

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.

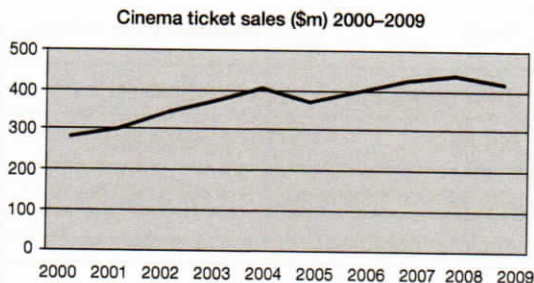
- Complete the table below to show the main use (a-f) and the example (A-F) of each type.

Uses:

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

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

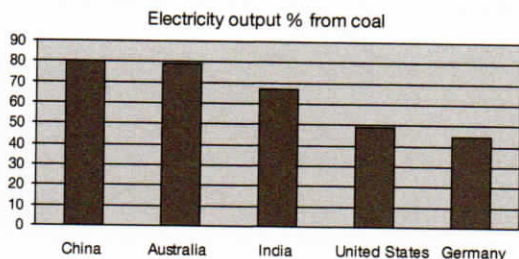
### (A) Cinema ticket sales



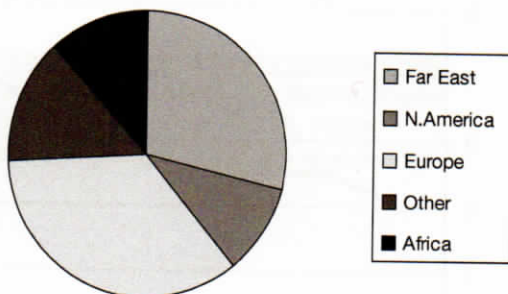
### (B) Average life expectancy (in years)

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| 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 |

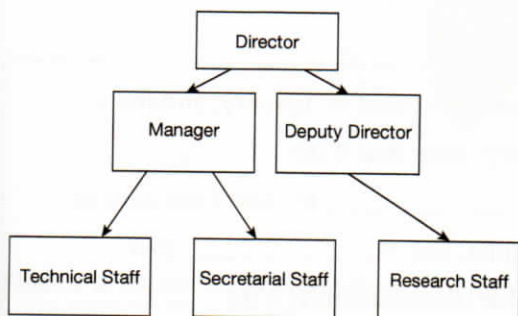
### (C) Electricity output from coal



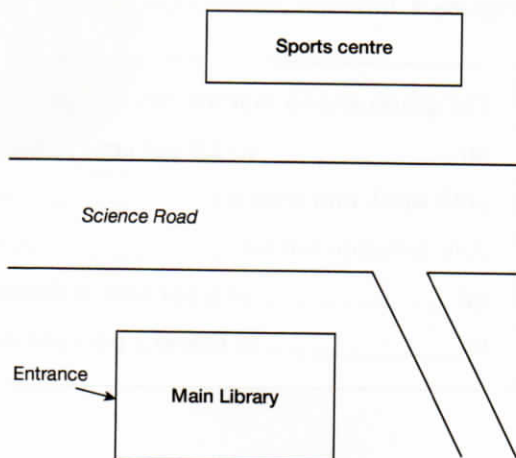
### (D) Origins of international students



### (E) Organisation of the research unit



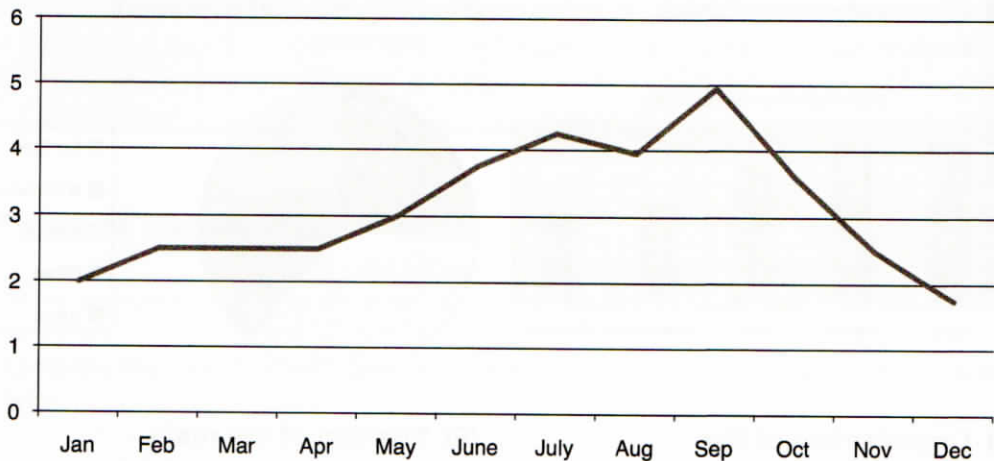
### (F) Position of the main library



## 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.

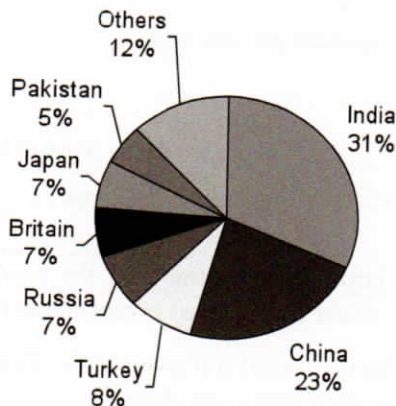
### 3 Describing visuals

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<br>map<br>diagram | shows<br>illustrates<br>displays | the changes in the price of oil since 1990.<br>the main sources of copper in Africa.<br>the organisation of both companies. |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

■ (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.

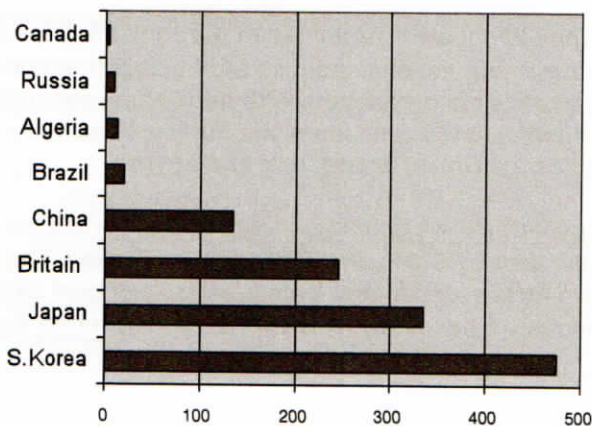


**Figure 2** World tea consumption

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)

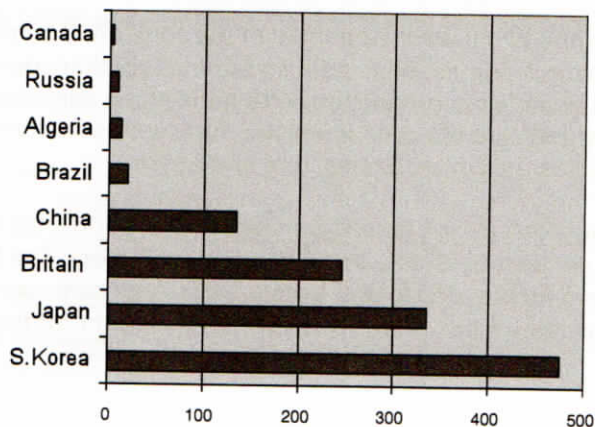
Source: OECD

## 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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## 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.

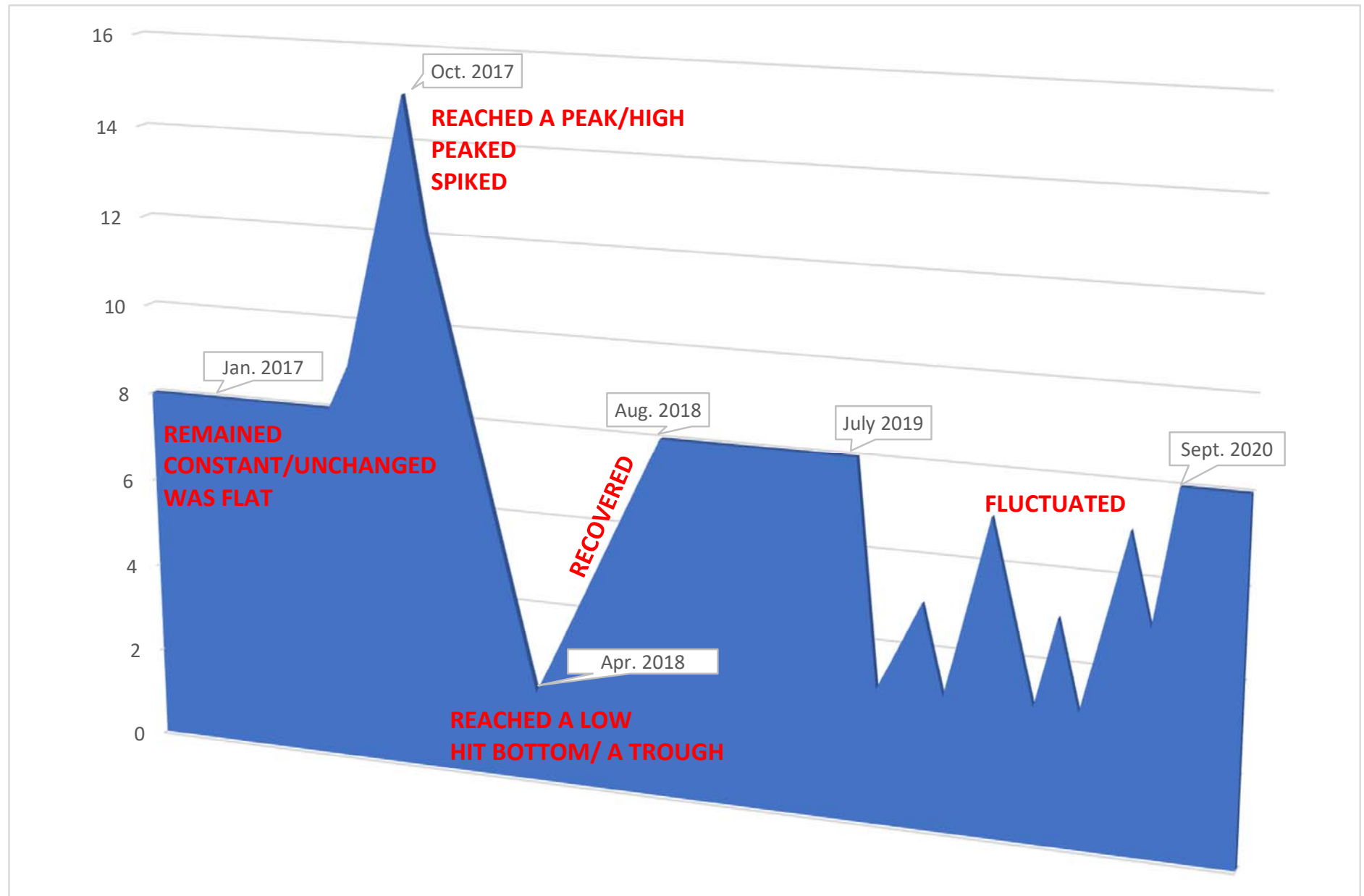
## 6 Practice B

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

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

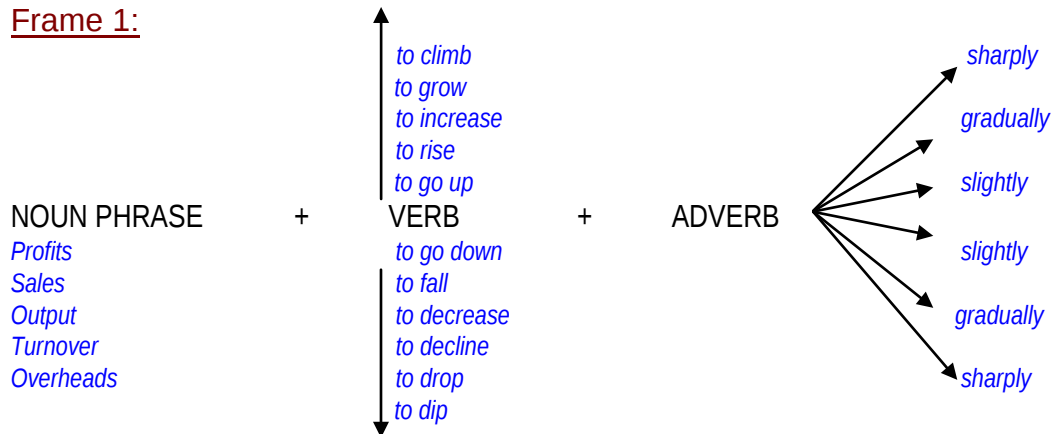
| <b>Library facilities</b>          | <b>Undergraduates (%)</b> | <b>Postgraduates (%)</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Opening hours                      | 72                        | 63                       |
| Staff helpfulness                  | 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

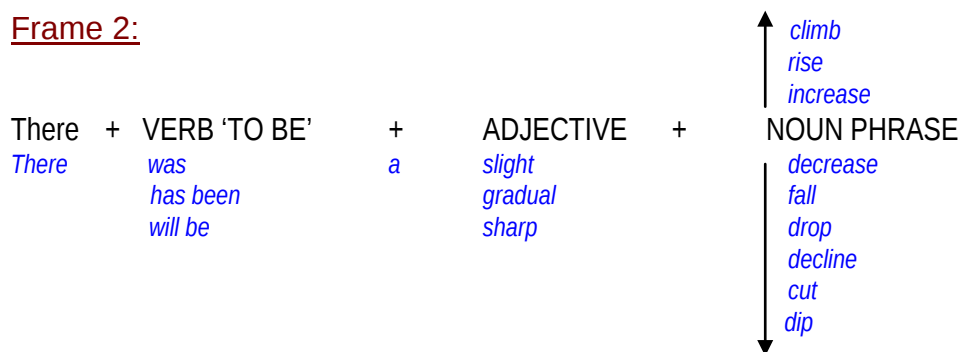


## Describing Trends

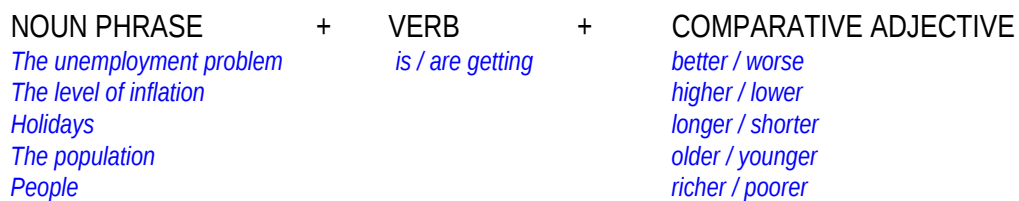
### Frame 1:



### 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.

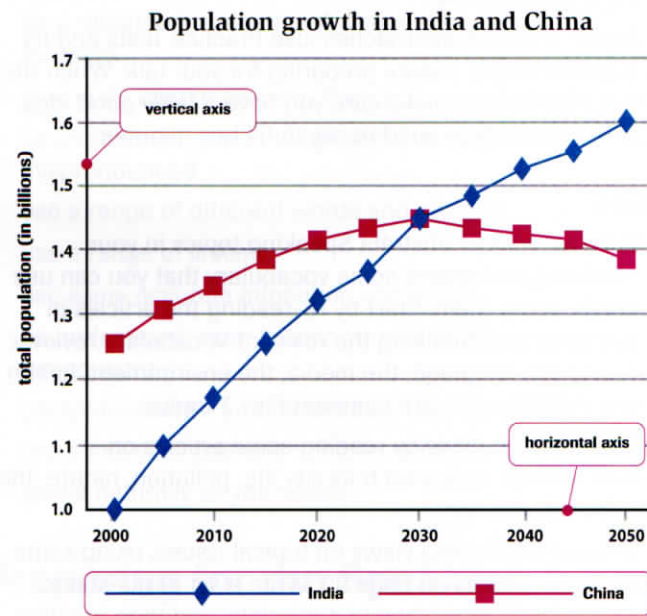
### 1 Graphs: showing trends over time

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.

### 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.

Note the change in tense to summarise points about 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

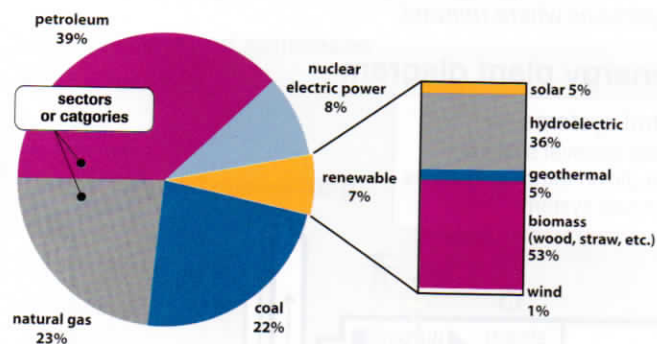
Look at the Writing task below and answer these questions.

- 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.

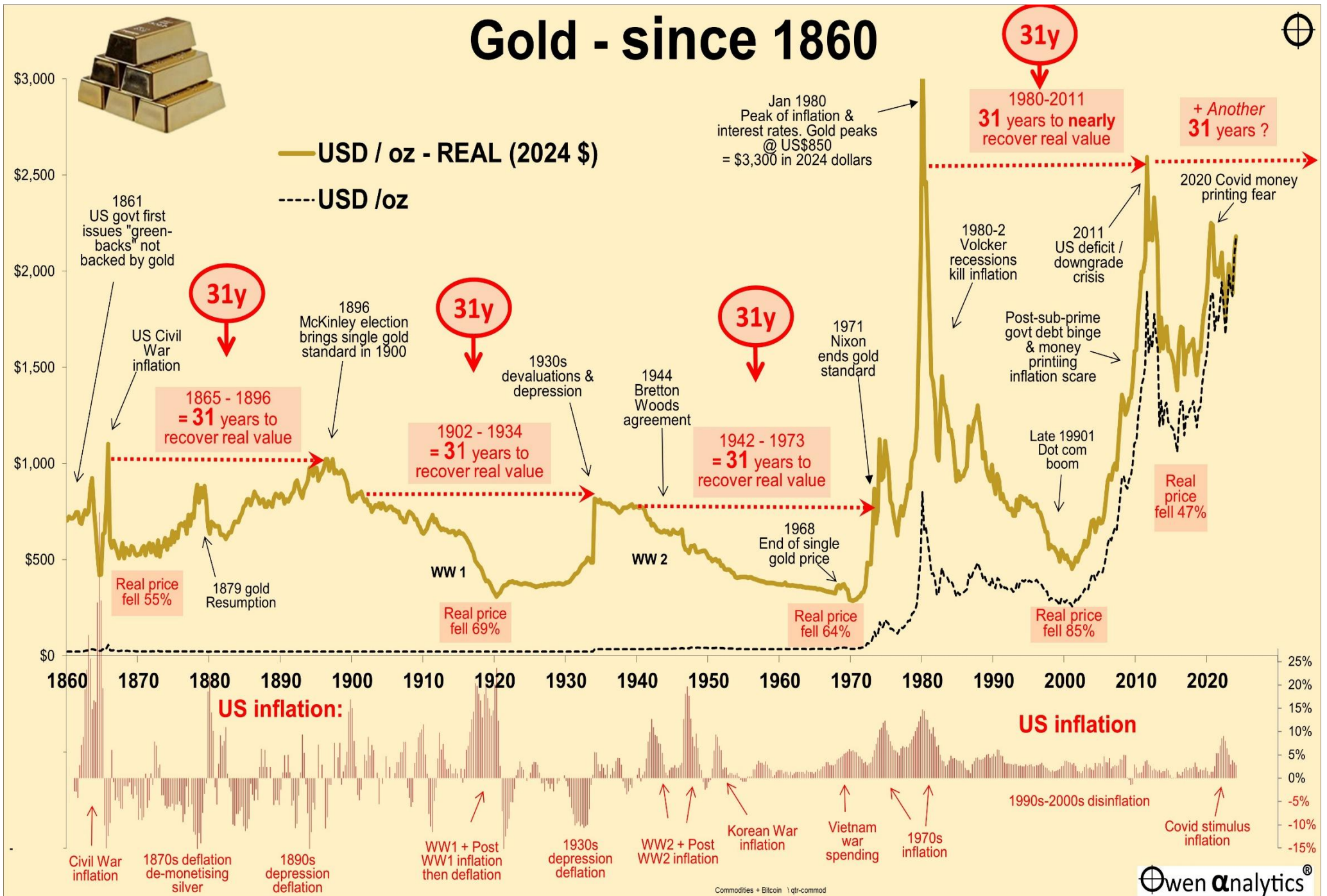
Notice how the writer avoids repeating the same words and phrases.

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

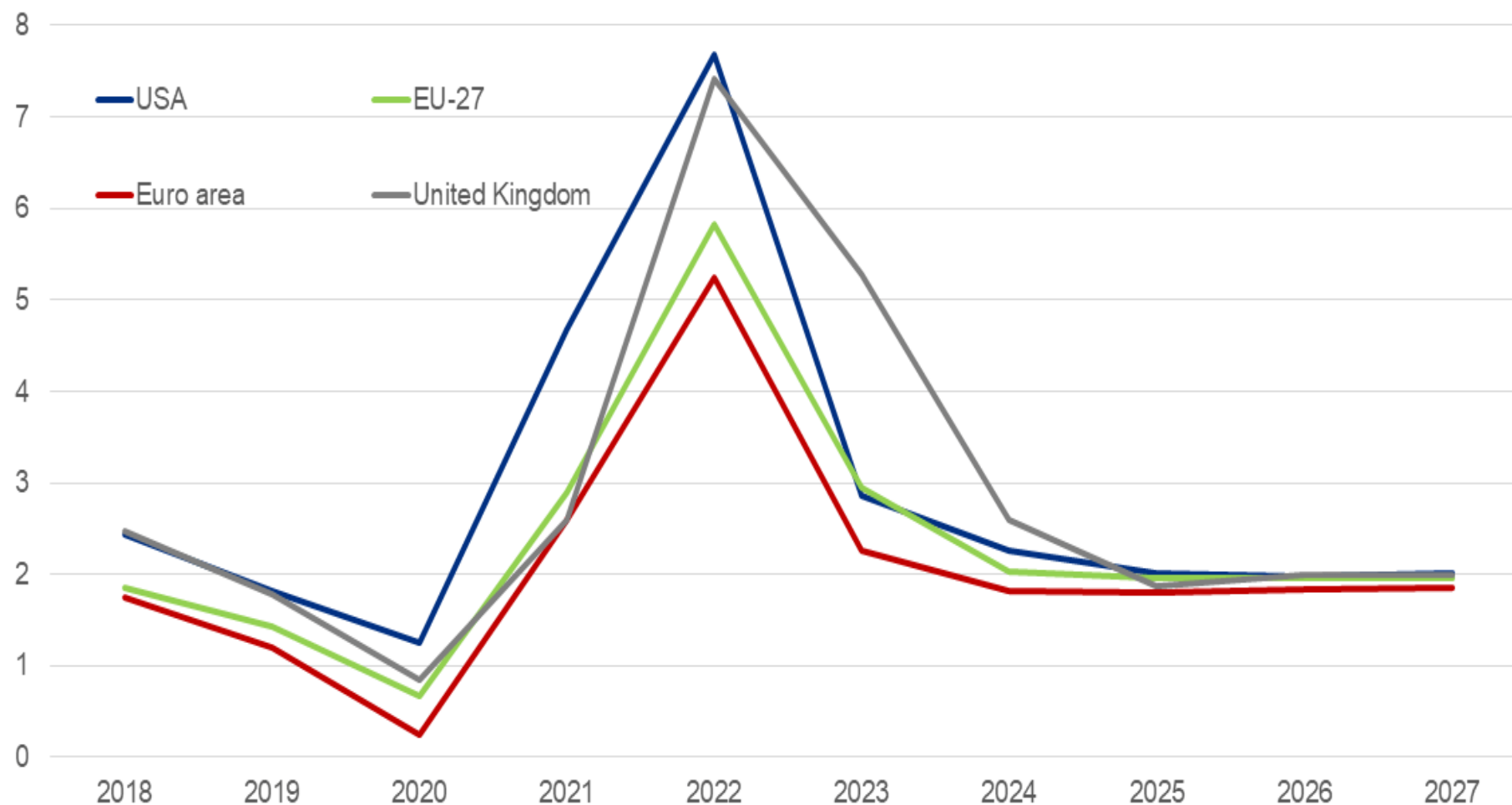
Include relevant vocabulary to improve your score.

- 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.

# Gold - since 1860



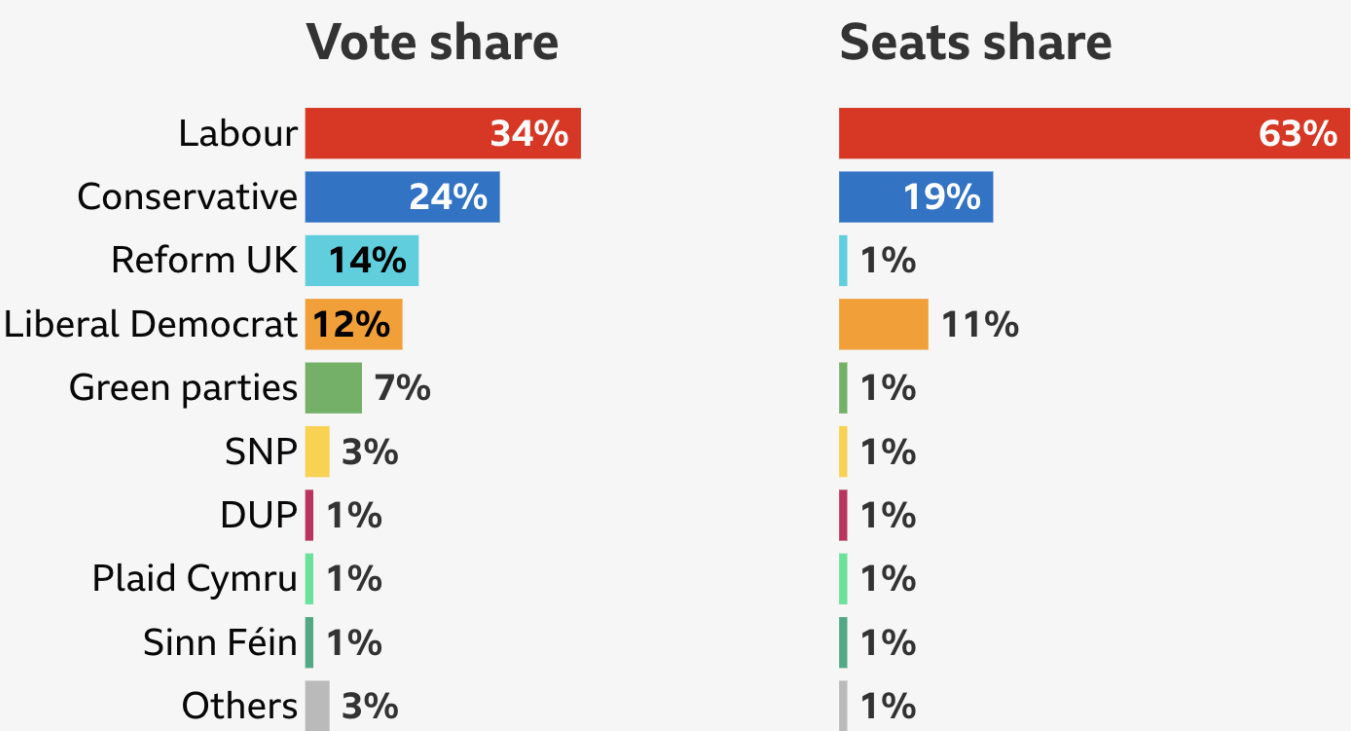
## Annual inflation in selected regions: average consumer prices, percent change



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

# General election results 2024

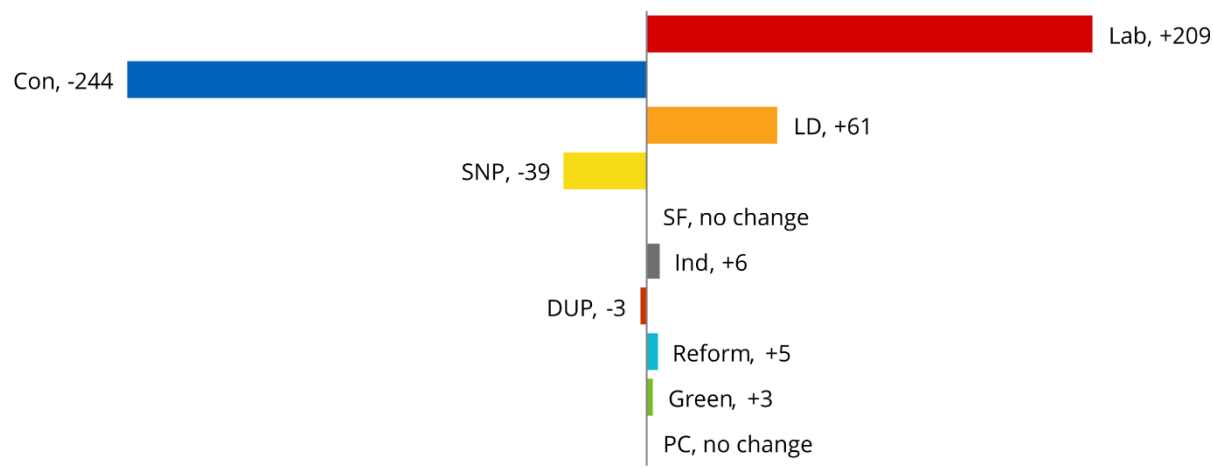
Share of the UK vote and share of seats in Parliament



The green parties for England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are separate. Their combined vote share is shown **B B C**

## 2024 general election: change in seats compared with 2019

After all 650 seats declared



Note: changes calculated relative to the number of seats won at the 2019 general election, not notional results.