

English Ladder

Student Workbook

Describing Trends

A polished self-study handout designed for print or tablet use. Read the concept, notice the pattern, and then complete the matching practice set on your own.



Grammar Concepts #43


Key Points

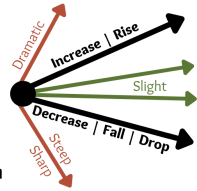
Visual anchor

Use the concept poster to spotlight the main language pattern in **Describing Trends** and keep the explanation visible during practice and discussion.

ENGLISH LADDER

Concept #43 ▶ Describing Trends

 Trends are movements over time. The arrows on the right show many of the terms we use to describe trends. The **black terms** are both nouns or verbs. The **red and green terms** are adjectives (matching nouns) that can be converted into adverbs (matching verbs). Consider the examples below.




- The **sharp increase** in sales was surprising. **adjective + noun**
- Sales **sharply increased** last month. **adverb + verb**
- Recently there has been a **slight fall** in sales. **adjective + noun**
- Sales **have fallen slightly** this year. **verb + adverb**

Adverbs are flexible and can go either before or after the verb.

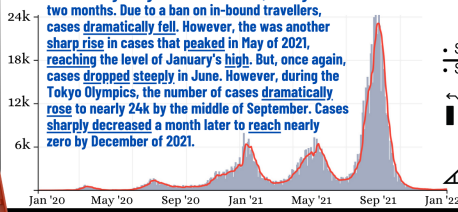
Trend Progression Example
(Trend terms are underlined.)

Other Terms

- Sales were **stable**. (good news)
- Sales were **flat**. (bad news)
- Sales have been **fluctuating**.
- Sales **recovered**.



For most of 2020, there were relatively few COVID-19 cases in Japan. However, there was a surge in cases near the beginning of 2021 to about 6k, lasting about two months. Due to a ban on in-bound travellers, cases dramatically fell. However, there was another sharp rise in cases that peaked in May of 2021, reaching the level of January's high. But, once again, cases dropped steeply in June. However, during the Tokyo Olympics, the number of cases dramatically rose to nearly 24k by the middle of September. Cases sharply decreased a month later to reach nearly zero by December of 2021.



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Core Idea

When discussing trends, we're essentially talking about changes or movements that occur over time, which can be upward, downward, or oscillatory. These changes can be quantitatively or qualitatively measured, and the language we use to describe them must be precise to convey the intended meaning. Describing trends accurately involves a deep understanding of how nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs work together to create clear, informative sentences.

Quick reference

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|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Nouns and Adjectives: | Sharp increase: Analysis: The adjective "sharp" indicates a rapid and substantial rise, suggesting that the change is both sudden and significant. Example: "The company experienced a sharp increase in customer inquiries following the product launch." Explanation: Here, "sharp increase" implies that the number of customer inquiries rose quickly and by a large margin, emphasizing the impact of the product launch. |
| 2. Verbs and Adverbs: | Have sharply increased: Analysis: The adverb "sharply" modifies the verb "increased," implying that the rise was both rapid and substantial. Example: "Sales figures sharply increased in response to the new marketing campaign." Explanation: The adverb "sharply" conveys the idea that the sales figures did not just increase, but did so in a manner that was both sudden and significant, underscoring the effectiveness of the campaign. |
| 3. Describing Degrees of Change: | Dramatic / Dramatically: Usage: These terms are used to describe very large or sudden changes. Example (Adjective + Noun): "There was a dramatic rise in interest rates." Explanation: The adjective "dramatic" suggests that the rise in interest rates was not only large but also had a significant impact on the economy. Example (Verb + Adverb): "Interest rates rose dramatically following the central bank's announcement." Explanation: The adverb "dramatically" emphasizes the extent and speed of the increase, indicating a substantial shift in economic conditions. |



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| 4. Trends Over Time: | <p>Increase → Rise → Peak: Usage: This sequence can describe a trend that begins with an increase, continues to rise, and eventually reaches a peak. Example: "The stock price increased steadily over the year, rose sharply in the final quarter, and peaked just before the fiscal year-end."</p> <p>Explanation: This sentence illustrates a trend that progresses from a steady increase to a sharp rise, ultimately reaching a maximum point (the peak). The use of "steadily," "sharply," and "peaked" provides a detailed account of the trend's development over time.</p> |
| 5. Other Trend-Related Terms: | <p>Stable / Stable: Usage: Describes a situation where there is little to no change over time. Example: "The company's revenue remained stable throughout the recession." Explanation: "Stable" suggests consistency and a lack of significant fluctuations, often implying reliability or resilience in the face of potential challenges.</p> |
| 6. Practical Application and Examples: | <p>Dramatic Increase: Sentence: "The number of tourists in Japan dramatically increased in 2021, following a period of relative stability." Explanation: Here, "dramatically increased" indicates a significant and sudden rise in the number of tourists. The phrase "following a period of relative stability" provides context, showing that the increase was especially noticeable because it came after a time when the numbers were not changing much.</p> |

Key Points

1. Nouns and Adjectives:

Nouns serve as the fundamental building blocks that denote the entity or concept that is changing. Common nouns in trend descriptions include "increase," "rise," "fall," "drop," and "decline."

Adjectives modify these nouns to specify the nature of the change. The choice of adjective can significantly alter the interpretation of the trend, which is why selecting the appropriate adjective is critical.

- **Sharp increase:** Analysis: The adjective "sharp" indicates a rapid and substantial rise, suggesting that the change is both sudden and significant. Example: "The company experienced a sharp increase in customer inquiries following the product launch." Explanation: Here, "sharp increase" implies that the number of customer inquiries rose quickly and by a large margin, emphasizing the impact of the product launch.
- **Slight fall:** Analysis: The adjective "slight" describes a small or minor decrease, indicating that the change is not drastic. Example: "There has been a slight fall in the stock prices after the earnings report." Explanation: In this context, "slight fall" suggests that the stock prices decreased, but the change was minimal, potentially indicating market stability despite the earnings report.



Key Concept: Adjectives attached to nouns are vital in quantifying the extent of a trend. Misusing adjectives can lead to a misrepresentation of data, which is why it's essential to understand the subtle differences between terms like "sharp" and "slight."

2. Verbs and Adverbs:

Verbs are action words that describe what is happening to the subject. In the context of trends, verbs like "increase," "rise," "fall," "drop," and "decline" are common.

Adverbs modify these verbs, providing additional information about how the action occurs. Adverbs are particularly useful for describing the manner, degree, or frequency of the trend.

- **Have sharply increased:** Analysis: The adverb "sharply" modifies the verb "increased," implying that the rise was both rapid and substantial. Example: "Sales figures sharply increased in response to the new marketing campaign." Explanation: The adverb "sharply" conveys the idea that the sales figures did not just increase, but did so in a manner that was both sudden and significant, underscoring the effectiveness of the campaign.
- **Have fallen slightly:** Analysis: The adverb "slightly" modifies the verb "fallen," suggesting that the decrease was minimal. Example: "The unemployment rate has fallen slightly over the past month." Explanation: "Fallen slightly" indicates that while there was a decrease in unemployment, the change was minor, hinting at a stable labor market.

Key Concept: The placement of adverbs can affect the emphasis of the sentence. Adverbs that precede the verb typically emphasize the degree of the action, while those that follow the verb may subtly alter the focus of the sentence.

3. Describing Degrees of Change:

Degrees of change are expressed using specific adjectives and adverbs. These terms are crucial for conveying the intensity and significance of the trend.

- **Dramatic / Dramatically:** Usage: These terms are used to describe very large or sudden changes. Example (Adjective + Noun): "There was a dramatic rise in interest rates." Explanation: The adjective "dramatic" suggests that the rise in interest rates was not only large but also had a significant impact on the economy. Example (Verb + Adverb): "Interest rates rose dramatically following the central bank's announcement." Explanation: The adverb "dramatically" emphasizes the extent and speed of the increase, indicating a substantial shift in economic conditions.
- **Slight / Slightly:** Usage: These terms indicate a small or minor change. Example (Adjective + Noun): "There was a slight improvement in the company's performance." Explanation: The adjective "slight" indicates that the improvement was minimal, suggesting that while the company's performance improved, it was not by a large margin. Example (Verb + Adverb): "The company's performance improved slightly after the restructuring." Explanation: The adverb "slightly" conveys that the improvement was small, which could imply that the restructuring had a limited effect.

Key Concept: The degree of change can drastically alter the interpretation of a trend. For instance, "a slight increase" versus "a dramatic increase" presents two very different scenarios, each with its own implications.

4. Trends Over Time:



Describing how trends evolve over time often involves using a sequence of adjectives, nouns, verbs, and adverbs to convey the progression of change. Understanding how to effectively combine these elements is essential for accurate trend description.

- **Increase → Rise → Peak:** Usage: This sequence can describe a trend that begins with an increase, continues to rise, and eventually reaches a peak. Example: "The stock price increased steadily over the year, rose sharply in the final quarter, and peaked just before the fiscal year-end." Explanation: This sentence illustrates a trend that progresses from a steady increase to a sharp rise, ultimately reaching a maximum point (the peak). The use of "steadily," "sharply," and "peaked" provides a detailed account of the trend's development over time.
- **Decrease → Drop → Stabilize:** Usage: This sequence can describe a trend that starts with a decrease, experiences a drop, and then stabilizes. Example: "The attendance at the event decreased after the initial excitement, dropped significantly during the second week, and finally stabilized in the last few days." Explanation: The sequence "decreased," "dropped," and "stabilized" provides a clear depiction of how attendance changed over time, highlighting the initial decline, the more pronounced drop, and the eventual stabilization.
- **Fluctuate:** Usage: This verb is used to describe changes that go up and down irregularly. Example: "The temperature fluctuated throughout the week, making it difficult to predict the weather." Explanation: "Fluctuated" indicates that the temperature did not follow a consistent trend but varied irregularly, which can often be challenging to manage or plan for.

Key Concept: When describing trends over time, it's essential to capture not only the direction of change but also the nature and timing of these changes. This level of detail helps provide a more comprehensive understanding of the trend.

5. Other Trend-Related Terms:

In addition to the common trend descriptors, several other terms are frequently used to describe trends in more nuanced ways:

- **Stable / Stable:** Usage: Describes a situation where there is little to no change over time. Example: "The company's revenue remained stable throughout the recession." Explanation: "Stable" suggests consistency and a lack of significant fluctuations, often implying reliability or resilience in the face of potential challenges.
- **Flat:** Usage: Often indicates minimal or no change, sometimes with a negative connotation. Example: "Sales remained flat, despite the marketing efforts." Explanation: "Flat" conveys that there was little to no increase in sales, often implying disappointment or underperformance.
- **Fluctuate / Fluctuating:** Usage: Describes irregular changes, often going up and down. Example: "The currency exchange rate has been fluctuating due to market volatility." Explanation: "Fluctuating" indicates instability, suggesting that the exchange rate is not steady and may be challenging to predict.



- Recover / Recovered: Usage: Refers to a return to a previous level after a decline. Example: "The economy recovered after the recession, returning to pre-crisis levels." Explanation: "Recovered" implies that after experiencing a downturn, the economy improved and regained its former status, often signaling resilience or successful intervention.

Key Concept: These additional terms provide more nuanced ways to describe trends, offering alternatives that may better capture the specific nature of the trend being discussed.

6. Practical Application and Examples:

To better understand how these concepts work in the sentences found at the bottom of the graphic, let's look at some examples that combine the different elements discussed- nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs -to describe trends in a clear and accurate way.

- Dramatic Increase: Sentence: "The number of tourists in Japan dramatically increased in 2021, following a period of relative stability." Explanation: Here, "dramatically increased" indicates a significant and sudden rise in the number of tourists. The phrase "following a period of relative stability" provides context, showing that the increase was especially noticeable because it came after a time when the numbers were not changing much.
- Sharp Decrease: Sentence: "However, there was a sharp decrease in 2022 due to new travel restrictions." Explanation: "Sharp decrease" suggests that the drop in tourist numbers was both sudden and large. The phrase "due to new travel restrictions" explains the cause of this rapid decline, making the sentence both informative and precise.
- Slight Fluctuation: Sentence: "Tourist numbers fluctuated slightly in the months following the pandemic, reflecting ongoing uncertainty." Explanation: "Fluctuated slightly" means that the tourist numbers went up and down, but these changes were not significant. The phrase "reflecting ongoing uncertainty" adds depth by linking the minor fluctuations to the broader context of the pandemic's impact, suggesting that the situation was still unstable.

By applying these combinations of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, you can describe trends in a way that is both detailed and easy to understand. These examples show how the careful choice of words can convey precise information about the nature and progression of a trend.



Practice Check

Answer the quiz questions below with responses consistent with the grammar concepts taught in this article.

ITEM 01

The company experienced a ____ increase in profits last quarter.

- a) dramatic
- b) slightly
- c) sharp
- d) gradually

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 02

The stock prices ____ after the announcement.

- a) rose
- b) risen
- c) raising
- d) rise

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 03

There has been a ____ decrease in sales recently.

- a) slightly
- b) sharply
- c) significant

Correct choice: _____

**ITEM 04**

The company's performance has ____ slightly after the restructuring.

- a) improve
- b) improved
- c) been improve
- d) been improving

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 05

The temperature has ____ steadily over the past week.

- a) rise
- b) risen
- c) raising
- d) rose

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 06

Sales have ____ slightly since the start of the year.

- a) decrease
- b) decreased
- c) been decreased
- d) been decreasing

Correct choice: _____

**ITEM 07**

The number of visitors ____ significantly after the new exhibit opened.

- a) rise
- b) risen
- c) rose
- d) has risen

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 08

The market ____ fluctuating due to uncertainty in global trade.

- a) is
- b) has
- c) been
- d) had been

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 09

After the initial drop, sales ____ to their previous levels.

- a) recover
- b) recovered
- c) recovering
- d) had recovered

Correct choice: _____

**ITEM 10**

The stock market has been ____ throughout the year.

- a) fluctuated
- b) fluctuating
- c) fluctuate
- d) fluctuation

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 11

The unemployment rate has ____ slightly over the past month.

- a) fall
- b) fallen
- c) falling
- d) fell

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 12

The number of tourists ____ during the pandemic but recovered afterward.

- a) dropped
- b) dropping
- c) drops
- d) has dropped

Correct choice: _____

**ITEM 13**

There was a ____ in cases after the vaccine rollout.

- a) rise
- b) rose
- c) risen
- d) raising

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 14

The economy ____ slowly after the recession.

- a) recovering
- b) recovers
- c) recovered
- d) has recover

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 15

The prices have been ____ due to market instability.

- a) rise
- b) risen
- c) rising
- d) rose

Correct choice: _____

**ITEM 16**

The situation has ____ to improve, but it remains uncertain.

- a) begin
- b) began
- c) begun
- d) beginning

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 17

The sales numbers have ____ significantly in recent months.

- a) increase
- b) increased
- c) rising
- d) risen

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 18

The prices ____ slowly after the market crash.

- a) recovering
- b) recover
- c) recovered
- d) have recover

Correct choice: _____

**ITEM 19**

There has been a ____ drop in consumer confidence this year.

- a) slight
 - b) sharply
 - c) slightly
 - d) sharply decreased
-

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 20

The economic indicators have been ____ steadily this quarter.

- a) improving
 - b) improved
 - c) improve
 - d) improvement
-

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 21

The project deadlines have ____ closer as the year progresses.

- a) draw
 - b) drawing
 - c) drawn
 - d) drew
-

Correct choice: _____

**ITEM 22**

The market ____ fluctuating lately, and investors are concerned.

- a) is
- b) has been
- c) had been
- d) were

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 23

The unemployment rate ____ slightly, indicating a stable economy.

- a) rise
- b) rose
- c) risen
- d) has risen

Correct choice: _____

ITEM 24

The company has been ____ significantly in recent years.

- a) grow
- b) grew
- c) growing
- d) grown

Correct choice: _____



Self-check Answer Key

Use the key after you have completed every item on your own.

ITEM 01 a) dramatic

ITEM 02 a) rose

ITEM 03 c) significant

ITEM 04 a) improve

ITEM 05 a) rise

ITEM 06 a) decrease

ITEM 07 c) rose

ITEM 08 a) is

ITEM 09 a) recover

ITEM 10 b) fluctuating

ITEM 11 a) fall

ITEM 12 a) dropped

ITEM 13 a) rise

ITEM 14 c) recovered



ITEM 15 c) rising

ITEM 16 c) begun

ITEM 17 a) increase

ITEM 18 b) recover

ITEM 19 a) slight

ITEM 20 a) improving

ITEM 21 a) draw

ITEM 22 b) has been

ITEM 23 a) rise

ITEM 24 a) grow