Writing skills practice: Writing about survey results – exercises

Look at the exam question and report and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

Preparation

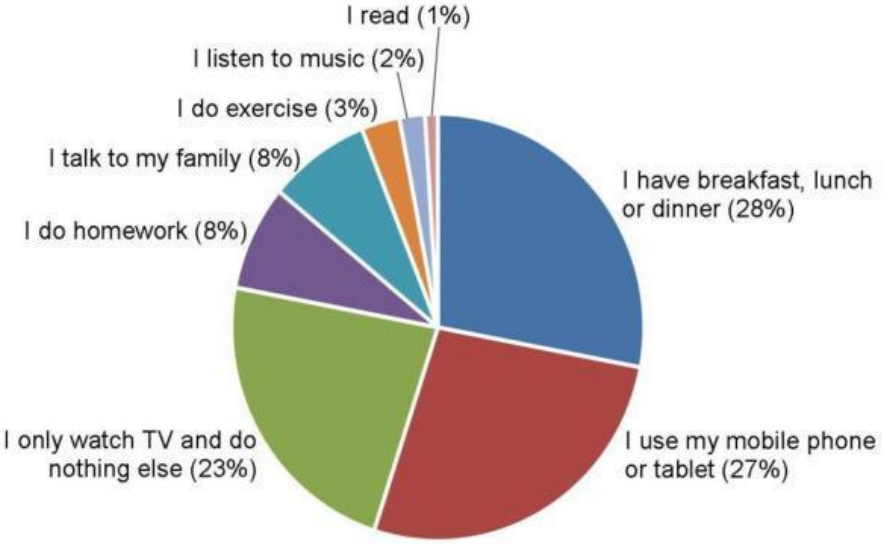
Circle *True* or *False* for these sentences.

1.	Your writing should have an introduction, main body and conclusion.	*True*	*False*
2.	You should include your opinion about the results of the survey.	*True*	*False*
3.	You should try to mention or summarise all the information given.	*True*	*False*
4.	You should use a variety of expressions for describing percentages and proportions.	*True*	*False*
5.	You don't have to use connectors or link ideas together.	*True*	*False*
6.	In your conclusion, you should focus on the most important figures or trends.	*True*	*False*

Exam question

In a survey for *Northern Ireland Teen Time* magazine, 100 teenagers were asked the question: 'Do you do anything else while you are watching TV?' The pie chart below shows the results of the survey.

Summarise the information in the chart by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



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This pie chart shows teenagers' answers to a survey for *Northern Ireland Teen Time* magazine, which asked them if they do anything else while they watch TV. It can be seen that over three-quarters of those surveyed do other things simultaneously.

Over half said they either ate or checked their mobile phone or tablet while they were watching TV while, perhaps unsurprisingly, only a few teenagers said they read, did exercise or listened to music while watching TV. Eight per cent talked to their families and another 8% said they often did homework and watched TV at the same time. It is not clear from the pie chart if they did more than one additional activity at once.

In conclusion, it is evident that a large proportion of families watch TV while they are eating, while almost a third of young people divide their attention between several screens at the same time. These figures may reflect a general trend towards less formal family mealtimes and greater levels of multitasking. However, a significant number of teenagers still focus fully on the television when they are watching.

Top Tips for writing

1. Start by saying exactly what the pie chart shows.
2. The second sentence in the introduction should summarise the single most important thing from the chart.
3. In the second paragraph describe the survey results in detail. Use a variety of language to describe proportions, fractions and percentages.
4. Use expressions for comparing like *while ..., however ...*
5. In the conclusion, summarise the bigger picture and mention the most significant percentages or trends.

1. Check your understanding: multiple choice

Circle the best answer to complete these sentences.

1. The text summarises teenagers' answers to ___ about their TV viewing habits.
   a. one question b. two questions c. three questions
2. The proportion of teenagers that did something else while watching TV was ___.
   a. more than 50 per cent b. more than 75 per cent c. more than 80 per cent
3. We don't know from the survey results ___ while watching TV.
   a. what percentage of teenagers read b. if teenagers talk to their families c. if teenagers do more than one other activity
4. The most common activities to do while watching TV were ___.
   a. chatting to families and reading b. eating and checking phones or tablets c. eating and chatting to families

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5. The top two activities done while watching TV could show ___.

   a. a general trend
   b. a very surprising change
   c. that teenagers' habits are the same as they've always been

6. The proportion of teenagers that do nothing else while they watch TV is ___.

   a. surprisingly small
   b. unknown
   c. significant

2. Check your writing: matching

Match the amounts with an expression from the box which has a similar meaning.

quite a lot	nearly a third	the majority of
double the number of	over three-quarters	over two-thirds

1. more than 75% _____
2. more than half of _____
3. more than 66% _____
4. 31% _____
5. twice as many _____
6. a significant number _____

3. Check your writing: gap fill

Write one word in each gap to complete the second phrase so that it has the same meaning as the first.

1. We can see that …
   It can _____ seen that …

2. Over 50% said …
   _____ than half said …

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3. More than 75% of the teenagers surveyed …

   _____ three-_____ of the teenagers surveyed …

4. Most of the teenagers asked said …

   The _____ of the teenagers asked said …

5. Nearly one in every three people surveyed …

   Nearly a _____ of people surveyed …

6. Quite a lot of teenagers said …

   A significant _____ of teenagers said …

7. On the other hand, a significant number …

   _____, a significant number …

8. To conclude, …

   In _____, …

Discussion
What do you do while you are watching TV? Have you carried out any surveys or questionnaires? What did you find out?

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