12 Using prepositions: describing trends and changes

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

1 a There has been an increase in the number of people aged over eighty.
  b There has been an increase of the number of people aged over eighty.
2 a Between 1990 and 2000, there was a drop 15%.
  b Between 1990 and 2000, there was a drop of 15%.

We use a noun describing a specific trend or change + *in* + a word or phrase describing the thing which has changed:

- *a(n) cut/decline/decrease/drop/fall/increase/reduction/rise, etc. in something*
  The chart shows ***a decline in*** *the bird population.*
  There have been dramatic ***cuts in*** *the level of spending on the elderly.*
- *a(n) change/growth/improvement/trend/variation, etc. in something*
  There have been significant ***improvements in*** *health care.*
  We have seen massive ***changes in*** *people's lifestyles.*

We use a noun describing a change or the result of a change + *of* + a number showing the size of the change:

- *a(n) decrease/drop/fall/increase/reduction/rise, etc. of + number*
  The statistics show ***a reduction of*** *20%* ***in*** *energy costs as a result of the measures.*
  The radio station experienced ***a fall of*** *36,000 listeners to a total audience of 2.1 million.*
- *a high/low/maximum/peak/total, etc. of + number*
  Demand reached ***a peak of*** *45,000 in early March.*

2 Correct the mistake below.

The hot weather led to a sudden surge of ice cream sales.



The hot weather led to ..... .

3 Underline the correct preposition in each sentence.

1 There has been a slight rise *in/of/to* the number of men employed.
2 Experts expect there to be a fall *by/of/in* approximately 30% over the next decade.
3 The introduction of DVDs has led to a decline *of/in/to* video sales.
4 We have seen an increase *by/of/in* only 0.5% during the past year.
5 Researchers observed changes *of/to/in* educational levels.
6 The survey hopes to track trends *for/in/to* consumer spending.
7 The health service spent a total *in/of/at* £2.5 billion on staffing last year.
8 The new figures show a drop of 5% *in/of/to* student numbers.

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