

How to Describe Charts and Trends



Statistics can be made to demonstrate anything – even the truth.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

There are two kinds of statistics, the kind you look up and the kind you make up.

REX STOUT – AMERICAN WRITER

The average human has one breast and one testicle.

DES McHALE – MATHEMATICS PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN



Meine Ziele

Nach Bearbeitung dieses Kapitels kann ich

- Nach Bearbeitung dieses Kapitels kann ich
- die gebräuchlichsten Diagramme beschreiben.
- Daten graphisch unterschiedlich darstellen.
- den Verlauf einer Kurve sprachlich erläutern.

1 Keywords

allmählich ■ ansteigen ■ Balkendiagramm ■ beträchtlich ■ Daten ■ sich einpendeln ■ Flussdiagramm ■ gewaltig ■
Kurvendiagramm ■ stocken ■ stürzen ■ Tabelle ■ Tortendiagramm ■ sich verbessern ■ ein wenig ■ zeigen

Fill in the matching German words from the box above.

	English	Definition	German
1	bar chart	a diagram that uses lines or narrow rectangles (= bars) of different heights (but equal widths) to show different amounts, so that they can be compared	
2	considerably	much, a lot	
3	data (Sg.)	facts or information, especially when examined and used to find out things or to make decisions	
4	to display	to show information	
5	flow chart	a diagram that shows the connections between the different stages of a process or parts of a system	
6	gradually	slowly, over a period of time	
7	to improve	to become better than before	
8	to increase	to become or to make something greater in amount, number, value, etc.	
9	to level off	to stay at a steady level of development or progress after a period of sharp rises or falls	
10	line graph	a planned drawing, consisting of a line or lines, showing how two or more sets of numbers are related to each other	
11	pie chart	a diagram consisting of a circle (= pie) that is divided into sections to show the size of particular amounts in relation to the whole	
12	to plummet	to fall very quickly and suddenly	
13	slightly	a little	
14	to stagnate	to stop developing or making progress	
15	table	a list of facts or numbers arranged in a special order, usually in rows and columns	
16	tremendously	very great in amount or level	

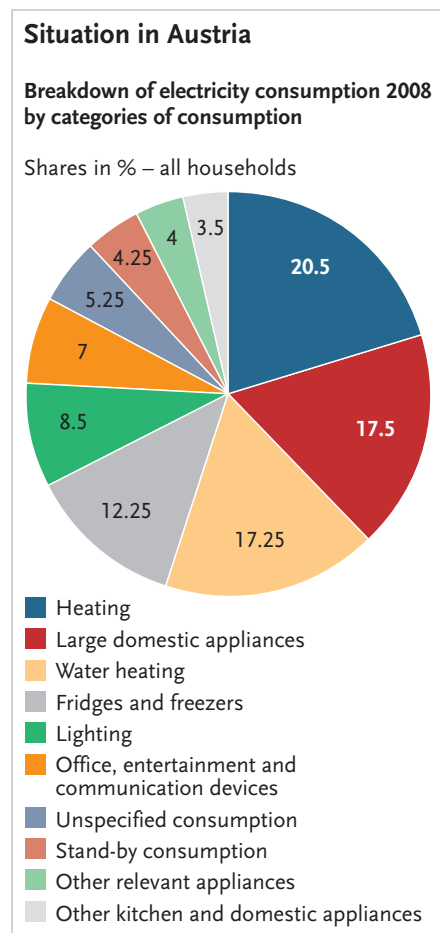
to enhance = verstärken

2 Types of Graphs and Charts

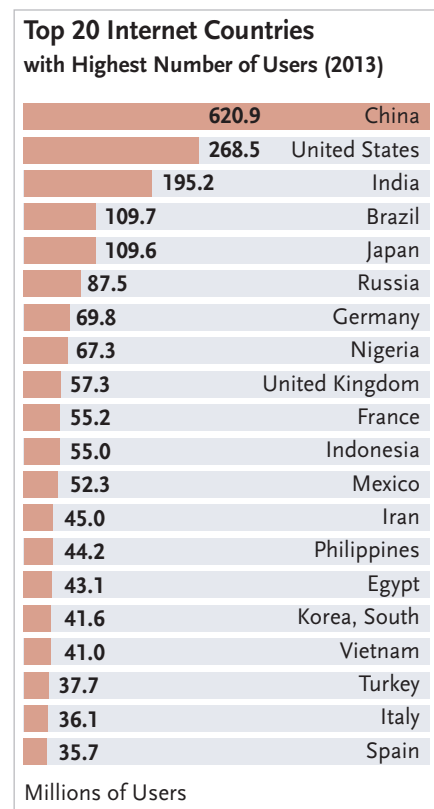
If you want to present ideas including references to data which need to be understood quickly, it might be helpful to use graphs or tables which enhance the message you want to deliver. There are a number of different types of graphs and charts.

The most widely used forms of diagrams are the following:

a pie chart



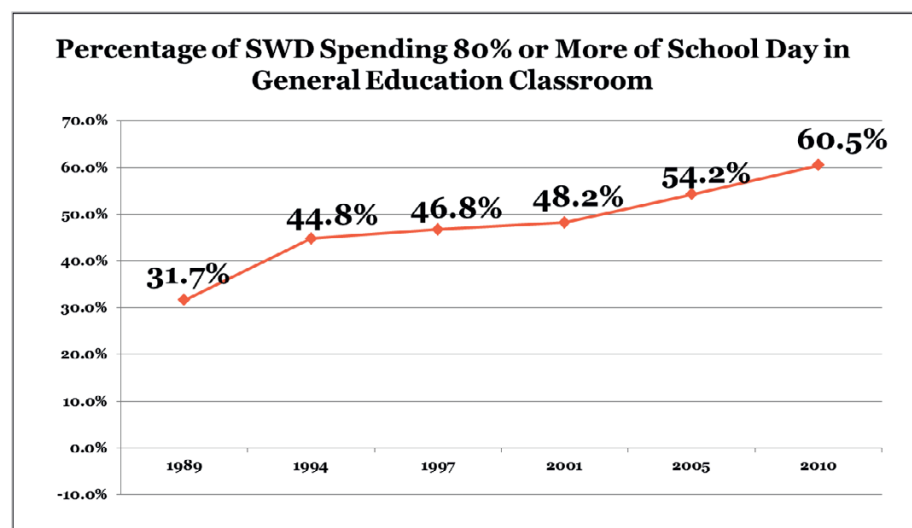
a bar chart



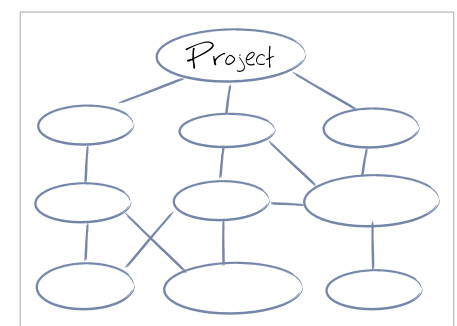
a table

% Homicides with firearms	
Colombia	85 %
USA	46 %
Switzerland	37 %
Canada	34 %
Spain	16 %
England	8 %
Singapore	3 %

a line graph



a flow chart





Individual Work

First, read the definitions. Then match them with the English words from the box.

a bar chart ■ a flow chart ■ a line graph ■ a pie chart ■ a table

Definition	Diagram
1. a diagram consisting of a circle that is divided into sections to show the size of particular amounts in relation to the whole	
2. a diagram that shows the connections between the different stages of a process or parts of a system	
3. a list of facts or numbers arranged in a special order, usually in rows and columns	
4. a drawing that consists of a line or lines, showing how two or more sets of numbers are related to each other	
5. a diagram which uses narrow bands of different heights to show different amounts, so that they can be compared	

3 Describing Graphs and Charts

There are a number of specific verbs and phrases that are used to describe graphs and charts. Make use of these expressions in your presentations, and your ability to speak about diagrams and the data they display will improve considerably.

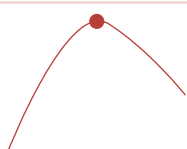
The line goes up:



to boost, to climb, to rise, to go up, to grow, to increase, to improve




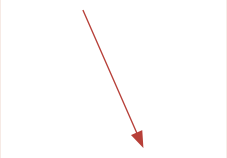
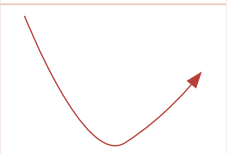
to rocket (up), to soar, to shoot up, to skyrocket



to peak, to reach a maximum, to reach an extreme

to soar = in die Höhe schnellen

The line goes down:

	to decline, to fall, to drop, to decrease, to deteriorate
	to collapse, to crash, to plunge, to slump, to plummet
	to reach a low, to hit a low, to bottom out

to deteriorate = sich verschlechtern



to plunge = stürzen

to slump = stark fallen

to plummet = (ab)stürzen

to bottom out = abflachen

Other useful verbs:

	to remain stable/steady/unchanged, to stay constant, to stabilise, to stagnate
	to even out, to flatten out, to level off, to level out, to stop rising/falling

If we want to be more precise and describe how much or how fast something has changed, we use quantifying adverbs.

		How much?	How fast?
It	has increased	slightly. considerably. significantly.	slowly. gradually. steadily.
	has decreased	dramatically. tremendously.	rapidly. fast.

significantly = deutlich

steadily = stetig

Even when something does not change much, there may be shades of difference.

It	remained	relatively – comparatively – extremely	stable.
	has levelled off	at 3 % – at 10 % – completely	.

comparatively = vergleichsweise

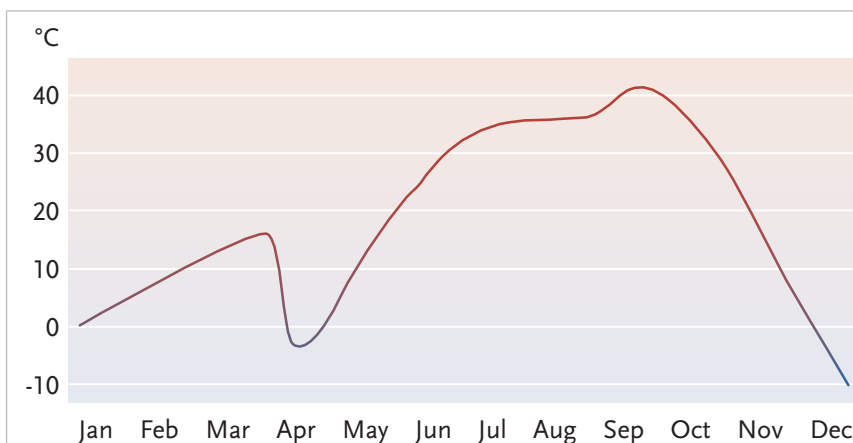
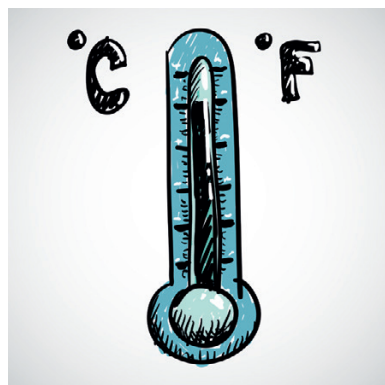
An alternative is to use nouns:

to increase steadily	to show a steady increase
to decrease tremendously	to result in a tremendous decrease
to rise considerably	to cause a considerable rise
to fall dramatically	to see a dramatic fall
to peak	to reach a peak

**Individual Work/Pair Work**

- Have a look at the graph below and complete its description with the correct expressions from the box.

a tremendous increase ■ fell dramatically ■ levelled off ■ had another peak ■ plunged ■ reached a low ■ remained relatively stable ■ rose steadily ■ saw a gradual decline



Temperatures _____ (1) in the first three months.

At the beginning of April they _____ (2) until they _____ (3) by the end of the month.

In May and June there was _____ (4) in temperatures, however, they eventually _____ (5) at 30°C in July.

During the summer season they _____ (6), until they _____ (7) at the beginning of September.

October and November _____ (8) in temperatures, and at Christmas they eventually _____ (9) to a record low.

2. Now draw your own graph and describe it to a partner. He or she must draw it without looking, then compare the two. Take turns.



Ziele erreicht?

Look for different graphs and charts online and choose a suitable one for each topic in this book. Describe them to a partner or give a written explanation.

Self-Check

✓ started ✓✓ on my way ✓✓✓ accomplished

I can describe charts and diagrams.

I can draw different graphs and charts to illustrate data.

I can comment on the characteristics of graphs and diagrams.

✓

✓✓

✓✓✓