

Test section – Academic Writing Task 1

Developing range of grammatical structures and lexis

Activities

1. Analysing a Writing Task 1 answer
2. Assessing strengths and weaknesses
3. Sentence transformation
4. Team sentence transformation

Aims

- to help students demonstrate their ability to use a range of grammatical structures
- to help students develop their lexical range

Learning outcomes

- Students will have analysed what makes a good answer in terms of Grammatical Range and Accuracy, and Lexical Resource.
- Students will have practised using different structures to improve their answers.

Information about this section of IELTS

In Academic Writing Task 1, test takers will be presented with a graph, table, chart or diagram. Test takers will be asked to describe and summarise the information in their own words. This might involve describing and summarising data, describing the stages of a process or how something works, or describing an object or event. Test takers should write at least 150 words in a formal, academic style. The recommended time for this task is 20 minutes.

Time	60 minutes
Level	B1+
Class	Suitable for groups / large classes F2F / Online
Interaction	Pair or group work Individual work
Materials	Worksheets x2 attached

Activity 1: Analysing a sample answer

Material: Worksheet 1

Time: 5 minutes

Procedure:

- introduce the focus of the lesson: Academic Writing Task 1 - Developing range of grammar and lexis.
- give students a copy of Worksheet 1.
- students work alone to underline verbs and circle adverbs.
- get class feedback.

Answers

The weather station recorded temperatures of about 18 degrees in 2006. From 2006 to 2008 the temperature increased **rapidly** to 27^o C. However, from 2008, the temperature declined **gradually** to around 22^oC in 2011. From 2010 to 2017 it fluctuated **slightly**, and then rose **dramatically** again. The temperature peaked at just under 35 degrees in 2020.

Activity 2: Assessing strengths and weaknesses

Material: Worksheet 1

Time: 5-10 minutes

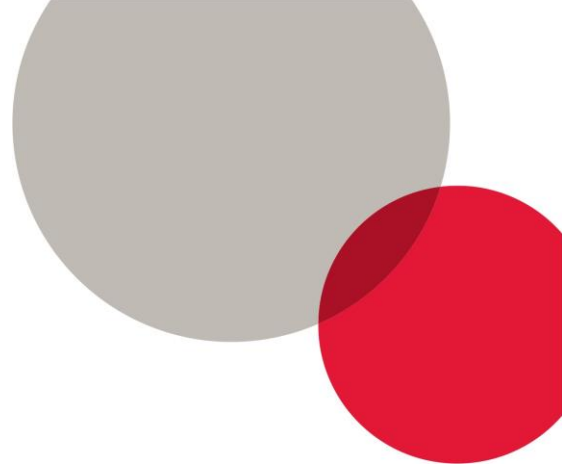
Procedure:

- students work in pairs and decide what the test taker has done well (the strengths) and less well (weaknesses) in this answer.
- elicit some ideas from the class.

Answers

Strengths: test taker has used a variety of vocabulary, the language is accurate (spelling, grammar, word formation, etc.), the information is accurate (= it correctly describes the graph), data is given to support the description (e.g. *to 27 degrees*).

Weaknesses: the main weakness is the limited range of grammatical structures used – past simple is repeated throughout the extract. Also, they only use the verb + adverb formulation and do not extend the lexical range.



Activity 3: Sentence transformation

Material: Worksheet 1

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

- draw students' attention to the information box and elicit the ideas for introducing range of both grammar and lexis.
- ask students to look at sentence 1 in exercise 3. Elicit what the verb is (fluctuated) and the adverb (slightly).
- elicit the noun derived from the verb (fluctuation), and the adjective derived from the adverb (slight). Nominate a student to provide the completed sentence.
- you may wish to work through sentence 2 (active/passive) with the whole class as with sentence 1.
- students work alone and complete the exercise.
- put students into pairs to compare their answers.
- elicit the answers and their ideas on the board with feedback.

Note

When transforming **v + adv** to **adj + n**, a **preposition** is needed after the noun. The passive is formed with 'to be' in the correct tense (is/are or was/were) + **past participle** and the preposition 'by' must be used if the agent is mentioned.

Answers

1 From 2011 to 2017 the temperature fluctuated slightly. (**verb + adverb**)
From 2011 to 2017 there was a **slight fluctuation in** the temperature. (**adj. + noun**)

2 The weather station recorded temperatures of 18 degrees in 2006. (**active**)
Temperatures of 18 degrees **were recorded** in 2006. (**passive**)

3 There was an enormous fall in the value of the dollar in the last year.
The value of the dollar **fell enormously** in the last year.

4 The number of people using public transport rose slightly.
There was a **slight rise in** the number of people using public transport.

5 It is predicted there will be a dramatic increase in price by 2030.
The price is predicted to **increase dramatically** by 2030.

6 Barometers measure atmospheric pressure.
Atmospheric pressure **is measured by** barometers.

7 The supervisor checks all components of the computer personally.
All components of the computer **are checked by** the supervisor personally.

8 The water passed through a number of valves in the pump.
The water **is passed** through a number of valves in the pump.

Activity 4: Team sentence transformation

Material: Worksheet 2

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

- put students into pairs and put two pairs, Pair A and Pair B, together in groups of 4.
- cut out the sentences on Worksheet 2 so that each group of 4 have a full set of 8 sentences.
- students put the piles of sentences face-down between them.
- explain the rules:
 - Pair A turn over a sentence slip.
 - they have 60 seconds to work together to transform it.
 - Pair B set a timer for 60 seconds and say 'stop' when it is over.
 - the sentence slip is put to one side.
 - Pair B turn over the next sentence slip with 60 seconds to transform it.
 - continue until all 8 sentences have been re-written.
- when all the groups have finished the game, give out a copy of the worksheet to each student.
- work through each sentence with the whole class. Each pair gets one point for a fully-correct sentence transformation.

- tell students to write the correct transformation onto the worksheet.
- the pair with the most points in each group of four wins.

Answers

1 The price of theatre tickets reached a peak in 2014.

There **was** a peak **in the price of theatre tickets** in 2014.

2 A slight drop in temperatures in 2016 led to an overall average of 24 degrees.

Temperatures dropped slightly in 2016 **leading to** an overall average of 24 degrees.

3 In general, Germany will spend much more on technology than the UK over the next 20 years.

In general, **much more will be** spent on technology in Germany **than in the UK** over the next 20 years.

4 The ageing population in Japan has grown steadily.

There **has been a steady growth in** the ageing population in Japan.

5 Finally, a conveyor belt moves the parcels to the distribution point.

Finally, **the parcels are moved to the distribution point by** a conveyor belt.

6 Spending patterns in Asia have differed significantly since 2018.

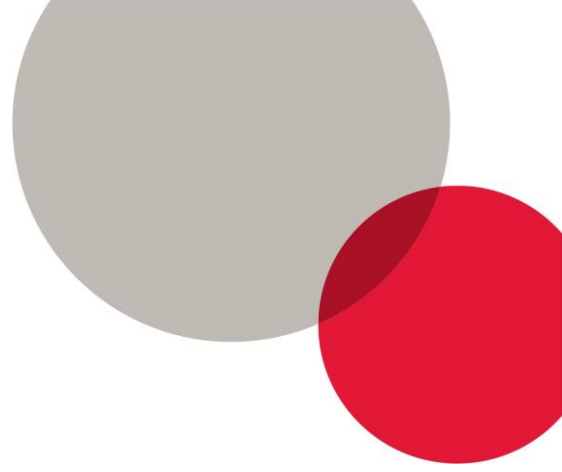
There **have been significant differences in** spending patterns in Asia since 2018.

7 The price of oil is expected to rise dramatically.

There **is expected to be a dramatic rise in** the price of oil.

8 The town council has made a number of noticeable changes to the layout of the roads.

The layout of the roads **has been changed noticeably**.



Extra information

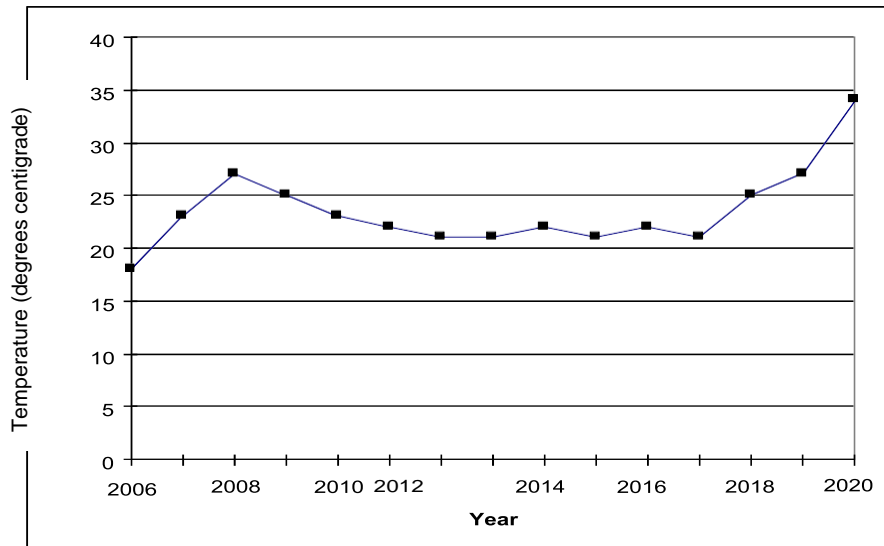
- You may wish to download the Band Descriptors for Writing Task 1 or tell your students to do so.
https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/ielts_writing_band_descriptors.pdf
- You can then point out the important differences in the criteria Grammatical Range & Accuracy and Lexical Resource for the levels appropriate to your class.

Academic Writing Task 1

Worksheet 1

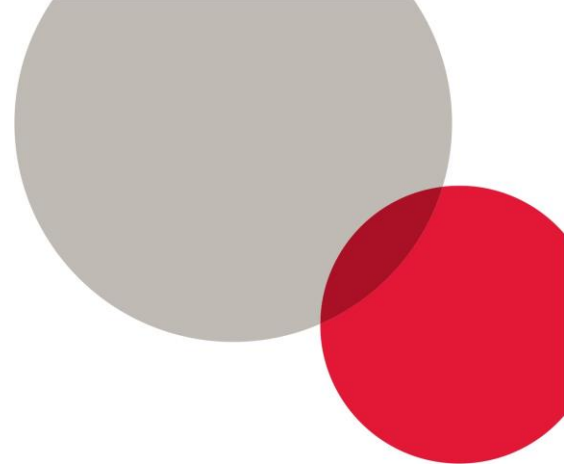
Strengths and weaknesses

1 Look at the graph below and read an extract from one test taker's response. Underline the verbs and circle the adverbs.



The weather station recorded temperatures of about 18 degrees in 2006. From 2006 to 2008 the temperature increased rapidly to 27° C. However, from 2008, the temperature declined gradually to around 22 °C in 2011. From 2011 to 2017 it fluctuated slightly, and then rose dramatically again. The temperature peaked at just under 35 degrees in 2020.

2 Work with a partner. Discuss what the strengths and weaknesses of this response, in terms of grammar and vocabulary.



Sentence transformation

In Writing Task 1, you need to demonstrate that you can use a range of grammatical structures and a variety of vocabulary. You can do this by using a mixture of active and passive verbs, and by using both adjective + noun, and verb + adverb combinations.

3 *Re-write the following sentences so the second sentence has the same meaning as the first.*

1 From 2011 to 2017 the temperature fluctuated slightly. **(verb + adverb)**
From 2011 to 2017 there was athe temperature. **(adj. + noun)**

2 The weather station recorded temperatures of 18 degrees in 2006. **(active)**
Temperatures of 18 degrees in 2006. **(passive)**

3 There was an enormous fall in the value of the dollar in the last year.
The value of the dollar in the last year.

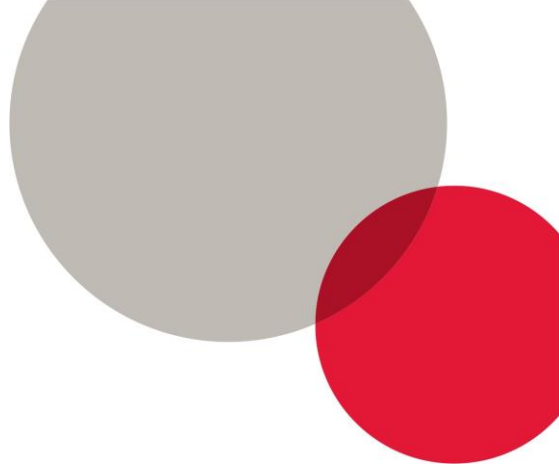
4 The number of people using public transport rose slightly.
There was the number of people using public transport.

5 It is predicted there will be a dramatic increase in price by 2030.
The price is predicted to by 2030.

6 Barometers measure atmospheric pressure.
Atmospheric pressure barometers.

7 The supervisor checks all components of the computer personally.
All components of the computer the supervisor personally.

8 The water passed through a number of valves in the pump.
The water through a number of valves in the pump.



Academic Writing Task 1

Worksheet 2

Team sentence transformation

Complete the gaps in the sentences below so that the second sentence means the same.

Example:

There were dramatic fluctuations in the number of people who took holidays from 2010 to 2015.

The number of people who took holidays **fluctuated dramatically** from 2010 to 2015.

1 The price of theatre tickets reached a peak in 2014.

There _____ a peak _____ in 2014.

2 A slight drop in temperatures in 2016 led to an overall average of 24 degrees.

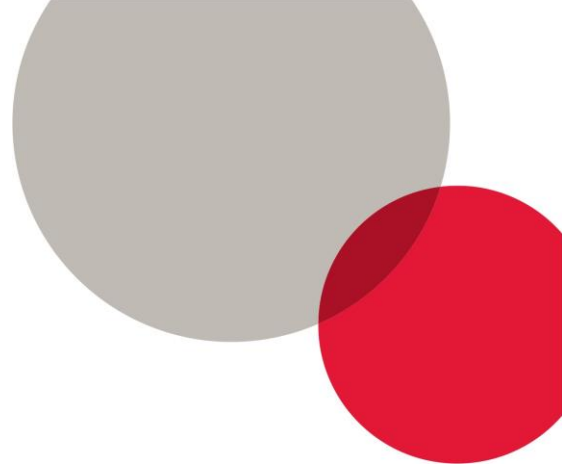
_____ in 2016 _____ an overall average of 24 degrees.

3 In general, Germany will spend much more on technology than the UK over the next 20 years.

In general, _____ spent on technology in Germany _____ over the next 20 years.

4 The ageing population in Japan has grown steadily.

There _____ the ageing population in



Japan.

5 Finally, a conveyor belt moves the parcels to the distribution point.

Finally, _____ parcels _____
_____ a conveyor belt.

6 Spending patterns in Asia have differed significantly since 2018.

There _____ spending patterns in Asia
since 2018.

7 The price of oil is expected to rise dramatically.

There _____ expected _____ a _____ the price
of oil.

8 The town council has made a number of noticeable changes to the layout of the roads.

The layout of the roads _____