



Technical Descriptive Writing




Length & Timing

- You have to write at least 150 words. (maximum 200 words)
- You are advised to spend 20 minutes on this task.



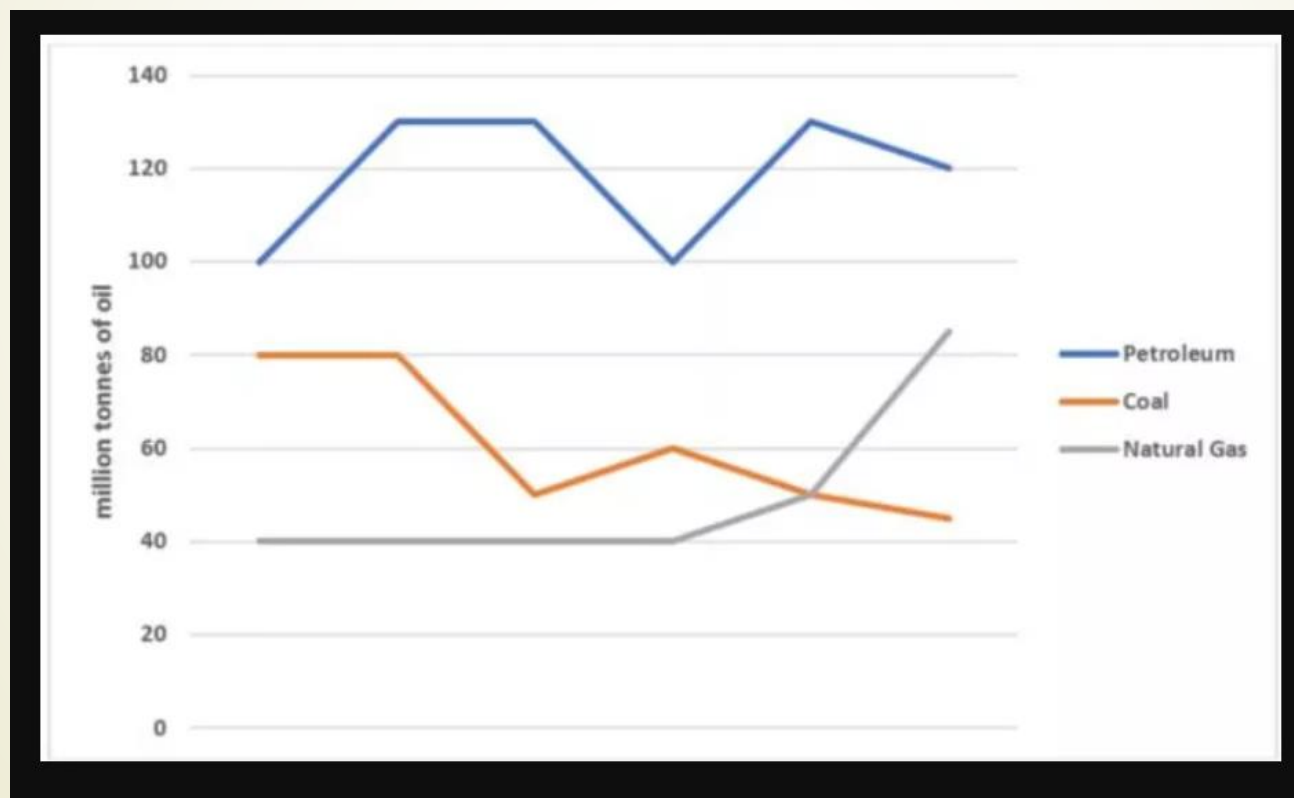
How to Describe a Graph in IELTS Writing Task? Follow the Seven Steps Process

- 
1. Analyse the question
 2. Identify the major features
 3. Remember the 4 paragraph structure
 4. Paraphrase the question sentence
 5. Write an Overview paragraph
 6. Write the Body paragraph 1
 7. Write the Body paragraph 2

Question:

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The graph below shows the production levels of main fuels in a European country from 1981 to 2000. Measured in tonnes. Write at least 150 words.





1. Analysing the Question

Find three major areas in the question sentence:

- ▶ **Topic Words / Keywords** (General area of the question topic)
- ▶ **Micro Keywords** (It helps us prepare a specific answer, rather than being general)
- ▶ **Action Words** (The words that tell you what you need to do)

For the Example Provided:

- **Topic Words:** production levels of main fuels
- **Micro Keywords:** Petroleum, Coal, and Natural Gas; (1981 - 2000)
- **Action Words:** Compare (Action words are the words that call for action. However, these words might not always be stated directly, in that case you need to understand what the examiner is expecting from you. For example, if there are more than one diagram or data set or graphical line as in this question, you can just go for comparing the major features).

2. Identifying the Major Features

- Petroleum kept fluctuating, but always remained highest.
- Coal declined gradually over the time.
- Natural Gas experienced a sharp rise after a long stagnant period.
- Only Natural Gas is rising at the end. The other two are falling.
- Units are measured in tonnes.

3.Remembering the Essay Structure

Complete your essay in Four paragraphs

- **1. Paraphrasing the Question Sentence**

- Paraphrase the question statement using just one or two sentences.

- **2. Overview Paragraph**

- Sentence 1: summary statement 1 (preview of the essay without presenting data)
- Sentence 2: summary statement 2 (more preview without presenting data)
- Sentence 3: outline sentence (State how the discussion will proceed.)

- **3. Body Paragraph 1**

- Sentence 1: first major point
- Sentence 2: second major point
- Sentence 3: extension sentence 1 (compare/combine the major points stated above)
- Sentence 4: extension sentence 2 (extension of the previous sentence, or adding an exceptional feature).

- **4. Body Paragraph 2**

- Sentence 1: exceptional feature
- Sentence 2: extension of the exceptional feature
- Sentence 3: final sentence (wrapping-up the whole essay, completely based on the discussion above, nothing new)

4. Paraphrasing the Question Sentence

- ▶ This paragraph is all about paraphrasing the question statement. That means you will restate the question sentence in your language without changing the meaning of the original sentence.

Original:

- ▶ "The graph below shows the production levels of main fuels in a European country from 1981 to 2000. Measured in tonnes."

Paraphrased:

- ▶ "The diagram illustrates the production levels of Petroleum, Coal and Natural Gas for a country over the period of 20 years, from 1981 to 2000. Units are measured in tonnes."



5. Overview Paragraph

- ▶ An Overview simply means a **summary of the main features** that you are going to discuss in the body paragraphs. **Don't use any data** in this paragraph, just state the **obvious feature** that you see in the diagrams. You are writing this paragraph just to convey a general idea about your essay to the readers.



For the Example Provided:

- **Sentence 1(Summary Statement 1)**

"Overall, instead of obvious fluctuation of production level, petroleum remained the highest level of fuel production in the whole period."

- **Sentence 2(Summary Statement 2)**

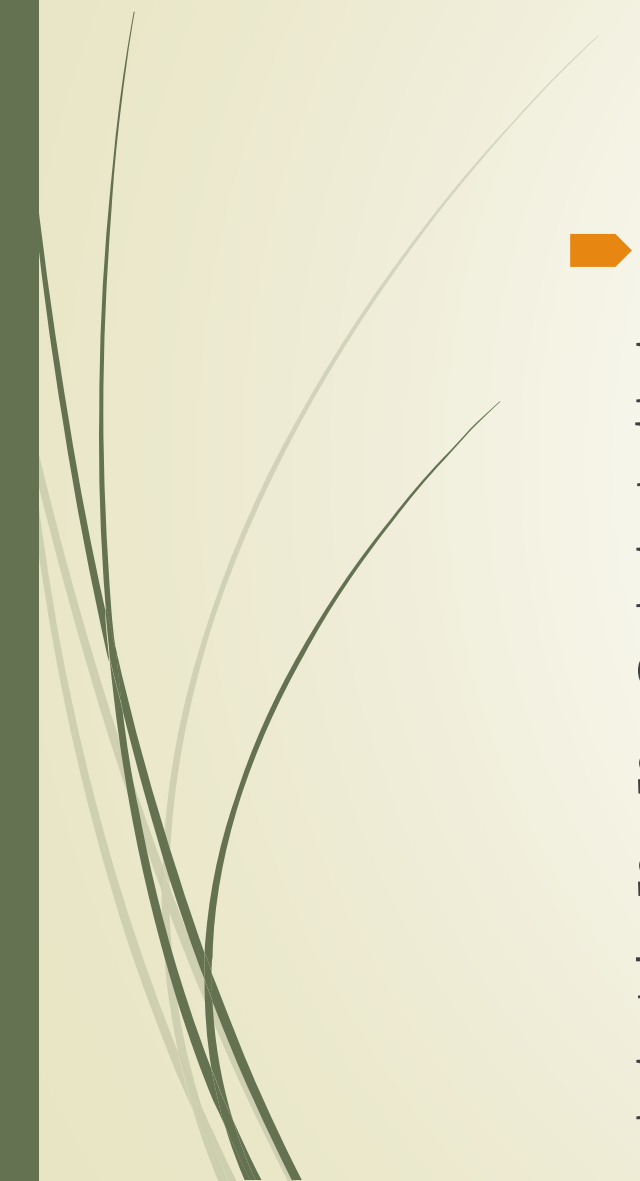
"However, Coal went through a steady decline over the time. Whereas, Natural Gas started rising sharp after quite a long period of stagnant level of production."

- **Sentence 3(Outline Sentence)**

"Significant features are discussed in the following paragraphs."



Complete Overview Paragraph

- 
- "Overall, instead of obvious fluctuation of production level, Petroleum remained the highest level of fuel production in the whole period. However, Coal went through a steady decline over the time. Whereas, Natural Gas started rising sharp after quite a long period of stagnant level of production. Significant features are discussed in the following paragraphs."

6. Body Paragraph 1

➤ Sentence 1(First Major Point)

"Though its production went through ups and downs, Petroleum was always the largest level of fuel production comparing the other two."

➤ Sentence 2(Second Major Point)

"Producing 80 million tonnes a year, Coal was the second major fuel production in 1981."

➤ Sentence 3(Extension Sentence 1)

"Though the production level of Petroleum always kept fluctuating between 100 and 120 million tonnes, Coal experienced a steady decline over the period."

➤ Sentence 4(Extension Sentence 2)

"Eventually in 2000, it ended up with producing the lowest level among the three major fuels."

Complete Body Paragraph 1

- "Though its production went through ups and downs, Petroleum was always the largest level of fuel production comparing the other two. Producing 80 million tonnes a year, Coal was the second major fuel production in 1981. Though the production level of Petroleum always kept fluctuating between 100 and 120 million tonnes, Coal experienced a steady decline over the period. Eventually in 2000, it ended up with producing the lowest level among the three major fuels."

7. Body Paragraph 2

➤ **Sentence 1(Exceptional Feature)**

"On the other hand, Natural Gas never experienced decline in this whole period, though it started 3rd in 1981 and passed a long stagnant production level."

➤ **Sentence 2(Extension of the Exceptional Feature)**

"Bisecting Coal at 50 million tonnes, Natural Gas started increasing sharp and remained the only rising fuel at the end of the period."

➤ **Sentence 3(Final Sentence)**

"Finally, instead of major fluctuations, Petroleum remained at the highest level of production, Coal experienced a steady decline and only Natural Gas was rising at the end of the period."

Complete Body Paragraph 2

- "On the other hand, Natural Gas never experienced decline in this whole period, though it started 3rd in 1981 and passed a long stagnant production level. Bisecting Coal at 50 million tonnes, Natural Gas started increasing sharp and remained the only rising fuel at the end of the period. Finally, instead of major fluctuations, Petroleum remained at the highest level of production, Coal experienced a steady decline and only Natural Gas was rising at the end of the period."

Complete Version

The diagram illustrates the production levels of Petroleum, Coal and Natural Gas for a country over the period of 20 years, from 1981 to 2000. Units are measured in tonnes.

Overall, instead of obvious fluctuation of production level, Petroleum remained the highest level of fuel production in the whole period. However, Coal went through a steady decline over the time. Whereas, Natural Gas started rising sharp after quite a long period of stagnant level of production. Significant features are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Though its production went through ups and downs, Petroleum was always the largest level of fuel production comparing the other two. Producing 80 million tonnes a year, Coal was the second major fuel production in 1981. Though the production level of Petroleum always kept fluctuating between 100 and 120 million tonnes, Coal experienced a steady decline over the period. Eventually in 2000, it ended up with producing the lowest level among the three major fuels.

On the other hand, Natural Gas never experienced decline in this whole period, though it started 3rd in 1981 and passed a long stagnant production level. Bisecting Coal at 50 million tonnes, Natural Gas started increasing sharp and remained the only rising fuel at the end of the period. Finally, instead of major fluctuations, Petroleum remained at the highest level of production, Coal experienced a steady decline and only Natural Gas was rising at the end of the period.

Don'ts

- ▶ Don't write about everything on the graph.
- ▶ Pick the biggest, the smallest, the main points, the main trends.
- ▶ Group similar things together
- ▶ Don't write about the line or the bar: "The line went up," "The bar went down." Instead, write about the idea. "The number of people going to work by train increased gradually." "Oil production shot up in 1965"
- ▶ Don't use "I feel", "as I have written," "as you can see," etc. Keep it academic.
- ▶ Don't start sentences with But, So, Also, And, For, Since, Because, Although

Describing Trends

Verbs to describe

rise
jump
grow
climb
go up
increase
rocket



Verbs to describe

fall
drop
decline
decrease
go down
plunge
plummet



Adverbs to describe... HOW?

sharply quickly
rapidly steeply

considerably
significantly
substantially

steadily
gradually
moderately

slightly
slowly



How to describe

stay
remain
maintain

+

constant
steady
stable



Word Order

SUBJECT

Sales
Prices
Production
The percentage of x
The number of x

VERB

What happened?

fell
dropped
rose
decreased
increased

ADVERB

How did it change?

slightly
sharply
steadily
significantly
dramatically

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Remember: the verb is often in the past tense but always check this.

THERE + BE + A

There is a
There was a
There has been a
There will be a

ADJECTIVE

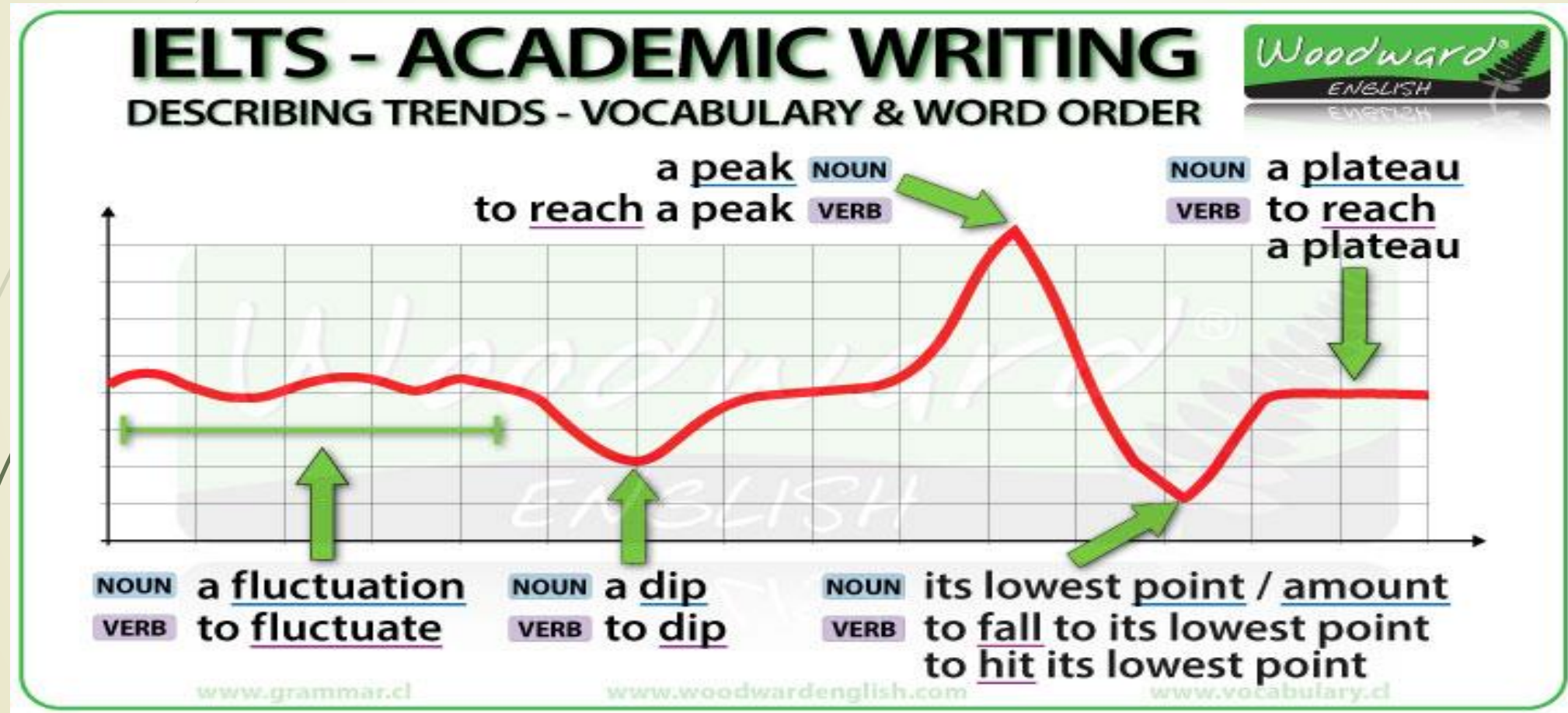
slight
gradual
dramatic
steady

NOUN

rise
fall
drop
decline

in sales ...
in the price of x
in the rate ...
in the number ...

Describing Trends



Verb to show downward trend

decline	to become less, worse, or lower in value	<i>Milk production could decline by 15% or more in the late summer months.</i>
decrease	to become less, or to make something become less	<i>The country's total exports decreased by 6% in 2009.</i>
collapse	to suddenly fall to a much lower level	<i>prices/shares collapse Share prices collapsed after news of poor trading</i>
fall	to become lower in size, amount, or strength	<i>Salaries in the public sector are expected to fall by 15 percent this year.</i>
plummet	to go down in amount or value very quickly and suddenly	<i>plummet (by) sth First-half advertising revenues plummeted 13%, compared with the same period a year ago.</i>
plunge	to go down in amount or value very quickly and suddenly	<i>prices plunged \$16.74, or 44%, to \$20.51 a share.</i>

Verb to show downward trend

slip	to become worse, lower, or less in value	<i>February crude oil slipped 1¢ to \$18.96 a barrel.</i>
dip	to go down to a lower level, often by a small amount or for a short time	<i>House prices are likely to dip in the first three months of the year.</i>
slump	to fall suddenly in price, amount, or value	<i>Home computer sales slumped dramatically last year.</i>
tumble	to fall a lot in value in a short time	<i>Share prices tumbled yesterday.</i>
deplete	to reduce something in size or amount, especially supplies of energy, money, etc.	<i>If we continue to deplete the earth's natural resources, we will cause serious damage to the environment.</i>
diminish	to reduce or be reduced in size, importance, or value	<i>Over a period of several years, these securities diminished in value and the corporation went bankrupt.</i>

Common Upward Trend Verbs

rocket	to rise extremely quickly	Stock prices rocketed to their highest level yesterday.
Surge	to increase suddenly and strongly	Shares surged to a record high.
Soar	to increase quickly in amount, number, value, or level	House prices soared a further 20 per cent.
leap	to increase, improve, or grow very quickly	Shares in the company leapt 250 per cent.
Boom	to increase or become successful and produce a lot of money very quickly	The housing market is booming .
Bounce	to suddenly increase, often after falling to its lowest level	The Group's shares bounced 20%
Expand	to increase in size, number, or importance	Most noteworthy, we live in an expanding universe.
Escalate	to rise or to make something rise	As prices escalated , fewer people could afford a mortgage on a house.
Ascend	to move up or climb something	Finally, they slowly ascended the steep path up the mountain.

Common Upward Trend Nouns

Growth	an increase in size, amount, degree, level, etc.	<i>The growth in the money supply was faster than expected.</i>
Increase	a rise in the amount or size of something	<i>There were 39,000 new cases last year – an increase of six percent.</i>
rise	an increase	<i>a 5 percent rise in inflation</i>
Acceleration	an increase in the speed or rate of something	<i>There has been a rapid acceleration in the rate of growth of new orders.</i>
Development	the process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced	<i>Ever since was formed in 1968, the company has been at the forefront of computer development.</i>
Expansion	the increase of something in size, number, or importance	<i>the rapid expansion of the software industry</i>
gain	an increase in something such as size, weight, or amount	<i>After deducting costs, we still made a net gain of £5,000.</i>
Ascent	the act of climbing or moving upwards	<i>She made her first successful ascent of Everest last year.</i>
Jump	a sudden increase	<i>Interest rates are now at 6.75 – that's a jump of almost 2 percent.</i>

Adverbs

rapidly	very quickly; at a great rate	<i>a rapidly growing economy</i>
quickly	at a fast speed	<i>The plane climbed quickly to a height of 30,000 feet.</i>
swiftly	quickly; after a very short time	<i>The sales increased swiftly.</i>
suddenly	quickly and unexpectedly	<i>The prices fell suddenly.</i>
steadily	gradually and in an even and regular way	<i>The company's exports have been increasing steadily.</i>
gradually	slowly over a period of time or a distance	<i>The sales were declining gradually.</i>
slowly	at a slow speed	<i>The sales increased slowly.</i>
sharply	in a way that is sudden and very noticeable	<i>Dealer sales fell sharply in August.</i>
moderately	to an average extent; fairly but not very	<i>a moderately successful career/ She only</i>
scarcely	only just; almost not	<i>I was scarcely able to move my arm after the accident.</i>
marginally	Slightly	<i>marginally more expensive</i>

Words and Phrases Describing Stability

Maintain	to make something continue in the same way or at the same level	<i>We have been able to maintain prices for our customers at their current level.</i>
Remain	to stay in the same place or in the same condition	<i>Most commentators expect the basic rate of tax to remain at 25 percent.</i>
level off	If a rate or amount levels off, it stops rising or falling and stays at the same level	<i>House prices now seem to be levelling off after the steep rises of the last few years.</i>
flatten out/ off	to stop rising or falling, and stay at the same level	<i>A fall in house prices is unlikely; prices are more likely to flatten off.</i>
Stagnate	to stay the same and not grow or develop	<i>Their economy was stagnating, while Japan and Asia's "tiger economies" were booming.</i>
Stabilize	to cause something to become fixed and stop changing	<i>In China, the policy of one child per family was introduced to stabilize the country's population at 1.6 billion.</i>
keep constant	to keep something the same	<i>Unlike density-dependent limiting factors, density-independent limiting factors alone can't keep a population at constant levels.</i>

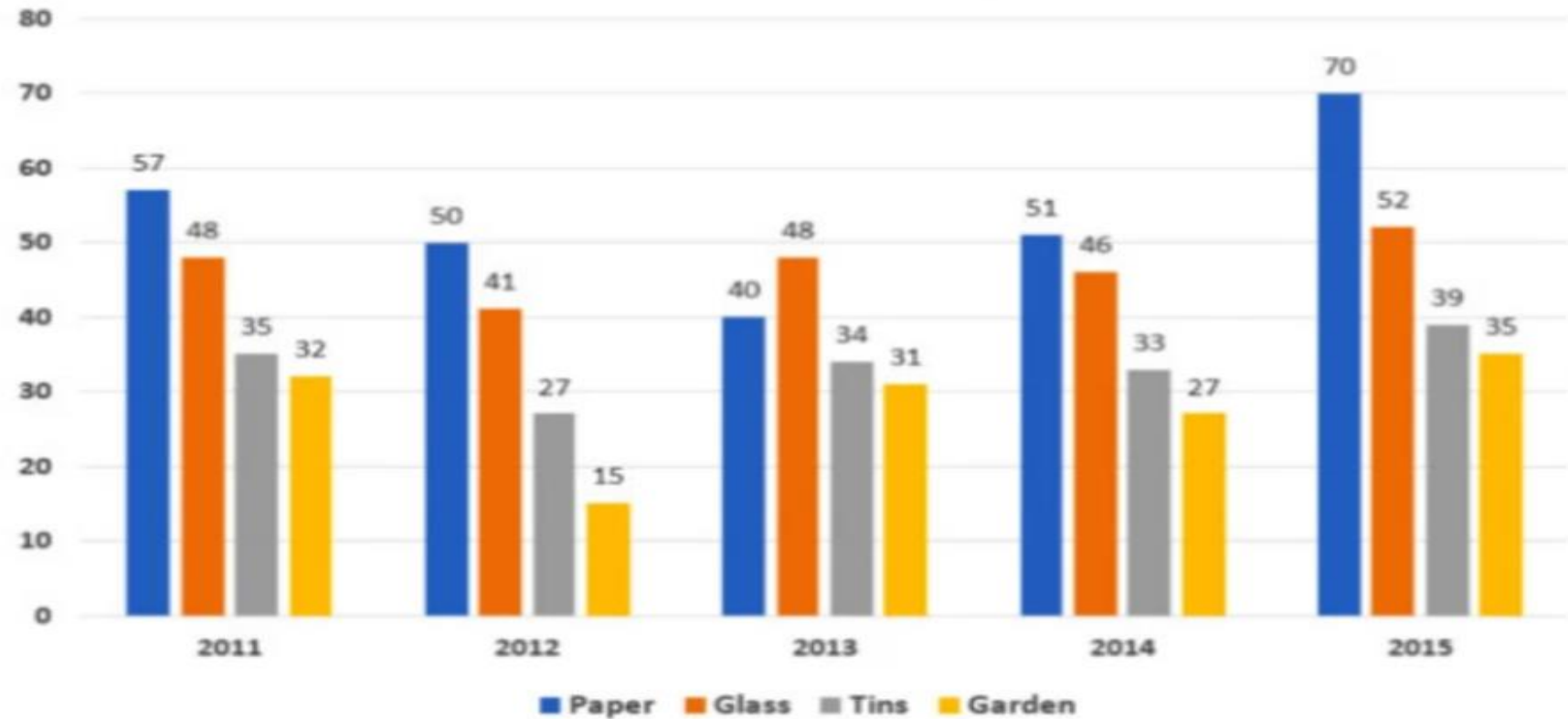
Verbs and Nouns Describing Fluctuation

fluctuate (fluctuate around)	to change, especially continuously and between one level or thing and another	<i>Her wages fluctuate between £150 and £200 a week.</i>
Vary	to change in amount or level or make a change in amount or level	<i>vary between sth and sth Prices vary between \$65 and \$160.</i>
fluctuation	a situation in which prices, levels or interest rates go up and down	<i>Employers can adjust their workforce in line with fluctuations in demand for goods and services.</i>
variation	a change in amount or level	<i>The medical tests showed some variation in the baby's heart rate.</i>

The chart below shows waste collection by a recycling centre from 2011 to 2015.

Write at least 150 words.

Waste collected by a recycling centre (tons of waste)



Sample answer

The diagram illustrates different categories of waste collected by a recycling centre over the period of five years in a row, from 2011 to 2015 inclusive. Unites are measured in tons.

Overall, throughout the whole period except 2013, paper was the leading amount of waste followed by glass, tins and gardens respectively. However, apart from 2015, total amount of waste from all the four categories was mostly stable over the period. Significant features are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Throughout the whole period, the proportional amount of waste collected from all the four categories remained same. Followed by Glass, Tins and Gardens respectively, Paper was almost always the leading amount of waste collected by the centre. However in 2013, Glass led the tally followed by Paper and Tins. Meanwhile, the level of Tins and Garden waste demonstrated neck and neck over the time, though the Garden waste always remained below.

However, the total amount of waste collection followed a different trend. In 2015, the centre collected total 196 tons of waste, which is the highest amount of total waste collected in one year, followed by 2011 and 2014. Finally, Paper was the leading amount of waste over the time, and 2015 was the highest amount of waste collected by the centre in a year.

Table Chart

	Types of advertising (millions of dollars)				
	Press	Cinema	Outdoor	Radio	TV
Renault	45	6	7	15	59
Rover	38	0	2	15	45
Vauxhall	8	5	7	15	65
Cetirizine	12	0	3	15	70

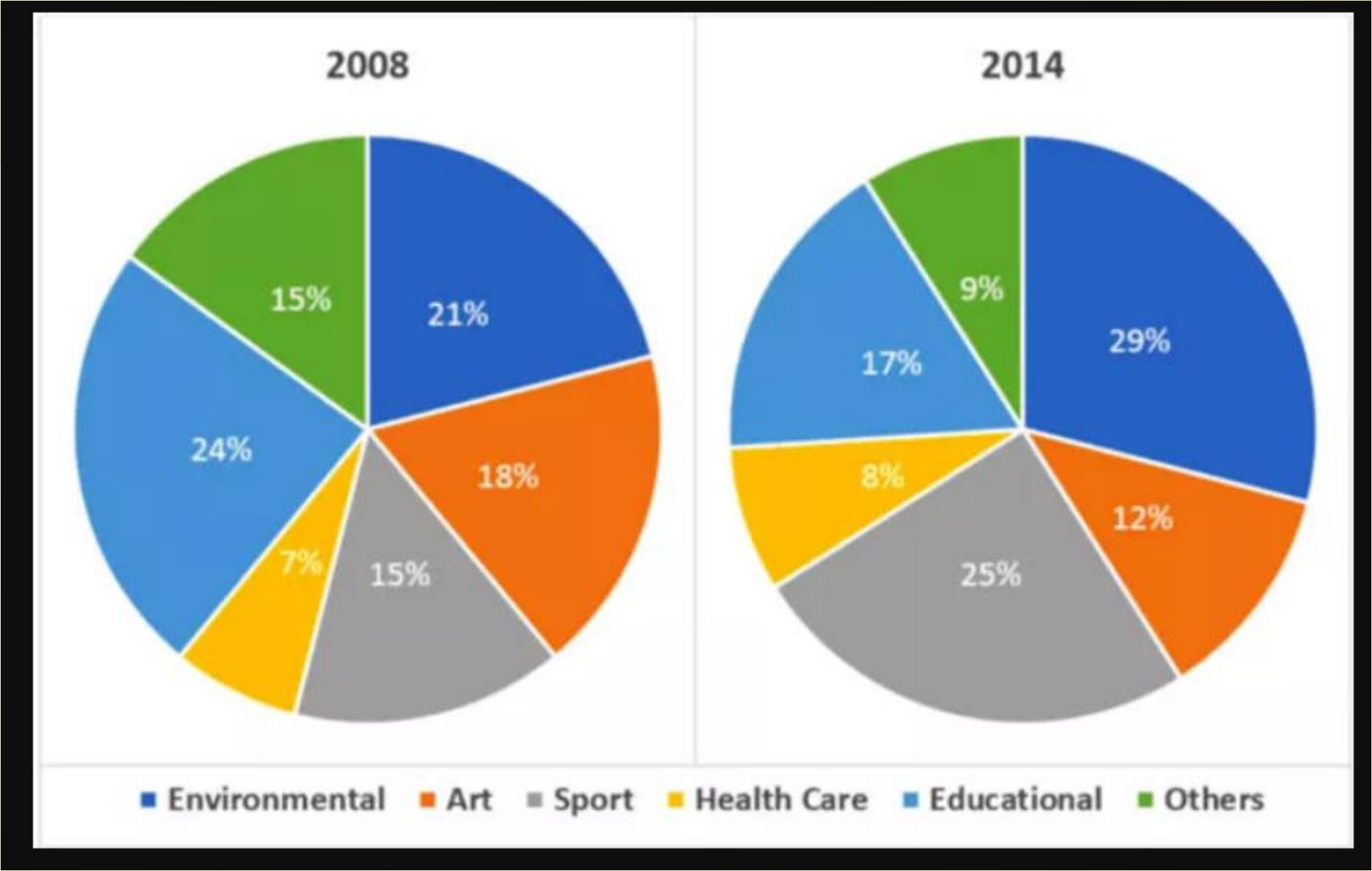
Sample Answer

The data table illustrates how many millions of dollars each of the four car companies spent for advertisement in the United Kingdom in 2002.

Overall, Renault was the leading spender on advertisement and TV attracted the highest expenses. Though the companies varied in their expenses on Press, Cinema and Outdoor advertisements, each of them spent exactly the same amount of money on radio promotion. Major features are explained in the following paragraphs.

Renault led the promotional expense tally spending total 132 million dollars, whereas the other 3 companies spent equally 100 million dollars each. However, attracting total 239 million dollars, TV received the highest advertisement expenses from all the four companies. In terms of advertisement types and advertising companies, TV was followed by Press and Renault was followed by Vauxhall respectively. Meanwhile, all the four companies spent equally 15 million dollars each for radio promotion.

On the other hand, Cetirizine spent the highest 70 million dollars on TV promotions, followed by Vauxhall. However, Outdoor and Cinema always received the least amount of promotional expenses. Finally, TV grabbed the highest share of advertising expenditure from all the four companies, and Renault was the leading spender in advertisement purpose.



Sample Answer

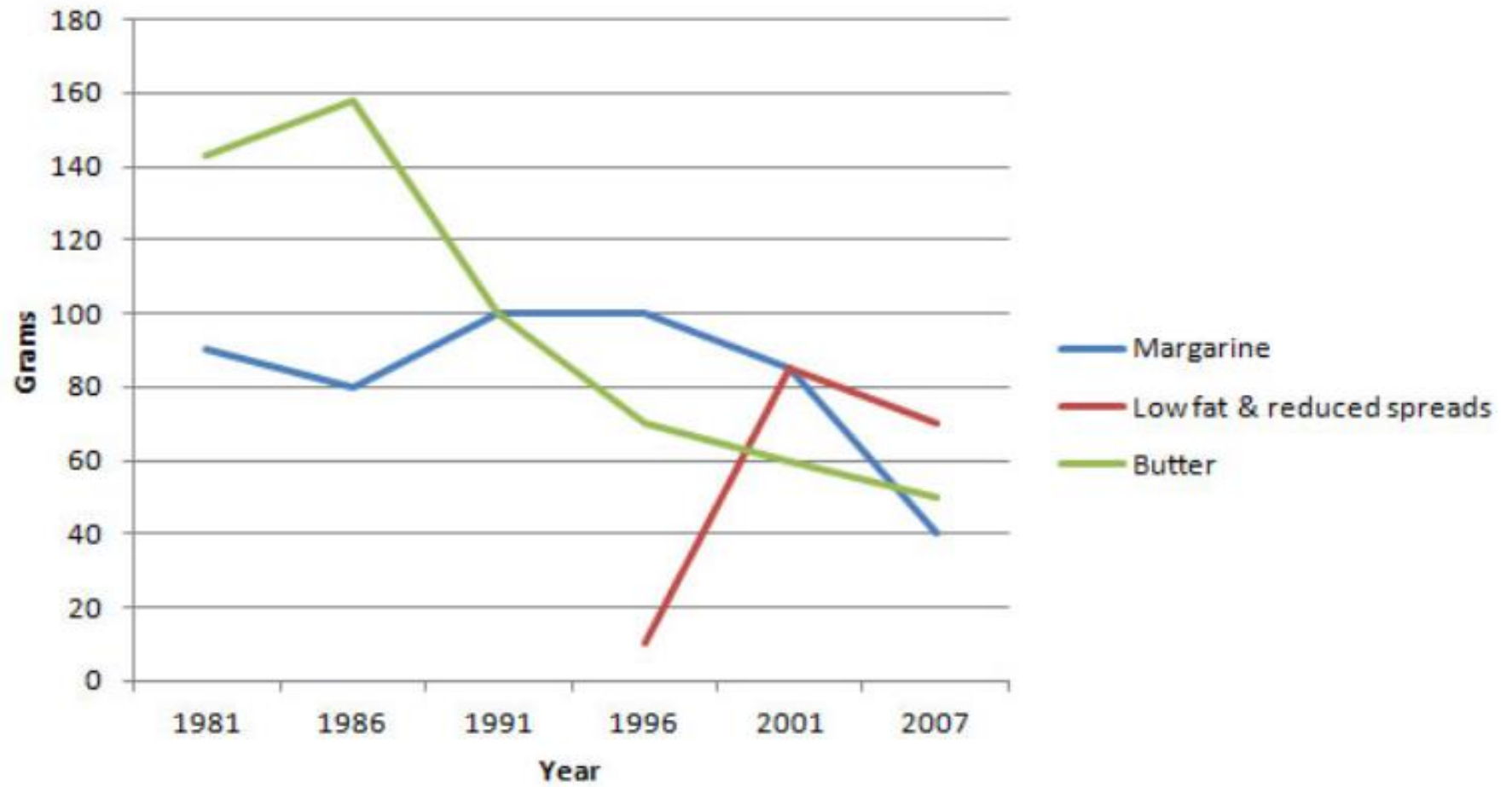
The diagrams illustrate the rate of volunteer participation from different organisations for the periods 2008 and 2014.


Overall, out of the total 6 participating organizations, the percentage rate of volunteers from 3 organizations increased. Though Sport experienced the most significant change, Educational and Environmental organisations contributed the highest percentage of volunteers in 2008 and 2014 respectively. Major changes are explained below.

With 24% of total volunteer participation, Educational organization is the largest contributor of volunteers in 2008, followed by Environmental and Art. However in 2014, the highest 29% volunteers came from Environmental organisation. Educational organisation has gone through a moderate decline from 24% in 2008 to 17% in 2014, whereas Environmental organisation experienced an increase from 21% to 29% over the same period. Meanwhile, Health Care was the lowest contributor in both the periods.

On the other hand, only Sport's contribution increased significantly from 15% in 2008 to 25% in 2014, while all others went through a moderate rise or fall. Moreover, the rate of volunteer participation only from Health Care, Environmental and Sport increased, whereas all the other three declined over the same period. Finally, Educational and Environmental organisations were the highest contributors in 2008 and 2014 respectively, whereas Health Care remained the least contributor in both the periods.

Consumption of Spreads





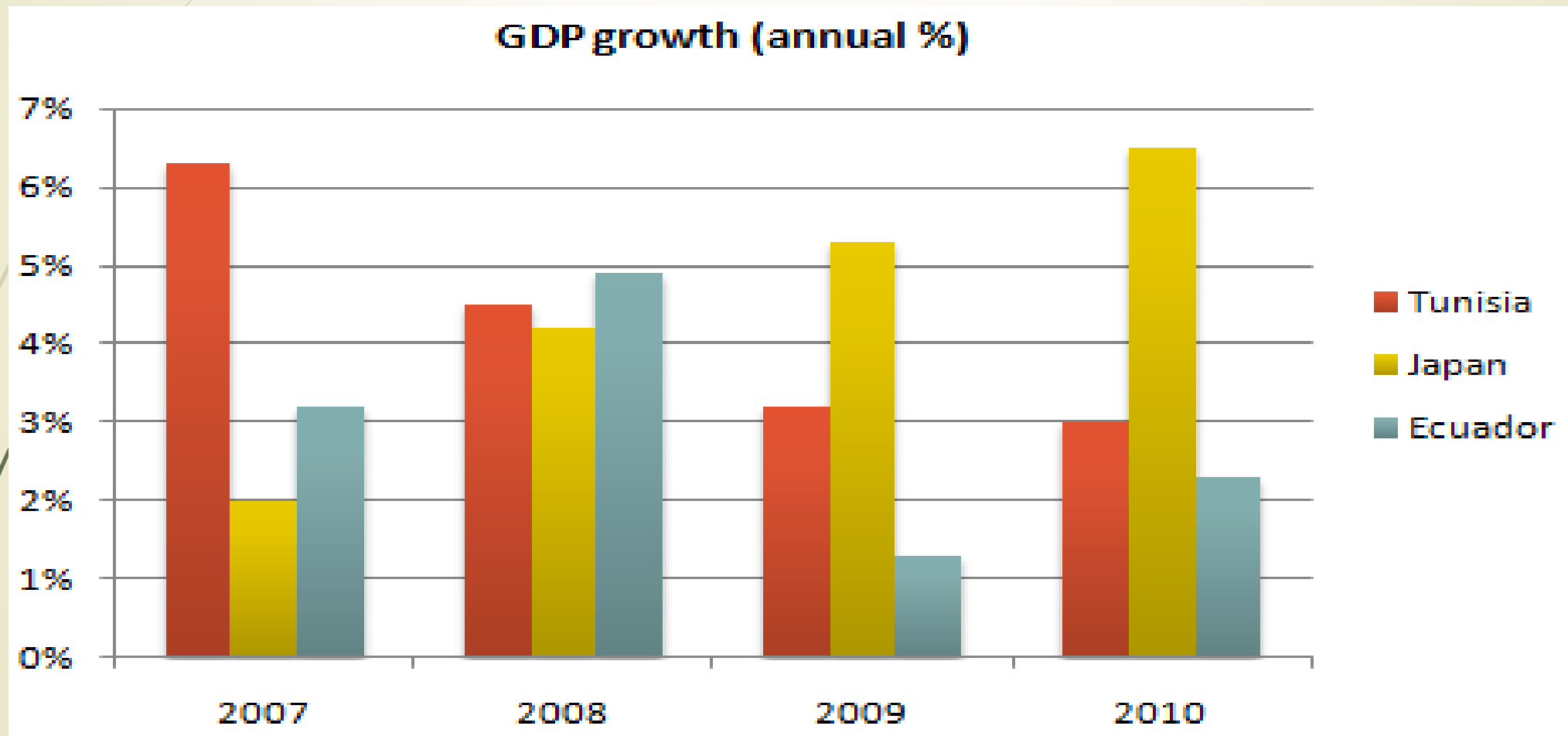
The line graph illustrates the amount of three kinds of spreads (margarine, low fat and reduced spreads and butter) which were consumed over 26 years from 1981 to 2007. Units are measured in grams.

Overall, the consumption of margarine and butter decreased over the period given, while for low fat and reduced spreads, it rose. At the start of the period, butter was the most popular spread, which was replaced by margarine from 1991 to 2001, and following that low fat and reduced spreads became the most widely used spread in the final years.

With regards to the amount of butter used, it began at around 140 grams and then peaked at 160 grams in 1986 before falling dramatically to about 50 grams in the last year. Likewise, approximately 90 grams of margarine was eaten in the first year after which the figure fluctuated slightly and dropped to a low of 40 grams in 2007.

On the other hand, the consumption of low fats and reduced spreads only started in 1996 at about 10 grams. This figure, which reached a high of just over 80 grams 5 years later, fell slightly in the final years to approximately 70 grams in 2007.

Bar Chart for Practice



Line Graph for Practice

