

## IELTS writing task 1 – line graphs

by Mairi Joanne Anderson

**Age:** Teenagers / Adults

**Level:** Intermediate – advanced

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Objective:** to practise the adjective + noun and verb + adverb collocations required to describe trends on line graphs in IELTS writing task 1; to practise identifying main trends

**Key skills:** writing, speaking

**Materials:** one copy of worksheet A for half the class; one copy of worksheet B for half the class; a few copies of the suggested answer sheets 1, 2 and 3 for the students (about one copy per group of four will suffice; alternatively, you can project the answers).

### Before the class

Cut up the first suggested answers sheet as shown.

### Procedure

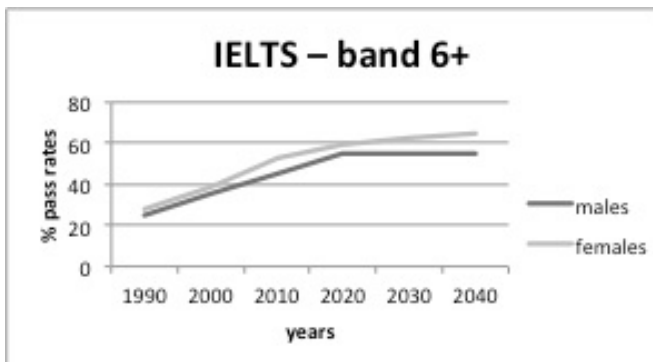
- Tell your class you are going to practise the vocabulary required to describe trends and statistics in IELTS writing task 1, in which students write a report.
- Divide your classroom in two and have all the people on one side work on worksheet A and all the people on the other on worksheet B. If you have a very large class, put the people working on worksheet A into smaller groups and do the same for those doing worksheet B. The important thing is that As and Bs do not confer.
- Distribute worksheet A to the As and worksheet B to the Bs. Point out that worksheet A and worksheet B are opposites: As will focus on graphs 1 and 3, while Bs will focus on graphs 2 and 4.
- Tell the groups to brainstorm all the language they might need in order to describe their graphs and write them under the graphs. This can take the form of adjective + noun combinations (e.g. a gradual increase), or nouns on their own (e.g. a fall). Give the examples just mentioned, or similar ones of your own, so students know what kind of language you are after, then set a time limit of approximately five minutes.
- Distribute the Group A suggested answers to the As and the Group B suggested answers to the Bs – one copy per group of four students will suffice. Get any feedback and resolve any doubts. Some students might suggest different collocations to those on the answer sheet so you may need to remind them that only certain collocations are possible. You may want to introduce your students to a concordancer at this point.
- Now, put the students in pairs: one A with one B. Do not let them look at each other's worksheets. Ideally, they should sit face to face. The students will take it in turns to describe their graphs with one student listening and the other drawing the lines on his or her graph. You should circulate and make notes of any problem language to focus on at the end. When the students have finished, they can compare worksheets to check their answers. Get feedback.
- Now, ask the pairs to look at the language notes they made on their worksheets. Have them write beside these their equivalent verb or verb + adverb collocations, (e.g. *a sharp increase > increase sharply*). Circulate and help, then distribute the second suggested answers sheet (one for every four students) or project it so students can check their work. Get feedback.
- Focus on any errors you noted down during the activity by writing them up on the board and asking the students to find the problem and correct it.
- Explain that one of the biggest difficulties for IELTS students is identifying the main trends. Ask the students to use a coloured pen to circle the main trends on their graphs. Check together, giving out one copy of suggested answers sheet 3 per group of four students or, alternatively, projecting it.

### Extension activity

Ask the students to write up their notes for homework in the form of a mini report on each or one of the graphs.

## IELTS writing task 1 – line graphs by Mairi Joanne Anderson

Graph 1



Notes

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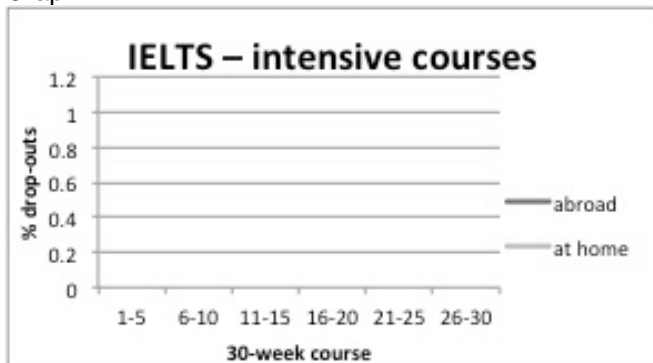
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Graph 2



Notes

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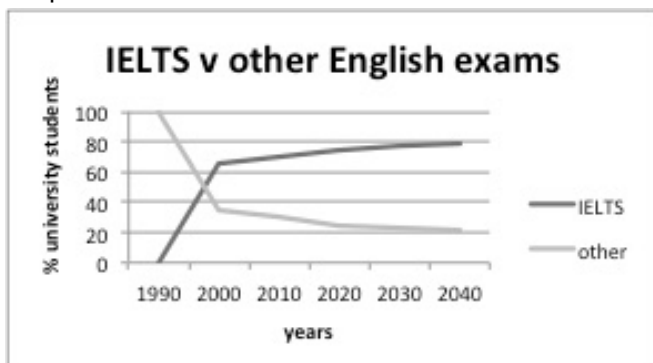
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Graph 3



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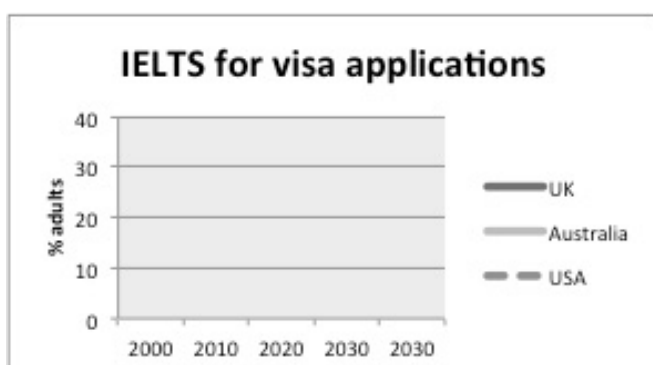
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Graph 4



Notes

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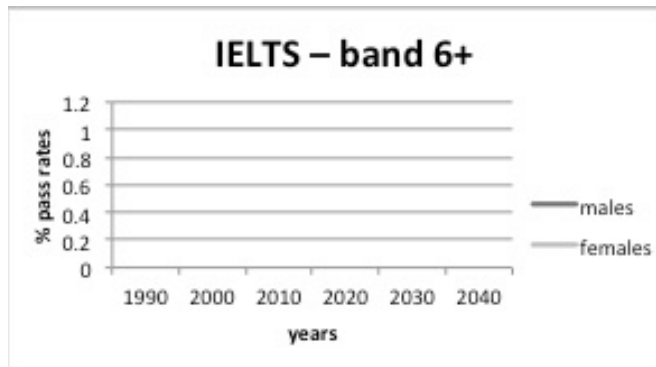
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Graph 1



Notes

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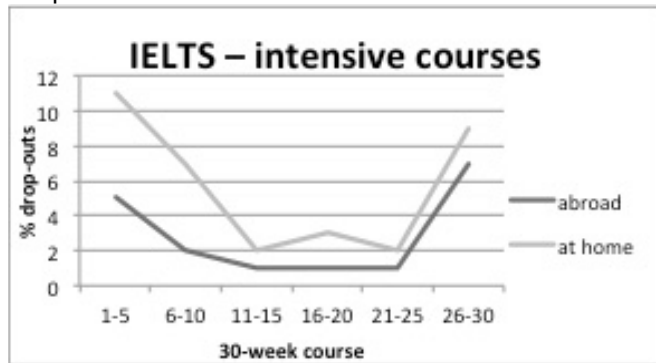
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Graph 2



Notes

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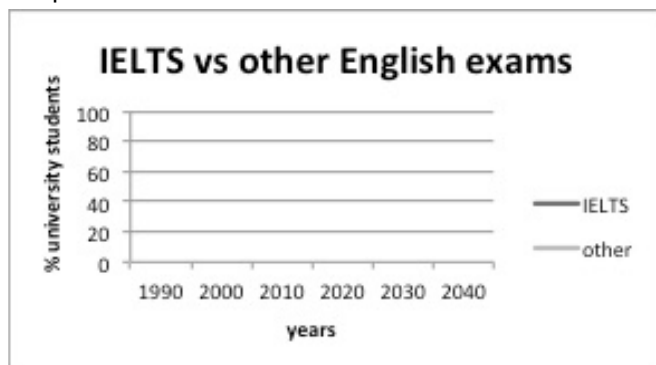
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Graph 3



Notes

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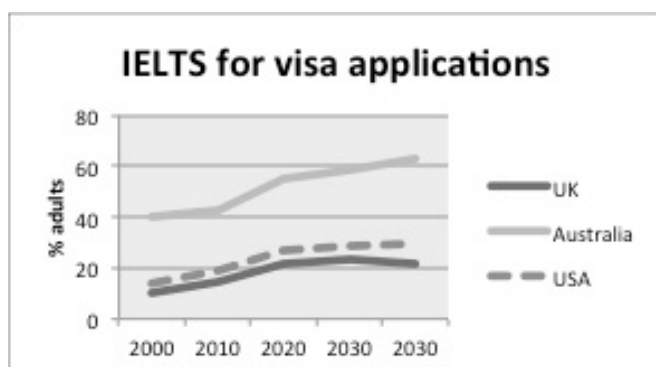
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Graph 4



Notes

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**Group A**

## Graph 1

- a gradual/steady + increase/rise
- a levelling off
- a plateau
- double

## Graph 3

- a dramatic/rapid/sharp/significant + decrease/drop/decline/fall
  - a jump/surge
  - a plummet/slump
  - a gradual/steady + increase/rise/fall/decrease
  - a levelling off
- 

**Group B**

## Graph 2

- a dramatic/rapid/sharp/significant + decrease/drop/decline/fall
- a plummet/slump
- a plateau
- a slight + recovery/increase/drop/decrease
- a dramatic/rapid/sharp/significant + increase/recovery
- a jump

## Graph 4

- a gradual/steady/slight/marginal + increase/rise

**IELTS writing task 1 – line graphs**  
by Mairi Joanne Anderson**Graph 1**

- increase/rise + gradually/steadily
- level off
- plateau
- remain steady
- double

**Graph 2**

- decrease/drop/decline/fall + dramatically/rapidly/sharply/significantly
- plummet/slump
- plateau
- recover/increase/drop/decrease + slightly marginally
- increase/recover + dramatically/rapidly/sharply/significantly
- jump

**Graph 3**

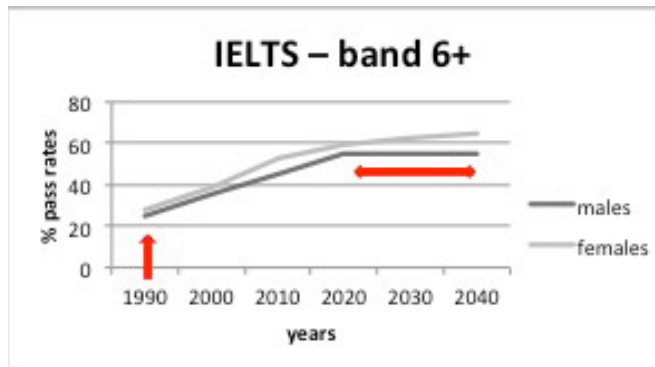
- decrease/drop/decline/fall + dramatically/rapidly/sharply/significantly
- jump/surge
- plummet/slump
- increase/rise/fall/decrease + gradually/steadily
- level off

**Graph 4**

- increase/rise + gradually/steadily/slightly/marginally

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Graph 1



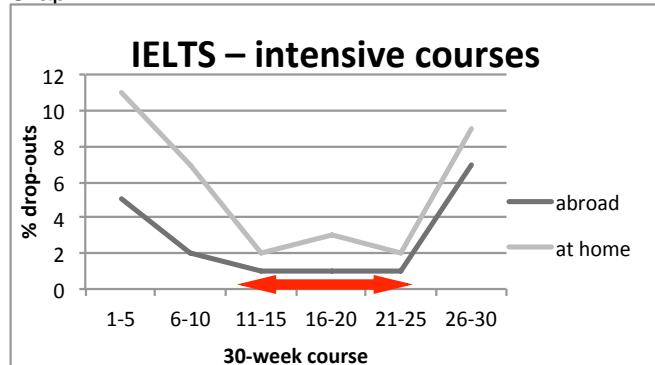
### Notes

Rates double between 1990 and 2020.

After 2020, they level off.

Females stay in the lead position throughout the period.

Graph 2



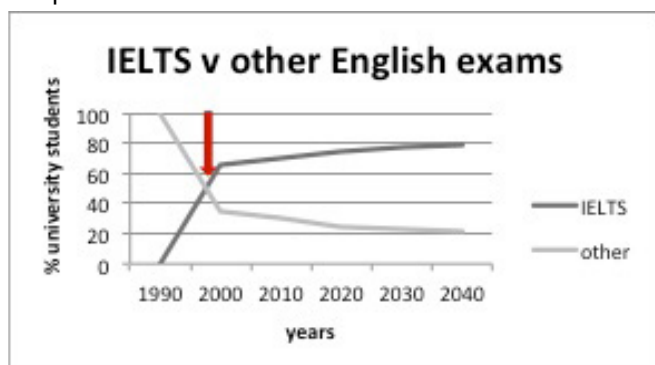
### Notes

There are more drop-outs at the beginning/end of the course.

There are more drop-outs at home than abroad.

The period with the fewest drop-outs is mid-course.

Graph 3

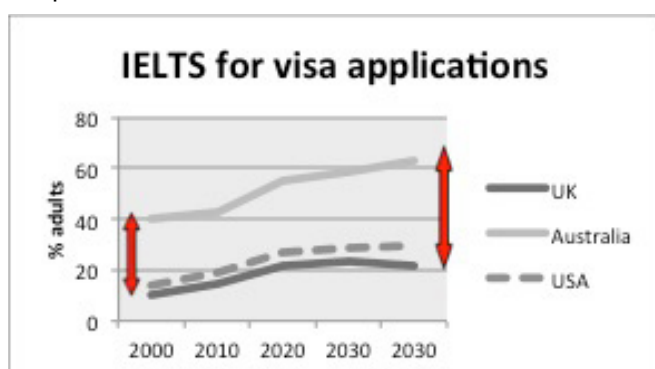


### Notes

The late nineties saw IELTS overtake other exams.

The increase in IELTS and decrease in other exams slowed down shortly after this date.

Graph 4



### Notes

Each country maintains its position but the gap between them gradually widens.