Using the right prepositions

It is important to use the right preposition when you are reporting the features and describing the numbers, prepositions like to, by, with and at when describing numbers and figures. Here are some examples to give you a basic idea of the differences:

1. Use **to** when describing what happened to the number:

   In 2008, the rate of unemployment rose to 10%.

2. Use **by** when describing the amount of change between two numbers:

   In 2009, the rate of unemployment fell by 2% (from 10% to 8%).

3. Use **with** to give the idea of 'having' the number:

   He won the election with 52% of the vote.

4. Use **at** to add the number on the end of a sentence:

   Unemployment reached its highest level in 2008, at 10%.

Exercise: Complete the sentences choosing the right preposition from the list below.

for	at	on	to	in	by	from	between
of	up	down	with	and	during		

1. ..... 1990 ..... 2000, there was a drop ..... 15%.
2. GM car sales peaked ..... 2,000 in 1999.
3. The chart shows a decline ..... 35% ..... the bird population.
4. There has been a significant increase ..... the number of people aged over eighty.
5. There have been dramatic cuts ..... the level of spending on the elderly, reaching a low ..... 11%.
6. Profits rose ..... a low of 4.5 million to a high of 8 million in 2008.
7. Canada and Australia's wheat exports fluctuated ..... 5 million and 6 million respectively.
8. There were significant improvements ..... healthcare ..... 1980.
9. The statistics show a reduction ..... 20% ..... energy costs as a result ..... the measures.
10. Profits fell ..... 10%, from 2,000 to 1,800 in 1970s.
11. The radio station experienced a fall ..... 36,000 listeners to a total audience ..... 2.1 million.

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12. The number of students fell ..... a low of 1,500 in the second half of the year.
13. Cases of AIDS shot ..... from 2,400 in 1996 to 4,000 in 2004.
14. Demand reached a peak ..... 45,000 in early March.
15. The number of cars sold remained unchanged in 1999 ..... three million.
16. Students do between three ..... four hours homework a night.
17. The number of accidents ..... 1999 was slightly higher than that of 2000.
18. The figure rose steadily ..... the four years between 1997 ..... 2001.
19. Oil production rose dramatically at first but then leveled out ..... $70 a barrel.
20. There was an increase ..... 50,000 between 1990 and 1992.
21. ..... 1994 ..... 1997, sales rose steadily ..... over 20,000.
22. DVD sales peaked ..... 60,000 ..... 1992 but then decreased ..... about 10,000 over the next two years.
23. In the year 2000, sales started ..... 10,000. In the first month, there was a rise ..... around 2,000.
24. After some fluctuations, sales in 2000 reached their peak ..... just over 15,000, a rise ..... 5,000 since the beginning of the year. Sales increased ..... over 10,000 between 1994 and 1997, but then dropped ..... more than 10,000 ..... 1997 and 1999.
25. In 2008, the rate of unemployment rose ..... 10%.
26. In 2008, the rate of unemployment rose ..... 10%, from 2,000 to 2,200 cases.
27. There was a slight rise ..... the number of men employed.
28. Experts expect there to be a fall ..... approximately 30% over the next decade.
29. The introduction ..... DVDs led to a decline ..... 20% ..... video sales.
30. The figures show a drop ..... 5% ..... student numbers.
31. The health service program spent a total ..... $2.5 billion on staffing ..... April 2002.
32. The survey hopes to track trends ..... consumer spending.
33. In 2009, the rate of unemployment fell ..... 2% (from 10% to 8%).
34. He won the election ..... 52% of the vote.
35. Unemployment reached its highest level ..... the year 2008 ..... 10%.
36. ..... 2002, the cost of an average house in the UK was around £130,000. ..... 2007, the average house price had risen ..... almost £190,000, but it fell back ..... just under £150,000 ..... 2008.
37. Japan ..... two gold medals and a silver one stood ahead of the US ..... one gold and one bronze medal ..... 1968.

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