

KRISTOF ABRATH · ENGLISH EXAM PREPARATION

IELTS Writing Task 1

Comparisons Practice Pack

Turn lists of figures into real comparisons. Four step-by-step exercises take you from spotting a comparison, to choosing the best one, to writing your own sentences and a full body paragraph — with a complete answer key for independent study or classroom use.

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

4 Exercises + Answer Key

WHAT'S INSIDE

How to Use This Pack

Exercise 1 — Listing or comparing? (12 sentences)

Exercise 2 — Which sentence compares best? (12 questions)

Exercise 3 — Write one comparing sentence (10 data sets)

Exercise 4 — Repair the paragraph (5 graphs)

Answer Key with explanations and model answers

By the end of this exercise, I will be able to: tell a list of figures from a real comparison, and write comparisons that are accurate and clear.

Why Comparisons Matter

In Academic Writing Task 1 you describe data (at least 150 words, about 20 minutes). Task Achievement is one of four criteria, worth 25% each. Examiners look for the **key features** and for **comparisons** between them, not a list of every number. Comparisons support a clear **overview**; this pack practises the comparing skill, not a complete Task 1 response.

Three Levels of Sentence — Same Data

LISTING

In 2020, 40% of commuters took the bus and 20% took the tram.
Figures only. No link.

BASIC CONTRAST

In 2020, 40% of commuters took the bus, **while** 20% took the tram.
Side by side. No size or direction.

FULL COMPARISON

In 2020, buses carried **twice as many** commuters as trams, at 40% against 20%.
Says how they compare.

Ways to Compare

- **Difference:** 17 percentage points more than
- **Multiple:** three times as many as
- **Fraction:** a third of
- **Similarity:** almost identical
- **Ranking:** the largest, followed by
- **Change in order:** overtook
- **Changing gap:** narrowed from ... to ...
- **Proportion:** far larger share than

TIP A gap between two percentages is in **percentage points**. 68% minus 52% is 16 percentage points, not 16%. A **relative** change is different: 20% to 30% is a 10-point rise, or a 50% increase.

What's in This Pack

- **Exercise 1** — Read each sentence. Tick: listing, basic contrast or full comparison.
- **Exercise 2** — Read the data. Choose the one sentence that compares it correctly.
- **Exercise 3** — Read the data. Write one comparing sentence. Hints fade as you go.
- **Exercise 4** — Look at a graph. Rewrite a listing paragraph so it compares. Then self-check.
- **Answer Key** — on separate pages. Check your work after you finish each exercise, not before.

Exercises 3 and 4 have many correct answers. The key gives one model, not the only one. Check the meaning, the numbers and the grammar.



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 1: Listing or comparing?

⌚ 8 min

By the end of this exercise, I will be able to: tell listing, basic contrast and full comparison apart in Task 1 sentences.

Instructions

Read each sentence. **Tick ONE box.** Decide from the words, not by working out the numbers.

EXAMPLE Cars were owned by 30% of households in Accra, double the 15% owning a motorbike.

☒ **Full comparison** — “double” says how the two figures compare.

1.

Between 2010 and 2020, the proportion of households in Nairobi cooking with electricity rose from 8% to 21%, while the proportion using charcoal fell from 54% to 40%.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

2.

In 2021, households in Lagos spent 38% of their income on food, 17 percentage points more than the 21% spent in Warsaw.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

3.

In 2022, the Seoul metro carried 2.1 million passengers a day, and the bus network carried 4.3 million.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

4.

Wind power supplied 14% of the country's electricity in 2020, while solar power supplied 5%.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

5.

Online enrolment overtook classroom enrolment in 2016, having begun the period at only a third of the classroom total.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

6.

Average household electricity use in Hanoi in 2020 matched that of Bogotá, at roughly 2,400 kilowatt-hours a year.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 1: Listing or comparing?

8 min

TIP A word like **while** only puts figures side by side. A full comparison says **how**: bigger, smaller, how much, the same, first or second.

7.

Rent made up 46% of the average student budget in São Paulo, and food made up 27%.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

8.

Natural gas supplied the largest share of Argentina's electricity in 2000, at 45%, with hydropower second at 30%.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

9.

In 2021, 18% of the university's graduates worked in education, 24% in health care and 31% in technology.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

10.

Kenya's tea exports to Asia were double those to Europe in 2018, at 60 million and 30 million US dollars respectively.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

11.

The gap between urban and rural broadband access narrowed from 31 percentage points in 2010 to 12 percentage points in 2020.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

12.

Visitor numbers to the national park peaked at 410,000 in 2015 and then fell steadily to 330,000 by 2022.

☐ Listing ☐ Basic contrast ☐ Full comparison

CONFIDENCE CHECK: ☐ Got it ☐ Need more practice ☐ Still stuck



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2-C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 2: Which sentence compares best?

⌚ 12 min

By the end of this exercise, I will be able to: choose the sentence that compares the data correctly, with the right direction, size and numbers.

Read the original data. **Circle ONE letter** (A, B or C): the sentence that compares the data best. Check the numbers: one option has an error.

EXAMPLE **Original:** In 2021, Airport A handled 60 million passengers. Airport B handled 20 million.

- A. Airport A handled 60 million passengers and Airport B handled 20 million.
- B. Airport A handled three times as many passengers as Airport B, at 60 million against 20 million.
- C. Airport A handled twice as many passengers as Airport B, at 60 million against 20 million.

Answer: B. A only lists. C compares, but $60 \div 20$ is 3, not 2.

1.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2018, 82% of adults in Chile used the internet.
In Bolivia, the figure was 45%.

- (A) In 2018, 82% of adults in Chile used the internet, while 45% of adults in Bolivia used it.
- (B) In 2018, 82% of adults in Chile used the internet, whereas the figure for Bolivia was much lower, at 45%.
- (C) In 2018, 45% of adults in Bolivia used the internet, whereas the figure for Chile was much lower, at 82%.

2.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2020, heating accounted for 60% of home energy use in Ulaanbaatar, and cooking accounted for 20%.

- (A) In 2020, home energy use in Ulaanbaatar was 60% for heating and 20% for cooking.
- (B) In 2020, heating accounted for twice as much of home energy use in Ulaanbaatar as cooking, at 60% against 20%.
- (C) In 2020, heating accounted for 60% of home energy use in Ulaanbaatar, three times the 20% for cooking.

3.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2021, farms in the region harvested 600 tonnes of maize.
They harvested 200 tonnes of millet.

- (A) In 2021, the 200-tonne millet harvest was a third of the 600-tonne maize harvest.
- (B) In 2021, farms in the region harvested 600 tonnes of maize and 200 tonnes of millet.
- (C) In 2021, the millet harvest of 200 tonnes was only a quarter of the maize harvest of 600 tonnes.

4.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2020, 68% of households in Nairobi had piped water, and 52% of households in Kampala did.

- (A) In 2020, 68% of households in Nairobi had piped water, while 52% of households in Kampala had it.
- (B) In 2020, piped water reached 68% of households in Nairobi, exceeding the Kampala figure of 52% by 16 percentage points.
- (C) In 2020, piped water reached 68% of households in Nairobi, exceeding the Kampala figure of 52% by 16%.



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 2: Which sentence compares best?

⌚ 12 min

5.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2021, a monthly bus pass cost 30 US dollars in Cape Town.
In Addis Ababa, the same pass cost 15 US dollars.

- (A) A monthly bus pass cost 30 US dollars in Cape Town in 2021, and 15 US dollars in Addis Ababa.
- (B) Compared with Addis Ababa, where a monthly bus pass cost 15 US dollars, the same pass in Cape Town was twice as higher, at 30 US dollars.
- (C) Compared with Addis Ababa, where a monthly bus pass cost 15 US dollars, the same pass in Cape Town was considerably more expensive, at 30 US dollars.

6.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2022, households in Lima spent 31% of their budget on housing, and households in Manila spent 30%.

- (A) In 2022, housing accounted for almost the same share of household budgets in Lima (31%) and Manila (30%).
- (B) In 2022, households in Lima spent 31% of their budget on housing, while households in Manila spent 30%.
- (C) In 2022, housing accounted for a far larger share of household budgets in Lima (31%) than in Manila (30%).

7.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2010, oil supplied 41% of the region's energy.
Gas supplied 33%, and coal supplied 26%.

- (A) In 2010, oil supplied 41% of the region's energy, gas supplied 33% and coal supplied 26%.
- (B) In 2010, oil was the largest source of the region's energy, at 41%, followed by gas at 33% and coal at 26%.
- (C) In 2010, oil was the largest source of the region's energy, at 41%, followed by coal at 33% and gas at 26%.

8.

ORIGINAL DATA

Between 2005 and 2020, tram ridership in the city rose from 8 million to 15 million passengers a year.
Over the same period, bus ridership fell from 12 million to 10 million.

- (A) Tram ridership rose from 8 million to 15 million between 2005 and 2020, and bus ridership fell from 12 million to 10 million.
- (B) Buses overtook trams between 2005 and 2020, with trams rising from 8 million to 15 million and buses falling from 12 million to 10 million.
- (C) Starting below buses (8 million against 12 million), trams overtook them by 2020, reaching 15 million against 10 million.



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2-C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 2: Which sentence compares best?

⌚ 12 min

9.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2000, 82% of pupils in private schools and 55% of pupils in state schools passed the national exam. By 2020, the figures were 88% and 79%.

- (A) The gap in exam pass rates between private and state schools narrowed from 27 percentage points in 2000 to 9 percentage points in 2020.
- (B) Pass rates rose from 82% to 88% in private schools and from 55% to 79% in state schools between 2000 and 2020.
- (C) The gap in exam pass rates between private and state schools narrowed from 27% in 2000 to 9% in 2020.

10.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2015, rail carried 18% of the country's freight, and road carried 64%.

- (A) In 2015, rail carried 18% of the country's freight, while road carried 64%.
- (B) In 2015, road accounted for a far larger share of the country's freight than rail, at 64% against 18%.
- (C) In 2015, road accounted for as large a share of the country's freight as rail, at 64% against 18%.

11.

ORIGINAL DATA

Between 2012 and 2022, e-book sales rose from 2 million to 6 million, while printed book sales fell from 5 million to 4 million.

- (A) E-book sales rose from 2 million to 6 million between 2012 and 2022, whereas printed book sales fell from 5 million to 4 million.
- (B) E-book sales tripled between 2012 and 2022, from 2 million to 6 million, overtaking printed books, which collapsed from 5 million to 4 million.
- (C) E-book sales tripled between 2012 and 2022, from 2 million to 6 million, overtaking printed books, which slipped from 5 million to 4 million.

12.

ORIGINAL DATA

In 2023, 38% of students cycled to campus, and 20% walked.

- (A) In 2023, cycling (38%) was just under twice as common as walking (20%) among students.
- (B) In 2023, 38% of students chose to cycle to campus, and 20% of students chose to walk.
- (C) In 2023, among university staff, cycling (38%) was just under twice as common as walking (20%).

CONFIDENCE CHECK: ☐ Got it ☐ Need more practice ☐ Still stuck



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 3: Write one comparing sentence

⌚ 15 min

By the end of this exercise, I will be able to: write accurate comparing sentences, using fewer and fewer hints.

Read the data. **Write ONE sentence** that compares the figures. Items 1–4 give a structure. Items 5–7 give a hint to use if you need it. Items 8–10 give no hint.

EXAMPLE **Data:** In 2020, 52% of commuters in Pune used public transport, and 13% cycled.

💡 Try: four times as ... as

Model: In 2020, public transport was four times as common as cycling among Pune's commuters, at 52% against 13%.

1.

DATA

In 2022, 41% of employees in Bengaluru worked from home at least once a week, and 18% of employees in Lagos did.

💡 Try: whereas

2.

DATA

In 2020, the average household in Medellín spent 14% of its income on transport, and the average household in Munich spent 9%.

💡 Try: compared with

3.

DATA

In 2019, 90 students were enrolled on Spanish courses at the language school, and 30 on Japanese courses.

💡 Try: three times as many ... as



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 3: Write one comparing sentence

⌚ 15 min

4.

DATA

In 2018, the town's recycling centre collected 500 tonnes of paper.
It collected 125 tonnes of glass.

💡 Try: a quarter of

5.

DATA

In 2021, 63% of adults in Dakar had a bank account.
In Abidjan, the figure was 51%.

💡 Hint (try without it first): exceeded ... by ... percentage points

6.

DATA

In 2020, people in Jakarta slept an average of 6.8 hours a night, and people in Madrid slept 6.9 hours.

💡 Hint (try without it first): almost identical / almost the same

7.

DATA

In 2019, Thailand received 38 million international visitors.
Vietnam received 15 million, and Cambodia received 6 million.

💡 Hint (try without it first): the most ... followed by



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 3: Write one comparing sentence

⌚ 15 min

8.

DATA

Between 2008 and 2022, streaming's share of music revenue rose from 5% to 68%.
Over the same period, the share of CD sales fell from 71% to 14%.

9.

DATA

In 2010, the average monthly rent was 620 euros in the city centre and 410 euros in the suburbs.
By 2020, the figures were 980 euros and 880 euros.

10.

DATA

In 2000, 60% of households in the town had a landline, and 20% had a mobile phone.
By 2020, 30% had a landline, and 90% had a mobile phone.

CONFIDENCE CHECK: ☐ Got it ☐ Need more practice ☐ Still stuck



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2-C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 4: Repair the paragraph (Line graph 1/5)

30 min total

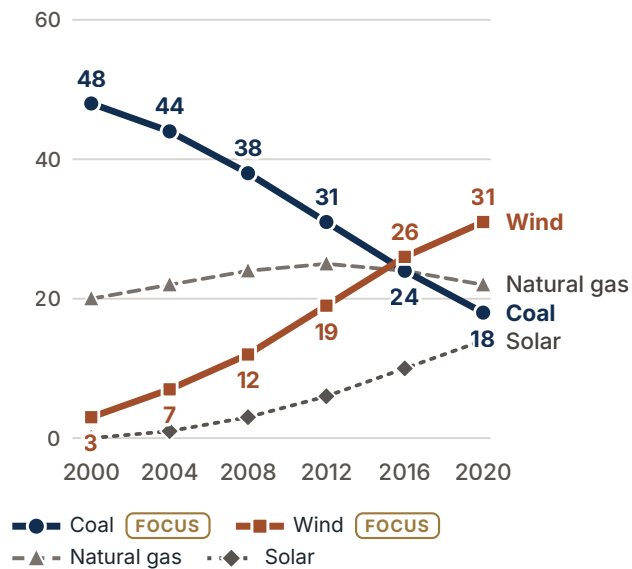
By the end of this exercise, I will be able to: rewrite a list of facts as a paragraph that compares the main features of a graph.

Step 1. Look at the data. Read the paragraph: it only lists facts. **Rewrite it** so it compares **Coal** and **Wind**.

Share of electricity generation by source, 2000 to 2020

Unit: %

Four sources shown. Other sources are not shown.



ORIGINAL PARAGRAPH

In 2000, coal supplied 48% of the country's electricity. Coal then fell steadily, reaching 31% in 2012 and 18% in 2020. Wind supplied just 3% of electricity in 2000. Its share rose to 19% in 2012 and 31% in 2020.

TIP Choose the **main** comparisons. You do not need every number.

YOUR PARAGRAPH

Step 2. Compare with the model in the Answer Key. **Step 3.** Self-check (tick Yes or No):

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Does my paragraph say how the two sets of figures compare? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 2. Did I choose the main comparisons, not all of them? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 3. Does each sentence link to the one before? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| 4. Are my numbers, units and comparing words correct? | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

My self-check score: ____ / 4



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2-C1)

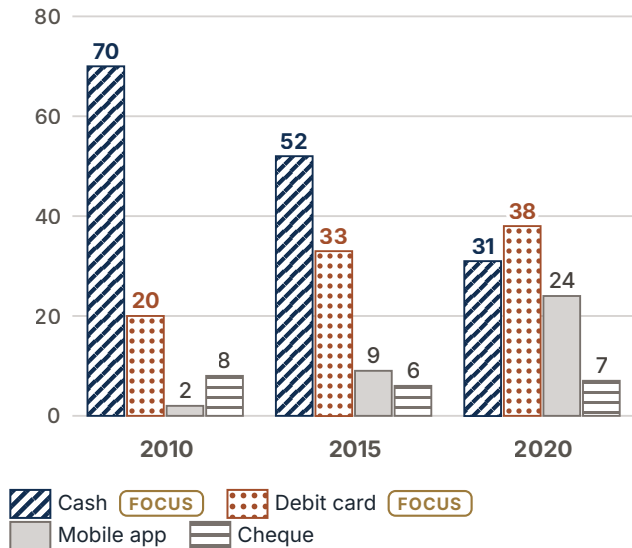
IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 4: Repair the paragraph (Bar chart 2/5)

6 min

Step 1. Look at the data. Read the paragraph: it only lists facts. **Rewrite it** so it compares **Cash** and **Debit card**.

Methods used to pay in shops, 2010, 2015 and 2020

Unit: % of transactions



ORIGINAL PARAGRAPH

In 2010, cash was used for 70% of shop payments. By 2015 this had fallen to 52%, and by 2020 to 31%. Debit cards were used for 20% of payments in 2010. This rose to 33% in 2015 and 38% in 2020.

TIP Choose the **main** comparisons. You do not need every number.

YOUR PARAGRAPH

Step 2. Compare with the model in the Answer Key. **Step 3.** Self-check (tick Yes or No):

- Does my paragraph say how the two sets of figures compare? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Did I choose the main comparisons, not all of them? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Does each sentence link to the one before? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Are my numbers, units and comparing words correct? ☐ Yes ☐ No

My self-check score: ____ / 4



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2-C1)

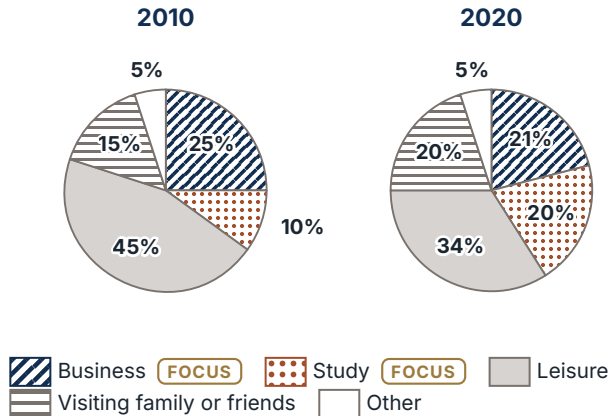
IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 4: Repair the paragraph (Pie charts 3/5)

6 min

Step 1. Look at the data. Read the paragraph: it only lists facts. **Rewrite it** so it compares **Business** and **Study**.

Visitors to a coastal city by main purpose of visit, 2010 and 2020

Unit: %



ORIGINAL PARAGRAPH

In 2010, 25% of visitors came on business. Business visitors made up 21% of the total in 2020. Study accounted for 10% of visits in 2010. By 2020, study accounted for 20% of visits.

TIP Choose the **main** comparisons. You do not need every number.

YOUR PARAGRAPH

Step 2. Compare with the model in the Answer Key. **Step 3.** Self-check (tick Yes or No):

1. Does my paragraph say how the two sets of figures compare? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Did I choose the main comparisons, not all of them? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Does each sentence link to the one before? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Are my numbers, units and comparing words correct? ☐ Yes ☐ No

My self-check score: ____ / 4



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 4: Repair the paragraph (Table 4/5)

6 min

Step 1. Look at the data. Read the paragraph: it only lists facts. **Rewrite it** so it compares **Seoul** and **Bogotá**.

Household waste recycled in four cities, 2005, 2015 and 2025

Unit: % of total waste

City	2005	2015	2025
Seoul FOCUS	46	49	48
Bogotá FOCUS	12	28	46
Lisbon	18	27	35
Nairobi	8	14	20

ORIGINAL PARAGRAPH

In 2005, 46% of Seoul's household waste was recycled. The rate was 49% in 2015 and 48% in 2025. In Bogotá, the recycling rate was 12% in 2005. It rose to 28% in 2015 and 46% in 2025.

TIP Choose the **main** comparisons. You do not need every number.

YOUR PARAGRAPH

Step 2. Compare with the model in the Answer Key. **Step 3.** Self-check (tick Yes or No):

1. Does my paragraph say how the two sets of figures compare? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Did I choose the main comparisons, not all of them? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Does each sentence link to the one before? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Are my numbers, units and comparing words correct? ☐ Yes ☐ No

My self-check score: ____ / 4



IELTS Writing Task 1 Comparisons

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2-C1)

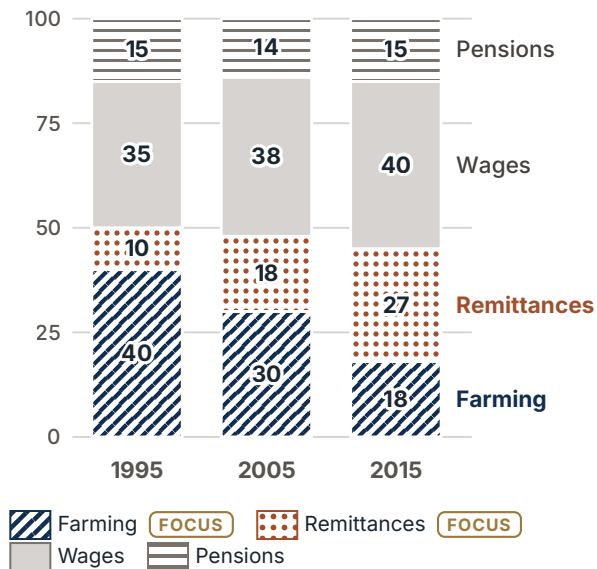
IELTS Writing Task 1 / Task Achievement / Comparisons / Exercise 4: Repair the paragraph (Stacked bar chart 5/5)

6 min

Step 1. Look at the data. Read the paragraph: it only lists facts. **Rewrite it** so it compares **Farming** and **Remittances**.

Sources of household income in a rural region, 1995, 2005 and 2015

Unit: %



ORIGINAL PARAGRAPH

In 1995, farming provided 40% of household income. This fell to 30% in 2005 and 18% in 2015. Remittances provided 10% of income in 1995. They rose to 18% in 2005 and 27% in 2015.

TIP

Choose the **main** comparisons. You do not need every number.

YOUR PARAGRAPH

Step 2. Compare with the model in the Answer Key. **Step 3.** Self-check (tick Yes or No):

1. Does my paragraph say how the two sets of figures compare? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Did I choose the main comparisons, not all of them? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Does each sentence link to the one before? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Are my numbers, units and comparing words correct? ☐ Yes ☐ No

My self-check score: ____ / 4



Answer Key

Kristof Abrath · Exercise 1: Listing or comparing?

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

Teacher / Self-Check Copy

Model answers for comparison. Accept any answer that is accurate, compares the data and uses correct units.

1. Basic contrast. "While" sets the two trends against each other. But the sentence does not say how they compare, for example that the gap narrowed. Key words: **while**.

2. Full comparison (difference). It says how far apart the two figures are: 17 percentage points. Key words: **17 percentage points more than**.

3. Listing. It gives two figures but does not say which is bigger or by how much.

4. Basic contrast. "While" sets the two figures against each other. But the sentence does not say which is bigger or by how much. Key words: **while**.

5. Full comparison (change). It shows a change in order: online study went from below to above classroom study. Key words: **overtook, only a third of**.

6. Full comparison (similarity). It says electricity use was about the same in the two cities. The verb "matched" says this directly. Key words: **matched that of**.

7. Listing. It gives each share on its own and does not link them.

8. Full comparison (ranking). It puts the sources in order: gas is first and hydropower is second. Key words: **the largest share, second**.

9. Listing. It gives three figures but does not say which is the largest.

10. Full comparison (proportion). It says Asia was twice as big as Europe. "Double those" connects the two figures. Key words: **double those**.

11. Full comparison (gap). It says how the distance between two groups changed: it got smaller. Key words: **The gap, narrowed**.

12. Listing. This is good trend language ("peaked at", "fell steadily to"), but it describes only one category. It does not compare two figures.

Model answers for comparison. Accept any answer that is accurate, compares the data and uses correct units.

- 1. B.** It gives the direction (lower) and the size (much lower). Both figures match the data. A: "While" puts the figures side by side, but the sentence does not say which is higher or by how much. C: 82% is higher than 45%, not lower. The direction is wrong.
- 2. C.** 60 divided by 20 is 3, so "three times" is accurate. A: Both figures are given, but nothing says how they relate. B: 60 divided by 20 is 3, not 2. Heating is three times cooking.
- 3. A.** 200 divided by 600 is one third, so "a third of" is accurate. B: It repeats the two figures with "and" and does not link them. C: A quarter of 600 is 150, not 200. The millet harvest is one third of the maize harvest.
- 4. B.** 68 minus 52 is 16. The gap between two percentages is measured in percentage points. A: "While" contrasts the figures, but the sentence gives no difference. C: The gap between two percentages is in percentage points: 68% minus 52% is 16 percentage points. "16%" is a different measure. Compared with Kampala's 52%, Nairobi's figure is about 31% higher.
- 5. C.** It gives the direction (more expensive) and a fair size (considerably). 30 is double 15. A: It gives both prices but does not say which is higher. B: 30 is double 15, but "twice as higher" mixes two forms. We say "twice as expensive as" or "twice the price of".
- 6. A.** The figures differ by 1 percentage point, so "almost the same" is accurate. B: The sentence gives both figures, but it does not say how they compare. The gap is only 1 percentage point, so "almost the same" is clearer. C: The gap is only 1 percentage point. "Far larger" is much too strong.
- 7. B.** The order matches the data: 41% is first, 33% is second, 26% is third. A: It lists the three shares in one sentence but does not rank them. C: Coal supplied 26%, not 33%. Gas was second. The two categories are swapped.
- 8. C.** Trams started 4 million below buses and ended 5 million above, so "overtook" is accurate. A: Each trend is reported on its own. The sentence does not say that the order changed. B: Trams ended higher (15 million against 10 million), so trams overtook buses, not the other way round.
- 9. A.** 82 minus 55 is 27, and 88 minus 79 is 9. A gap between percentages is in percentage points. B: It reports two rises separately and does not mention the gap. C: The gap is measured in percentage points. "27%" and "9%" would be shares, not gaps.
- 10. B.** It states the direction (road is larger) and a fair size (far larger). 64% is more than three times 18%. A: It gives both shares but does not say which is larger. C: "As large a share as" means the shares are equal. 64% and 18% are very different.
- 11. C.** 6 million is three times 2 million. E-books moved from below to above print, and "slipped" fits a small fall. A: Each trend is reported on its own. "Whereas" contrasts them, but the sentence does not say that the order reversed. B: A fall from 5 million to 4 million is 1 million, or 20%. That is not a collapse.
- 12. A.** Twice 20 is 40, and 38 is just below that, so "just under twice" is accurate. B: It repeats the two figures and does not compare them. C: The data are about students, not staff. The group is wrong.

Answer Key

Kristof Abrath · Exercise 3: Write one comparing sentence

IELTS Band 6.5+ (B2–C1)

Teacher / Self-Check Copy

Model answers for comparison. Accept any answer that is accurate, compares the data and uses correct units.

1. Model: In 2022, 41% of employees in Bengaluru worked from home at least once a week, whereas the figure in Lagos was much lower, at 18%.

Another way: Working from home was much more common in Bengaluru (41%) than in Lagos (18%) in 2022. Structure: whereas.

2. Model: In 2020, households in Medellín spent a larger share of their income on transport than those in Munich: 14% compared with 9%.

Another way: Households in Medellín spent more of their income on transport (14%) than those in Munich (9%) in 2020. Structure: compared with.

3. Model: In 2019, three times as many students took Spanish courses as Japanese courses, with 90 students compared with 30.

Another way: Spanish courses had 90 students in 2019, three times the 30 on Japanese courses. Structure: a multiple (three times as many ... as).

4. Model: In 2018, the recycling centre collected 125 tonnes of glass, a quarter of the 500 tonnes of paper.

Another way: In 2018, the recycling centre collected 500 tonnes of paper, four times the 125 tonnes of glass. Structure: a fraction (a quarter of).

5. Model: In 2021, bank account ownership in Dakar (63%) exceeded that in Abidjan (51%) by 12 percentage points.

Another way: In 2021, 63% of adults in Dakar had a bank account, 12 percentage points more than in Abidjan (51%). Structure: a difference in percentage points.

6. Model: In 2020, average nightly sleep was almost identical in Jakarta (6.8 hours) and Madrid (6.9 hours).

Another way: Jakarta and Madrid had almost the same average nightly sleep in 2020: 6.8 hours and 6.9 hours. Structure: similarity (almost identical).

7. Model: In 2019, Thailand received the most international visitors (38 million), followed by Vietnam (15 million) and Cambodia (6 million).

Another way: Thailand had the highest number of visitors in 2019, at 38 million, ahead of Vietnam (15 million) and Cambodia (6 million). Structure: ranking (the most ... followed by).

8. Model: Streaming's share of music revenue rose from 5% in 2008 to 68% in 2022, overtaking CDs, which fell from 71% to 14%.

Another way: Streaming started well below CDs in 2008 (5% against 71%) but overtook them by 2022 (68% against 14%). Structure: overtaking.

9. Model: The gap between rents in the city centre and the suburbs narrowed from 210 euros in 2010 to 100 euros in 2020.

Another way: Suburban rents rose faster than central rents, so the gap fell from 210 euros in 2010 to 100 euros in 2020. Structure: a changing gap (narrowed from ... to ...).

10. Model: Between 2000 and 2020, landline ownership fell by half, from 60% to 30%, whereas mobile phone ownership rose from 20% to 90% and overtook it.

Another way: In 2000, mobile phones were less common than landlines (20% against 60%), but by 2020 they were three times as common (90% against 30%). Structure: change over time, then the result (rose ... and overtook ...).

Model answers for comparison. Accept any answer that is accurate, compares the data and uses correct units.

Paragraph 1: Line graph (focus: Coal and Wind)

Model: Coal began the period as by far the largest source of electricity, supplying 48% against just 3% for wind, but this gap of 45 percentage points narrowed steadily and wind overtook coal between 2012 and 2016. By 2020, wind supplied 31% of electricity, 13 percentage points more than coal's 18%. The two sources had therefore reversed their ranking.

- **Gap narrows** (key): The 45-point lead for coal shrinks step by step. This shows a trend, not just two numbers.
- **Overtaking** (key): Wind passes coal between 2012 and 2016. This is the main story of the graph.
- **End difference in points** (support): "13 percentage points" tells the reader how big the final lead is.

Left out on purpose: In 2008, coal's 38% was about three times wind's 12%. Lower priority: it is true, but it is a middle year. The gap closing and the crossing already tell this story.

Paragraph 2: Bar chart (focus: Cash and Debit card)

Model: In 2010, cash accounted for 70% of shop payments, three and a half times the debit card share of 20%. Over the next decade, however, the cash share more than halved, whereas the debit card share almost doubled. As a result, debit cards had become the most widely used method by 2020, at 38% against 31% for cash.

- **Multiple** (key): "Three and a half times" shows how far ahead cash was at the start.
- **Relative change** (support): "More than halved" and "almost doubled" show the size of each trend side by side.
- **Ranking change** (key): Debit cards move from second to first. This is the main change in the chart.

Left out on purpose: In 2015, cash (52%) was still 19 percentage points ahead of debit cards (33%). Lower priority: it is true, but it is a middle year. The start and the end already show the story.

Paragraph 3: Pie charts (focus: Business and Study)

Model: In 2010, the share of visits for business, at 25%, was two and a half times the share for study, at 10%. By 2020, however, the study share had doubled to 20%, while the business share had fallen slightly to 21%. The two shares had therefore become almost equal.

- **Multiple** (support): "Two and a half times" gives the starting difference in one clear phrase.
- **Share doubles** (key): Study doubles from 10% to 20%. This is the biggest change for the pair.
- **Similar end share** (key): 21% and 20% are almost equal. The two purposes have come together.

Left out on purpose: In 2010, the difference between the two shares was 15 percentage points. Repeated idea: it is true, but it shows the multiple in another form and adds no new idea.

Model answers for comparison. Accept any answer that is accurate, compares the data and uses correct units.

Paragraph 4: Table (focus: Seoul and Bogotá)

Model: In 2005, Seoul's recycling rate of 46% was 34 percentage points higher than Bogotá's 12%. Over the next two decades, however, Seoul's rate stayed almost unchanged at around 48%, whereas Bogotá's rate nearly quadrupled. As a result, the two recycling rates ended at similar levels, at 48% and 46% respectively.

- **Difference in points** (support): "34 percentage points" gives the exact size of the starting gap.
- **Stable vs changing** (key): One city stays flat while the other rises sharply. This is the main contrast.
- **Similar end point** (key): 48% and 46% are almost the same. The two cities meet at the end.

Left out on purpose: Bogotá's rate rose by 16 points from 2005 to 2015 and by 18 points from 2015 to 2025. Lower priority: it is true, but it only describes the pace inside the period. The big picture is the nearly fourfold rise.

Paragraph 5: Stacked bar chart (focus: Farming and Remittances)

Model: In 1995, remittances provided a quarter as much household income as farming did, at 10% against 40%. By 2015, the position had reversed: remittances contributed 27% of household income, one and a half times the 18% share from farming. Together, however, the two sources made up a similar proportion of income at both dates, at 50% in 1995 and 45% in 2015.

- **Fraction** (key): "A quarter as much" shows how small remittances were at the start.
- **Reversed ratio** (key): Farming leads at the start and remittances lead at the end. This is the main change.
- **Combined share** (support): The two sources together stay close to half of income. One source replaces the other.

Left out on purpose: In 2005, farming still exceeded remittances by 12 percentage points (30% against 18%). Lower priority: it is true, but it is a middle bar. The first and last bars tell the main story.