

## Exam skills 3: Improving your writing style

### Tip

A good way to increase your level further when writing Task 1 answers is to list/rank and compare in the same sentence.

### 1 Read these sentences and draw two simple bar charts to represent the information. Compare with a partner.

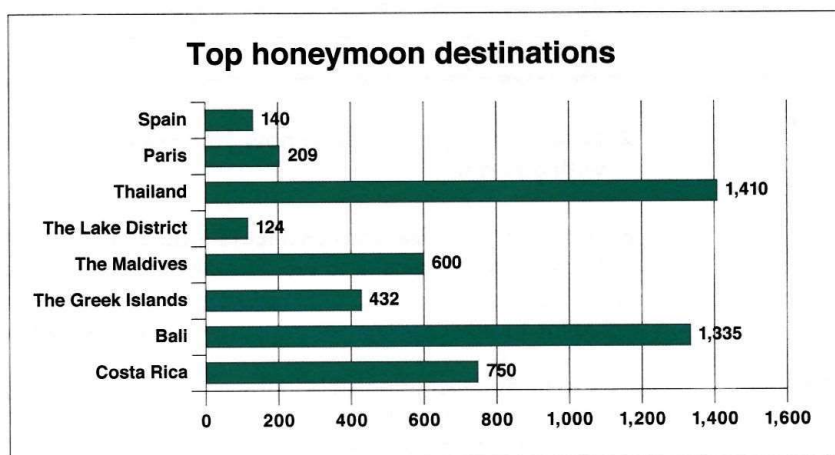
- 1 Playing a team sport was next on the list at 54%, **making it slightly more popular than** listening to music at 53%.
- 2 Team sports were the second most popular activity at 54%, **just ahead of** listening to music at 53%.
- 3 Shopping came next at 10%, **although this was much less popular than** socializing, at 20%.
- 4 Socializing was next at 20%, **which was twice as popular as** shopping, with 10%.
- 5 Fifty-four per cent of people said they played a team sport in December, **slightly more than** the number who listened to music, with 53%.
- 6 Second on the list were team sports at 54%, **while** listening to music was slightly less popular at 53%.

### 2 Study the sentences in Exercise 1 and choose the three pieces of language in blue you like the most. Tell a partner the reasons for your choices.

Example: I like number 2 because I think it is not too difficult to learn.

### 3 Look at this bar chart. Which of the destinations would you most like to visit? Why?

This chart shows the top eight honeymoon destinations for newlywed British couples in 2010. The results come from a survey of 5,000 couples.



### 4 Using the language you studied in Exercise 2, add a clause to these sentence starters to compare the data in the chart in Exercise 3.

- 1 Thailand was the number-one destination, with 1,410 couples choosing this, just ahead of ...
- 2 Bali was second on the list, with 1,335 couples spending their honeymoon there, making it ...
- 3 Costa Rica was the third most popular destination for honeymooners at 750, although this was ...
- 4 The Maldives came next, with 600, while the Greek Islands ...

### 5 Write three more sentences about the chart with your own ideas. Compare your answer with a partner.

### 6 Try and write a complete Task 1 answer for the chart.

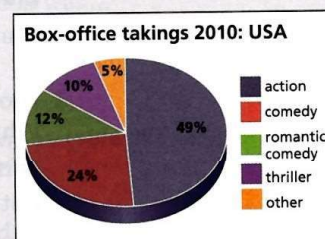
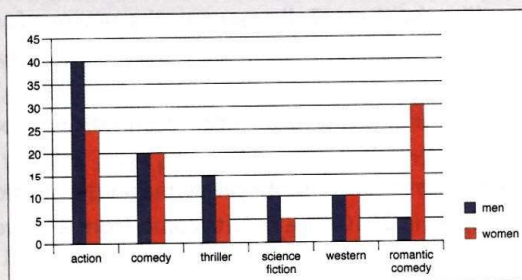
## Next steps 1: Dealing with more than one graph

Often in Task 1, you will need to write about the information presented in two or even three charts. This could be two bar charts, a line graph and a table, a pie chart and a bar chart or any other combination.

### 1 Look at the Task 1 question below and think about these questions.

- 1 What would you write in the introduction?
- 2 What information would you include in the overview?
- 3 How would you organize the rest of your answer?
- 4 Would you have time to write about everything in detail?

**The charts below show the most popular films by genre for men and women and general ticket sales for different types of film in the USA in 2010. Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.**



### 2 Write a basic plan to show how you would write your answer. Compare notes with a partner.

### 3 Look at the advice from two IELTS students in this table. Tick the advice you think is more logical and would make it easier to write a clear answer.

	student 1's advice	student 2's advice
<b>introduction</b>	Try to be as clever as possible in the introduction to impress the examiner. Something like <i>Both these charts provide different information about the film industry in America, including popular films and ...</i>	Keep it clear and simple. Write something like <i>The bar graph shows the most popular films ...</i> and then use a linker and explain the second graph clearly: <i>... while the pie chart illustrates how much money ...</i>
<b>overview</b>	Write about as many parts of the graph as possible. I start by writing about the first thing I see, e.g. the action films, then write about comedy next, etc., but you have to write really quickly!	Study both graphs carefully first and then pick out a total of two or three pieces of key information to write about, e.g. <i>The most popular type of film was ...</i> These act as a useful summary of the charts.
<b>writing about the details</b>	Write about both charts together in one paragraph. This way, you can compare the information as you write, and it looks much more impressive.	Write two separate paragraphs. Start by writing about the first chart, then write another paragraph about the second chart. You can include comparisons in the second paragraph.

### 4 Which student do you think wrote the clearest answer? Why?

### 5 Try writing an answer for the Task 1 question in Exercise 1.



## Next steps 2: Developing your range of language and vocabulary

Studying texts which may not be directly related to the IELTS exam is an excellent way to increase your range and level of vocabulary. Paying attention to useful phrases, collocations and chunks of language will help in both Task 1 and 2, but also as you continue to develop your command of English in the future.

- 1 This newspaper article contains useful vocabulary for giving your writing more range and variety, particularly in Task 1. Read it and pick out some useful language.

### Fears increase among environmentalists as car travel experiences another boom

Latest transport statistics reveal Europeans are using their cars more than ever – despite growing economic pressures and the increasing threat of global warming. Journeys by car now make up more than 40% of all travel within the European Union, making this the highest rate on record by some distance.

The Transport Agency's annual report, which includes data on a range of transport issues, shows that the percentage of trips made by car has now exceeded the previous high of 37% in 2005. While the overall frequency of car travel has shown a marginal decline, from an average of 6.4 trips per week down to 6.2, environmentalists are sure to be paying close attention to how the government reacts to the report.

The increased proportion of travel by Europe's car users is even more concerning, given the fact that public-transport use has dropped off substantially in the last five years.

A glance at bus travel, for instance, shows that use of this mode of transport has almost halved over the same period, dropping from 28% of the overall share in 2005 to just 15% today.



Meanwhile, the use of the underground has remained fairly constant over the last five years, fluctuating between 20% and 23% of the overall share of travel in Europe.

Similarly, train travel has also shown no major changes, and took up 18% of the share in 2010 as opposed to 17% the previous year, a slight increase.

Representatives of the European Union's own transport committee are expected to meet later this month in Stuttgart to discuss the findings of the report.

**Tip**  
Repeat this process with other newspaper or magazine articles you find.

- 2 Go through the language you selected in Exercise 1. Note your ideas about meaning and check in a dictionary.

Examples: *experience a (major) boom – a big increase*  
*the statistics reveal – the data show*

- 3 Find other articles in newspapers or online and repeat the process in Exercises 1 and 2.



## Check and challenge

### Key language for making comparisons

**CHECK 1** Circle the errors in these comparative forms and correct them. Some are correct.

1 easier 2 more high 3 intelligenter 4 more healthy 5 further 6 busyer

**2** Write these adjectives in their superlative form.

1 successful 2 fast 3 well-paid

**3** Find and correct the mistakes in these sentences.

1 Newark Airport is not busier as JFK Airport.

2 The Grange Hotel is not as expensive than LumLae Lodge.

**CHALLENGE** Use comparatives and superlatives to list this information. Try to express whether the difference is large or small.

1 Land Rover 140 mph / Jaguar 150 mph / Mitsubishi 120 mph

2 St James Football Club (3 cups) / Landport FC (15 cups) / Fleur De Lys FC (4 cups)

3 scuba-diving course (520 people) / kite-surfing course (800 people) / kayaking course (180 people)

### Describing numbers

**CHECK** Describe or rewrite these numbers in as many ways as you can.

a 81 b 74% c 298,000 d 1 in 5 e 10% f 34% g about half

**CHALLENGE** Choose one of the graphs or charts from this unit and write about the data from the chart in as many ways as you can, using the language for describing numbers.

### Numerical comparatives

**CHECK** Add the missing words to these sentences.

1 Chicken Jalfrezi is twice expensive Saag Aloo, at £7 and £3.50 respectively.

2 Chicken Jalfrezi, £7, costs twice much Saag Aloo, at £3.50.

3 Twice many customers ordered Saag Aloo the Chicken Jalfrezi.

**CHALLENGE** Practise comparative structures by writing about the data in this table.

UK's most popular seaside towns 1960 (thousands of visitors)

Blackpool	Margate	Bournemouth	Great Yarmouth	St Ives	Eastbourne
100	75	60	50	25	20

### Practice question

*This table shows the class numbers by level at Mother Tongue Language School.*

*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features.*

level	number of students
Proficiency	25
Advanced	25
Upper intermediate	50
Intermediate	200
Pre-intermediate	100
Elementary	90
Beginner	30