Interpreting graphs

Line graphs

The verbs in the box on the right can all be used to describe changes commonly represented on line graphs. Use your dictionary to look up the meanings of the verbs and then answer the following questions:

plummet	increase
peak	soar
rocket	fluctuate
level out	drop
decrease	decline
rise	fall

1 Which 5 verbs mean go up?
2 Of these, which 3 mean go up suddenly/a lot?
3 Which 5 verbs mean go down?
4 Which verb means reach its highest level?
5 Which verb means stay the same?
6 Which verb means go up and down?

Now decide which parts of the graphs below, showing the sales of a book between 1990 and 2000, can be described using the verbs given.

Book sales 1990 – 1999
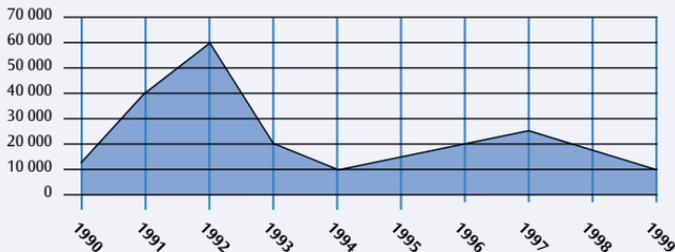
Book sales January – December 2000
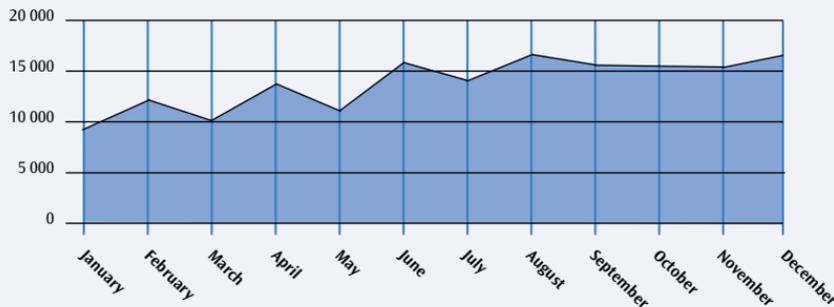
EXERCISE 1

Now, using the verbs above, complete these sentences using the information shown on the graphs:

1 In the year 2000, sales _____ at the beginning of August.
2 Sales rocketed between 19_____ and 19_____ .
3 From 1992 to 1993, sales of the book _____ .
4 Book sales fluctuated between _____ and _____ 2000.
5 Sales _____ between September and November 2000.
6 Sales started to fall for the first time in 19_____ .
7 Book sales _____ from 1994 to 1997.
8 However, from 1997 to 1999, sales _____ .

EXERCISE 2

Changes can also be described in more detail by modifying a verb with an adverb. Using a verb from the box on the left, and an adverb from the box on the right, make sentences describing the changes represented on the line graphs on page S26 for the years or months shown. The first one has been done for you as an example.

increase	fall
decrease	rise
decline	drop

slightly	slowly	sharply
rapidly	steadily	gradually
moderately	dramatically	

1 1990—1992
   Sales increased/rose dramatically/sharply.
2 1992—1994
3 1994—1997
4 1997—1999
5 July – August 2000
6 November—December 2000

Look at the following two ways of expressing the same idea:

— *Sales **increased dramatically** from 1990 to 1992.*
  subj + verb + adverb

— *There was **a dramatic increase** in sales from 1990 to 1992.*
  There was/were + adjective + noun + in + sth

Now turn the rest of the sentences you made in **exercise 2** into similar sentences with an adjective + noun.

EXERCISE 3

Check your prepositions. Choose a preposition from the box below to go into each of the gaps in the sentences on the right, which describe the graphs on page S26.

at	in	to
of	by	from

1 There was an increase _____ 50 000 between 1990 and 1992.
2 _____ 1994 _____ 1997, sales rose steadily _____ over 20 000.
3 Overall sales peaked _____ nearly 60 000 _____ 1992, but then plummeted _____ about 10 000 over the next two years.
4 In the year 2000, sales started _____ around 10 000. In the first month, there was a rise _____ around 2 000.
5 After some fluctuations, sales in 2000 reached their peak _____ just over 15 000, a rise _____ 5 000 since the beginning of the year.
6 Sales increased _____ over 10 000 between 1994 and 1997, but then dropped _____ more than 10 000 between 1997 and 1999.

EXERCISE 4

The following paragraph summarizes the information in the two graphs on page S26. Notice the expressions in **bold** that refer to time and amount.

Just over 10 000 copies of the book were sold in 1990. Sales increased dramatically **over the next two years**, to peak at **almost** 60 000 in 1992. However, sales then fell sharply to **well under** 30 000 in the following year, and they went down by a further 12 000 **or so** between 1993 and 1994. There was a steady increase in sales **over the next three years**, and by 1997 there had been a rise of **slightly more than** 10 000. However, after this sales began to drop once more to **approximately** 10 000 in 1999.

    In the first six months of the year 2000, sales fluctuated, although there was a moderate increase in July-August, reaching a peak at **well over** 15 000. A sharp decrease followed, with sales falling to around 12 000 in September. They remained steady until November, when there was a slight increase.

Now put the expressions from the box on the left into the table on the right, from the greatest amount to the smallest. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Look at the two tables below for other ways to express amounts:

~~well over~~
just under
almost/nearly
well under
exactly
just over

well over	
————	
————	10 000
————	half
————	
————	
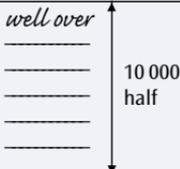
APPROXIMATIONS	
approximately	
around	10 000
about	half
roughly	3 times
more or less	

COMPARISONS	
a little/slightly	
far	more than
a lot	less than [+ uncountable noun]
much	fewer than [+ countable noun]
considerably	
significantly	

EXERCISE 5

The two pie charts below illustrate two families' average monthly expenditure. In the summary there are **ten** factual errors. Using the information on the pie charts, underline the mistakes and then rewrite the text, making the corrections necessary. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Family A's monthly income

Clothes **8%** Misc **2%**
Entertainment **16%**
Mortgage **32%**
Car **9%**
Bills **14%**
Food **19%**
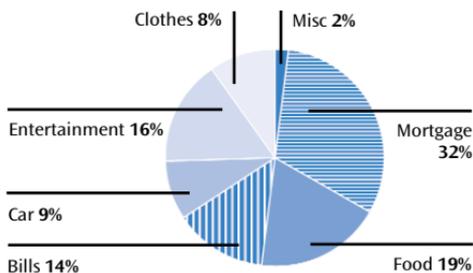
Family B's monthly income

Clothes **5%** Misc **3%**
Entertainment **9%**
Mortgage **24%**
Car **14%**
Bills **24%**
Food **21%**
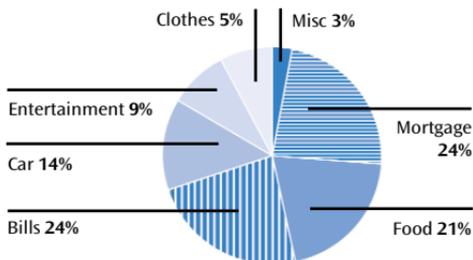
Both families' biggest expenditure each month is the mortgage. Family A spends far more on their mortgage than they do on anything else (32%). This is exactly half what they spend on entertainment each month. Their food budget (19%) is significantly higher than their entertainment budget, while they spend well under 10% each month on clothes. Family B's clothes budget is far less (5%). Family B's entertainment budget is similar to Family A's, at just 9%. In contrast, Family B spends much more on bills each month, over a quarter of the whole monthly budget. This is compensated for by their mortgage, which is slightly less than Family A's, at only 24%. Just over 15% of their monthly budget goes on the car, significantly more than the 9% that Family A spends each month. In general, Family B spends more on necessary items such as bills, food and their car, while Family A allows slightly more money for entertainment and clothes.

— *Family A's biggest expenditure each month is the mortgage...*