

## Writing an IELTS Writing Task 1

This section requires you to write a summary of at least 150 words in response to visual information presented as a graph (bar, line or pie charts), table, chart, map, or a process (how something works). You will be tested on your ability to select and report on the main features, to describe and compare data, extract significant data and trends across a given period where applicable.

Answers will always vary depending on the type of graph or diagram, and the type of language required will vary accordingly, but there is a certain general structure that they all follow.

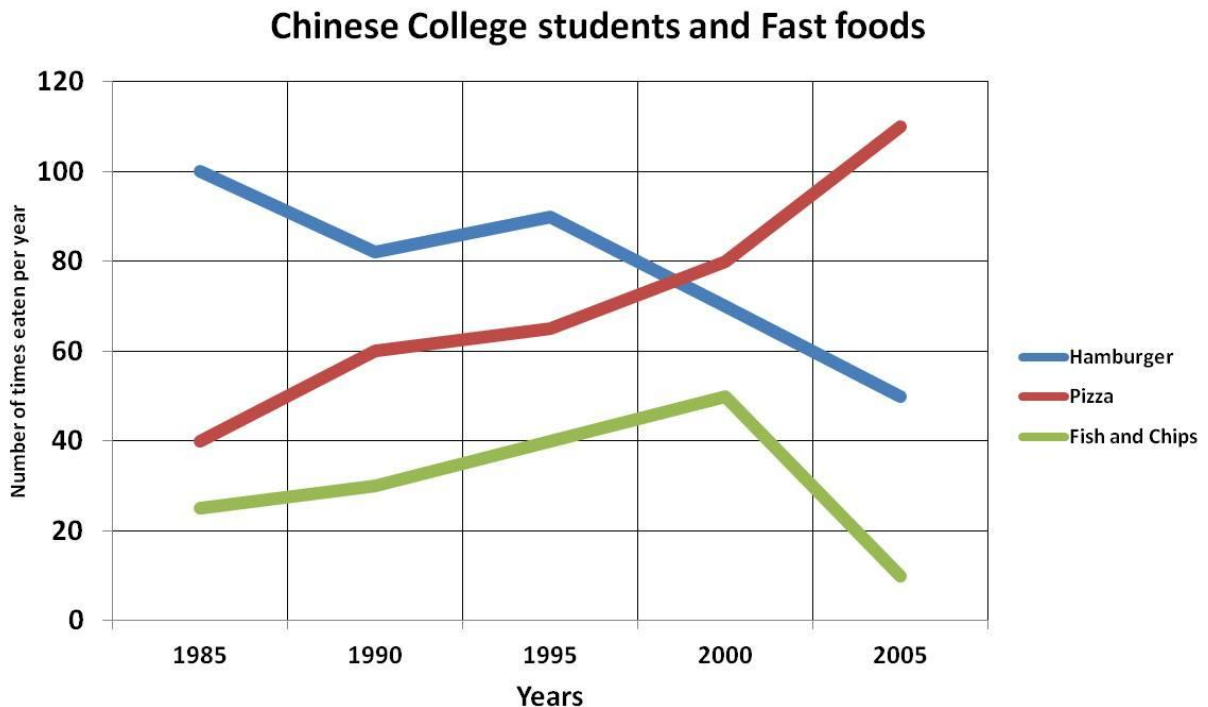
### Answering an IELTS writing task 1

Look at the following question and line graph.

The data below show the changes in the amount and type of fast food preferences of Chinese college students from 1985 to 2005.

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

*Write at least 150 words.*



## **The Structure of an IELTS Writing Task 1.**

- 1. Introduce the graph**
- 2. An overview**
- 3. Providing the detail**

### **1) Introduce the Graph**

Begin with one or two sentences that state what the information of the IELTS writing task 1 shows. It is best to paraphrase (use your own words) the title of the graph and also use the time period if applicable.

Example for the line graph above:

**The line graph shows the amount of fast food consumed by Chinese college students over a period of 25 years from 1985 to 2005.**

All the information needed for the introduction is taken directly from the graph in your own sentence.

### **2) Give an Overview**

The overview is a statement of what is happening overall. To do this, you need to state what the main trend or trends in the graph are. It is not necessary to provide any details in the overview.

In the example, one type of fast food (hamburgers) fell over the period, one fast food (fish and chips) rose steadily and then fell and the third fast food (pizza) rose over the period. These trends need to be stated as the overview.

Example:

**Overall, the consumption of hamburgers dropped over the period, whereas fish and chips first increased and declined over the same period. On the other hand, the consumption of pizza continually increased over the period.**

This covers the main changes or trends of each fast food that took place over the whole period.

It is better to give the overview at the beginning of your report because it provides the background later explanations of the details. In this way, you move from the general to the specific, which helps the reader follow and understand your report.

### 3) The Specific Details

There is no set number of body paragraphs so you must plan your body paragraphs based on the information. In these paragraphs you must refer to the data

You must make reference to the data when giving the detail in the Writing Task 1.

The first thing to organizing your body paragraphs for an IELTS writing task 1 is to try to **group data** together where there are **patterns**.

Finding **patterns** means looking for any **similarities** and **differences**.

Look at the graph – what things (data) are similar and what things are different?

In the overview we already stated that the consumption of hamburgers declined – fish and chips first increased and then declined and the consumption of pizza increased over the period.

It therefore makes sense to group hamburgers and fish and chips together because of the decline and to keep pizza alone because of the increase. This grouping results in two body paragraphs – declining and increasing.

Here is an example of the first paragraph:

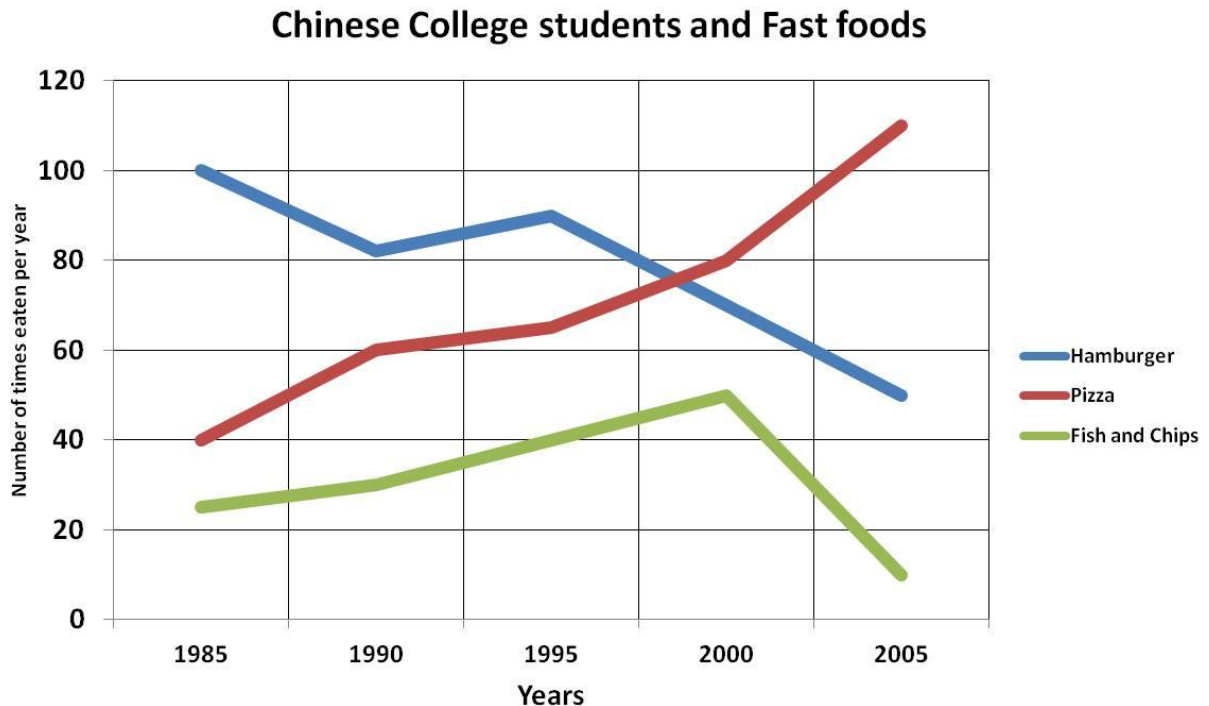
**In 1985, the most popular fast food with Chinese college students was hamburgers eaten 100 times per year. This was far higher than pizza eaten 40 times per year or fish and chips eaten a little more than 20 times per year. However, apart from a brief rise from 1900 to 1995, the consumption of hamburgers declined to almost 50 times per year. The consumption of fish and chips increased steadily from 1985 until 2000 to more than 40 times, but then declined sharply to less than 20 times per year in 2005.**

Here the focus is on hamburgers because of the more consistent decline. Although fish also declined, it was not as consistent as the drop for hamburgers.

The second body paragraph will focus on pizza consumption.

**In sharp contrast, although pizza was the second most consumed in 1985 it had surpassed hamburgers and fish and chips by 2000 and reached 80 times per year in 2000. Despite the small increase from 1900 to 1995, pizza consumption climbed sharply and by 2005 it was the only fast food to break the 100 times per year mark. In fact, by 2005 pizza consumption was more than hamburgers and fish combined. The most marked increases for pizza were from 1985 to 1990 and a similar increase from 2000 to 2005 as can be seen from the similar slopes of the graph. The most remarkable contrast is the sharp increase for pizza and the simultaneous steady decrease for hamburgers and fish and chips from 2000 to 2005.**

**Model Answer:**



The line graph shows the amount of fast food consumed by Chinese college students over a period of 25 years from 1985 to 2005.

In 1985, the most popular fast food with Chinese college students was hamburgers eaten 100 times per year. Hamburgers were far higher than pizza eaten 40 times per year or fish and chips eaten a little more than 20 times per year. However, apart from a brief rise from 1990 to 1995, the consumption of hamburgers declined to almost 50 times per year. Fish and chips increased steadily from 1985 until 2000 to more than 40 times, but then declined sharply to less than 20 times per year in 2005.

In sharp contrast, pizza increased and it surpassed hamburgers and fish and chips by 2000 and reached 80 times per year in 2000. Despite the small increase from 1990 to 1995, pizza consumption climbed sharply and by 2005 it was the only fast food to break the 100 times per year mark. In fact, by 2005 pizza consumption was more than hamburgers and fish combined. The most marked increases for pizza were from 1985 to 1990 and a similar increase from 2000 to 2005 as can be seen from the similar slopes of the graph. The most remarkable contrast is the sharp increase for pizza and the simultaneous steady decrease for hamburgers and fish and chips from 2000 to 2005.

(234 words)