



## MAKING COMPARISONS

When describing information presented in graphs, tables or pie charts, it is necessary to use language specifying amount, and the language of comparison.

In specifying amount the use of *per cent* and *percentage* is important because visual data is commonly presented in this form.

Of equal importance is the use of comparative language, making the description of the visual data meaningful, and meeting the requirements of the IELTS Writing task.

## STUDY TIPS

In IELTS Writing task 1, it is important to make factual statements, about the data in graphs, tables or pie charts.

Statements describing trends in must be supported by examples, and taken from the information supplied in the IELTS question.

When describing data use a variety of structures, including both 'per cent' and 'percentage', and comparative language.

## Language specifying amount

The two words, *per cent* and *percentage*, are commonly used when specifying factual information in graphs, tables or pie charts. These words, however, are often confused or misused. The differences in meaning and use are as follows.

PER CENT /pə'sɪnt/ - (two words) British English, Australian English  
 PERCENT /pɪ'sɪnt/ - (one word) American English, Canadian English

- specifies an amount for or in every hundred
- can be used as a noun, adjective or adverb
- in formal writing, use *per cent* (*percent*), rather than the % sign
- use *per cent* (*percent*) with a number, for example:

It is predicted that house prices will rise **2 percent** over the year.

PERCENTAGE - (one word only)  
 /pə'sɪntɪdʒ/ - British English, Australian English  
 /pɪ'sɪntɪdʒ/ - American English, Canadian English

- specifies an amount for or in every hundred; this is not the same as a total number
- used as a noun
- percentage can be followed by either a singular or plural noun, for example:

A small **percentage** of the state's **budget** is used for infrastructure.  
 A large **percentage** of the **buildings** in that street will be demolished.

## Language of comparison

When describing trends in graphs, table or pie charts, it is necessary to select and compare salient features or meaningful items. There are a number of ways comparisons can be made.

Adjectives have **three degrees** of comparison:

<b>positive</b>	big, good, interesting
<b>comparative</b>	bigger, better, more interesting
<b>superlative</b>	biggest, best, most interesting

## Comparative

- comparative forms are used to compare 2 people, places, things, and actions:  
*Taking the train is **faster** but **more expensive than** driving to Sydney.*
- If the second person, place, thing or action is given, then **'than'** is added after the comparative.

## Superlative

- superlative forms are used to compare 3 or more people, places, and things:  
*Walking is **the cheapest** and **the best** form of exercise.*
- 'the'** is always used with superlatives

## Comparative and Superlative forms of adjectives

### One-syllable adjectives

Add **-er** and **-est** to the positive adjective to form the **comparative** and **superlative** degrees:

hard	harder	hardest
large	larger	largest

Some adjectives have **irregular** forms:

good	better	best
bad	worse	worst

Some adjectives have **more than one** form:

far	farther/further	farthest/furthest
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**Spelling tip:** If an adjective ends in a **single consonant** and is preceded by a **single vowel**, the consonant is **doubled**

thin	thinner	thinnest
big	bigger	biggest

### Two-syllable adjectives

Use **more/less** and the **most/the least** to form the **comparative** and **superlative** degrees:

modern	more/less modern	the most/the least modern
profitable	more/less profitable	the most/the least profitable

If an adjective ends in a final **-y** and is **preceded by a consonant**, the **-y** changes to an **-i before -er** and **-est**:

Easy	easier	easiest
Funny	funnier	funniest

**Spelling tip:** If an adjective ends in an **-e**, the **final -e** is dropped before **-er** and **-est**:

simple	simpler	simplest
secure	securer	securest