

# I spy Task 1



## Level

### The idea

The aim of the activity is to raise the students' awareness of the language and structural requirements of describing specific graphs in Writing Task 1.

Eventually, students should be able to take ownership of their own writing by applying the suggested points to their writing. They should be able to proof-read their writing in the exam by keeping these points in mind.



### IELTS focus

A Writing Task 1 checklist: **TA**, **CC**, **LR** and **GRA**



### What to prepare

One card per student.

Choose the one relevant to the Writing Task.

### IELTS hack

Never underestimate the power of proof-reading. As you prepare for the exam, you should develop a mental checklist that focuses on two things:

- the requirements of the task (layout, specific vocabulary, linking words, grammatical range)
- the mistakes you tend to make – and should therefore double-check your writing for.

Spend the final 3–4 minutes of your writing just looking out for these two aspects and amending your writing as necessary. You may increase your chance of getting a much higher score if you learn to upgrade your writing efficiently!

## How to play

- Before writing:

### Task 1

On the board, write *150, 20, 3* and encourage students to speculate what the numbers might mean in the context of the Writing Part 1 (perhaps, writing at least *150 words, 20 minutes* to write an answer, and dividing their text into at least *3 paragraphs*).

Elicit and discuss other Task 1 do's and don'ts.

**Task** On the board, write *250, 40* and *3* and encourage students to speculate what the numbers might mean in the context of the Writing Part 2. (perhaps, writing at least *250 words, 40 minutes* to write an answer, and dividing an essay into at least *3 paragraphs*).

Elicit and discuss other essay do's and don'ts.

- After completing a Writing task:

### Both tasks

Tell students to exchange their tasks (written individually or as a group) and hand out the "I spy" cards. To avoid confusion in feedback, get two students sitting next to each other to mark each other's writing. Please, note:

- to focus on specific points, it is recommended to use the same card for everyone.
- for a more holistic approach to feedback, all the cards can be distributed among students and different points can be highlighted.



- Tell students to scan through each other's writing and then tick and highlight the language and organisational points suggested by the feedback card.
- After about 10 minutes get students to work with each other and share initial feedback.
- Copy feedback cards, or note down some recurrent features to focus on in the following writing lesson.

### Follow-up

- Students should highlight what they see as the most important requirements on their card.
- Tell students they will make a class check list which you can then photocopy and use in lessons and for self- and peer-correction.
- Organise students into a carousel / "speed dating" seating and encourage them to rotate in order to compile the class writing checklist using a selection of ideas from each card.
- Encourage students to add their own areas to work on to the checklist.

A line graph: I spy ... 	Tick	A pie / bar chart: I spy ... 	Tick
(content): an overview: the overall TREND (upwards, downwards, unstable)		(content): an overview: the HIGHEST and the LOWEST proportion	
(content): similar features grouped together		(content): similarities grouped together	
(content): highlighted differences between trends		(content): ranking of information	
(content): periods of stability and fluctuation		(content): comparison between categories	
(layout): at least three paragraphs: introduction, overview, detail		(layout): at least three paragraphs: introduction, overview, detail	
(connection) linking words and referencing (this, that, such)		(connection) linking words and referencing (this, that, such)	
(vocabulary) adjectives and adverbs of change and movement		(vocabulary) of percentages, proportions and fractions	
(vocabulary) peaks and troughs		(vocabulary) "number" for countable and "amount" for uncountable nouns	
(vocabulary) verbs of change and movement		(vocabulary) quantifiers (most, some, all)	
(grammar) Do the verbs reflect the time of the graph?		(grammar) Do the verbs reflect the time of the chart?	
(grammar) complex sentences: 1) having + (verb of change), ... the figure then ... 2) despite + (verb of change)-ing, the figure then ... 3) The figure ..., which meant that it ...		(grammar) complex sentences: 1) ..., making it + adjective 2) which was nowhere near as + / adjective... as adjective ... / 3) with the majority (minority) of ... (verb) -ing	



<b>A diagram: I spy ...</b> 	<b>Tick</b>	<b>A map: I spy ...</b> 	<b>Tick</b>
(content): an overview: the TYPE of process, where it BEGINS and ENDS, and NUMBER of stages		(content): an overview: a general change in the LAYOUT of the map and the TYPE of place	
(content): a description of stages in order with similar ones grouped together		(content): a description of changes with similar ones grouped together	
(content): extra information about the stage (where, which, in order to)		(content): comment on the change of size and purpose of places	
(layout): at least three paragraphs: introduction, overview, detail		(layout): at least three paragraphs: introduction, overview, detail	
(connection): language of connecting the stages, time connectors		(connection): linking words and referencing (there, this, that, such)	
(vocabulary): language specific to the chart		(vocabulary): place-specific words	
(grammar): the present simple active for a natural process		(vocabulary): prepositions of place and phrases of location	
(grammar): the passive voice to describe actions		(grammar): Do the verbs reflect the time of shown on the map?	
(grammar): Use complex sentence structures: 1) once + the present perfect 2) after + -ing 3) having + past participle		(grammar): Use complex sentence structures: 1) ..., making it + adjective 2) which was nowhere near as + / adjective... as adjective ... / 3) after + -ing	

