WRITING A
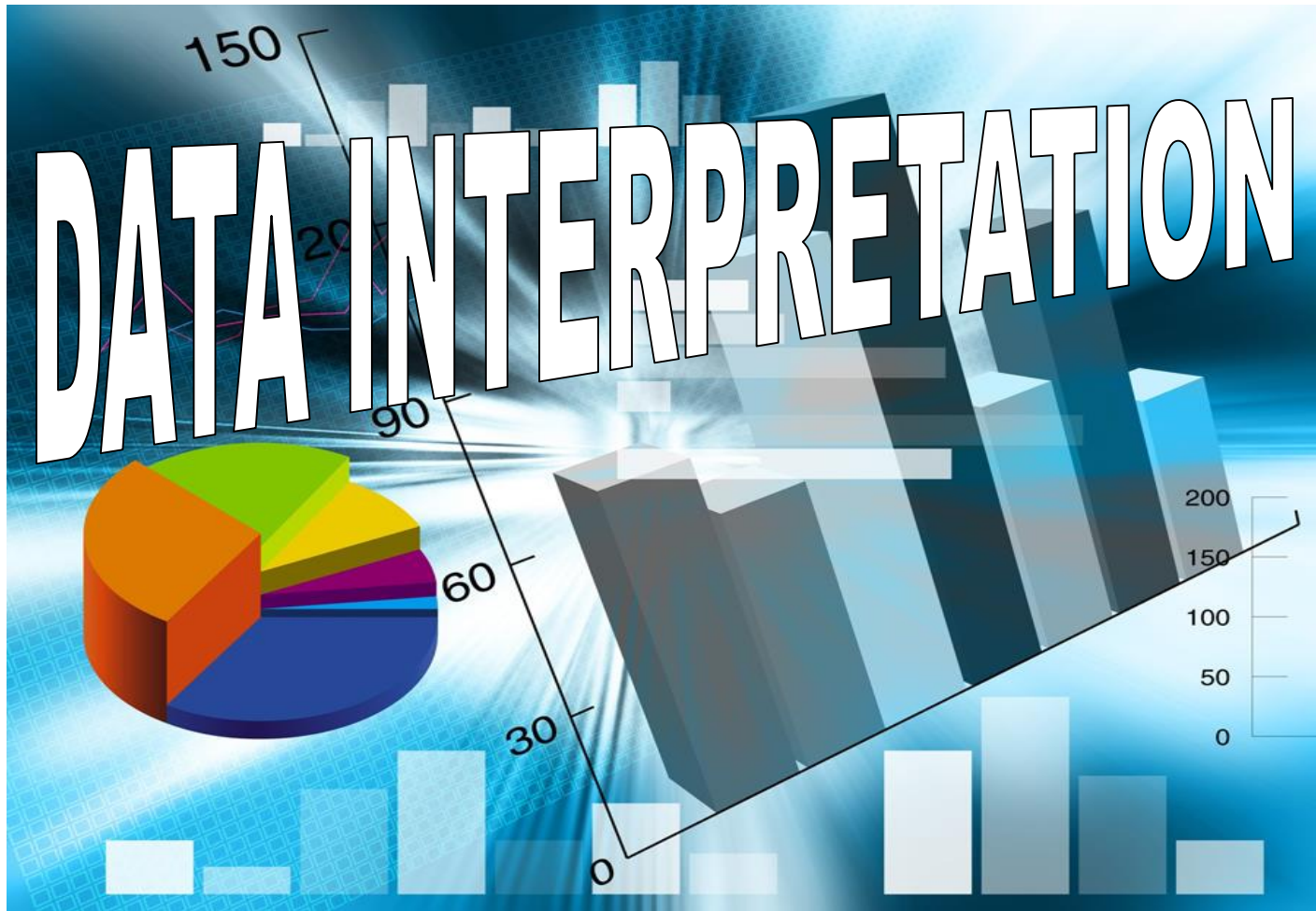
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CELPAD

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

IIUM'S EPT REQUIREMENT

OVERALL BAND:

IELTS Task 1 Writing band descriptors (public version)

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	▪ fully satisfies all the requirements of the task ▪ clearly presents a fully developed response	▪ uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention ▪ skilfully manages paragraphing	▪ uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'	▪ uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	▪ covers all requirements of the task sufficiently ▪ presents, highlights and illustrates key features / bullet points clearly and appropriately	▪ sequences information and ideas logically ▪ manages all aspects of cohesion well ▪ uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately	▪ uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings ▪ skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation ▪ produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation	▪ uses a wide range of structures ▪ the majority of sentences are error-free ▪ makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	▪ covers the requirements of the task ▪ (Academic) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages ▪ (General Training) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriate ▪ clearly presents and highlights key features / bullet points but could be more fully extended	▪ logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout ▪ uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use	▪ uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision ▪ uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation ▪ may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation	▪ uses a variety of complex structures ▪ produces frequent error-free sentences ▪ has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	▪ addresses the requirements of the task ▪ (Academic) presents an overview with information appropriately selected ▪ (General Training) presents a purpose that is generally clear; there may be inconsistencies in tone ▪ presents and adequately highlights key features / bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate	▪ arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression ▪ uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical ▪ may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately	▪ uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task ▪ attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy ▪ makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication	▪ uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms ▪ makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication

BAND 6

How do I describe data?

Task 1: some tips for describing data in a chart or table

When writing Task 1 bear these in mind:
- Task Fulfillment – answer the question completely
- Coherence – use sequencing words
  e.g. Firstly, Secondly, Finally
- Cohesion – using anaphoric reference
  e.g. "this", "it", "he", "and", "but" and synonyms
- Vocabulary – use a wide range, appropriate and
  academic
- Sentence Structure – be concise but not simplistic

continued

- **Language Input:**
  - Tenses used to describe charts
    - Use present tense to describe the chart.
    - Use past tense to describe things in the chart that have passed.
    - Use present perfect to describe issues that have started in the past up until today.
    - Use the future tense for information / prediction after today.

# PLANNING YOUR ESSAY
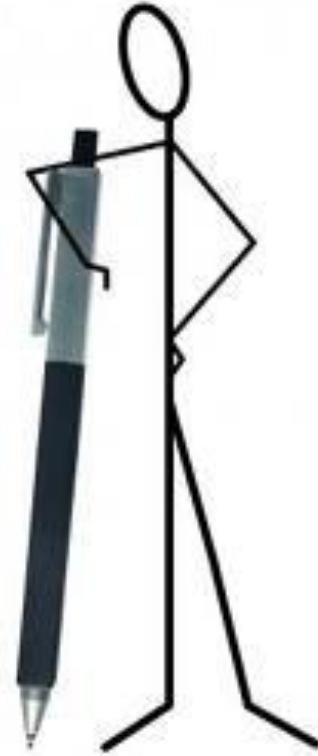
Preparation for Task 1

- Identify the **OVERALL** trend (if any)
  - **REMEMBER THAT NOT ALL GRAPHS CONTAIN TRENDS**
    - Graph 1
    - Graph 2
- Identify the main trends for each mode (if any)
- Identify any large increases or decreases.
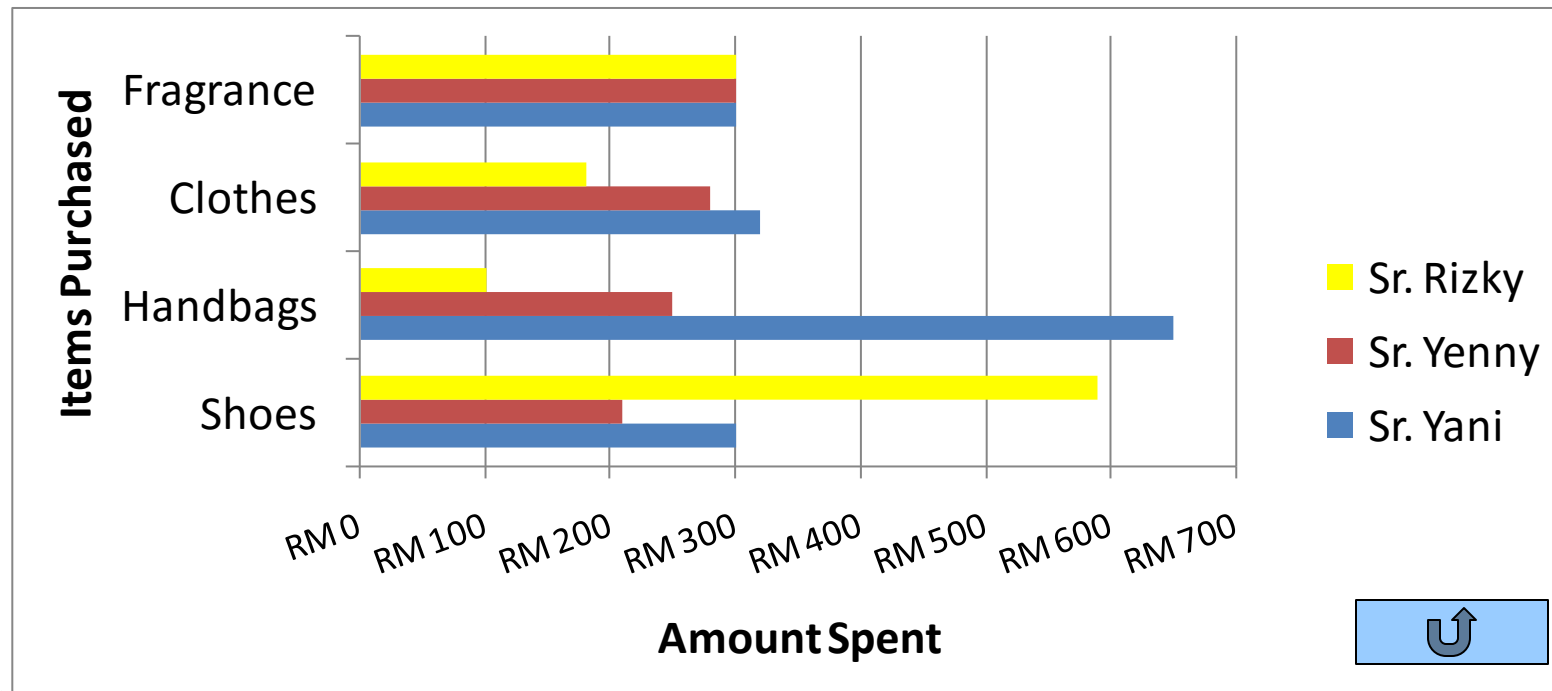- **Group information**, if possible!

Trend or no trend?

The graph below illustrates the number of *Roti Canai* eaten for breakfast by Br. Mahmoud , Abdullah and Sukri on four different days last week.
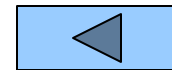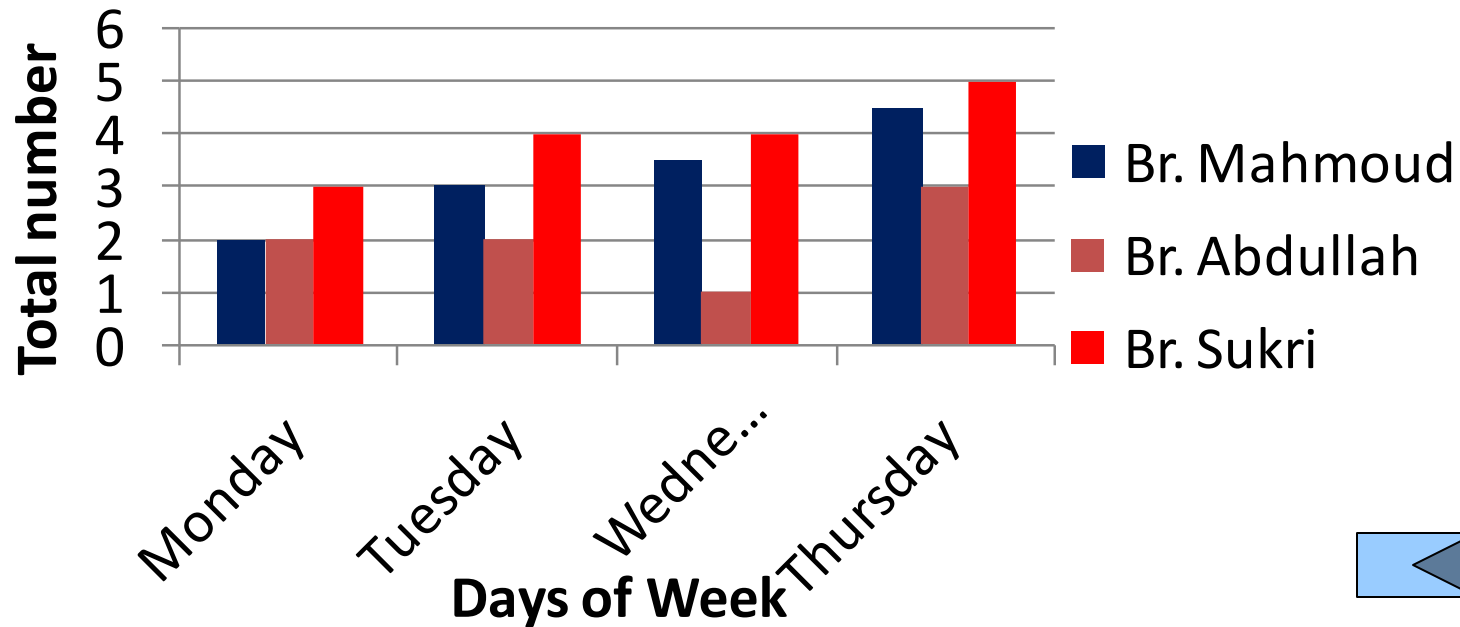
Trend or no trend?

The following graph illustrates Sr. Rizky, Yenny and Yani's shopping expenditure for different personal items during this month's "Mega Sale Carnival".

Preparation for Task 1

- Are there any clear and consistent directions?

- Does anything seem particularly significant?

- Are there any clear relationships between modes or percentages?

Useful Vocabulary

- Trend Verbs
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Comparatives and Superlatives
- Approximations

Trend Verbs

- increase
- decrease
- fluctuate
- incline
- decline
- unstable
- grow
- rocketed
- slump
- plunge

Adjectives

- **Describing the degree of change**

  There was a slight increase in the value of the Ringgit.
    - dramatic
    - sharp
    - huge
    - enormous
    - steep
    - substantial
    - considerable
    - significant
    - marked
    - moderate
    - slight
    - small
    - minimal

- **Describing the speed of change**

  Unemployment rates fell swiftly last year.
    - rapid
    - quick
    - swift
    - sudden
    - steady
    - gradual
    - slow

Adverb

- **Describing the degree of change**
  - dramatically
  - sharply
  - enormously
  - steeply
  - substantially
  - considerably
  - significantly
  - markedly
  - moderately
  - slightly
  - minimally

- **Describing the speed of change**
  - rapidly
  - quickly
  - swiftly
  - suddenly
  - steadily
  - gradually
  - slowly

A word of caution…

- When pairing trend verbs / nouns with either adverbs / adjectives, ensure that the pairing is suitable.
  - dramatic plateau
  - sharp slump
  - plunged slightly
  - rocketed swiftly
  - marked fluctuation

Comparatives and Superlatives

- bigger
- larger
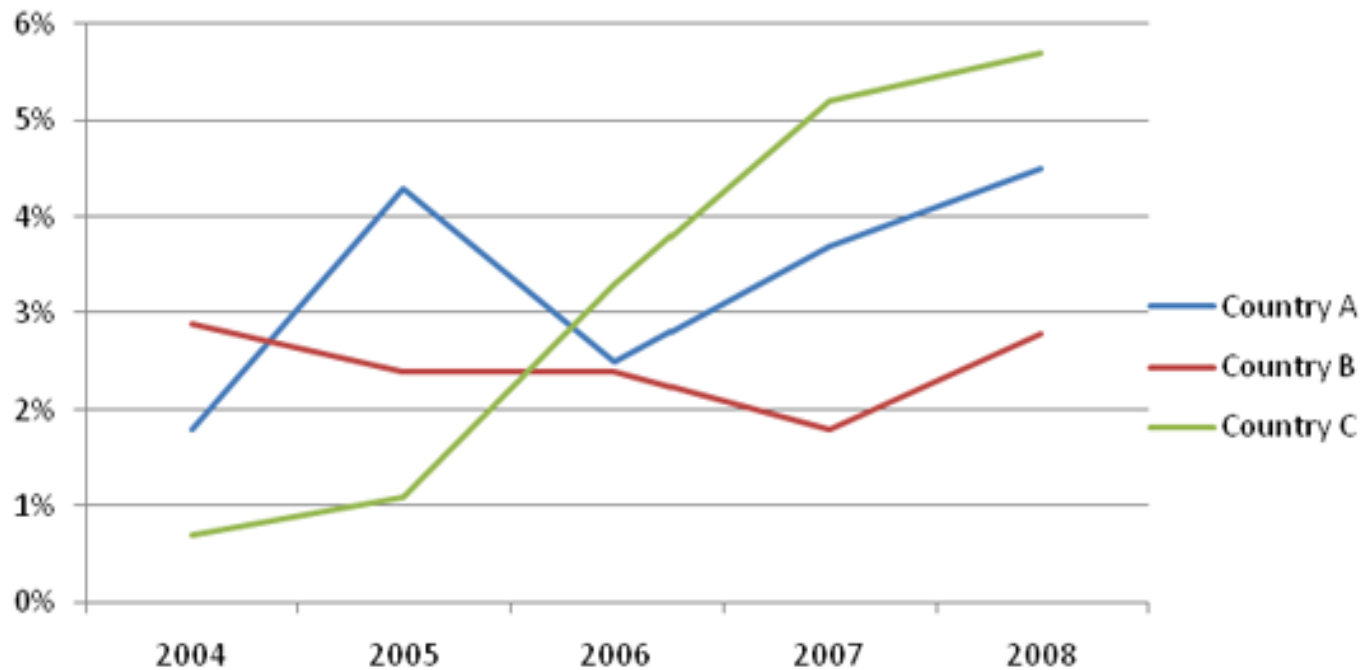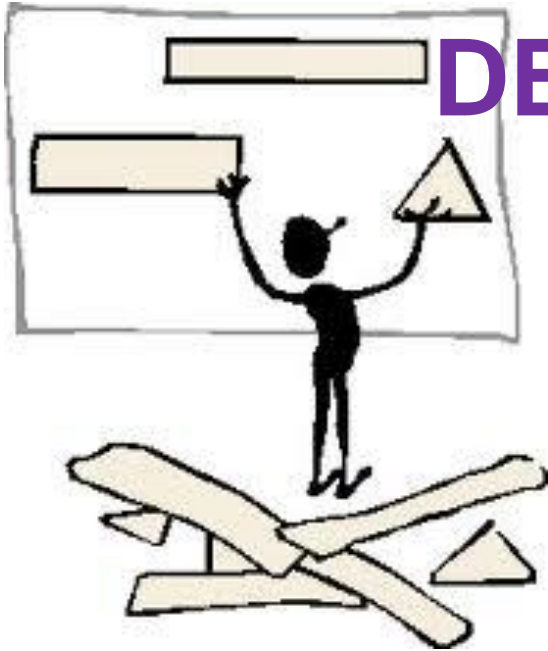- more expensive
- worse
- least
- better

Approximations

≈

- around one third
- about half
- more than 100
- less than half
- approximately
- just under
- over
- slightly over

Levels of Unemployment in 3 Countries from 2004-2008

SENTENCE PATTERN

DESCRIBING TRENDS

Sentence Pattern (describing trends)

- There + verb + article + adj + noun
  - There was a slight decrease in the number of tourists to Penang.
- verb + article + adj + noun
  - The number of tourists to Penang experienced a slight decrease.
- verb + adverb
  - The number of tourists to Penang decreased slightly in 2011.
- adverb + verb
  - The number of tourists to Penang slightly decreased in 2011.

VOCABULARY

DESCRIBING INCREASE AND DECREASE

(No trend)

Fruit sales (kilos)
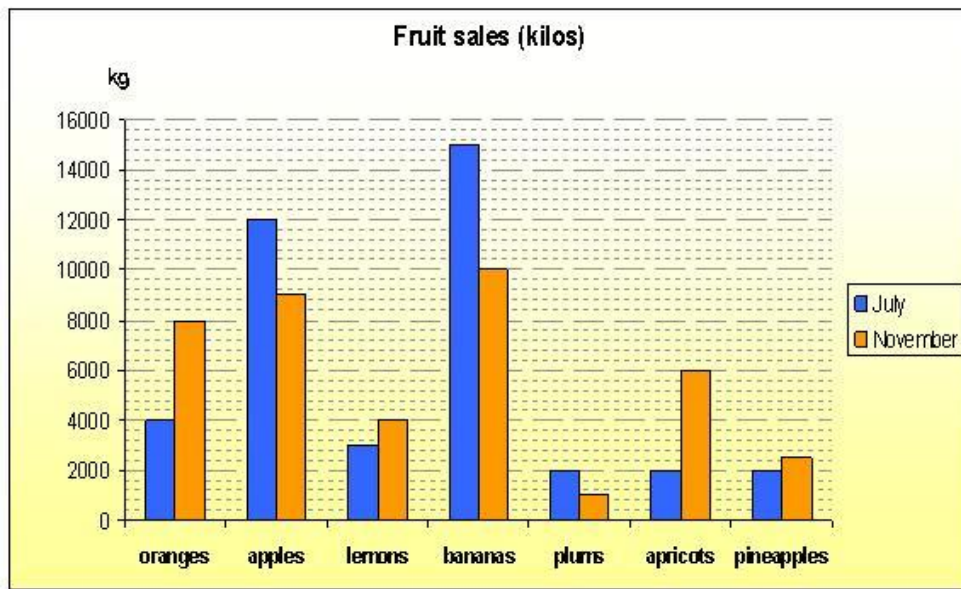
fell by

halved

a quarter   a third   doubled   rose by
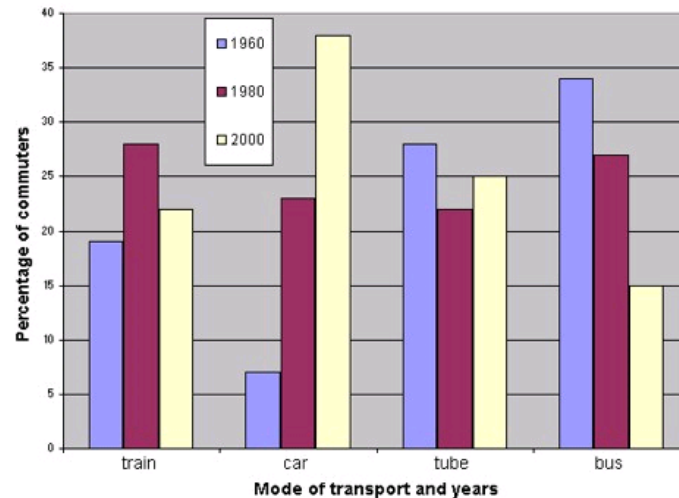
tripled

Answering Task 1

Are you ready?

Task 1

- You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

 **The graph below shows the different modes of commuter transport used in London in 1960, 1980 and 2000.**

  Commuter Transport in London

  Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information shown. You should write at least 150 words.

Introduction

The introductory paragraph states the main purpose of the chart, written in paraphrase using the writer's own words.
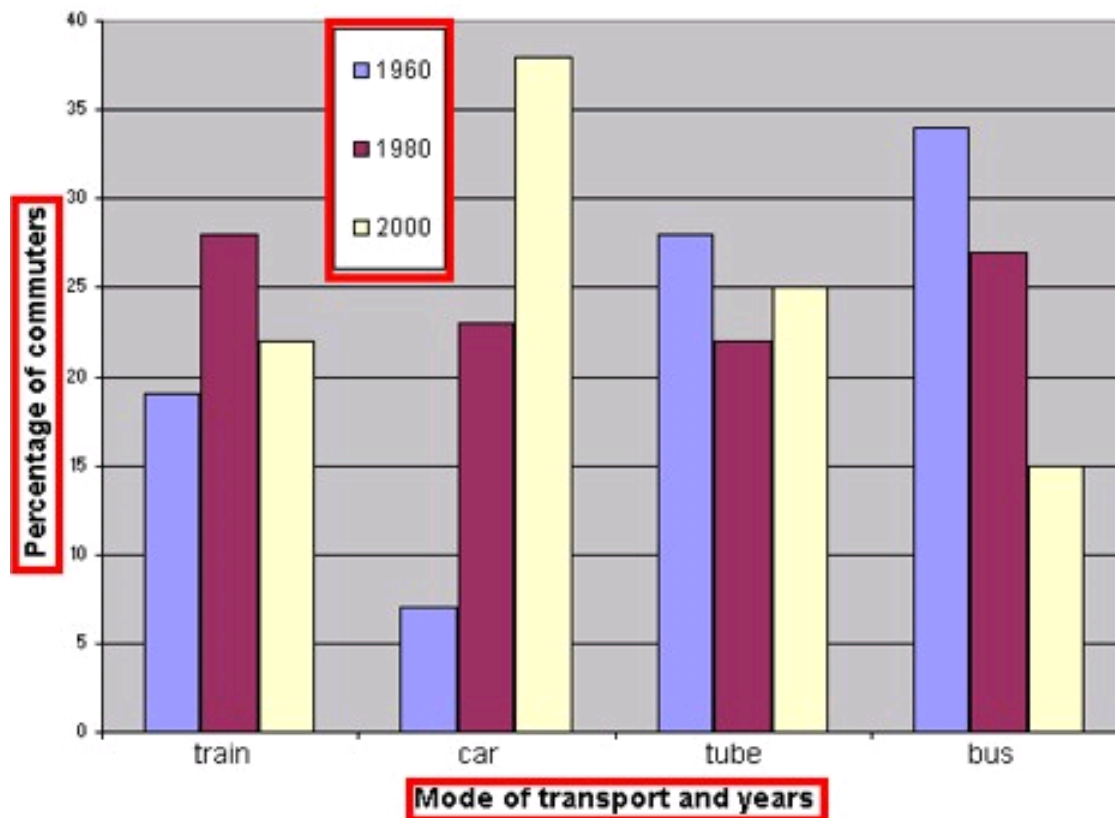
Model answer for Introduction

INTRODUCTION:

The horizontal bar graph shows the changing patterns in commuting by train, car, tube or bus for commuters in London in the years 1960, 1980 and 2000. Overall, it can be seen that commuter figures were erratic for all transport types throughout the 3 years.

Analysis 1: train

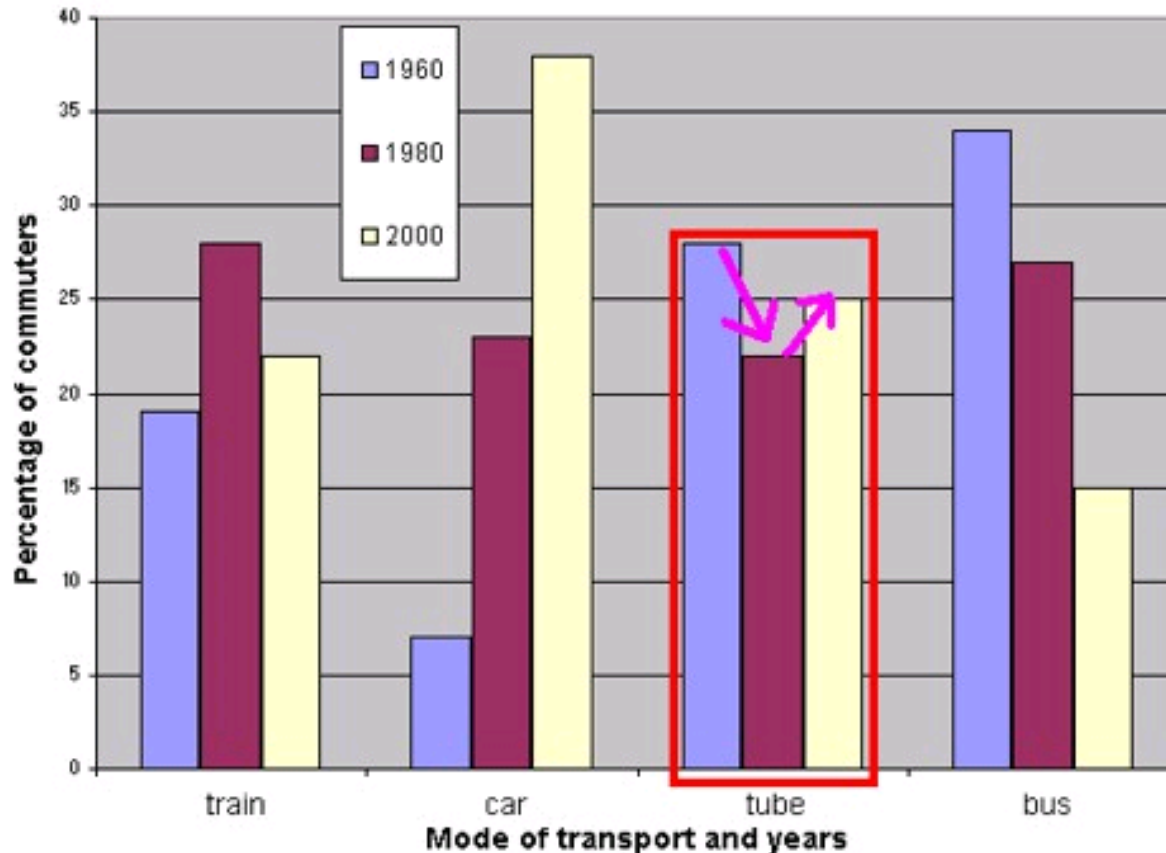**The second paragraph describes the data for the use of trains given in the chart, written in the writer's own words.**
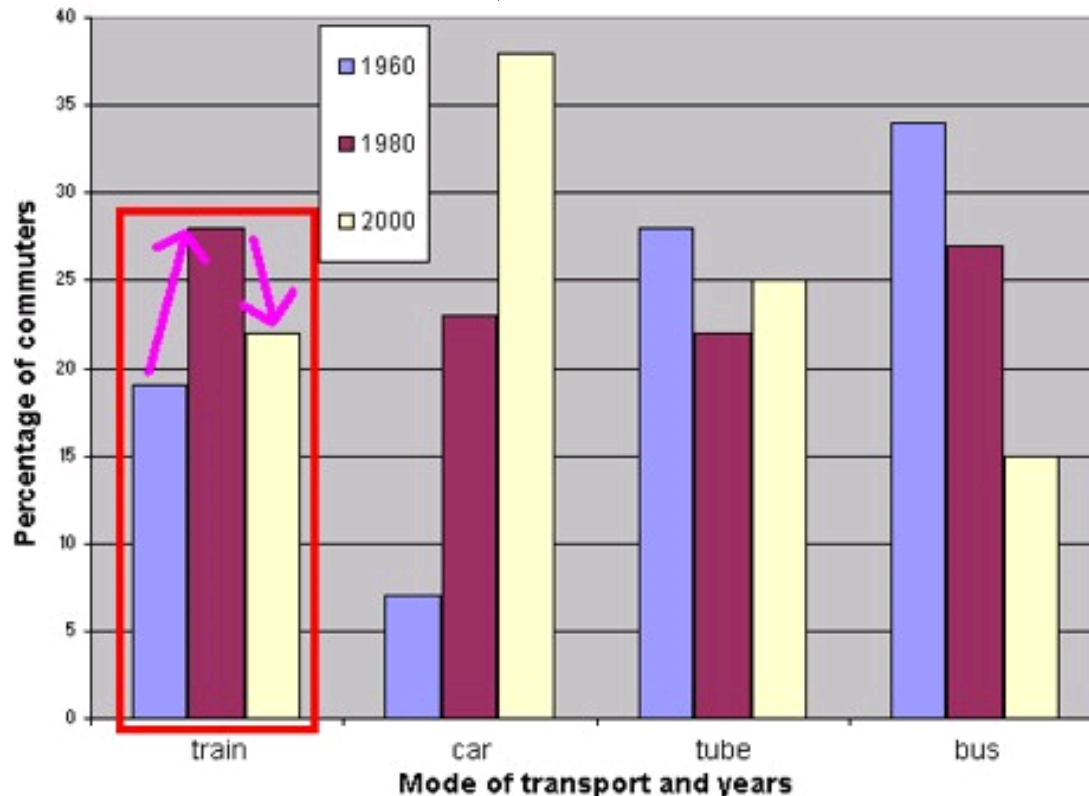
Model answer for Analysis 1

BODY:

Firstly, the number of people who used trains was somewhat unstable as it ranged from slightly under 20% in 1960 to about 26% in 1980, but then fell back to about 23% in 2000.

Analysis 2: the Tube

The third paragraph describes the data for the use of the tube given in the chart, written in the writer's own words.
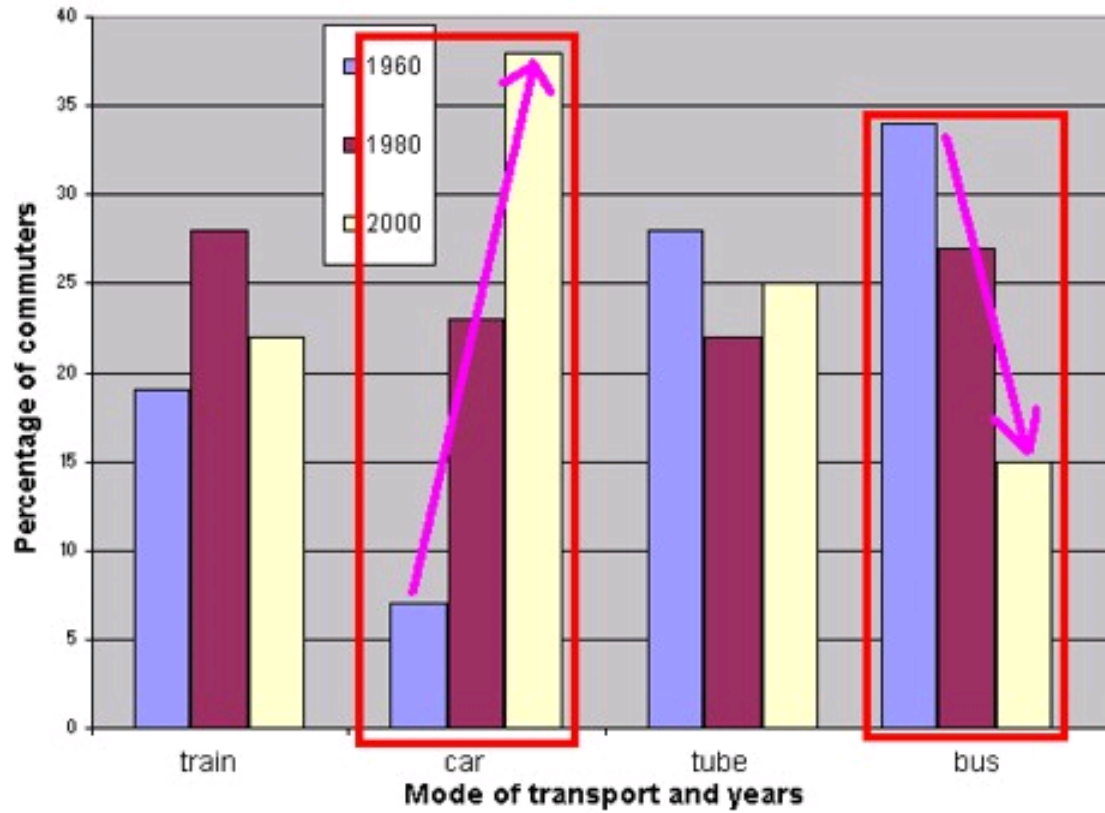
Model answer for Analysis 2

BODY:

Next, the usage of the tube was relatively stable, as it made up a total number of around 23% to around 27% of commuters throughout the three stated years.

Analysis 3: cars and buses

The fourth paragraph describes the data for the use of cars and buses given in the chart, written in the writer's own words.

Model answer for Analysis 3

BODY:

To continue, the use of cars increased steadily from just over 5% in 1960 reaching almost 40% by 2000, whereas in contrast, the popularity of buses declined since 1960, falling from just under 35% in 1960 to 27% in 1980 and a low of 15% in 2000.

Conclusion

The concluding paragraph summarizes the main findings of the chart, written in the writer's own words.
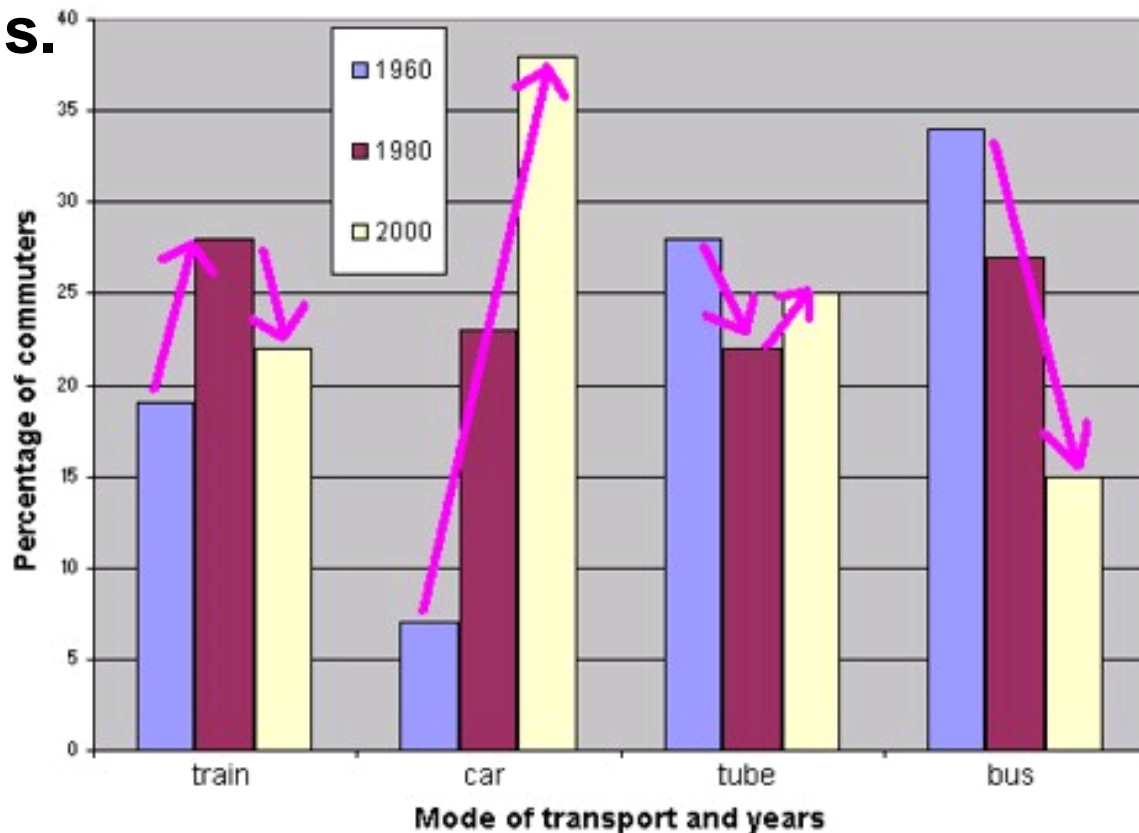
Model answer for Conclusion

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the graph indicates that the usage of cars, for commuting to work, grew between 1960,1980 and 2000 as well as the corresponding decline in the popularity of buses from being the most popular mode of transport in 1960 to the least popular in 2000.

Answer analysis

- The text above given in the model answer consists of 174 words in a few paragraphs which describe the data in the chart. These paragraphs can be further analyzed as comprising:

  - Introduction
  - Figures on the use of trains
  - Figures on the use of the tube
  - Figures on the use of cars and buses
  - Conclusion

 **Body**

STUDENTS' COMMON ERRORS IN TASK 1

Common error 1

- **Not understanding the data presented**

  - Students do not correctly understand the data in the charts: often they *do not carefully read the labels* (e.g. student writes '250 people were unemployed in Kuala Lumpur in 2010' , when they should write '250 *thousand* people were unemployed in Kuala Lumpur in 2010')

Common error 2

- **Not 'translating' note form to grammatical English**

  - Students often write the labels or titles directly as they appear in the chart. However, these are usually in 'note form', so need to be changed into grammatically correct English in your writing.
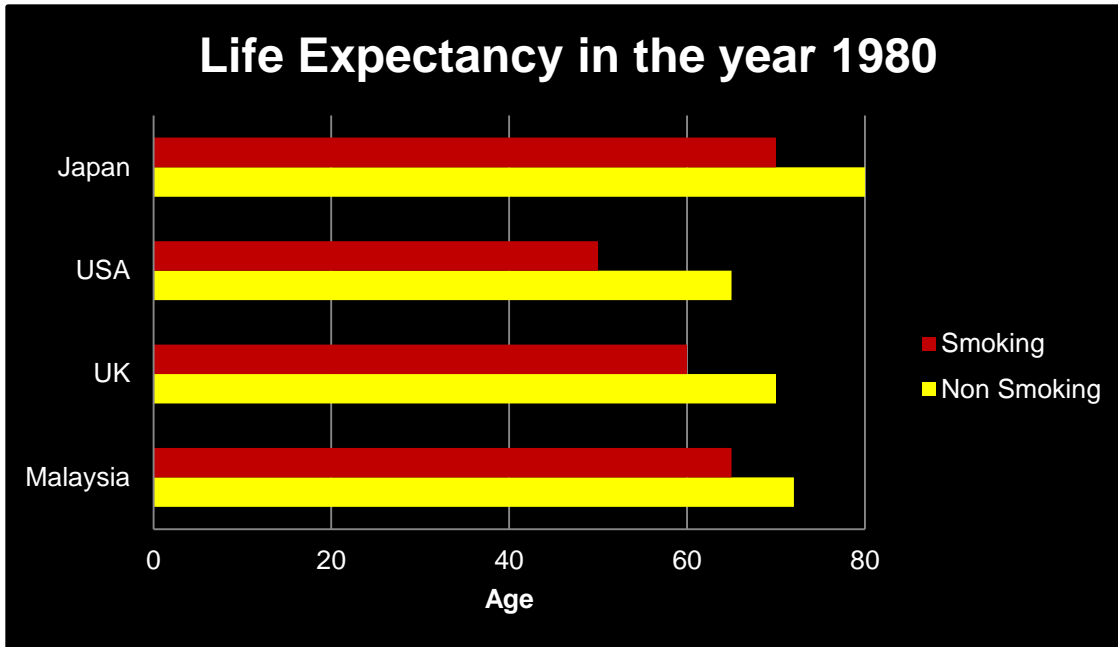
'the average life-expectancy of non-smoking in Malaysia was 72'

- In the previous chart describing the life expectancy of smokers and non-smokers, one label read 'Non-Smoking' - meaning 'non-smoking *people* '. It would therefore be ungrammatical to say **'the average life-expectancy of *non-smoking* in Malaysia was 72'** ; we need to *change the label* to a form such as **'the average life-expectancy of *non-smokers* in the Malaysia was 72'** .

Common error 3

- **Listing and not analysing**

  - In 2008, the budget allocated was RM23m. In 2009, the budget increased to RM24m. In 2010, the allocated budget decreased to RM16m. In 2011, the budget rose to RM25m.
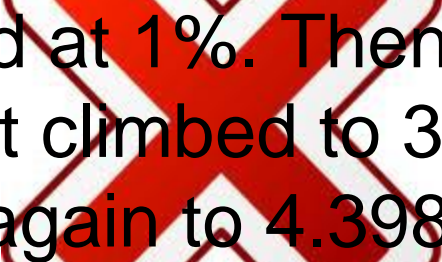
Common error 4

- **Fail to provide 'measurement' of data**

  - The unemployment rate in the UK rose by 2% between 2008 and 2009, whereas Canada decreased by about 1%. The USA was the highest, at just over 4 %.

Common error 5

- **Describing <u>every number</u> in a chart or graph (unless there are only a few numbers).**

- A key skill in task 1 is being able to *choose* the key information and describe or compare it well.

- Firstly, x started at 1%. Then it increased to 2 percent. Then it climbed to 3 percent. After that it inclined again to 4.39876 percent.

Common error 6

- **Errors in sentence patterns when describing trends.**

  - The number of holidays abroad dramatically increment in 2005.
  - In 2008, the number of foreign holidays reduction to its lowest point.

Common error 7

- **Grammar**
  - In 2011, there is a decline in the imports of wheat.
  - In 2020, Malaysia was a well developed country.
  - There were an increased steadily in the number of tourists to Langkawi island.
  - Last year, the numbers was declined for about 24.

Do not forget!
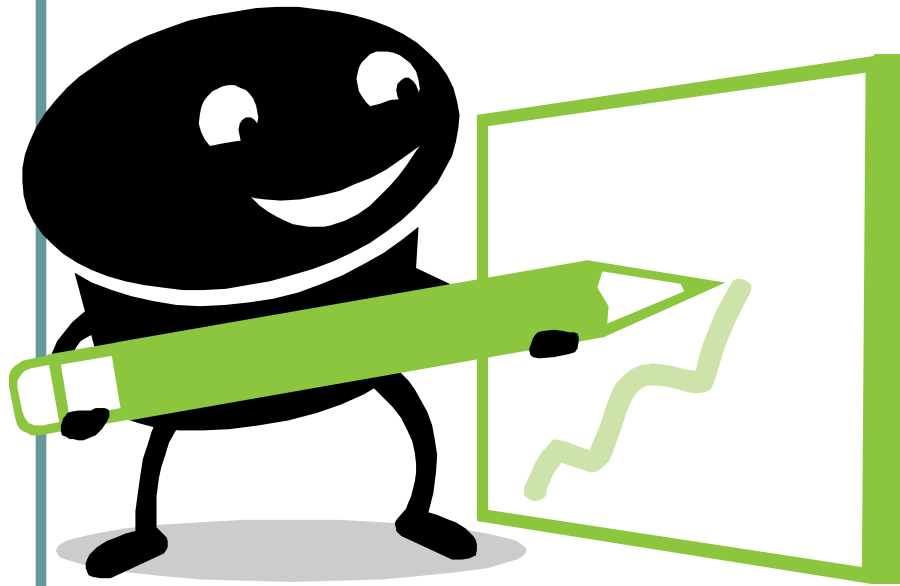
- **EDIT YOUR ESSAY!**
  - Spelling
  - **SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENTS**
  - Tenses
  - Articles

What you would have done …

The main writing skills performed in Task 1 are:

- Describing numerical data
- Identifying differences and similarities
- Comparing and contrasting
- Identifying and describing trends

QUESTIONS AND ANSWER

Feel free to ask!

Further Questions?

You may contact me through email at

mohdkhairul@iium.edu.my

A word of wisdom

"Remember that just the moment you say, 'I give up,' someone else seeing the same situation is saying, 'My, what a great opportunity.'"

H. Jackson Brown

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.