

Active IELTS writing
How to answer task 1

First, look at the task. Read it carefully. You have time.

1. Write your introductory sentence. Say what it is and what it shows.

This sentence can repeat the ideas in the title but in different words, e.g. 'The graph shows the number of people studying English in the UK from 1990 to 2000' can be reworded as 'This diagram shows how many students of English were in Britain over a ten year period from 1990 on'. If you use the same words then the examiner doesn't count them, so if you write less than 150 you will have problems.

2. Write your overview (summary). You can put this at the beginning or at the end.

This is a couple of sentences which identify the main trends and changes on the diagram, e.g. In general the graph shows that there was an increase in the number of people studying until 1995 and then this number dropped.'

3. Identify a framework.

For example, if you have a graph which shows the numbers of men and women in further education in three different years, you can either write one paragraph on men and one on women, or one describing what happens in each year – three in total. Both ways would be correct. But it is very important to **identify a framework and follow it**.

4. Identify the main features.

You may not need to talk about every detail. Often there is a lot of information on several diagrams and you need to select the most important features. Also, if you have two or more diagrams you are not expected to make connections between them, just describe one and then the other.

5. Identify the data and the dimensions you need.

Be careful here! If your diagram talks about \$, then use \$. If the diagram has numbers in 1000s, then say 4000, 6000 etc, not 4 and 6. You will lose marks if you don't use the data correctly or forget to include it.

6. Write a short description based on these.

Remember you only need a **total of 150 words**.

7. If you have time, write an opinion sentence to conclude, for example, 'It is interesting to see that more women than men are in further education nowadays'

This is optional. If you have answered the question well, then an opinion is a nice addition to finish it off.