

# Writing: Describing visual information

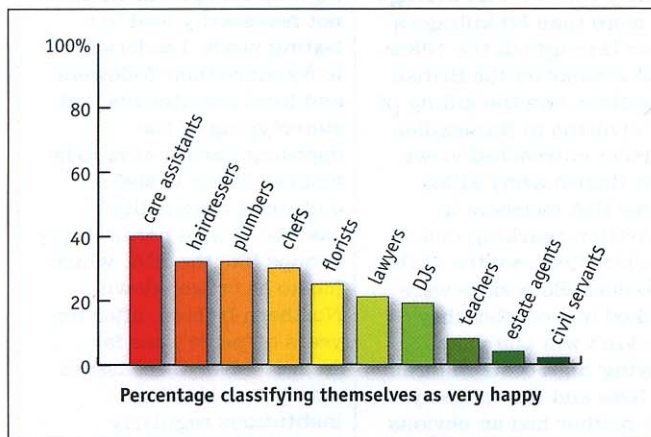
## 1 Speaking

Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. What factors do you think contribute most to a feeling of job satisfaction?
2. What kind of jobs would you expect people to be happiest / unhappiest in? Why?

Now look at the chart below. It shows the results of a survey into levels of job satisfaction.

3. What do you find most surprising about this information?
4. Why do you think those in certain blue-collar jobs seem to be much happier than those in white-collar jobs?
5. What would you imagine the pleasures and the downsides of each of these jobs would be?



## 2 Commenting on visual data

Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

case    inspection    revealed    significant  
from    morale    seems    with

1. As can be seen ..... this chart, a ..... proportion of blue-collar workers seem content with their lives.
2. As ..... by these figures, a financially-rewarding job is no guarantee of job satisfaction.
3. As can be seen from a closer ..... of the figures, there almost ..... to be an inverse relationship between income and job satisfaction.
4. As shown in this chart, the teaching profession is suffering from a serious loss of .....
5. As is often the ..... with surveys, the limited number of respondents means the results should be treated ..... caution.

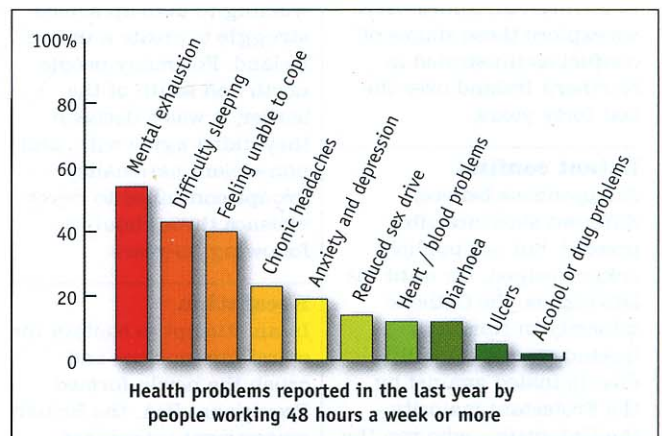
## 3 Interpreting research data

In these sentences, both choices are possible. Circle the ones that make the stronger claims.

1. The results *indicate* / *establish* that there is a link between living near power lines and cancer.
2. Table 9 *shows* / *suggests* that many in the overseas research community still require help with their written English.
3. These experiments *call into question* / *undermine* much previous research.
4. Figure 8 *clearly depicts* / *helps to clarify* the relationship between the two elements.
5. Temperature changes *had an influence on* / *distorted* the results of the experiment.
6. The results depicted in Figure 3 *validate* / *go some way towards supporting* this theory.
7. Most commentators *haven't fully taken* / *have failed to take* these findings into consideration.
8. The findings *demonstrate* / *suggest a need for further* research into the matter.

## 4 Practice

Make three comments about the chart below using some of the sentence starters from Activity 2.



Compare your comments with a partner. Now try to make some interpretations of the data, using some of the language from Activity 3.

## 5 Describing charts

Complete this short essay about the chart in Activity 1 with ONE word in each space.

This chart shows the results of a recent survey into levels of job satisfaction across a wide (1) ..... of occupations.

Perhaps surprisingly, the overall (2) ..... appears to be for those in more blue-collar jobs to classify themselves as very happy, (3) ..... those in the usually more financially-rewarding white-collar sector claim disturbingly low levels of happiness.

(4) ..... can be seen from the chart, the happiest workers are care assistants, of (5) ..... 40 per cent described themselves as very happy. A slightly lower proportion of (6) ..... hairdressers and plumbers (32 per cent) placed themselves in this category, with 30 per cent of chefs also opting for it. A (7) ..... of all florists, just over a fifth of all lawyers and just (8) ..... a fifth of all DJs seem content, whilst only an alarming 8 per cent of teachers feel similarly. At the bottom end of the survey, a (9) ..... 4 per cent of estate agents are happy in their jobs whilst an (10) ..... tinier proportion of civil servants feel the same.

## 6 Describing numbers

In this kind of academic writing, we need to vary the way we talk about the figures. Otherwise, the writing quickly becomes monotonous.

Replace the underlined statistics in these sentences with the expressions in the box.

an almost insignificant number	only slightly fewer
the overwhelming majority	just over half
just under a third	upwards of a third
only a tiny percentage	

1. 52 per cent of shoppers surveyed claimed to feel less confident about the state of the economy this year than last and 49 per cent said this was affecting their shopping patterns.
2. Only 2 per cent of the annual defence budget is currently spent on clothing and footwear.
3. 96 per cent of those polled said they would support a change in the law.
4. 35 per cent of all city dwellers have been affected by violent crime, though surprisingly 31 per cent of those living in the country have also been hit.
5. Only 0.2 per cent of those questioned claimed to support the proposals.

## 7 Using grammar: relative clauses

We often use relative clauses to link connected ideas together. Look at these examples:

- The bank currently has more than 2.4 million borrowers, *the vast majority of whom* are women.
- A prescribing error occurred in approximately 3 per cent of all medication orders written at the hospital, *of which* 18 per cent were potentially serious.

We generally use *of whom* to connect ideas about people and *of which* to connect ideas about things.

For more information on using relative clauses like this, see G14.

Connect the pairs of sentences with a relative clause using *of whom* or *of which*.

1. Only 800 escaped from the camps. 650 of the escapees were recaptured.
2. The government donates approximately 1.3 billion dollars in overseas aid per annum. The majority of this money goes to Eastern Europe.
3. Over a thousand people died in the conflict. Only a small percentage of those who died were actual combatants.
4. There has been a sharp increase in crime over the last twelve months. A considerable amount of this crime was juvenile crime.
5. Your body needs between 1.5 and 1.8 litres of fluid a day. The bulk of this fluid should be water.
6. During this time, just over 250 responses were received. Only a small percentage of these were negative.
7. Italian is a Romance language currently spoken by some 66,000,000 people. The vast majority of speakers live in peninsular Italy.
8. There were 1,113 motorcycle casualties in the country last year. 63 people involved in motorcycle accidents died.

## 8 Writing

Write a short essay (150–250 words) describing the chart shown in Activity 4. Use the essay in Activity 5 to help you. Try to use as much language from this unit as you can.

# Writing: Reports

## 1 Speaking

Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. Have you ever taken part in or conducted a survey? What was it about?
2. Do you ever read or write the following kinds of reports? Why? What's usually in them?

Accident reports	Progress reports
Annual reports	School reports
Departmental reports	Scientific reports
Financial reports	Weekly reports

## 2 Topic sentences

The first sentence in a paragraph usually shows the general 'topic', which is then fleshed out in more detail in the rest of the paragraph.

What do you think will be the details in the paragraphs following these topic sentences in a report?

- a. This report provides a summary of the findings of a customer satisfaction survey which was carried out during the week of 24th to 30th March.
- b. Given the tight budget, we are restricted in what we can do to improve the areas highlighted by the survey.
- c. The customer evaluation of staff was very mixed.
- d. Overall, customers were positive in their views of our products.
- e. One issue which emerged from customer responses was the poor organisation of stock and lack of clear signage.

## 3 Reading

Read the report and match the topic sentences to the correct paragraph. Were your ideas in Activity 2 correct?

Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. What kind of shop do you think Gadfly's is?
2. From what you read, do you think you would shop there? Why / why not?
3. Do you think the recommendations will work? What would you recommend?

1 ..... The survey was a mixture of just over 100 evaluation forms, which customers filled in at home, and subsequently returned by post, as well as 20 face-to-face interviews conducted in-store. While the survey showed reasonable levels of satisfaction with the range and value of our products, there were serious issues raised regarding service and layout of the store.

### Products

2 ..... Price-wise, they rated our store very highly, with some 87% stating Gadfly's provided equal or better value on designer and home brand lines. There were similar results with regard to the variety of stock available in store, although, as we shall see, there were a number of people who stated that the range of products could be organised better.

### In-store layout

3 ..... While many recognised that Gadfly's provided a good range of products – clothing in particular – they were frustrated by the fact that they had to search for the correct sizes. They also disliked the fact that different designer brands were frequently lumped together.

Over 15% complained that shelving and rails were too close together, so that it was uncomfortable to move round and browse. 'It's a constant jostle' and 'far too cramped' were not untypical comments. One man who was interviewed said, 'I find the whole experience hell! If I can persuade my wife to go elsewhere, I will.' Even though this may be expressed in rather extreme terms, it does illustrate that this is a real problem that is putting off customers and it is something that needs addressing.

### Service

4 ..... While customers were very positive about staff in terms of attitude and politeness, as far as efficiency and knowledge were concerned, staff scored very badly. Customers felt that staff – particularly those dealing with electrical goods – were not very well-informed about the products they were selling.

Several customers said they had been left waiting for 15 minutes or more while staff checked in the stock room. Some of the comments were damning: 'my five-year-old could tell me more about the computers'; 'the guy just smiled like a village idiot'; 'the girl did her best and was very apologetic, but her best just wasn't good enough.'

### Recommendations

5 ..... Staff should be provided with bullet-pointed lists of key features of products. I would also strongly recommend moving two members of staff from the tills and detailing them to regularly tidy up and reorganise clothes on shelves and racks. I suggest we introduce an Employee of the Month award to back up these changes. In the long term, we should seriously consider a full re-fit, although this obviously has huge cost implications.

### Real English: price-wise

We often add *-wise* to a noun to mean *regarding* or *concerning*. Some of these *-wise* words, like *price-wise* and *business-wise*, are quite common, but this is something which people sometimes do inventively. For example:

*Service-wise, the restaurant is improving.*

*The car scores well efficiency-wise, but is very slow.*

### 4 Referring to things

We often refer to a particular area dealt with in a report using words and expressions such as 'regarding'. Complete the sentences with one word in each space. The first letter is given.

- As f..... as the price of the course was c....., there were few complaints and we were compared favourably to our competitors.
- Overall, the results of the survey were quite discouraging, although there were more favourable responses with r..... to pricing.
- In t..... of price, customers rated the school very highly.
- P....., the food in the canteen was rated very highly and it was generally felt it was cheaper than in the nearby restaurants.
- While the store scored well on pricing, several respondents made negative comments c..... quality.
- The company was ranked in the top five best tour operators in the country when it c..... to value for money.

### 5 Rating things

The verbs below summarise how respondents rate businesses in customer evaluation surveys. Match the verbs with the words they go with.

- |                   |                          |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. be praised     | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. for its attention to detail |
| 2. be compared    | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. for praise                  |
| 3. be ranked      | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. badly on quality            |
| 4. be singled out | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. the experience very highly  |
| 5. not rate       | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. the company down on service |
| 6. score          | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. unfavourably to others      |
| 7. mark           | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. bottom out of 500 schools   |
| 8. make           | <input type="checkbox"/> | h. negative comments           |

Now imagine you're writing a report based on a survey of a restaurant you know. Write sentences like those in Activity 4 using the verbs above. Write about:

the atmosphere	the drinks	the parking
the building	the food	the service
the décor	the opening hours	

### 6 Making formal recommendations

Complete these sentences with the verbs in brackets in the correct form.

- The school should seriously consider ..... a wider variety of courses. (offer)
- The décor desperately needs ..... (update)
- The company urgently needs ..... some more experienced staff. (recruit)
- I would strongly recommend that the department ..... more rigorous security procedures. (institute)
- At the very least, a permanent fan should definitely ..... (install)
- I would certainly suggest that less money ..... on photocopying. (spend)

Underline all the adverbs and the verbs they collocate with.

### 7 Reporting people's responses

In reports, we often summarise comments people have made that seem quite similar to us.

Summarise in one sentence the pairs of comments using the words in brackets.

- I was worried that the kids weren't properly supervised.  
I felt the kids were left to their own devices too much. (voiced concerns)
- I'd like to see a greater range of facilities provided.  
Why don't you provide a crèche and baby changing facilities? (expressed a desire)
- Four hours a day in one class is too long.  
I just couldn't really concentrate by the end, I was so tired. (it was felt)
- We had to queue up for both drinks and food.  
Not only do you have to wait for ages to order, you then have to queue up to pay! (disliked)

### 8 Planning a report

You are going to write a report on a shop or school that you know. In pairs, discuss what headings you will use for the report. What points would you raise under each of these headings? Invent some comments from a survey to include.

Write your report (300 words or so). Remember to start each section with a clear topic sentence. Try to use as much language from these two pages as you can.