

# 4

# Education

UNIT AIMS

**TASK 1** Using general and specific statements  
Paraphrasing  
Describing proportions

**TASK 2** Avoiding overgeneralization  
Developing reasons

## Task 1 Using general and specific statements

1 Decide which university building below is more attractive. Which of these two universities would you prefer to go to?



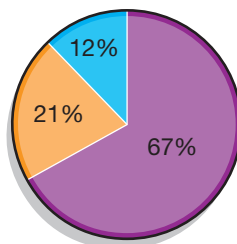
- 2 The statements below give students' reasons for choosing a particular university. Which of these statements do you agree with?
- a The lecturers' qualifications are more important than the quality of the teaching.
  - b The sports facilities are as important as the academic resources.
  - c Good library facilities are the most important factor for postgraduate students.
  - d A pleasant environment is more important than the university's reputation.
- 3 Look at the pie charts and the Task 1 question. Answer questions a–f on page 31.

### Task 1

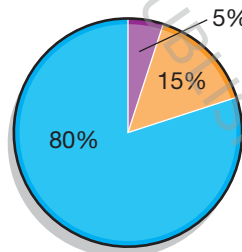
The pie charts illustrate the number of journal articles read per week by all students, PhD students and junior lecturers at an Australian university.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

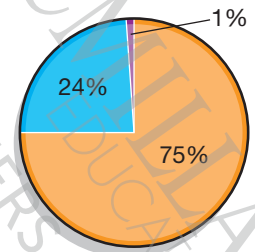
Number of journal articles read by all students



Number of journal articles read by PhD students



Number of journal articles read by junior lecturers



- What does each pie chart describe?
- What do the numbers on each pie chart represent?
- What does the box at the bottom of the pie charts refer to?
- What noticeable feature can you see in each chart?
- What general statements can you make about each chart?
- Where in your answer can you put the general overview of all the charts?

4 Complete sentences a–g using the phrases below.

that ■ respectively ■ for example ■ how ■ but ■ which ■ meanwhile ■ whereas ■ and

- The three pie charts illustrate \_\_\_\_\_ many articles from academic journals are read weekly by PhD students \_\_\_\_\_ junior lecturers compared to other students at an Australian university.
- \_\_\_\_\_, the overwhelming majority of those studying doctorates read at least twelve articles per week in comparison with the average student.
- The figures were 80 per cent and 12 per cent \_\_\_\_\_.
- Furthermore, only five per cent of PhD level students read between one and five articles, \_\_\_\_\_ the average for all students in this category is a hefty 67 per cent.
- \_\_\_\_\_, for junior lecturers the pattern appears to be slightly different.
- Most read six or more articles per week (99 per cent), \_\_\_\_\_ out of this total 24 per cent read 12 or more, \_\_\_\_\_ is almost a third of the corresponding figure for PhD level students.
- It is clear \_\_\_\_\_ those students who are researching for a PhD read more articles than either junior lecturers or other students.

5 Underline 5–7 words and phrases from the sentences in exercise 4 that you think will be useful to remember, e.g. *it is clear that*. What synonyms do you know for these words and phrases?

6 The sentences in exercise 4 form a model text. Group the sentences into four paragraphs.

Paragraph 1 Introduction: \_\_\_\_\_ Paragraph 3 Body: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 2 Body: \_\_\_\_\_ Paragraph 4 Conclusion/Overview: \_\_\_\_\_

7 Descriptions contain general and specific statements. Specific statements contain reference to data, whereas general statements do not. Which statements in exercise 4 are general? Which are specific?

8 Divide the following sentences into general and specific statements.

#### Examples

General: *Postgraduate students tended to be better off than other students.*

Specific: *75 per cent of schoolchildren read comics each week.*

- Far fewer female lecturers than male lecturers are employed at the University, 25 and 75 respectively.
- We can see that there are considerable differences in the proportion of nationalities in each course.
- Only ten per cent of postgraduate students attended taught classes.
- Overall, women were more likely to read novels than men.
- Students preparing for their doctorate read the greatest number of journal articles.
- The sales for all four companies showed similar trends.
- The pattern for senior lecturers was very different.
- The vast majority of those students preparing for PhDs read 12 or more journal articles each week.

### Technique

Identify the most striking feature(s) of the pie chart and summarize them in your answer. Find the **similarities**, **differences** and **patterns**. Use these words in bold in your answer, where possible. Underline and keep in mind the words.

### Technique

Write a general overview of all the data (see sentence d). Also aim to make at least one general statement in the middle of your text (see sentence g).

# Unit 4

9 Write sentences using the notes below.

- 1 clear/differences/pattern/student/enrolment/university/in/different years
- 2 less/one third/children/rural areas/obtain place/university
- 3 greater/number/boys/choose/study/physics/girls
- 4 international students/make up/21 per cent/total/number/university
- 5 clear/relationship/parental income/children/achievement/school exams

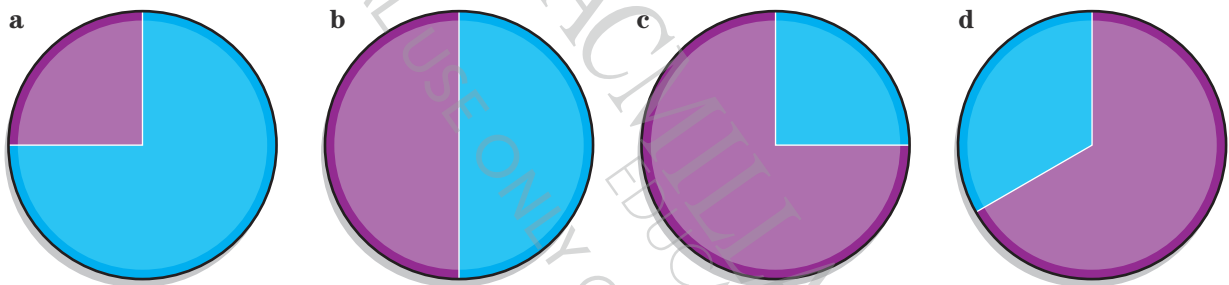
## Paraphrasing

1 Rewrite the following sentences using the given words in brackets so that the meaning is the same.

- a Far more PhD students read over 12 articles a week compared with junior lecturers. (Far fewer)
- b The average student reads fewer journal articles than the average junior lecturer. (The average junior lecturer)
- c The other students at the university do not read as many articles as the average PhD student. (The average PhD student)
- d Junior lecturers do not have as much time to read articles as those students who are researching for a PhD. (Those students who are researching for a PhD)

## Describing proportions

1 Decide which proportions the sections in blue represent:



2 The phrases in the list are alternative ways of describing proportions. Divide the list into four groups that each have similar meanings.

three quarters ■ almost half ■ one third ■ 75 per cent ■ one in three ■ nearly half ■ 26 per cent  
48 per cent ■ about one in four ■ 33 per cent ■ three out of four ■ just under one half  
just over a quarter ■ close to one half

3 These adjective-noun collocations can also be used to describe proportions. Write the adjectives next to the correct meaning in the table.

the vast majority ■ a tiny minority ■ a massive 85 per cent ■ a modest twelve per cent  
a hefty 85 per cent ■ a mere twelve per cent ■ the overwhelming majority

very big	_____
very big (used before numbers)	_____
very small	_____
not very big (used before numbers)	_____

- 4 Rewrite sentences a–e, replacing the phrases in italics with an alternative expression.
- We see from the chart that *23 per cent of students* failed to finish their university degree.
  - In 1990, *nine out of ten* engineering students were male, but by 2000 this figure had fallen to *exactly three quarters*.
  - In 1960, *34 per cent* of science graduates went into the teaching profession but in 1970, the figure was just *10 per cent*.
  - Exactly one half* of the student population were members of the union in 2001, but five years later the figure was *64 per cent*.
  - 92 per cent* of people surveyed felt that mixed sex schools were preferable.

### Technique

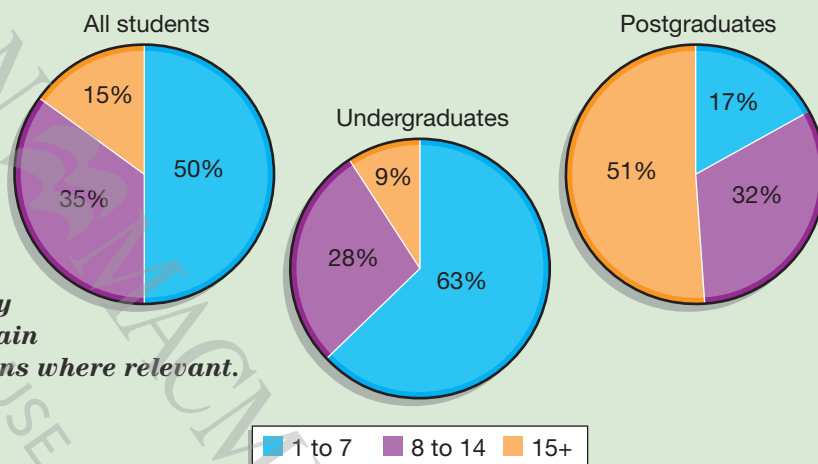
Vary the way you express proportions – sometimes use words instead of numbers.

- 5 Read the Task 1 question below and answer questions a–d.

### Task 1

The pie charts show the number of hours spent in a British university library by undergraduates, postgraduates and the total student population.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features and make comparisons where relevant.



- What are the similarities between postgraduate and all students?
  - What are the main differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students?
  - What tendency can you observe as students move from undergraduate to postgraduate?
  - What general conclusions can you draw?
- 6 Choose the most suitable alternative to complete the sentences below about the data in exercise 5.
- Meanwhile, the *pattern/amount/majority* for postgraduate students was substantially different.
  - Overall, the *pattern/size/proportion* of postgraduate students who spent fifteen hours a week or more in the library was very close to the entire student body who spent 1–7 hours in the library.
  - The most striking difference in the data for undergraduates was that a sizeable *majority/minority/number* spent only 1–7 hours per week in the library.
  - A *majority/minority/total* of undergraduates (nine per cent) used the library for fifteen or more hours per week.
  - There is a clear *trend/progress/drift* towards using the library more as students move towards graduation and post-graduation.
  - Undergraduate students were less likely than postgraduate students to use the library with just under *one quarter/one third/two-thirds* of the first group spending 1–7 hours there.
  - About a *third/quarter/minority* of undergraduate students as opposed to nearly a third of postgraduate students spent between eight and fourteen hours studying.
- 7 In your own words, write two sentences about each pie chart and one summarizing sentence.

## Task 2 Avoiding overgeneralization

- 1 Read the sentences below. Then answer questions a–c.
- The international community should ensure that education is free for all schoolchildren.
  - They should provide books.
  - Parents should be encouraged to become involved in schools.
- a How are the ideas connected?  
 b Do the second and third sentences support the first sentence?  
 c What ideas can you think of to support the first sentence?

- 2 The opinion statement below is very broad. In your opinion, which reason is most appropriate?

Opinion statement: Education is a major factor in lifting people out of poverty

Reason 1: ... since it gives people more ideas about what to do with their lives.

Reason 2: ... because it gives them greater opportunities when they look for work.

- 3 For each statement below, decide whether you agree or disagree.

- a Universities should make more links with businesses.
- b The present young generation knows more than previous ones.
- c Teaching thinking at school is essential, even at primary level.
- d More time needs to be spent learning music, either during or after school hours.
- e Physical education is a necessary part of the learning process for all pupils.
- f Play is a major part of the learning process for children.
- g It is important for children to try to learn another language early in their education.
- h Being bored and learning to deal with boredom is a necessary part of the learning process for children.

- 4 Look again at the statements you agreed with in exercise 3. Do you think they are general or specific? Do they need more information like reasons and examples to make them clearer? Give reasons for your choice.

### Technique

Avoid overgeneralizing by giving reasons. A common criticism of IELTS candidates is that they overgeneralize in Task 2.



5 Choose phrases below to intensify your opinions in exercise 3.

*Example*

It is important that *universities should make more links with business.*

It is important that ■ There is no doubt that ■ One cannot deny that  
It is impossible to argue against the fact that ■ There is no denying that  
It is undeniable that

6 Look again at the phrases you disagreed with in exercise 3. It is possible to present opinions as belonging to someone else. Choose from the phrases below and add these to the sentences you disagreed with in exercise 4.

Some people think/feel/believe/claim/argue that ■ Other people are of the opinion that  
Yet other people put forward the view that

### Technique

Make sure you justify an opinion with a reason when using a general statement. Use phrases such as *because* and *since* as trigger words.

7 To avoid overgeneralization, give reasons. Add the reasons below to opinions a–h in exercise 3.

- 1 *since* it creates a healthy basis for later life.
- 2 *as* it helps the brain to function better and increases coordination.
- 3 *because* children now find it more difficult to reason.
- 4 *since* they have more access to information.
- 5 *because* it helps them intellectually and also helps them to find a job.
- 6 *as* this would connect their research with the real world.
- 7 *because* interaction helps to develop social skills.
- 8 *as* it teaches them how to be creative on their own.

### Developing reasons

1 In the IELTS exam, opinions and reasons should be supported with 'examples from your knowledge and experience'. Sentences a–c give three examples to support the argument below. Match each example with the descriptions 1–3.

*Play is a major part of the learning process for children as it teaches them how to be creative.*

- a Take, for example, children in my country who learn musical games at an early age.
- b For instance, children who draw and paint are widely known to be better coordinated.
- c For example, play can develop artistic or musical skills.

- 1 a general example
- 2 an example from knowledge
- 3 an example from experience

**2** Develop the ideas below by adding your own examples like those in exercise 1.

For instance, ■ For example, ■ like ■ namely ■ Take, for example, ■ A good example is

- a** Out of school activities help children develop because they can learn subjects that are not in the school curriculum.
- b** The focus in education is on grades rather than on learning.
- c** Travel helps to broaden the minds of children because it helps to bring to life the things they read in class.
- d** Private education goes very well with state education as it can do things state education cannot.
- e** Successful entrepreneurs and sports stars should teach in schools and universities since they would provide good role models for young people.

**3** Develop three of the sentences below. Use phrases to intensify your own or others' opinions. Give your own reasons and examples.

*Example*

*Too much emphasis is put on passing exams.*

*Some people feel that too much emphasis is put on passing exams, because pupils spend a large proportion of school time doing tests rather than learning. For example, children in some British schools prepare for tests for weeks before the exams, but they are not taught anything.*

- a** Foreign language learning should be compulsory.
- b** Students need to have good study skills on entering university.
- c** University lecturers need some teacher training.
- d** Boys and girls ought to be educated in separate schools.
- e** Teachers' salaries need to be as high as doctors' or lawyers'.

### Technique

Illustrate any reasons that you state with examples. Use phrases such as *For example/For instance* and *such as/like* as trigger words.

## Practice Test 4

### Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The bar chart shows the percentage of people in the United Kingdom per age group without any qualifications.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



### Task 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

**Some people believe that competitive sports, both team and individual, have no place in the school curriculum. To what extent do you agree or disagree?**

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

#### Checklist

- 1 Decide which side you generally agree with.
- 2 Write an introduction of two sentences to develop the general topic of the question.
- 3 Use trigger words like *for example* and *because* to give some possible reasons. Do this for both sides of the argument (possible reasons why competitive sports do and don't have a place).
- 4 Write three main paragraphs, one for the opinion that you disagree with and two for your own opinion. Give a reason in each one and, if you can, an example.
- 5 Write a conclusion of one or two sentences summarizing your opinion and giving your main reasons.