

Writing task one: double line graph

You will be given a graph with two lines. Your task is to describe the information given in the graph by writing a 150 word report. You are not asked to give your opinion. You should spend around 20 minutes on the task.

What is being tested is your ability to:

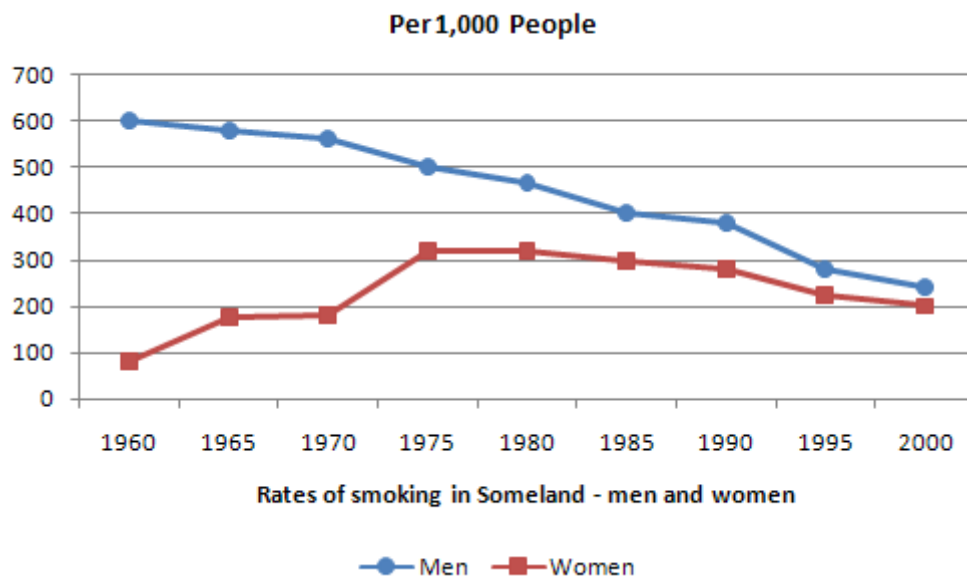
- objectively describe the information given to you
- compare and contrast
- report on an impersonal topic without the use of opinion
- use the language of graph description

Sample task

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information in the graph below.

Write at least 150 words.



Your task

Complete the task one report writing exercise above. Spend only 20 minutes. Then look at the guidelines and the sample answer below.

Guidelines for a good answer

Does the report have a suitable structure?

- Does it have an introduction, body and conclusion?

- Does it include connective words to make the writing cohesive within sentences and paragraphs?

Does the report use suitable grammar and vocabulary?

- Does it include a variety of sentence structures?
- Does it include a range of appropriate vocabulary?

Does the report meet the requirements of the task?

- Does it meet the word limit requirements?
- Does it describe the whole graph adequately?
- Does it focus on the important trends presented in the graphic information?

Now read sample answer one. How well does it follow the guidelines?

Sample answer 1

The graph shows the rate of smoking in Someland.

In 1960, 600 men in every 1,000 was smoking. This number decreased gradually to 500 by 1974 and continued to decrease but more steeply to 300 in 1995. In contrast the rate of women smokers in 1960 was very low at only 80 in every 1,000. This number increased to 170 by 1968 and increased again but more steeply to 320 in 1977. The rate of female smokers then remained stable at 320 until 1984 at which point the figures began to decline and had dropped to 250 by 1995.

Teacher's comments on the sample answer

"The report **structure** lacks a clear introduction giving the parameters of the graph (should include who and when) and lacks a statement summing up the main trends. The report also lacks any conclusion. The candidate uses a variety of **grammatical structures** and **vocabulary** so that the writing is not repetitive. In terms of **task requirements**, the report is short because the introduction and conclusion sections are missing. However, the body of the report does describe the graph well."

Now look at a better answer to this task. Notice how it follows the guidelines.

Sample answer 2

The graph compares the rate of smoking in men and women in Someland between the years 1960 and 2000. It can be clearly seen that the rate of smoking for both men and women is currently declining and that fewer women have smoked throughout the period.

In 1960, 600 men in every 1,000 was smoking. This number decreased gradually to 500 by 1974 and continued to decrease but more steeply to 250 in 2000. In contrast, the rate of smoking in women in 1960 was very low at only 80 in every 1,000. By 1968 this increased to 170, and increased again but more steeply to 320 in 1977. The rate of female smokers then remained stable at 320 until 1984 at which point the figures began to decline and had dropped to 200 by 2000.

In conclusion we can see that the rate of smoking in men dropped throughout the whole period but was always at a higher level than the female figures. The rate of smoking in women increased until 1977 but then decreased for the rest of the period.

Strategies for improving your IELTS score

Selecting information

In completing this task it is important that you describe the whole graph fully. However, this does not mean that you should note every detail. In most cases there will be too much information for you to mention each figure. You will therefore need to summarise the graph in meaningful segments, as we saw in the section on single line graphs.

Report structure

Like the single line graph, your report should be structured simply with an introduction, body and conclusion. Tenses should be used appropriately.

Use two standard opening sentences to introduce the graph and your report. These opening sentences should make up the first paragraph. Sentence one should define what the graph is about, that is the date, location, what is being described in the graph etc. For example:

The graph compares the rate of smoking between men and women in Someland between the years 1960 and 2000.

Notice that in the single line graph we said that 'the graph shows ...' but with two lines we can more accurately say 'the graph compares ...'

Notice the tense used. Even though it describes information from the past, the graph shows the information in the present time.

Notice that the sample opening sentence does not simply copy the words used on the graphic material. Copied sentences will not be assessed by the examiner and so you waste your time including them.

Sentence two (and possibly three) might sum up the overall trend. For example:

It can be clearly seen that the rate of smoking for both men and women is currently declining and that fewer women had smoked throughout the period.

Notice that the Present perfect tense is used. Here we are talking about the rate of smoking in the past and up to the present.

The body of the report will describe the graph or graphs in detail. You will need to decide on the most clear and logical order to present the material. Line graphs generally present information in chronological order and so the most logical order for you to write up the information would also, most probably, be from earliest to latest. Bar graphs, pie charts, etc are organised in different ways and so

you need to decide on the organisation of each one.

Your report should end with one or two sentences which summarise your report or draw a relevant conclusion.