Describing trends in IELTS Writing Task 1

Tilmashq

One-page cheat sheet · sentence patterns, prepositions, strength, shape

> **Variety comes from switching sentence frames, not from hunting for rarer verbs. Save the strong words for the strongest changes on the graph.**

Four sentence patterns — one fact, four ways

1. Verb + adverb — the workhorse, ~2/3 of sentences

`Streaming revenue rose dramatically after 2012.`

Adverb after the verb: *fell steadily*, not *steadily fell*.

2. There was a + adjective + noun — max once a paragraph

`There was a dramatic rise in streaming revenue after 2012.`

Pairs: sharply → a sharp · steadily → a steady · slightly → a slight

3. X saw / experienced + noun — good to open a paragraph

`Streaming saw a dramatic rise after 2012.`

Make the category the subject, not the year.

4. Participle tail — a second figure, no new sentence

`…took off after 2012, reaching $760 million by 2020.`

reaching / rising to / falling to / peaking at. Must continue, not contradict.

Prepositions with numbers

Prep.	Meaning · example
from … to	start and end: fell from $820m to $90m
to	end value: rose to $760m
by	size of change: fell by $60m
at	a level: peaked at $330m; stood at $30m in 2000
of	size after a noun: a fall of $60m
in	what changed: a rise in streaming revenue
by + year	no later than (Past Perfect): by 2020, streaming had overtaken CDs

Size, then thing: *an increase of $120m in download revenue*. ✗ reached to · peaked on → reached $760m · peaked at $330m / in 2012.

Multiples — learn in pairs

Rise	Fall
doubled	halved
more than doubled	more than halved
tripled / trebled	fell to a third of its 2000 level
rose sevenfold	fell to a ninth of its original level
was twice as high as	was half the figure for

Check the arithmetic: 90 → 380 is *more than quadrupled*. Axis in %: 45% → 65% is **20 percentage points**, not "a 20% increase". No multiples in the overview.

How strong — measure against the start value, not the angle on the page

How strong	Rise	Fall	Adverb / adjective
Several times over	surged, soared, rocketed, took off	plummeted, plunged, collapsed	dramatically / a dramatic
Clearly	rose, increased, climbed, grew	fell, dropped, declined, decreased	sharply, considerably, significantly
Moderately	rose steadily, climbed gradually	fell steadily, declined gradually	steadily, gradually, moderately
A little	edged up, crept up, rose slightly	edged down, dipped, fell slightly	slightly, marginally
Not at all	remained stable, stayed flat, levelled off, held steady — only if the line did not move at all		—

Shape of the line

- **Accelerating:** growth accelerated / gathered pace
- **Slowing:** growth slowed / lost momentum / began to level off
- **Peak and fall:** peaked at X in 2012 before falling back
- **Low and recovery:** hit a low of X, then recovered / bottomed out
- **Fluctuation:** fluctuated between A and B — one word plus the range
- **Plateau:** rose until 2015, after which it levelled off at around A
- **Two halves:** rose sharply to a peak of $330m in 2012 **before falling** to $60m by 2020

Comparing lines

- Streaming saw **by far the steepest** increase of the four.
- Vinyl **followed a similar pattern**, though from a much lower base.
- CDs fell, **whereas** streaming rose. (not at sentence start)
- Streaming **overtook** CDs between 2012 and 2016.
- The gap **narrowed / widened**; the lines **converged** at ~$300m.
- Streaming earned **over eight times as much as** CDs.

Strong sentence = movement + shape + comparison, ~20 words.

Common mistakes

✗	✓
rose by $760m when you mean the end value	rose to $760m — same only if the start was zero
an increase of sales · There was a sharply rise	an increase in sales · a sharp rise
soared for 25 → 45 · remained stable for 12 → 10	rose steadily · dipped slightly
every year in turn · has grown · …because of smartphones	start, end, turning points · grew (past years) · no reasons not on the graph