

Writing skills practice: Writing about a bar chart – exercises

Look at the exam question and report and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

Preparation

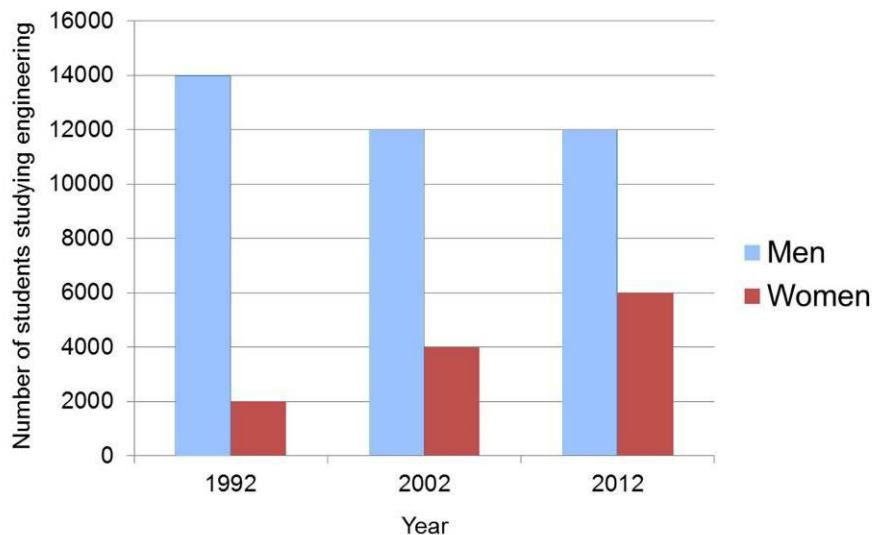
Look at the chart below and circle the best answer to these questions.

1. How many years does the chart show information for?
 - a. one
 - b. two
 - c. three
2. Who does the chart show information for?
 - a. men only
 - b. women only
 - c. both men and women
3. How many men studied engineering in Australian universities in 2012?
 - a. 6,000
 - b. 12,000
 - c. 14,000

Exam question

The bar chart below shows the number of men and women studying engineering at Australian universities.

Summarise the information in the chart by selecting and reporting the main features. Make comparisons where relevant.



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The bar chart illustrates the number of men and women studying engineering at Australian universities between the years 1992 and 2012 at 10-year intervals.

It can be seen that the number of male students fell slightly from 14,000 in 1992 to 12,000 in 2002, and then remained level through the following decade. The number of female students is relatively low, starting at 2,000 in 1992. However, while the number of men decreased, the number of women increased. Female students grew steadily by 2,000 each decade. This led to a rise in the total number of engineering students from 16,000 to 18,000 in this period.

Men continue to make up the majority of students. However, the proportion of female students increased sharply in this period. In 1992 there was one woman to every seven men, but by 2012 this had narrowed to one woman to every two men.

Overall, we can see a clear upward trend in the number of female engineering students in Australian universities, while the number of male students seems to have levelled off.

Top Tips for writing

1. Start by saying exactly what the chart shows, and the time period.
2. Describe the changes as precisely as you can. Use data and numbers from the bar chart.
3. Compare the information. Talk about differences or similarities between the groups shown.
4. Conclude by saying what the main trends or changes are.

1. Check your understanding: true or false

Circle *True* or *False* for these sentences.

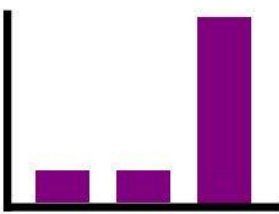
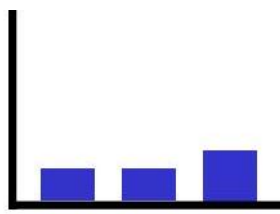
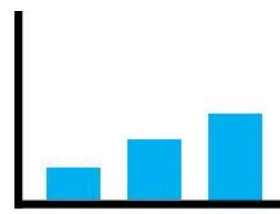
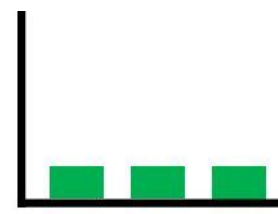
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|----|--|-------------|--------------|
| 1. | The bar chart shows the different numbers of male and female engineering students in three separate years. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 2. | The number of male students rose at first. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 3. | The number of male students stayed the same between the second two years. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 4. | The number of female students went up constantly. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 5. | The number of women rose constantly until there were as many women as men. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |

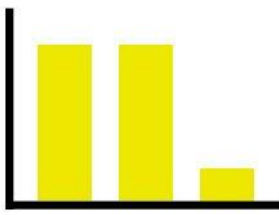

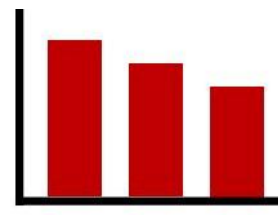
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2. Check your writing: picture matching – describing changes in bar charts

Write the descriptions in the boxes below the bar charts.

a steady rise	no change	a slight fall	a sharp rise
a steady fall	a sharp fall		a slight rise

3. Check your writing: matching – useful language

Match the words and phrases with their purpose in the box.

Introducing your analysis	Talking about numbers going up	Talking about numbers staying the same
Summarising the main trend	Talking about numbers going down	Expressing a contrast

1. _____ The bar chart illustrates ...
2. _____ Overall, ...
3. _____ In contrast ... / However, ... / While ...
4. _____ ... rose / increased / grew (VERBS)
... a rise / an increase / an upward trend (NOUNS)
5. _____ ... fell / dropped / decreased (VERBS)
... a fall / a drop / a decrease / a downward trend (NOUNS)
6. _____ ... remained steady / stabilised / stayed level

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4. Check your writing: gap fill - prepositions

Complete the sentences with a preposition.

1. The bar chart illustrates numbers _____ male and female engineering students in 1992, 2002 and 2012.
2. The number of male students fell quite significantly _____ 1992 and 2002.
3. The number of female students was half the number of male students _____ 2012.
4. _____ contrast, the number of female students rose constantly.
5. Between 2002 and 2012, the number of female engineering students rose _____ 4,000 _____ 6,000.

Vocabulary Box

Write any new words you have learnt in this lesson.

Discussion

Do you like using charts and graphs?