

Task 1 · Lesson 1 — The first sentence & the overview

The two paragraphs that open every Task 1 answer: the paraphrased introduction, then the overview.

NAME _____

DATE _____

TEACHER / SELF-STUDY _____

Every Task 1 answer — line graph, bar chart, pie chart, table or process — opens with the same two moves, and they are **two separate paragraphs**. First a short **introduction** that paraphrases the question in your own words. Then, on a new line, your **overview** of the big picture. Get these two right and you have the backbone of a Band 7 answer before you describe a single detail.

- 1 **Paragraph 1 — the introduction.** One or two sentences, no more. Rewrite the task's first sentence and the chart labels in your own words — changing verbs, word class, word order and phrasing — without copying and without changing the meaning.
- 2 **Paragraph 2 — the overview.** Start a new line. Name the most striking thing about the data as a whole. No individual figures, no reasons, no opinions — just the big picture.

The whole answer is built the same way every time: **introduction** → **overview** → **two body paragraphs** (the detail and the figures). This lesson builds the first two.

MOVE 1 Paraphrase the question & the labels

You **must not copy the question**. Words copied straight from the task are not counted as your own, so a first sentence that repeats the rubric earns you nothing for vocabulary. Instead, rewrite it using four simple tools:

- A **Synonyms.** *shows* → illustrates, depicts, presents; *the number of* → how many.
- B **Change the word class.** A noun becomes a verb: *the number of visitors* → how many people visited.
- C **Change the word order / voice.** Move the time phrase, or switch active and passive.
- D **Name the chart type.** *the graph below* → the line graph / the bar chart / the two pie charts.

Some words you **keep**: proper nouns (London, France), units (millions, %) and technical terms usually have no safe synonym — changing them risks changing the meaning. Here is the whole move on one example.

THE QUESTION SAYS

“The graph below shows the number of visitors, in millions, to three museums in London between 2010 and 2019.”

A GOOD PARAPHRASE

“The **line graph illustrates** **how many people visited** three London museums, in millions, **over the ten years from** 2010 to 2019.”

the graph below → the line graph (D)

shows → illustrates (A)

the number of visitors → how many people visited (B)

between 2010 and 2019 → over the ten years from 2010 to 2019 (C)

kept: London, three, millions

“An answer that lifts wording directly from the task instructions cannot be credited for that language. The strongest responses re-express the prompt accurately in the candidate's own words before reporting the data.”

— IELTS Writing Key Assessment Criteria, Lexical Resource (paraphrased)

EXERCISE 1 · JUDGE THE REWRITE

8 MARKS

Each row rewrites a piece of the museum question above. Tick **one** box for each: is the rewrite a **good paraphrase** (different words, same meaning), **just copied** (barely changed), or a **meaning change** (it says something the question does not)?

#	Original wording → the rewrite	Good paraphrase	Just copied	Meaning change
1	the graph below shows → the line graph illustrates	☐	☐	☐
2	shows the number of visitors → shows the number of visitors	☐	☐	☐
3	the number of visitors → how many people visited	☐	☐	☐
4	shows the number of visitors → shows how popular the museums are	☐	☐	☐
5	between 2010 and 2019 → over the ten years from 2010 to 2019	☐	☐	☐
6	between 2010 and 2019 → in recent years	☐	☐	☐
7	three museums in London → three London museums	☐	☐	☐
8	three museums in London → several museums in London	☐	☐	☐

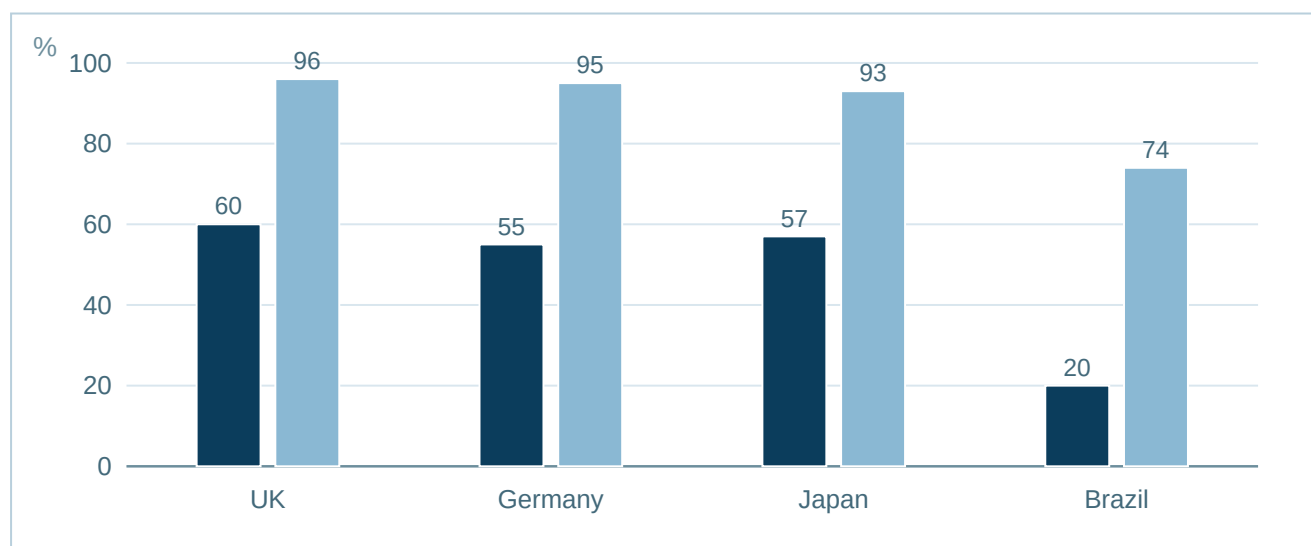
PRACTICE Four questions, four chart types

Task 1 can give you any of five input types. The paraphrase move is the same for all of them, but the *verbs* shift: a graph over time *ris*es and *fall*s; a table or bar chart *comp*ares; a process *has* stages. Study the four below, then do Exercise 2.

QUESTION A · BAR CHART

The chart below shows the percentage of households with internet access in four countries in 2005 and 2020.

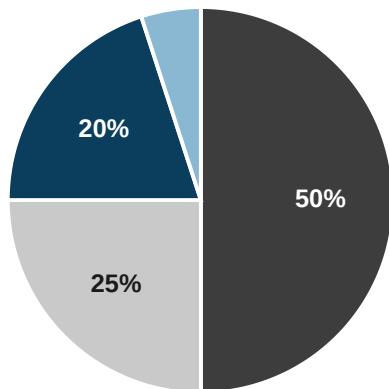
■ 2005 ■ 2020



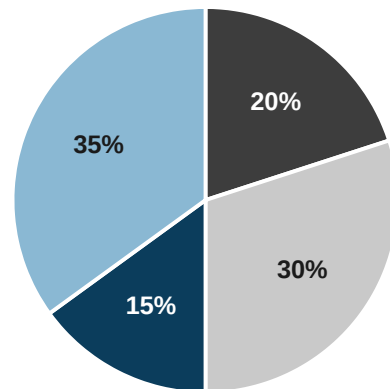
QUESTION B · PIE CHARTS

The two pie charts below show the proportion of electricity generated from four sources in Country X in 2000 and 2020.

Coal Gas Nuclear Renewables



2000



2020

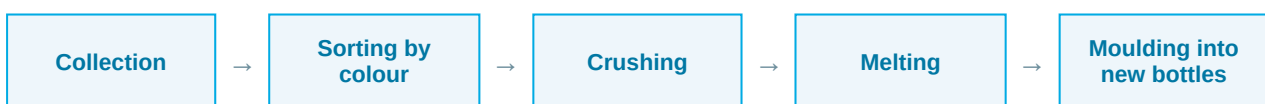
QUESTION C · TABLE

The table below shows average monthly household spending, in pounds, on three categories by three age groups.

Age group	Housing (£)	Food (£)	Leisure (£)
18–25	620	180	210
26–40	950	320	240
41–60	880	360	300

QUESTION D · PROCESS

The diagram below shows the process by which used glass bottles are recycled.



EXERCISE 2 · PICK THE BEST OPENING

4 MARKS

For each of the four questions above, **circle the letter** of the opening sentence that paraphrases the task **accurately** — not a copy, and not one that adds meaning the chart does not show.

9. Question A — bar chart, internet access

- (A) The chart shows the percentage of households with internet access in four countries in 2005 and 2020.
- (B) The bar chart compares the proportion of homes with internet access across four countries in 2005 and 2020.
- (C) The bar chart shows how internet use grew in four countries over fifteen years.

10. Question B — pie charts, electricity sources

- (A) The two pie charts show the proportion of electricity generated from four sources in Country X in 2000 and 2020.
- (B) The pie charts show why Country X changed its energy sources between 2000 and 2020.
- (C) The pie charts illustrate how Country X produced its electricity from four sources in 2000 and, twenty years later, in 2020.

11. Question C — table, monthly spending

- (A) The table gives the mean amount, in pounds, that three age groups spent each month on housing, food and leisure.
- (B) The table shows average monthly household spending on three categories by three age groups.
- (C) The table shows which age group is the most careful with money.

12. Question D — process, glass recycling

- (A) The diagram below shows the process by which used glass bottles are recycled.
- (B) The diagram shows the best way to recycle glass bottles.
- (C) The flow chart illustrates the different stages involved in recycling used glass bottles.

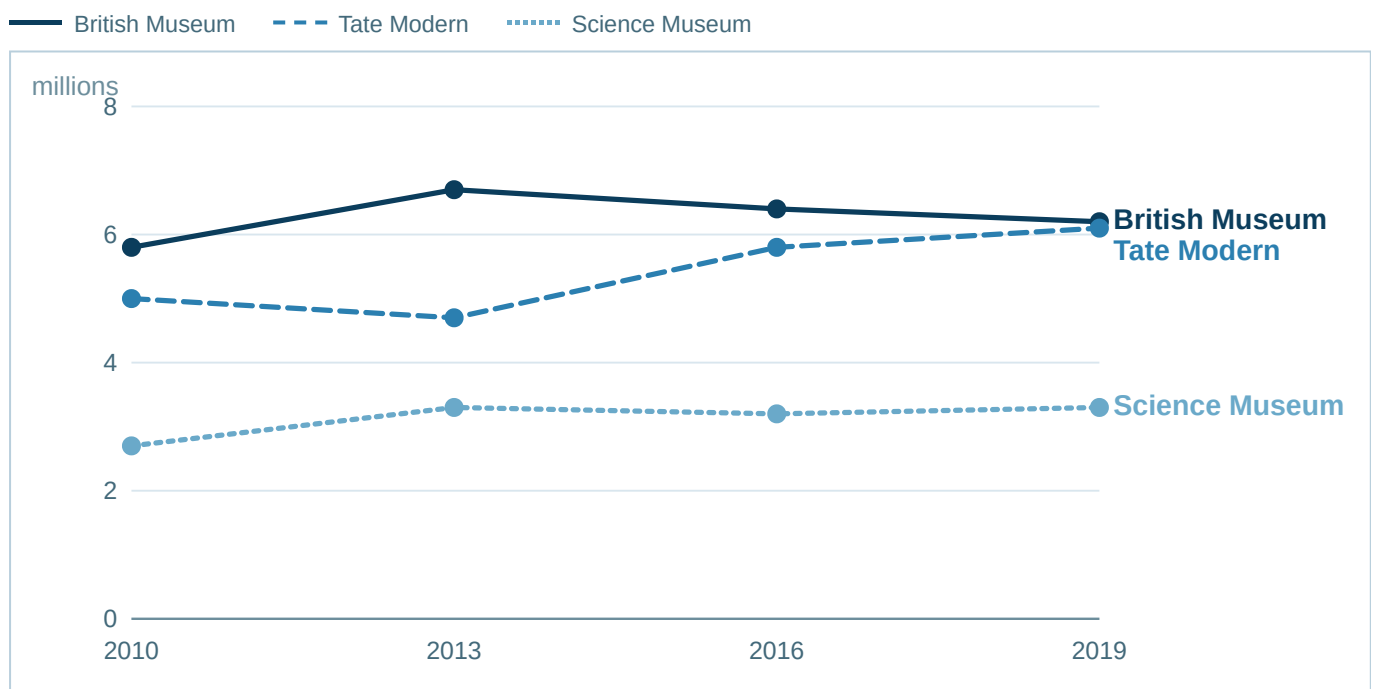
MOVE 2 Make a broad statement — the overview

The introduction is finished — it was the paraphrase, and nothing else. Now **start a new paragraph** and stand back. The **overview** names the biggest, most general features of the whole data set — the thing a reader would notice from across the room. It is usually one or two sentences, but it is a paragraph of its own: never bolt it onto the end of your introduction, and never bury it in the body. A missing or weak overview is the single most common reason Task 1 answers are capped at Band 5 — giving it its own line is what makes the examiner see it.

A good overview:

- ✓ stands as its **own paragraph**, straight after the introduction;
- ✓ opens with a signpost — *Overall, / It is clear that / The most striking feature is that;*
- ✓ names a **general trend or comparison** (highest/lowest, biggest rise, main change);
- ✗ contains **no specific figures, no causes** (“because...”) and **no opinions** (“which is good”).

Figure 1. Visitors to three London museums, 2010–2019 (millions)



EXERCISE 3 · OVERVIEW OR NOT?

8 MARKS

For each statement about Figure 1, tick **one** box: does it belong in a **good overview** (broad, no numbers), is it a **detail** (true, but a

specific figure for the body), or is it **off-task** (a cause, opinion or recommendation the chart cannot show)?

#	Statement about Figure 1	Good overview	A detail	Off-task
13	Overall, visitor numbers rose at all three museums across the period, though the British Museum stayed the most visited.	☐	☐	☐
14	The British Museum received 6.7 million visitors in 2013.	☐	☐	☐
15	In 2019 the Tate Modern reached 6.1 million, almost catching the British Museum.	☐	☐	☐
16	Overall, the Tate Modern showed the largest increase, while the British Museum changed the least.	☐	☐	☐
17	The museums were popular because London is a major tourist destination.	☐	☐	☐
18	The Science Museum was the least visited of the three throughout the period.	☐	☐	☐
19	London should open more museums to meet the rising demand.	☐	☐	☐
20	The Science Museum's figures were 2.7, 3.3, 3.2 and 3.3 million.	☐	☐	☐

EXERCISE 4 · WRITE THE TWO OPENING PARAGRAPHS

WRITING

Here is the question that goes with Figure 1. Write **only** the introduction and the overview — two separate paragraphs, four sentences at the very most. Do not describe any figures yet.

THE TASK The graph below shows the number of visitors, in millions, to three museums in London between 2010 and 2019.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

PARAGRAPH 1 — INTRODUCTION (PARAPHRASE THE TASK)

PARAGRAPH 2 — OVERVIEW (THE BIG PICTURE, NO FIGURES)

CHECK YOUR OWN WRITING BEFORE YOU LOOK AT THE KEY

- ☐ Not one phrase of three words or more copied from the task.
- ☐ The chart type is named (line graph), and the dates and units are still correct.
- ☐ The overview starts on a new line and begins with a signpost such as *Overall*,
- ☐ There is not a single figure in the overview.
- ☐ No causes, predictions or opinions anywhere.

EXERCISE 1 — JUDGE THE REWRITE

- 1 Good paraphrase.** The chart type is named and the verb is a synonym — different words, same meaning.
- 2 Just copied.** Nothing has changed. Copied wording earns no credit for vocabulary.
- 3 Good paraphrase.** A noun phrase becomes a verb phrase (word-class change) — a strong move.
- 4 Meaning change.** Popularity is a judgement. The graph shows visitor numbers, not how “popular” a museum is.
- 5 Good paraphrase.** The dates are kept but re-phrased as a time span — accurate and reworded.
- 6 Meaning change.** “Recent years” drops the exact period. Task 1 must report the dates the chart covers.
- 7 Good paraphrase.** A neat word-order change (post-modifier to compound noun). Same meaning, fresh wording.
- 8 Meaning change.** “Several” loses the exact figure of three. Keep quantities the chart specifies.

EXERCISE 2 — PICK THE BEST OPENING

- 9 B.** B renames the chart and re-words “households” and “percentage” accurately. A is copied; C changes the meaning (“access” is not “use”, and “grew” assumes a trend before you have described one).
- 10 C.** C is reworded and accurate. A copies the task; B asks “why” — a cause the charts do not explain.
- 11 A.** A paraphrases “average” as “mean”, names the three categories and keeps the units. B is copied; C adds a judgement the data does not make.
- 12 C.** C names the diagram type and re-words “process” as “stages”. A is copied; B calls it the “best” way — an evaluation the diagram does not make.
- 13 Good overview.** Broad, covers the whole chart, names the leader — and quotes no figures.
- 14 A detail.** A single accurate figure. Save exact numbers for the body paragraphs.
- 15 A detail.** A specific figure-based comparison — good body material, too detailed for an overview.
- 16 Good overview.** A broad comparison of trends with no numbers.

EXERCISE 4 — MODEL ANSWER

- 17 Off-task.** A cause. The graph shows visitor numbers, never the reason behind them.
- 18 Good overview.** A general comparison that holds for every year and uses no figures.
- 19 Off-task.** A recommendation. Task 1 reports the data; it does not advise or predict.
- 20 A detail.** Listing every data point is the opposite of an overview — these belong in the body, selectively.
- EXERCISE 4 — MODEL ANSWER**
- Introduction:** The line graph illustrates how many people, in millions, visited three museums in London over the ten years from 2010 to 2019.
- Overview:** Overall, all three museums attracted more visitors by the end of the period than at the start, with the British Museum remaining the busiest throughout. The clearest change was at the Tate Modern, which climbed steadily to come close to the British Museum, while the Science Museum stayed well behind the other two.
- Yours will not match this wording — it should not. Check it against the five boxes above instead: no copying, chart type named, dates and units intact, overview on its own line, and no figures, causes or opinions in it.