

Test section – Academic Writing Task 1

Writing the Overview

Activities

1. Matching
2. Writing overviews

Aims

- to help students better select the appropriate information necessary to write a clear overview which highlights the main trends / key features
- to give students practice in writing overviews

Learning outcomes

- Students will have understood the process of selecting key information to form the basis of an overview.
- Students will have practised writing an overview.

Information about this section of IELTS

In Academic Writing Task 1, test takers will be presented with a graph, table, chart, or diagram. Test takers will be asked to describe and summarise the information in their own words. This might involve describing and summarising data, describing the stages of a process or how something works, or describing an object or event. Test takers should write at least 150 words in a formal, academic style. The recommended time for this task is 20 minutes.

Time	30-40 minutes
Level	B1+
Class	Suitable for groups / large classes F2F / Online
Interaction	Pair or group work Individual work
Materials	Worksheets x3 attached

Activity 1: Matching

Material: Worksheets 1 and 2

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

- introduce focus of the lesson: Academic Writing Task 1.
- put students into pairs or small groups and give each pair/group a copy of the 5 graphs (Worksheet 1).
- ask students to look at the graphs. Ask:
 - what do the graphs show? (% of population of 4 countries who travelled abroad between 2002 and 2012)
 - what form are the numbers in on the vertical axis? (percentage)
 - what is shown along the horizontal axis? (years 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012)
 - which countries are represented? (France, Germany, Spain, UK)
- give a copy of Worksheet 2 to each pair/group.
- tell students they have to match the test taker’s notes to the graphs.
- get class feedback.

Answers

- Notes A Graph 5
- Notes B Graph 1
- Notes C Graph 2
- Notes D Graph 4
- Notes E Graph 3

Activity 2: Writing overviews

Material: Worksheet 3

Time: 15-20 minutes

Procedure:

You may wish to explain/ elicit what the ‘overview’ is, and how important it is to reach a higher score for Task Achievement. (An overview is a summary of the main points / general trends of a diagram. Students should always include an overview in the introduction to their Academic Writing Task 1 answer.)

	Task Achievement
Band 7	It presents a clear overview, the data are appropriately categorised, and main trends or differences are identified.
Band 6	A relevant overview is attempted.
Band 5	There may be a tendency to focus on details (without referring to the bigger picture).

- tell students to read an 'overview' based on one set of the notes from Worksheet 2 and match it to the correct notes.
- get class feedback.

Answer

The overview matches Notes B, Graph 1.

- students work in pairs and answer the questions about the overview. This will help students understand what kind of information should be included in an overview and how it should be expressed.
- get class feedback.

Answers

1 Overall, generally

2 In general, From an overall perspective

3 No. The information in the overview should be general. They will write other paragraphs with more specific details. Numbers or other data should be mentioned in these.

4 Foreign travellers, travel(led) abroad, trips abroad.

Explain to students that they should try not to repeat phrases from the rubric repeatedly in their answer.

- ask students to turn over/put away Worksheet 2 so they can't see the notes.
- tell each student to choose a graph 2-5 and to make notes on the key points from their graph.
- go around and monitor.
- when they have finished, tell them to compare their notes with the ones on Worksheet 2. Tell them to check that they identified the same main trend and did not include individual details.
- tell students to study their graph, and using their notes, to write an overview.
- remind them to use some of the language from Worksheet 3, exercise 2.
- to round up, pairs could swap graphs and overviews and give each other feedback about how successful they think the overview is.

Suggested overviews

Graph 2 - Overall, the number of foreign holidays remained fairly stable, except for in Germany where there was a significant increase over the years. Germans also took far more trips abroad than any of the other Europeans.

Graph 3 - There was an overall increase in the number of foreign travellers from

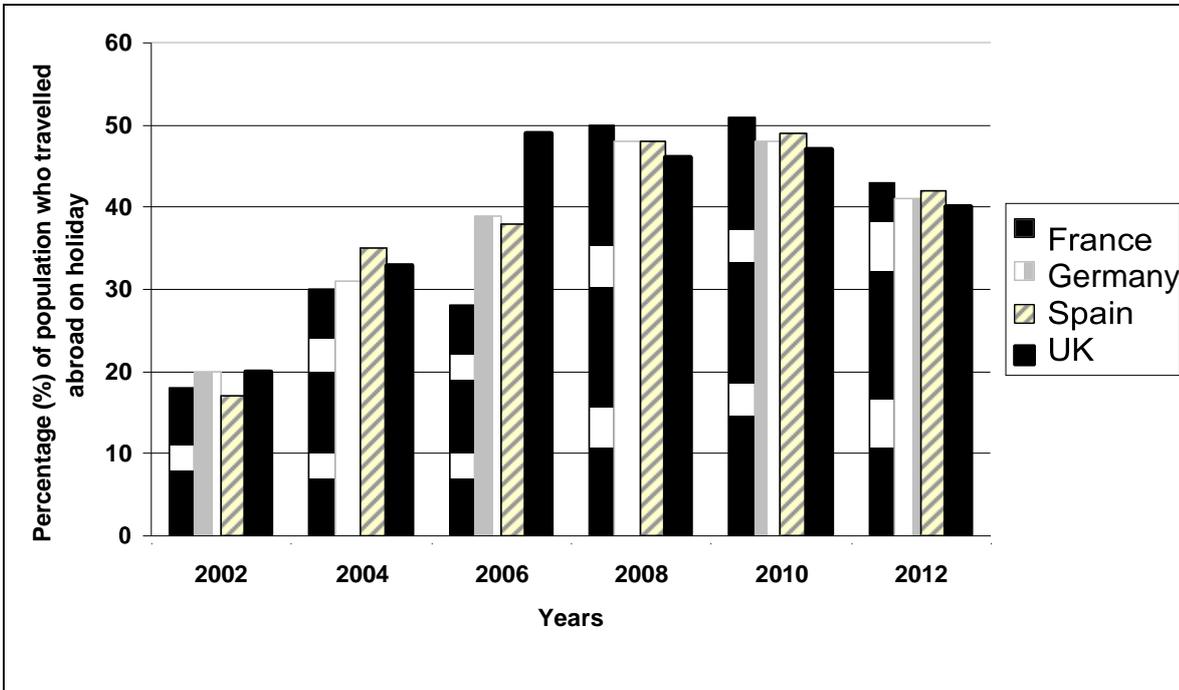
2002 to 2012. Foreign holidays were most popular with citizens of Spain and the UK.

Graph 4 - From an overall perspective, overseas holidays became less popular from 2002 to 2012, except for in the UK where there was an increase in foreign holidays.

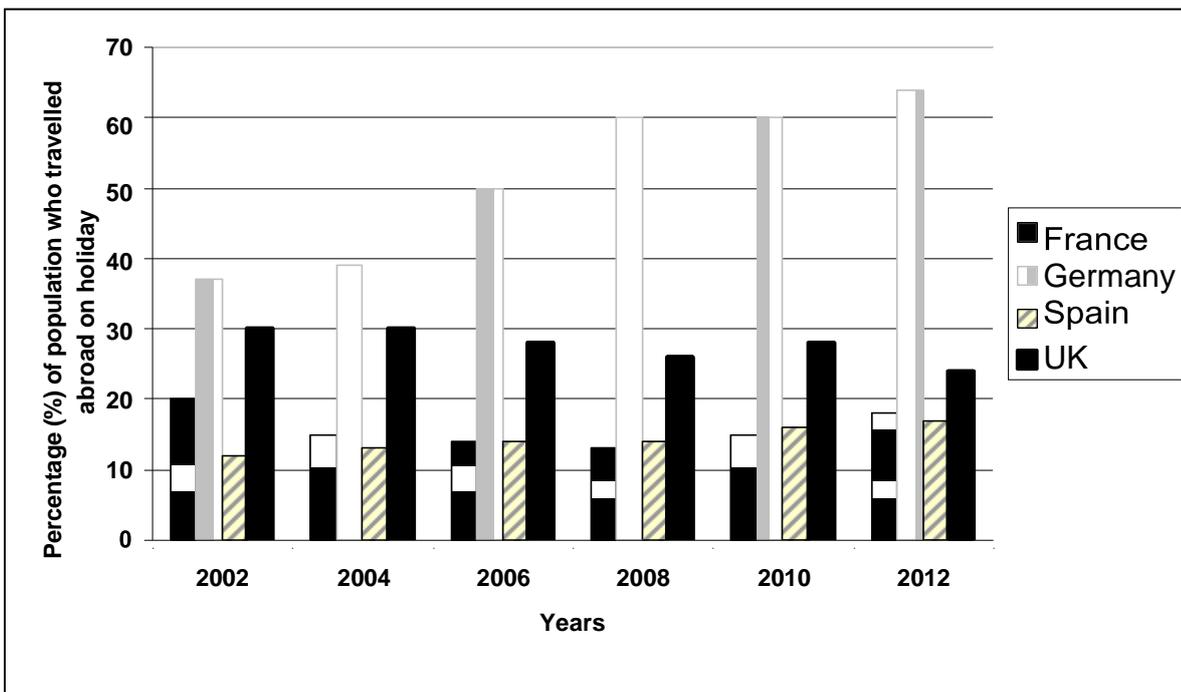
Graph 5 - In general, the number of people from each country who went abroad on holiday increased over the period, except in 2006 when all countries took the lowest number of vacations in other countries.

Academic Writing Task 1 Worksheet 1

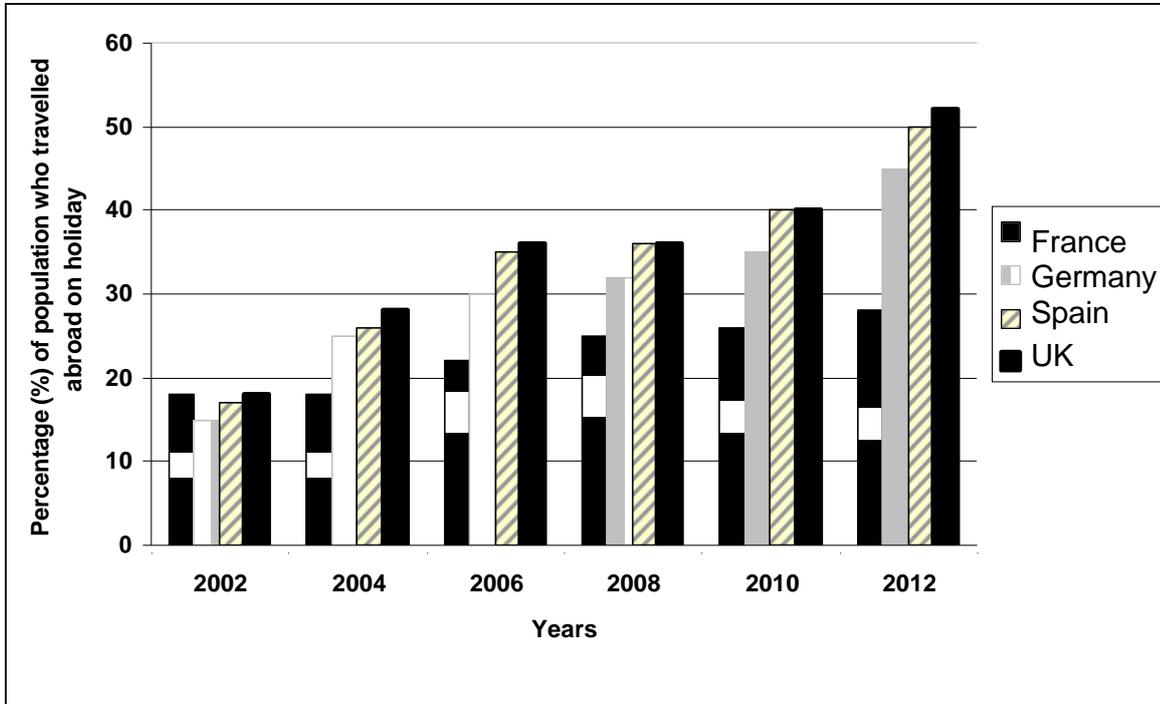
Graph 1



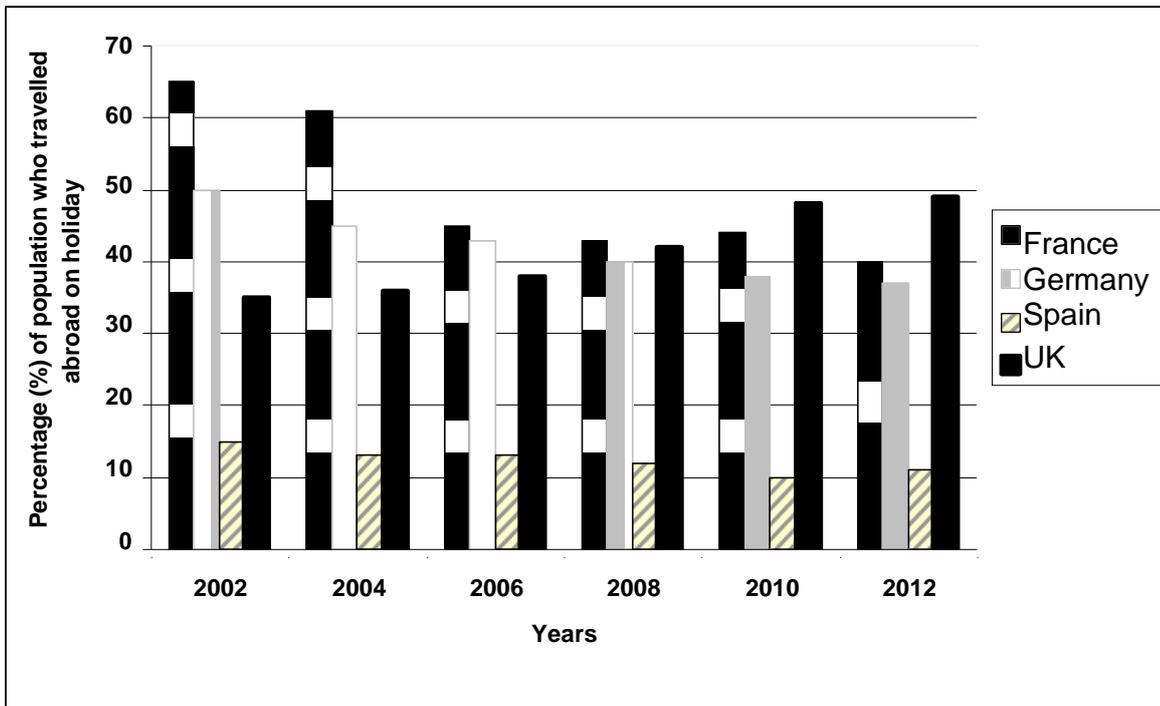
Graph 2



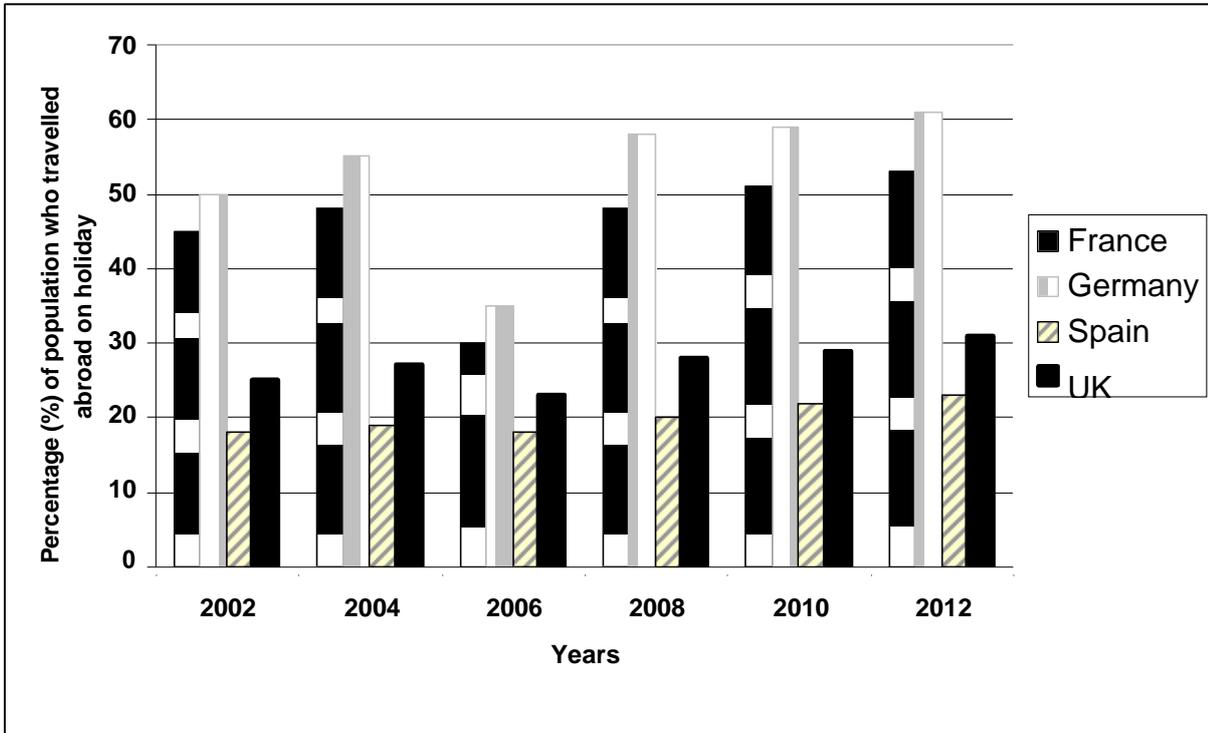
Graph 3



Graph 4



Graph 5



Academic Writing Task 1 Worksheet 3

1 *A test taker has expanded their notes into the overview below. Match the overview to one of the sets of notes (A – E) on Worksheet 2.*

There was an overall increase in the number of foreign vacations from 2002. However, trips abroad decreased slightly after 2010. Generally, in each year, a similar percentage of people from each country took overseas holidays, except for in 2006 when there was a big difference between France and the UK.

2 *Work in pairs. Answer the questions about the overview.*

1 Which words / phrases show that these are general trends (instead of details)?

.....

2 Can you think of any other words / phrases like this?

.....

3 Does the candidate give any specific percentages in the overview?

.....

4 Which words / phrases does the candidate use to refer to 'percentage of the population which travelled abroad'?

.....

3 *Choose a graph from number 2 to number 5 and write notes about the key trends / main features.*

4 *Compare your notes with the notes about the same graph on Worksheet 2.*

5 *Use your notes to write the overview for your graph.*