

# Education

## Unit aims

Task 1

General and specific statements  
Comparing information  
Describing proportions

Task 2

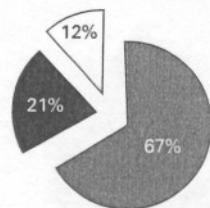
Avoiding overgeneralization  
Developing reasons

## Task 1 General and specific statements

- 1 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.
- 2 Look at the pie charts and the Task 1 question. Answer questions a–e below.

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

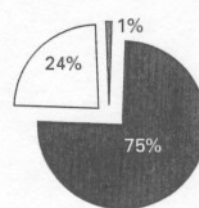
Number of journal articles read by all students



Number of journal articles read by PhD students



Number of journal articles read by junior lecturers



■ 1 to 5 ■ 6 to 11 □ 12+

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

- a What does each pie chart describe?
- b What do the numbers on each pie chart represent?
- c What does the box at the bottom of the pie charts refer to?
- d What noticeable feature can you see in each chart?
- e What general statements can you make about each chart?



Research





3 Complete sentences a–g using the phrases below.

that    respectively    for example    how    but  
 which    meanwhile    whereas    and

- a 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.
- b ..... the overwhelming majority of those studying doctorates read at least twelve articles per week in comparison with the average student.
- c The figures were 80 per cent and twelve per cent .....
- d 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.
- e ....., for junior lecturers the pattern appears to be slightly different.
- f Most read six or more articles per week (99 per cent), ..... out of this total 24 per cent read twelve or more, ..... is almost a third of the corresponding figure for PhD level students.
- g It is clear ..... those students who are researching for a PhD read more articles than either junior lecturers or other students.

4 The sentences in 3 form a model text. Group the sentences into four paragraphs.

- Paragraph 1: .....
- Paragraph 2: .....
- Paragraph 3: .....
- Paragraph 4: .....

5 Descriptions contain general and specific statements. **Specific statements** contain reference to data, whereas **general statements** do not. Which statements in 3 are **general**? Which are **specific**?

6 Divide the following sentences into **general** and **specific statements**.

*Examples*

General: Postgraduate students tended to be better off than other students.  
 Specific: Seventy-five per cent of school children read comics each week.

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

**Technique**

Aim to make at least one general statement in the middle of your text.



## Comparing information

- 7 Rewrite the following sentences using the given words so that the meaning is the same.
- Far more PhD students read over twelve articles a week compared with junior lecturers.  
Far fewer .....
  - The average student reads fewer journal articles than the average junior lecturer.  
The average junior lecturer .....
  - The other students at the university do not read as many articles as the average PhD student.  
The average PhD student .....
  - 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

- 8 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

- 9 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)	.....

Partners

# Talkers

### Technique

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

- 10 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 *ten 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*.
- Ninety-two per cent* of people surveyed felt that mixed sex schools were preferable.

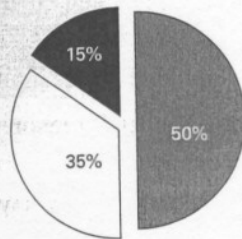


## 11 Read the Task 1 question below and answer questions a–e.

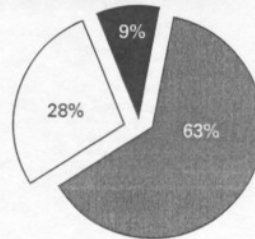
**Task 1**

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

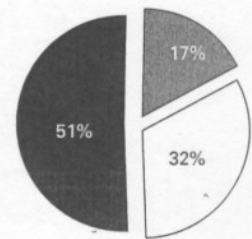
Proportion of all students by time spent in library



Proportion of undergraduates by time spent in library



Proportion of postgraduates by time spent in library



■ 1 to 7   □ 8 to 14   ■ 15+

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 is the most interesting feature of the three charts?
- What general conclusions can you draw?

## 12 Choose the most suitable alternative to complete the sentences below about the data in 11.

- 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 former 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.

## 13 In your own words, write two sentences about each pie chart and one summarizing sentence.