

DATA COMMENTARY

(adapted from *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* by Swales & Feak, 1994, pp. 77-104)

1) **Summary:** Tell what it shows.

This line graph/bar graph/pie-chart/table shows . . .

The x-axis/y-axis represents . . .

The shaded/dark/light area indicates . . .

2) **Highlighting statements:** Point out generalizations from the details of the data.

As shown in the . . ./As revealed by the . . ./As can be seen in the . . .

It is interesting to see that . . ./Notice that . . .

3) **Concluding a commentary:** Explain the data and/or discuss implications

This was probably because . . ./The could have been the result of . . .

This trend indicates that if . . ./This has several implications for the future.

- **Qualifying comparisons:** Which is the most effective comparison?

a. **Sixty-nine percent of girls** reported restrictions on going out late at night as opposed to **thirty-five percent of boys**.

b. **More girls** reported restrictions on going out late at night than did boys.

c. **Thirty-four percent more girls** reported restrictions on going out late at night than did boys.

d. **Almost exactly twice as many girls** reported restrictions on going out late at night as did boys.

- **Other useful alternatives**

A marginally smaller percentage of X reported . . .

Slightly over twice as many X reported . . .

Close to three times as many X reported . . .

X exceeded Y in the times they reported . . . by a ratio of 3.5 to 1.

The percentage of X who reported . . . is roughly twice that of Y.

- **Useful vocabulary in talking about graphs**

Verb	Adjective	Noun
increase	upward/downward	trend
decrease/decline	gradual/dramatic	increase/decrease
level off	high/low	point
fluctuate	steep	fall

	sharp	rise
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