

# BARRON'S

The Leader in Test Preparation



# Writing for the IELTS®

Dr. Lin Lougheed

Comprehensive guide to completing both IELTS writing tasks

Easy 1-2-3 approach to writing the perfect essay

Writing practice to build your confidence

Step-by-step system for revising your writing



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**Dr. Lin Lougheed**

Teachers College  
Columbia University



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250 Wireless Boulevard

Hauppauge, New York 11788

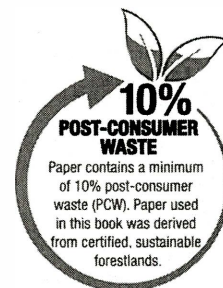
**www.barronseduc.com**

*Library of Congress Control Number: 2016934837*

ISBN: 978-1-4380-0765-6

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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# Introduction

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## WHAT IS IELTS?

IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is an English language proficiency exam that tests listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. There are over 1,000 test centers in more than 140 countries around the world. Over 9,000 organizations, including universities, government agencies, and private companies, accept IELTS test scores.

There are two versions of the test—Academic and General Training. The Academic version is for students who want to pursue a university education in an English-speaking country. The General Training test is for people who need to demonstrate English language proficiency for work, training programs, secondary education, or immigration to certain countries.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book will help you prepare for the writing section of the IELTS test whether you are planning to take the Academic or the General Training version. Both versions of the test include a writing section with two tasks.

The organization of this book follows the criteria IELTS examiners use to score your writing. If you study everything in this book, you will score well.

- Task Achievement/Task Response
- Coherence and Cohesion
- Lexical Resource
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy

In the **Task Achievement/Task Response** chapter, you will learn to follow a three-step model for creating an essay:

- STEP 1** Plan
- STEP 2** Write
- STEP 3** Revise

You will learn how to apply this model to each of the IELTS writing tasks. Study the sections of this chapter that focus on the version of the test that you plan to take—Academic or General Training.

Each section leads you step by step through the process of writing an essay in response to that particular task. Therefore, you should work your way through each section from beginning to end. As you study a section, you will become familiar with the types of questions you will have to respond to on the IELTS. You will also learn to complete your responses within the time limits of the test.

When you respond to the IELTS writing tasks, you must write clearly, coherently, and correctly. The next three chapters of this book will help you do that. They will help you develop skills you will need for both the Academic and General Training versions of the test.

In the **Coherence and Cohesion** chapter, you will practice organizing your writing and connecting your ideas. In the **Lexical Resource** chapter, you will learn how to develop your vocabulary and use it correctly. In the **Grammatical Range and Accuracy** chapter, you will review grammar rules and practice applying them to your writing.

You can work through these chapters in order. Or, you can *focus first* on the parts that address your weakest areas. Then, you can use the rest for review and practice.

In the Appendix you will find a **More Writing Practice** section with a selection of essays written in response to IELTS writing tasks. You can study the essays as models of good writing. You can also use this section for further practice by writing your own responses to the tasks included in the section.

## IELTS WRITING SCORES

Scores for the IELTS writing tasks are reported in a scale of bands, ranging from Band 0 to Band 9. Each band represents a level of ability. Scores are based on the following criteria.

**TASK ACHIEVEMENT (TASK 1):** To achieve a high score, you must write a well-developed report that completely addresses all parts of the task.

**TASK RESPONSE (TASK 2):** To achieve a high score, you must address all parts of the task in a well-developed essay that presents a clear position supported with relevant ideas.

**COHERENCE AND COHESION:** To achieve a high score, your ideas and information must follow a logical organization (coherence), and you must use a range of cohesive devices skillfully.

**LEXICAL RESOURCE:** To achieve a high score, you must use a wide range of vocabulary fluently with few errors.

**GRAMMATICAL RANGE AND ACCURACY:** To achieve a high score, you must use a wide range of grammatical structures fluently and accurately with few errors.

For a complete description of the writing task bands, visit the IELTS website: [http://www.ielts.org/researchers/score\\_processing\\_and\\_reporting.aspx#Writing](http://www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx#Writing)

## TIPS

### Before the test

- Practice writing within time limits. You can use the tasks in the More Writing Practice section of the Appendix for practice. Give yourself 20 minutes to complete a Task 1 response and 40 minutes to complete a Task 2 response.
- Become familiar with word count. On the IELTS, you will write your essays by hand. You will have to write a minimum of 150 words for Task 1 and 250 words for Task 2, but you won't be able to take the time to count your words. As you practice writing essays at home, count your words. You will become familiar with what 150 words and 250 words look like in your handwriting.
- To prepare for Academic Task 1, take some time to study a variety of graphs, charts, and tables. You can find many on the Internet. Practice reading them and interpreting the information.

### During the test

- Read the task carefully and make sure you understand exactly what it asks you to do.
- Do not copy complete sentences from the task. Paraphrase and use synonyms. You will learn how to do this in Chapters 1 and 3.
- Write in complete sentences. You can make notes in abbreviated form when you plan, but your finished essay must have complete sentences and paragraphs.
- Vary your sentences. Use sentence structures that you know you can use correctly, but do not write the same type of sentence over and over. In Chapter 4, you will get practice with different sentence types.
- Learn and use the three-step model presented in this book—plan, write, revise. It will help you write a complete and organized response to both tasks. Following a model will give you confidence.



# Task Achievement/ Task Response

# 1

## ACADEMIC WRITING TASK 1: CHARTS, GRAPHS, TABLES

### TIME

You will have 60 minutes to complete the writing part of the test. You should allow 20 minutes for Task 1. Divide your time as follows:

**Total time** 20 minutes

**STEP 1** Plan 5 minutes

**STEP 2** Write 12 minutes

**STEP 3** Revise 3 minutes

### LENGTH

You must write at least 150 words. You can write more.

### TIPS

- Use only the information provided in the task. Do not include outside information or your own opinion.
- Ask yourself questions to focus on the task:
  - What is this graphic about?
  - Which are the most important details?

### SCORE

To receive a good score

- address all parts of the task
- accurately summarize the information
- make meaningful comparisons
- end with a brief overview of the information
- use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- write in complete sentences
- use your own words; do not copy exact sentences from the task

## STEP 1: PLAN

Spend about 5 minutes on planning before you start writing. Planning will make sure you include all the necessary information.

### Address the Task

In Task 1, you will see a graphic. This graphic may be a graph, chart, or table. (The graphic might also be a diagram describing a process. See the following section (page 47) for information on process diagrams.) You will be asked to describe the information shown in the graphic and make comparisons. You must immediately recognize the type of graphic and its features. This will help you address the task.

### PRACTICE 1

Look at the following tasks and graphics. Write the letter of each graphic or set of graphics next to the corresponding task.

#### Tasks

1 .....

*The bar graph below shows the number of tourists visiting two different cities by season.*

*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

2 .....

*The pie charts below show the form of transportation to work normally used by workers in a particular city.*

*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

3 .....

*The line graph below shows the number of single-family homes constructed in the United States by region over a period of six years.*

*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting in the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

4 .....

*The table below shows the number of hours per week people of different ages spend using the Internet for different types of activities.*

*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

5 .....

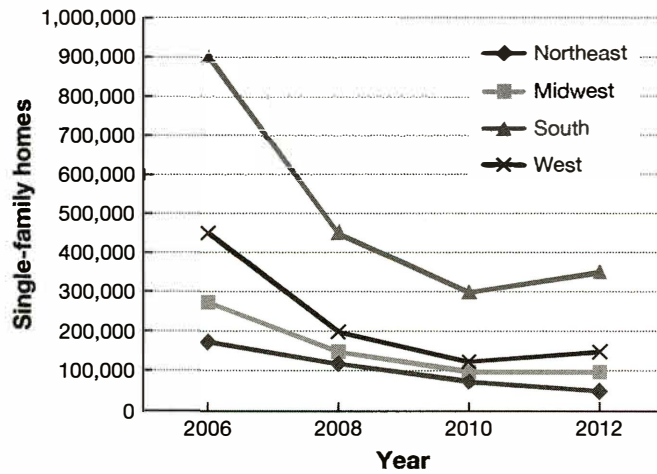
The pie charts below show enrollment in different fields of study at a particular university.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

## Graphics

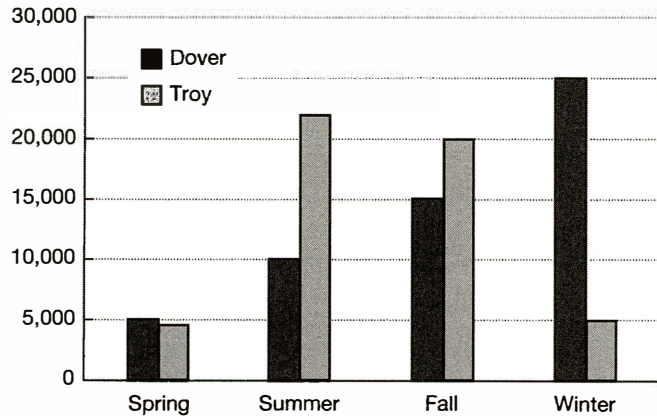
A

### New Residential Construction



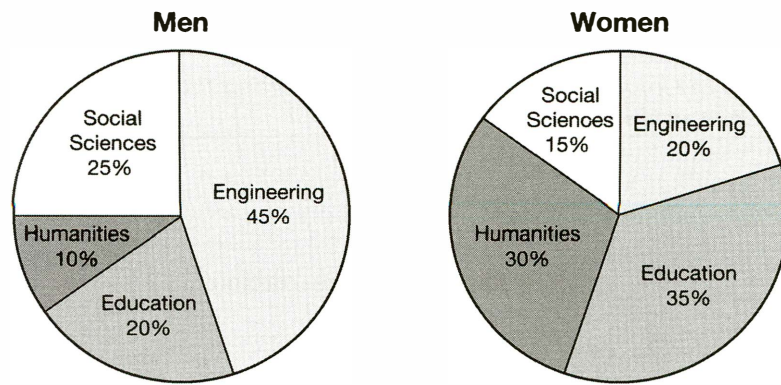
B

### Number of Tourists by Season



C

### Clydesdale University Enrollment



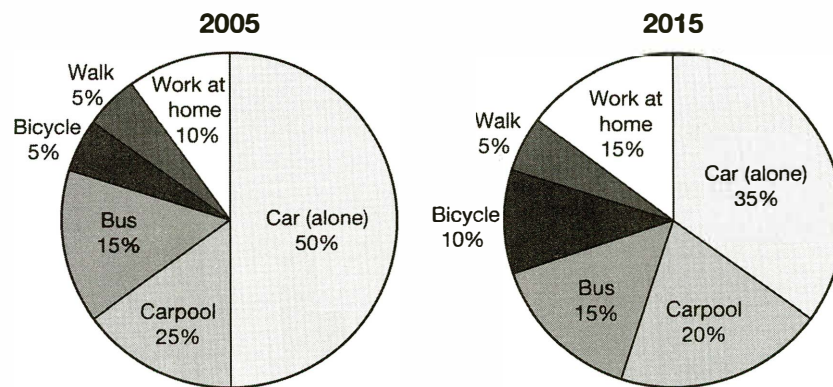
D

### Hours per Week Spent on the Internet, by Age

	Teens	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s +
Studying/working	15	50	45	40	40	17
Leisure activities	20	18	17	10	11	18

E

### Rockingham, Transportation



## Determine the Topic

In Task 1, you will be asked to summarize the information on the graphic *by selecting and reporting on the main features*. The main features will help you determine the details of the topic of the graphic.

To identify the main details of the graphic, first read the task and identify the type of graphic. Second, read the title of the graphic and scan the features. To focus your thoughts, ask yourself *Who? What? When? and Where?* Use this information to determine the details of the topic.

### Details

Task

Type of graphic

Title of graphic

Features

Who

What

When

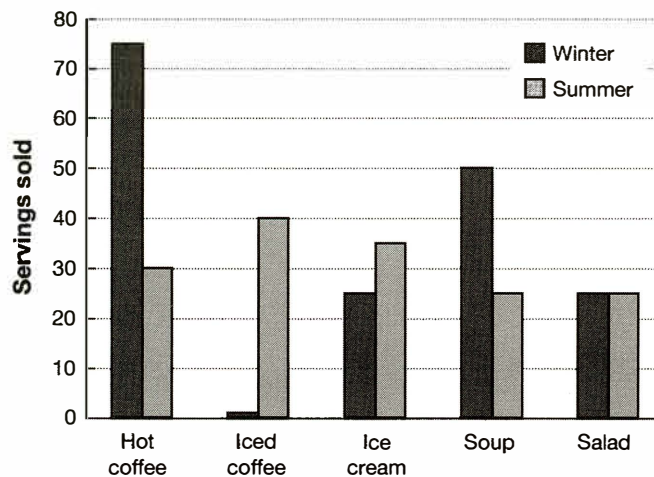
Where

**Topic:** .....

Look at these examples.

- I *The graph below shows the average daily sales of selected food items at the Vista Café, by season.*
- Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

**Average Daily Sales, by Number of Servings**



**Graphic type:** bar graph

**Title:** Average Daily Sales, by Number of Servings

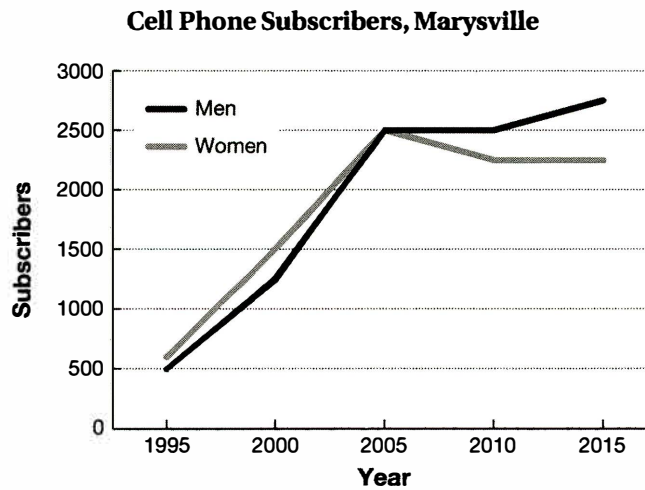
**What?** average daily sales

**When?** winter and summer

**Topic:** the average number of servings of certain food items sold daily in the winter and in the summer

**II** *The graph below shows the number of cell phone subscribers in a particular city, by gender.*

*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*



**Graphic type:** line graph

**Title:** Cell Phone Subscribers, Marysville

**What?** number of cell phone subscribers

**Who?** men and women

**When?** 1995–2015

**Where?** Marysville

**Topic:** The number of men and women cell phone subscribers in Marysville from 1995 to 2015

**PRACTICE 2**

*Determine the topics of the graphics in Practice 1 (pages 7–8) by completing the information.*

**Graphic A**

**Graphic type:** .....

**Title:** .....

**What?** .....

**When?** .....

**Where?** .....

**Topic:** .....

**Graphic B**

**Graphic type:** .....

**Title:** .....

**What?** .....

**When?** .....

**Where?** .....

**Topic:** .....

**Graphic C**

**Graphic type:** .....

**Title:** .....

**Who?** .....

**What?** .....

**Where?** .....

**Topic:** .....

**Graphic D**

**Graphic type:** .....

**Title:** .....

**Who?** .....

**What?** .....

**When?** .....

**Topic:** .....

**Graphic E**

**Graphic type:** .....

**Title:** .....

**Who?** .....

**What?** .....

**When?** .....

**Topic:** .....

**Make Notes About Comparisons**

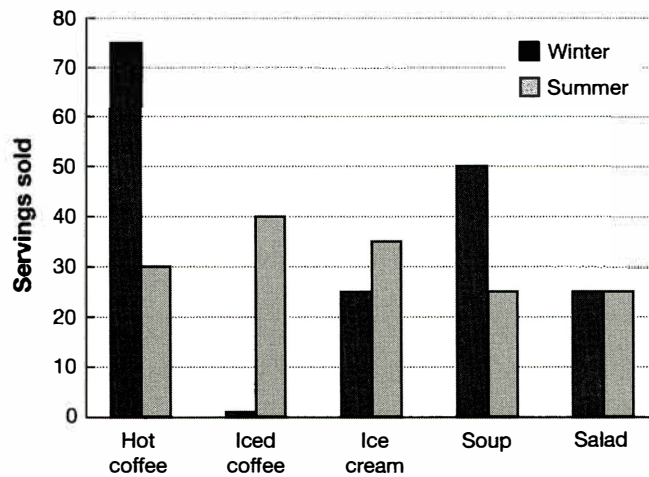
In Task 1, you will be asked to *make comparisons where relevant*. When you look at a graphic, look for things you can compare. The graphic might show, for example, different places, types of people, types of activities, products, and/or changes over time. Look for similarities and differences among these things.

In Practice 2 (page 11), you asked yourself *Who? What? When?* and *Where?* about the graphics. Use this same information to find comparisons.

Look at these examples.

I

**Average Daily Sales, by Number of Servings**



**Graphic type:** *bar graph* .....

**Title:** *Average Daily Sales, by Number of Servings* .....

**What?** *average daily sales* .....

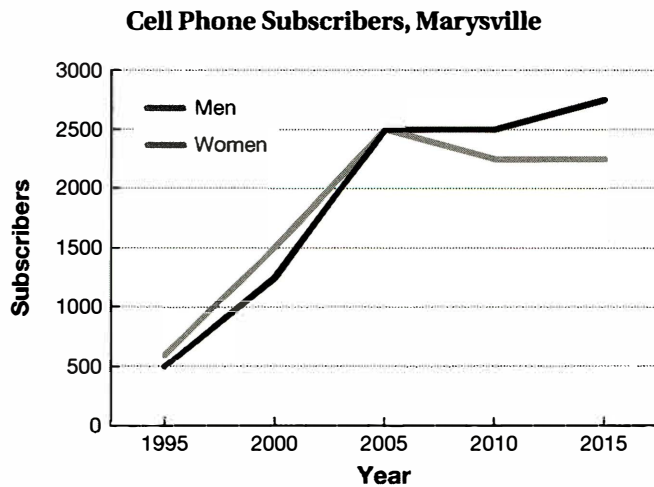
**When?** *winter and summer* .....

**Topic:** *the average daily sales of selected food items in the winter and in the summer* .....

When we write about Graphic I, we can make two kinds of comparisons:

- 1 the average daily sales of selected food items in winter .....
- 2 the average daily sales of selected food items in summer .....

**II** *The line graph below shows the number of cell phone subscribers in a particular city, by gender.*  
*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*



**Graphic type:** line graph .....

**Title:** Cell Phone Subscribers, Marysville .....

**What?** number of cell phone subscribers .....

**Who?** men and women .....

**When?** 1995–2015 .....

**Where?** Marysville .....

**Topic:** The number of men and women cell phone subscribers in Marysville  
from 1995 to 2015 .....

When we write about Graphic II, we can make two kinds of comparisons:

- 1 the number of men cell phone subscribers in different years .....
- 2 the number of women cell phone subscribers in different years .....

**PRACTICE 3**

*Look at the information you completed in Practice 2 (page 11). Use this information to determine the comparisons you can make for each of the graphics from Practice 1 (pages 7–8).*

**Graphic A**

**Comparisons**

1 .....

2 .....

**Graphic B**

**Comparisons**

1 .....

2 .....

**Graphic C**

**Comparisons**

1 .....

2 .....

**Graphic D**

**Comparisons**

1 .....

2 .....

**Graphic E**

**Comparisons**

1 .....

2 .....

## Make Notes About Details

In Practice 3 (page 14) you determined the possible comparisons in a graphic. Now, you will look for the details that describe the comparisons.

Look for where things change. Look for where numbers go up or down. Look for where the biggest differences are.

For Graphic I on page 12, we determined these two comparisons:

- 1 *the average daily sales of different food items in winter*.....
- 2 *the average daily sales of different food items in summer*.....

The relevant details will be about *how many* servings of each item were sold. Look at the following details for Graphic I.

### Comparison

- 1 *the average daily sales of different food items in winter*.....

### Details

- A *highest number of sales—hot coffee—75*.....
- B *second highest number of sales—soup—50*.....
- C *salad and ice cream sales—25 each*.....
- D *lowest number of sales—iced coffee—almost 0*.....

### Comparison

- 2 *the average daily sales of different food items in summer*.....

### Details

- A *highest number of sales—iced coffee—40*.....
- B *second highest number of sales—ice cream—35*.....
- C *hot coffee sales—30*.....
- D *lowest number of sales—soup and salad—25 each*.....

**PRACTICE 4**

*Look at the graphics in Practice 1 (pages 7–8). Use the comparisons you determined for each of the graphics in Practice 3 (page 14) to determine the relevant details for each graphic. Find between two and four details for each comparison.*

**Graphic A**

**Comparison**

1 .....

**Details**

A .....

B .....

C .....

D .....

**Comparison**

2 .....

**Details**

A .....

B .....

C .....

D .....

**Graphic B**

**Comparison**

1 .....

**Details**

A .....

B .....

C .....

D .....

**Comparison**

2 .....

**Details**

A .....

B .....

C .....

D .....

**Graphic C**

**Comparison**

1 .....

**Details**

A .....

B .....

C .....

D .....

**Comparison**

2 .....

**Details**

A .....

B .....

C .....

D .....

**Graphic D**

**Comparison**

**1** .....

**Details**

**A** .....

**B** .....

**C** .....

**D** .....

**Comparison**

**2** .....

**Details**

**A** .....

**B** .....

**C** .....

**D** .....

**Graphic E**

**Comparison**

**1** .....

**Details**

**A** .....

**B** .....

**C** .....

**D** .....

**Comparison**

2 .....

**Details**

A .....

B .....

C .....

D .....

**STEP 2: WRITE**

After you plan, you are ready to write. You will use your notes about the task, topic, comparisons, and details as a guide. You should take about 12 minutes to write your essay.

**Write the Introduction**

The introduction tells what you will write about. In Task 1, you are asked to summarize and compare. In your introduction, tell *what* you will summarize and compare.

**Write the Topic Sentence**

For the first sentence of the introduction, write a topic sentence that summarizes the information in the graphic. In Practice 2 (page 11), you identified the main features of the graphic and determined the topic. Now you will change those notes into a topic sentence. Do NOT copy exact phrases and sentences from the task and graphic title. Paraphrase by using other phrases and synonyms to express the same ideas. See Chapter 3 (page 187) for more information on synonyms.

Look at these examples.

**Graphic I**

**Task**

*The graph below shows the average daily sales of selected food items at the Vista Café, by season.*

*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

## Notes

**Graphic type:** bar graph  
**Title:** Average Daily Sales, by Number of Servings  
**Topic:** the average daily sales of selected food items in the winter and in the summer

### Topic sentence

The bar graph shows how many servings of certain food items sold on average every day in two different seasons at the Vista Café.

### Discussion

This topic sentence mentions the main features of the graphic. It avoids copying exact phrases and sentences from the task and graphic title by using the phrase *how many* instead of *the number of*, *certain* instead of *selected*, and *every day* instead of *daily*.

## Graphic II

*The graph below shows the number of cars sold in two different cities.*

*Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

## Notes

**Graphic type:** line graph  
**Title:** Cell Phone Subscribers, Marysville  
**Topic:** The number of men and women cell phone subscribers in Marysville from 1995 to 2015

### Topic sentence

The graph shows how many men and women in Marysville paid for cell phone service from 1995 to 2015.

### Discussion

This topic sentence mentions the main features of the graphic. It avoids copying exact phrases and sentences from the task and graphic title by using the words *how many* instead of *the number of* and the phrase *paid for cell phone service* instead of *subscribers*.

**PRACTICE 5**

Find the synonym for each of the following words and phrases. Write the letter of the synonym in the blank.

**Words/Phrases**

**Synonyms**

- |    |                     |   |                 |
|----|---------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1  | ..... construct     | A | various         |
| 2  | ..... region        | B | how many        |
| 3  | ..... the number of | C | female          |
| 4  | ..... visit         | D | male            |
| 5  | ..... different     | E | during the week |
| 6  | ..... type          | F | people who ride |
| 7  | ..... passengers    | G | build           |
| 8  | ..... on weekdays   | H | spend time in   |
| 9  | ..... men           | I | kind            |
| 10 | ..... women         | J | area            |

**PRACTICE 6**

Rewrite the following topic sentences by using synonyms for the underlined sections.

- 1 The graph shows the number of schools constructed in each region of the country in 2014.

.....

- 2 The graph shows the number of people who visited the Palm Island Resort in each of the years from 2010 to 2015.

.....

- 3 The charts show the percentages of men and women shoppers who shopped at Mayfield's Clothing Store at different times of the day.

.....

- 4 The table shows the different types of career interests reported by students at Bingham University.

.....

- 5 The graph shows the number of bus passengers in the city on weekdays.

.....

## Make a Statement About Comparisons

The first sentence of your introduction is the topic sentence. The topic sentence tells what the graphic is about. In the next sentence, tell what comparisons you will make. In Practice 3 (page 14), you made notes about comparisons. Now you will turn those notes into a sentence that tells what comparisons you will make in your essay.

Look at these examples.

### Comparisons for Graphic I (page 12):

- 1 *the average daily sales of selected food items in winter* .....
- 2 *the average daily sales of selected food items in summer* .....

#### Topic sentence

The bar graph shows how many servings of certain food items sold on average every day in two different seasons at the Vista Café.

#### Second sentence

The average number of sales of each item changed with the season.

#### Discussion

The second sentence tells what you will compare (*average number of sales of each item*) and how you will compare them (*changed with the season*).

### Comparisons for Graphic II (page 13):

- 1 *the number of men cell phone subscribers in different years* .....
- 2 *the number of women cell phone subscribers in different years* .....

#### Topic sentence

The graph shows how many men and women in Marysville paid for cell phone service from 1995 to 2015.

#### Second sentence

The number of subscribers of each gender rose at similar rates during the ten-year period.

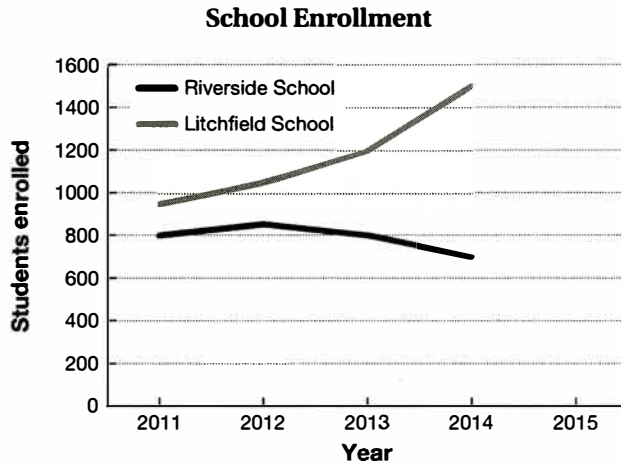
#### Discussion

The second sentence tells what you will compare (*number of subscribers*) and how you will compare them (*rose at similar rates*).

**PRACTICE 7**

Choose the best sentence to complete the introduction for each graphic.

1



**Comparisons**

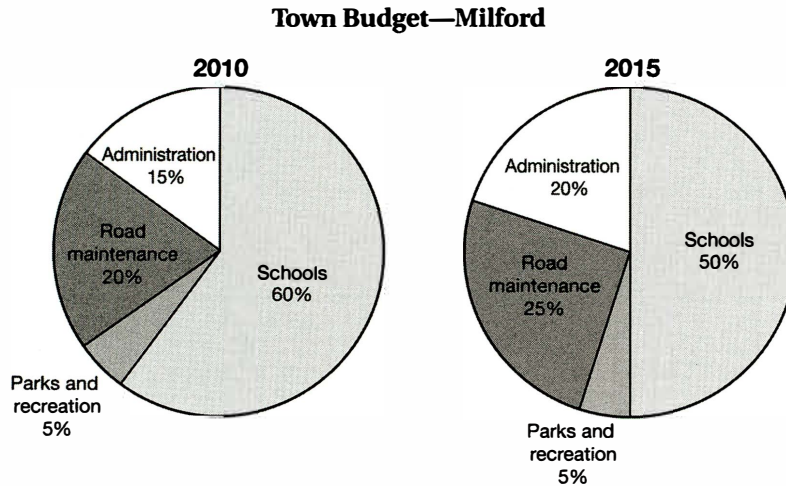
enrollment in Riverside School  
enrollment in Litchfield School

**Introduction**

The graph shows how many students were registered at Riverside School and Litchfield School in each of the years from 2011 to 2014.

- A The number of students at each school changed every year.
- B The number of students at Litchfield School went down between 2013 and 2014.
- C The number of students at both schools went up between 2011 and 2014.

2



**Comparisons**

town spending in Milford in 2010  
town spending in Milford in 2015

**Introduction**

The charts show how the town of Milford spent its money in 2010 and 2015.

- A At least half the budget was spent on schools in both years.
- B Spending on administration went up in 2015.
- C Spending fell in some areas, while it rose in others.

3

**Ticket Sales—Springfield Cinema**

	3:00	5:00	7:00	9:00
Saturday	100	125	150	150
Sunday	125	100	75	50

**Comparisons**

- Saturday ticket sales
- Sunday ticket sales

**Introduction**

The table shows how many movie tickets were sold at the Springfield Cinema at different times of the weekend.

- A One hundred fifty tickets were sold at 9:00 on Saturday.
- B On Sunday the fewest tickets were sold in the evening.
- C On Saturday sales were highest in the evening, while on Sunday they were highest in the afternoon.

**PRACTICE 8**

*Use your notes from Practice 2 (page 11) and Practice 3 (page 14) to write an introduction for an essay about each of the graphics in Practice 1 (pages 7–8). Include a topic sentence and a statement about comparisons in each introduction.*

**Graphic A**

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**Graphic B**

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**Graphic C**

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**Graphic D**

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**Graphic E**

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