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How to describe graphs, charts, and diagrams in a presentation

Wondering how to describe a graph vs a chart in English? In this article, you'll disco essential chart and graph terms to make your presentation stand out.

Do you have to give a presentation? But do you know how to make it attractive to your listeners? Charts, graphs, and diagrams can help you cope with this task.

When you can articulate data clearly and compellingly, you position yourself as a knowledgeable expert. You will also need this skill to pass the IELTS, which is one of the

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in the exam is usually to describe and discuss a diagram or any other visuals with[illegible]es a facts. Now, let's review some helpful vocabulary and phrases to describe charts [illegible]aph

Why you need to know how to describe a graph

A lot of presentations focus on data and numbers. Sounds boring, right? Apart from esser **business presentation phrases**, charts, graphs, and diagrams can also help you **keep your listeners' attention**. Add them to your presentation, and you will have profound evidence-based work.

When presenting and explaining data charts, graphs, and diagrams, you should help peopl understand and memorize their main points. Diagrams and other visuals are excellent tools for describing trends or showing relationships between two or more items.

How to describe a graph

Once you create a fascinating graph for your **presentation**, it is time to know how to describe graphs, charts, and diagrams. Let's go over the general process for how to do this

Introduce the graph

Your first step should be to present the graph to your audience. This means covering high-level information like:

- Its title
- The topic
- Data source
- Time frame

Here are some examples of how to do this:

- This graph shows the relationship between X and Y.
- This diagram is a visual representation of the process for...

The data in this graph is from 2020.

Identify key features

From there, you can describe the key variables that make up the graph. Graphs and charts typically have an x- and y-axis, which represent different variables. Describing these axes help the audience understand how the graph displays data.

Here are some helpful phrases for identifying these variables:

The vertical axis shows...

The horizontal axis represents...

This curve illustrates...

The solid line shows...

The shaded area describes...

This colored segment is for...

The red bar...

Point out important information

When describing graphs, start by recognizing the main patterns, trends, or relationships th show. For example, if the chart clearly shows an increase in revenue over the past year, yo should highlight that first.

To describe the movement of the line, you should use appropriate **verbs**, **adjectives**, and **adverbs** depending on the kind of action you need to show. For this, you should use the following vocabulary:

Verbs: rise, increase, grow, go up to, climb, boom, peak, fall, decline, decrease, drop, dip go down, reduce, level up, remain stable, no change, remain steady, stay constant, stay, maintain the same level, crash, collapse, plunge, plummet.

Adjectives: sharp, rapid, huge, dramatic, substantial, considerable, significant, slight, sm minimal, massive.

Adverbs: dramatically, rapidly, hugely, massive, sharply, steeply, considerably, substantially, significantly, slightly, minimally, markedly, quickly, swiftly, sudde ead gradually, slowly.

You can also identify other notable information, like outliers. This shows you understand th data beyond the surface level.

Share your conclusions

Once you've described what you see in the graph, you need to explain what the data mea To come up with ideas, you can ask yourself questions like:

How does this data affect the future?

How can we learn from this data?

What can we do differently to improve?

What decisions should we make based on this data?

Some ways to explain your conclusions include:

Based on the graph, we can conclude that...

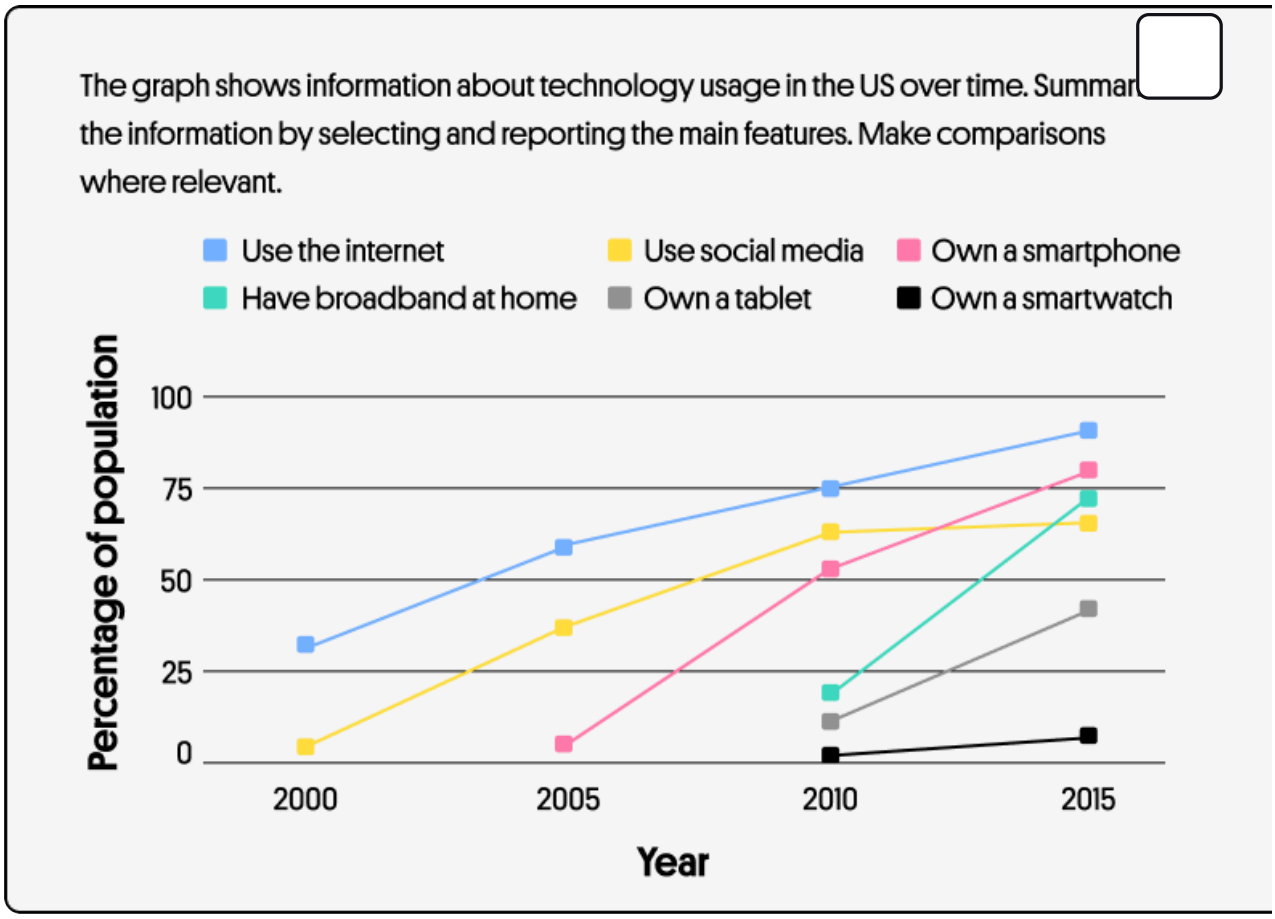
This chart indicates that...

As you can see, *user growth has increased in the past year*. This means we expect *to se more users in the next six months*.

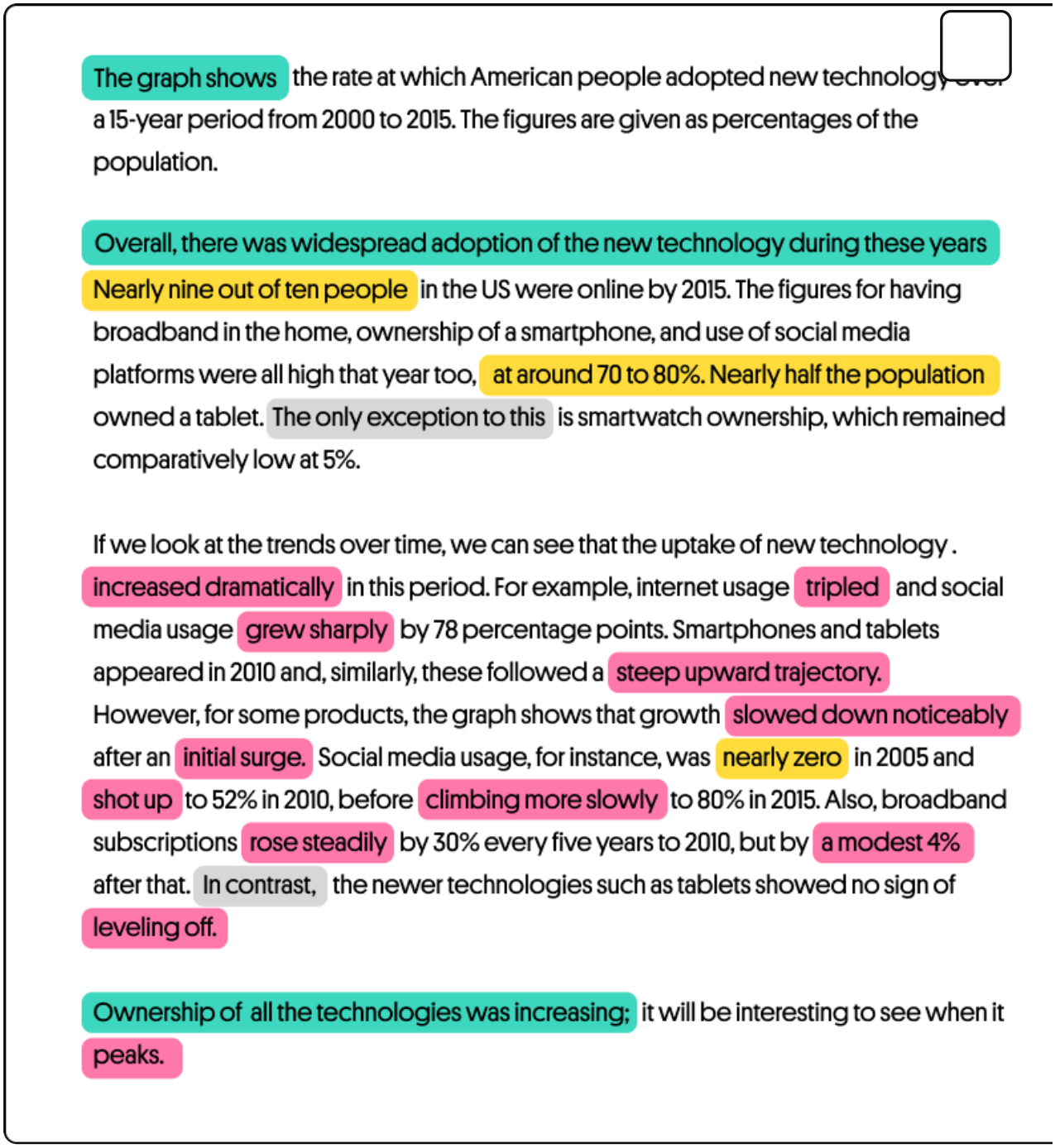
How do you describe a line graph?

This type of graph visualizes data as points on a grid connected with a line to represent trends, changes, or relationships between objects, numbers, dates, or other data. These lir show movement over time affected by the increase or decrease in the key factors.

To describe the graph, follow its progress along the horizontal access and describe wheth it goes down, up, or stays the same. Here's a sample of a line chart with the exam questior for the IELTS:



The appropriate vocabulary below will help you understand how to describe such charts:



The graph shows the rate at which American people adopted new technology over a 15-year period from 2000 to 2015. The figures are given as percentages of the population.

Overall, there was widespread adoption of the new technology during these years Nearly nine out of ten people in the US were online by 2015. The figures for having broadband in the home, ownership of a smartphone, and use of social media platforms were all high that year too, at around 70 to 80%. Nearly half the population owned a tablet. The only exception to this is smartwatch ownership, which remained comparatively low at 5%.

If we look at the trends over time, we can see that the uptake of new technology . increased dramatically in this period. For example, internet usage tripled and social media usage grew sharply by 78 percentage points. Smartphones and tablets appeared in 2010 and, similarly, these followed a steep upward trajectory. However, for some products, the graph shows that growth slowed down noticeably after an initial surge. Social media usage, for instance, was nearly zero in 2005 and shot up to 52% in 2010, before climbing more slowly to 80% in 2015. Also, broadband subscriptions rose steadily by 30% every five years to 2010, but by a modest 4% after that. In contrast, the newer technologies such as tablets showed no sign of leveling off.

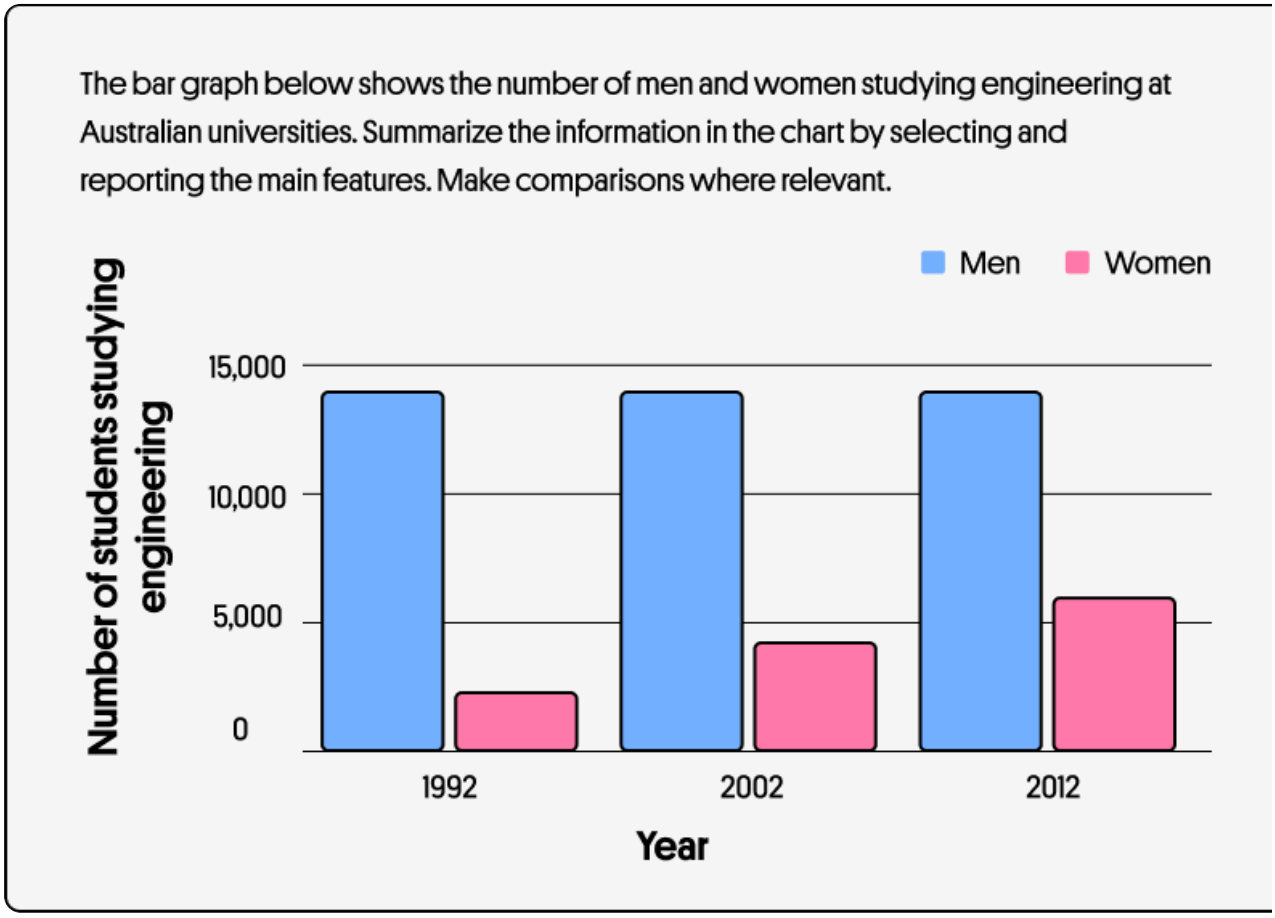
Ownership of all the technologies was increasing; it will be interesting to see when it peaks.

How do you describe a bar graph?

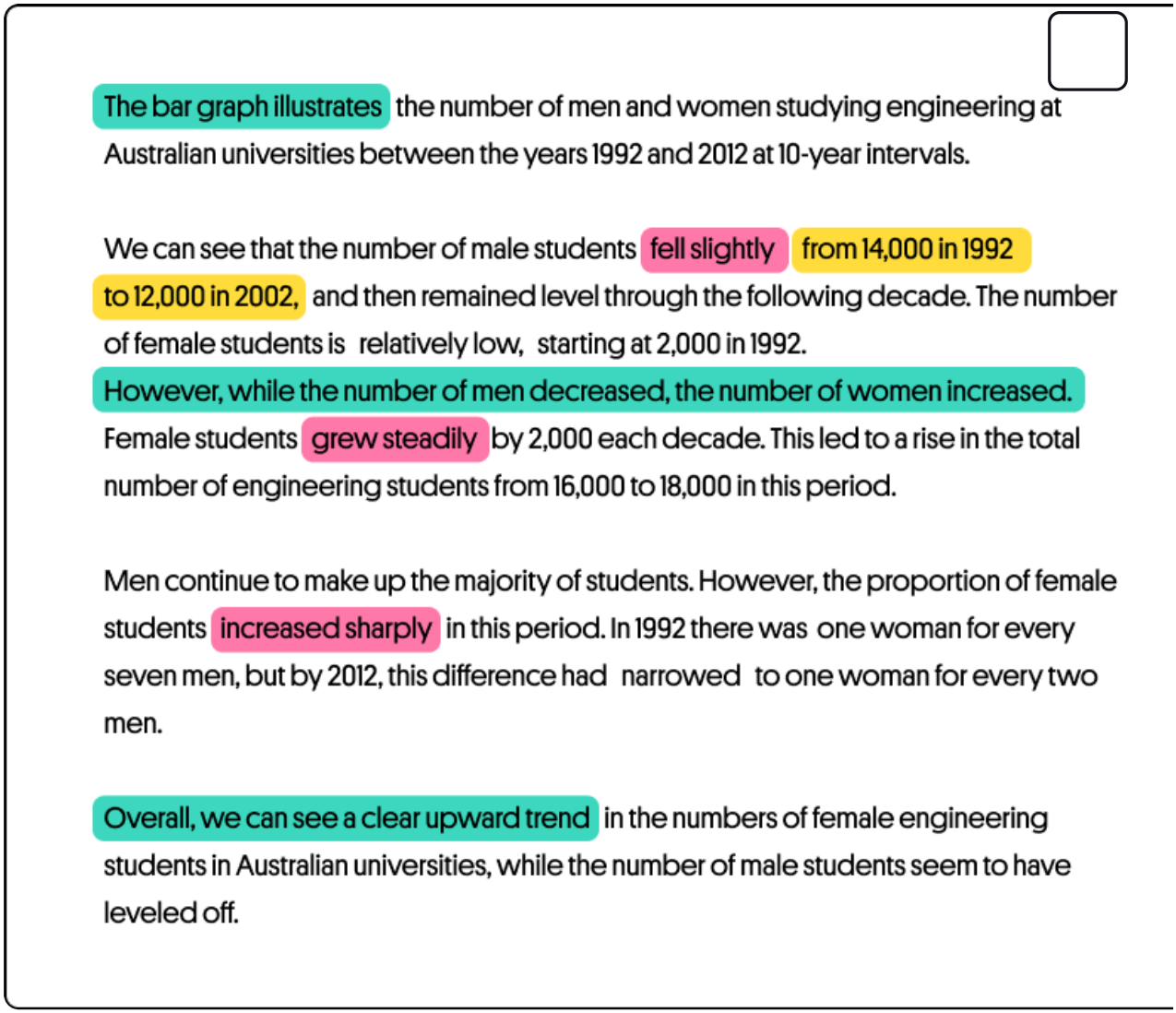
Bar graphs transform the data into separate bars or columns. Generally, these visuals have categories on the x-axis and the numbers on the y-axis. This allows you to compare statistical data between different groups over time.

Bar graphs also show which category is the largest or the smallest. Each group is independent so that the changes in one do not influence others. The bars or columns can

To describe the graph, follow the trend from left to right. Then explain if it goes [redacted]up, stays the same. The words used to describe bar charts are similar to the ones us[redacted]the line charts. Let's have a look at the exam question for the IELTS writing test:



Here is another excellent example of writing about bar graphs prepared by the British Council as an answer to this exam question. You can also use the following vocabulary to t about bar charts used in your presentation.



The bar graph illustrates the number of men and women studying engineering at Australian universities between the years 1992 and 2012 at 10-year intervals.

We can see that the number of male students fell slightly from 14,000 in 1992 to 12,000 in 2002, and then remained level through the following decade. The number of female students is relatively low, starting at 2,000 in 1992. However, while the number of men decreased, the number of women increased. Female students grew steadily by 2,000 each decade. This led to a rise in the total number of engineering students from 16,000 to 18,000 in this period.

Men continue to make up the majority of students. However, the proportion of female students increased sharply in this period. In 1992 there was one woman for every seven men, but by 2012, this difference had narrowed to one woman for every two men.

Overall, we can see a clear upward trend in the numbers of female engineering students in Australian universities, while the number of male students seem to have leveled off.

How do you describe a pie chart?

The pie chart primarily illustrates how different parts make up a whole. The best way to present your data in a pie chart is to compare each “slice” of the chart to the others to determine what share of the total each category has. The following comparison words car be used to describe a pie chart:

to compare

compared to

as opposed to

versus

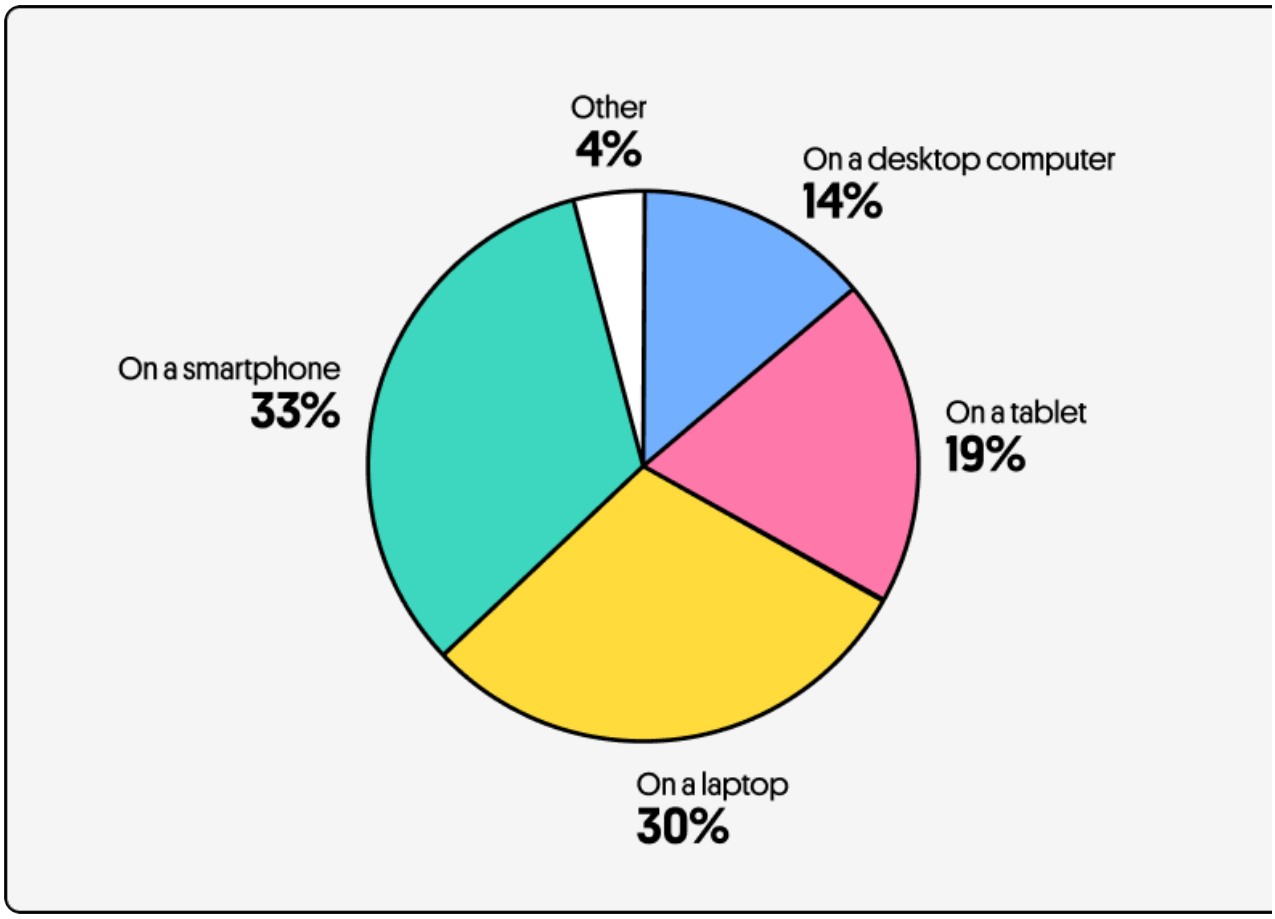
the majority of

only a small monitory

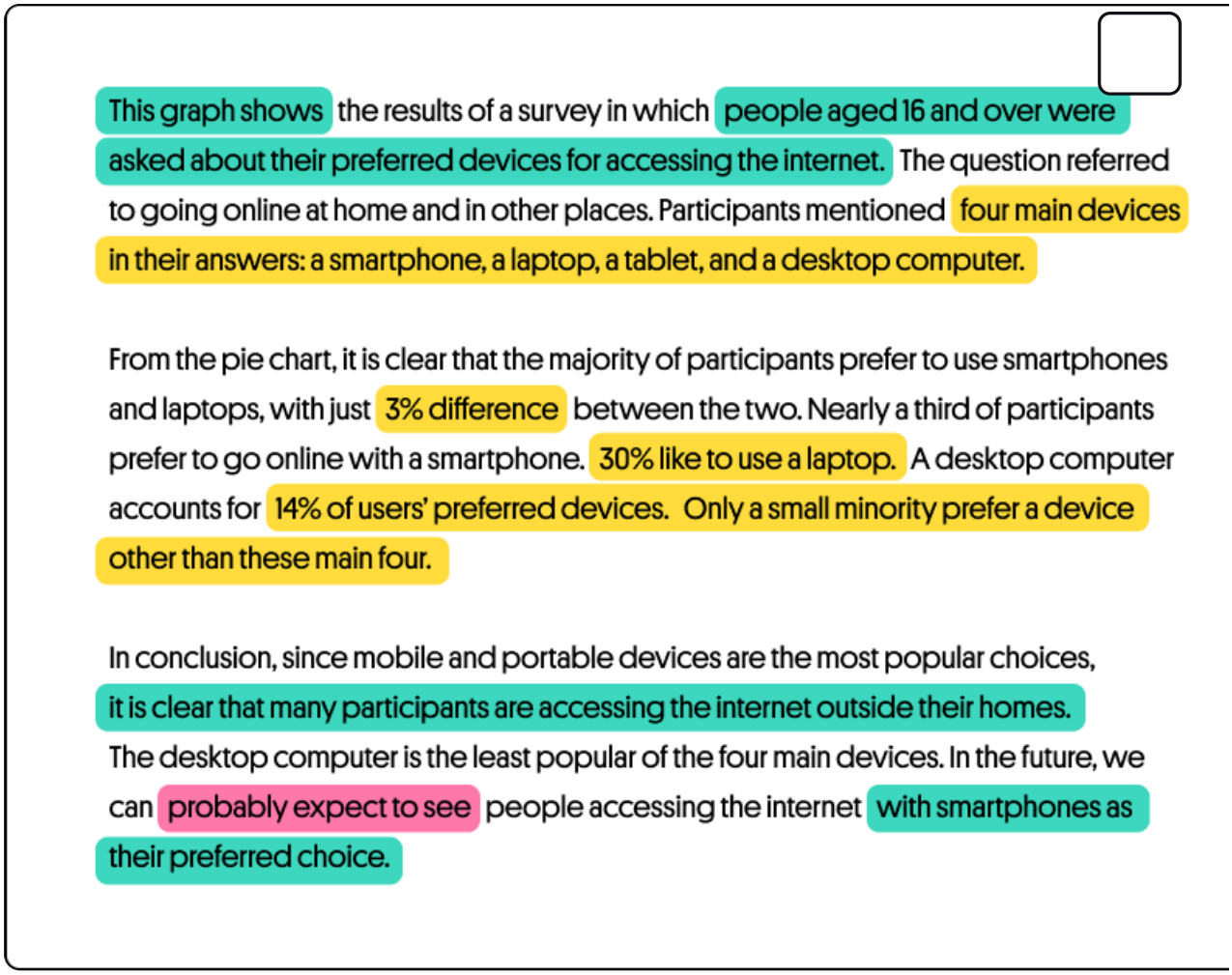
greater than

less than

Here we have an example of a pie chart that represents how internet users aged 16+ prefe to browse the web:



The example below demonstrates the best way to summarize data by selecting and reporting the main features:



This graph shows the results of a survey in which people aged 16 and over were asked about their preferred devices for accessing the internet. The question referred to going online at home and in other places. Participants mentioned four main devices in their answers: a smartphone, a laptop, a tablet, and a desktop computer.

From the pie chart, it is clear that the majority of participants prefer to use smartphones and laptops, with just 3% difference between the two. Nearly a third of participants prefer to go online with a smartphone. 30% like to use a laptop. A desktop computer accounts for 14% of users' preferred devices. Only a small minority prefer a device other than these main four.

In conclusion, since mobile and portable devices are the most popular choices, it is clear that many participants are accessing the internet outside their homes. The desktop computer is the least popular of the four main devices. In the future, we can probably expect to see people accessing the internet with smartphones as their preferred choice.

How to choose the correct language for a chart presentatio

Now that you understand how to describe various charts better, let's zoom out to the presentation in general.

Introductory phrases

To catch your audience's attention from the very beginning, you can use the following phrases for introduction:

Let me show you this bar graph...

Let's turn to this diagram...

I'd like you to look at this map...

Let's have a look at this pie chart...

If you look at this line chart, you will understand...

To illustrate my point, let's look at some charts...

Verb tenses

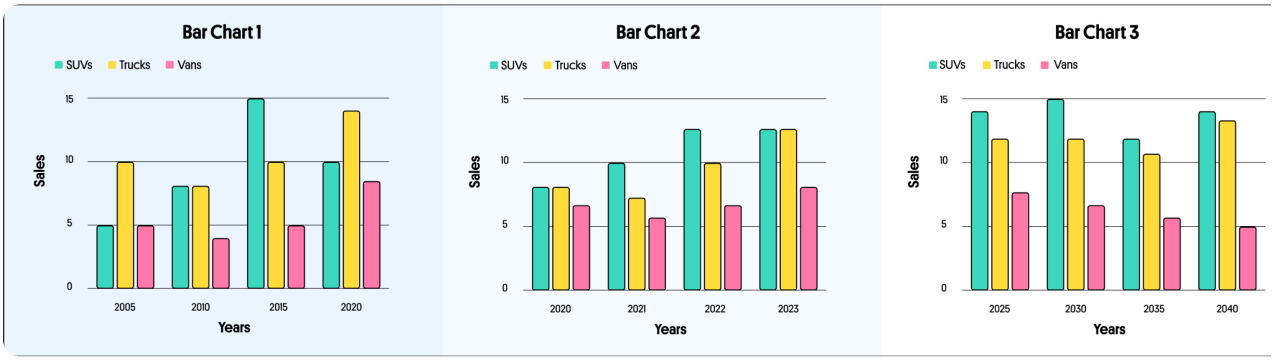
When describing graphs, you must also be careful about grammar, especially when choosi the verb tense. When you look at the graph, ask yourself these questions:

Is this data from the **past, present, or future**?

Does this graph **represent the same point in time**?

Is this graph **predicting the future**?

Depending on your answers, you'll end up choosing different tenses. Let's take a look at these bar charts:



They might look very similar, but if you look more closely, you'll see that each bar chart represents a different time period. That means they'll each require a different verb tense.

Bar chart 1 shows data from the past, so we would use the **English past simple**. For examp "Sales of SUVs **increased** between 2005 and 2015, then **dropped** by 2020."

Bar chart 2 shows data from the past and present, so we would use the **English present perfect**. For example, "Sales of trucks **have slowly risen** since 2020."

Bar chart 3 shows data predictions for the future, so we would use the **English future sim** For example, "We expect sales of vans **will decrease** starting in 2025."

Essential graph terms

Vertex (or Node): A fundamental unit of a graph, representing a point or an entity.

Edge: A connection between two vertices in a graph, representing a relationship or interaction.

Directed graph (or Digraph): A graph in which edges have a direction, indicating a one-way connection from one vertex to another.

Undirected graph: A graph in which edges have no direction, and the connections between vertices are bidirectional.

Weighted graph: A graph in which each edge is assigned a numerical value or weight, representing a cost, distance, or some other metric.

Degree: The number of edges incident to a vertex. In a directed graph, the degree is oft split into in-degree (incoming edges) and out-degree (outgoing edges).

Adjacency: A pair of vertices is said to be adjacent if there is an edge connecting them.

Path: A sequence of vertices where each adjacent pair is connected by an edge.

Cycle: A path that starts and ends at the same vertex, forming a closed loop.

Connected graph: A graph in which there is a path between every pair of vertices.

Disconnected graph: A graph with at least two vertices that do not have a path connecting them.

Subgraph: A graph formed by a subset of the vertices and edges of a larger graph.

Graph traversal: The process of systematically visiting all the vertices and edges of a graph.

Connected components: The maximal connected subgraphs of a graph.

Tree: A connected acyclic graph, where there is exactly one path between any two vertices.

Forest: A collection of disjoint trees or disconnected components.

Graph diameter: The length of the longest shortest path in the graph

Hamiltonian graph: A graph that contains a Hamiltonian cycle, which is a cycle visit every vertex exactly once.

Isomorphic graphs: Two graphs are isomorphic if they have the same structure, i.e., the same number of vertices connected in the same way.

These terms provide a foundation for understanding and discussing graph theory, a branc of mathematics that studies the properties and relationships of graphs.

Essential chart terms

Axis: The reference lines on a chart that define the scale of the data. Typically, there's a horizontal (x-axis) and a vertical (y-axis).

Data series: A set of related data points that are plotted on the chart. Each series is usu represented by a distinct color or symbol.

Data point: An individual value or set of values representing a specific element of the da plotted on the chart.

Legend: A key that explains the colors or symbols used to represent different data serie on the chart.

Title: A descriptive label that provides information about the content or purpose of the chart.

Labels: Descriptive text used to identify and provide context for specific elements on th chart, such as axis labels, data labels, etc.

X-Axis: The horizontal axis on a chart that represents the independent variable or categories of data.

Y-Axis: The vertical axis on a chart that represents the dependent variable or values of t data.

Bar chart: A chart that uses rectangular bars of varying lengths to represent and compa data values.

Line chart: A chart that displays data points using a series of connected line segments, useful for showing trends over time.

Pie chart: A circular chart divided into slices, each representing a proportion of the who

Scatter plot: A chart that displays individual data points on a two-dimensional plane to show the relationship between two variables.

Area chart: Similar to a line chart but with the area below the line filled with color to represent the cumulative effect of the data.

Stacked bar/Column chart: A bar or column chart in which the various data series are stacked on top of each other.

Histogram: A chart that displays the distribution of a dataset, showing the frequency of different values or ranges.

Doughnut chart: Similar to a pie chart but with a hole in the center, often used to displa multiple sets of data.

Bubble chart: A scatter plot in which a third dimension of the data is shown through the size of markers.

Axis scale: The range and increments on an axis, determining how data values are displayed.

Gridlines: Lines on the chart that help in reading values and aligning data points.

Understanding these terms can enhance your ability to interpret and create effective visualizations.

6 tools for creating graphs and charts

Here are some of the best tools you can use to create graphs and charts, depending on yo needs.

Microsoft Excel Online

Cost: Free for basic features; full features available starting at $6.99/month for persona use

Best use cases: Financial modeling and analysis, budgeting and financial planning

Microsoft Excel Online is the cloud adaptation of the renowned spreadsheet software Microsoft Excel.

It's also especially known for its ability to craft charts and graphs, making data vi ation straightforward. Its integration with other Microsoft Office tools online ensures s ess data management and collaboration.

Google Sheets

Cost: Free for individual users; G Suite for businesses starting at $6/user/month

Best use cases: Collaborative projects, data collection through Google Forms, real-time data sharing and editing

Google Sheets is a versatile, cloud-based spreadsheet tool that's part of Google's suite of office applications.

While it offers functionalities similar to Excel, its seamless integration with other Google services like Google Drive and Google Forms sets it apart. The chart-making capabilities a robust, with various templates and customization options.

Tableau Public

Cost: Free for public use; Tableau Desktop for private and professional use starting at $70/user/month

Best use cases: Advanced data visualization, business intelligence and analysis, public d sharing and storytelling, interactive dashboards

Tableau Public is a premier data visualization tool catering to beginners and professionals. You can transform raw data into interactive and aesthetically pleasing dashboards and visualizations.

One of its unique features is the ability to publish and share these visualizations with a broader audience online. The tool supports drag-and-drop functionality, making it user-friendly even for those without a technical background.

Plotly

Cost: Free for basic use; professional cloud services starting at $20/month

Best use cases: Scientific and engineering projects, integration with programming

Plotly is a dynamic online platform dedicated to data visualization and analysis. It supports myriad of chart types, from basic line charts to intricate 3D plots. What sets Plotly apart is interactive nature; viewers can hover over data points, zoom in, and pan across charts.

The platform also offers APIs for various programming languages, allowing developers to integrate and customize visualizations in their applications.

Canva

Cost: Free for basic use; advanced features with Canva Pro starting at $12.95/user/mon

Best use cases: Social media graphs, marketing and promotional materials, infographics for blogs and websites

Although predominantly recognized as a graphic design tool, Canva also boasts a suite of features for creating graphs and charts. With its intuitive drag-and-drop interface, users c design custom charts without any design experience.

Canva's vast library of free templates and design elements, combined with its charting capabilities, makes it a go-to tool for visually appealing data representation. It's especially popular among marketers, bloggers, and social media enthusiasts.

Infogram

Cost: Free for basic use; paid plans starting at $19/month

Best use cases: Infographics for digital marketing, interactive reports and presentations

Infogram is a digital tool for crafting infographics, charts, and maps. It simplifies the proce of turning data into engaging visual stories.

One of its standout features is the ability to make interactive visualizations, enhancing use engagement. With a user-friendly interface and many design options, Infogram is a favorit among journalists, educators, and businesses aiming to present data compellingly.

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FAQs

What are graphs and charts?

What is the fundamental difference between a graph vs chart?

What are the different types of graphs vs charts?

What are some essential graph terms?

Candice Benjamine 29 articles

Candice Benjamin is an English teacher with more than 6 years of online teaching experience. Candice has taught English to children and adults alike of various levels, ensuring that each achieves their respective goals. Candice specializes in the IELTS, TOEFL, and Cambridge exams and creates courses and strategies specific to the needs and goals of each student, to help them achieve their desired grade. Candice is patient and determined to produce significant results for her students.

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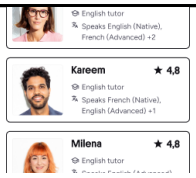

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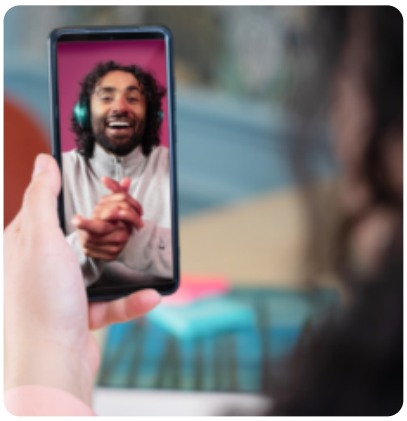

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