**Academic IELTS Task 1 – Useful Vocabulary for Graphs and Diagrams**

To get a high score in Task 1 writing of the academic IELTS you need to give accurate and strong description and analyses for the provided graph(s) or diagram. In this minimum 150 word essay it is easy to keep repeating words and numbers. However, this is not good to achieve a high score. In order to get a great band level on this section of the IELTS, you must use a variety of vocabulary that not only describes but also emphasizes the changes, similarities and differences in the data. You should review and practice the vocabulary below.

**Verbs**

These verbs are alternatives to the basic rise and fall vocabulary. One benefit of using them is that sometimes they help you avoid repeating too many numbers. If you have a strong verb, you don’t always have to give the exact figure.

**Up Verbs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Verbs** | **Example** |
| soar | the use of water soared in March |
| leap | the prices leapt to 90% in one year |
| Climb | populations climbed to over one million by 1980 |
| Rocket | use of cars rocketed in the first decade |
| Surge | a surge of migration is seen in November |

**Notes:**

* “Soar “and “rocket” are both very strong words that describe large rises. “Rocket” is more sudden. You probably do not need to qualify these verbs with adverbs.
* “Leap” shows a large and sudden rise. Again, you probably do not need to qualify it with an adverb.
* “Climb” is a relatively neutral verb that can be used with the adverbs below.

**Down verbs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Verbs** | **Example** |
| Sink | The cost of housing sunk after 2008 |
| Slip back | Use of electricity slipped back to 50 in May |
| Dip | Divorce rate dipped in the 60s |
| Drop | A drop in crime can be seen last year |
| Plummet | Tourists to the city plummets after September |

**Notes:**

* “Plummet” is the strongest word here. It means to fall very quickly and a long way.
* “Drop”  and “drop” are normally used for fairly small decreases
* “Slip back” is used for falls that come after rises
* “Drop” and “Dip” are also frequently used as nouns: “a slight dip” “a sudden drop”

**Adjectives and adverbs**

This is a selection of some of the most common adjectives and adverbs used for trend language. Please be careful. This is an area where it is possible to make low-level mistakes. Make sure that you use adjectives with nouns and adverbs with verbs:

* a significant rise – correct (adjective/noun)
* rose significant**ly** – correct (adverb/verb)
* a significantly rise – wrong

Please also note the **spelling** of the adverbs. There is a particular problem with the word “dramatically:

* dramatically – correct
* dramaticly – wrong
* dramaticaly – wrong

**Adjectives of Degree**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Example** | **Adverb** | **Example** |
| Significant | A significant change | Significantly | Changed significantly |
| Dramatic | A dramatic shift | Dramatically | Sifts dramatically |
| Sudden | A sudden rise | Suddenly | Has risen suddenly |
| Substantial | A substantial gain | Substantially | Gained substantially |
| Sharp | A sharp decrease | Sharply | Had decreased sharply |

**Notes:**

* “sudden” and “sharp” can be used for relatively minor changes that happen quickly
* “spectacular” and “dramatic” are very strong words only used for big changes

**Steady Adjectives**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Example** | **Adverb** | **Example** |
| Consistent | A consistent flow | Consistently | Flowed consistently |
| Steady | A steady movement | Steadily | Moved steadily |
| Constant | Constant shift | Constantly | Sifted constantly |

**Small adjectives**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Example** | **Adverb** | **Example** |
| Slight | A slight rise | Slightly | Rose slightly |
| Gradual | A gradual fall | Gradually | Has fallen gradually |
| Marginal | A marginal change | Marginally | Had changed marginally |
| Modest | A modest increase | Modestly | Increases modestly |

**Notes:**

* “marginal” is a particularly useful word for describing very small changes

**Other useful adjectives**

These adjectives can be used to describes more general trends

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Adjective** | **Example** |
| Upward | By looking at the five data points, there appears to be a clear upward pattern in prices |
| Downward | Over the past quarter century there is a downward trend in use of pesticides |
| Overall | The overall shift in the market seems to favour the use of nuclear power |

**Notes:**

* “overall” can be used to describe changes in trend over the whole period: very useful in introductions and conclusions
* “upward” and “downward” are adjectives: the adverbs are “upwards” and “downwards”