IELTS Writing Task 1 — Active vs Passive

Exercise: Choose the correct verb form (10 questions, ~10 minutes)

Rules to remember

Rule A	**Verbs that describe data — NEVER use passive:** *show, indicate, reveal, demonstrate, suggest* ✗ An increase is shown by the graph. ✓ The graph shows an increase.
Rule B	**Verbs of increase/decrease — NEVER use passive:** *rise, fall, increase, decrease, grow, drop, go up/down* ✗ Sales were risen sharply in 2020. ✓ Sales rose sharply in 2020.

Questions — circle the correct answer

#	Rule	Sentence & options
1	Rule A	The chart ___ a steady rise in internet usage between 2010 and 2020. ☐ A. shows ☐ B. is shown ☐ C. was shown
2	Rule B	Overall, sales ___ dramatically in the second quarter. ☐ A. were increased ☐ B. increased ☐ C. is increasing
3	Rule A	The data ___ that younger consumers prefer online shopping. ☐ A. is suggested ☐ B. are suggested ☐ C. suggests
4	Rule B	The number of users ___ sharply after the new policy was introduced. ☐ A. was fallen ☐ B. fell ☐ C. was decreased
5	Rule A	The graph ___ that temperatures have been rising consistently. ☐ A. is revealed ☐ B. was revealing ☐ C. reveals
6	Special case	As ___ by the pie chart, the largest proportion belongs to Asia. ☐ A. shown ☐ B. shows ☐ C. is showing
7	Rule A	The figures ___ that spending on education doubled over the decade. ☐ A. demonstrate ☐ B. are demonstrated

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#	Rule	Sentence & options
		☐ C. were demonstrated
8	Rule B	Between 2000 and 2010, the unemployment rate ___. ☐ A. was risen ☐ B. was rose ☐ C. rose
9	Rule B	The proportion of elderly residents ___ from 12% to 21% over the period. ☐ A. was grown ☐ B. grew ☐ C. were grown
10	Rule A + B	The line graph ___ that car ownership ___ steadily until 2015, then levelled off. ☐ A. indicates / rose ☐ B. is indicated / was risen ☐ C. indicates / was risen

Answer key & explanations

#	Answer	Explanation
1	A	'Show' is an intransitive verb for describing data — always active. Subject = 'the chart'.
2	B	'Increase' is a verb of change — never passive. Use simple past active: 'increased'.
3	C	'Suggest' is intransitive in this context — always active. 'The data' treated as singular: 'suggests'.
4	B	'Fall' is intransitive — no passive form exists. Use simple past active: 'fell'.
5	C	'Reveal' in Task 1 is intransitive — use active present simple: 'reveals'.
6	A	'As shown by...' is a fixed transitional phrase — the only acceptable passive form for these verbs in Task 1.
7	A	'Demonstrate' is intransitive here — always active. 'The figures demonstrate that...' is the standard structure.
8	C	'Rise/rose/risen' is fully intransitive — never used in passive. Use simple past: 'rose'.
9	B	'Grow' (in the sense of increase) is intransitive — use active: 'grew'. 'Was grown' implies someone cultivated it.
10	A	Two rules in one sentence: 'indicate' (Rule A) needs active; 'rise' (Rule B) needs active. Only option A uses both correctly.

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