

Writing skills practice: Describing a bar chart – exercises

Look at the bar chart, exam question and sample answer and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

Preparation

Write the verbs in the correct group.

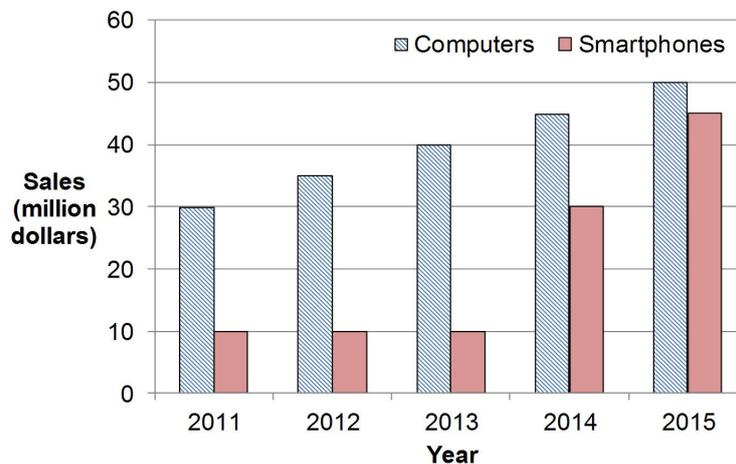
increase	rise	grow	rose	increased
grew	was spent	goes up	is spent	went up

Present	Past

Writing skills practice: Describing a bar chart – exercises
Exam question

The bar chart shows the amount of money spent on two types of electronic items in country X.

Summarise the information in the chart by selecting and reporting the main features. Make comparisons where relevant.



The chart gives information about how much money was spent on computers and smartphones in country X between the years 2011 and 2015.

According to the chart, there were upward trends in spending on both items. Computer sales increased steadily by \$5 million each year. Smartphone sales remained level at \$10 million until 2013 and then increased dramatically, reaching \$45 million dollars in 2015. Although they are still less than the value of computer sales, they are only \$5 million behind.

People's total expenditure on these electronic devices rose dramatically in this period. The total was \$40 million in 2011 and it rose to \$95 million in 2015.

Overall, the sales of both of these items grew, but smartphone sales grew more quickly. If these trends continue, we can expect smartphone sales to overtake computer sales in 2016 or soon after.

Top Tips for writing

- The first paragraph is short. It should simply say what the chart shows and where and when it describes.
- Avoid repeating words in the question. Instead, use other words with the same or similar meanings.
- Describe the trends you can see. Use numbers from the chart.
- To sum up, highlight the most important things the information shows. You can also say what is likely to happen in the future.
- Don't try to explain the chart. In this type of exam question you just have to describe what happened, not say why it happened.

1. Check your understanding: multiple choice

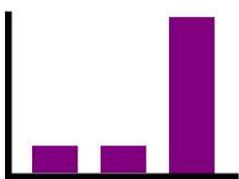
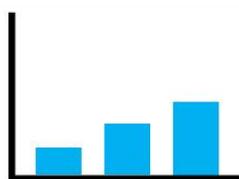
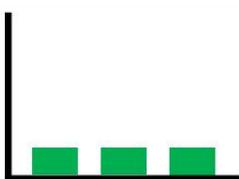
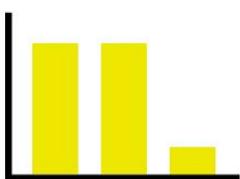
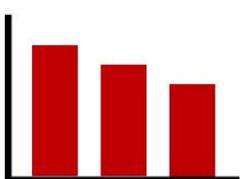
Circle the correct option to complete these sentences.

1. The chart shows sales of **one / two / three** types of electronic item.
2. The graph shows spending over a **three / four / five** -year period.
3. The data shows sales from **2011 / 2012 / 2014** to 2015.
4. Sales of both items **increased / remained level / fell** .
5. Sales of **computers / smartphones / both** remained level and then increased dramatically.
6. Sales of **computers / smartphones / both** increased steadily.

2. Check your writing: matching

Write the description in the box below the correct bar chart.

... remained level	... increased dramatically	... fell steadily
... fell dramatically		... rose steadily

3. Check your writing: gap fill

Complete the sentences with a word.

1. This chart gives information _____ spending on smartphones and computers.
2. The chart shows information for country X _____ 2011 and 2015.
3. According _____ the chart, spending increased on both items.
4. Spending on computers increased _____ \$5 million each year.
5. From 2011 to 2013 smartphone sales remained level _____ \$10 million.
6. Expenditure on smartphones is still less _____ on computers.
7. Total spending on these items rose from \$40 million _____ \$95 million in the period described.
8. Spending on smartphones could overtake spending on computers _____ 2016.

4. Check your writing: gap fill

Complete the sentences with a phrase from the box.

grew	overtake	increased steadily
increased dramatically	remained level	in this period

1. Computer sales _____ (*went up at a steady rate*) during the five years.
2. Smartphone sales _____ (*stayed the same*) until 2013.
3. In 2014 and 2015 smartphone sales _____ (*went up a lot in a short time*).
4. People's total spending on these electronic devices rose dramatically _____ (*during these years*).
5. Overall, the sales of both these items _____ (*went up*).
6. If these trends continue, we can expect smartphone sales to _____ (*become greater than*) computer sales in 2016.

Discussion

How often do you buy a new computer or smartphone?