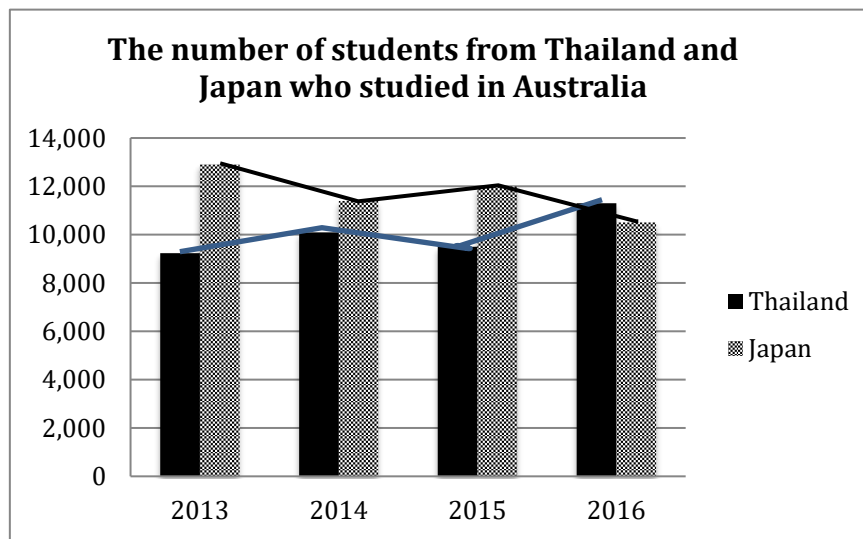


How to Describe Trends

In order to get a good mark, you need to describe the most important changes in a chart or graph.

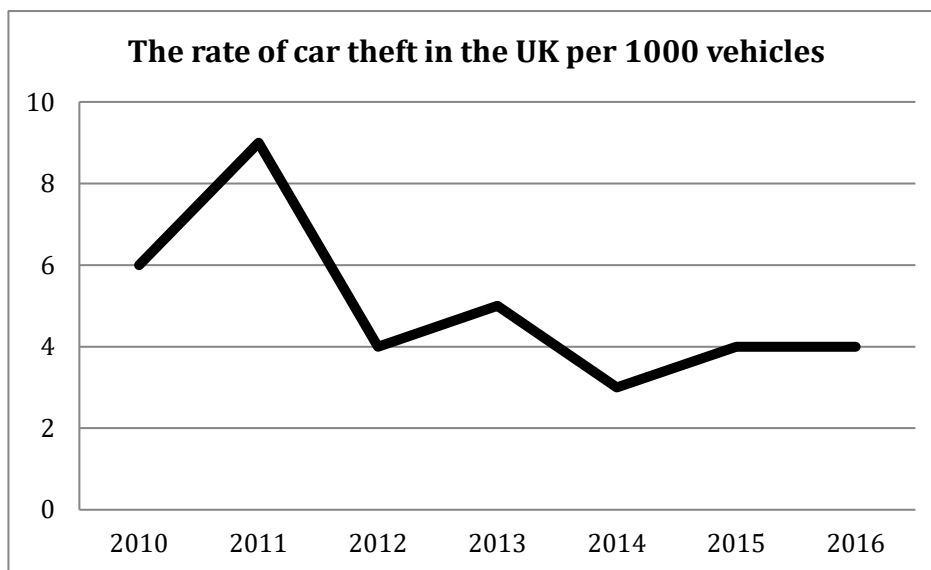
To do this, you need to describe trends. These are movements in data. To make them easier to see, try to *outline* the trends in your mind. You should describe three or four trends in your answer. Look at this example:



There are four main trends here:

- Thailand has an upward trend.
- Japan has a downward trend.
- Both Thailand and Japan move up and down.
- Japan started with the higher number of students, but Thailand overtook them.

First, let's look at the vocabulary needed to describe basic movements in data. This list of words is illustrated by describing this line graph.



The trends are:

Up: 2010-2011

Down: 2011-2012

Up and down: 2012-2015

No change: 2015-2016

The highest point: 2011

Upward movements

There are grammatical differences when using these words as either verbs or nouns. First, let's look at **verbs**. In the graph the timeline ends in 2016, so we need to use the past tense of the verbs.

🔑 Preposition – 'by' and 'to'. 'By' tells you the size of the change. 'To' tells you the figure at the end of the change.

Verb	By	To
Rise	It rose by 3%	It rose to 9%
Grow	It grew by 3%	It grew to 9%
Increase	It increased by 3%	It increased to 9%

You can also use the same words as **nouns**. When using the words as nouns, you generally use the present tense form.

🔑 **Preposition** – ‘in’ and ‘of’. We use ‘in’ to describe changes in things and ‘of’ to describe changes in number or amount.

Noun	Of	In
Rise	There was a rise of 3%	There was a 3% rise in the rate of car theft.
Grow	There was a growth of 3% (Note- the past participle is used here).	There was a 3% growth in the rate of car theft.
Increase	There was an increase of 3%	There was a 3% increase in the rate of car theft.

Downward movements

The grammar is the same for downward movements.

Verb	By	To
Decrease	It decreased by 5%	It decreased to 4%
Fall	It fell by 5%	It fell to 4%
Decline	It declined by 5%	It declined to 4%

Noun	Of	In
Decrease	There was a decrease of 5%	There was a 5% decrease in the rate of car theft.
Fall	There was a fall of 5%	There was a 5% fall in the rate of car theft.
Decline	There was a decline of 5%	There was a 5% decline in the rate of car theft.

Up and down

When describing a period when the data goes both up and down, you can use the word ‘fluctuate’. The word can be used as a verb and a noun.

Verb	Example	Purpose
Fluctuate	(2012-2015) It fluctuated between 3% and 5%	Tells the highest and lowest point of the movements.

Noun	Example	Purpose
A fluctuation	There was a 2% fluctuation.	The difference in size between the highest and lowest points.

No change

🔑 **At** - introduces a stable number.

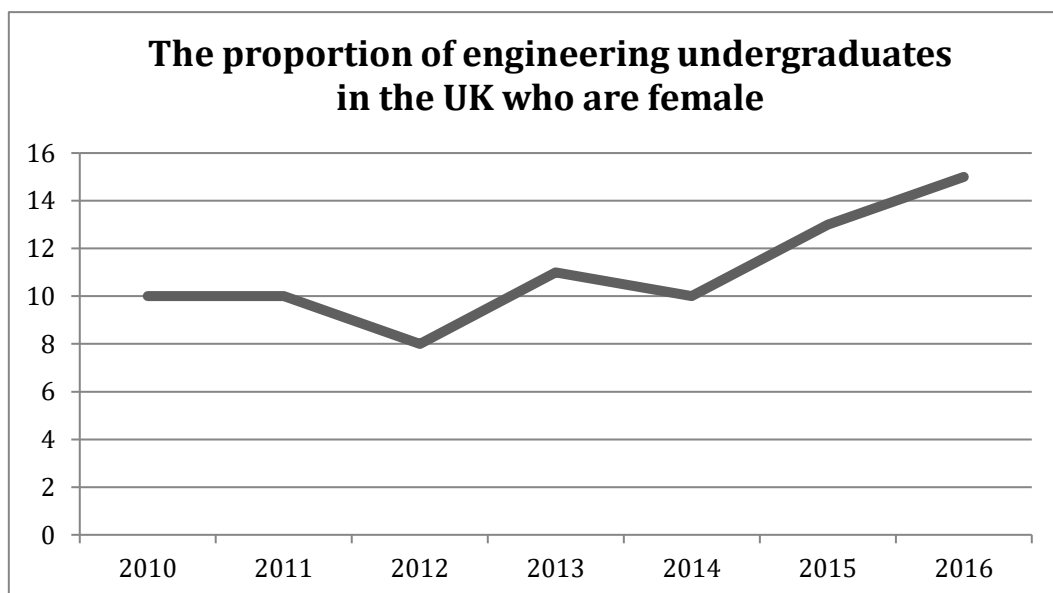
Verb	Example
Stabilise	It stabilised at 6%
Remain steady	It remained steady at 6%

The highest point

Verb	Noun	Example
Peak	(reach) a peak	It peaked at 9% / It reached a peak of 9%

Patterns to Compare Two Data Points

🔑 **From ... to ... / Between ... and ...** Used to show a period of time.



Between 2011 and 2014, the proportion of female students fluctuated between 8% and 11%.

From 2014 to 2016, the proportion of female students grew by 5%.

Size of Change

It is important to describe the size of a change. This is the key vocabulary.

Large

Adjective	Adverb	Example
Dramatic	Dramatically	There was a dramatic growth in price / The price grew dramatically
Significant	Significantly	There was a significant fall in price / the price fell significantly

Medium

Adjective	Adverb	Example
Moderate	Moderately	There was a moderate fall in price / The price fell moderately

Small

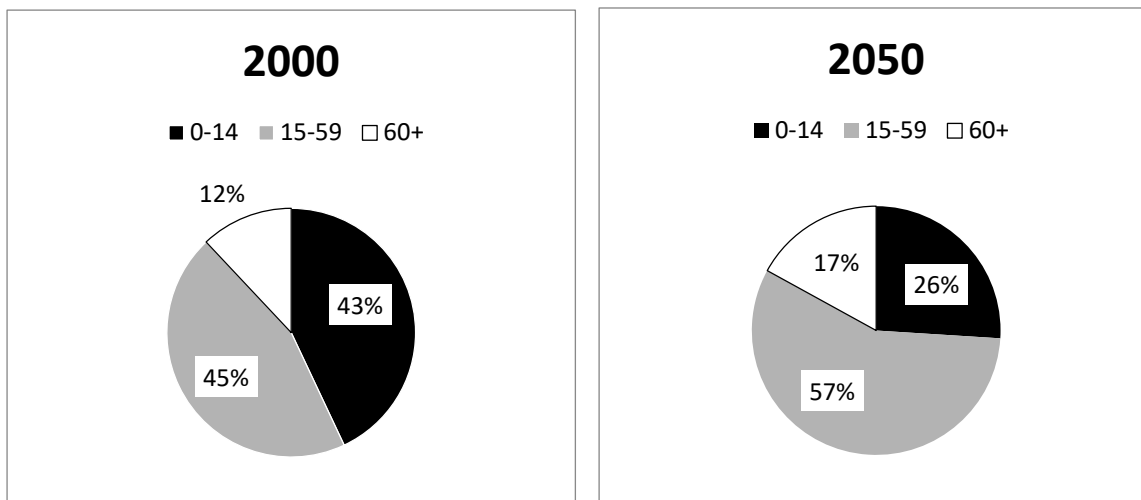
Adjective	Adverb	Example
Slight	Slightly	There was a slight fall in price / The price fell slightly

Choosing the Correct Tense

To get a good grammar score in this task, it is vital to work out which tense you should use. Usually, the charts and graphs are dated in the past, so you need to use the past tense. However, sometimes a graph or chart is set at a future date. In the below example, one of the pie charts is labeled for the year 2050.

🔑 **Projection.** An estimate or forecast of a future situation or trend based on a study of present ones.

Below are two pie charts providing demographic (population) information about Mongolia in 2000 and projections for 2050.



Skill: Relabeling indexes. It is a good idea to describe the indexes (the categories of information). For instance, here one age group is 0-14, but instead we may just write 'children'. Another is '60+' but we may say 'elderly people'.

The proportion of children is projected to **fall dramatically**.

The proportion of elderly people is projected to **grow slightly**.

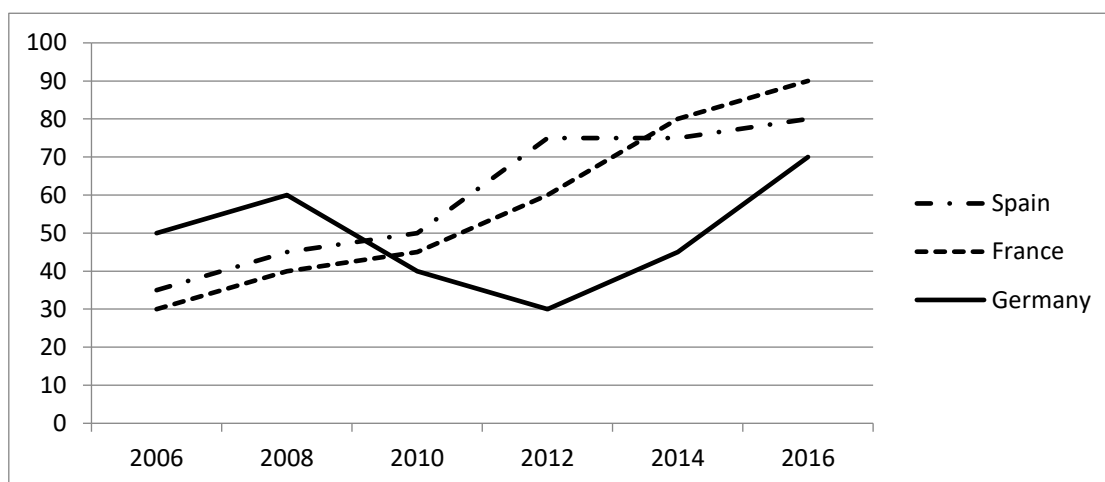
The proportion of people aged 15-59 is projected to **rise moderately**.

Using Multiplication

Another way to describe the size of change is to state how many times a figure has increased or decreased.

Times 2	double	the figure doubled from five to ten percent
Times 3	triple	the figure tripled from five to 15 percent
Times 4	quadruple	the figure quadrupled from five to 20 percent

The household recycling rates (%) in three European countries



From 2008 to 2014, the recycling rate in France **doubled**, rising from 40 to 80 percent.

Between 2008 and 2012, the recycling rate in Germany **halved**, falling from 60 to 30 percent.

Over the period, the recycling rate in France **tripled**, rising from 30 to 90 percent.

The Speed of Change

Fast

Adjective	Adverb	Example
Fast	Quickly	There was a fast growth in price / The price grew quickly
Rapid	Rapidly	There was a rapid growth in price / The price grew rapidly

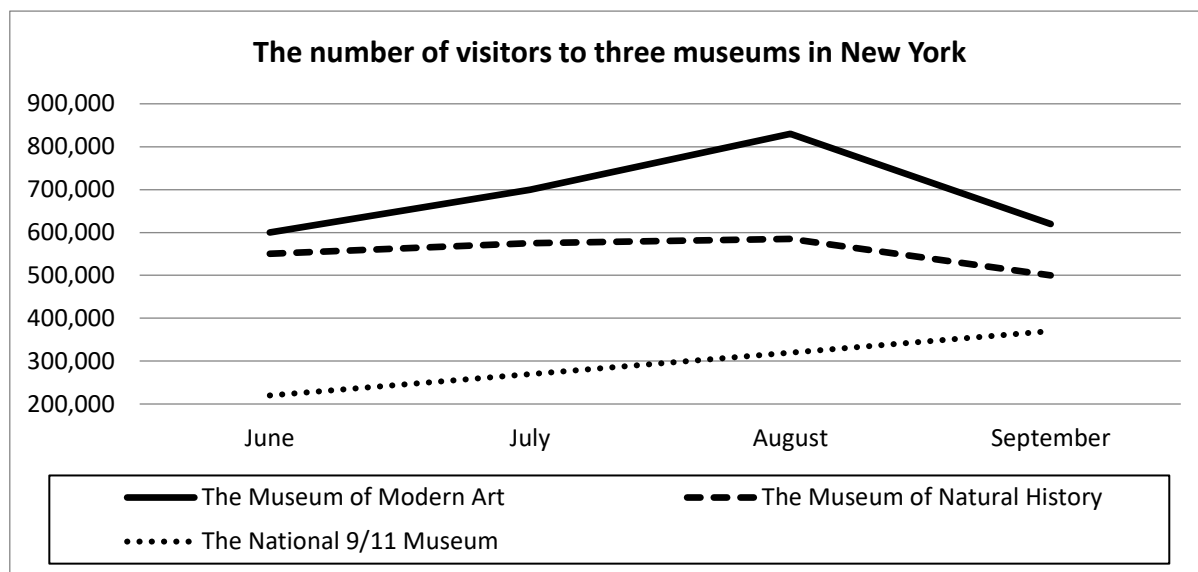
Medium

Adjective	Adverb	Example
Steady	Steadily	There was a steady growth in price / The price grew steadily
Gradual	Gradually	There was a gradual growth in price / The price grew gradually

Slow

Adjective	Adverb	Example
Slow	Slowly	There was a slow growth in price / The price grew slowly

➔ Look at how the vocabulary is used for the following graph.



🔑 **Overall / Over the period.** The whole timeframe of the graph, so in this instance it means from June to September.

From June to August the number of visitors to the Museum of Natural History grew slightly.

Overall, the number of visitors to the National 9/11 Museum increased gradually.

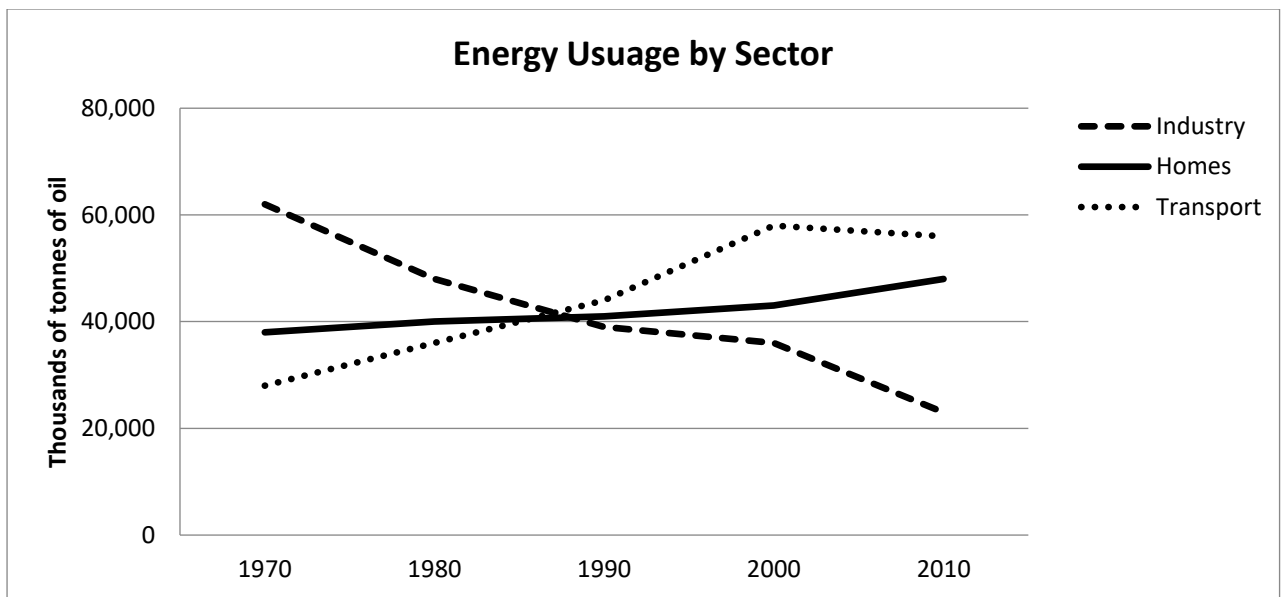
Between August and September, the number of visitors to the Museum of Modern Art fell rapidly.

Between June and August, the number of visitors to the Museum of Modern Art grew slowly.

Skill: State the Period, the Change and Data

This is a way to use all the vocabulary you have learned in this lesson in one sentence. First, you state the time period, then the trend and then describe the data. For example, for the following line graph, you could write.

Between 1970 and 1990, the amount of energy used by the industry sector fell rapidly by just over 20,000 (to finish at approximately 40,000) / from just over 60,000 (to finish at approximately 40,000).



🔑 **Amount / number of.** Use 'amount of' for uncountable nouns, and 'number of' for countable nouns. In this case, 'energy' is an uncountable noun so we must use 'amount'.

Between 1970 and 1990, the amount of energy used by the industry sector declined significantly by approximately 20,000 tonnes.