Vic. remained approximately the same.

Reading tips strategies Writing Task One

Looking at the table, going from left to right, for **Step One**, we find cross-sections such as:

	Vic.	NSW	Qld.	SA	WA
1975	2.4	11.3	2.6	2.4	2.8
1990	2.2	24.4	4.6	3.9	3.2
2010	2.6	77.0	83.0	4.1	5.7

Step Two tells us that, in this table, such an analysis is a *comparison of production across different states in specific years*. Looking at *all* of these, for **Step Three**, we can see that the second column (NSW) had, by far, the highest iron production, except for the last year, when Qld. (as we have already noted) had the greater figure.

These two ways of looking at the table [top to bottom, and left to right] allow us to decide on our forest-view, which can then be written as shown in Tips 7 and 8.

Non-Time Tables

Many tables do not have a time axis, as in the next.

Australia's Major Mineral Exports, 2010					
	NSW	Qld.	Vic.	SA	WA
Iron	77.0	83.0	2.6	4.1	5.7
Coal	117.9	235	12.4	3.3	11.3
Oil	0.3	0.0	111.0	0.0	123.0

To find the forest-view, follow the same 'Step [0], One, Two, and Three' procedure. In other words, nothing is different, and you can follow all the same tips.

Exercise 34

1. Look again at the previous 'non-time' table. Follow the procedure, and try writing a forest-view for it.
2. Look at the original table at the start of this tip. Write a full answer for it.

Compare your answers to mine in Appendix 12.

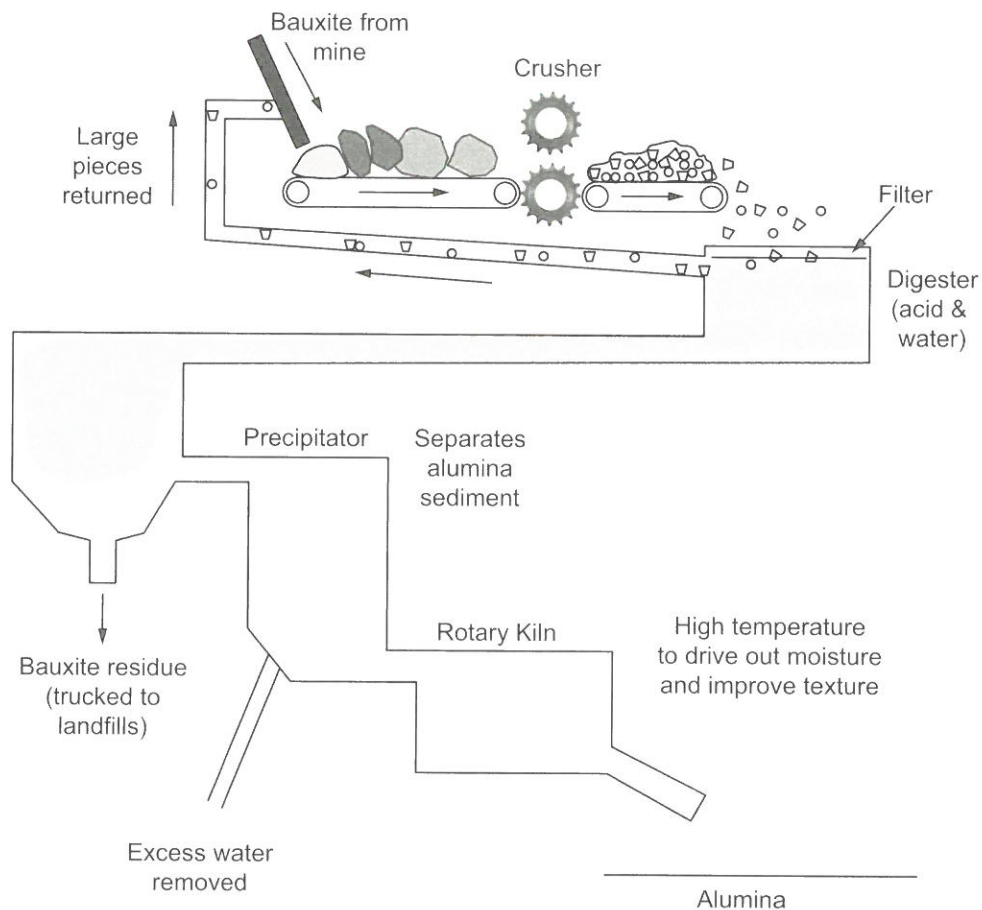
Tip 16

Approaching a Diagram

Look at the following Task One.

The diagram shows the process for producing alumina from bauxite.

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



Exercise 35

Think about these questions.

1. How would you *approach* a summary/description of this diagram?

2. What *tense*, and what voice – active or passive – would you probably use?
3. How would you *connect* each section of text? Can you use topic phrases?
4. Is it possible to have a *forest-view*, and if so, how would you write it?

Try writing a description, then afterwards, comparing it to the approach and sample answer shown in this book.

Let me answer each of the four questions with the following four hints, and then add another.

Hint 1: Approach

Generally, pick one part [the beginning of the process, or a logical starting point in a circular process], and follow it through, step by step. Thus, in the example diagram, we would logically start from the top, and work downwards.

Hint 2: Tense

For describing processes involving machines, workers, or artificial items, passive voice is usually better, and it is in present simple tense since it is always true. Do you know how to make the passive voice? Here is a quick grammar lesson. There are four steps.

1. Put the *object* of the active sentence first.
2. Add/conjugate 'to be' in the same tense as the active sentence.
3. Add in the V3 of the main verb.
4. If necessary, add in the subject with 'by [subject]'.

Thus, an active sentence such as: Farmers grow the sugar cane.

... becomes the passive sentence: The sugar cane is grown (by farmers).

Passive voice is often better for diagrams because we are not interested in general subjects such as 'farmers' or 'workers' or 'machines'. We are more interested in the products these farmers or workers or machines deal with. This means it is usually better to put these product names at the front of a sentence, using a passive construction. Thus, for example, the sentence:

Machines then transport the bauxite to the Digester.

... is not as good as the passive construction...

The bauxite is then transported to the Digester.

Thus, one of our introduction sentences:

The diagram shows how *workers produce alumina* from bauxite.

... can be improved by using the passive voice, giving:

The diagram shows how *alumina is produced* from bauxite.

Keep in mind, though, that it is good to mix the words and tenses, so we should sometimes have an active use, particularly if we have a more defined subject, such as a 'named' piece of machinery. In our example diagram, we can see 'Digester', 'Precipitator', and 'Rotary Kiln'. Thus, either of the following two sentences could be used:

1. A rotary kiln *bakes out* the remaining moisture content. [Active]
2. The remaining moisture content *is baked out* by a rotary kiln. [Passive]

Hint 3: Sequencers/Connectors

Each section would be linked by sequencers such as 'First', 'Then', 'Next', 'Following this step', and 'In the next part'. [See Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 3]. Remember, do not use 'Moreover' or 'Furthermore' and other such phrases, since these are for adding *ideas*.

We would make logical paragraph breaks – for example, one paragraph for each step, or one for Step 1, one for Steps 2 and 3, and one for Step 4.

Topic phrases can still be used to group parts of the description together. For example,

Looking at the first two steps, ...

As for the last part of the process, ...

Hint 4: Forest-view

This leads us to the forest-view. Diagrams do not show clear forest-views. They have no 'trends' which can be summarised as a whole. Trying to write a forest-view that does not really exist could lead to meaningless, repetitive, and/or irrelevant writing. However, the public version of the IELTS band descriptors makes it clear that a forest-view is *necessary* to a good answer, so we *need* this, but how? Use one of the following approaches:

Approach to Diagram Forest-View

Example

1. Steps, or Stages	In general, there are [two/three] stages.	Firstly, [Subj.] + [Verb]... [Noun/Noun phrases]...
2. Natural Forces	the process involves...	[What forces? How do they interact with each other?]
3. Physical Parts	the process is/involves/ utilises/consists of...	[Noun/Noun phrases]... [What parts? Can they be grouped together into more general functions? How do they connect/move/interact with each other?]

Any of the three approaches (1, 2, or 3) can result in similar forest-views, but the approach is different. The nature of the diagram itself, or your own abilities [2. Natural Forces can involve difficult vocabulary] will suggest which of these forest-view approaches is best. The first approach can lead to good use of relative clauses or participial phrases. Follow the model:

Organising Sentence	Signpost Adverb	Stage Description Clause/Sentence	Addition	
In general, there are two/three stages	Firstly, ...			
	Then, ...	[Subject + Verb], ...		
	Finally, ...		which [Verb]...	
	Stage Description Sentence			
	(Adverb) + Subject + Verb +	Object		
	Firstly, there is the...			
	Then follows the...		in which...	
	Finally, there is the...			[Subj. + Verb]...
	Participial Phrase			
	, the first being the...			where...
	, the second being the...			
	... leading to the...			

For example:

Overall, there are three stages. Firstly, there is the intake and preliminary treatment of seawater, *which involves/involving* filtering and a backwash to the sea...

If using noun phrases, you need to use new vocabulary which *summarises* the nature of the stage.
For example:

	• electrical	• factory	• dry	• land-based	- stage
	• physical	• delivery	• wet	• sea-based	- phase
the	• chemical	• field	• rock	• human-based	- section
	• liquid	• agricultural	• powder	• air-borne	- step
	• solid	• industrial	• heating	• distribution	

Remember, as with all forest-views, they must:

- truly be forest-views – that is, not just some detail. Avoid identifying too many specific names, parts, or pieces. Look for more general terms, and/or real-world vocabulary.
- not be so complete that they cover the whole diagram, leaving nothing to write about in the tree-paragraphs. This can be a problem for simpler diagrams. For this reason, if using the Steps/Stage approach, do not use more than three steps.

- not be just a list. Approach 3 can sometimes lead students to write a list of parts. Remember to mention *how* those parts connect, move, or interact.

Exercise 36

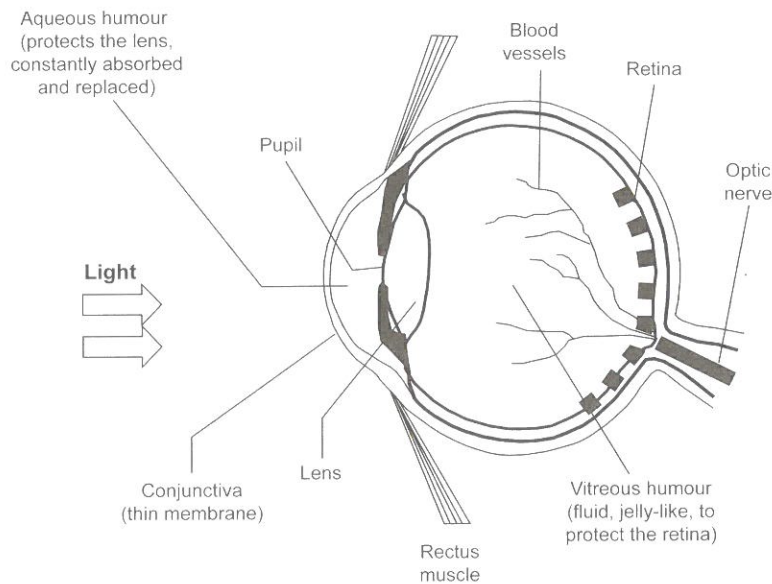
Part One

Now that you have these hints to writing a diagram forest-view, try to write *three* separate and different forest-views for the diagram given at the start of this tip. Make the *first* forest-view involve 1. Stages – and the *second* forest-view involve 2. Natural Forces – and the *third* forest-view involve 3. Physical Parts. Answers are shown in Appendix 13.

Part Two

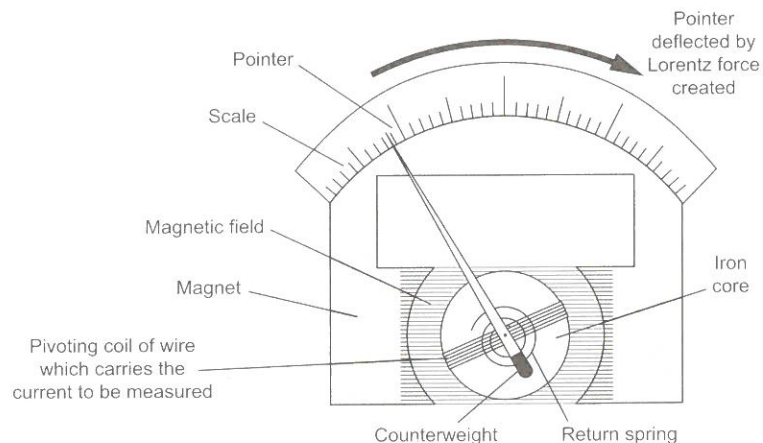
Here are two more diagram Task Ones.

The Human Eye



A Galvanometer

(to measure direct current in amperes; accuracy 1.5%)



1. Write a sample introduction (to make sure you will not repeat this information in the forest-view).
2. As we did in Part One, write *three* separate and different forest-views using the 1. Stages, 2. Natural Forces, and 3. Physical Parts approach.
3. Since you have written an introduction and forest-view, why not *complete* the whole answer by writing the tree-views.

Answers to the two diagrams are shown in Appendices 14 and 15 respectively.

Going back to the diagram task at the beginning of this tip, a sample answer is shown in Appendix 16, but perhaps you could now try re-writing your answer first, before looking at mine.

Hint 5: Factual Additions

Diagrams are clearly a very different sort of task. They show processes, functions, or devices, some of which may be familiar. Because of this, there is sometimes the chance to add extra facts from your own knowledge. Can you do this?

Based upon the ‘natural reaction’ argument, which says that we are all intelligent human beings, you *can* do this, but you must make clear this extra information is from you, and is not written as a statement of fact. Thus, you may need to introduce it with a modal verb [‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’], or an adverb [‘clearly’, ‘possibly’, ‘probably’], or a personal statement. For example, the italicised part in the following sentence:

Then, in the next stage, the milk is heated, *clearly to kill harmful bacteria*.

If you really know your facts and words, *and* have good writing ability, then you could even continue this with:

... a process known as pasteurisation.

The words ‘bacteria’ and ‘pasteurisation’ are now in the answer, adding greatly to the lexical variety. Another example could be in the ‘human eye’ diagram in Exercise 36. My sample answer (in Appendix 14), reads:

The light meets this component, *whose purpose, as with any lens, is to focus the light rays to form a sharp image.*

This ‘external’ knowledge is so obvious and natural that one almost feels forced to give it – and it is all part of an intelligent description/summary. We will later see that this is related to the next tip, Tip 18: Giving Final Thoughts, Item 3: A link to a well-known outside event or external fact.

Warnings

Remember, for factual additions, you need to...

1. know the fact,
2. know that it is appropriate to give this fact (and recognise that it is not just irrelevant opinion),
3. know the words to describe the fact,
4. have the grammar skills to write it,
5. avoid the word(s) 'because (of)'. [See also Tips 5 and 7].

These five warnings mean that trying to add extra knowledge when you actually cannot, or unthinkingly trying to force some extra material into an answer in the hope that it will make it better, will only make the answer worse. As with all the tips and hints in this book, you need to do them naturally, appropriately, and as a thinking human being. This includes when adding *final thoughts* to our answer, as Tip 18 will explain.

Regarding Point 5, the use of 'because' can turn an answer into an *explanation* or *opinion* (not a summary or information transfer, which the task asked for). Do not write:

- A. The water flows downwards *because of* the force of gravity.
- B. The pupil is small *because* it needs to allow in only a small amount of light.
- C. The return spring is needed *because* the Lorentz force has to be counteracted.

Write this additional vocabulary in an *incidental* and descriptive way. Participial phrases are often useful for this.

- A. The *force of gravity* then sees the water migrate down.
- B. ... a small pupil, allowing the *appropriate amount of light to enter the eye*.
- C. The Lorentz force turns the pointer, a motion which is *appropriately counteracted by the spring*, allowing the pointer to stop.

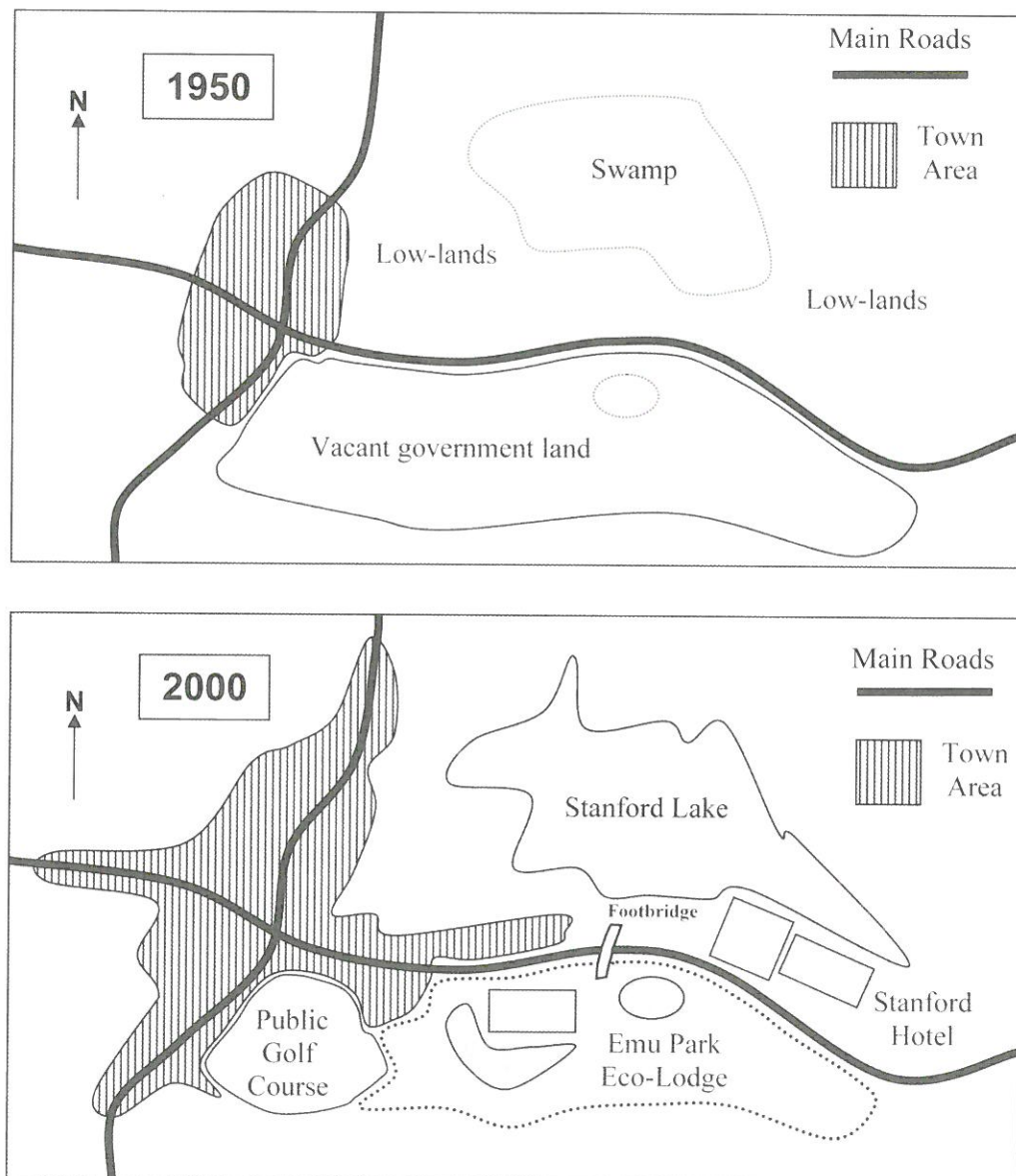
Tip 17

Approaching a Map

Look at the following Task One.

Walgett is a small town near Melbourne. The map shows its development over a given period.

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



As with most other Task Ones, maps almost always show changes over time. If it is one map only, the time references could be in the map key. For example:



The map could also show the time changes through two separate maps, as in the given example.

Forest-View

The forest-view is decided by how, generally, the town/area/region/park/office/building has changed, and, generally, what forces have created this. Here are three examples.

Example One Generally speaking, the originally quiet and somewhat rustic* town has transformed* into a major touristic centre, apparent* from the extensive development both in residential* areas and tourist amenities*, situated mostly along the scenic coastal areas.

Example Two Overall, there are two trends. Firstly, the growth of the town took place in two distinct* sections, dictated* by the advent* of the two transport hubs* – the railway and the motorway – with development expanding outwards from them both. Secondly, this expansion has been particularly rapid since 1970, contrasting the sedate* rate of change in the previous 100 years.

Example Three In general, the area has shown an economic decline, from a once highly industrialised economy to a much smaller one, noticeable by a distinct* lack of commercial enterprises. This shrinkage* is mirrored* in both the residential* zones* and the town's population, although the construction of the science park may show an area of future growth.

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	rustic	(adj)	to change in form, appearance, or structure
2	to transform	(v)	relating to residences, or private homes
3	apparent	(adj)	relating to life in the country (as compared to cities or towns)
4	residential	(adj)	the arrival, or the coming into being of something
5	amenity	(n)	the centre of activity, authority, or commerce

6	distinct	(adj)	the act or fact of shrinking, or becoming smaller
7	to dictate	(v)	seeming to be so according in appearance or initial evidence
8	advent	(n)	having features that are similar to sth. else
9	hub	(n)	to order or control
10	sedate	(adj)	clear, plain, or unmistakeable; being not the same as others
11	shrinkage	(n)	any feature that provides comfort, convenience, or pleasure
12	mirrored	(adj)	an area of land that differs, or is used for a purpose
13	zone	(n)	calm or quiet; undisturbed by passion or activity

Tree-View

If there are two maps, then we know from Tip 9, Part One, Exercise 15, that those two maps give the clearest and most logical topic phrases. In the rare instance of one map only, with no time period, the map would be divided into two (or three) pieces or parts, in a similar way to how we dealt with diagrams.

Looking at the ... *urban centre/main town/north bank*, ...

Comparing this to the ... *outer areas/western outskirts/other side of the river*, ...

Vocabulary

One area of difficulty is in knowing the vocabulary to describe maps, since this lexical set is quite large. The following exercise will help. All the answers are given in Appendix 17.

Exercise 37

A. Directions

Do you know all the *directions* in English [N, S, E, W, NE, SE...]?

What are their *adjective* forms?

B. Vocabulary of Change

Complete the following table with verbs and nouns of *change*.

Radical IELTS Strategies Writing Task One

Verb	Noun	Verb	Noun
• (re)construct	•	• expand	•
•	• demolition	•	• contraction
• (re)develop	•	• evolve	•
•	• replacement	•	• transformation
• modify	•	• grow	•
•	• rebuilding	•	• conversion

C. Map Vocabulary

Place the following vocabulary in the correct category in the table which follows.

• retail	• infrastructure	• commercial	• tourism
• lake	• rural	• original	• zone
• construction	• facilities	• coast	• technology
• outskirts	• suburb	• region	• urban
• part(s)	• industrial	• district	• seaside
• recreational	• province	• former	• previous
• centre	• transport(ation)	• amenities	• erosion
• forest	• mountain	• residential	• section
• once	• coastal	• vacant land	• border
• river	• pasture	• manufacturing	• agricultural

General features	Adjectives describing industries	General Nouns of areas	Adjectives describing areas	Natural features	Nouns of specific areas	Adjectives referring back
	agricultural				seaside	

Now try using the Walgett map to write a description, then afterwards, compare it to the sample answer in Appendix 17.

FINISHING OFF TIPS: 18-19

Tip 18

Giving Final Thoughts

Straight into an exercise.

Exercise 38

Which of the following comments is a good addition to an answer?

1. The profit for Noble Park Football Club decreases sharply, which is very bad since this will affect the people who work for the club.
2. Given the strength and consistency of Dandenong's rise, it seems probable that this will continue in the subsequent year.

The Problem

Let me repeat an important point: we should *not* put opinion or commentary into our answer. The task only asks us to summarise. This means we should not use phrases such as: 'I think', 'I believe', or 'In my opinion', or conjunctions such as 'because'. In addition, we should not try to conclude in essay style by writing 'In conclusion...' or 'To conclude...' or 'To sum up...'. [See Tip 5]

However, we have discussed that Task Ones can be quite 'dry' and boring, giving us fewer chances to use interesting grammar and words. The question is, how do we raise our 'Lexical Resource' band score...

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|--|
| from | 5 | = | limited range, |
| to | 6 | = | adequate range; less common words, |
| to | 7 | = | good range; less common words with some flexibility and style, |
| to | 8 | = | wide range; uncommon words with good flexibility and style? |

We need to take all chances to use interesting words and to comment on the task in different ways. We must also keep our answer factual and relevant to the question, so that our 'Task Achievement' Band Score is not affected. So far, we have found three ways to do this.

1. Tip 5 suggested that you could express natural reactions, such as, 'Somewhat *surprisingly* ...' and '... surely a *desirable* result'. [Note: I also warned you to be honest, thinking, and cautious about this.]
2. Tip 7 suggested trying to use some 'real-world' words in the forest-view, such as, 'Dandenong is the most *financially successful* club' and '... *defied this inflationary pressure* ...'
3. Tip 11 suggested the use of synonyms and paraphrasings, such as '*these centres of learning*' [for 'institutes'] and '*untimely ends*' [for 'non-natural deaths'].

Also, Tip 9, Part One suggested that you might have the opportunity for real-world words if grouping subjects in the topic phrase, such as 'Regarding *heavy duty weapons*,' and 'As for the *senior phases of life*, ...'. Tip 16, Hint 5 suggested, if you have a diagram, that you may be able to use some 'factual additions', such as 'clearly to kill *harmful bacteria*' and 'as *with any lens*, is *to focus* the light rays'.

Final Thoughts

These methods (especially the third) are the main ways to add word variety and style into your writing. However, if you *have* time, there *is* one more chance. You could add 'final thoughts' to finish the answer. Some IELTS books talk about a 'concluding' statement, but remember, we do not 'conclude' in a Task-One answer, and these statements are *not* concluding in purpose, but look deeper and sometimes beyond the task.

Remember, these final thoughts cannot be based on opinion; however, if the task...

1. shows a logical future trend or consequence,
2. shows a cause and effect relationship (often known as a 'correlation'),
3. shows a link to a well-known outside event or external fact,
4. causes a *natural* reaction (e.g. surprise or puzzlement),
5. allows a grouping of parts into more general statements,

... then the answer is improved by mentioning this, provided that we do not write it as a statement of fact. How do I know this? Well, final thoughts are just the same as natural reactions, and in Tip 5, Part Two, I explained why these can be used. The benefits are better word-range, flexibility, and style, and since we are all thinking human beings, there can be nothing inappropriate or irrelevant in using Items 1 to 5 mentioned before. Item 5 is often useful for forming real-world forest-views, so if you use Item 5, be careful not to just repeat the forest-view in your final thoughts.

Thus, in Exercise 38, it is certainly possible to use the second comment to finish the answer. Note that this comment uses the phrase ‘... it seems probable that...’ to avoid an absolute 100% statement. Other phrases which could be used are:

- It could be speculated that...
- It is possible/reasonable to deduce (from this) that...
- There is a likely correlation between...
- There... is a likely/appears to be no... correlation between...
- One wonders why... // One can sense that... //
- The diagram does not seem to explain... [for Point 4]

Some Important Advice

Input about giving final thoughts is in this book only *for completeness*, to show the *theoretically* best approach. A 20-minute IELTS Task One, written under pressure by intermediate students, is *far* from theory. In such a *practical* situation, the best advice, which I will be repeating throughout this book, is to *not write final thoughts*.

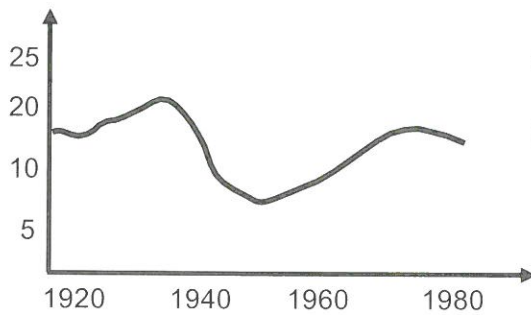
Specifically, here are the issues with final thoughts, which you should consider carefully.

1. Final thoughts are at the end of the answer, and should only be done *once the task has been fully summarised*. Final thoughts do *not* add to the Task Achievement category.
2. Being at the end of the answer, you must think carefully about how much time you have left.
3. Final thoughts are sometimes not obvious, or else difficult to write, particularly for students of English, with perhaps less experience of the world. If you cannot think of any final thoughts, then *do not write them*. Final thoughts are not ‘magic’, and trying to write words when you have nothing to write can take your band score *down*.
4. Final thoughts require thinking. Remember, we are talking about final ‘thoughts’ here, not final ‘memorisation’. Memorisation techniques *cannot* work, and could finish your answer on a bad note. Do you really want to do that?
5. Final thoughts should not be long. They do not add to the Task Achievement category, only to Lexical Resource and Grammar.
6. As we already know, avoid using the word(s): ‘because (of)’.

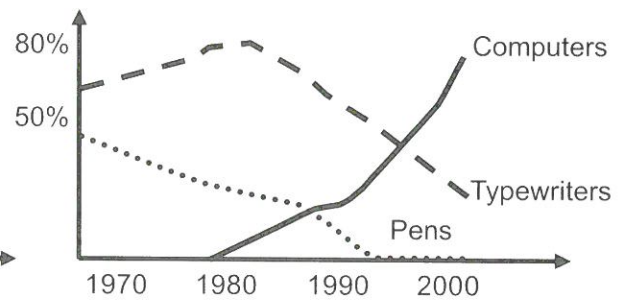
Exercise 39

1. Can you think of final thoughts for the following three tasks?

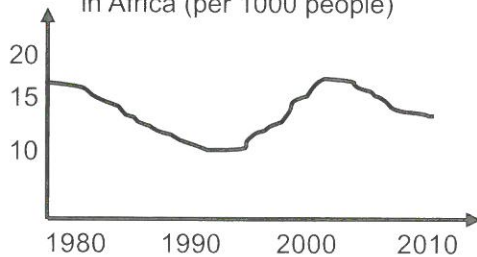
Task A
Unemployment in Australia



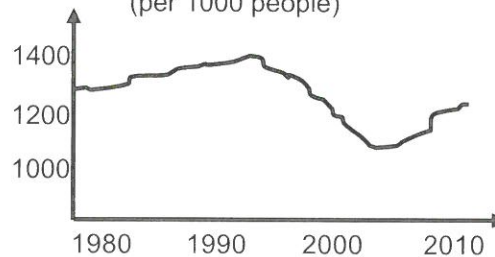
Task B
Writing Devices Used by University Students



Task C
Foreign Aid Doctors Working in Africa (per 1000 people)



Death from Disease in Africa (per 1000 people)



2. Can you think of any final thoughts for...

2. ... our 'football clubs' graph in Tip 4?
3. ... the pie chart in Tip 14, and the table of figures in Tip 15?
4. ... the diagram at the beginning of Tip 16, and the two diagrams in Tip 16, Exercise 36?
5. ... the map at the beginning of Tip 17?

Sample answers to all of these are given in Appendix 18.

Tip 19

'Danger' Words

This is Tip 19, which is linked to Appendix 19, so we can look at 19 of the most commonly misused words or concepts in Task One, based on my many years of teaching IELTS preparation courses.

Exercise 40

What is wrong with the following sentences? Can you fix them?

The answers are given in Appendix 19.

1. a. The number of tourists *fell down* dramatically.
b. The crime rate *grows up* from nine to 17%.
c. The profit figures *rised* quickly.
d. The number of hamburgers shows a *dramatical* fall.
2. a. The export amount *raises* to almost one half of the total.
b. The wool production *lowers* in the second half of the decade.
c. The profit figure *reduces* gradually.
3. a. The death rate from infection *slumped* to a low of 2%.
b. The TV manufacturing time *crashes* to three hours.
c. [about pollution rates] Los Angeles is in *the first place*.
d. The production of cars *reaches* a minimum.
e. The football club *achieves* a low profit.
f. The crime rate decreased to *over* 7%.
g. The infection rate increased to *under* 15%.
4. a. The percentage rises *stably*.
b. The figure dips *dramatically*.

- c. It soars *significantly*.
 - d. It rockets *dramatically* upwards.
 - e. It plummets *steadily*.
 - f. It fluctuates *downwards*.
5. a. Continually, the volume doubled every 10 years.
 - b. The number climbs to 300 slowly.
 - c. The profit figure falls from 50 to about 15 evenly.
6. a. [at the top of the page] From the information given *above*, ...
 - b. [at the bottom of the page] The chart *below* shows information on...
 - c. *On the left hand side* of the chart, there are sales figures.
 - d. *At the top of the page* is a line graph.
7. a. Geelong's profit was low in this quarter, while the *latter* was not.
 - b. It increases from 50 to 90, *respectively*.
 - c. The profit continued to rise *since* 1995.
 - d. From 1980 to 1990, it *peaked* at 50.
8. a. It is *crystal clear/obvious/easily seen/evident* from the diagram that ...
 - b. It is *unbelievably* high.
 - c. *A quick glance* at the chart reveals [Details of the task].
9. a. At the *start*, from 1990 to 1995, the profit increases.
 - b. In the second 2005 to 2007, the number fluctuates.
 - c. *Next*, in the *following* five years, it decreases.
 - d. *Following* this, in the *subsequent* two years, it remains constant.
 - e. In *general*, the profit *mostly* increases.
 - f. *Overall*, the figures *generally* decline.
 - g. *Generally speaking*, there are two main trends.
10. a. The most popular place *tends to* be cinemas.
 - b. The profit figure *seems to* decrease to a minimum.

Practical IELTS Strategies 3 Writing Task One

- c. The process *is mainly* divided into three stages.
 - d. The figure *appears to* reach a peak.
 - e. The number of Japanese tourists *looks* similar to that of Korea.
 - f. *Apparently* the figure falls to a minimum.
 - g. The volume *sort of* increases.
11. a. There is a big demand, *so* production increases.
- b. The number of tourists falls *because* of the weather.
- c. The percentage grew, *since* people like hamburgers.
- d. The death rate was so big.
12. a. The profit increases in 2001 *whereas* in 2003, it rises slightly.
- b. Dandenong's profit increases. *In addition*, it decreases.
- c. Geelong rises in the first quarter. *Moreover*, it falls in the next.
13. a. Dandenong's *ratio* is the highest.
- b. From the *aforesaid*, it can be seen that Dandenong's profit is high.
- c. The *trend* increases steadily.
- d. The *trend* falls.
14. a. The profit *of them* is highest.
- b. The number *of it* decreases substantially.
- c. The peak *of it* is 55%.
15. a. The chart shows two countries, *including* the UK and France.
- b. The profit *particularly* grows.
- c. There are many countries, *namely*: Japan and China.
- d. The profit grows strongly, *such as* in Asia.
16. a. The graph shows the *change in mobile phone owners*.
- b. The bars chart shows how *the houses* grew.
- c. The *amount* of people increased.
- d. The *quantity* of profit decreased steadily.

- e. The *number* of fruit remained at this level.
 - f. The figure *of water* fluctuates.
17. a. Dandenong's profit grows. *On the contrary*, Noble Park's falls.
- b. Geelong increases somewhat. *On the other hand*, Dandenong is bigger.
- c. Melbourne's tourist number stays the same. *Meanwhile*, Rowburn's increases.
- d. In the first year, the water level increases. *During* the next year, it falls greatly.
18. a. The profit grows steadily to eight millions.
- b. It drops gradually to about six thousands.
- c. Dandenong's profit is *most bigger* than the others.
- d. Academic books were *the second expensive*.
- e. The profit rose to 70%, *accounting for the highest number*.
19. a. The number of people grows steadily from 350 to 600, *in 2005*.
- b. The sales figure shows a dramatic fall to 23 *in the year 2010*.
- c. The profit grows from 3000 in 2000 to 4000 in 2001.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

- ✎ Summary of Tips
- ✎ Tip 20: The Writing Task One Procedure
- ✎ Summarising Exercise
- ✎ IELTS Writing Task One Practice I-IV
- ✎ Conclusion

Summary of Tips

We can summarise what we have learnt for the IELTS Writing Task One.

Tip 1 (How much to write)	We have written well over 150 words, and we would notice this on the answer sheet because we would be writing at the top part of the second page.
Tip 2 (Which task to do first)	We thought about which task to do first, considering the three arguments (supporting Task One first, Task Two first, or the one we are best at first). We decided which one of these strategies worked best for us.
Tip 3 (Study the item/ Read the axes)	We analysed the item, and in the case of graphs, bar charts, or tables of figures, we carefully read the Y and X axes.
Tip 4 (Write in formal style)	We wrote the description using formal words, and formal grammar (such as relative clauses).
Tip 5 (Do not give opinion)	We did not give opinions; we only gave a descriptive summary (thus fulfilling the requirements of the task). We could, however, where possible and in an honest way, include some natural reactions.
Tip 6 (Cut the fluff)	We did not use meaningless 'model' sentences, or words which only made our answer longer, and did nothing else.
Tip 7 (Include a forest-view)	We included a 'forest-view', or a passage which gave the general message of the item we were describing. If possible, we tried to express this with some real-world English, avoiding figures, dates, and specific detail.
Tip 8 (Structuring the forest-view)	We put the 'forest-view' as a separate paragraph, and wrote it immediately after the introductory sentence(s), thus making sure it appeared in the answer.
Tip 9 (Structuring the tree-views)	We divided the detailed description into 'tree-paragraphs' with consistent subjects, introduced by topic phrases, using only two or three of these paragraphs, but covering the whole Task One item. We 'grouped' information into major trends, used sequencers as needed, and gave 'X' axis information in the (SP)YT order.

<p>Tip 10 (Vary the words & grammar: the introduction)</p>	<p>We did not copy long sections from the task introduction, and we always tried to paraphrase noun-phrases.</p>
<p>Tip 11 (Vary the words & grammar: the body text)</p>	<p>For subjects which repeated themselves, we varied the words, using synonyms and other phrases – that is, we used lexical chains.</p> <p>We also varied the grammar, using conjunctions, sequencers, relative clauses, and participial phrases, where possible.</p>
<p>Tip 12 (Grammar Issues)</p>	<p>We could use two specific grammars to describe time trends (varying that grammar appropriately), and we became familiar with prepositions and graph features. We used consistent tenses, and tried to use relative clauses and participial phrases.</p>
<p>Tip 13 (Significant features [and figures])</p>	<p>We looked for other significant features (rather than just describing in detail every feature or change). We supported these with figures. We explained why these figures were significant, trying to use complex structures.</p>
<p>Tip 14 (Approaching a pie chart)</p>	<p>For pie charts, we realised that they are less dynamic than graphs, and thus we were careful about using some adverbs and time sequencers.</p> <p>We also did not just give long lists of figures, but instead looked for significant features.</p>
<p>Tip 15 (Approaching a table of figures)</p>	<p>For tables of figures, we analysed the table by scanning along the up/down view, and left/right view, looking for trends.</p> <p>We also did not just give long lists of figures, but instead looked for significant features.</p>
<p>Tip 16 (Approaching a diagram)</p>	<p>For diagrams, we selected a logical starting point, and followed step by step through the process, mostly using the passive voice, and using sequencers and paragraphs as appropriate.</p> <p>We wrote a forest-view by thinking about stages, natural forces, and/or physical parts.</p>
<p>Tip 17 (Approaching a map)</p>	<p>For maps, we used a general description of change for the forest-view, and the time periods for the topic phrases.</p>
<p>Tip 18 (Giving final thoughts)</p>	<p>We thought carefully about whether there was a possibility of adding final thoughts, and if there was, we introduced these thoughts using careful language.</p>
<p>Tip 19 (‘Danger’ words)</p>	<p>We became aware of some ‘danger’ words, grammar, and phrases.</p>

Tip 20

The Writing Task One Procedure

Combining all the tips we have learnt suggests the following procedure for the IELTS Writing Task One.

Start

Step 1: Read the task introduction / Study the task.

Step 2: Read the axes (for graphs, bar charts, and tables of figures).

Step 3: Decide on the forest-view. [Tip 7]

Think about:

- how it can be expressed *without* figures,
- if there is any *real-world* message,
- and honest natural reactions.

Step 4: Decide on/Circle the significant features [Tip 13], such as highs/lows, similar features, interesting points, or points of comparison.

Step 5: Quickly decide on the organisation of the tree-paragraphs so that there will be only two or three of them. Sketch this organisation. Decide on:

1. the focus of each paragraph,
2. the topic phrases,
3. and any final thoughts.

3 min.

Step 6: Begin writing, following the structure in Tips 8 and 9, and following the tips for the type of task: graph, pie chart, bar chart, table, diagram, or map.

1. Do not repeat too many of the question words or too much of the question grammar.
2. Do not include opinion.
3. Cut the fluff! Write to the point!
4. Do not use essay language.
5. Vary the words and grammar.
6. Group major trends, and try to write 'X' axis trend-sentences in the (SP)YT order.

- Step 7:**
1. Give *significant* features [highs/lows, similar features, interesting points, and points of comparisons].
 2. Say *why* they are significant [Use relative clauses, *with* commas, and participial phrases].
 3. Support these with figures.

- Step 8:**
1. Make comparisons.
 2. Say why these other features/aspects/figures are significant/relevant [Use relative clauses, *with* commas etc.].
 3. Support these with figures.

Step 9: If appropriate and possible, add final thoughts.

Step 10: If time allows, check your work.

— 20 min.

Remember, it is good to be aware of, and follow, a procedure, but this does not mean it is easy. In fact, there is so much advice here that we will look at one more exercise, but it is a long exercise, involving quite a difficult Task-One item. It will summarise and give good practice for every tip we have learnt.

Summarising Exercise

Look at the following question.

The table shows the major causes of non-natural deaths, in percentage points, according to age, in the year 2010 in Victoria.

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

Cause of Death	Age Category			
	0 - 18	19 - 30	31 - 50	50+
Criminal Acts	15	9	8	4
Car Accidents	20	30	32	30
Poisonings	15	8	7	5
Drownings	19	10	9	12
Suicides	1	31	10	7
Falls	15	3	12	34

Remember, we will make sure that we write to at least the middle of the second page of the answer sheet, so that the answer is long enough [Tip 1]; and let us suppose that we decided that doing Task One first is a good strategy for us [Tip 2], and so choose to do it first.

We can now look at a bad answer, and then slowly make it better by using all the tips we have studied. The grammar in the following answer is, in fact, without mistake, but there are still many other problems. The underlined or italicised parts show problem areas.

Sample Answer (Version One)

The table shows the major causes of non-natural deaths, all according to many ages, in the year 2010 in Victoria. A quick glance at the chart provided shows a careful comparison of four age-groups. The figures show marked changes and significant variations. In all the age-groups, car accidents are 20. Then car accidents are 30. Car accidents are 32 and 30. This is really terrible because in contemporary society it is universally acknowledged that cars play an increasingly indispensable role. *And criminal stuff* is 15, poisonings are 15, drownings are 19, suicides are 1, and falls were 15 in the first age-group.

On the other hand, in the next group, car accidents are 30, criminals are 9, and so on. Moreover, drownings are 10, suicides are 31. Falls are 3. 31 – 50 and 50+ age-groups show changes.

The car accidents grew up in the first three groups. It is surprising that the 31 – 50 has got 32 for car accidents. 50+'s got 12 for drownings. And it's got 34 for falls. That's too high. 31 – 50 had only 7 for poisonings. Car accidents are 30. In conclusion, the figures generally indicate how dangerous life is. This shows we must be careful for different things.

(205 words)

You should quickly see that this answer is not paragraphed clearly, logically, or in the modern style. As we said in Tip 4, good writing must be paragraphed. The forest-view at the end is too vague and somewhat meaningless, and the answer is mostly lists of figures, with irrelevant fluff and opinion [Task Achievement 4]. The cohesive devices are basic, used wrongly, or missing, causing repetition and confusion, and the information is not presented clearly at all [Coherence & Cohesion 4]. If you take away the memorised and copied material, there is very little new vocabulary. It is basic and repetitive [Lexical Resource 4]. Similarly, the grammar has no mistakes, but there is a very limited range, with almost no compound or complex sentences [Grammatical Range & Accuracy 4]. This is an overall IELTS 4 piece of writing.

Let us look at this writing answer, tip by tip, to change it from an IELTS 4 answer into something much higher. So, think about Tips 3 to 6.

<p>Tip 3 (Study the item / Read the axes)</p>	<p>Analyse the item, and in the case of graphs, bar charts, or tables of figures, carefully read the Y and X axes.</p>
<p>Tip 4 (Write in formal style)</p>	<p>Write the description using formal words, and formal grammar (such as relative clauses).</p>

Tip 5
(Do not give opinion)

Do not give opinions; only give a descriptive summary (thus fulfilling the requirements of the task). You can, however, where possible and in an honest way, include some natural reactions.

Tip 6
(Cut the fluff)

Do not use meaningless 'model' sentences, or words which only make your answer longer, and do nothing else.

First Task

Improve the writing according to these tips.

1. Separate the introduction, and put the rest of the text together (for now).
2. Remove all fluff and opinion.
3. Correct any inaccurate phrasing [shown underlined].
4. Correct any informality [shown in *italics*]. Single digits could be fixed by just adding the percentage sign (%).

A sample answer will be given, but first try this task yourself.

Improving our answer according to the first task (with all the changes shown in italic print) could give:

Sample Answer (Version Two)

The table shows the major causes of non-natural deaths, all according to many ages, in the year 2010 in Victoria.

In all the age-groups, car accidents are 20%. Then car accidents are 30%. Car accidents are 32% and 30%. *Also* criminal acts are 15%, poisonings are 15%, drownings are 19%, suicides are 1%, and falls were 15% in the first age-group. On the other hand, in the next group, car accidents are 30%, criminal acts are 9%, and so on. Moreover, drownings are 10%, suicides are 31%. Falls are 3%. The 31 – 50 and 50+ age-groups show changes. The *number of* car accidents *increased* in the first three groups. The 31 – 50 *has* 32% for *these* accidents. 50+ *has* 12% for drownings. It *also has* 34% for falls. That is very high. 31 – 50 had only 7% for poisonings. Car accidents are 30%.

(143 words)

Well, we have removed about 60 'fluff' words. The answer is only 143 words, which is not long enough, but it does not yet have a forest-view! Having a forest-view is very important, so let us now think about the relevant tips.

<p>Tip 7 [First Part] (Include a forest-view)</p>	Include a 'forest-view', or a passage which gives the general message of the item you are describing.
<p>Tip 8 (Structuring the forest-view)</p>	Put the 'forest-view' as a separate paragraph, and write it immediately after the introductory sentence(s), thus making sure it appears in the answer.

If we want to decide on a forest-view for a table of figures, we need to consider the first part of Tip 15.

<p>Tip 15 [First Part] (Approaching a table of figures)</p>	Analyse the table by scanning along the up/down view, and left/right view, looking for trends.
--	--

Second Task

Let us improve the writing by finding and adding a forest-view. This is quite a difficult task, and there is no single 'best' answer. Scan left/right, and up/down. Think about how you look at a forest. What features comes to you as you look around? Try to write a forest-view yourself before looking at mine.

Doing this second task gives an answer such as:

In general, car accidents remain high in all age-groups. Additionally, the adult age-groups see mostly one high cause, whereas among the youngest age-group, most causes are significant.

Well, it does not yet have any real-world English, but it is a forest-view. By scanning in the up/down and left/right direction, the passage correctly notices two overall trends. Notice that this forest-view:

1. does not have figures,
2. is meaningful,
3. is, in fact, 'forest' – that is, it is broad, attempting to cover the whole task.

When scanning left/right, you might also have noticed that both criminal acts and poisonings *decrease* with *increasing* age, but there seems to be no other trends in this respect. You could put this observation into the forest-view, but since it only involves two causes of death, perhaps it is

not 'forestry' enough. Perhaps then it could be used in the tree-view.

However, look at our *tree-view*. It is just a single paragraph of confusing detail! It is not clear *how* it is organised. We need to look at Tip 9.

Tip 9

(Structuring the tree-views)

Divide the detailed description into 'tree-paragraphs' with consistent subjects, introduced by topic phrases, using two or three of these paragraphs only, but covering the whole Task One item.

'Group' information into major trends, use sequencers as needed, and give 'X' axis information in the (SP)YT order.

Third Task

Improve the writing according to these tips.

Organise the 'tree' paragraph into two or three separate paragraphs, each with a single theme, introduced by a topic phrase.

The paragraph themes could be 'causes of death', but there are seven of these, which is too many. Look at Tip 9, Part One, Exercise 15 once again. It tells us we need to group information so that there are two or three 'tree' paragraphs only, but these must also *cover the whole task*. Thus, it is probably better to use 'age categories', but there are still *four* of these. Probably no age-group is more interesting than the others, so there is no logic which tells us to put one of them alone in one paragraph (and the other three in another). So, perhaps we can simply combine the first two age-groups into one paragraph, and the second two into another. Can you think of any real-world term to describe the second two age-groups?

A sample answer will be given, but first try this task yourself.

Improving our answer according to the third task could give:

Sample Answer (Version Three)

The table shows the major **causes** of non-natural deaths, all according to many **ages**, in the year 2010 in Victoria.

In general, car accidents remain high in all *age-groups*. Additionally, the adult *age-groups* see mostly one *high cause*, whereas among the youngest *age-group*, most *causes* are significant.

Looking at the 0-18 and 19-30 *age-groups*, criminal acts are **15%**, poisonings are *15%*, drownings are *19%*, suicides are *1%*, and falls were *15%* in the first age-group. On the other hand, in the second *age-group*, car accidents are *30%*, criminal acts are *9%*, and so on. Moreover, drownings are *10%*, suicides are *31%*. [...] Falls are *3%*.

As for the older *age-groups* (31 – 50 and 50+), the 31 – 50 *age-group* has *32%* for car accidents. [...] 31 – 50 had only *7%* for poisonings. 50+ has *12%* for drownings. It also has *34%* for falls. [...] That is very high. Car accidents are *30%*.

(153 words)

Our answer is now beginning to look organised, but there is much repetition, and the grammar is mostly just simple sentences. Go back to the task introduction, and you will see our introduction is mostly copied from this. There is also some essay-style language which needs to be removed. We need to look at the tips about smaller detail, namely: Tips 10, 11, and 12.

<p>Tip 10 (Vary the words & grammar: the introduction)</p>	Do not copy long sections from the task introduction, and always try to paraphrase noun-phrases.
<p>Tip 11 (Vary the words & grammar: the body text)</p>	For subjects which repeat themselves, vary the words, using synonyms and other phrases – that is, use lexical chains. Also vary the grammar, using conjunctions, sequencers, relative clauses, and participial phrases, where possible.
<p>Tip 12 (Grammar Issues)</p>	Use two specific grammars to describe time trends (varying that grammar appropriately). Be familiar with prepositions and graph features. Use consistent tenses, and try to use relative clauses and participial phrases.

Fourth Task

Improve the writing according to these tips.

1. Re-write the introduction using original grammar.
2. As Tip 5 also mentioned, you should not use 'essay language' in Task One, so remove the essay-language (shown dashed underlined).
3. Vary or remove the *italicised* words so that they are different from the leading noun (shown in **bold** print). Can you use any real-world English, or paraphrasing?
4. Add conjunctions or relative clauses in the square brackets ('[...]'), and try to combine other parts of the answer.
5. To finish Tip 9, put the underlined sequencer first.

6. Make the tenses consistent.

A sample answer will be given, but first try this task yourself.

Improving our answer according to the fourth task (with all the changes shown in italic print) could give:

Sample Answer (Version Four)

The data compares six principal causes of unnatural fatalities in Victoria in 2010, divided into four age-groups.

In general, car accidents remain high *throughout life*. Additionally, the adult years see mostly one *particularly frequent manner of untimely exit*, whereas among *children*, most are significant.

Looking at the 0-18 and 19-30 categories, *in the first*, criminal acts and poisonings are 15%, drownings are 19%, suicides are 1%, and falls are 15%, *whereas* in the *second*, car accidents are 30%, and criminal acts are 9%. Drownings are 10%, suicides are 31%, *while* falls are 3%.

As for the later *phases of life*, 31-50 has 32% for car accidents *but has* only 7% for poisonings. The 50+ group has 12% for drownings. It also has 34% for falls, *which* is very high. Car accidents are 30%.

(140 words)

This is becoming better – but it is still just many figures with only few comparisons or key features. This results in repetitive words and grammar, ‘hanging’ sentences, and an unclear answer. We need to think about the second part of Tip 15.

Tip 15

[Second Part]
(Approaching a table
of figures)

Also, do not just give long lists of figures, but instead look for significant features.

Unfortunately we *have* given many figures, and many of them are not significant features. Well, highs and lows are certainly significant, and by only giving these, we can remove the excess figures. Let us then re-write our answer in this way. This could give:

Sample Answer (Version Five)

The data compares six principal causes of unnatural fatalities in Victoria in 2010, divided into four age-groups.

In general, car accidents remain high throughout life. Additionally, the adult years see mostly one particularly frequent manner of untimely exit, whereas among children, most are significant.

Looking at the 0-18 and 19-30 categories, in the first, car accidents are 20%, and suicides are 1%, whereas in the second, suicides are 31%, and falls are 3%.

As for the later phases of life, 31-50 has 32% for car accidents, but has only 7% for poisonings. The 50+ group has 34% for falls, which is very high, but only 4% for criminal acts.

(116 words)

Okay? The grammar is good, and reasonably varied. There are conjunctions (compound sentences), and relative clauses (complex sentences). The answer is paragraphed, organised, has a clear forest-view, and contains only significant figures. No problem, right?

Actually, the answer is only 116 words – very much *under* the word limit. We need at least 34 more words! So, we need to add memorised fluff back into the answer, right? How about:

A quick glance at the tabulated information
which is required to be described tells us that...

[Now just write anything]

Making a broad comparison of all the relevant figures,
it can be clearly discerned among the data that...

There. That's 34 words. And to give 20 more words, why don't we add:

Starkly contrasting the previous information, it is worth pointing out... [Now just write

Another interesting point that deserves to be mentioned is that... something more]

Perfect, right?

WRONG!

Look at Tip 6 again.

Tip 6 (Cut the fluff)	Do not use meaningless 'model' sentences, or words which only make your sentences longer and do nothing else.
---------------------------------	---

Yes, that fluff might sound good, but students need to:

Practical IELTS Strategies 3: Writing Task One

- remember it correctly,
- fit it grammatically and logically in the answer, which they often do *not*.
- believe in it,

The fluff itself needs to:

- be true,
- give progression, which it does *not*.
- show no repetition,

Finally, writing fluff uses time, time that *we need to actually achieve the task*, as Tip 13 reminds us.

Tip 13 (Significant features [and figures])	Look for other significant features (rather than just describing in detail every feature or change). Support these with figures. Explain why these are significant, trying to use complex structures.
--	---

Part of this task involves the second part of Tip 7.

Tip 7 [Second Part] (Include a forest-view)	If possible, try to express the forest-view with some real-world English, avoiding figures, dates, and specific detail.
---	---

Fifth Task

Improve the body text according to Tip 13. You should:

1. Explain the significance of all the figures you have given, *which gives you the chance to use relative clauses* – for example, the italicised clause in this sentence. You can also use participial phrases, *reading one right now*. Remember, use commas with your relative clauses.
2. Compare these figures with other figures, always explaining why you are giving this detail (with more complex structures).
3. Try to use some real-world English, natural reactions, or paraphrasings where appropriate.

Use the questions in the square brackets ([...]) in the following text to help you.

Forest-View

In general, car accidents remain high throughout life [In what manner (= adverb)?][Can you compare this to some others?] [Overall, by what proportion?][Why is this proportion significant?][What does it mean?]. Additionally, the adult years see just one or two particularly frequent manners of untimely ends, whereas among children, most [Can you be more specific?] are significant [What does this mean in real world English?] [How does this make you feel?].

Tree-views

Looking at the 0-18 and 19-30 categories, in the first, car accidents are 20% [Why is this significant?][How does it compare with other figures?], and suicides are 1% [Can you use a real world English adverb about this figure?][Why is this figure significant?][How does it compare with all the other figures?], whereas, in the second, suicides are 31% [Why is this significant?][Can you compare it with anything?], and falls are 3% [Why is this significant?].

As for the later phases of life, 31-50 has 32% for car accidents [Why is this significant?], but only 7% for poisonings [Why is this significant?][What did we notice about the trend in poisonings?]. The 50+ group has 34% for falls, which is very high [In what way?], but only 4% for criminal. [Why is this significant?][What did we notice about the trend in criminal acts?].

A sample answer will be given, but first try this task yourself.

Sample Answer (Final Version)

The data compares six principal causes of unnatural fatalities* in Victoria in 2010, divided into four age-groups.

In general, although car accidents are not always dominant in specific phases,* they remain significant throughout, collectively comprising* almost one third, making automobiles the greatest takers of life in this state. Additionally, the adult years see mostly one particularly frequent manner of untimely* exit, whereas among children, all apart from suicide remain significant, illustrating youngsters' unfortunate gravitation* towards a variety of tragic ends.

Looking at the 0-18 and 19-30 categories, in the first, although car accidents are highest (at 20%), drownings at 19% are a close second, while suicides are predictably low at 1%, being the smallest figure of all. However, in the second age-group, whilst cars remain as lethal* as ever, suicide has escalated to the topmost rung (31%), leaving falls with the lowest occurrence of 3%.

As for the later phases of life, from 31-50, car accidents are most prevalent,* at 32%, while poisonings at 7% now occur least frequently, concordant* with their downward drift* with age. The 50+ group has the highest figure of all, being falls, at 34%, contrasting criminal acts, which, showing the same decline as poisonings, extinguish the fewest lives, at 4%.

(205 words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	fatality	(n)	to have sb./sth. as parts or members
2	phase	(n)	causing or able to cause death
3	to comprise	(v)	an attraction or movement towards sb./sth.
4	untimely	(adj)	a death that is caused in war, or by accident, violence, or disease
5	gravitation	(n)	a stage in the process of change, growth, or development
6	lethal	(adj)	a slow steady movement; a gradual change or development
7	prevalent	(adj)	agreeing; following an accepted pattern
8	concordant	(adj)	existing or being very common at a particular time or place
9	drift	(n)	happening too soon, or sooner than normal or expected

Our final answer is now 205 words, exactly the same number as the original Version One answer, but in our final answer, *every* word is meaningful, important, and describes the table.

Looking at the answer, we can see that it follows all the tips. It is long enough (Tip 1), uses formal grammar and words (Tip 4), *without irrelevant opinion* (Tip 5) or fluff (Tip 6). There is a clear forest-view, which is well-announced and structured (Tips 7 and 8), and the tree-paragraphs are similarly modelled (Tip 9). We have varied the grammar in the introduction and body text (Tips 10 and 11), and included, highlighted, and supported (with figures) significant features (Tips 13 and 16). By using all the tips in this book, this answer has changed to become very good indeed.

However, to receive the 'perfect' IELTS 9, we might need extra words identifying other key features so that the Task is absolutely *fully* described [Task Achievement = 9]. As for Lexical Resource, in the very 'dry' Task One task, to achieve a 9, we might need to take the opportunity to further show our writing skills with some final thoughts. This gives the chance to add some more smooth and stylish words. We need to look at Tip 18.

<p>Tip 18 (Giving final thoughts)</p>	<p>Think carefully about whether there is a possibility of adding final thoughts, and if there is, introduce these thoughts using careful language.</p>
--	---

Final Task

Look again at the table of figures. Try to think of final thoughts. As Tip 18 tells us, for final thoughts we need one of either:

1. a logical future trend or consequence,
2. a cause and effect relationship (often known as a 'correlation'),
3. a link to a well-known outside event or external fact,
4. a *natural* reaction (..eg.. surprise or puzzlement),
5. a grouping of parts into more general statements.

The writing answer is already long enough, so if we had more time in the actual IELTS test, we should definitely go back to Task Two for checking [See Tip 1]. However, if we still had time, this table of figures could have final thoughts based on '5. A grouping of parts into more general statements'. For example, what *honestly* came into my mind was:

Interestingly then, death by car accident is a far higher statistical probability than crime, although the latter inevitably gains the most publicity.

[22 extra words]

Also what immediately came into my mind was a comment based on '4. Causing a natural reaction' (and having a noun phrase):

Suicide being so high in the 19-30 age-group would certainly be a troubling statistic for most people.

[17 extra words]

However, remember all the warnings about final thoughts: you need the ability to honestly see them, the time and skill to write them, and they should not be too long.

Well, I hope this Summarising Task has further shown you how to apply all the tips in this book. There is just one last step on this road.

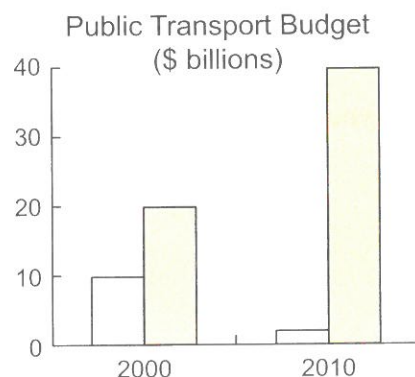
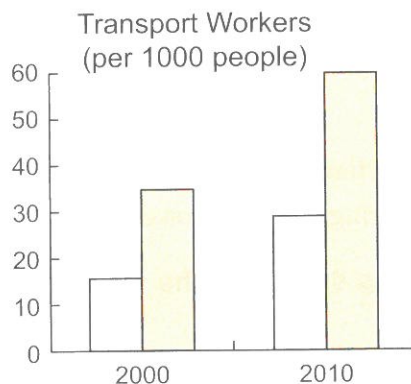
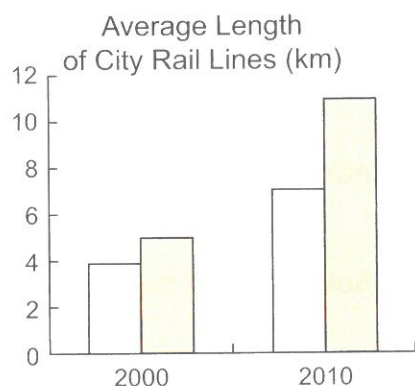
IELTS Writing Task One Practice I – IV

There have been many tips in this book, and I have taken you through them carefully, and given many examples. Now, in this final task, I will give four IELTS Writing Task Ones, and to challenge you, I have made them quite difficult. Try doing all four tasks, following the tips and hints given in this book. Then compare your answers to the sample answers given in Appendix 20.

Practice I

The charts show investment in public transport in Europe and Africa for the years 2000 and 2010.

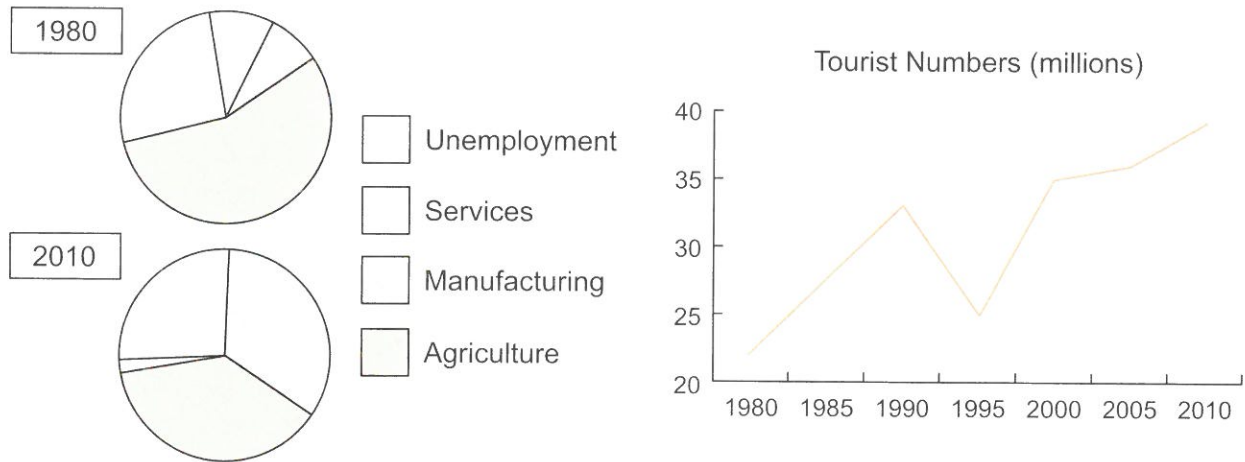
Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



Practice II

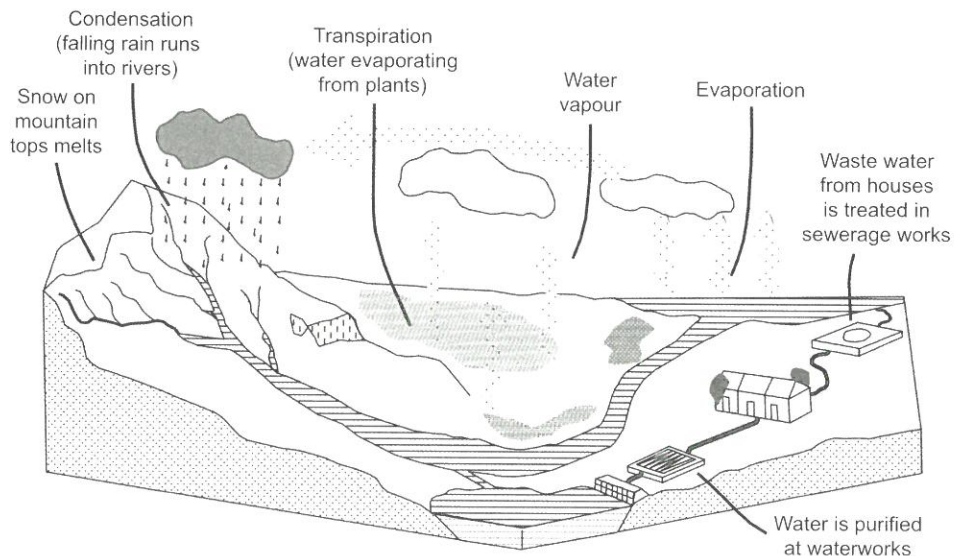
The charts show the percentage of people working in sectors of the economy in South-East Asia, and the rates of tourism to this area.

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



Practice III

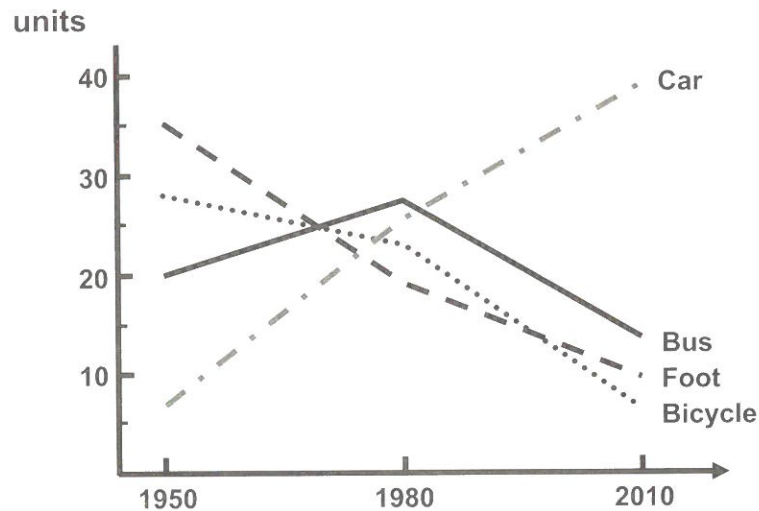
The diagram shows the water cycle. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



Practice IV

The graph below shows the different modes of transport used in Melbourne for weekend activities in 1950, 1980, and 2010.

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



Conclusion

Well, that concludes our practical and strategic study of the IELTS Academic Writing Task One. At this point, I would like to mention again a comment from the ‘About this Book’ section – that ‘there are *no magic answers* to obtaining higher band scores in the IELTS test. The test is a test of English language ability, so, naturally, you obtain higher scores by having higher ability.’

Certainly, by following these tips and hints *correctly* and *appropriately*, you can indeed improve your chances greatly, but you *must* follow them correctly and appropriately. If you do not do this, you will try to use the tips in this book, but make mistakes, mix up the strategies, forget the important advice, and *not* produce a better piece of writing at all. Tips only work when used alongside solid English skills. How can writing tips help if you still cannot write?

So, to advance your writing significantly *beyond* the scores of your present ability, you will need to keep working on your English skills: writing, grammar, and vocabulary. You also need to keep experiencing the world to help with independent thinking skills. By doing this, *together* with careful study of this book, you will begin to use the tips and hints correctly and appropriately, reaching your goals, and going beyond.

To help with this, you are now advised to carefully and methodically work through the other books of this series (if you have not done so already). These books are:

1. Reading
2. Speaking
4. Writing Task Two
5. IELTS Test Practice Book

The last of these has six practice tests, complete with sample answers and analysis, allowing you to consolidate all your skills. Good luck, and thank you for traveling this road with me.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Vocabulary Exercise

- | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. profile | 6. cross-section | 11. trend | 16. categories | 21. avoid |
| 2. fraction | 7. proportion | 12. exported | 17. appropriate | 22. list |
| 3. correlation | 8. details | 13. coherent | 18. mature | 23. italics |
| 4. fluff | 9. consistent | 14. quiz | 19. cohesive | 24. limited |
| 5. dynamic | 10. signposts | 15. relevant | 20. approach | 25. identify |

Appendix 2

Tip 4, Exercise 3, Part Two: Formal English

	Informal English	Appropriate Formal English
1.	Noble Park <i>footy</i> club	Noble Park <i>football</i> club...
2.	<i>has got</i> a big decline	<i>has</i> a <i>substantial</i> decline, ...
3.	...eg... at the end, ...	<i>especially</i> at the end, ...
4.	just <i>like</i> Geelong in the third quarter.	<i>as does</i> Geelong in the third quarter.
5.	You can see that it <i>sinks like a rock</i> ...	The profit <i>falls greatly</i> ...
6.	to about 9,	to about <i>nine</i> // to <i>less than/just under</i> 10,
7.	while Geelong is <i>about</i> 58 -	while Geelong is <i>almost</i> 60 -
8.	49 units higher than Noble Park,	<i>six times</i> higher than Noble Park,
9.	but about 41 units lower than Dandenong.	but <i>only three-quarters</i> of Dandenong.
10.	But <i>take a look</i> at Dandenong.	<i>Regarding</i> Dandenong, ...
11.	<i>It's pretty much</i> different all over.	<i>it is completely</i> different.
12.	<i>It's wonderful, actually, that's for sure, ...</i>	It <i>certainly achieves</i> a positive profile, ...
13.	... <i>obviously going up lots</i> <i>rising greatly</i> .
14.	<i>And it increases more and more</i> ...	<i>Also</i> , it does this <i>consistently</i> , ...
15.	, <i>and in the end it tops them all</i> .	ultimately <i>achieving</i> the <i>highest</i> profit overall.

Notes

2. 'Have got' means the same as 'have', but they have different grammar. Compare 'What have you got?' to 'What do you have?' They also have different levels of formality. 'Have got' is used more for spoken English, whereas 'have' is used more for written English, thus it is better to use 'have' in IELTS writing.
4. 'Like' here is used as a preposition. 'Like' as a verb is appropriate ['People like cars.'], but 'like' as a preposition ['He sounded like he was angry.'] should be avoided in formal writing.
5. Do not use the first person pronouns ('I' and 'we'), or the second-person pronoun ('you'). IELTS Task One is a formal summary of facts, so personal pronouns are not appropriate.
There is a lot of 'fluff' in books, giving sentences such as 'We can see from the chart that...' This is better written in the passive voice, as 'It can be seen from the chart that...', but, as Tip 6 explains, it is only fluff anyway, and so why write it?
'To sink like a rock' is known as an idiom. Idioms are not formal, and you should be careful about using them in Task One writing.
6. The problem here is the use of a single digit, or number, '9'. It looks 'bare' and out-of-place among so many words, and can be confused with letters ('2' for 'z', for example). One rule you could follow is, if there is a single digit, write it out in full; thus, '9' should be 'nine'. If it is a double digit, then you write it with digits, since it no longer looks so 'bare', cannot be confused, and since writing larger numbers in full takes time that you might not have.
Thus '10' is correct, as is, 'nine men and 10 women'. Single digits are, however, acceptable if they come with other symbols; for example, '\$3' or '3%', since this 'doubles' their length, making them look less 'bare', more 'word-like', and clearer. If the figures on the task show 'decimals', such as 2.4, 3.9, or 6.8, then write any single digits with '.0' – for example: 3, 6, 4, as 3.0, 6.0, and 4.0 respectively.
7. 58 is two digits, but the message is more clearly given with round figures – that is, multiples of 10. Thus, 58 is better written as 'almost 60', while 9 in the previous sentence is better written as 'under 10' or 'less than 10'.
8. 49 is again two digits, but when making comparisons (which you should certainly do – see Tip 13), the message is far better given when shown as a *fraction* or *proportion* of one figure against the other.
As Tip 12, Part Six explains, you can use the grammar:

[Figure One] is [X] times	- (higher than)	[Figure Two].
	- that of	
9. As Tip 12, Part Six explains, in this case, you can use the grammar:
[Figure One] is [Fraction] of [Figure Two].
12. 'Wonderful' is known as an adjective of 'extreme quality', meaning that there is strong 'emotion' in this word. Other examples of these adjectives are 'horrible', 'fantastic', and 'terrible'. The problem with these is that your 'passion' or 'emotion' is not relevant to the task. You are asked just to describe and transfer information. Even in Writing Task Two, how strongly you might feel is not considered relevant, or appropriate to the writing. Do not use these adjectives.

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13. 'Obviously' is not appropriate, since what you find 'obvious' is not always so to others. It is better to use 'clearly' or 'clear'.

Multiple-word-verbs can usually be replaced by more formal single-word-verbs. Thus, 'go up' is better written as 'increase' or 'rise'.

14. Do not begin sentences with 'And'. Use 'Also' or 'In addition', or, if *sequencing* events along the X axis, use 'Then', 'Next', 'After that, ...' and other sequencing phrases [See Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 3]. 'More and more', or 'less and less', and other 'double' adjectival phrases are immediately repetitive, and do not show style.

Better grammar would be:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| - ... increasingly [adj] ... | - amount(s)/volume(s) of [uncountable noun] ... |
| - ... increasing/decreasing | - numbers of [countable noun] ... |

Here are some example sentences.

- Dandenong is increasingly profitable.
- Increasing amounts of construction took place in the east.

15. Do not start a line with a comma. This is not acceptable in English. Put the comma at the end of the word in the line before.

Appendix 3

Tip 7, Exercise 10: Sample Forest-views

Task A

Over the whole period, absenteeism at Strathburn remains low and basically unchanged, whereas Melside holds the dubious* distinction* of not only a bigger problem, but also a worsening one, seeing a growing body of students not attending school.

Task B

Overall, this establishment is busiest at two distinct* times: early in the morning and late in the afternoon, with these periods logically corresponding* to the morning and afternoon rush hours, when most commuting occurs.

Task C

The main message is that Snazzle remained, by far, the most consumed snack bar, although this popularity did decline somewhat with the passing of time, perhaps correlating* to the steady yet significant ascent of Snitch.

Tip 8, Exercise 12: More Sample Forest-views

Task A

Generally speaking, in all years apart from one in the mid-period, CMT University employed significantly more women than men, as well as having similar amounts and ratios* of staffing. In that mid-period, however, the number of male staff was extraordinarily high, more than twofold that of the other gender, making overall staff numbers soar, but (somewhat anomalously*) in that year only.

Task B

Looking as a whole, the agency originally found employment mostly for teachers, whereas three years later, this clientele* had become only a minor part of the company's business, with the emphasis having shifted to the two medical professions (doctors and nurses), which, by garnering* one third each of the total turnover, dominated recruitment numbers.

Task C

On the whole, tourists' impressions of Victoria were quite favourable indeed, with only a small minority expressing negative sentiments.* Perhaps consequently to this, apart from one mid-period downturn, this state became increasingly popular as a place for tourists to spend their holidays.

Task D

Over the whole period, Petersglen University ultimately proved by far the most popular, with its student body expanding so fast and consistently that, by the final year, it was over twofold the demographic* size of the other institutes. In addition, all these places experienced growths, apart from CMT, where numbers descended as time went by, ultimately seeing it become the least-attended centre of learning.

Task E

Overall, there are two distinct* trends. Firstly, the heavy-duty arms (rifles and shotguns) were always far more costly than the lighter weaponry, being on average two to threefold higher. The second trend is that all these devices became increasingly expensive, finishing with their highest price, apart from slug guns, which, somewhat strangely, defied this inflationary* pressure, remaining almost totally static* over the whole period.

Task F

In general, the more sedate* and static* museums and art galleries are popular with the older generation, whereas beaches and bars, somewhat predictably, are frequented* more by the younger crowd, while cinemas remain liked by all ages. However, these trends become most apparent at either end of the age spectrum,* meaning that all these recreational centres receive quite respectable numbers of middle-aged patrons.*

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	dubious	(adj)	to be the same as, or match something
2	distinction	(n)	of doubtful quality or worth
3	distinct	(adj)	a feature that makes sth. different, often better
4	to correspond	(v)	relating to difference from what is normal or expected
5	to correlate	(v)	a relationship between two things represented by two numbers
6	ratio	(n)	to be closely connected, or affect or depend on each other
7	anomalously	(adv)	a feeling or opinion, esp. one based on emotions
8	clientele	(n)	to obtain or collect sth., such as information or support

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9	to garner	(v)	not moving, changing, or developing
10	sentiment	(n)	clear, plain, or unmistakeable; being not the same as others
11	demographic	(adj)	all the customers or clients of a shop or organisation
12	inflation	(n)	to visit a place
13	static	(adj)	slow, calm, and relaxed; lacking excitement
14	sedate	(adj)	a complete or wide range of sth.
15	to frequent	(v)	a general rise in the prices of goods and services
16	spectrum	(n)	a person who uses a particular shop, store, restaurant etc.
17	patron	(n)	relating to changes in population and the groups within it

Note that all these forest-views:

1. try to cover the whole task (the forest), and not just highlight single specific points.
2. try to use some real-world English, as appropriate ('employed', 'popular', 'busiest', 'recruitment', 'expensive', 'clientele', 'inflationary', and others).
3. do not give opinions. There is only some honest natural reaction, as appropriate ('extraordinary', 'anomalously', 'somewhat strangely', 'predictably', and others).
4. do not use figures, or even dates. These are generally referred to ('mid-period', 'originally', 'morning', 'three years later', 'finishing'). Specific figures and dates can appear in the tree-views.

Appendix 4

Tip 9, Part Two, Exercise 17: Sequencing

Part One

A possible answer is ...

In the first three years, the profit rose steadily, after which it fluctuated for some months. Then, from 03 to 05, it experienced a descent to about 30. Next, there was a three-year period of stability, followed by another fall to a low point of 10 in the last year.

Part Two

The answer is...

Regarding Snitch, the number remains constant for almost three quarters, after which there occurs a slight rise.

Moving to Smoothlow, in the first third of the year, sales fall to the lowest point. In the next few months, they experience a pronounced and steady rise. After that, there is a period of stability.

As for Snazzle, the number sold rises slightly in the first one and a half quarters. Then, there is a three month period of stability, followed by a significant fall.

Part Three

The answers are: 1C, 2D, 3A, 4B, 5F, 6G, 7E.

Tip 10, Exercise 19: Paraphrasing and Introductions

Part One

1. • AAA Electronics' Employee's Levels of Education
• The Levels of Education which AAA Electronics Employees Obtained
2. • The Prices at which Johnson's Gun shops Sell their Wares
• Johnson Gun Shops' Average Price of Weapon
3. • Sources from where British Men and Women Obtain their News of the World
• Manner in which World News is Obtained, by Gender, in Britain
4. • Urban and Rural Areas' Water Supply and Sanitation
• Provision of Water and Sanitation to Urban and Rural Areas
• Water and Sanitation Provided to both City and Country Regions
5. • Walgett's Development
• The Way in which Walgett has Developed
6. • The Water Purification Process
• The Way in which Water is Purified
7. • Amount of Electricity Generated by Japan and China according to Fuel Type
• Power Levels which Japan and China Generate using Various Fuels

Part Two

Possible answers follow.

Mentioning the Task

- A. The graph shows how the degree at absenteeism at Melside and Strathburn High School varied throughout a year.
- B. The graph reveals the variations in the passenger usage of Noble Park station in a day.
- C. The bar chart compares the 2010 sales performance of Snazzle, Smoothlow, and Snitch chocolate bars, all three being products of the Chunky Chocolate company.

Not Mentioning the Task

- A. What follows is a summary of the variation in absenteeism at Melside and Strathburn High School throughout a year.

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- B. The fluctuations in the passenger usage of Noble Park station throughout the day can be summarised as follows.
- C. The following summarises the 2010 sales performance of Chunky Chocolate Bars with respect to Snazzle, Smoothlow, and Snitch.

Appendix 5 Lexical Variety

Tip 11, Exercise 21: Lexical Chains

Part One: Lexical Chains

Chain One	Chain Two	Chain Three	Chain Four	Chain Five
From [X1] to [X2]	Geelong's	profit	increases	a great deal.
In the period [X1] - [X2]	this club's	figure	rises	greatly.
In the next year	the team's	number*	grows	significantly.
In the next/following [X2-X1] years	the/its	earnings	climbs	noticeably.
		amount*	becomes greater.	

- * 'Number' is *not* used with uncountable nouns. Do not say:
'The number of fruit/water/oil'. In these cases, use 'figure' on its own or 'amount'.
- Similarly, 'amount' is *not* used with countable nouns. Do not say:
'The amount of apples/cars/people'. In these cases, use 'figure' on its own or 'number'.

Chain Six	Chain Seven	Chain Eight	Chain Nine
Then, from [X1] to [X2],	decreases	slightly.	stays the same.
	declines	a little.	remains level.
	falls	marginally.	keeps stable.
	drops	but not significantly.	does not change.
	becomes smaller.		has little change.

Part Two: Synonyms and Paraphrasing

1.	the area	the region	the district
----	----------	------------	--------------

2.	the company	the organisation	the business/enterprise
3.	exports	products	commodities
4.	production	output	yield
5.	customers	clientele	people served
6.	(electricity) demand	power needs	energy consumed
7.	level of education	degree of study	scholastic achievement
8.	international tourists	foreign travelers	those going abroad
9.	unemployment rate	degree of joblessness	those without jobs
10.	(share) price	value	worth
11.	tourist destinations	places visited	favoured locations
12.	transport	means of travel	methods of moving around
13.	firing of staff	dismissals	termination of employment
14.	hiring of staff	recruitment	finding of employees
15.	having children	producing offspring	procreation
16.	Japan	this developed country	this Asian nation
17.	petrol	this fuel	this source of power
18.	medical complaints	health issues	bodily ailments
19.	changing accommodation	moving house	residential relocation
20.	leisure time	time off	opportunities for relaxation
21.	household goods	domestic appliances	machines for home use
22.	visits abroad	overseas travel	foreign journeys
23.	imprisonment	incarceration	detention
24.	reasons for complaint	causes of grievance	sources of discontent
25.	school subjects	academic areas	fields of study
26.	the USA and Europe	both countries	these two parts of the world
27.	management styles	ways of managing	methods of handling staff
28.	study hours	time invested	hours absorbed
29.	migration	movement of population	relocation to other countries
30.	chores	household tasks	domestic duties

Appendix 6

Tip 12, Exercise 23: Verb and Noun Grammar

Verb Grammar

	Verb	Adverb	
[Y]	1. increases	dramatically	
	2. grows	rapidly	
	3. rises	sharply	
	4. climbs	moderately	
The number	5. ascends	marginally	
	6. [any of the above five verbs]	fourfold ¹	
The figure			
	7. falls	steeply	
	8. decreases	substantially	
The amount	9. descends	steadily	
	10. drops	gradually	
	11. declines	slowly	
It	12. declines	slightly	

Units

to 80
by 60
from 20

2005 2010

- from... to...
- in the period 05-10.
- in (over/throughout/for/during)... the five-year period./these five years./the period in question.
- with the passing of time.
- as time goes by.

Noun Grammar

	Adjective	Noun	
There is	1. dramatic	increase	in [Y].
[Time period]	2. rapid	growth	
	3. sharp	rise	
	4. moderate	climb	
	5. marginal	ascent	
	6. fourfold ¹	[any of the above five nouns]	
	7. steep	fall	
	8. substantial	decrease	
	9. steady	descent	
	10. gradual	drop	
	11. slow	decline	
	12. slight		

Units

to 80
of 60
from 20

2005 2010

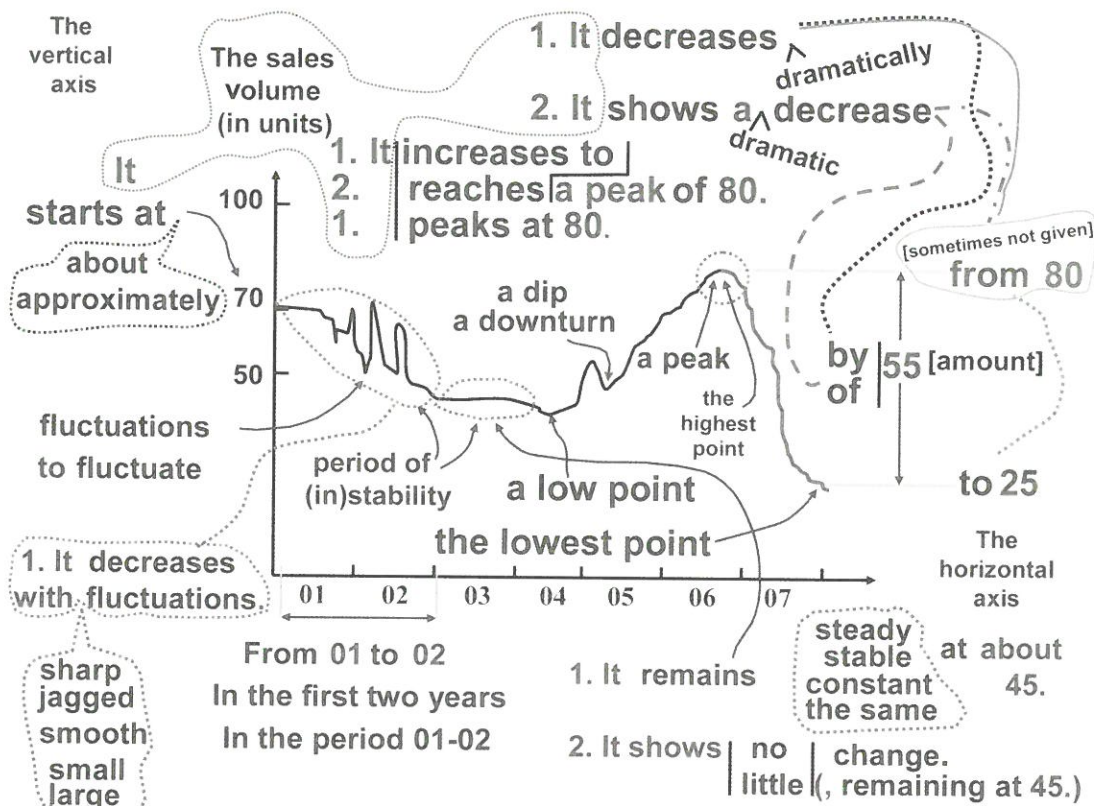
¹ These can begin from 'twofold' onwards: 'threefold', 'fourfold', 'fivefold', and so on.

² These verbs can be better understood by imagining the time period as an object with an 'eye', looking upwards at the changes occurring. Thus, these period do indeed 'see' and 'witness'.

³ Remember that this verb is best used with [Y]s which can show possession – for example, countries ('Japan'), organisations ('Chunky Chocolate'), rather than concepts ('number', 'profit', and others).

Appendix 7

Tip 12, Exercise 24: Graph Grammar and Features



When describing this graph line, to avoid over-writing (that is, to avoid including too much minor detail and repetitive sentence structures), you should pick the major trends, probably describing the graph in the 'time chunks' [01 to 02], [03 to mid 04], [mid 04 to end 06], and [07]. You could also combine the first two time periods, thus starting with [01 to mid 04], describing it as 'declining with fluctuations to a low point of about 40'.

Tip 12, Exercise 25

Sample Task C Answer (from Tip 7, Exercise 10)

Using only verb grammar

Snazzle begins the year at a high point of 60. Then, over the first three quarters, it decreases steadily to 45, after which it ascends, but only slightly. In contrast, Snitch starts at a low point of 20, but grows with equal steadiness in those same three quarters, reaching a peak of 35, after which it decreases. As for Smoothlow, it merely fluctuates throughout the year at around 20.

Using only noun grammar

At the start of the year, Snazzle is at a high of 60. Then, over the first three quarters, it experiences a steady decrease to 45, followed by a slight rise. In contrast, Snitch, originally at a low point of 20, shows an equally steady growth in those same three quarters, peaking at 35, after which there is a marginal fall. As for Smoothlow, the whole year merely sees fluctuations at around 20.

Tip 12, Exercise 27 Part One: Participial Phrases

1. The number dropped steadily, finishing at 50.
2. The profit rose quickly, reaching its highest point.
3. It fell to 10, thus losing the highest place.
4. The amount shows an increase, peaking at about 60.
5. The figure rises over the whole period, experiencing no downturns at all.
6. It rose, starting at 37 in 1990, finishing at 80.
7. This dominates exports, being over half of the total amount.
8. NSW achieves little, being the lowest in both years.
9. This figure rises quickly to 80, becoming the highest.
10. Its percentage is merely 14, thus being the lowest.

Sentences 7 and 8 give a 'Result/Reason', so they can be inverted. Sentence 5 is at the same time, so it too can be inverted. For the rest, the events happen one after the other, so they cannot be inverted.

Appendix 8

Tip 13, Exercise 30: Significant Features of Two Line Graphs

Football Line Graph [From Tip 4]

Highs and Lows

Dandenong, by increasing consistently, achieves the highest profit overall (in the last quarter), whereas Noble Park has the lowest profit (also in the last quarter), and also by a consistent (downward) trend.

Similar Features

- Dandenong and Noble Park are, coincidentally, almost mirror images of each other, with one rising, and the other falling.
- Dandenong and Geelong both manage an overall rise (although the latter with fluctuations).
- Dandenong and Geelong reach their highest points, and Noble Park reaches its lowest, all at the end of the year.

Interesting Points

- In the middle of the first quarter, Dandenong and Noble Park have the same profit.
- Near the middle of the second quarter, Geelong and Noble Park have the same profit.

- In the first few months, Noble Park, although consistently decreasing throughout the year, was, somewhat ironically, the highest of the three clubs.
- In contrast to Dandenong and Noble Park, Geelong is the only club which experiences fluctuations.

Points of Comparison

Dandenong reaches the highest profit, at 100 units, which was about 30 units higher than the second highest, Geelong (also at that same point in time).

Line Graphs [from Tip 9, Exercise 14]

Highs and Lows

Smoothlow descends to the lowest number overall (in the middle of the second quarter), as well as reaching the highest overall (in the last quarter), thus can certainly be said to fluctuate the most.

Similar Features

- Snazzle and Snitch are substantially constant for the first three quarters.
- Snazzle and Smoothlow start at about the same level, but finish with widely divergent numbers.

Interesting Points

- At the end of the third quarter, all three lines experience a sudden change, perhaps indicating some external influence affecting all of them at the same time.
- Smoothlow starts, and finishes, with the highest level of the three.
- Snazzle remains higher than Snitch at all times apart from the last few months.

Points of Comparison

Smoothlow achieves the highest amount overall, of about 100, in the last quarter, 20 units higher than Snazzle's highest level, achieved in the 2nd and 3rd quarters.

Appendix 9

Sample Answers to Two Simplified Line Graphs (A & B from Tip 7, Exercise 10)

Notes

1. I, the author, can easily handwrite a Task One of over 250 words in the 20 minutes. To provide a more realistic example for students of English, I reduced the length of the sample Task Ones in this book [Appendix 9 to 12, 14 to 16, 17D, and 20] to about 200 words, although this length varies depending on the nature and complexity of the task.

2. Tasks A and B are simple by usual IELTS standards. It is interesting to note that, despite this simplicity, the minimum word length of 150 is easily surpassed, showing just how much information a Task One actually contains. This makes it very clear that fluff (as a means for gaining words) is not necessary at all (besides being bad writing).

Task A

The graph reveals how rates of absenteeism* vary among two high schools: Melside and Strathburn throughout an academic year.

The introduction. Notice that the 'graph' is never mentioned again.

Over this whole period, Strathburn enjoys what can be assumed to be¹ a low and, certainly essentially unchanging, degree of truancy, * whereas its counterpart* holds the dubious* distinction* of not only a bigger problem, but also a worsening one, seeing a growing body of students unwilling to attend school.

The forest-view, with some stylistic phrasing and real world English.

Looking at Strathburn in detail, at the beginning, the rate is just under 1%, and basically remains there with apparently² nothing untoward* happening over the year. The only anomaly* is the third term, which sees some minor fluctuation, in the midst of which the rate dips to its lowest point.

A topic phrase. The task has two lines, giving a clear division. [See Tip 9, Part One: 'Try to Divide'].

A key feature (the lowest point) is highlighted.

Moving onto Melside, their level begins marginally higher, but then starts a steady, and, one would think, worrying rise, to almost 2% by mid-period. At this point, the gradient arches* even more sharply upwards, beginning with a small ripple, * perhaps similarly affected by the same external factors which see Strathburn's concurrent* tremours. But while the latter stabilises, Melside continues its divergent* course, so that by year-end, this centre of learning suffers from 4% truancy, * which is the highest over the whole period.

The second topic phrase, covering the whole graph.

Some natural reaction.

An interesting point is highlighted.

Paraphrasing for style, and a key feature is highlighted.

(200 words)

¹ An example of a natural reaction. Is 1% good or bad? I don't know, but it sounds acceptably low. I will assume it to be so, noting that this is an assumption [See Tip 5, Part Two].

² Be very careful with the word 'apparently' (= I think this is true, but I may be wrong). It should only be used by higher-level writers. Using it wrongly ('Apparently Melside has higher absenteeism than Strathburn') just lowers your score. [See Tip 19, Exercise 40, Item 10f].

Task B

The fluctuations in the customer usage of Noble Park train station over its daytime operating hours (6am – 9pm) can be summarised as follows.

Overall, this establishment is busiest at two distinct times: early in the morning and late in the afternoon, with these periods logically occurring during the rush hours, when most commuting* occurs. Although the morning surge* is higher, the afternoon one sustains* itself longer, equating to similar volumes of through-traffic.

Regarding the first half of the day, at 6am, only 100 passengers enter the premises*. The next two hours see this figure increase over twofold, reaching the first (and highest) peak of almost 300, after which numbers falls with the same steep gradient to 150, remaining there from 11am to 3pm – the only period of relative stability in the entire day.

As for the remaining time, the next hour sees an accelerating rise to the second peak of 200, which is maintained for an hour (about 5.00 to 6.00pm) before a more sedate* fall in the following few hours. By period-end, the number has shrunk* to 100, which, coincidentally*, is the same as the early morning, when the station gates* first opened, both times being the quietest period.

The introduction, this time not mentioning the graph.

The forest-view. Notice that even the times (of the rush hours) are not mentioned. Generally, try to let your words give the message here.

A topic phrase. The task has one line, so the time axis is divided into two. [See Tip 9, Part One: 'Try to Divide'].

The second topic phrase, covering the whole graph.

An interesting point is highlighted.

A key feature is highlighted.

(200 words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the text) with their meaning on the right.

1	absenteeism	(n)	to become smaller
2	truancy	(n)	a feature that makes sth. different, often better
3	counterpart	(n)	the practice of being absent or away from work or school
4	dubious	(adj)	a person or thing which has the same position or function
5	distinction	(n)	to rise in the form of an arch, or curve
6	untoward	(adj)	the act or state of being away from school without permission
7	anomaly	(n)	a slight rising and falling of a surface
8	to arch	(v)	to travel regularly over some distance

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9	ripple	(n)	separating or going in different directions
10	concurrent	(adj)	an odd or strange situation or condition
11	divergent	(adj)	slow, calm, and relaxed; lacking in excitement
12	to commute	(v)	a building together with its grounds
13	surge	(n)	of doubtful quality or worth
14	to sustain	(v)	unfavourable, unfortunate, or improper
15	premises	(n)	happening or occurring at the same time
16	sedate	(adj)	a sudden increase in the amount or number of something
17	to shrink	(v)	a barrier like a door used to close an entry or exit point
18	coincidentally	(adv)	to support, keep, or hold itself steady
19	gate	(n)	occurring or existing at the same time

Appendix 10

Sample Answer to the 'Football Clubs' Line Graph (from Tip 4)

The graph makes a comparison of the profit gained for Noble Park, Dandenong, and Geelong football clubs over a calendar year.

The introduction, short and to the point, and using a different grammar. Notice that the 'graph' is never mentioned again in the answer.

Looking first as a whole, apart from a short initial* interval, Dandenong is clearly more profitable than its two rivals*, and, additionally, generates increasingly higher earnings over this time (whereas the opposition suffer mixed fortunes), making this establishment, by far, the most financially successful.

The forest-view, with some 'real-world' English.

Notice that there are no figures here.

Now considering Dandenong in more detail,¹ it begins at 45 (thousand dollars),² which is slightly lower than Noble Park. However, by the first quarter, it has risen to 60, already surpassing* the others. This ascent continues in a manner which would please any stakeholder,* ultimately* reaching 100, the highest figure overall by far, 40 above the nearest competitor,* Geelong.

A topic phrase, introducing the tree-view, beginning with Dandenong.

Significant figures are written here. There is also some honest natural reaction/stylistic phrasing.

As for Noble Park, its profile* is an approximate mirror image of Dandenong, descending throughout. It starts promisingly at just over 50, making it, somewhat ironically,* the best performing club at that time, only to finish at the doubtlessly disappointing level of 10, then being the lowest figure of all, yet at least remaining 'in the black'.*

A topic phrase, introducing Noble Park.

Some natural reactions.

Idiomatic phrasing shown in inverted commas.

Moving to Geelong, it charts* an erratic* course, fluctuating jaggedly* between its competitors,* but ending respectably on a highpoint of 60, its sawtooth* outline contrasting the smooth contours* of the others, who remain immune* to whatever causes this instability.

A topic phrase, introducing Geelong.

The trend is summarised without giving unnecessary figures.

(220 words)

- ¹ As Tip 9, Part One, explained, 'in more detail' (or 'more specifically') can be used here since Dandenong has already been generally discussed in the previous paragraph. If this was not so, then the topic phrase would just be, 'Considering Dandenong'.
- ² This is used to show that the term 'thousand dollars' applies to all the given figures, to avoid repetition. Another way to do this is to write at the end of the introduction '*...with the figures shown in thousands of dollars*', and then similarly to use the bare figures, as in the answer in Appendix 12, although it could be clearer to insert the units once in the answer (using brackets) to remind the reader.

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the text) with their meaning on the right.

1	initial	(adj)	relating to the last, furthest, or end of a process or series
2	rival	(n)	to do or be better than sb./sth.
3	to surpass	(v)	sb./sth. which competes with another in sport or business
4	stakeholder	(n)	relating to the beginning or first
5	ultimately	(adv)	amusing because it is very different from what is expected
6	competitor	(n)	a person/company involved in a sth., esp. through investment
7	profile	(n)	to follow the progress or development of sth.
8	ironically	(adv)	to have money; be making money
9	be in the black	(adj)	having ragged sharp edges; zigzagged
10	to chart	(v)	having a zigzagged edge, similar to the cutting edge of a saw
11	erratic	(adj)	an outline of an object, esp. along a cross-sectional plane
12	jaggedly	(adv)	not affected by something
13	sawtooth	(adj)	not following any plan or regular pattern
14	contour	(n)	a person, team, or company which competes
15	immune	(adj)	the outline of a figure or body; the line that defines the shape

Possible Final Thoughts

See Appendix 18 (14 extra words)

Appendix 11

Tip 14, Exercise 33: Sample Answer to Pie Chart Task One

The pie charts make a comparison between the proportion of products exported from Australia in 2005 and 2010.

The main message is that, in both years, coal and iron are the largest and second largest respectively. Additionally, by the second year, coal, that solid fossil fuel, has reached almost half of the total, completely dominating* the field, illustrating that mining takes an overwhelming* first place over the other primary* industries (agriculture and manufacturing) in its contribution to this nation's foreign trade.

Regarding the first year, coal and iron are 32 and 27% respectively, taking top position, followed by wheat (16%) and meat (11%), with all other commodities* being more or less insignificant. Fish, somewhat surprisingly (given the extent of coastline available), shares the lowest rung* with vehicles, at 2%.

Moving forward half a decade, with coal having risen to such a dominant position of 43%, there must necessarily be corresponding* decreases in other products destined to go abroad. This is quite significant in wheat, which has declined from 16 to 10%, although iron, from 27 to 20%, also shrinks* considerably, whilst not losing its secondary status. Fish again remains lowest, at 1%, now having the unenviable* distinction of being there alone.

(201 words)

The introduction, mentioning the charts, but notice that they are never mentioned again.

The forest-view, noting two main points, and joining them together in a broader 'real-world' observation.

Notice that there are no figures or dates.

Significant features (highs and lows) in 2005.

Notice that this answer uses the 'sports commentator's tense'.

Some real-world knowledge.

Significant features (highs and lows) in 2010.

Some stylistic phrasing.

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the text) with their meaning on the right.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-------|---|
| 1 | to dominate | (v) | the horizontal parts of a ladder; (fig.) position or rank |
| 2 | overwhelming | (adj) | associated or connected together in a relationship |

3	primary	(adj)	so great as to make resistance or opposition useless
4	commodity	(n)	an article of trade or commerce, esp. a product
5	rung	(n)	not being worthy of envy or desire to be that way
6	corresponding	(adj)	to lessen in size; become smaller
7	to shrink	(v)	of the greatest relevance, significance, or importance
8	unenviable	(adj)	to control with the highest, most determining influence

Possible Final Thoughts

See Appendix 18 (34 extra words)

Appendix 12

Tip 15, Exercise 34: Sample Answers to Two Table of Figures Task One

1. Forest View

Apart from oil, NSW and Qld supplied, by far, the bulk* of this country's mineral exports. In addition, these two states clearly led the field in coal production, whereas Vic. and WA held this mantle* in oil, leaving SA to be virtually insignificant in all three commodities, presumably then almost totally bereft* of subterranean* resources.

2. Full Answer

The following summarises the variation in iron production (in millions of tons) in five Australian states over a 35-year period: 1975 to 2010.

Overall, there are three trends. Firstly, NSW produced the most of this metal in all years except the last. Secondly, there were increasing yields* in all states, except Vic; however, the final trend is that production developed particularly fast in Qld., to the extent that it overtook* NSW in the last year, illustrating that these two north-eastern states together produced, overwhelmingly,* most of Australia's iron, rendering* the rest of the nation virtually* insignificant.

Looking at Vic., SA, and WA, the first had the lowest output of 2.4 (million), showing no consistent* growth – although the other two states, starting at similar levels, only managed minor gains, to 4.1 and 5.7, respectively – certainly quite uninspiring* efforts, especially given the considerable* time frame involved.

This introduction chooses not to mention the task, but it does mention 'millions of tons', to avoid repeating it throughout the task.

Since three trends have been chosen, the answer organises them with 'Firstly', 'Secondly', and 'final'. Two of the trends are joined together for a broader 'real-world' observation.

The verb 'illustrate' (or 'indicate') is often used for drawing conclusions.

A topic phrase, grouping Vic, SA, and WA together for comparison. 'Millions' is repeated once, in brackets, to remind the reader of the units used. Some 'natural reaction'.

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As for NSW and Qld., in the first, production began at 11.3. This grew steadily, and by period-end had reached its highest point of 77. Its northern neighbour, in contrast, started much lower, at 2.6, edging* upwards to only 4.6 in 1990. However, from this time onwards, it showed an exponential* increase, eventually reaching 83, being the highest output* of any region over this period, six units above its nearest rival,* NSW.

A topic phrase, signposting the change to NSW and Qld.

Some real-world (geographical) knowledge ('northern...').

(216 words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the text) with their meaning on the right.

1	bulk	(n)	the role and responsibilities of an important job or position
2	mantle	(n)	completely lacking in something
3	bereft of	(adj)	under the ground
4	subterranean	(adj)	the main part of something
5	yield	(n)	to move ahead in achievement, production, or score
6	to overtake	(v)	almost or very nearly
7	overwhelmingly	(adv)	to move slowly in a particular direction
8	to render	(v)	depressing; not causing good feeling
9	virtually	(adv)	the total amount of crops, profit .etc. produced
10	consistent	(adj)	rather large in size, distance, or extent
11	uninspiring	(adj)	to cause sth./sb. to be in a particular state or condition
12	considerable	(adj)	the amount of something produced
13	to edge	(v)	constantly following the same course
14	exponential	(adj)	in amount being great, making resistance or opposition useless
15	output	(n)	a person, company, or thing, that competes with another
16	rival	(n)	growing by increasingly greater degrees

Possible Final Thoughts

See Appendix 18 (21 extra words)

Appendix 13

Tip 16, Exercise 36, Part One: Three Sample Diagram Forest-Views

1. Using Stages

Overall, there are three stages in this transformation* process, the first being the physical crushing* and filtering of the input ore,* which also allows a feedback and re-crushing. Then follows the liquid-based stage, involving 'digesting'* and precipitating* out the required product, leading to the 'dry' final stage: the thermal* baking* and storage, thus completing the process.

2. Using Natural Forces [See also Appendix 16]

Looking as a whole, the process involves the systematic and steady reduction of large, solid, and impure rock to a refined* powder through the utilisation of physical, chemical, and thermal* means. [being pulverisation,* acidic action, and heat, respectively. (possible extra part)]

3. Using Physical Parts

Generally speaking, the process is a factory-based and essentially linear* system of conveyors and containers,* interconnected for the purpose of converting* bauxite ore (at the input) to refined* alumina (at the output), while appropriately removing the water and residue waste-product in mid-process.

Notice that these forest-views avoid directly naming parts or giving specific details. They are indeed forest-views, broadly trying to summarise the processes which are shown.

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	transformation	(n)	to press or squeeze with a force that breaks or deforms
2	to crush	(v)	metal-bearing mineral or rock
3	ore	(n)	to separate as a solid from the liquid or gas form
4	to digest	(v)	in a fine or pure state, free from impurities
5	to precipitate	(v)	the act or process of transforming or changing
6	thermal	(adj)	to convert, esp. food, into useable form
7	to bake	(v)	to physically break something into fine powder
8	refined	(adj)	extended, or arranged in, or following, a line
9	to pulverise	(v)	to dry or harden by subjecting to heat
10	linear	(adj)	to change or make sth. from one form to another
11	container	(n)	connected with heat and temperature
12	to convert	(v)	anything that contains or holds something

Appendix 14

Tip 16, Exercise 36, Part Two: Sample Answer to Eye Diagram Task One

The manner in which the internal* components of the human eye collectively function can be summarised as follows.

Overall, there are three stages, the first being the image reception, in which the light rays from a viewed object pass through the clump* of front layers. Then there is the focussing* stage, which sees these rays pass through the main body of the eye to strike* the rear, at which point begins the electric-pulse stage, as the eye responds* by sending signals to the brain to be interpreted* as vision.

Generally speaking, the process involves the linear propagation* of light through the eye, and, primarily* by muscular flexing*, the focussing of this light so that the resultant* electrical signals can travel to the brain for the formulation* of a moving image.

Looking first as a whole, the process involves the soft, linear,* and doubtlessly very intricate connection of transparent* biological* layers, nevertheless being directly comparable to a mechanical camera in both the through-transmission of light, and, ultimately*, its conversion into a moving image.

Looking at the outer layers, light from a viewed object passes through the conjunctiva, a protective membrane* over the eye. This light then meets the 'aqueous' humour, which, as the name suggests, is kept filled with fluid, serving to protect the globular* lens within. The light meets this component, whose purpose, as with any lens, is to focus* the rays to form a sharp image.

As for the interior, this now focussed light passes through the jelly-like* 'vitreous' humour, which is, by far, the largest part of the eye, maintaining the shape, and protecting the apparently* very delicate* retina, lining* the rear. This, upon being struck, sends electrical impulses to the brain via* the optic nerve for the formulation* of visual* images.

Moving to non-optical* components, there exists rectus muscles for swivelling* the eyeball itself, and blood vessels for the provision of oxygen to the retina and immediate surrounds.

An introduction, not mentioning the task.

A forest-view using stages.	Notice that all three forest-views here avoid specifically naming parts or pieces.
A forest-view using the natural forces.	

A forest-view using the physical parts.
This forest-view will be used in this answer.

Following the diagram logically from the right to left.

Some 'external' knowledge.

After a logical paragraph break, the description continues.

After another logical paragraph break, some final details are given.

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	internal	(adj)	a small, close group; a lump or mass
2	clump	(n)	that can be seen through; allowing you to see through it
3	to focus	(v)	to read or bring out the meaning of something
4	to strike	(v)	a movement through space or other substances
5	to respond	(v)	referring to what results, or follows as a consequence
6	to interpret	(v)	shaped like a globe; spherical or ball-shaped
7	propagation	(n)	a thin sheet or layer of tissue
8	primarily	(adv)	extended, or arranged in, or following, a line
9	to flex	(v)	relating to the last, furthest, or end of a process or series
10	resultant	(adj)	a creation or preparation involving care and detail
11	formulation	(n)	relating to life, living things, or living organisms
12	linear	(adj)	to hit, or bang into
13	transparent	(adj)	mostly; chiefly; for the most part
14	biological	(adj)	to react by some action
15	ultimately	(adv)	a soft, elastic, and often transparent, material
16	membrane	(n)	to turn around as if on a swivel, or turning device
17	globular	(adj)	by way of; by that pathway
18	jelly	(n)	seeming to be so in appearance or initial evidence
19	apparently	(adv)	relating to light and vision
20	delicate	(adj)	inside of something; relating to the inner part
21	to line	(v)	to bend naturally without breaking
22	via	(prep)	to bring into focus, or act to produce a sharp, clear image
23	visual	(adj)	to cover the inside of sth. with a layer
24	optical	(adj)	fragile; easily damaged or hurt
25	to swivel	(v)	relating to vision, sight, and seeing

Possible Final Thoughts

See Appendix 18 (21 extra words)

Appendix 15

Tip 16, Exercise 36: Part Two: Sample Answer to Galvanometer Diagram Task One

The diagram shows how a galvanometer functions to accurately measure the amount of electric current passing through it.

Overall, there are two processes at work, the first being electrical, involving current passing through a wire-coiled and pivoted* interior. Secondly, there occurs the simultaneous* physical* effect, which deflects* the centrepiece and attached pointer proportionally to the amount of current being measured.

Looking at the central components, the actual pointer has a counterweight on one end, just beyond the spindle* over which the central iron cylinder rotates*. In addition, there is a centrally - attached return spring to appropriately counteract the physical 'Lorentz' force produced (from the interaction* of the magnetic and electric fields), allowing the pointer to stop, as well as returning it to zero in the absence of input.

Regarding the visual reading of this current, the scale is arc*-shaped, with graduations and numerical markings appropriately calibrated* to the range the device* has been designed to measure. This must be direct (as opposed to alternating), and is in units of amperes or 'amps', often as low as micro-amps when involving electronic circuitry. All this gives the meter an accuracy of plus or minus 1.5%.

A forest-view using stages.

A topic phrase (using different words) begins the focus on the inner parts.

Another topic phrase focuses on the outer parts of the galvanometer.

Some external knowledge is used ('alternating', 'micro-amps').

(193 words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	pivoted	(adj)	a part of a curved line
2	simultaneous	(adj)	balanced on a shaft or pin to allow a turning motion
3	physical	(adj)	to turn around a central point
4	to deflect	(v)	an action or influence affecting two or more objects
5	spindle	(n)	an object/piece of equipment designed to do a particular job
6	to rotate	(v)	existing or occurring at the same time
7	interaction	(n)	to turn aside, esp. from a fixed direction

8	arc	(n)	sth. shaped like a pin or shaft on which sth. turns
9	to calibrate	(v)	relating to actual existence, and movement
10	device	(n)	to determine, fix, or mark the graduations

Possible Final Thoughts

See Appendix 18 (12 or 17 extra words)

Appendix 16

Tip 16: Sample Answer to Process Diagram Task One

Here is a summary of how the ore, bauxite, is converted into alumina.

The introduction, not mentioning the diagram.

Looking as a whole, the process involves the systematic and steady reduction of large, solid, and impure rock to a refined powder through the utilisation of physical, chemical, and thermal means, being pulverisation, acidic action, and heat, respectively.

The forest-view, using the 'natural forces' approach.

Regarding the initial* phase, after being delivered, the ore is passed through a rotary crusher. The resultant pieces are deposited* in a 'Digester', where preliminary filtering excludes material insufficiently reduced. This is returned to the original input conveyors*, to be re-fed through the crusher, establishing a feedback loop* ensuring only appropriately small particles are conveyed* onwards.

Note the sequencers: 'after' and 'preliminary'.

Note the passive voice: 'is passed/ deposited/returned'...

Moving onto the chemical phase, the Digester dissolves* this metal-bearing rock in an acid bath, thereby creating an impure alumina solution*. This is filtered again to remove waste residue* (which is trucked to landfills), leaving the now purer alumina liquid to be piped, in the next step, to a 'Precipitator', where the excess water is removed, and the alumina, logically enough, is precipitated into a sedimentary sludge*.

...but note the active voice: 'dissolve', since we have a named subject: 'Digester', and it is good to vary the grammar.

Some external knowledge.

As for the final phase, this refined material is delivered to a rotary kiln which, through the application of high temperature, bakes* out the residual moisture, improving the texture* to create the end alumina powder.

After a logical paragraph break, the final part of the process is described.

(209 words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

[See Appendix 13: Item 2, for forest-view vocabulary]

1	initial	(adj)	a curving of a line or path back onto itself
2	to deposit	(v)	to take, carry, or transport sth. from one place to another
3	conveyor	(n)	to lay down or let fall
4	loop	(n)	a liquid with solids dissolved inside it
5	to convey	(v)	a muddy or slushy mass or deposit
6	to dissolve	(v)	to dry or harden by subjecting to heat
7	solution	(n)	the surface characteristics of sth., in its looks and feel
8	residue	(n)	something that remains after a part is taken
9	sludge	(n)	of, or relating to, the beginning
10	to bake	(v)	to cause to become part of a liquid
11	texture	(n)	sth. that transports a product, often using a moving belt

Possible Final Thoughts

See Appendix 18 (21 extra words)

Appendix 17

Tip 17, Exercise 37

Vocabulary, and Map Task One Sample Answer

A. Directions

The compass points are: North, South, East, West, then Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest. To form adjectives, put '-ern' at the end of these words: 'Northern, Southeastern' and so on. They are capitalised on a map to show direction, but not in the text.

B. Vocabulary of Change

Verb	Noun	Verb	Noun
(re)construct	construction	expand	expansion
demolish	demolition	contract	contraction
(re)develop	development	evolve	evolution
replace	replacement	transform	transformation
modify	modification	grow	growth
rebuild	rebuilding	convert	conversion

C. Map Vocabulary

Gen. Features	Adj.s of Industries	Nouns of areas	Adj.s of areas
construction	agricultural	region	rural
infrastructure	retail	district	urban
facilities	tourism	zone	industrial
amenities	manufacturing	province	residential
transport-(ation)	recreational	part(s)	commercial
vacant land	technology	section	coastal

Natural Features	Nouns of spec. areas	Adj.s referring back
lake	outskirts	original
forest	suburb	once
mountain	seaside	former
erosion	coast	previous
river	border	
pasture	centre	

D. Sample Answer to Map Task One

The maps display how the town of Walgett has evolved from 1950 to 2000.

Generally speaking, there are two trends. One: the town area has grown, but not excessively,* given the timeframe involved. The second trend is the extensive re-development of the eastern wasteland into resort complexes,* catering* primarily to ecological* tourism, with the clever utilisation and adaptation* of the pre-existing aquatic* feature of the terrain.*

Considering the beginning, Walgett is circular in shape, centred on the intersection of the only two roads, aligned* in an approximate north-south, and east-west direction. The eastern section only has large stretches* of unused land, comprising* swamps* in the northern reaches,* empty government land along the south, and one would suspect, extensive* marshland* all around, of apparently* little value.

Moving forward half a century, while the town has merely elongated,* amoeba-like, * along the same roads, the peripheral* lowlands have transformed utterly* with the construction of various tourist amenities.* A hotel now exists alongside the swamp, the latter having been modified to become a fully-fledged* lake, presumably offering some striking* natural vistas.* In addition, an Eco-Lodge has appeared, accessing this lakeside via a footbridge spanning* the main road. Finally, there is a new golf course, these latter two establishments comprising* the original government grounds.

(210 words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	excessively	(adv)	to provide things that a particular person or situation needs
2	complex	(n)	connected with water
3	to cater	(v)	the process of changing sth. to suit a new situation
4	ecological	(adj)	an area of land or water, esp. a long one
5	adaptation	(n)	to arrange or design in relation to other features
6	aquatic	(adj)	in a way that is greater than what is reasonable or appropriate
7	terrain	(n)	seeming to be so according to appearance or initial evidence
8	to align	(v)	covering a large area; great in amount
9	stretch	(n)	related to plants, living creatures, and their environment
10	to comprise	(v)	the parts of an area that are a long way from the centre
11	swamp	(n)	relating to the outer edge of a particular area
12	reaches	(n)	an area of low land that is always soft and wet
13	extensive	(adj)	a small living creature that consists of only one cell
14	marshland	(n)	completely developed, with all the qualities needed for sth.
15	apparently	(adv)	to become longer; to lengthen
16	to elongate	(v)	an area of ground that is very wet or covered with water
17	amoeba	(n)	landscape; the type, shape, and nature of, landforms
18	peripheral	(adj)	to have sth./sb. as parts or members
19	utterly	(adv)	any feature that provides comfort, convenience, or pleasure
20	amenity	(n)	to stretch right across sth.
21	fully-fledged	(adj)	emphasising how complete sth. is
22	striking	(adj)	a group of buildings of a similar type, together in one place
23	vista	(n)	interesting and unusual so that it attracts attention
24	to span	(v)	a beautiful view, of the countryside, a city, etc.

Possible Final Thoughts

See Appendix 18 (25 extra words)

Appendix 18

Tip 18, Exercise 39: Sample Final Thoughts

Preliminary Discussion

Apart from the sample answers for the Summarising Exercise, and the Writing One Practice Test Answers (in Appendix 20), all the sample final thoughts have been put separately in this appendix. There are three reasons for this.

Firstly, it shows that final thoughts are 'separate' from an answer, and not necessary to the 'Task Achievement' category. The 'task' is fully achieved without them. Final thoughts add nothing to this category. In this sense, they are not necessary, and I did not wish to show that they belong to the core answer.

However, final thoughts can add to the 'Lexical Resource' and 'Grammatical Range & Accuracy' category, as well as give a style and flexibility that *better* writers might otherwise not be able to include. For this reason, I, the author of this book, *do* wish to give you samples of what could be written.

The third reason for putting all these final thoughts in a separate appendix is that it allows me to repeat the warnings given at the end of Tip 18.

1. Think about whether you have the time to write them.
2. Be honest! Do you actually see anything? Final thoughts require 'thoughts' – that is, thinking! Never try to write final thoughts when you cannot think of anything.
3. It follows then that you should never memorise anything to be used.
4. Finally, final thoughts should not be too long.

Well, I have the time [Warning 1], and I am a native writer of English with a fair experience of the world, meaning that I can honestly see opportunities for final thoughts [Warning 2]. Obviously I will not use anything memorised [Warning 3], and I will keep the final thoughts short [Warning 4]. Here they are.

1. Tasks A, B, and C (in Tip 18, Exercise 39)

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| A. | The fall in unemployment in the early 40s is almost certainly consequent to World War Two. | Using a link to a well-known external fact. |
| B. | It is possible to extrapolate* these trends, concluding that computers have now almost totally superseded* the other two methods. | Using a logical future trend. |
| C. | It is logical and likely that there exists an inverse correlation between these two factors. | Using a cause and effect relationship, or correlation/ inverse correlation. |

2. Football Clubs Graph (from the beginning of Tip 4)

The steadiness of Dandenong's growth suggests that this rise continues beyond the given timeframe.

Using a logical future trend.

3. Pie Chart Task One (from Tip 14)

Manufacturing is only represented by Computers and Vehicles, together amounting to a relatively minor 6 and 9% in these years respectively, certainly showing that the land remains most important in the production of exports.

Using a grouping of parts into more general statements. This is longer than most final thoughts since it does, actually, base itself on further factual description of the task.

Table of Figures Task One (from Tip 15)

The rapid growth in Qld. suggests it continues beyond the given timeframe, making this northeastern state, by far, the premier iron-producer.

Using a logical future trend.

4. Diagram Task One (from Tip 16)

The alumina is thus ready for the next stage in the production process: being refined at a smelter* into pure aluminium.

Using a link to a well-known external fact, or what Tip 16 calls a 'factual addition'.

'Eye' Diagram (in Tip 16, Exercise 36)

One immediately feels that, despite its apparent simplicity, the human eye is a marvelously fine-tuned and complicated part of the body.

Using a natural reaction, and one that I honestly felt when studying this diagram.

Galvanometer Diagram (in Tip 16, Exercise 36)

1. One suspects that this device has now been superseded* by digital technology.
2. The device is thus very intricately assembled to utilise electro-magnetic and physical forces to achieve its purpose.

Using a logical future trend or consequence. Notice that I use the careful phrasing 'suspects', since you cannot be sure.

Using a grouping of parts into more general statements.

In this second example, I am using one of the forest-view approaches, writing about the natural forces involved. I can do this, since the actual forest-view uses the 'steps or stages' approach, so I am not repeating information.

5. Map Task One (from Tip 17)

This golf course, by being public and nestled* closely within the south-eastern arms of residential development, seems affiliated* more with the town than the resorts.

Using a natural (logical) reaction/observation.

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	to extrapolate	(v)	to take the place of sth. considered old-fashioned
2	to supersede	(v)	to form an opinion for the future from the present facts
3	smelter	(n)	to be in a position that is protected, sheltered, or partly hidden
4	to nestle	(v)	closely linked with another
5	affiliated	(adj)	the place where ore is melted to extract metal

Before finishing with final thoughts, can I make the usual warning I have given many times now - that you should not try writing final thoughts unless you have the:

1. honest awareness,
2. English skills and ability,
3. time,

... to do so. Some students may have all this; most will not. Follow your instincts and the timing during the test, and always think!

Appendix 19

Tip 19, Exercise 40: 'Danger Words'

Sentences 1

In Sentences a and b, 'fall down' and 'grow up' are two-word verbs meaning 'trip over', and 'get older' respectively. These verbs do not belong in a graph description. Sentences c and d show typical mistakes. The past tense of 'rise' is 'rose' [not 'rised'], and the adjective of 'dramatically' is 'dramatic' [not 'dramatical'].

Sentences 2

These sentences show the problems of 'raise' and 'rise'. 'Raise' needs an object, and thus it also needs an active agent [or a something actively making it happen]. It means that something or someone [the agent] is actively making an object...

Practical IELTS Strategies 3: Writing Task One

- move physically higher (a picture, your hands, the clock)
- increase (salaries, standards, voices)
- start to happen (doubts, protests, laughs)
- be cared for (children, animals, crops).

'Rise' has no active agent or object. It means that something/someone is naturally going to a higher degree in:

- amount or number (of prices, water level, salaries)
- physical position (of smoke, the sun, you [from your bed])
- importance or strength (of people, sound, wind)
- a figurative way (from the dead, from the ashes, above problems and prejudice).

For example, ...

Shop keepers *raised* the price of fruit.

[active agent + 'raise' + object]

The price of fruit *rose*.

[no active agent; no object]

In IELTS Writing Task One, you usually do not know the active agent or there is no single defined agent which causes [Y] to increase/decrease. This means that you almost always use 'rise'. Similarly, do not use 'lower' or 'reduce', which have the same issues as 'rise'. Use 'fall/decline'.

Sentences 3

Some verbs have an 'unlucky' meaning about them. This is often for verbs showing reduction, such as:

slump, sink, crash, dive, plummet

... which all show something that we do not want. Profit, tourist numbers, and economic production can all 'slump'. However, if the reduction is actually something we *do* want to happen, such as a rate of death, it is inappropriate to use those verbs. In Sentence a and b, we want those figures to decrease, so you should use 'neutral' verbs, such as 'fall' or 'decrease' or 'drops'.

Incidentally, Sentence a is a good example of a chance to express a natural reaction that most readers would feel, and as Tip 5 explained, this is possible and can increase your lexical and grammatical range, especially if there is a relative clause. Thus, we could re-write Sentence a as:

The death rate from infection *decreased* to 2%, *which is surely a good result*.

In a graph, read the Y axis [Tip 3] and just check what it is that you are writing about, and think a little about the verbs you use. Thus, for Sentence c, we are writing about pollution, but being in the 'first place' has a 'happy' meaning. It means you are the 'winner', but no city wants to win a contest about pollution rates. If the Y-axis shows a bad aspect such as this, and there is a 'winner', you could use the ironic and stylish collocation 'dubious distinction of [Noun]' as in Appendix 3, Task A. Thus, in our example, we could write:

Los Angeles *holds the dubious distinction of* being in first place.

Other good collocations for negative aspects are: 'suffers from' and 'faces' [the most pollution].

Some verbs have direction in their meaning. Obviously, 'decrease' means downwards, but with some verbs it is not so clear. 'Reach' and 'achieve' refer to an upward or positive or desired direction. This means Sentences d and e sound strange, since 'minimum' and 'low profit' are undesired and downward looking. 'Falls to a' and 'only made' respectively are more appropriate verb phrases.

Sentences f and g have a similar problem. There is a strange combination of 'decrease' with 'over', and 'increase' with 'under'. If something *decreases* to 7.1%, then do not write 'to *over* 7%'; write 'to *about* 7%' or 'to *below* 8%'. If something *increases* to 14.9%, then do not write 'to *under* 15%'; write 'to *almost* 15%' or 'to *above* 14%'. In general, ...

Something	<i>increases</i>	to	<i>almost</i> <i>above</i> <i>more than</i>	a level.
	<i>decreases</i>	to	<i>below</i> <i>less than</i>	

Sentences 4

These sentences misunderstand the meaning of the verbs used. Sentence a uses the adjective 'stable' as an adverb: 'stably', and this is not done in English. Furthermore, if something is rising (or falling), it is not, by definition, stable. The adverb which should be used is 'steadily'.

Similarly, to 'dip' means to decrease a little, so it is not possible, as in Sentence b, to combine 'dip' with 'dramatically'. Sentence c uses the verb 'soar'. The meaning of this verb is 'to rise dramatically', so adding 'dramatic(ally)' to the sentence is unnecessary and wrong. Similarly, 'plummet' already means to fall steadily, and directly, down, and 'rocket' means to dramatically rise, so the use of adverbs with these verbs is also wrong.

'To fluctuate' means to move randomly up and down, while *not showing overall change*. Something *fluctuates at* a level, or *between* a high and low point. It cannot, by definition, *fluctuate downwards*, as in Sentence f. As Tip 12, Part Three, Exercise 24 tells us, the simplest correct sentence is: 'It decreases with fluctuations'. Another sentence is: 'It fluctuates, but the trend is downwards.'

Sentences 5

In Writing Task One, it is better and more natural for short simple adverbs to *be next to* the verb. Thus, the first three sentences should be written:

The volume doubled continually every 10 years.

The number climbs slowly to 300.

The profit figure falls evenly from 50 to about 15.

Sentences 6

These sentences use the 'position' words 'above', 'below', 'left', and 'top'. The writer is referring *physically* to the Task One page. It is better not to do this. As Tip 6 says, the best answer should be able to be understood *without* looking at the actual Task One, especially since the 'position' can change. For example, often there is nothing 'above' at all – just the top of the page.

Sentences 7

The 'former and latter' reference pattern can be used, but in Sentence a it is used incorrectly, since there is only *one* item in the sentence. There needs to be two. Sentence a could be written:

Noble Park and Geelong's profit were both low in this quarter, but with the latter showing an increasing trend.

Sentence b uses 'respectively', but this can only be used with *a specific number of* items which are linked to *the same number of* other items, as in:

The profit for Dandenong and Geelong rises to 50 and 80, respectively.



See the answer to Sentences 14 for another use of 'respectively'.

Sentence c uses 'since', which is a dangerous word because it means from that point *until now*. The time axes of IELTS graphs very rarely go to the 'present'. They usually finish some time in the past, meaning that you will be unlikely to need the preposition 'since'.

Sentence d combines a period (1980 to 1990) with the verb 'peak', which is wrong. 'Peak' is a *punctual* verb, that is, it describes an event happening *at a point in time*, so it cannot be compared with a period. The sentence needs the addition of a 'durative' verb, that is, a verb which can be stretched over time. The sentence could be written:

- From 1980 to 1990,
- it rose, peaking at 50.
 - it rose to a peak of 50.
 - it rose, and eventually peaked at 50.

Sentences 8

As for Sentence a, it can be linked to the 'We can see from the chart' problem, which we looked at in Tip 6. The sentence is similarly strange, since it assumes we are *seeing* the chart, yet the chart is on another piece of paper. But let us consider another danger of 'crystal clear/obvious/easily seen/evident'. The problem is that what *you* announce as 'crystal clear' is often not so clear to others. Student A thinks it is 'clearly obvious' that there are four stages in the diagram, while Student B thinks there are five. Upon studying the diagram, everyone in the class becomes unsure. The advice is to be very careful about assuming information is 'clear', 'obvious', or 'evident'. If it is not, then your words are inappropriate.

Also, do not use ‘unbelievably’ as Sentence b does. Tip 5 says that ‘natural reactions’ are possible, but you must not use ‘extreme’ or inappropriate adjectives [See the answer to Tip 4, Exercise 3, Part Two, Item 12]. ‘Terribly’, ‘awful’, and ‘fantastic’ are inappropriate for the same reason. Be formal and academic, since this is formal writing.

On the subject of memorised sentences, do not use c as an introduction. It is not a ‘glance’ that would show the details which follow, but instead a ‘careful study’. No one is ‘glancing’ at anything, especially not you, so why is this silly sentence being used?

Sentences 9

Sentence a uses ‘At the start’, but this must be followed by a *specific* time reference, because that is what ‘at’ means – for example, ‘at 5.35 pm; at dawn; at midnight’. Thus, when using ‘at’ here, you must refer to the ‘starting point’ of the time axis. Remember though that the ‘start’ refers to this starting point which is probably mentioned in the introduction, so it is usually not necessary to repeat this specific point of time.

If you use a *period* of time, then the preposition needed is ‘In’ [= ‘inside’]. Sentence a could thus be rewritten in three ways:

At the *start*, [*in* 1990], the profit was 55%.

In the *first five* years, the profit increases.

From 1990 to 1995, the profit increases.

Sentence b uses the ‘second’ + [time period] model, but this time period must be a general *length* of time, not specific dates. Thus:

In the second *three years*, the number fluctuates.

Sentence c and d show a different issue – repetition of sequencers. ‘Next’ is the same as ‘following’, which is the same as ‘subsequent’, so these sentences repeat the same sequencer, which is not good. Sentence d, for example, could be written in two ways:

Following this, it remains constant for two years.

... or...

In the *subsequent* two years, it remains constant.

Sentence e to g show a similar repetition, this time of the ‘general’ concept. Since ‘general’ = ‘mostly’, and ‘overall’ = ‘generally’ = ‘main’, the sentences should be written:

In *general*, the profit increases.

Overall, the figures decline.

Generally speaking, there are two trends.

Sentences 10

The first five sentences use the very careful and unsure verbs: ‘tends’, ‘seems’, ‘is mainly’, ‘appears to’

and ‘looks’, respectively. IELTS Task Ones show *facts*, in black and white, and mostly you need to be exact.

Looking at Sentence a, the most popular place *is* cinemas, or is *not* cinemas. In b, the figure decreases to a minimum, or does not, and in c, the process is divided into three, or is not. You will only need to use ‘unsure’ verbs when putting in final thoughts [See Tip 18], otherwise say what the fact is, and say it directly.

Sentence f uses ‘apparently’ but this word should be used when *not* fully sure, as in Appendix 17, where I wrote:

... of apparently little value.

... or Appendix 20, where I wrote:

[The figure increases] to an *apparently* massive 40 billion in just 10 years.

Do not use ‘apparently’ for hard facts. Similarly, do not use ‘hedges’ such as ‘sort of’ or ‘kind of’ as g does. These are used for spoken English, often for ‘softening’ a message – for example, ‘He was *kind of* ugly’. For higher marks in the Lexical Resource category, you need to ‘convey precise meanings’.

Sentences 11

The first three sentences introduce conjunctions of cause and effect. They are dangerous words because they often introduce opinion and outside speculation, which you should not give. Cause and effect can only be used in a careful and limited way if deducing a correlation. [See Tip 18]

Sentence d uses ‘so’ to add emphasis, but this is an ‘emotional’ emphasis. This is *not* appropriate to Task One writing.

Sentences 12

Sentence a uses another conjunction, ‘whereas’, to sequence two statements, but it breaks some rules about using this conjunction. ‘Whereas’ is used to:

1. show a *total* contrast
[Clause One = Verb; Clause Two = Opposite Verb/Verb Idea]
2. ... usually of two *different* subjects ...
3. ... usually at the *same* time
4. ... with ‘whereas’ usually *between* two clauses.

For example:

In 2001, *China’s GDP* increases, whereas *Australia’s* remains constant.

This sentence shows a 1. total contrast (the first increases; the second does *not*), of 2. two different

subjects (China and Australia's GDP), at 3. the same time (2001), with 'whereas' 4. in the middle. The explanation to Sentences 16 c to e show 'whereas' [underlined], following all these rules.

Task One usually involves many *different* subjects, and they all show *different* trends over the *same* periods, meaning that 'whereas' can indeed be a very useful Task One conjunction, and you will notice it used often in my sample answers.

'While', incidentally, shows a similar contrast, and can be used to replace 'whereas', but 'whereas' is certainly better if the contrast is clear. The difficulty is that 'while' can also mean 'although'. In this second usage, it breaks all the four rules. For example, '**While** some *people* think studying very hard is necessary, *they* often later suffer personality problems,' (where the verbs are not contrasting, the subject is the same, the time is different, and 'while' begins the sentence).

Sentence b and c also use the wrong sequencer. As Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 3, and Tip 5, Exercise 4c, both explained, 'In addition' and 'Moreover' do *not* sequence events *in time*. That is, they are not used for *chronological* ordering. This means they should not be used to sequence along a time axis. They can only be used when adding ideas – that is, when listing forest-view trends.

Sentences 13

Sentence a uses the word 'ratio' – a word that often appears when students describe pie charts, and appears also in other answers, referring to a *percentage*.

A ratio has two numbers, showing the relationship in size between two features, such as 3:2, or 4:5, or 1:2. You will almost never need to use this in an IELTS Task One. You *could* use it, but use it properly, such as in the sentences:

The ratio of male to female engineers is 6:1.

The ratio of Japanese to Taiwanese tourists is three to two.

Sentence b uses a similar bit of fluff – 'aforesaid'. As this word suggests, it is used more for *spoken* English, often in a legal situation. Use 'previous' or 'previously'.

Sentence c & d uses 'trend' as an active subject. However, a 'trend' does not increase; the *item on the 'Y' axis* (profit, percentage, volume, and so on) increases. You can only use 'trend' with adjectives, in sentences such as:

Adjectives		
[Y] shows a(n)	rising / falling / upwards / downwards / contrasting / different / similar	trend.
The trend is	upwards / downwards / not as clear / different	.

Sentences 14

Here, we can also demonstrate the correct use of ‘respectively’ [Sentence 7b] by giving the correct version of Sentences 14. They show a common and awkward use of English. The *three* sentences are much better written as:

Their profit is highest.

Its number decreases substantially.

Its peak is 55%.

..., respectively.

Sentences 15

These sentences show more typical mistakes. ‘Including’ must introduce *part(s)* of a *larger* group, and gives a slight emphasis (often because of an element of surprise).

The chart shows *seven* countries, *including some* in Asia.

‘Particularly’ (and ‘especially’) also introduces *part(s)* of a *larger* group, and give a strong emphasis, so it needs to be directed at something specific.

The *profit* rises *particularly* fast in the third year.

The *number of tourists* from Britain is *particularly* high.

Dandenong, in *particular*, shows a strong growth.

‘Namely’ gives *everything* which is *promised*. This means it needs to be used with a *definite number*.

There are *two* Asian countries, *namely*: Japan and China.

The graph shows *three* kinds of snack food, *namely*: nuts, chocolate, and chips.

‘Such as’ is for giving general examples. You might notice that ‘such as’ almost never appears in any of my sample answers. The *general* nature of ‘such as’ (and ‘for example’) suggest it is *not* appropriate for IELTS Writing Task One, where *specific* and *limited* information needs to be summarised.

Sentences 16

These sentences show problems with noun phrases. Sentences a and b are a reminder about Tip 3. Read the axis! The graph shows the change in *the number of* mobile phone owners, and the bars chart shows how *the number of* houses grew.

Sentences c to e shows the problems relating to countable and *uncountable* nouns that were also mentioned in Appendix 5. ‘Amount’ and ‘quantity’ are for *uncountable*, whereas ‘number’ is for countable. Thus, the sentences could read:

c. The *amount of* fruit increased. [uncountable concept]

d. The *quantity of* water decreased steadily. [uncountable concept]

e. The *number of* people remained at this level. [countable concept]

As for Sentence f, while we can write ‘number of (sth.)’, we cannot write, ‘figure of (sth)’. The word

figure usually stands on its own, although we can say '[adj.] + figure' in *some* situations.

Sentences 17

These sentences are a reminder to use Task *One* language. 'On the contrary' and 'On the other hand' are not Task *One* phrases. Actually, 'On the contrary' is more for *spoken* English, when *correcting* a false statement, and not even appropriate for Task Two! So, you think I only speak English? *On the contrary*, I speak Spanish and Mandarin Chinese.

Sentences c and d use 'meanwhile' and 'during', but these words are used mainly for story-telling or narratives, where happenings and events are put in order or sequenced. Avoid using them in IELTS writing.

Sentences 18

There are various mistakes shown here. The mistakes in the first two sentences are in the plural 's'. When we give figures, we do not use this. In English, we talk about eight *million*, and six *thousand*. However, we could say, 'The profit is given in millions of dollars', or, 'The sales figures are given in thousands.'

The next two errors are common mistakes when comparing. They should read

Dandenong's profit is *the biggest*. [or] *bigger than the others*.
Academic books were the *second most* expensive.

Finally, 'to account for' is used with figures [hence the 'count' stem in the verb]. Thus, the last sentence should read:

The profit rose to the *highest number*, accounting for 70%.

Sentences 19

The problem in Sentences a and b is that the meaning is not clear. The concept to be shown is that the number of people grew *over a period*, and this period *ended* in 2005. The problem is that Sentence a suggests that everything happened *in the one year*, 2005. Similarly, Sentence b suggests that everything happened in the year 2010.

One way to solve this is to not use a comma. This means that the 'in 2005' connects only to the last noun, 600. You could also put the year in brackets.

The number of people grows steadily from 350 to 600 in 2005.
The number of people grows steadily to 600 (in 2005).

However, there is still a lack of clarity here. The best method is to put the *complete* time period in the sentence, as Tip 9, Part Two, Hint 4 tells us [Remember the '(SP)YT' rule, where 'P' is the period of time], giving:

From 2000 to 2005, the number of people grows steadily from 350 to 600.
From 2008 to 2010, the sales figure shows a dramatic fall to 23.

Sentence c is possible, but by mixing figures and dates next to each other, can be confusing, which is one reason the (SP)YT rule is better. Follow it!

Appendix 20

Writing Task One Practice : Sample Answers

Note

For all the following four sample answers, the final thoughts are shown inside a box, indicating that they do not belong to the 'core' answer, and do not add to Task Achievement (but do add to Vocabulary and Grammar). Final thoughts appear only *after* the task has been fully described, and are shown here to represent the *theoretical* best answer, which faster and stronger writers may achieve.

To repeat the advice given in Tip 18, in the *practical* situation of an IELTS test, many students struggle to write the required 150 words in the 20 minutes, which suggests that you should probably *not* attempt to write final thoughts, but instead use any extra time for checking, changing, and improving, or moving onto Task Two.

Practice I

The charts compare Europe with Africa in relation to the average distance of urban rail lines, number of workers, and total spending, for the years 2000 and 2010.

Overall, there are two trends. Firstly, the more advanced infrastructures* of Europe are reflected by its correspondingly higher status in all measures, in both years, but particularly in spending at the end. Secondly, all these indexes,* apart from Africa's spending, experience increases, although again somewhat predictably, Europe can claim a far greater advance.

Looking at this northern continent over the decade, train lines extend from five to 11 (kilometers), with staff numbers showing a similar but accentuated* rise, doubling from 35 to 70 (per 1000 people). However, the most impressive* growth is in the monetary spending, from \$20 (billion) to an apparently massive 40, contrasting the sad decline in Africa over this same period.

The introduction, using 'compare'.

The forest-view, identifying two trends, and signposting them logically.

It is actually difficult to use much real-world English here, since all three indexes measure different aspects.

Starting with a logical topic phrase.

Units are introduced in brackets one time only.

Some natural reaction.

A participial phrase.

Moving onto this southern neighbour, rail distances and staffing at least show growths, but by being at reduced levels and by smaller margins*, presenting a pronounced* disparity* with their continental equivalents*, especially in money invested, originally \$10 (billion), only to languish* at a comparative meagre* two, totally dwarfed* by the European efforts.

One would suspect a correlation, with the increase of funds being invested in rail construction and staff recruitment, a trend more apparent in the advanced European sector.

(197 + 27 = 224 words)

The second topic phrase, now ensuring the whole task is summarised.

Now you probably did not even notice that this task was written in the 'sports commentator's tense' – a stylistic choice.

The final thoughts, deducing a correlation, with some external knowledge.

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	index	(n)	an extra amount; a part not included into the main group
2	infrastructure	(n)	small in quantity, or poor in quality
3	accentuated	(adj)	a difference, esp. connected with unfair treatment
4	impressive	(adj)	sth. that directs attention to some fact, statistic, or condition
5	margin	(n)	to make sth. seem small compared with sth. else
6	pronounced	(adj)	a thing that is equal in some way to sth. else
7	disparity	(n)	having the power to impress, cause attention or admiration
8	equivalent	(n)	to become weaker or fail to make progress
9	to languish	(v)	the basic systems and services necessary for operation
10	meagre	(adj)	very noticeable, obvious, or strongly expressed
11	to dwarf	(v)	emphasised, or made more noticeable

Practice II

What follows summarises the workforce distribution among economic sectors* in 1980 and 2010 in Southeast Asia, including information concerning its numbers of incoming tourists.

The introduction, not mentioning the item, and using a participial phrase.

Practical IELTS Strategies 3 Writing Task One

In general, most people worked in the agricultural sector,* which dominated* both years, but particularly the first, where it comprised over half of the total. In addition, manufacturing made strong gains, such that by period-end it had almost equaled agriculture, at about one third each, making both of them the leading providers of employment. Finally, apart from one glaring* and substantial mid-period downturn,* tourist numbers showed very healthy advances indeed.

Looking specifically at the economic divisions, over these three decades, unemployment plummeted from 27 to 2% – clearly a welcome change, and certainly linked* to the growth in the service industry and manufacturing, from 12 to 25%, and 7.0 to 37%, respectively.

Turning to tourism, in the first decade, numbers grew from 22 to almost 35 (million). However, such success was short-lived, with a pronounced* descent of 10 occurring over the next five years. Despite this setback,* recovery was rapid, seeing figures soon reaching 35, and ending at almost 40, giving in an overall doubling of people travelling for recreational purposes.

One sees a transition* here, from an agricultural to a modern industrial and services-based economy, paralleling* the influx* in tourist numbers, for whom there would need to be facilities.

(193 + 29 = 222 words)

The forest-view.

Three trends are given and signposted logically.

Some real-world English, and participial phrases

The tree-view, looking at the pie charts, and...

... then the line graph (as Tip 9, Part One suggests, using the 'two-ness' to our advantage).

Some paraphrasing for style.

Some final thoughts, grouping parts into a more general statement. (29 additional words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	sector	(n)	a difficulty that delays, prevents, or makes something worse
2	to dominate	(v)	the process of changing from one state or condition to another
3	glaring	(adj)	connected, or showing a relationship
4	downturn	(n)	the fact that many people, or things arrive somewhere
5	linked	(adj)	to be very similar or taking place at the same time
6	pronounced	(adj)	a part which falls and then rises again
7	setback	(n)	very noticeable, obvious, or strongly expressed
8	transition	(n)	a division of society, in terms of people, politics, or economy
9	to parallel	(v)	to have the highest, most determining position

10	influx	(n)	very easily seen
----	--------	-----	------------------

Practice III

The diagram shows the cyclic* path that water follows in the essentially closed system of the earth's biosphere.*

In general, there are three stages. Firstly, there is condensation* and precipitation,* in which raindrops form and fall to the ground, leading to the second stage: the accumulation* and movement of this water downward, inevitably* to the sea. The final stage is evaporation,* in which water vapour rises to eventually form airborne clouds, ready for the process to begin again.

Overall, the process involves water driven in gaseous and liquid form by the natural ambience* of both high and low elevations,* gravity acting along the topography* of the land surface, and the meteorological* influence of sun, wind, and ocean.

Generally speaking, the process charts the downward path of liquid water along the earth's surface, eventually to the sea, or, in the case of human-related diversions,* through reservoirs* and waterworks, but similarly ending in the sea, where evaporation* begins the process again.

With respect to the land-based processes, it begins when the air-borne vapour, having precipitated into raindrops, falls to the ground. Additionally, existing ice on the higher mountain tops melts and, along with the rainwater, joins the surface rivulets* and streams, combining into larger rivers as gravity draws them on a downward winding* course, inevitably* to the sea.

Considering the man-made world, there exists a diversion* from the river's natural flow, into a storage reservoir.* After undergoing purification at a treatment plant, this water serves various human purposes. The resultant discharge is also treated to be relatively free of pollutants, then once again channelled* into the all-receiving sea.

Moving to the atmospheric phase,* solar radiation evaporates exposed* liquid, or transpires it from plants, allowing this vapour to migrate* upwards where it is funneled* by prevailing* winds and mountain slopes* into the cooler conditions of higher altitudes.* This results in condensation* and cloud-formation, thus completing the cycle.

An example forest-view using stages.

A forest-view using the natural forces.

This forest-view will be used in this answer.

An example forest-view using the physical parts.

Each tree-view paragraph begins with a topic-phrase

... and...

each of these topic-phrases logically chooses a 'chunk' or section,

... and...

together they completely cover the diagram.

Pollution, such as acid rain and water-borne chemical waste, is noticeably unrepresented.

Final thoughts, based on a natural reaction (12 words).

(212 + 12 = 224 words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	cyclic	(adj)	the act of forming a 'precipitate' (liquid), coming from vapour
2	biosphere	(n)	repeated many times, and happening in the same order
3	condensation	(n)	unable to be avoided or escaped
4	precipitation	(n)	the height above the level of the sea
5	accumulation	(n)	the physical features of an area of land, esp. their position
6	inevitable	(adj)	relating to the scientific study of the atmosphere and weather
7	evaporation	(n)	the changing of a substance from vapour to a liquid
8	ambience	(n)	the act of changing into a vapour
9	elevation	(n)	the feeling, mood, or conditions of a place
10	topography	(n)	something that turns something from one course to another
11	meteorological	(adj)	the part of the earth's surface which contains life
12	diversion	(n)	a growth by continuous addition
13	reservoir	(n)	open to view; not covered or protected
14	rivulet	(n)	an artificial lake where water is stored for use
15	winding	(adj)	to move from one place to another
16	to channel	(v)	a stage in a process of change or development
17	phase	(n)	the surface piece of a land that 'slopes', e.g. a hill or mountain
18	exposed	(adj)	having a curving and twisting shape
19	to migrate	(v)	existing or common at a particular time
20	to funnel	(v)	a very small river; a small stream of water or other liquid
21	prevailing	(adj)	to convey or direct through a channel or path
22	slope	(n)	the specific height above sea level
23	altitude	(n)	to move or make something move into a narrower space

Practice IV

You should be familiar enough with 'my' method now not to need any further comments, apart from mentioning that three sample final thoughts are given: one looking back; one looking forward; and one

looking at the present.

The fluctuations in the usage of four forms of transport taken for weekend events in Melbourne, from 1950 to 2010, can be summarised as follows.

Over the whole period, the once popular physical means (foot and bicycles), including – eventually – buses (involving, as they do, some degree of physicality), were ultimately superseded* by cars, whose popularity surged at the expense of the others, to dominate the methods of moving around for recreational purposes.

Examining motorised transport, cars started at about seven (units). Over the next thirty years, they accelerated* ahead (to use an apt* metaphor*) to 25, soon 'overtaking' the field. They finished at 40, then having over twofold the popularity of their nearest rival, buses. These were, in fact, the only method which challenged cars, in the first half-period gaining favour, from 20 to 27, but then succumbing* to the inevitable* with the passing of time, having fallen to 14 by the final year.

Regarding the humbler* means of travel, walking was initially most popular, at 35, being seven above the second-placed bicycles. However, both experienced a fairly catastrophic* descent. Although the mid-period saw a convergence* of all forms to an approximately even distribution,* walking and bicycles continued their fall from grace, by period-end being a paltry* 10 and seven, respectively – the latter representing the lowest usage of all.

All this confirms the well-documented rise of the automobile in modern times.	Final thoughts I
Extrapolating* ahead, the gulf* between cars and other transport has probably widened.	Final thoughts II
One sees in this an over-reliance on machines, in lieu* of exercise.	Final thoughts III

(219 + 12 = 231 words)

Word Learning Time

Match the words on the left (* in the previous text) with their meaning on the right.

1	to supersede	(v)	sudden and causing great and unwelcome change
2	to accelerate	(v)	to take the place of sth. considered old-fashioned
3	apt	(adj)	being certain to happen at some point in the future
4	metaphor	(n)	to happen or make sth. happen faster or earlier
5	to succumb	(v)	the way that sth. is shared or exists in an area or group
6	inevitable	(adj)	to surrender, give up, or be defeated by sth.
7	humble	(adj)	suitable or appropriate in the circumstances
8	catastrophic	(adj)	too small to be considered important or useful
9	convergence	(n)	a large difference between people or groups in an aspect

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10	distribution	(n)	to form an opinion for the future from the present facts
11	paltry	(adj)	instead of
12	to extrapolate	(v)	not large or special in any way
13	gulf	(n)	an unusual use of words used to describe something
14	in lieu of	(prep)	movement from different directions towards a common meeting place

Summary

You might notice that all these IELTS Task One sample answers:

- have a clear introduction, whether that introduction mentions the item, or not,
- accurately attempt to describe the Task One item, giving, and highlighting, a forest-view and key features,
- have clear paragraphs, with one single theme given at the beginning of each as a topic phrase,
- have no fluff whatsoever,
- are concisely written, eliminating absolutely all repetition or needless phrasing – for example, the task is only mentioned *one* time, if at all (and such concision is important, since there is actually *very* much information in any IELTS Task One, and all words are needed to address the task),
- are written honestly, with real belief expressed in any natural reactions, stylistic phrasing, or final thoughts.

All these factors make the answers very good indeed.

Answers to Word Learning Time

Tip 5, Exercise 5

4, 6, 7, 2, 8, 11, 1, 9, 12, 5, 10, 3

Tip 7, The Overview (Forest-View) and Real World?

3, 5, 8, 6, 2, 7, 1, 11, 4, 14, 12, 9, 10, 13

Tip 17, Forest-View

2, 4, 1, 8, 9, 11, 3, 12, 7, 6, 5, 13, 10

Summarising Exercise, Sample Answer (Final Version)

3, 6, 5, 1, 2, 9, 8, 7, 4

Appendix 3

4, 1, 2, 7, 6, 5, 10, 9, 13, 3, 8, 15, 14, 16, 12, 17, 11

Appendix 9

17, 5, 1, 3, 8, 2, 9, 12, 11, 7, 16, 15, 4, 6, 10, 13, 19, 14, 18

Appendix 10

5, 3, 6 (or 2), 1, 8, 4, 10, 9, 12, 13, 7, 15, 11, 2 (or 6), 14

Appendix 11

5, 6, 2, 4, 8, 7, 3, 1

Appendix 12

2, 3, 4, 1, 6, 9, 13, 11, 15, 12, 8, 5, 10, 7, 16, 14

Appendix 13

2, 3, 5, 8, 1, 4, 9, 10, 7, 12, 6, 11

Appendix 14

2, 13, 6, 7, 10, 17, 16, 12, 15, 11, 14, 4, 8, 5, 18, 25, 22, 19, 24, 1, 9, 3, 21, 20, 23

Appendix 15

8, 1, 6, 7, 10, 2, 4, 5, 3, 9

Appendix 16

4, 5, 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 8, 1, 6, 3

Appendix 17

3, 6, 5, 9, 8, 1, 15, 13, 4, 12, 18, 11 (or 14), 17, 21, 16, 14 (or 11), 7, 10, 20, 24, 19, 2, 22, 23

Appendix 18

2, 1, 4, 5, 3

Appendix 20

Task One Practice I

5, 10, 7, 1, 11, 8, 4, 9, 2, 6, 3

Task One Practice II

7, 8, 5, 10, 9, 4, 6, 1, 2, 3

Task One Practice III

4, 1, 6, 9 (or 23), 10, 11, 3, 7, 8, 12, 2, 5, 18, 13, 19, 17, 22, 15, 21, 14, 16, 23 (or 9), 20

Task One Practice IV

8, 1, 6, 2, 10, 5, 3, 11, 13, 12, 14, 7, 4, 9

This Practical IELTS Strategies book is above all (as the name suggests), practical and strategic, giving a clear and achievable framework to maximising your score in the IELTS Writing Task One.

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Book 4: Writing Task Two [Academic Module] 2nd Edition

Book 5: IELTS Test Practice Book

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