How to Describe Graphic Information

Why graphic information description?

In L3, you will be asked to analyze and describe graphic information that may be presented as a line graph, bar graph, pie chart, table or diagram. Knowing how to read and interpret data is a key skill you will use in your future professional lives.

What is a graph?

A graph is a visual representation of data which explains the relationship between two or more variables and enables us to summarize and compare data. When describing a graph, it is important to interpret the data (i.e. understand the ways the data is displayed), identify the overall trend(s), make comparisons if appropriate and make general objective comments.

There are four main types of graphs: bar graph/chart, line graph, pie chart and diagram (see the appendix for examples).

When?

In class, you will study and practice graph description writing methodology. The rubric in this handout will be used to grade your in-class TD and the graph description on your DE. You will have one hour for your in-class graph description which will take place in **lesson 11**. On the DE, which will last two hours, you will read three texts, answer comprehension questions, and plan/write your graph description based on the graph(s) provided. Be careful, this means that you may be asked to write a description of one or more (complex) graphs. Make sure you leave yourself time to reread your work.

To write a successful graph description, follow these steps:

1) Read the title and labels on the graph(s).
2) Analyze the information/data and identify the overall trend(s).
3) Plan your body paragraphs (one for each trend) and draft a topic sentence for each paragraph.
4) Make comparisons where necessary (e.g. if you are presented with a double line graph, if there are two opposing trends etc.).
5) Write your introduction and body paragraphs following the guidelines. Ensure you use the **appropriate language** (verbs of movements, transitive and intransitive verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions). You might need to review tenses, linking words (particularly of addition, contrast, reason and result) and other useful phrases to help you describe the graph correctly (e.g. referring to visuals, figures and numbers, approximate figures etc.).
6) Restate the main trends using different words and write a conclusion.
7) Proofread! (check the tenses, prepositions, noun and verb phrases, is the structure clear?, is the information accurate and detailed enough?

How to Structure a Graph Description

A graph description should not be longer than one page and should contain three to five concise paragraphs with information given in the following order (the following examples pertain to a line graph):

A. The Introductory Paragraph

Two to three standard sentences should be used to introduce the description. These opening sentences will make up the first paragraph.

Sentence one should define what the graph is about and what is being depicted. Carefully read the title, labels, units measured, any captions, key, and a source (if provided).

For example:

The graph shows the amount of X released into the atmosphere by company Y between the years 2011 and 2021…

➢ Pay attention to the tense used. Even though the graph may describe information from the past, it may also show the information in the present time.

Sentence two (three sentences in all may be necessary) should identify the overall trend(s) or/and general patterns.

For example:

It can be clearly seen that the amount of X released into the atmosphere increased steadily from 500 parts per million (ppm) a year in 2011 to over 20,000 ppm in 2021.

➢ Pay attention to the tense used. In this sentence we are discussing the release of X in the past.

B. The Main Body Paragraphs

These paragraphs describe the graph in detail. It is important to think about the clearest and most logical order for presenting the information. Line graphs generally display information in chronological order and so the most logical order in which to present the information is from the earliest to the latest. However, bar graphs, pie charts, or diagrams are organized in different ways and so you need to decide the organization depending on how to best convey the information in the graphic.

Regardless of the organization, each paragraph must begin with a topic sentence (i.e. a sentence that summarizes the main idea of a paragraph) and should describe only one trend or pattern. Ensure that you use appropriate language. Do not forget to provide evidence from the graph to support the identified trend(s).

Use a separate paragraph to describe any anomalies or differences. Again, provide evidence to support your claims.

C. The Concluding Paragraph

Your description should conclude with one paragraph that summarizes your report to draw a relevant conclusion. To do this, rephrase the main trend(s) and information in general

terms. Use generic comparative language such as 'the majority', 'least' etc. rather than specific figures. To finish, you may provide a general objective recommendation for further action (e.g. 'Based on this data', …).

For example: *In conclusion, the graph reveals that company Y's release of X into the atmosphere has increased with little interruption during the years between 2011 and 2021.*

Key Take-Aways

➢ Study the graph carefully and make sure you read all the information provided.
➢ Always draw an outline before you start writing.
➢ The number of paragraphs depends on the number of trends or main ideas in the graph.
➢ It is essential to support your trend(s) with evidence from the graph.
➢ Your graph description must be a cohesive text organised in clear paragraphs, numbered lists and bullet points should be avoided.
➢ It is essential to learn and effectively employ the appropriate language.

Good luck!

Sources:
https://www.lc.cityu.edu.hk/ELSS/Resource/Graph%20Description%20Essay/
http://www.transint.boun.edu.tr/toefl/belgeler/tips.pdf
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/Pages/interpreting-graphs.aspx

Grading

Your instructor will grade your graph description according to the grid below. Please note, half points can be awarded.
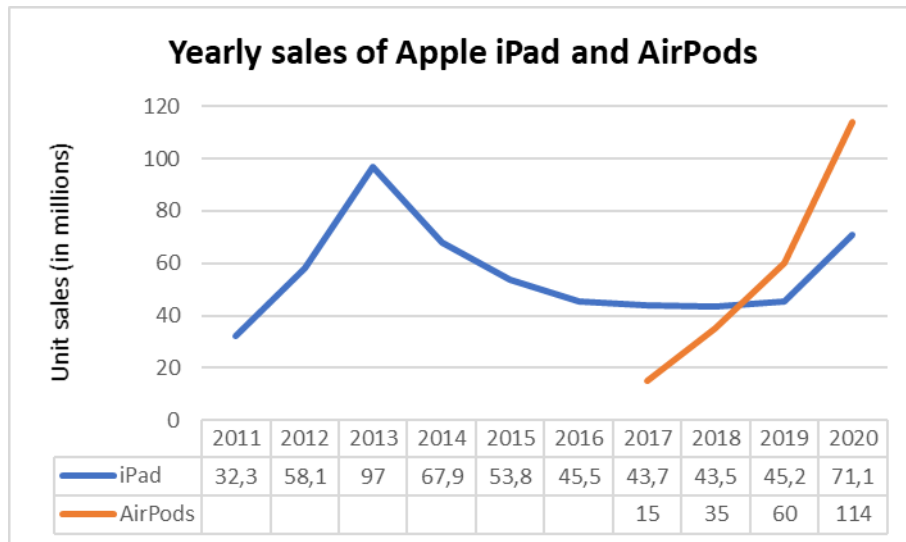
Structure (3 points)	Content (7 points)	Language (10 points)
☐ *Uses correct overall structure (Introduction, body, conclusion) 1pt.* ☐ *Information is presented in a clear and logical way 1pt.* ☐ *Provides clear, cohesive paragraphs with topic sentences 1pt.*	☐ *Graph definition and summary of trend conform to graphic 1pt.* ☐ *Provides sufficient detail 1pt.* ☐ *Uses evidence from the graph(s) to support the identified trend(s) 2pts.* ☐ *Describes anomalies or/and differences where necessary 1pt.* ☐ *Compares the data across two or more graphs 1pt.* ☐ *Provides general conclusion 1pt.*	☐ *Grammar (suitable tenses etc.) 3pts.* ☐ *Syntax. (linking words, sentence structure etc.) 2pts.* ☐ *Vocabulary (verbs of movement, figures, adverbs, adjectives, vocabulary appropriate to data etc.) 4pts.* ☐ *Punctuation 1pt.*
_____/3	_____/7	_____/10
Corrector's Comments:	**Corrector's Comments:**	**Corrector's Comments:**

TOTAL: /20

Appendix
Types of graphs

A) Line graph (double line graph)

Yearly sales of Apple iPad and AirPods

Unit sales (in millions)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
iPad	32,3	58,1	97	67,9	53,8	45,5	43,7	43,5	45,2	71,1
AirPods							15	35	60	114

B) Bar chart

Yearly Sales of Apple iPad and AirPods

Unit sales (in millions)

2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

■ iPad ■ Airpods

C) Pie chart

iPad

6% 2011
10% 2012
17% 2013
12% 2014
10% 2015
8% 2016
8% 2017
8% 2018
8% 2019
13% 2020

Legend: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

Airpods
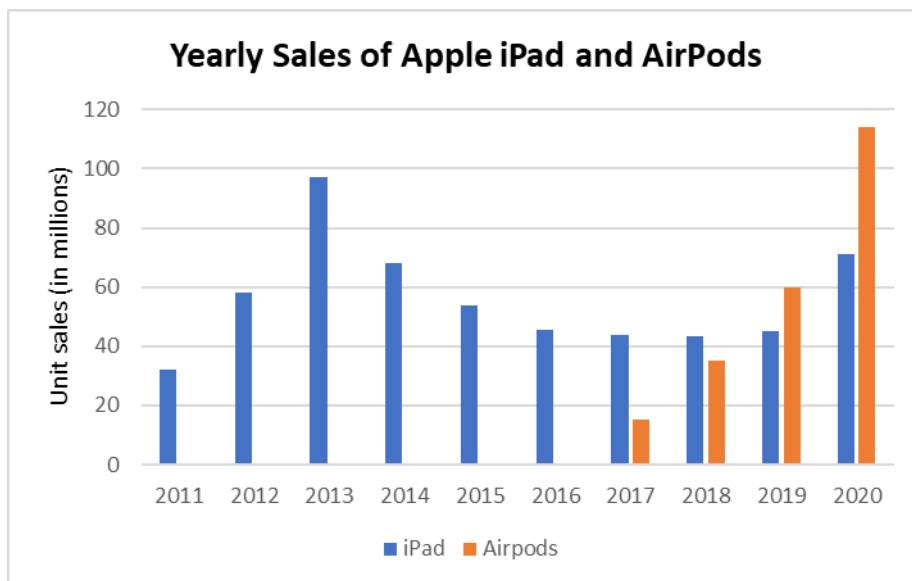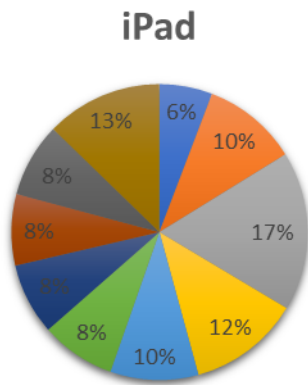
7% 2017
15% 2018
27% 2019
51% 2020
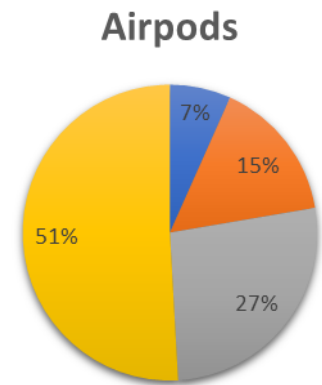
Legend: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

D) Diagram

AirPods Pro Firmware: A Timeline

Strong noise cancellation, positive media reviews based on this firmware

Launch Firmware
2B584
Released October 30th 2019

Two weeks after launch, noise cancellation weakened with THIS update

Current Firmware as of April 9th 2020
2B588
Originally Released November 14th 2019

Noise cancellation remains weakened, sound profile adjusted

Unavailable as of January 2020
2C54
Released December 16th 2019

2C54 is recalled and the previous 2B588 firmware becomes the 'latest' version. Degraded noise cancellation quality remains an issue for ALL users as of April 2020 as the issue started with 2B588. AirPods that updated to 2C54 can not be downgraded.

Source : https://tidbits.com/2020/05/04/airpods-pro-firmware-problems/