

You need to write an introductory statement for your description. For this, it is particularly important to use your own words instead of copying words and phrases directly from the question. You can do this by

- using a synonym of the words in the question.
- changing the form of a word (e.g. changing a verb into a noun).

**1.2** Look at these extracts from Writing Task 1 questions, and candidates' introductory statements. Replace the underlined words in the candidates' answers with a suitable phrase from the box to improve the range of vocabulary.

- A** how many  
**B** a group of people of a range of ages  
**C** the countries they come from  
**D** the number of vehicles on the road  
**E** have taken courses at  
**F** different sports preferred by  
**G** how much people spent

- 1 The graph shows traffic growth in the Netherlands between 1960 and 2010.

*The graph indicates the changes in traffic in the Netherlands from 1960 to 2010.*

- 2 The bar chart shows the sporting preferences of 100 adults, boys and girls in Manchester.

*The bar chart tells us the sporting preferences of 100 adults, boys and girls in Manchester.*

- 3 The graphs show the number of students that have attended the college since 1980 and their different nationalities.

*From the graphs, we can see the number of students that have attended the college since 1980 as well as their different nationalities.*

- 4 The two pie charts show the average household expenditure in the US in 1900 and in 2000.

*The pie charts reveal the average household expenditure in the US in 1900 and 2000.*

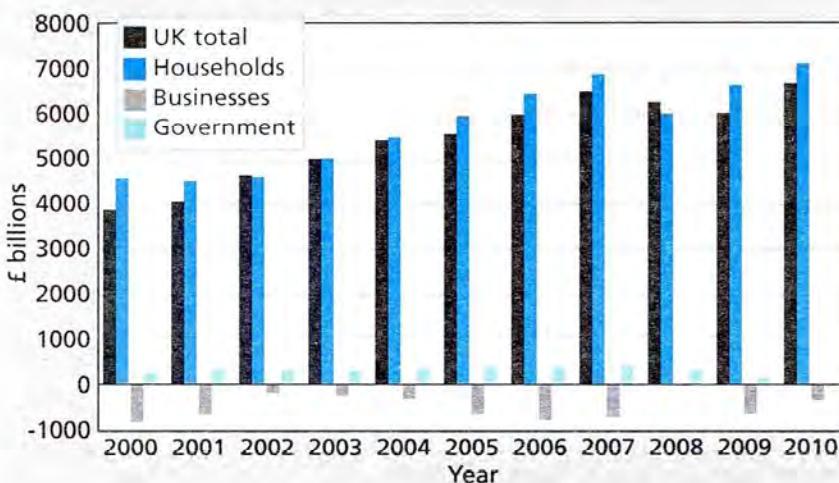
**1.3** Look at the candidates' statements again. Which other examples of paraphrase can you find?

## 2 Comparing and contrasting data

When you are describing a chart or graph, you are actually describing the patterns in the data. Before you begin to write, spend one or two minutes noticing the different features of the visual information.

### 2.1 Look at this Writing Task and then answer the questions.

The bar chart below shows the net worth of the UK from 2000 to 2010 according to three different sectors.



- 1 What do the figures on the left measure?
- 2 Why does the number 1,000 appear twice?
- 3 Which set of figures shows what is happening in the country as a whole?

To help identify the patterns, you need to look for the

- peaks (high points) and troughs (low points)
- periods when the figures remain steady (show little or no change)
- periods when the figures fluctuate (show a lot of changes)

You also need to notice which different figures you can compare (show that they are similar) and contrast (show that they are different)

### 2.2 Look at the patterns in the data and answer these questions.

- 1 Over which span of time did the UK government's wealth remain steady?
- 2 Over which period did its wealth decline?
- 3 In which three separate years did business wealth show a marked improvement?
- 4 In which two years was the total wealth of the UK worth more than household wealth?
- 5 Which three sets of data generally followed the same pattern?
- 6 Which sector fluctuated the most between 2000 and 2010?

 **Test Tip** Remember that, to achieve a high score for Writing Task 1, you need to **select and report on the main features and make comparisons where relevant**.

Usually, changes occur over time. So, to describe these changes accurately, you must use the appropriate tense.

### 2.3 Complete the sentences with the most appropriate tense of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 The figures for UK households \_\_\_\_\_ (remain) fairly steady between 2000 and 2002 then \_\_\_\_\_ (begin; increase). By 2007, UK household wealth \_\_\_\_\_ (rise) from £4,500 billion to just under £7000 billion.
- 2 Between 2000 and 2007, both the government and household wealth \_\_\_\_\_ (show) positive figures that gradually \_\_\_\_\_ (increase) over time.
- 3 While both the household and government net wealth \_\_\_\_\_ (drop) significantly in 2008, the government's net worth \_\_\_\_\_ (fall) so much that it actually \_\_\_\_\_ (go) into negative figures in 2010.
- 4 Between 2000 and 2010, the total net worth of the UK \_\_\_\_\_ (follow) a similar pattern to that of the households and the government.
- 5 Although the net worth of businesses in the country \_\_\_\_\_ (improve) from 2000 to 2002, this trend \_\_\_\_\_ (not last) long and \_\_\_\_\_ (begin; worsen) again only a year later.
- 6 From 2005 to 2007, although the rest of the country \_\_\_\_\_ (experience) continued growth, the wealth of businesses \_\_\_\_\_ (return) to the levels of 2000.
- 7 The data for the business community \_\_\_\_\_ (reveal) the opposite trend to that of the rest of the country. At the same time that the wealth of households and the government \_\_\_\_\_ (grow), the wealth of businesses \_\_\_\_\_ (decline).

### 2.4 Look at the sentences in 2.3 again. Which sentences are

- A describing a pattern or trend in one sector?
- B pointing out the similarities in data for two or more sectors?
- C contrasting data from two or more sectors?

### 2.5 Study the language used in the sentences in 2.3 and make a note of any new vocabulary.

### 3 Grammatical Accuracy – describing numbers and figures accurately

Another criterion the examiner will use to assess your writing is **Grammatical Range and Accuracy**.

After your introductory sentence and your overview sentence, you need to select relevant data to report on. To do this, you need to be able to accurately describe numbers and figures.

#### 3.1 Read this extract from a description of the bar chart in 2.1 and the underlined information.

The chart shows that the maximum net worth of all UK households reached a little over £7000 billion. In six of the ten years represented in the chart, UK households were worth approximately 5% to 10% more than the UK total. For just under a third of this period, in the years 2002 to 2004, the UK total was equal to or greater than the total worth of UK households.

- 1 Which information is written as numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.)?
- 2 Which information is written in words?

#### 3.2 Replace the relevant numerals in the following sentences with the correct word from the box.

three and a half billion	a quarter	half
a third	one million dollars	

- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the people who attended in 1961 had never attended a concert before.
- 2 They reduced the budget by \$1m 40 years later.
- 3 60% of students report using the library in term time only and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of those use the library at night.
- 4 The population rose by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  billion in the next 15 years.
- 5 Over 15 million planes landed at the airport in the last seven months; this is an increase of  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

A common problem for candidates is in deciding whether or not a noun or a number should have a final 's'.

### 3.3

**Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.**

- 1 There were approximately three hundred \_\_\_\_\_ on the roads in 1970. (thousand; car)
- 2 Current figures show that this has now risen to over twelve \_\_\_\_\_. (million)
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ of people travel by plane every year. (million)
- 4 According to the chart, four \_\_\_\_\_ were manufactured in the factory last month. (hundred; bed)
- 5 Approximately 40% of all \_\_\_\_\_ admitted to working through the night before exams. (student)

Another common mistake that candidates make when describing numbers is missing out the preposition or using the wrong one.

### 3.4

**Choose the correct preposition from the box to complete the sentences below. You may use some prepositions more than once.**

in      of      to      for      from

- 1 The increase \_\_\_\_\_ car use was accompanied by a decline in the use of public transport.
- 2 The table shows the number \_\_\_\_\_ students enrolled at the school between 1960 and 1990.
- 3 Approximately 70% \_\_\_\_\_ women have experienced this as compared to only 30% \_\_\_\_\_ men.
- 4 The figures \_\_\_\_\_ train and bicycle use reveal a steady drop in these types of transport.
- 5 The figures had increased \_\_\_\_\_ 35% \_\_\_\_\_ over 60% within five years.



**Study Tip** When you are practising this type of writing, say your answer aloud to help you decide whether your language is too repetitive. Do your sentences sound very similar? Think about the sentence structures you have used, as well as the vocabulary.

The **coherence** (how easy your writing is to understand) and **cohesion** (how the ideas in your answer are connected together) of your answer are also assessed in Writing Task 1. You need to take the time to organise your ideas into paragraphs. You can practise this in Units 3, 4 and 6.



**Test Tip** Make sure that you leave time at the end to check your writing. You need to make sure that your facts and your language are both accurate.

# Writing skills

## 3 Academic Writing Task 1 – Describing diagrams

In this unit you will practise:

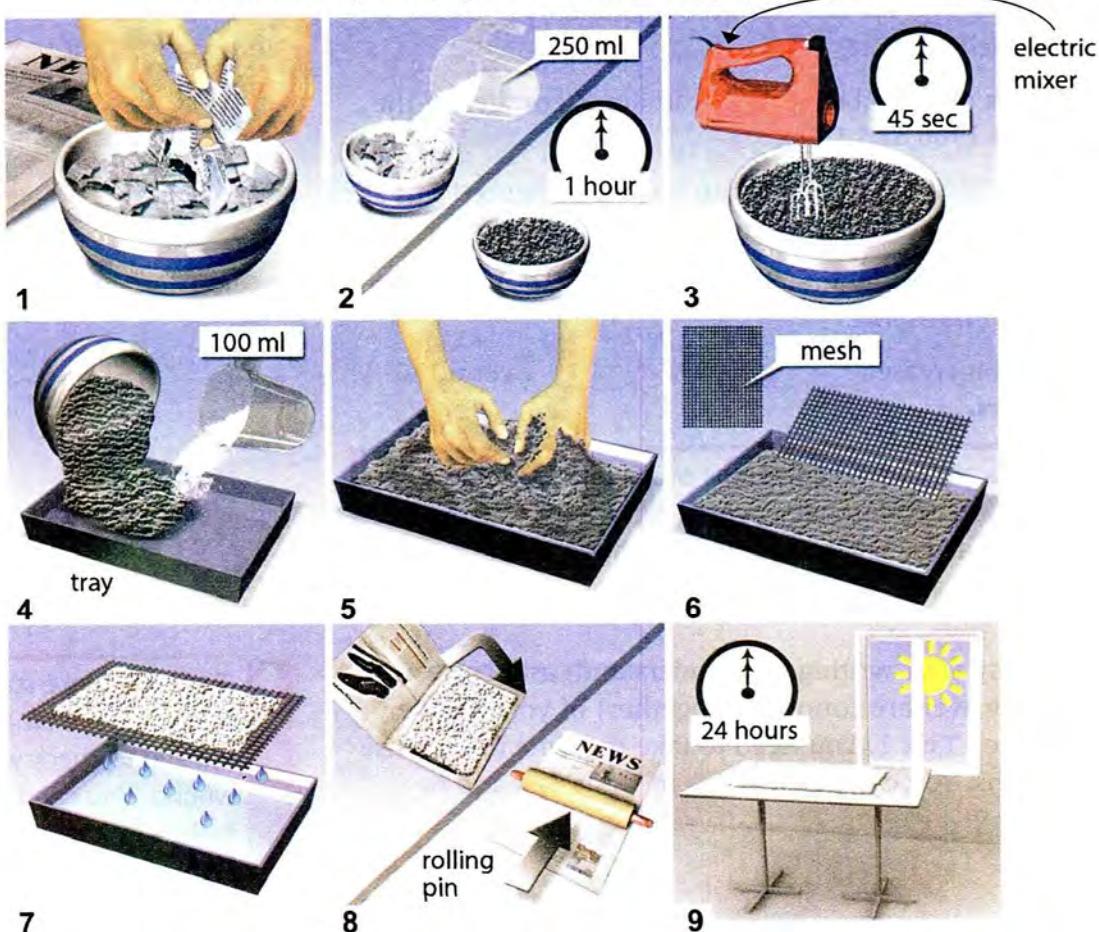
- understanding a diagram
- describing a process
- improving coherence and cohesion
- understanding Lexical Resource
- being accurate

### 1 Understanding a diagram

Another form of visual information is a diagram. Again, you need to spend a little time studying and understanding the diagram before you begin to write. Remember, you need to include all of the most relevant information.

#### 1.1 Look at the diagram below for one minute.

How to make recycled paper from old newspapers.



**Test Tip** Try drawing your own diagram of an everyday machine in your home (e.g. a washing machine). Divide the process up into different stages and describe it.

### 1.2 Match the verbs to parts 1–9 in the diagram. You may use more than one verb for each image.

lift	pour	leave	drain	add	put	tear
mix	press	soak	dry	place	slide	beat

There may be some labels included in the diagram. These are usually the names of different objects that you are not expected to know. You should use these in your description.

### 1.3 Study the diagram again and complete these sentences.

- 1 You need old newspapers, a \_\_\_\_\_ to hold the mixture and a \_\_\_\_\_ containing 250 ml of water.
- 2 An \_\_\_\_\_ is used to form the mixture into a pulp.
- 3 The pulp is poured into a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Some \_\_\_\_\_ is used to lift the pulp out of the water.
- 5 A \_\_\_\_\_ is used to flatten the pulp and press the water out.

**Test Tip** Remember, you have only 20 minutes to complete Writing Task 1, so you need to identify the most important information in only one or two minutes. To help plan your answer, write the different verbs you will use to describe each stage on the diagram itself. This will help to make sure you don't miss out any important steps in your description.

## 2 Describing a process – coherence and cohesion

Your Writing Task answer will be assessed based on its **coherence** (is it easy to understand?) and its **cohesion** (are the ideas connected well?). For every Writing Task answer, your ideas must be organised in a logical way and be connected together. Your answer must not be a list of individual sentences.

### 2.1 Complete sentences 1–9 with endings A–I.

- 1 The diagram explains how to
- 2 First,
- 3 Then, add 250 ml of water and
- 4 Next, using an electric mixer,
- 5 When it is ready,
- 6 Then, use a piece of mesh, to carefully
- 7 Next, open up an old newspaper and
- 8 Then, use a rolling pin to
- 9 Finally,

- A place the pulp mixture inside.
- B beat the mixture for about 45 seconds until it forms a pulp.
- C leave your new paper to dry in a warm place for at least 24 hours.
- D make recycled paper from old newspapers.
- E tear some newspaper into small pieces and put them in a bowl.
- F lift the pulp mixture out of the tray, allowing the water to drain.
- G press the paper down and force out any excess water.
- H leave the paper to soak for up to an hour.
- I pour the pulp into a shallow tray and add a further 100 ml of water. Mix it together by hand.

To describe a process, we usually use the passive voice.

#### Active voice

First, tear some newspaper into small pieces.

#### Passive voice

First, some newspaper is torn into small pieces.

### 2.2 Now complete the description below by changing the sentences in 2.1 to the passive voice.

The diagram explains how recycled paper is made from old newspapers. First, some newspaper is torn into small pieces and put into a bowl. Then,


### 2.3 Look at the complete description in the Answer Key. The beginning of each sentence helps to organise the information and link it together. Complete the list of words/phrases below that help do this.

First, ... Then, ...

## 3 Lexical Resource – being accurate

### Common spelling mistakes

#### 3.1 Accuracy in vocabulary includes using the correct spelling. The sentences below each contain one spelling mistake. Find the mistakes and correct them.

- 1 The goverment increased spending in 1988 and again in 1998.
- 2 The chart shows the persentage of students who have access to the internet in their home.
- 3 From the pie charts, we can see the diffrent sports enjoyed by each age group.
- 4 These figures remained steady untill 1990, when they rose steeply.
- 5 The charts show the energy use of four different contries over a 50-year period.
- 6 The highest rise occurred betwen 1970 and 1990.
- 7 This figure had dicreased by 50% by the end of this decade.
- 8 While the amount of money spent on education remained the same, the budget for transport incresed considerably over this time.



#### Test Tip

Remember, your answer for Writing Task 1 will be marked against specific criteria. One of these is Lexical Resource. To get a good score, you need to use a wide range of vocabulary (not repeating the same common words) and use vocabulary accurately (without mistakes).

## Using the wrong noun

**3.2** Accuracy in vocabulary also involves using the most appropriate words. Improve the accuracy of the sentences below by replacing the underlined words with one of the nouns from the box.

percentage	number	means	method
amount	factors	figures	

- 1 The number of traffic on the road continues to increase.
- 2 The diagram shows the way for making canned food.
- 3 The amount of children who do not have access to a computer at home is higher in Newtown than in Westbridge.
- 4 The chart shows figures for four different ways of transport in The Netherlands.
- 5 Another significant figure is the percent of the budget that the school spent on recruiting staff.
- 6 The chart clearly shows the reasons that led to the current energy problems.

## Using the wrong form

**3.3** Another accuracy problem occurs when you choose the right word but use it in the wrong form. Complete these sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

- 1 The \_\_\_\_\_ between the two is only 9%. (different)
- 2 This involved a great deal of hard \_\_\_\_\_. (work)
- 3 The chart shows several of the areas we tend to take for granted in our \_\_\_\_\_. (live)
- 4 In the older group, there was a dramatic \_\_\_\_\_ in 2000. (increase)
- 5 The graph shows that the \_\_\_\_\_ rate of women increased far more than that of men. (attend)
- 6 There was a \_\_\_\_\_ decrease from 2005 to 2010, but overall it remained the same. (slight)
- 7 The figures show how many people in the area make use of the local \_\_\_\_\_ centre. (sport)
- 8 We often go on \_\_\_\_\_ trips to museums and art galleries. (education)

# Writing skills

## 4 Academic Writing Task 1 – Describing maps

In this unit you will practise:

- describing a map
- describing changes in a place
- being accurate

### 1 Describing a map

**1.1** Look at the following Writing Task 1. Then complete the list of changes below.

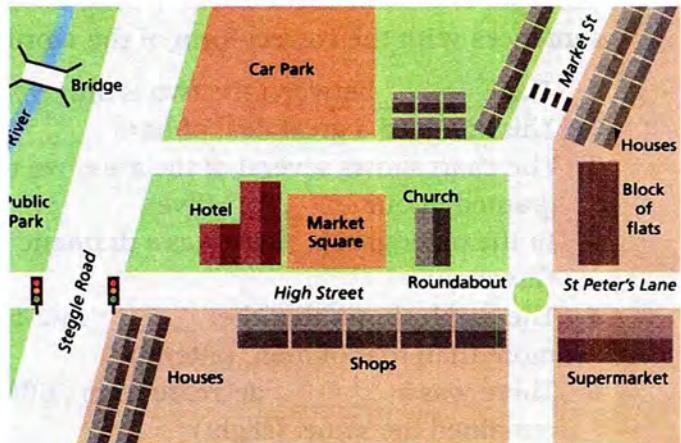
*The following maps show the changes that have taken place in the centre of a town since 1700.*

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

Town centre, 1700



Town centre today



Write at least 150 words

changes:

- the hotel has been expanded / extended
- Steggie Farm
- the roads
- the shops
- the houses
- Goode Farm
- the house in St Peter's Lane
- the stables

**Test Tip** Work out how much space 150 of your words take on a page. This can save you having to count. Make sure your handwriting is neat and legible.