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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.