

IELTS PRACTICE

Task 1: Basic grammar

Prepositions of Time

Prepositions of time indicate when events happen. They may indicate an exact point in time when something occurs (*in, on, at*), a period of time over which an action takes place (*from...to, between, during*), or the starting or end times of an action (*since, until*).

The restaurant closes at 6:00. (Six o'clock is the exact moment when this action occurs.)

Prices rose until 2012. (Prices rose and then stopped rising in 2012.)

Prices rose between 2008 and 2012. (Prices began to rise in 2008 and continued to rise until 2012.)

The company has been selling this product since 2005. (The company began to sell the product in 2005 and is still selling it.)

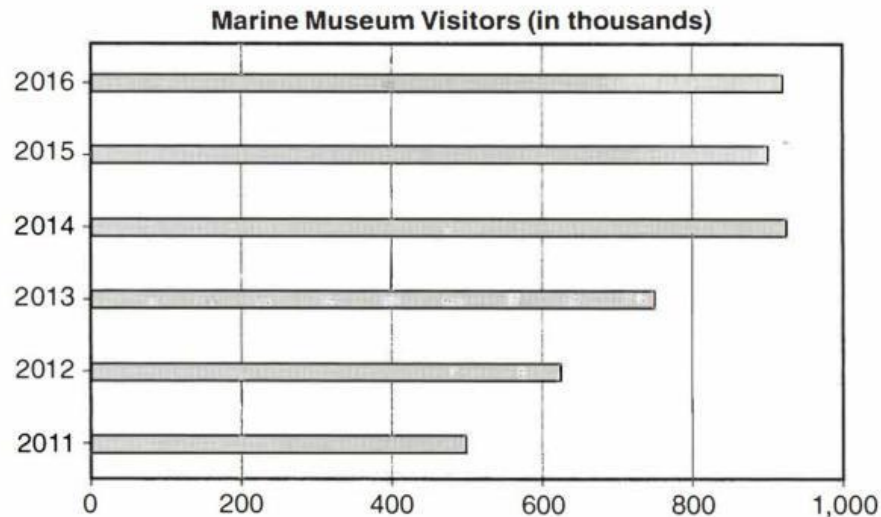
Preposition	Use	Example
<i>at</i>	Hour Part of day	At 6:00 At noon; At night
<i>on</i>	Day Date Holiday	On Monday On June 10 On Valentine's Day
<i>in</i>	Month Year Season Part of day	In September In 2013 In the summer In the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening
<i>from...to</i> <i>between...and</i>	The start and end point of something	From January to March Between April and August
<i>during</i>	Throughout a period of time	During 2010
<i>since</i>	The beginning point of something	Since Wednesday
<i>until</i>	Up to a certain time	Until 2:00

Exercise 1

Study the graph and the model essay below. Complete the blanks with the prepositions from the box below. Some words may not be used. Some may be used more than once.

in	from	between	until	to	since
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The graph below gives information about the numbers of annual visitors to the Marine Museum.



Model Essay

The graph shows the number of people who visited the Marine Museum each year, 1..... 2011 to 2016. The number of annual visitors increased steadily for several years and then started to level off.

2..... 2011, there were 500,000 visitors to the museum. The following year, the number rose to a little over 600,000. The number of annual visitors continued to rise 3..... 2014, when it reached a little over 900,000.

In 2015, there was a change. 4..... this year, the number of visitors fell to exactly 900,000. The next year it rose slightly, but was still a little less than it had been in 2014.

5..... 2011 and 2014, there were large annual increases in the numbers of annual visitors. The small decrease and increase 6..... 2015 and 2016 show a leveling off in the numbers of annual visitors to the Marine Museum.

Prepositions of Amount

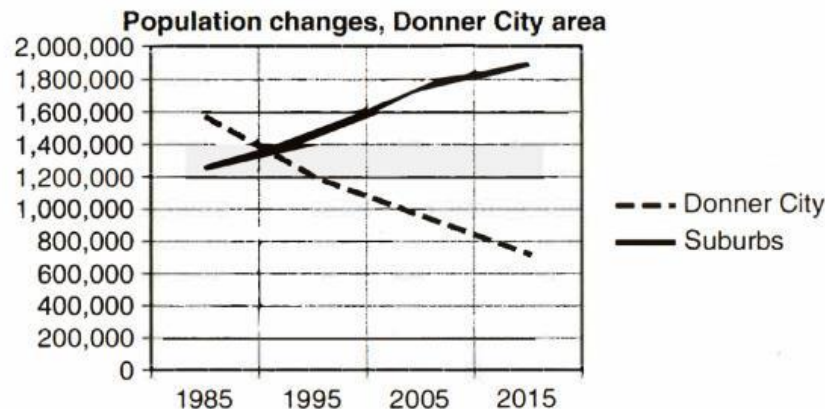
We use verbs such as *rise*, *increase*, *go up*, *fall*, *decrease*, and *go down* to talk about changes in amounts on a chart or graph. We use the prepositions *from*, *to*, and *by* together with these verbs.

Preposition	Use	Example
<i>from</i>	The starting amount	Prices fell from \$200.
<i>to</i>	The ending amount	The number rose to over a million.
<i>by</i>	The amount of the change	The cost increased by 25 percent.

Exercise 2

Study the graph and model essay below. Complete the blanks with the prepositions from the chart on page 130.

The graph below gives information about population changes in Donner City and its suburbs.



Model Essay

This graph shows the changes in the size of the population of Donner City and of the surrounding suburban area over a thirty-year period of time, from 1985 to 2015.

In 1985, the population of Donner City was 1,600,000. At 1,200,000, the population in the suburbs was lower 1..... 400,000. Over the next thirty years, the population of Donner City fell while the population of the suburbs rose. During that time, the Donner City population decreased 2..... about 50 percent. In the meantime, the suburban population rose 3..... almost 2,000,000.

Between 1985 and 1995, the population of Donner City fell 4..... 1,600,000 5..... about 1,200,000. During the same period of time, the population of the suburbs rose 6..... 1,200,000 7..... almost 2,000,000. Over the next ten years, the population in the city fell 8..... about 200,000 while the suburban population continued to rise and approached 1,800,000.

Overall, this graph shows that the population decreased in the city just as steadily as it increased in the suburbs.

Comparisons

We can compare things in several ways.

More, fewer, less

More indicates a bigger amount.

Fewer and *less* indicate a smaller amount.

Fewer is used with plural nouns.

Less is used with non-count nouns.

More people visited the museum in 2010.

The company sold fewer cars last year.

The company made less money last year.

Exercise 3

Study the table and the model essay below. Complete the blanks with comparative words from the box below. Some words may not be used. Some may be used more than once.

more	higher	fewer	cheaper
less	lower	busier	

The table below gives information about the average number of servings of ice cream sold each day in two different years.

Springer's Café Ice Cream Sales

	April	May	June	July	August	September
2015	15	25	50	55	60	25
2016	25	35	65	80	75	30

The table shows the average number of ice cream servings sold daily for the months of April through September during the years 2015–2016.

Model Essay

The café was 1..... in 2016 than in 2015. Looking month by month, the average number of servings sold was 2..... in 2016. For example, in April of 2015, there was an average of 15 servings sold daily, while in April of 2016 the average was 25. In each of the months shown, the average number of servings sold daily is 3..... for 2015 than it is for the corresponding months in 2016.

In 2015, 4..... servings were sold in August than in any other month. In 2016, 5..... servings were sold in July than in any other month. In both years, 6..... servings were sold in April than in any other month.

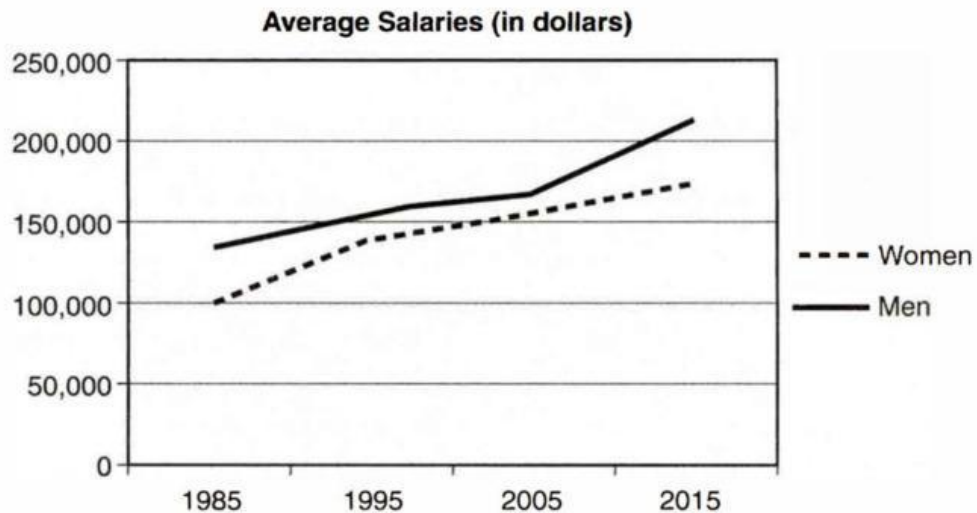
Overall the table shows 7..... sales in 2016 than in 2015. It also shows a significantly 8..... number of sales in June, July, and August than in the other months.

Exercise 4. Plurals

Study the graph and the model essay below. Complete the blanks with words from the box below, changing them to the plural form where necessary. All the words will be used more than once.

man	doctor	year
woman	salary	rate

The graph below gives information about new doctors' salaries.



Model Essay

The chart compares the average 1..... of men and women who have just become 2..... over a period of thirty 3....., from 1985 to 2015. Women's salaries remained lower than men's throughout the entire period.

In 1985, the average 4..... of a 5..... just starting out her career as a 6..... was \$100,000. During that same year, the average salary of a 7..... in the same situation was a little under \$150,000. During the next ten 8....., women's salaries increased at a faster 9..... than men's. In 1995, a woman earned an average salary of just under \$150,000 while a man earned a little over that same amount.

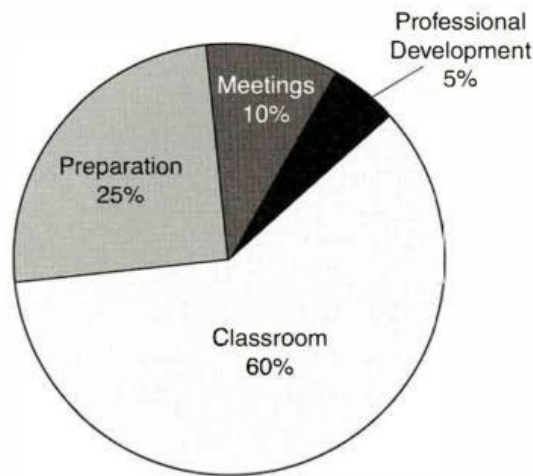
The 10..... of both men and 11..... continued to increase at a similar rate over the next ten years. Then, between 2005 and 2015, the salaries of 12..... started increasing at a faster 13..... . By 2015, 14..... were earning over \$200,000 a year on average, while 15..... were earning a good deal less than that.

Exercise 5: Subject – Verb Agreement

Study the chart and the model essay below. Complete the blanks with the correct form of the verbs in parentheses. Choose the verb that agrees with the subject.

The chart below presents the breakdown of professional time for elementary school teachers in the Wardsville school district.

Professional Time: Elementary School Teachers



Model Essay

The chart 1..... (show/shows) how elementary school teachers in the Wardsville school district 2..... (spend/spends) their professional time. Teachers working in elementary school 3..... (spend/spends) the largest portion of their time in the classroom. Professional development activities, on the other hand, 4..... (take/takes) up the least amount of teachers' time.

An elementary school teacher in Wardsville 5..... (spend/spends) a little over half of his or her professional time—60 percent of it—in the classroom. The rest of the time 6..... (are/is) taken up with activities such as preparation, meetings, and professional development activities. Preparation 7..... (take/takes) up one-fourth of a teacher's professional time. Meetings 8..... (take/takes) up 10 percent of it. Professional development activities 9..... (account/accounts) for just 5 percent of a teacher's time.

Overall, the chart 10..... (show/shows) that teachers 11..... (spend/spends) a significant portion of their professional time outside of the classroom. Forty percent of their time—close to half of it—12..... (are/is) spent in other types of activities.

Verb Tenses

You can use a few simple verb tenses to describe the graphics in Writing Task 1.

Use the **simple present tense** to refer to an action or state that is always true.

*The graph shows information about consumer spending in the past decade.
Houses cost more in Paris than in Bogota.*

Use the **present perfect tense** to refer to an action that started in the past and continues to the present.

*Prices have increased more than fifty percent since 2005.
The number of annual visitors has fallen since they closed part of the museum.*

Use the **simple past tense** to describe an action that was completed in the past.

*Prices increased last year.
Over one million people visited the museum in 2009.*

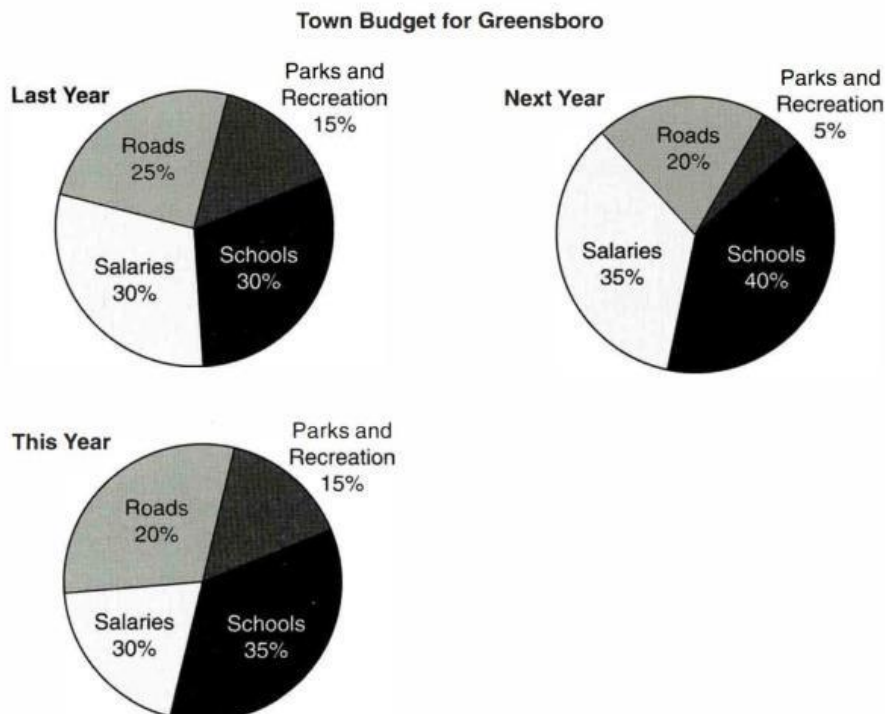
Use the **future tense** to describe an action that will take place in the future.

*Next month, prices will rise.
In the next decade, more people will leave the suburbs to live in the city.*

Exercise 6

Study the charts and the model essay below. Complete the blanks with the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

The charts below show the allocation of funds in the town budget of Greensboro.



Model Essay

The charts compare the budget of the town of Greensboro in three different years. Last year, the town 1..... (spend) an equal portion of its budget on schools and salaries. Thirty percent of the budget 2..... (go) to each of those areas. Spending on roads 3..... (take) up another 25 percent of the budget, while the smallest amount—15 percent—4..... (go) to parks and recreation.

This year, spending on schools 5..... (increase) 5 percent since last year. Spending on schools 6..... (remain) the same since last year, while spending on roads 7..... (decrease) 5 percent.

Next year, the town 8..... (spend) an even greater portion of its budget on schools—40 percent. Spending on salaries 9..... (rise) to 35 percent. Spending on roads 10..... (stay) the same, at 20 percent. Spending on parks and recreation 11..... (drop) to 5 percent.

The town always 12..... (spend) more on schools than it does on roads.