

IELTS Academic Task 1 Line Graph Language Bank

Line graph vocabulary and grammar, plus concise tips for all seven Academic Task 1 question types

Which question type did you receive?

The detailed language tables in this handout are designed mainly for line graphs and other time-based data. Choose different language for processes and maps.

Question type	What to focus on
Line graph	Use movement, degree, values, turning points and sequencing. This is the main focus of this language bank.
Bar chart	Use movement language only when time changes; otherwise compare categories, rankings and proportions.
Pie chart	Describe shares of a whole with percentage, proportion, accounted for, represented and made up.
Table	Group similar figures, compare the main highs and lows, and select important exceptions.
Combination	Connect the visuals through their shared topic and give one overview covering both.
Process	Describe stages with sequencing and passive forms. Do not use rise and fall unless quantities change.
Map	Use location language and change verbs such as was built, was replaced and remained unchanged.

Verb forms and useful adverbs

Use the past form for a finished period. Put the adverb after the movement verb.

Base	Past	Past participle	Noun	Useful adverbs	Example
rise	rose	risen	rise	slightly, gradually, steadily, sharply, dramatically	Sales rose sharply.
fall	fell	fallen	fall	slightly, gradually, steadily, sharply, dramatically	Sales fell gradually.
grow	grew	grown	growth	gradually, steadily, considerably, significantly	The population grew steadily.
increase	increased	increased	increase	slightly, gradually, steadily, considerably, significantly	The figure increased significantly.
decrease	decreased	decreased	decrease	slightly, gradually, steadily, considerably, significantly	The rate decreased gradually.
decline	declined	declined	decline	slightly, gradually, steadily, considerably, significantly	Demand declined steadily.
drop	dropped	dropped	drop	slightly, suddenly, sharply, dramatically	The figure dropped sharply.
climb	climbed	climbed	climb	gradually, steadily, considerably, sharply	Sales climbed steadily.
jump	jumped	jumped	jump	suddenly, sharply, dramatically	The total jumped dramatically.
surge	surged	surged	surge	suddenly, sharply, dramatically	Demand surged dramatically.
fluctuate	fluctuated	fluctuated	fluctuation	slightly, moderately, considerably, dramatically	Prices fluctuated considerably.
recover	recovered	recovered	recovery	slightly, gradually, steadily, strongly	Sales recovered gradually.
stabilise	stabilised	stabilised	stability	gradually, eventually	The figure eventually stabilised.

Article + adjective + noun phrases

Transform verb + adverb into adjective + noun. Do not use 'a' before uncountable growth.

Article	Adjective	Noun	Continuation	Complete sentence
a	slight	rise	in sales	There was a slight rise in sales.
a	gradual	increase	in the figure	There was a gradual increase in the figure.
-	steady	growth	in the population	There was steady growth in the population.
a	considerable	decline	in demand	There was a considerable decline in demand.
a	significant	decrease	in the rate	There was a significant decrease in the rate.
a	sharp	drop	in the total	There was a sharp drop in the total.
a	dramatic	surge	in sales	There was a dramatic surge in sales.
-	considerable	fluctuations	in prices	There were considerable fluctuations in prices.

Upward and downward movement

Use a word that matches the strength and speed of the change.

Language	Meaning or purpose	Example
rise / increase / grow	neutral increase	The figure rose from 20 to 30.
climb	noticeable increase	The figure climbed to 60%.
jump / surge / soar	strong or sudden increase	Demand surged in 2021.
fall / decrease / decline	neutral decrease	The rate declined steadily.
drop	noticeable decrease	The figure dropped to 25%.
plunge / plummet	very large or rapid decrease	Sales plunged in 2022.

Stability and other movement patterns

Distinguish no change from becoming stable.

Language	Meaning or purpose	Example
remain stable / unchanged	no significant change	The figure remained stable at 40%.
stabilise	become stable	The figure stabilised at around 30%.
level off / plateau	movement stops and becomes stable	Sales levelled off at 50%.
fluctuate	move repeatedly up and down	Prices fluctuated throughout the period.
recover	increase again after falling	Sales recovered in 2023.
peak at	reach the highest point	Sales peaked at 75%.
bottom out at	reach the lowest point	Sales bottomed out at 15%.

Degree and speed

Match the adjective to its adverb form.

Language	Meaning or purpose	Example
slight / slightly	small change	a slight rise / rose slightly
gradual / gradually	slow progressive change	a gradual increase / increased gradually
steady / steadily	consistent change	steady growth / grew steadily
considerable / considerably	fairly large change	a considerable fall / fell considerably
significant / significantly	important or large change	a significant increase / increased significantly
sharp / sharply	large or rapid change	a sharp drop / dropped sharply
dramatic / dramatically	very large or obvious change	a dramatic surge / surged dramatically
rapid / rapidly	fast change	rapid growth / grew rapidly

Numbers, values and prepositions

Show the starting value, endpoint and amount of change accurately.

Language	Meaning or purpose	Example
from	starting value	from 20%
to	finishing value	from 20% to 40%
by	amount of change	increased by 20 percentage points
at	exact level	stood at 40%
around / approximately / roughly	approximate value	approximately 50%
just over / just under	slightly above or below	just over 50%

Data nouns and comparisons

Keep the original meaning when paraphrasing data.

Language	Meaning or purpose	Example
number	countable people or things	the number of students
figure	a numerical value	the figure for Australia
total	complete number or amount	the total number
percentage / proportion	a share of a whole	the proportion of households
rate	measurement in relation to another quantity	the unemployment rate
amount	quantity of an uncountable thing	the amount of money
highest / lowest	maximum or minimum	X recorded the highest figure.
twice as high as / double	two times the value	X was twice as high as Y.

Sequencing and cohesion

First identify the relationship; then choose the connector.

Language	Meaning or purpose	Example
initially / to begin with	beginning	Initially, the figure stood at 20%.
then / subsequently / afterwards	next event	Sales then declined.
meanwhile / simultaneously	same time	Meanwhile, costs remained stable.
while / whereas	compare two clauses	Sales rose, whereas costs declined.
before + -ing	earlier movement	Sales increased before falling.
after + -ing	later movement	After rising sharply, sales stabilised.
by the end of the period	end result	By the end of the period, the figure had reached 60%.

Introduction, overview and sentence structures

Use accurate paraphrasing and keep the overview focused on the big picture.

Language	Meaning or purpose	Example
shows	illustrates / presents / compares	The graph illustrates changes in...
between 2000 and 2020	over the period from 2000 to 2020	The graph presents data over the period...
Overall,	introduce the big picture	Overall, all three categories increased.
showed an upward trend	general increase	The figure showed an upward trend.
Subject + verb	one movement	Sales rose sharply.
There + be + noun	one movement	There was a sharp rise in sales.
before / after + -ing	two movements	Sales rose before falling.
while / whereas	simultaneous comparison	Sales increased, whereas costs declined.

Use this language as a reference, not a template. Choose words because they match the data, and do not replace every word simply to sound advanced.