

Abbreviations are an important and expanding feature of contemporary English, widely used for convenience and space-saving. Students need to be familiar with general and academic abbreviations.

1 Types of abbreviation

Abbreviations take the form of shortened words, acronyms or other abbreviations, as shown below:

- (a) **Shortened words** are often used without the writer being aware of the original form. 'Bus' comes from 'omnibus', which is hardly used in modern English. However, 'refrigerator' is still better in written English than the informal 'fridge'. Yet, 'lab' for 'laboratory', 'memo' for 'memorandum' and 'vet' for 'veterinary surgeon' are quite standard.
- (b) **Acronyms** are made up of the initial letters of a name or phrase (e.g. AIDS = Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). They are pronounced as words.
- (c) **Other abbreviations** are read as sets of individual letters. They include names of countries, organisations and companies (USA/BBC), and also abbreviations that are only found in written English (e.g. PTO means 'please turn over'). Note that in many cases, abbreviations are widely used without most users knowing what the individual letters stand for (e.g. DNA, DVD).

2 Some common abbreviations

AGM	annual general meeting
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BCE	before common era
BSc	Bachelor of Sciences
CV	curriculum vitae
DIY	do-it-yourself
EU	European Union
FE	further education (non-university study above 18)
GM	genetically modified
GNP	gross national product
HE	higher education (university study above 18)
HRM	human resource management
ICT	information and communications technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LLB	Bachelor of Laws
MA	Master of Arts
MSc	Master of Science
PG	postgraduate
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PLC	public limited company
PR	public relations
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UG	undergraduate
UN	United Nations
URL	uniform resource locator (website address)
VC	Vice-Chancellor
WTO	World Trade Organisation

However, writers also employ more specialised abbreviations in texts, which are explained in brackets on first use:

Starting from the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, it is argued that . . .

The Technology Readiness Index (TRI) was introduced by Parasuraman (2000).

Note that the first time a phrase is used, it must be written in full, but on subsequent occasions the abbreviation can be used alone.

3 Punctuation

There are many standard abbreviations that have a full stop after them to show that it is a shortened form of a word (lt. = litre). Other examples are govt. (government), co. (company) and Oct. (October). With acronyms and other abbreviations, it is now normal to write the letters without full stops (e.g. BBC, ABS).

4 Duplicate abbreviations

Abbreviations can be confusing. PC, for example, may stand for 'personal computer' but also 'politically correct' or 'Police Constable'. It is useful to be aware of these potential confusions. A good dictionary should be used to understand more unusual abbreviations.

5 Abbreviations in writing

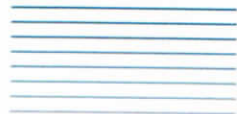
While all academic subjects have their own abbreviations, there are certain abbreviations common to all types of academic writing. They include:

anon.	anonymous (no author)
asap	as soon as possible
<i>c.</i>	<i>circa</i> (in dates – about)
cf.	compare
ed.	editor/edition
e.g.	for example
<i>et al.</i>	and others (used in place of names of multiple authors)
etc.	et cetera (and so on – do not use this in academic work)
Fig.	figure (for labelling charts and graphs)
<i>ibid.</i>	in the same place (to refer to source mentioned immediately before)
i.e.	that is
K	thousand
NB.	take careful note
nd	no date (i.e. an undated source)
<i>op. cit.</i>	in the source mentioned previously
p.a.	yearly (per annum)
pp.	pages
PS	postscript
re:	with reference to
vs	versus

6 Practice

■ Explain the abbreviations in the following sentences.

- (a) The failure rate among ICT projects in HE reaches 40 per cent (Smith *et al.*, 2008).
- (b) GM technology is leading to advances in many fields (e.g. forestry).
- (c) The world's most populous country (i.e. China) joined the WTO in 2001.
- (d) NB. CVs must be submitted to HR by 30 June.
- (e) The city seems to have been destroyed c.2,500 BCE.
- (f) The EU hopes to achieve a standard rate of VAT.
- (g) Her PhD examined the threat of TB in SE Asia.
- (h) Fig. 4 Trade patterns on the www (2003–2008).
- (i) The VC is meeting the PGCE students.
- (j) Director of PR required – salary approx. \$75K.
- (k) Re: the AGM next month: the report is needed asap.
- (l) Prof. Wren claimed that the quality of MSc and MA research was falling.



In many subjects, it is essential to support your writing with statistical data. Visual devices such as graphs and tables are a convenient way of displaying large quantities of information in a form that is easy to understand. This unit explains and practises the language connected with these devices.

1 Types of visuals

Below are examples of some of the main types of visuals used in academic texts.

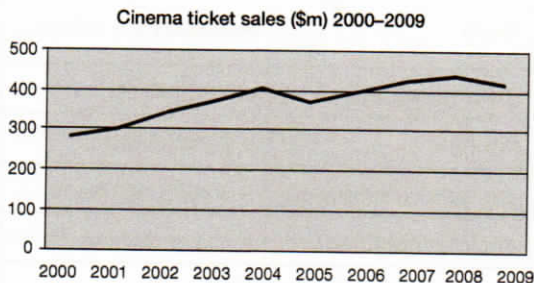
- Complete the table below to show the main use (a-f) and the example (A-F) of each type.

Uses:

- (a) location
(b) comparison
(c) proportion
(d) structure
(e) changes in time
(f) statistical display

Types	Uses	Example
1 Diagram		
2 Table		
3 Map		
4 Pie chart		
5 Bar chart		
6 Line graph		

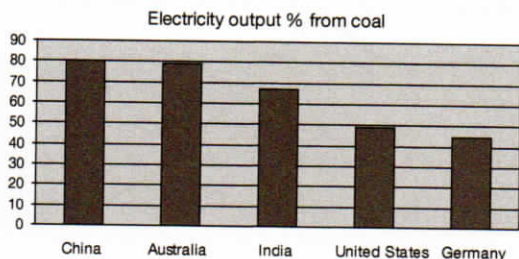
(A) Cinema ticket sales



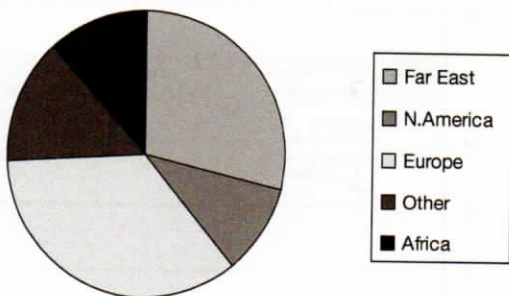
(B) Average life expectancy (in years)

Japan	81.6
France	79.0
United States	77.1
South Korea	75.5
Ghana	57.9
South Africa	47.7
Kenya	44.6
Zimbabwe	33.1

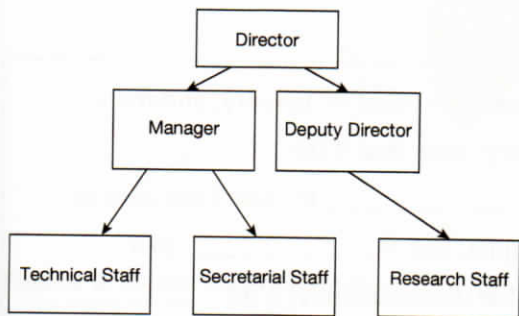
(C) Electricity output from coal



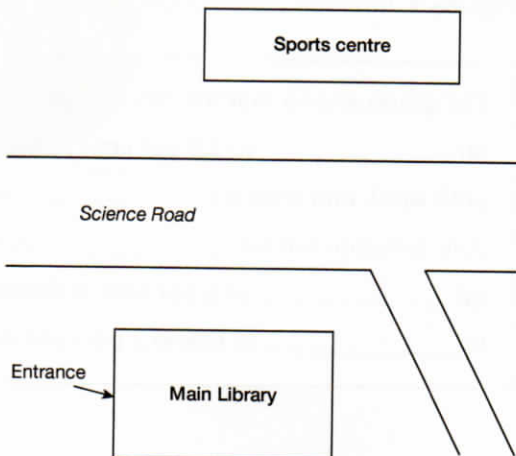
(D) Origins of international students



(E) Organisation of the research unit



(F) Position of the main library



2 The language of change (past tenses in brackets)

Verb ↗	Adverb	Verb ↗	Adjective + noun
grow (grew)	slightly	drop (dropped)	a slight drop
rise (rose)	gradually	fall (fell)	a gradual fall
increase (increased)	steadily	decrease (decreased)	a steady decrease
climb (climbed)	sharply	decline (declined)	a sharp decline
<i>also: a peak, to peak, a plateau, to level off, a trough</i>			

- Study the graph below and complete the description with phrases from the table above.

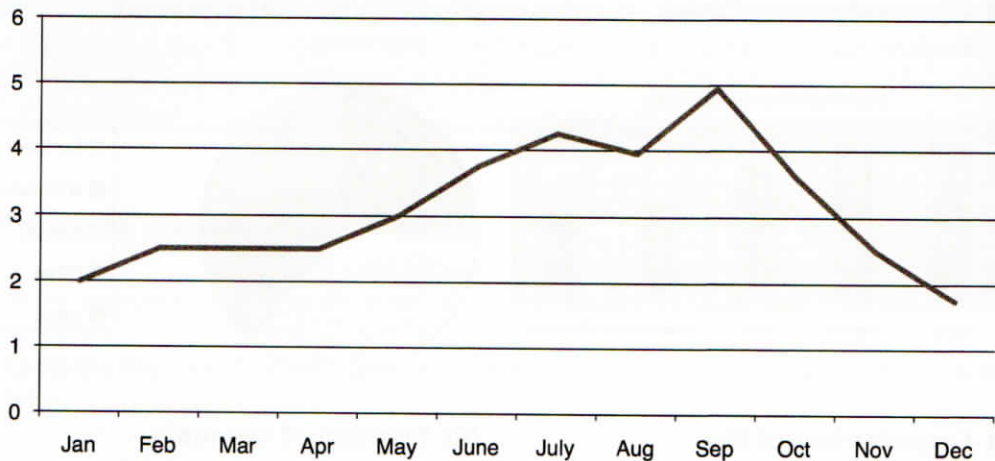


Figure 1 Inflation January–December

The graph shows that the rate of inflation was 2 per cent in January, and then (a) _____ to 2.5 per cent in February. After that it (b) _____ until April, and then (c) _____ (d) _____ to over 4 per cent in July. Inflation fell (e) _____ in August, but (f) _____ to a (g) _____ of 5 per cent in September. Subsequently, it (h) _____ (i) _____ to below 2 per cent in December.

3 Describing visuals

Although visuals do largely speak for themselves, it is common to help the reader interpret them by briefly commenting on their main features.

The graph map diagram	shows illustrates displays	the changes in the price of oil since 1990. the main sources of copper in Africa. the organisation of both companies.
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■ (A) Read the following descriptions of the chart below. Which is better, and why?

- (i) The chart (Figure 2) shows the quantity of tea consumed by the world's leading tea consuming nations. India and China together consume more than half the world's tea production, with India alone consuming about one third. Other significant tea consumers are Turkey, Russia and Britain. 'Others' includes the United States, Iran and Egypt.
- (ii) The chart (Figure 2) shows that 31 per cent of the world's tea is consumed by India, 23 per cent by China, and 8 per cent by Turkey. The fourth largest consumers are Russia, Japan and Britain, with 7 per cent each, while Pakistan consumes 5 per cent. Other countries account for the remaining 12 per cent.

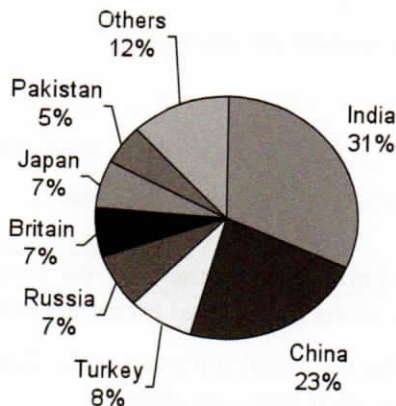


Figure 2 World tea consumption

Source: The Tea Council

■ (B) Complete the description of the chart below.

The bar chart (Figure 3) shows population (a) _____ in a variety of countries around the world. It (b) _____ the extreme contrast (c) _____ crowded nations such as South Korea (475 people per sq. km) and much (d) _____ countries such as Canada (3 people per sq. km). Clearly, climate plays a major (e) _____ in determining population density, (f) _____ the least crowded nations (g) _____ to have extreme climates (e.g. cold in Russia or dry in Algeria).

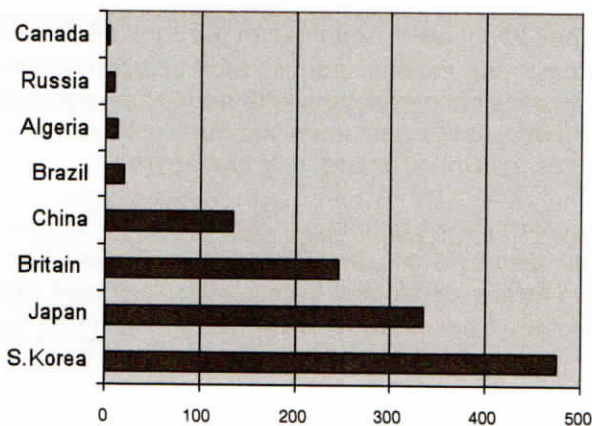


Figure 3 Population density (people per sq. km)

Source: OECD

4 Labelling

- When referring to visual information in the text, the word 'figure' is used for almost everything (such as maps, charts and graphs) except tables (see examples above).
- Figures and tables should be numbered and given a title. Titles of tables are written above, while titles of figures are written below the data.
- As with other data, sources must be given for all visual information.
- If you are writing a lengthy work such as a dissertation, you will need to provide lists of tables and figures, showing numbers, titles and page numbers after the contents page.

■ (B) Complete the description of the chart below.

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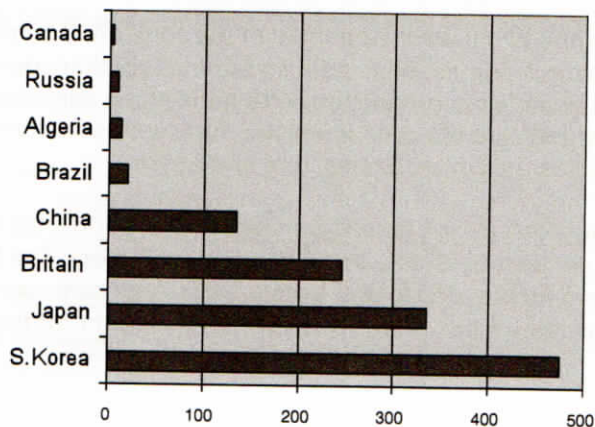


Figure 3 Population density (people per sq. km)

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5 Practice A

- Complete the following description of the table below (one word per gap).

Table 1 Projected population changes in various European countries 2010–2050 (millions)

Country	Population 2010	Projected population 2050	Change
France	62	67	+ 5
Germany	82	71	– 11
Italy	60	57	– 3
Poland	38	32	– 6
Portugal	10.7	10	– 0.7
Russia	140	116	– 24
Spain	45	51	+ 6
UK	61	72	+ 11

Source: UN

The table (a) _____ the projected population changes in (b) _____ European countries (c) _____ 2010 and 2050. It can be seen that in a (d) _____ the population is expected to fall, in some cases (e.g. Germany and Russia) quite (e) _____. However, the population of France, (f) _____ and the UK is predicted to increase, in the case of the last two by more (g) _____ 10 per cent.

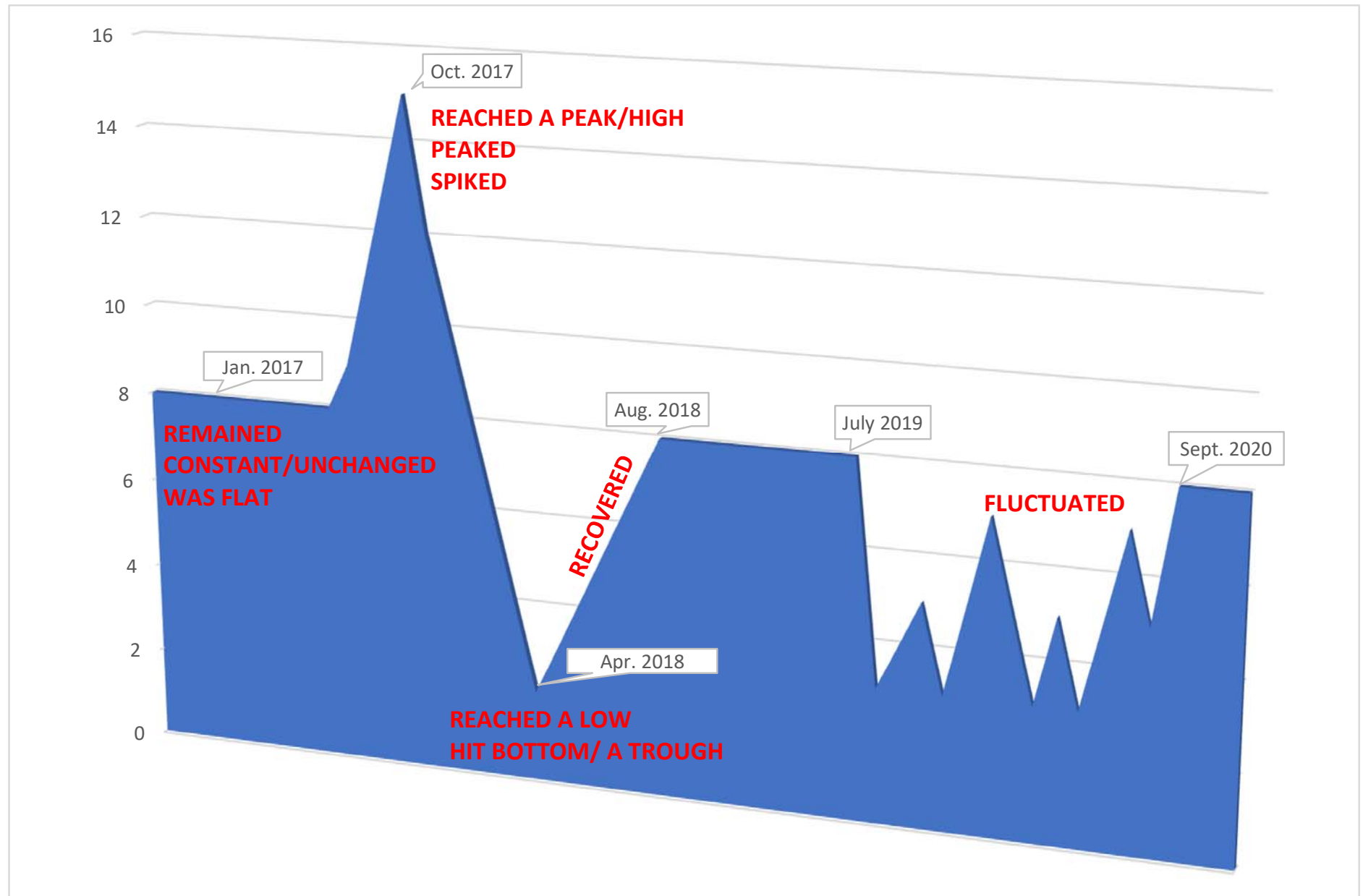
6 Practice B

- Write a paragraph commenting on the data in the table below.

Table 2 Student survey of library facilities: % students rating facilities as good

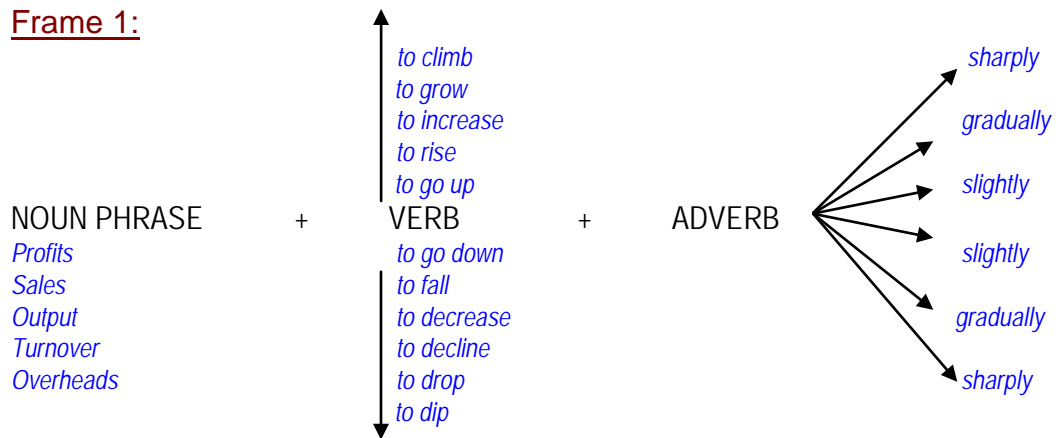
Library facilities	Undergraduates (%)	Postgraduates (%)
Opening hours	72	63
Staff helpfulness	94	81
Ease of using electronic catalogue	65	87
Availability of working space	80	76
Café area	91	95
Availability of short loan stock	43	35
Quality of main book stock	69	54

Source: Author

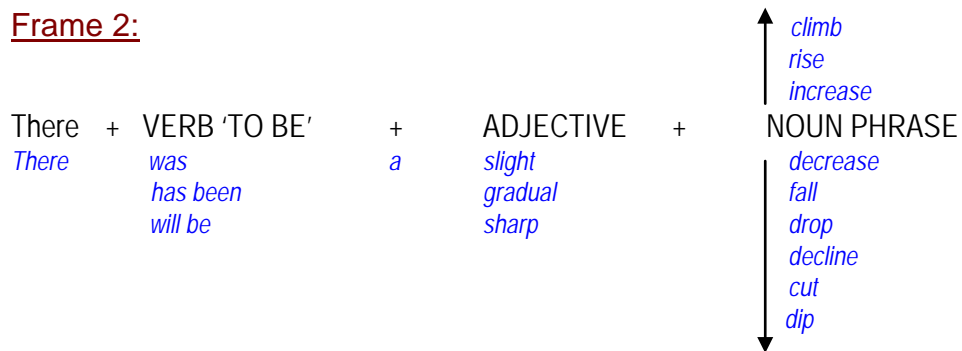


Describing Trends

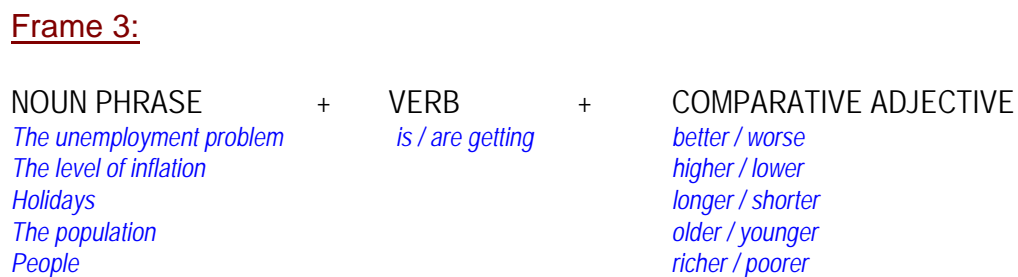
Frame 1:



Frame 2:



Frame 3:



2) Listen and complete the table below.

ITALY IN FIGURES	1961	1981	Now
Population			
Average Number of Children Per Family			
Average age of first-time mothers			
Number of Marriages			
Number of Divorces			
Average life expectancy for men			
Average life expectancy for women			
Infant mortality			
Deaths from infectious diseases			
Overweight and obesity rates for boys			
Overweight and obesity rates for girls			

3) Now describe ten trends using the NOUN PHRASE + VERB + COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVE pattern shown here.

NOUN PHRASE

VERB

COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVE

The population

is getting

older / younger

Families

are getting

bigger / smaller

Mothers

is becoming

safer / more dangerous

Marriage

are becoming

fatter / thinner

Divorce

healthier / less healthy

Men

better / worse

Women

more popular / less popular

Boys

Girls

People

Childbirth

Medical care

What to expect in the exam

The Writing Test is the third paper in the exam and it takes place after the Reading Test.

You do two tasks in one hour:

- Task 1 is a summary of one or more charts or diagrams on the same subject.
- Task 2 is a discursive essay. There is only one topic.

Task 1

In this task, you must summarise and compare information from a graph, chart, table or diagram, or a combination of these.

Your summary must be at least 150 words long. You may write more than this, but if you write less, you will lose some marks. You need to spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You should try to:

- include all the key points;
- include some details or data to support the key points;
- compare relevant features of the information;
- include an overview;
- organise your answer in a logical way;
- use relevant vocabulary;
- use your own words where possible, rather than copying from the question;
- write grammatically correct sentences;
- use accurate spelling and punctuation;
- write in a formal academic style (not bullet points or note form).

You studied and practised Writing Task 1 in Units 1, 3, 5 and 7.

How to do Task 1

- 1 Read the instructions and study the headings and information carefully. Find at least three key points and decide which features you should compare. (Allow between two and three minutes.)
- 2 Decide how many paragraphs to write and what to put in each one. Decide what will go in your overview. (Allow between two and three minutes.)
- 3 Write your answer, allowing a couple of minutes to check it through afterwards. (15 minutes)

Graphs, charts and diagrams

There are different types of visual information that you will have to deal with.

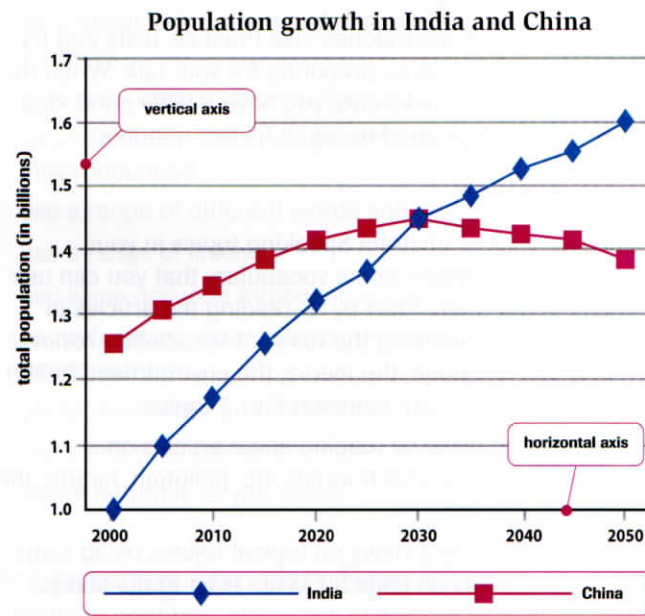
1 Graphs: showing trends over time

Look at the Writing task below and answer these questions.

- 1 What do the figures on the vertical axis represent?
- 2 What period of time does the graph cover?
- 3 What overall trends does the graph show?
- 4 Find three key points that you can compare on the graph.

The graph below shows population figures for India and China since the year 2000 and predicted population growth up until 2050.

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



- 5 Read the sample answer on page 93. Underline the writer's key points and the comparisons the writer makes.
- 6 Are the data that support the key points accurate?

Start with a sentence that introduces the summary. Use your own words as far as possible.

Note the change in tense to summarise points about the future.

Sample answer

The graph shows how the populations of India and China have changed since 2000 and how they will change in the future.

In 2000, there were more people living in China than in India. The number of Chinese was 1.25 billion, while India's population was about 1 billion. Between 2000 and the present, there has been a 0.2 billion rise in the number of Indian citizens. Over the same period, China's population has increased by 0.1 billion to reach over 1.35 billion.

According to the graph, the population in India will increase more quickly than in China, and experts say that by 2030, both countries will have the same population of 1.45 billion. After this, China's population is likely to fall slightly to 1.4 billion in 2050, while India's population will probably increase and reach 1.6 billion.

Thus, over the 50-year period, India is going to experience steady growth in its population and it will overtake China. On the other hand, China's population will peak in 2030 and then begin to fall.

The paragraphs cover different time periods on the graph. In this answer, the second paragraph goes up to the present day and the third paragraph deals with the future.

The overview is at the end and forms the final paragraph. It gives an overall picture of the trends.

- 7 Read the sample answer again. Underline any verbs, nouns and phrases that the writer uses to describe trends. (Include the prepositions.)

2 Pie charts: showing how 100% of something is divided up into smaller percentages

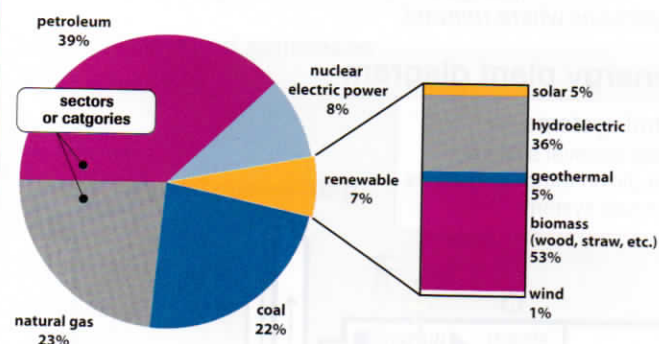
Look at the Writing task below and answer these questions.

- 1 Say what the pie chart shows (tell a partner in your own words). What does the bar on the right represent?
- 2 What are the key points in the charts?
- 3 How could you organise the information into paragraphs?

The chart below shows the world's energy use in 2010.

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

Global breakdown of energy consumption 2010



Sample answer

The chart illustrates the world's use of different forms of energy in 2010 and provides a breakdown of the use of renewable energy.

By far the biggest source of power is petroleum. Thirty-nine per cent of the world's energy comes from this source. Also, natural gas and coal together contribute 45 per cent of our energy sources. Clearly, we are very dependent on these three main energy supplies.

Similar but much smaller amounts of energy are consumed from nuclear power (8 per cent) and renewable sources (7 per cent). Within the renewable sector, there are a number of different energy sources. Wood-based sources and hydroelectric power are the largest of these and account for 53 and 36 per cent respectively, while solar energy is the smallest, at one per cent. In addition, very small percentages of wind and geothermal energy are used.

Although we use some renewable energy, our reliance on these forms is still minimal compared to the significant consumption of fossil fuels.

Notice how the writer avoids repeating the same words and phrases.

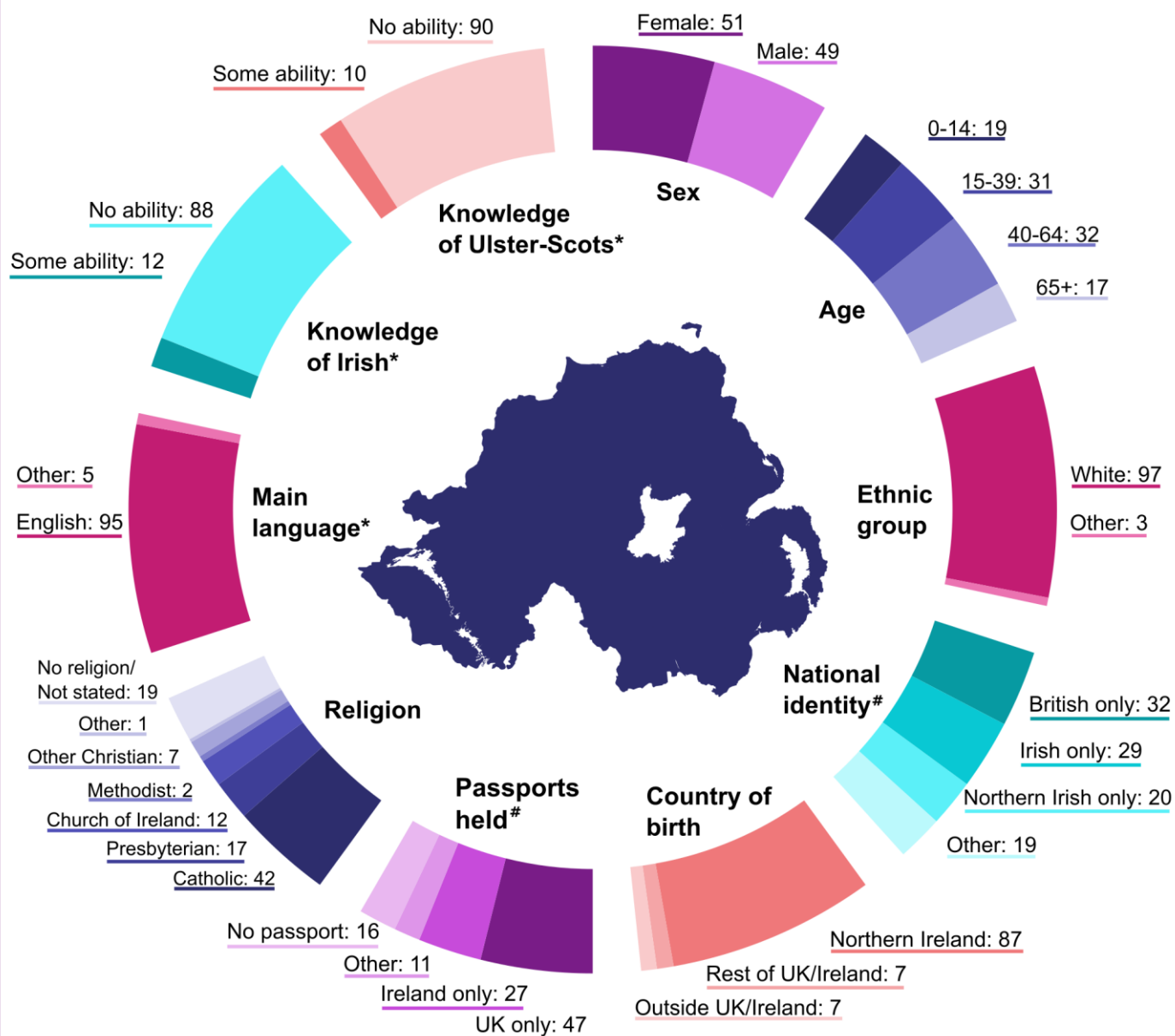
It is fine to use words from the task if you put them in your own sentence.

Include relevant vocabulary to improve your score.

- 4 Read the sample answer on the right. Which sentence sums up the first key point?
- 5 Find the overview.
- 6 Read the sample answer again. Underline the phrases the writer uses to make comparisons.
- 7 Underline the linkers.

census
2021

Northern Ireland as 100 people



*People aged 3 years and over

[#]Person based classification



nisra.gov.uk/census2021

explore.nisra.gov.uk



Population
1,903,200

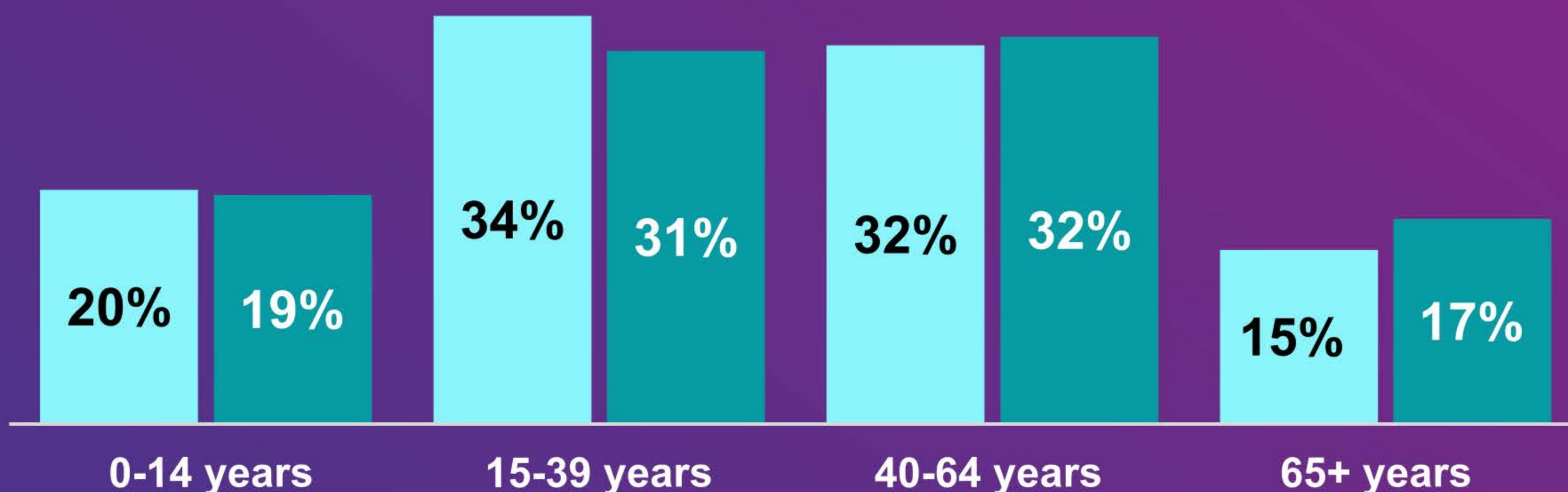
Up 5%
since
2011

Households
with usual residents
768,800

Up 9%
since
2011

Age

2011
2021



- Proportion of younger people decreased
- Proportion of older people increased



Northern
Ireland:
1,646,300

Rest of
UK/Ireland:
132,600

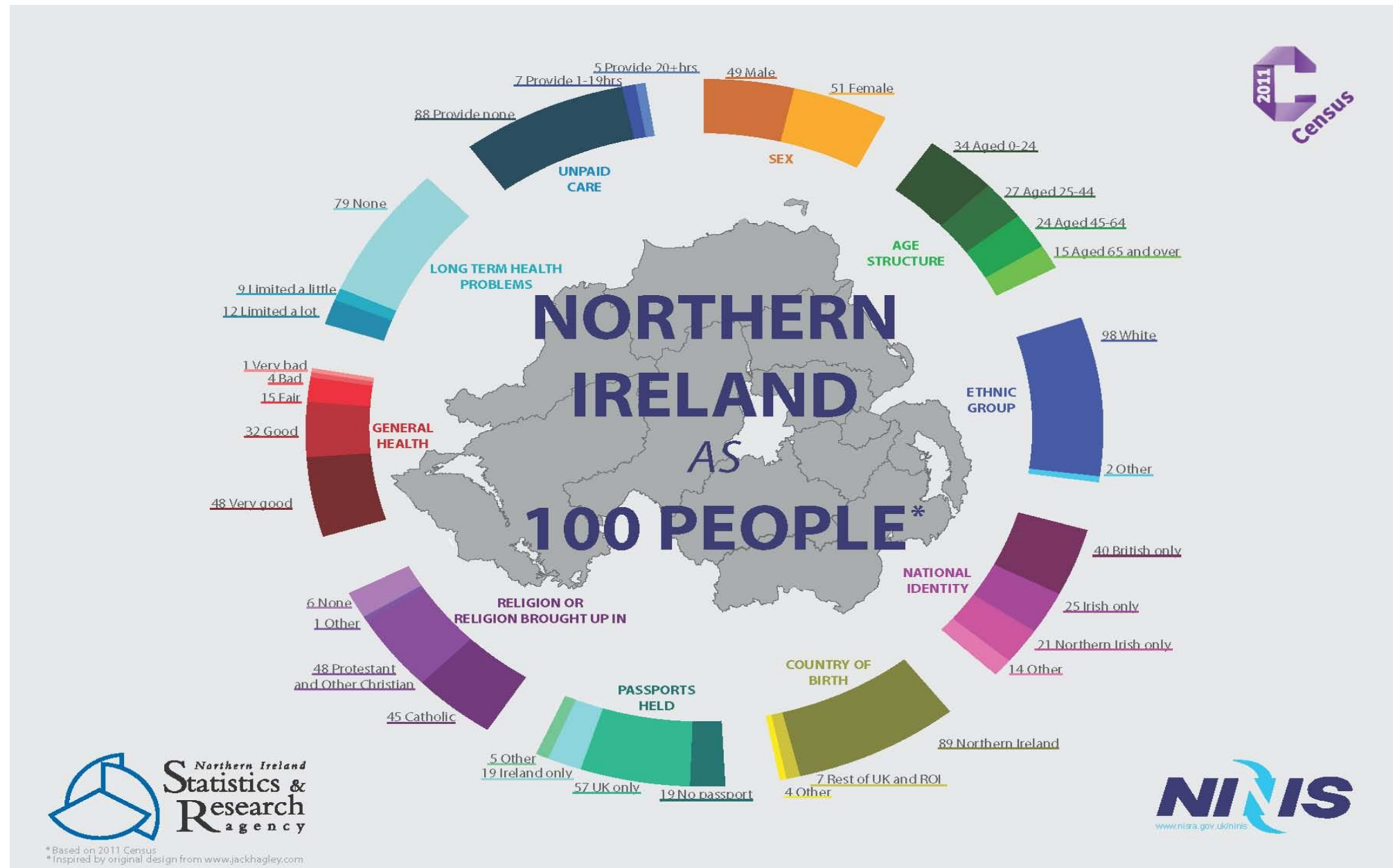
Outside
UK/Ireland:
124,300

Country of birth

Number of people
born outside
UK/Ireland increased
from 81,500 in 2011
to 124,300 in 2021

NORTHERN IRELAND CENSUS 2011

Now look at the chart showing the results of the 2011 census and explain how things changed in Northern Ireland between 2011 and 2021.



More Catholics than Protestants for First Time in Northern Ireland Census

Thursday, 22 Sep 2022

By Vincent Kearney

More people in Northern Ireland are Catholics than Protestants for the first time in its 101-year history, the latest census figures show.

The census reveals that of the resident population, 45.7% are either Catholic or brought up Catholic. The percentage of the population who are either Protestant or were brought up Protestant is 43.5%. 9.3% of people said they neither belonged to nor were brought up in any religion. The figure for the Catholic population has increased by 0.6% since the last census in 2011, while the figure for the Protestant population has fallen almost 5% during the same period. One of the key reasons for the decline in the Protestant population is that it is an older, aging community with higher mortality.

The population of Northern Ireland when the census was carried out in March last year was 1,903,100, an increase of 5% since 2011 and the highest figure recorded since Northern Ireland was created. When it comes to national identity, the number who said they have a "British only" identity has fallen while those who regard themselves as "Irish only" has increased.

Those who described their identity as British only identity has fallen from 40% to 31.9%, from 772,400 in 2011 to 606,300. The number who regard themselves as "Irish only" is up from 457,000 to 554,000 or 29.1%, that is up from 25% ten years ago.

There has been a sharp rise in the number of people in Northern Ireland who hold an Irish passport over the past decade, while the number with a British passport has fallen. The number who now hold an Irish passport either solely or jointly has increased from 375,800 in 2011 to 614,300 in 2021.

The number with a UK passport is 1 million, down from 1.7m ten years ago. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency says this is consistent with the increasing demand for Irish passports since the UK left the EU in 2016.

'Seminal Moment in History'

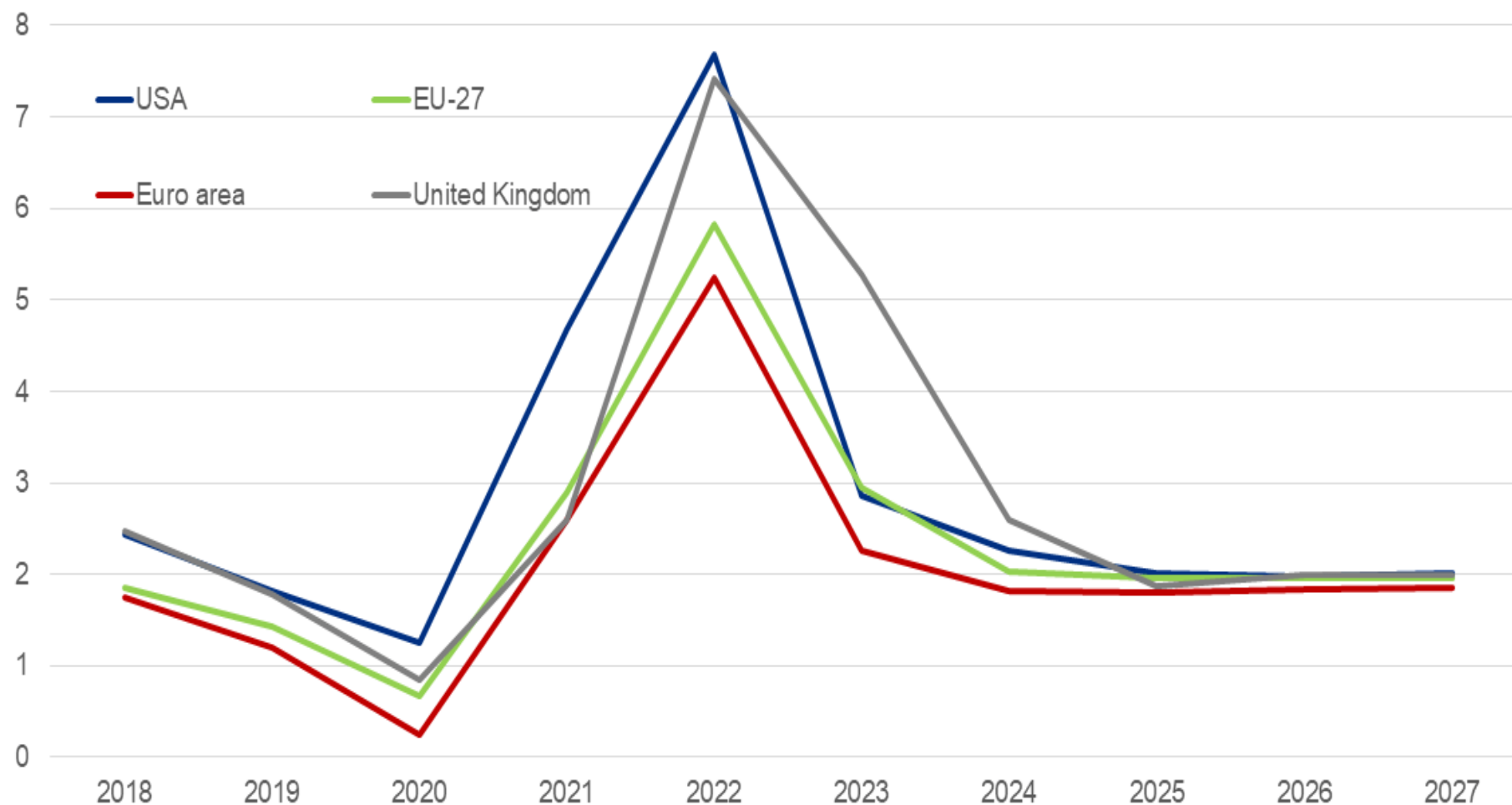
SDLP leader Colum Eastwood said the shift is "a seminal moment in the history of modern Ireland" that should not be downplayed.

Sinn Féin MP John Finucane said that "Today's census results are another indication that historic change is happening across this island and of the diversity of society which enriches us all."

The publication of the census traditionally prompts debate over what the figures may mean for the constitutional future of Northern Ireland. Some may seek to draw a direct link between the religious breakdown and public opinion on the potential reunification of Ireland. However, critics of that approach view religious affiliation as a crude metric to measure sentiment on the constitutional question, insisting that just because someone is Protestant or Catholic does not necessarily mean their respective political outlooks are unionist or nationalist.

In that respect, more emphasis may be placed on the census figures on national identity. That question was included in the census for the first time in 2011, when 40% said they had a British only national identity, 25% said they had an Irish only identity and 21% viewed their identity as being only Northern Irish. Under the terms of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, the constitutional status of Northern Ireland can be changed only with the consent of its population. The incumbent Northern Ireland Secretary is obliged to call a referendum on Irish unity if he or she believes there has been a shift in public opinion that would indicate a majority in favour of constitutional change. However, the 1998 peace deal provided no detail on what metrics or criteria should be relied upon to make this judgement call.

Annual inflation in selected regions: average consumer prices, percent change



Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2022, data extracted on 24 Apr 2022.