

UNIT /01: THE MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENT

READING

IN THIS UNIT YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO

- skim a text quickly to understand the general idea
- scan a text for specific information to answer short-answer questions
- use skimming and scanning to locate the answer quickly
- understand and produce paraphrasing
- use the present continuous and present simple correctly.

LEAD-IN

01 ▶ A common topic in the exam is 'home'. Put these words under the correct heading in the table.

apartment beach bungalow castle ceiling cellar remote island
 city centre countryside dining room floor garage stone glamorous
 leather mountains mansion marble modern simple skyscraper
 spacious staircase traditional wood window gym

Location	Building type	Style	Rooms	Parts of a room	Materials
	apartment				

02 ▶ In pairs, use the vocabulary from exercise 1 to help you describe your dream home.

My dream house would be on the beach near the sea. It would be a simple bungalow with wooden floors. It would have a large dining room ...

SKIMMING AND SCANNING



Skimming and scanning are important reading techniques which are very useful in IELTS. As time is limited in the exam, skimming and scanning help you to find the answers you need quickly.

You **skim** a text quickly to understand the **general idea**.

You **scan** a text quickly in order to find **specific information**.

03 For each activity, decide whether you would use skimming or scanning.

- 1 looking up a word in the dictionary *scanning*
- 2 browsing the internet for the latest news stories
- 3 choosing a book from a library or bookshop
- 4 finding a particular news story in a newspaper
- 5 finding the price of a product in a catalogue
- 6 looking through a magazine for an interesting article

TIP 03

Try to practise these or similar activities as much as possible. The more you practise, the better you will become at each technique.

04 The home in the photo cost about one billion dollars to build. What do you like or dislike about the design?

TIP 05

You are only reading for the main ideas at this stage, so remember to ignore unknown words.

05 Skim the text to understand the main ideas.

A Mukesh Ambani is one of the richest men in the world, and the first man to own a private residence costing more than one billion dollars to build. The home is on Altamout Road in Mumbai, one of the most expensive addresses in the world. Named after the mythical island Antilia, the property has 27 floors.

B The interior of the home is very glamorous and each floor is made from different materials to give an individual look. Marble floors, rare wood and fine rugs are just some of the design features used to create this extravagant home. The lotus flower and the sun are common symbols used throughout. Many of the rooms have floor-to-ceiling glass windows, offering spectacular views of Mumbai and the Arabian Sea.

C The skyscraper has a multi-storey garage with space for 168 cars. Alternatively, there are also three helipads on the roof of the building. The lobby has numerous reception areas and nine lifts. There are also several floors for dining, vast libraries and a health spa, including a gym, several swimming pools and yoga facilities. There is even an 'ice-room' which creates man-made snow, a Hindu prayer room and several floors of gardens.

D The Ambani residence is clearly designed to entertain guests. It has a theatre which seats 50, several guest bedrooms and a grand ballroom filled with chandeliers.

E The living quarters are on the top floors, because the family wanted as much sunlight as possible. The 400,000 ft² residence requires 600 staff, but all three Ambani children are required to clean their own rooms when they are at home.

F Several experts have criticised the architecture of this very expensive home, comparing it to an 'unstable pile of books'. Mrs Ambani, however, describes her home as 'an elevated house on top of a garden' and 'a modern home with an Indian heart'.

***helipad** - a place where a single helicopter can take off and land



06 Answer these questions.

- 1 When you were skim reading the text, which of these types of word did you focus on: prepositions, articles, names, verbs, adjectives, numbers?
- 2 Discuss with a partner what you remember about the text.
- 3 What overall title would you give the text?
- 4 Put the information in the order in which it appears in the passage.

a where the family live	<input type="checkbox"/>
b opinions on the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
c the materials used for the interior	<input type="checkbox"/>
d the cost and address of the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
e the facilities in the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
f the owner of the house	<input type="checkbox"/>
g information about the theatre and ballroom	<input type="checkbox"/>

07 Now scan the text for the information to answer these questions.

- 1 Who owns the property?
- 2 How many floors does it have?
- 3 What are the floors made out of?
- 4 What are the common symbols used throughout the house?
- 5 How many cars does the garage have space for?
- 6 How many people are required to work in the home?

TIP 07
 In many of the IELTS reading tasks, the answers appear in the same order as the text.

PARAPHRASING

08 These statements paraphrase each of the paragraphs in the text. Match each statement, 1–6, with the correct paragraph, A–F.

- 1 The house has many desirable facilities and outside spaces. Guests can either drive or fly to the home.
- 2 The family live on the top floor because they want exposure to sunlight.
- 3 Mrs Ambani and the architecture experts have different opinions about the house.
- 4 Antilia is situated in Mumbai and owned by Mukesh Ambani.
- 5 The appearance inside the house is very extravagant and expensive materials have been used. The house also has magnificent views of the city.
- 6 The home is fully equipped to make visitors feel welcome.

TIP
 'Paraphrasing' is another important technique to understand and use in the exam. Paraphrasing is when you repeat something using different words, often in a simpler and shorter form that makes the original meaning clearer.

09 The key to paraphrasing is understanding synonyms and words or phrases with a similar meaning. Match these words and expressions.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 desirable facilities | a guests |
| 2 outside spaces | b Mumbai |
| 3 inside | c expensive |
| 4 extravagant | d rare wood and fine rugs |
| 5 city | e health spa and libraries |
| 6 visitors | f gardens |
| 7 equipped to make visitors feel welcome | g interior |
| 8 expensive materials | h designed to entertain guests |

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

- Questions which require an answer of just a few words, like those in exercise 7, are a common feature of the exam. These are known as *short-answer* questions and they ask about factual details.

10 Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the passage for each answer.

- How many lifts does the home have?
- What can you find in the ice-room?
- What do the Ambani children have to do when at home?

TIP 10-11

The answers for short-answer questions come in the same order as they appear in the text.

TIP 10-11

Remember to check that your sentences are **grammatically correct** when you have chosen an answer.

COMPLETING SENTENCES

11 Complete the sentences. Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the passage for each answer.

- The name Antilia comes from a _____.
- There are many facilities to accommodate a large number of _____.
- Opinions on the _____ of the house vary.

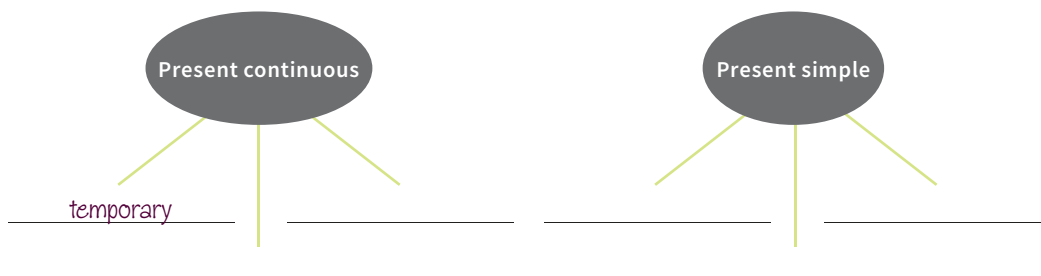


A similar type of task, which also requires an answer of only a few words, is the 'sentence completion task'. The sentences paraphrase words and ideas from the text.

GRAMMAR FOCUS: PRESENT SIMPLE/PRESENT CONTINUOUS

12 A 'mindmap' is a type of diagram with lines and circles for organising information so that it is easier to remember. Put these words and phrases with the appropriate tense in the mindmap.

temporary repeated actions general facts opinions
 an action which is not complete happening at the time of speaking



13 Using the rules in the mindmap, correct these sentences where necessary.

- Mukesh Ambani is living in Mumbai.
- Mrs Ambani is believing that her home has an Indian heart.
- The family live on the top floor because they want as much exposure to sunlight as possible.
- When the children are at home, they are cleaning their own rooms.
- Mrs Ambani entertains her guests in the ballroom at the moment.

14 Complete the sentences using the word in brackets and the correct form of the present continuous or the present simple.

- 1 Currently, my mum _____ (work) in the study.
- 2 I _____ (rent) in the city centre for now.
- 3 I _____ (think) that buying a new house now would be a very good idea.
- 4 What is that going to be? They _____ (build) a new accommodation block for students.
- 5 Every day his mum _____ (clean) the house.

EXAM SKILLS

15 Using the approach below, read the text and answer the questions which follow.

Locating the answer: one approach

- Read the questions first, so they are in your mind when you read the text.
- Make sure you have understood the question correctly – underlining key words could help.
- Skim read the text for the main ideas. This will help you to have a rough idea of where to locate your answers on a second read-through.

Choose NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER from the passage for each answer.

- 1 What job did William Hearst do?
- 2 Who helped Hearst design the Castle?
- 3 How much did Hearst spend on art during his lifetime?
- 4 How many times was the Neptune pool rebuilt before Hearst was happy with it?
- 5 What were visitors to the Castle required to do every evening?
- 6 Who owns the mansion now?

Complete the sentences. Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER from the passage for each answer.

- 7 As a child, Hearst enjoyed his holidays to _____.
- 8 Hearst inherited the land from his _____.
- 9 Builders spent _____ creating the magnificent Neptune Pool.
- 10 Hearst took animals from _____ for his private zoo.
- 11 Although the zoo is now closed, _____ still walk about the hillside.
- 12 The family donated the property because of _____.

TIP 15

Time yourself: try to do this task as quickly as possible to practise locating information quickly for the exam.



HEARST CASTLE

HOME

ABOUT

PHOTOS

BOOKING



A William Randolph Hearst was a successful American newspaper publisher who received over 1,000 km² of land when his mother died in 1919. Initially, he had planned to build just a small bungalow, so he hired Julia Morgan, the first female architect in California. Together, however, they designed a magnificent castle which cost 10 million dollars and took 28 years to build. The property, named *La Cuesta Encantada* (The Enchanted Mountain), has 56 bedrooms, 61 bathrooms, 19 sitting rooms and about 52,000 m² of garden.

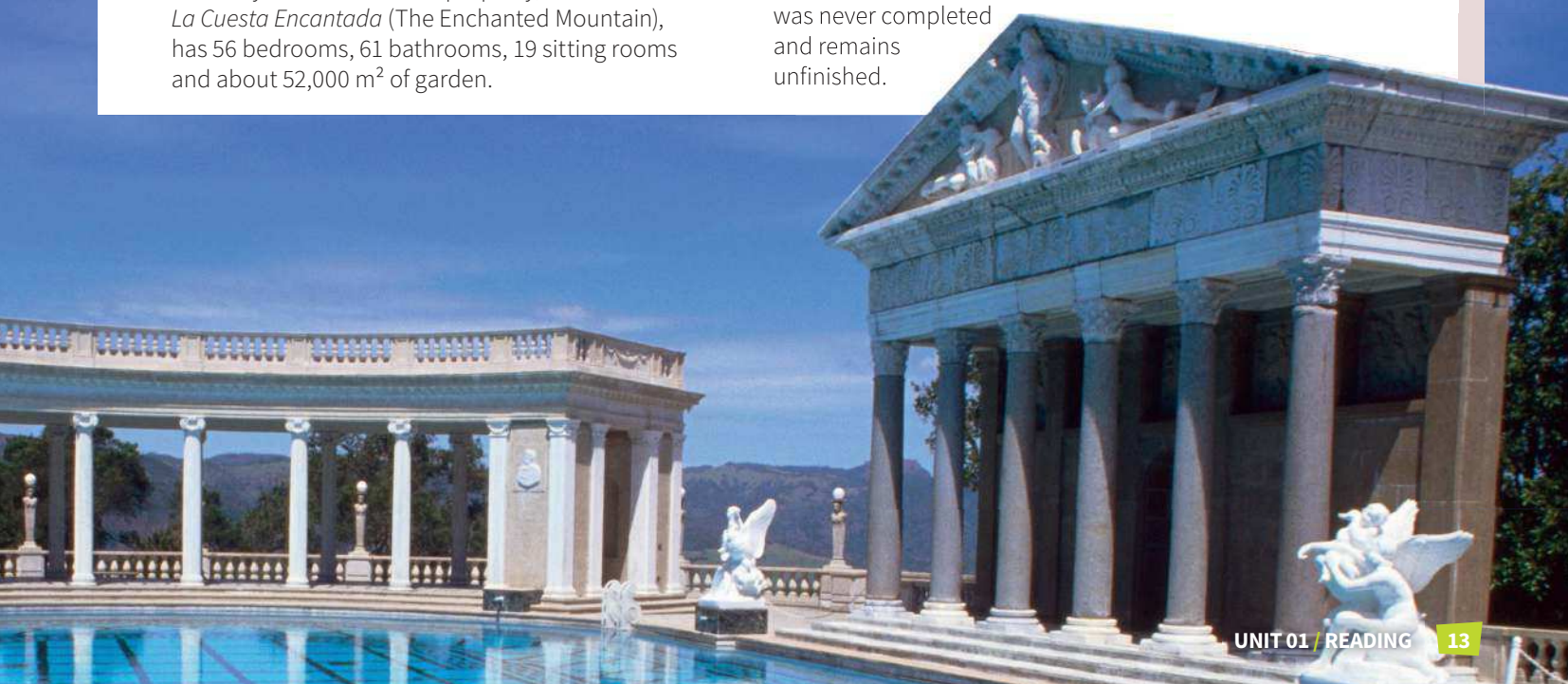
B Hearst loved travelling to Europe when he was a child and we can see this in the overall design of the house. He even included cathedral ceilings and Roman columns in his home. Hearst was also a keen art collector and, during his lifetime, spent \$3.5 million on his collection, which is displayed in the rooms at Hearst Castle. Today, his collection is worth much more, with one piece alone valued at \$10 million.

C One of the highlights of the estate is the Neptune Pool. It took 15 years to build and includes the front of an ancient Roman temple. It is on top of a hill and has wonderful views of the mountains, ocean and main house. The pool was rebuilt three times until he was satisfied.

D Although the inside of the house is very European, the outside is very Californian, with palm trees and water. Hearst loved trees and 70,000 were planted on the property during his lifetime. The castle was also home to the world's largest private zoo, holding animals from every continent. Although the zoo is now closed, zebras can still be seen on the hillside.

E As well as the *Casa Grande* (the main house), there are also three guest houses on the property: *Casa Del Monte*, *Casa Del Sol* and *Casa Del Mar*. Hearst entertained a great number of Hollywood stars and political leaders at the castle and many used his private airfield. Guests had to attend formal dinners every evening, but were free to do what they liked during the day. They were invited to stay as long as they wanted, but the longer they stayed, the further away they sat from Hearst at the dinner table.

F When Hearst died in 1951, his family learnt how expensive maintenance would be, and the mansion was donated to the State of California. Since then, it has been open for public tours and the site attracts millions of tourists every year. However, the Hearst family is still allowed to use it when they wish. The castle was never completed and remains unfinished.



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WRITING

IN THIS UNIT YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO

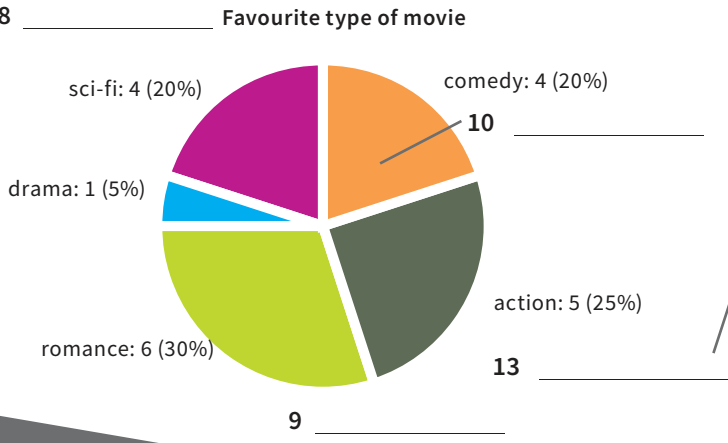
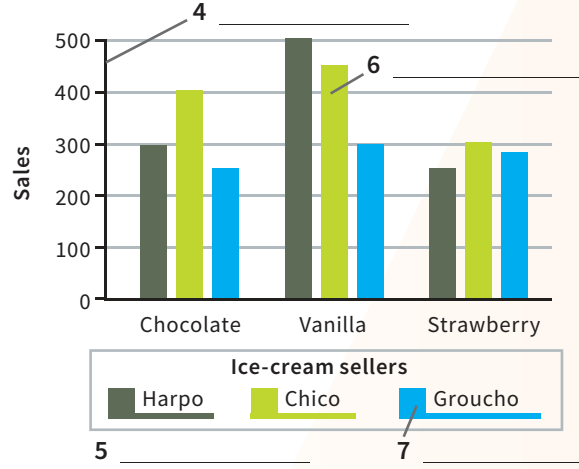
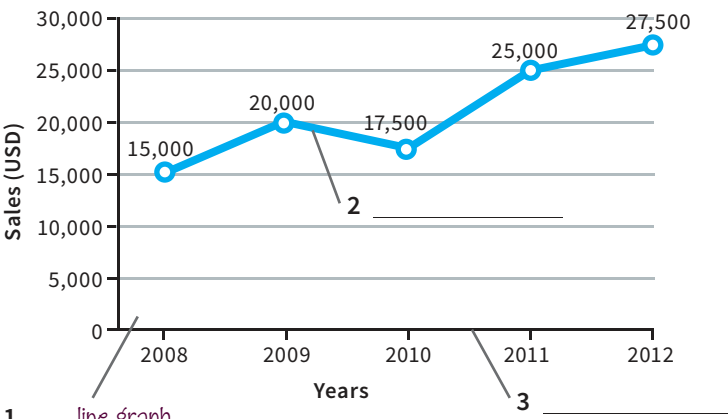
- select key features of different types of graph, chart and table in order to describe them accurately
- use suitable verbs, adjectives and adverbs to describe trends in different ways
- compare different graphs or information in the same graph and write a summary of the main features.

LEAD-IN

01 Look at these examples of the types of diagram you might encounter in the IELTS exam. Then label the diagrams with words from the box.

row bar pie chart line graph bar chart segment column table horizontal axis vertical axis key line title

In Writing Part 1, you could be given graphs/charts or tables to write about, so it is important to be very familiar with this kind of vocabulary.

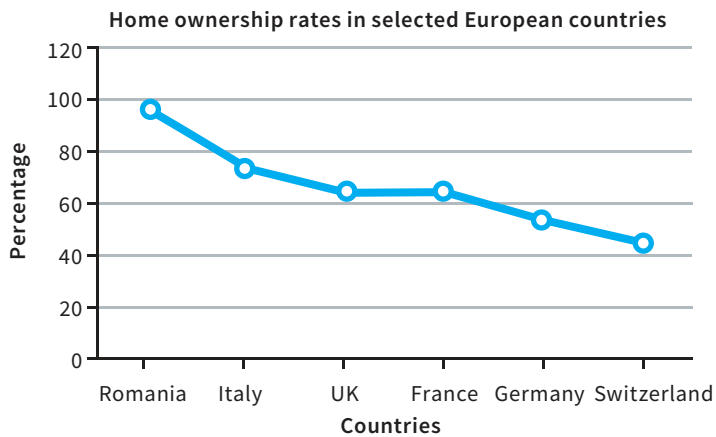


Keyword	Visits	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1 idealist	33,103	00:10:05	19.84%	12.73%
2 idealist.org	27,105	00:11:07	21.26%	12.26%
3 volunteer	12,908	00:03:35	84.76%	53.31%
4 volunteer work	6,721	00:02:42	90.55%	59.75%
5 volunteering.org	5,363	00:03:20	86.41%	61.78%
6 non profit jobs	5,203	00:09:04	47.01%	18.68%
7 www.idealist.org	4,733	00:10:45	15.63%	12.57%
8 volunteering	3,645	00:03:15	87.46%	56.24%
9 idealist.com	3,341	00:10:39	31.94%	14.43%
10 nonprofit jobs	2,865	00:08:35	37.38%	15.78%

SELECTING KEY FEATURES

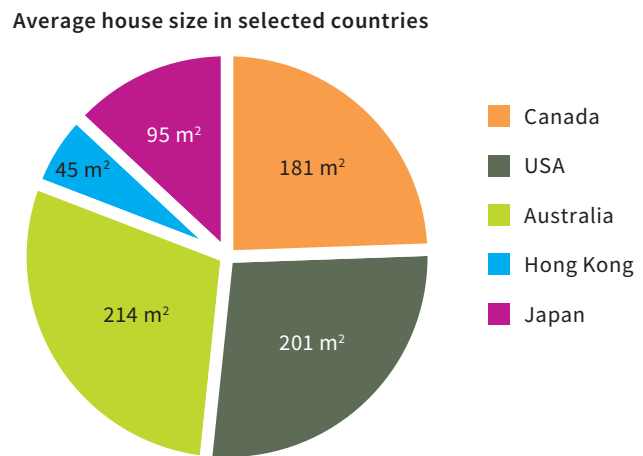
02 Study these graphs and make notes about their main features – use questions 1–12 to help you.

- 1 What does the title say the graph is about?
- 2 What does the vertical axis describe?
- 3 What does the horizontal axis describe?
- 4 What do the columns/bars represent?
- 5 Which is the tallest and shortest bar?
- 6 How do the bars compare to one another?



- 7 What does the title say the graph is about?
- 8 What does the vertical axis describe?
- 9 What does the horizontal axis describe?
- 10 What do the highest/lowest points of the line show?
- 11 What is the general trend of the line?
- 12 Are there any sharp decreases or increases?

- 13 What does the title say the graph is about?
- 14 What do the segments represent?
- 15 Which is the largest/smallest segment?
- 16 Are some segments similar in size?



Average house size in selected European countries

Country	Size
United Kingdom	76 m²
France	112 m²
Denmark	137 m²
Germany	109 m²
Italy	61 m²
Spain	97 m²
Greece	126 m²

- 17 What does the title say about the table?
- 18 How many columns are there? What do they represent?
- 19 Which country has the biggest average house size?
- 20 Which country has the smallest average house size?
- 21 Which countries have a similar average house size?

USING ACCURATE DATA

03 ▶ The sample answer describes the pie chart and table in exercise 2.
 Rewrite the sample answer, correcting any errors in data.

It is very important that the information you provide in your answer accurately reflects the information given in the text.

SAMPLE ANSWER

1 _____ The pie chart and table provide information about the average house size worldwide. According to the pie chart, the Australians have the most space with the average house size being 214 m². This is perhaps because it is such a large country. The second largest houses are in Canada with the average size being 201 m². The country with the smallest houses is Hong Kong, with residences being an average of just 45 m².

2 _____

3 _____ In comparison, the table illustrates the average house size in all European countries. The United Kingdom and Italy have the smallest houses and Denmark and Greece have the largest. The average house size in Denmark is 137 m².

4 _____

5 _____ In conclusion, when comparing the two graphs, it is easily apparent that houses in Europe are much smaller than in non-European countries.

6 _____ Overall, Australia has the biggest houses and Italy has the smallest. This is most probably due to the size of each country.

04 ▶ Did the writer make any other errors, not related to data? If so, what were they?

DESCRIBING TRENDS

05 ▶ Complete the words with the missing letters. Can you think of any more words for each category?

↑

1 Rise
 2 In _____
 3 Cl _____
 4 Go _____
 5 Ro _____
 6 So _____

↓

7 Fall
 8 Decr _____
 9 De _____
 10 Go d _____
 11 Plu _____
 12 Plun _____
 13 Dr _____

→

14 Maintain
 15 Remain
 16 Stay

06 ▶ Answer these questions.

- Which of the verbs in the boxes are used to describe a sudden increase?
- Which of the verbs in the boxes are used to describe a sudden decrease?

07 When using these verbs, it is important that you also consider the tense used. Look at this example.

The number of young people buying property plummet last year. **X**
 The number of young people buying property *plummeted* last year. **✓**

Complete the sentences using the verb in brackets in the correct tense. There may be more than one correct form of the verb.

- Last year house prices _____ (rise) by 5%.
- Monaco's property market _____ (remain) stable.
- The line graph illustrates that since 2010 home ownership _____ (decrease).
- House prices _____ (go up) next year.
- In Ireland, property prices _____ (rocket) substantially this year.

USEFUL ADVERBS AND ADJECTIVES

Once you know the common verbs used to describe charts and graphs, it is important to add adverbs and adjectives to your sentences in order to demonstrate your range of vocabulary.

USEFUL ADJECTIVES

Adjectives can be used to demonstrate your range of vocabulary. **Adjectives** describe **nouns** and usually come **before** the noun.
 Note: these verbs are also commonly used as nouns.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| to rise / a rise | to fall / a fall | to decrease / a decrease |
| to increase / an increase | to drop / a drop | to dip / a dip |
| to decline / a decline | to peak / a peak | |

08 Complete the table with the adjectives from the box.

- | | | | |
|--------|---------|-------------|------------|
| slight | modest | significant | dramatic |
| stable | steady* | substantial | unchanged* |

TIP 08

Make sure you know how to spell these adjectives correctly as it is common for students to make errors with these.

*These adjectives usually go after the noun.

Big change	Small change	Gradual or no change