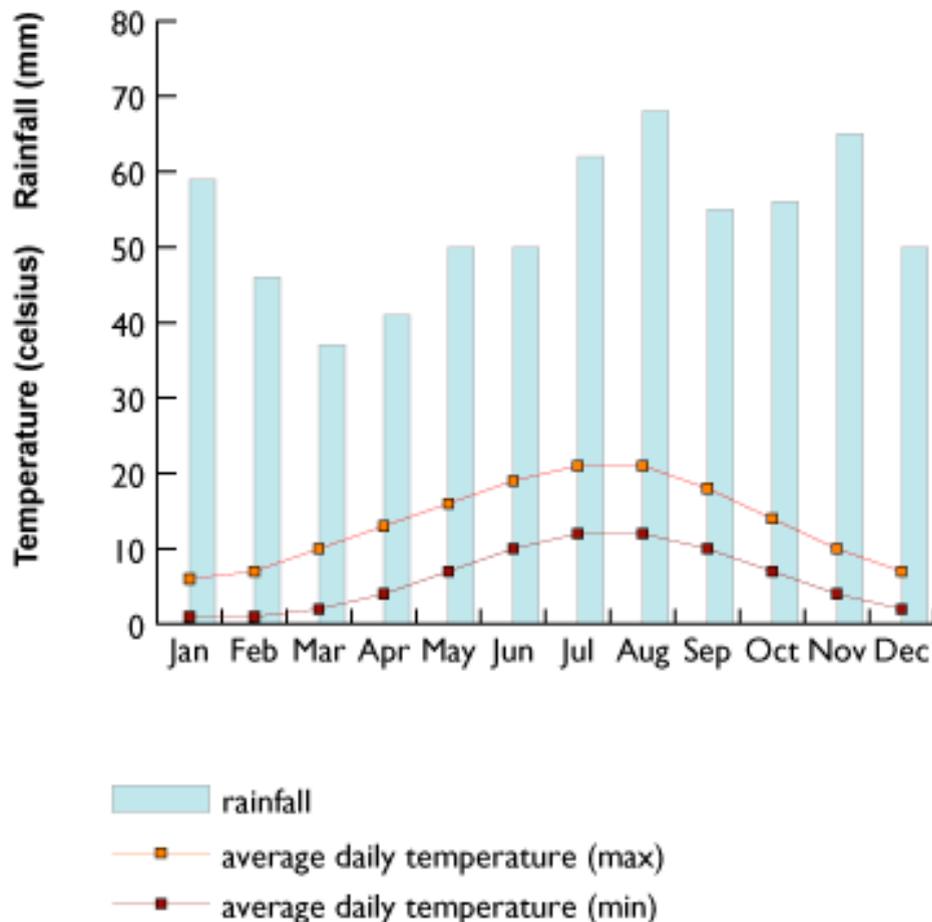


UNIT FOUR

Analysing Diagrams with a Time Period

To learn the skills needed to write a main body takes time and, for many students, are skills that are particularly difficult to develop. However, before looking at what kind of information you should write in the main body, it is better to look at what you should not write. Spend a few minutes looking at the diagram below showing information about the annual temperature and rainfall in York.



When you begin to write your essay, you must collect any extra information from the diagram, and use this to write a more complete introduction. For the general statement you can then look for a trend because this particular diagram shows a period of time from January to December.

The main body now needs to be written. To do this you need to spend time trying to select some of the most important features of the diagram. This is where it might seem as if everything is important. If you decide to write about everything in the diagram, a major problem is about to happen. Typically, a student might write something like this,

The line chart and bar chart provide data on the monthly rainfall and the average daily minimum and maximum temperature records from Jan to Dec in York.

In general, both the hottest and wettest months are in late summer with a fairly consistent temperature range.

More specifically, from Jan to Mar the rainfall decreases and then it increases until May. After this the amount of rain drops a little in Jun but it then rises to a peak in Aug. This is followed by a slight fall in rain in the following month but climbs to a new peak in Nov. Rainfall then falls again in Dec. The temperature starts low in Jan but steadily rises to a peak in the months of July and Aug where the temperature is stable. Subsequently, the temperature continues to fall until Dec. The average minimum and maximum daily temperatures both reflect these changes.

What do you think is wrong with this? Talk to one of your classmates and decide how you would try to improve it.

This is a typical example by a student who finds it very difficult to get more than grade 5.0 or 5.5 in the test. One of the main reasons is that the main body is purely descriptive in form. As such, this essay does not fulfil what the instructions in a Task 1 essay asks for. It states that you must, **select and report the main features, and make comparisons where relevant**. This means you have to pick certain parts of the diagram that are important, and explain why they are important. Another point is that you must always put figures in, but this example has none. Also, references to months have been made by writing – **Jan, Jul, Aug** and so on. Do not use abbreviations for things like days, months and years. A revised version where only certain aspects of the chart are written about could look like this,

The line chart and bar chart provides data on the monthly rainfall and the average daily minimum and maximum temperature records from January to December in York.

In general, both the hottest and wettest months are in late summer with a fairly consistent temperature range.

More specifically, while the driest month is in May with a downpour of a little under 40mm the wettest month is in August with a reading of just under 70mm. By contrast, the coldest months are in January and December with similar readings of slightly above zero to just over five degrees. The most constant rainfall can be found in May and June when the amount of rain is almost exactly 50mm. Apart from these two months there is a continued increase in the amount of rain falling over six consecutive months from a little below 40mm in March to slightly below 70mm in August.

This revised main body shows the ability to analyse and express the data in a clear, concise manner.

● Future Tense

One common mistake made by students is to ignore the fact that some time periods go into the future. This means that you need to use the simple future verb tense – **will increase, is going to increase** – as well as the more usual simple past in the main body. Look at the diagram below and write one main body sentence explaining the information.

The annual production of bio-fuel in Malaysia	
YEARS	Bio-Fuel Production
1995	2.5
2025	35.7

(units in millions of metric tons)

Now check with a classmate to see if you have written the same type of sentence. Did you write a sentence similar to these examples?

The amount of bio-fuel produced in Malaysia will increase from 2.5 million metric tons in 1885 to 35.7 in 2025, a total rise of 35.2 million metric tons.

or

The amount of bio-fuel produced in Malaysia is going to increase from 2.5 million metric tons in 1885 to 35.7 in 2025, a total rise of 35.2 million metric tons.

If you did, then you forgot to take into account that any references to the future are speculative, and any figures quoted are not 100% certain. It is essential, therefore, that you make this point clear in your writing. You can do this by adding words like – **predicted – expected – forecast – anticipated** – to your sentence. You would then write,

The amount of bio-fuel produced in Malaysia is expected to increase from 2.5 million metric tons in 1885 to 35.7 in 2025, a total rise of 35.2 million metric tons.

or

It is anticipated that the amount of bio-fuel produced in Malaysia is going to increase from 2.5 million metric tons in 1885 to 35.7 in 2025, a total rise of 35.2 million metric tons.

As most of the Task 1 examples you will see are only in the past, it is very easy to forget about the future. As a result, many students write the whole of their main body in the simple past and completely ignore the fact that some of the information they are writing about is in the future. This kind of error will definitely lower your grade.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The diagram below shows the changes in population of people who rely on fuel from organic sources from 2004 to 2030.

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

Write at least 150 words.

(millions)			
	2004	2015	2030
Sub-Saharan Africa	575	627	720
North Africa	4	5	5
India	740	777	782
China	480	453	394
Indonesia	156	171	180
Rest of Asia	489	521	561
Brazil	23	26	27
Rest of Latin America	60	60	58
TOTAL	2,528	2,640	2,727

Model essay from back of book

Unit Four - Exercise E

Note that the use of expressions like, **are expected to**, **is predicted to** and **is forecast to** help explain that the changes seen in the diagram are uncertain and may or may not happen.

The table compares and contrasts data on the changes that are expected to occur in the dependence of people in 8 different regions on traditional forms of biomass over a 27-year period from 2004-2030.

In general, reliance on biomass is predicted to increase in the majority of these areas with the notable exceptions of China and most of Latin America.

Sub-Saharan Africa is forecast to experience the largest increase, rising from 575 million people using biofuel in 2004 to 720 million in 2030. By contrast, the number of people dependant on this form of energy is predicted to fall the most in China from 480 million to 394 million, a decline of 86 million. The only two areas expected to show no change in biomass usage are the rest of Latin America, from 2004 to 2015, and North Africa, from 2015 to 2030, with 60 million and 5 million users respectively.