

6.1 test yourself

Complete the words in the sentences.

- From _____ evidence de _____ that some non-avian dinosaurs were able to swim.
- The company is _____ st _____ to their shareholders that indicated slight but significant growth in three new markets.
- After the team had ev _____ the em _____ data, it became clear that none of the animals had moved further than 500 metres from the river.
- Hogue att _____ the evidence in both reports, arguing that it was fl _____ and inconclusive.
- When all the re _____ facts had em _____, it was apparent that human error rather than mechanical failure was responsible for the accident.
- If Howells had not le _____ vi _____ information to the press, the mismanagement of these funds might have continued for years.

1 Referring to visual information

Some useful phrases to be aware of when referring to diagrams and other visual information such as graphs, charts, and tables are:

This diagram shows/illustrates/displays ...
As can be seen from/in the diagram, ...
It can be seen from/in the diagram that ...
We can see from/in the diagram that ...
From the diagram, it may be seen/concluded that ...
According to the diagram, ...
As (is) shown in the diagram, ...

- *This diagram illustrates the regions that are most affected by drought.*
- *As can be seen from the diagram, the greatest proportion of American debt is actually owed to the country itself, in the form of government bonds.*
- *As shown in the diagram, share value rose sharply in 2007, when the merger with Stanleys plc was announced.*

2 Describing recent/past trends

There are two useful sentence patterns for describing trends in facts and figures.

- a Present perfect/past simple of *be* + adjective + noun + *in*

ADJECTIVES: *dramatic, gradual, slight, small, steady, rapid, sharp, steep, sudden*

NOUNS: *decline, decrease, drop, fall, increase, reduction, rise*

- *There has been a dramatic reduction recently in the number of loans to small businesses.*
- *There was a steady rise in the 1990s in UK births to unmarried mothers.*

- b Noun + present perfect/past simple of verb such as *rise* + adverb

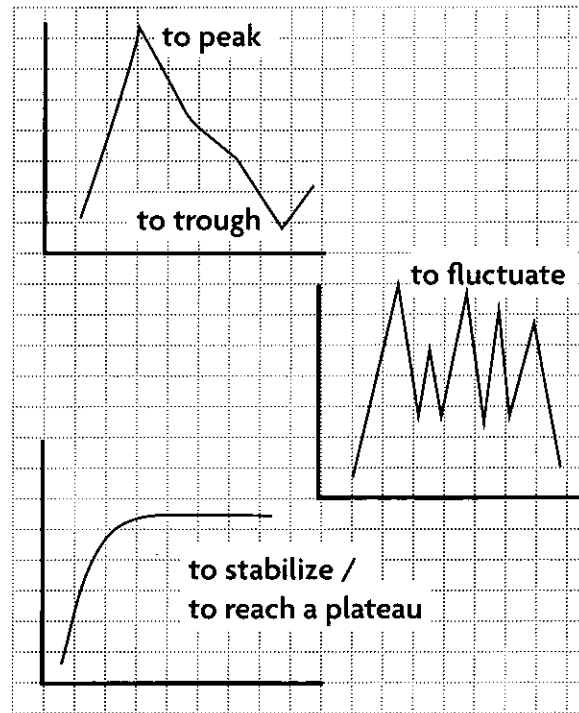
VERBS: *decline, decrease, drop, fall, grow, increase, rise*

ADVERBS: *dramatically, gradually, slightly, steadily, rapidly, sharply, steeply, suddenly*

- *Profits have increased gradually for the electronics company Sheldon plc.*
- *Leisure spending fell sharply in the last quarter of 2009.*
- *The price of computers has been dropping steadily for the last ten years.*

You can use the following verbs and verb phrases to describe the state of figures or statistics at particular periods:

to peak/reach a peak, to trough/hit a trough
to remain stable/constant, to stabilize, to level off/out,
to reach a plateau
to fluctuate (= to go up and down)



- *Sales of properties in Spain to UK residents reached a peak in the early 1980s.*
- *UK unemployment figures stabilized at 1.8 million in late 2008 after fluctuating in the previous two years.*

3 Making comparisons

Facts and figures for one country, company etc. are often compared with those for others, or with the way they used to be in the past. When talking about amounts, percentages, etc. the preposition *by* comes between a verb and the number, and *of* comes between a noun and a number.

- *Economic growth in the UK fell/declined by 0.2% in the second quarter of 2010.*
- *Spain enjoyed an increase/rise of 10% in its tourist trade in 2007.*

Structures with *more* (or *higher/lower*, etc.) ... *than* or ... *as ... as ...* are useful.

- *The Labour Party gained 3% more of the public vote than the Conservatives in the local elections of 2009.*
- *Manufacturing productivity was not nearly as high in France as it was in Germany in 2009.*

You can use the superlative form (*highest/lowest*, etc.) to describe peaks and troughs.

- *Birth rates in southern Europe reached their lowest level for six years in 2005.*

(You could also write *Birth rates ... hit a trough/troughed in 2005* or *Birth rates ... hit a six-year low in 2005*.)

You can also use expressions describing multiple amounts (*two/three*, etc. *times* or the verbs *double*, *treble*, *quadruple*).

- *Nearly three times as many Irish citizens work in the construction industry as in agriculture.*
- *The number of Norwegians with access to high-speed broadband doubled between 2005 and 2006.*

(See page 017 in unit 2 *Comparing and contrasting* for more on comparative and superlative structures.)

6.2 test yourself

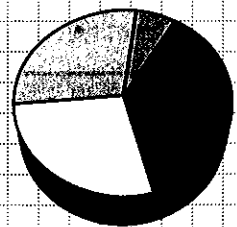
Correct each sentence by adding one of the words in the box.

constant highest tripled risen
 from by in of

- Clifton plc increased their exports to North America 11% in 2008.
- In 2009 Portugal suffered a decline 22% in its gross export figures.
- The number of graduates obtaining employment within six months of leaving university reached its level for a decade in 2007.
- It can be seen the pie chart that Brazil produces twice as much coffee as Colombia.
- There has been a gradual increase births by Caesarean section in the USA over the past thirty years.
- According to the British Antarctic Survey, mean annual temperatures on the Antarctic Peninsula have rapidly since records began fifty years ago.
- Since its abolition, UK public support for the restoration of the death penalty has remained at around 65%.
- UK sales of Freedom Food products between 2007 and 2009 to reach £122 million.

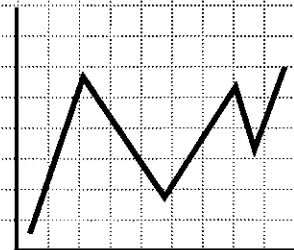
6.2 Talking about facts and figures

6.2 study



Pie chart

Line graph



Histogram or bar chart

