

# 2 Diet & nutrition

**Aims:** Describing a line graph | Using tense and time expressions | Taking a position  
Generating ideas for an essay | Presenting arguments and reasons for your opinion

## Part 1: Vocabulary

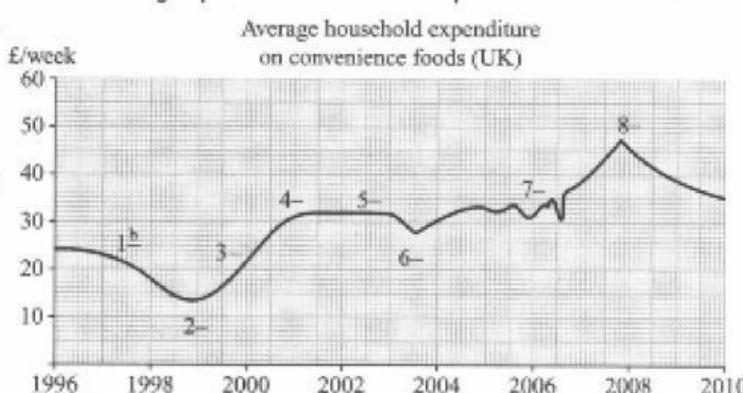


### 1 Match the expressions 1–9 with the correct definitions a–i.

1 organic food	a physical weakness resulting from lack of food or poor diet
2 dietary supplement	b fruit and vegetables available at particular times of the year
3 obesity	c food that needs little preparation and can be used at any time
4 fast food	d a diet without meat or fish
5 genetically modified food	e food containing genes which have been altered
6 seasonal produce	f condition of being very overweight
7 convenience food	g tablets or foods taken to improve nutrition
8 malnutrition	h food grown without artificial fertilizers or pesticides
9 vegetarianism	i food that can be obtained quickly from a restaurant

### 2 The verbs a–h can all be used to describe line graphs. Match each expression with the part of the graph it best describes.

- a rise (rose, risen)
- b fall (fell, fallen)
- c peak (-ed, -ed)
- d reach (-ed, -ed) its lowest point
- e level (-led, -led) off
- f dip (-ped, -ped)
- g remain (-ed, -ed) the same
- h fluctuate (-d, -d)



3 *There be + noun (+ in) can also be used to describe trends.*Example: *There was a rise in fast food consumption.*

Write the noun form of the verbs 1–7.

Example: *rose*      *rise*

1 increased

5 fell

2 peaked

6 dropped

3 decreased

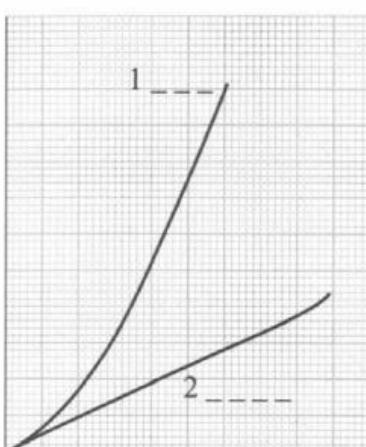
7 fluctuated

4 dipped

## 4 The adjectives a–g can be used to describe the degree of change represented in a line graph. Adjectives are placed before the noun.

Example: *There was a sharp rise in fast food consumption.*

Match each adjective with the line that it best describes.



- a gradual
- b moderate
- c modest
- d sharp
- e dramatic
- f slight
- g steep

## 5 Adverbs can also be used to describe the degree of change. Adverbs come after the verb.

Example: *Fast food consumption rose sharply.*The sentences 1–5 on the left describe trends using *there be + adjective + noun*. Complete the sentences on the right using the corresponding verb + adverb.Example: *There was a steep increase in sales of convenience food.**Sales of convenience food increased steeply.*

1 There was a dramatic decrease in the use of dietary supplements.

*The use of dietary supplements \_\_\_\_\_.*

2 There was a modest dip in levels of obesity.

*Levels of obesity \_\_\_\_\_.*

3 There was a slight fall in the production of genetically modified food.

*The production of genetically modified food \_\_\_\_\_.*

4 There was a significant drop in levels of malnutrition.

*Levels of malnutrition \_\_\_\_\_.*

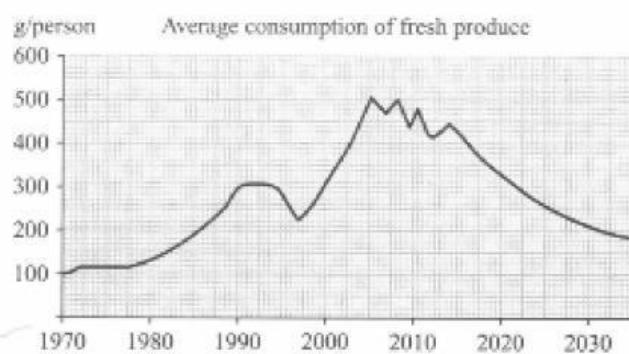
5 There was moderate fluctuation in the availability of seasonal produce.

*The availability of seasonal produce \_\_\_\_\_.*

## Part 2: Practice exercises: Task 1

1 In order to describe a line graph, you need to understand the time frame and use the correct tense. Study the graph below. Then read the passage and draw a solid line [ ] under examples of the past tense, a dotted line [.....] under examples of the present perfect tense, and circle the expressions which refer to the future. Then answer questions 1–4.

Consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables rose steadily from 1970 to 1990, and then levelled off. There was a dip in the early and mid 1990s, and then a further rise until it reached a peak of 500g per person in 2005. Since then consumption has fluctuated. Over the next ten years, consumption is expected to fall steadily. Between 2020 and 2030, it is also projected to decline, but more gradually.



- 1 When should you use the past tense in describing a line graph?
- 2 When should you use the present perfect tense?
- 3 What other expressions can you use for future trends?
- 4 When would you use the present tense?

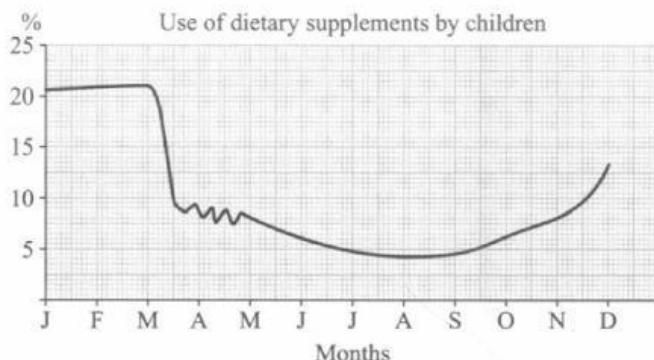
2 Complete the passage below using verbs, adverbs, adjectives and nouns. Make sure you use the correct verb tenses. The first one has been done for you.



The percentage of malnourished elderly people in the EU fell gradually between 1970 and 1978. Over the following seven years, it [1] \_\_\_\_\_ [2] \_\_\_\_\_, until 1990, when it [3] \_\_\_\_\_ at 16 per cent. After falling slightly, the rate of malnutrition [4] \_\_\_\_\_ for a decade. Since 2000, there [5] \_\_\_\_\_ a [6] \_\_\_\_\_ fall. Over the next ten years, it is [7] \_\_\_\_\_ to [8] \_\_\_\_\_ [9] \_\_\_\_\_.

3 When describing a line graph, you should also indicate precisely the time you are referring to. Use the expressions a–e to complete the passage below.

- a over the next .../for the following ...
- b thereafter
- c from ... to/between ... and
- d until
- e in (x2)



The percentage of children using supplements is at its highest level (1) \_\_\_\_\_ January \_\_\_\_\_ March. It then falls sharply and fluctuates (2) \_\_\_\_\_ two months. Supplement use continues to fall gradually (3) \_\_\_\_\_ it reaches its lowest point (4) \_\_\_\_\_ August. (5) \_\_\_\_\_, it increases gradually during the autumn months and more sharply (7) \_\_\_\_\_ December.

**Exam tip:** You can also use *from ... to* to describe the amount of change.

Example: *The percentage of children taking dietary supplements fell from 21 per cent in January to 6 per cent in March.*

Notice that the start and end points are indicated by *in* (*in January ... in March*). If you find this word order confusing, put the time frame at the start of the sentence and the amount of change at the end.

Example: *Between January and March, the percentage of children taking dietary supplements fell from 21 per cent to 6 per cent.*

4 Compare the two descriptions of a graph on obese adults. Underline any differences that you find.

**Description 1**

The percentage of obese adults rose steadily from 8 per cent in 1950 to 15 per cent in 1970. There was a slight dip, and then there was a gradual rise until 1990. It rose steeply for the next ten years, and then it levelled off. It has risen even more sharply, and it is projected to peak at 35 per cent in 2010 and then it will level off.

**Description 2**

The percentage of obese adults rose steadily from 8 per cent in 1950 to 15 per cent in 1970. There was a slight dip, followed by a gradual rise until 1990. After rising steeply for the next ten years, it levelled off. Since then, it has risen even more sharply. It is projected to peak at 35 per cent in 2010, and level off thereafter.

Now use the expressions: *followed by ...*, *after + -ing* and *since then* to rewrite the description below. Remove any unnecessary words.

Between 1996 and 1999, expenditure on convenience foods fell gradually from approximately £25 per week to half that amount. It rose sharply over the next three years and then levelled off at £30 per week. It remained the same for over two years. It dipped briefly and then rose slightly. Between 2005 and 2007 it fluctuated. It rose sharply and peaked at nearly £50 per week in 2008 and then started to fall.

## Part 2: Practice exercises: Task 2

5 Once you have analysed the title, you need to generate ideas. It helps to begin by identifying how you feel about the topic. Look at the statements 1–5 below and mark them according to how closely they represent your opinion. SA (Strongly agree), A (agree), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree)

- 1 We should return to more natural methods of food production, such as organic farming, even if this means that we produce food less efficiently.
- 2 In order to improve public health, governments should require food manufacturers to add nutrients to their products.
- 3 The problem of rising levels of obesity in many parts of the world is mainly due to people's lack of knowledge about food and nutrition.
- 4 Because fast food is generally unhealthy, governments should regulate the fast food industry in the same way that they regulate the alcohol and tobacco industries.
- 5 Convenience food will become increasingly prevalent and eventually replace traditional foods and traditional methods of food preparation.

6 When you write your essay, you must give reasons for your opinions. You should also show that you have 'tested' your opinion by comparing it with at least one other opinion and examined the reasoning behind it. Look at the two opinions below and the reasons a–g. Indicate which reasons support each opinion by writing letters a–g in the spaces provided. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 Some people strongly agree that we should return to more natural methods of food production, such as organic farming, even if this means that we produce food less efficiently. They believe this because: C, \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Other people strongly disagree that we should return to more natural methods of food production, such as organic farming, even if this means that we produce food less efficiently. They believe this because: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons

- a More people will need to be employed on farms, and fewer people will be available to do work that will help the country develop economically.
- b Producing food less efficiently could lead to food shortages.
- c It is better for the environment to produce food using fewer chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides.
- d Organically produced food is no more nutritious than food produced using pesticides and artificial fertilisers.
- e Naturally produced food tastes better than food produced using more artificial methods.
- f Food that has been produced without preservatives is less likely to stay fresh, so more food may be wasted.
- g Man-made chemicals used in modern methods of food production could be harmful to human health.

**Exam tip:** Templates are useful for training yourself to think of a range of points quickly and write about them in an organised way. However, during the actual exams, you should spend only 3–4 minutes on this stage, so you will probably have to do your preparation in your head rather than on paper.

7 Templates A and B below can be used for essay questions that involve writing about solutions to problems. Read the essay questions 1 and 2 and complete Templates A and B with the missing information a-h below.

1 What can governments do to encourage children to eat a healthier diet?

Template A: 'What is the solution?' essay questions				
	What are the possible solutions?	What specific action can be taken?	What are the positive consequences?	What are the drawbacks?
1	Regulate the food industry.	Require food producers to fortify their products with vitamins.	1 _____	This would be unpopular & expensive for food producers.
2	Regulate school meals.	2 _____	Children would have at least 1 healthy meal per day.	This would not stop children from bringing unhealthy packed lunches or going out for lunch to fast food outlets.
3	3 _____	Require schools to teach children to cook healthy foods.	Children can take pride in their learning & transfer these skills to the home.	4 _____

- a Schools may not have the facilities to teach cooking.
- b Children would eat healthier food without having to change their habits.
- c Require schools to provide only healthy food and drink at lunch time.
- d Educate children about healthy eating.

2 Should the government regulate the fast food industry in the same way that it regulates the drug, alcohol and tobacco industries?

Template B: 'Evaluate the solution' essay questions			
What are the possible solutions?	What specific action can be taken?	Positive consequence(s)	Drawback(s)
<b>Solution in the question:</b> Regulate the fast food industry like drug, alcohol & tobacco industries.	Restrict opening hours. Restrict location, e.g. not near schools.	Send a clear signal that fast food is bad for health. 5 _____	This would not stop people cooking & eating unhealthy food at home. 6 _____
<b>Other possible solution:</b> public health campaign explaining the dangers of eating too much fast food	television advertising showing long-term consequences of unhealthy diet	Help people change their eating habits fundamentally. 7 _____	People could ignore government advice. 8 _____

- e Reduces people's access to unhealthy foods.
- f Effectiveness of public health campaigns can be difficult to measure.
- g Allows freedom of choice.
- h Too much government interference is unpopular with business & bad for the economy.

8 Similar templates can be used for Task 2 essay questions that require you to discuss ideas. However, instead of listing 'positive consequences' and 'drawbacks', you will list 'evidence for the idea' and 'evidence against'.

Read the essay questions 1 and 2 and complete Templates C and D with the missing information.

1 Dieting to lose weight has become increasingly prevalent in the developed world. Why do you think people nowadays are so concerned with body shape and size?

Template C: 'Discuss your ideas' essay questions

	What are your ideas?	What is the evidence for?	What is the evidence against?
1	Advertisements encourage people to value slim figures.	Advertisements often show desirable consumer products alongside slim models.	Advertisers wouldn't use slim models unless the public already had a favourable view of them.
2	People associate slimness with positive character traits.	People who do not eat too much are seen as having good self-control.	1 _____
3	2 _____	3 _____	If people diet too much, they may become malnourished.

2 The problem of obesity is mainly due to people's lack of knowledge about healthy eating. To what extent do you agree with the statement above?

Template D: 'Evaluate an idea' essay questions

What are the ideas?	What is the evidence for?	What is the evidence against?
<b>Idea in the question:</b> Obesity is due to lack of knowledge about healthy eating.	4 _____	5 _____
<b>Other possible idea:</b> 6 _____	7 _____	8 _____

### Part 3: Exam practice

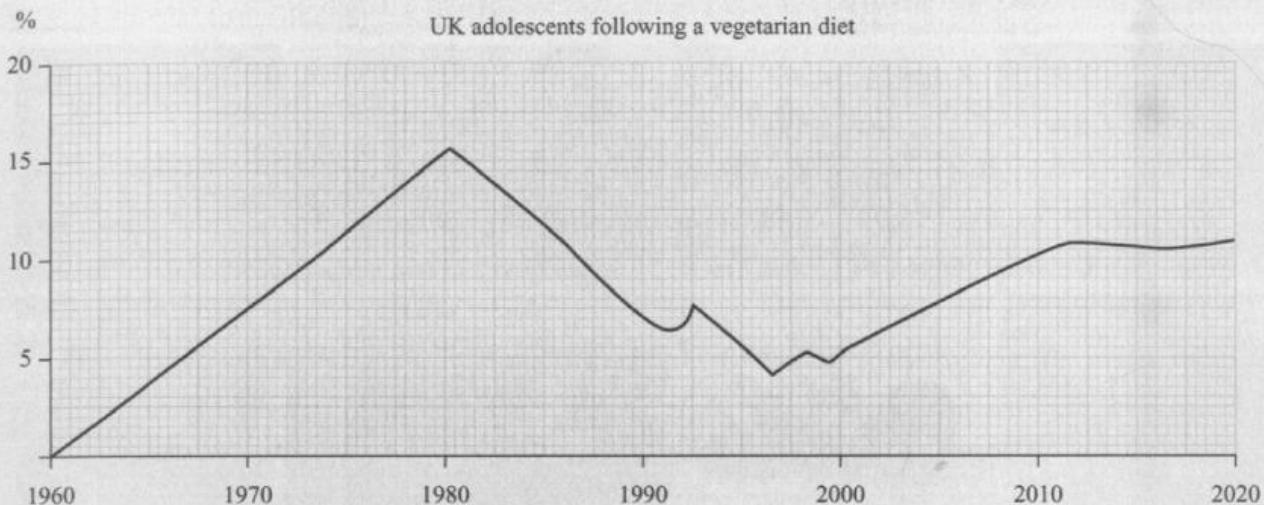
#### WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

*The graph shows the percentage of UK adolescents following a vegetarian diet.*

*Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features.*

Write at least 150 words.



#### WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

*Convenience foods will become increasingly prevalent and eventually replace traditional foods and traditional methods of food preparation.*

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.