

How To Write an IELTS Multiple Graph Essay?

IELTS multiple graph questions are quite common in the Academic Task 1 Writing test. Students often panic when they see these as they are worried about having to interpret two different types of data.

However, as long as you've learnt how to write essays on each type of graph, you will have no problem with multiple graphs questions.

A question could include any combination of the following:

- Bar Chart
- Line Graph
- Pie Chart
- Table Chart

The process for planning and writing IELTS multiple graph essays is the same as for any other Academic Task 1 essay.

Here are the 5 steps process I recommend that you use:

- 1) Analyze the question**
- 2) Identify the main features**
- 3) Write an introduction**
- 4) Write an overview**
- 5) Write the details paragraphs**

I'm going to take you through the whole process step-by-step as we work on a practice question.

Before we begin, here's a model essay structure that you can use as a guideline for all IELTS Academic Task 1 questions.

Ideally, your essay should have 4 paragraphs:

Paragraph 1 – Introduction

Paragraph 2 – Overview

Paragraph 3 – Details of 1st graph or chart

Paragraph 4 – Details of 2nd graph or chart

Now that we have all these tools we need, we're ready to begin planning and writing our IELTS multiple graph essay.

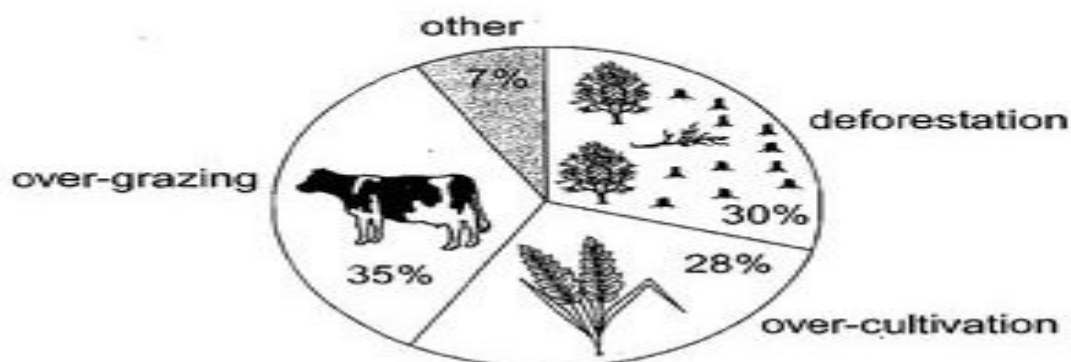
Here's our practice question, which includes a pie chart and a table:

The pie chart shows the main reasons why agricultural land becomes less productive. The table shows how these causes affected three regions of the world during the 1990s.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.

Causes of worldwide land degradation



Causes of land degradation by region

Region	% land degraded by...			
	deforestation	over-cultivation	over-grazing	Total land degraded
North America	0.2	3.3	1.5	5%
Europe	9.8	7.7	5.5	23%
Oceania*	1.7	0	11.3	13%

* A large group of islands in the South Pacific including Australia and New Zealand

Step 1 – Analyze the question

The format of every Academic Task 1 question is the same, with the instruction sentence (highlighted below) identical in every question. Here is our practice question again.

The pie chart shows the main reasons why agricultural land becomes less productive. The table shows how these causes affected three regions of the world during the 1990s.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Every question consists of:

- **Sentence 1** – A brief description of the graphic
- **Sentence 2** – The instructions
- **The graphic** – chart, graph, table, etc.

Sentence 2 tells you what you have to do.

You must do 3 things:

1. **Select the main features.**
2. **Write about the main features.**
3. **Compare the main features.**

All three tasks refer to the ‘main features’ of the graphic. You do not have to write about everything. Just pick out 2 or 3 key features and you’ll have plenty to write about.

Step 2 – Identify the Main Features

The graphics in IELTS multiple graph questions should not be difficult to interpret. Each question has been created to test your language skills, not your mathematics ability.

All you are looking for are the main features. These will usually be the easiest things to spot. In most Task 1 questions, you will be looking for two main features in one graph, chart or table. In multiple graph questions, look for one main feature in each graphic.

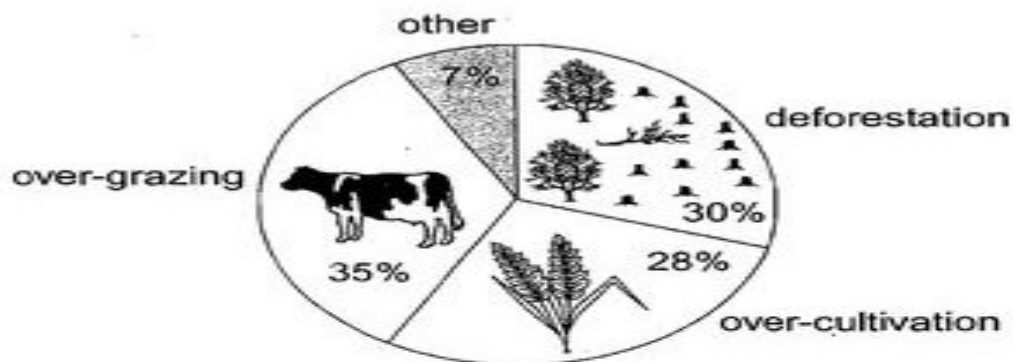
There will be lots of information in the graphics to help you identify them.

Here are some useful questions to ask? The first question relates specifically to bar charts and line graphs but the rest apply to all graph and chart types.

- What information do the 2 axes give?
- What are the units of measurements?
- What are the time periods?
- What can you learn from the title and any labels?
- What is the most obvious trend?
- Are there any notable similarities?

So, what main feature stands out in each of the graphics in our practice question? Here are the pie chart and table again.

Causes of worldwide land degradation



Causes of land degradation by region

Region	% land degraded by...			
	deforestation	over-cultivation	over-grazing	Total land degraded
North America	0.2	3.3	1.5	5%
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* A large group of islands in the South Pacific including Australia and New Zealand

The main features are:

Pie chart: The biggest cause of land degradation worldwide is over-grazing.

Table: Europe had the highest percentage of degraded land.

We're now ready to begin writing our essay. Here's a reminder of the 4-part structure we're going to use.

Paragraph 1 – Introduction

Paragraph 2 – Overview

Paragraph 3 – Details of 1st graph or chart

Paragraph 4 – Details of 2nd graph or chart

Step 3 – Write an Introduction

In the introduction, you should simply paraphrase the question, that is, say the same thing in a different way. You can do this by using synonyms and changing the sentence structure. For example:

Question:

The pie chart shows the main reasons why agricultural land becomes less productive. The table shows how these causes affected three regions of the world during the 1990s.

Introduction (Paragraph 1):

The pie chart illustrates the primary causes of land deterioration across the globe while the table outlines how three different regions were affected by these damaging factors in the 1990s.

Step 4 – Write an Overview (Paragraph 2)

In the second paragraph, you should report the main features you have identified, giving only general information. The detail comes later in the essay. However, with just 20 minutes allowed for Task 1, and a requirement of only 150 words, you won't be able to include many details.

Here are the features we picked out above.

Pie chart: The biggest cause of land degradation worldwide is over-grazing.

Table: Europe had the highest percentage of degraded land.

Now form these ideas into two or three sentences with a total of around 40 words. State the information simply using synonyms where possible. No elaborate vocabulary or grammar structures are required, just the appropriate words and correct verb tenses.

For example:

Overview (Paragraph 2):

It is clear from the pie chart that the main reason why farmland becomes less productive is over-grazing. The data in the table reveals that Europe had the highest percentage of degraded land compared to North America and Oceania for the period recorded.

Step 5 – Write the 1st Detail Paragraph

Paragraphs 3 and 4 of your IELTS multiple graph essay are where you include more detailed information about the data in the graphics. In paragraph 3, you should give evidence to support your first key feature.

Here it is again:

Pie chart: The biggest cause of land degradation worldwide is over-grazing.

And this is an example of what you could write:

Paragraph 3:

The pie chart presents two additional key reasons for the decrease in the productivity of agricultural land. These are deforestation and over-cultivation. Although tree clearance is almost as damaging as grazing too many animals, at 30%, it has a 5% lower impact than over-grazing. Excessive cultivation is the least problematic at just over a quarter of the total.

Step 6 – Write the 2nd Detail Paragraph

For the fourth and final paragraph, you do the same thing for your second key feature.

Table: Europe had the highest percentage of degraded land.

Here's an example of what you could write:

Paragraph 4:

According to the table, 23% of Europe's agricultural land was affected by these damaging practices. This was almost double the percentage in Oceania, the next most affected region. North America experienced by far the lowest level of productivity loss with a figure of just 5% of its total agricultural land.

Here are the four paragraphs brought together to create our finished essay.

The pie chart illustrates the primary causes of land deterioration across the globe while the table outlines how three different regions were affected by these damaging factors in the 1990s.

It is clear from the pie chart that the main reason why farmland becomes less productive is over-grazing. The data in the table reveals that Europe had the highest percentage of degraded land compared to North America and Oceania for the period recorded.

The pie chart presents two additional key reasons for the decrease in the productivity of agricultural land. These are deforestation and over-cultivation. Although tree clearance is almost as damaging as grazing too many animals, at 30%, it has a 5% lower impact than over-grazing. Excessive cultivation is the least problematic at just over a quarter of the total.

According to the table, 23% of Europe's agricultural land was affected by these damaging practices in the 90s. This was almost double the percentage in Oceania, the next most affected region. North America experienced by far the lowest level of productivity loss with a figure of just 5% of its total agricultural land.

(184 words)