

Preparing lower level students for IELTS

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Overview

- ⇒ Discussion: What challenges do you face?
- ⇒ General difficulties for lower levels and strategies to overcome these
- ⇒ Tools for teaching each paper at lower levels and activities for the classroom

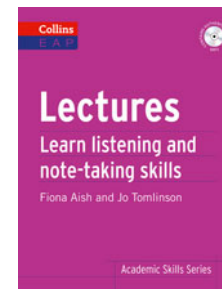
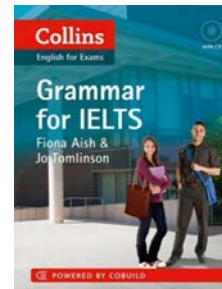
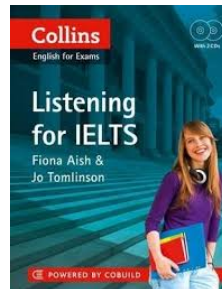
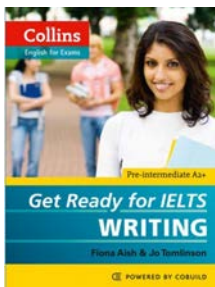
About us



Course design, delivery, test development and teacher training for EAP and exam preparation.



A diagnostic test to help students prepare for taking IELTS



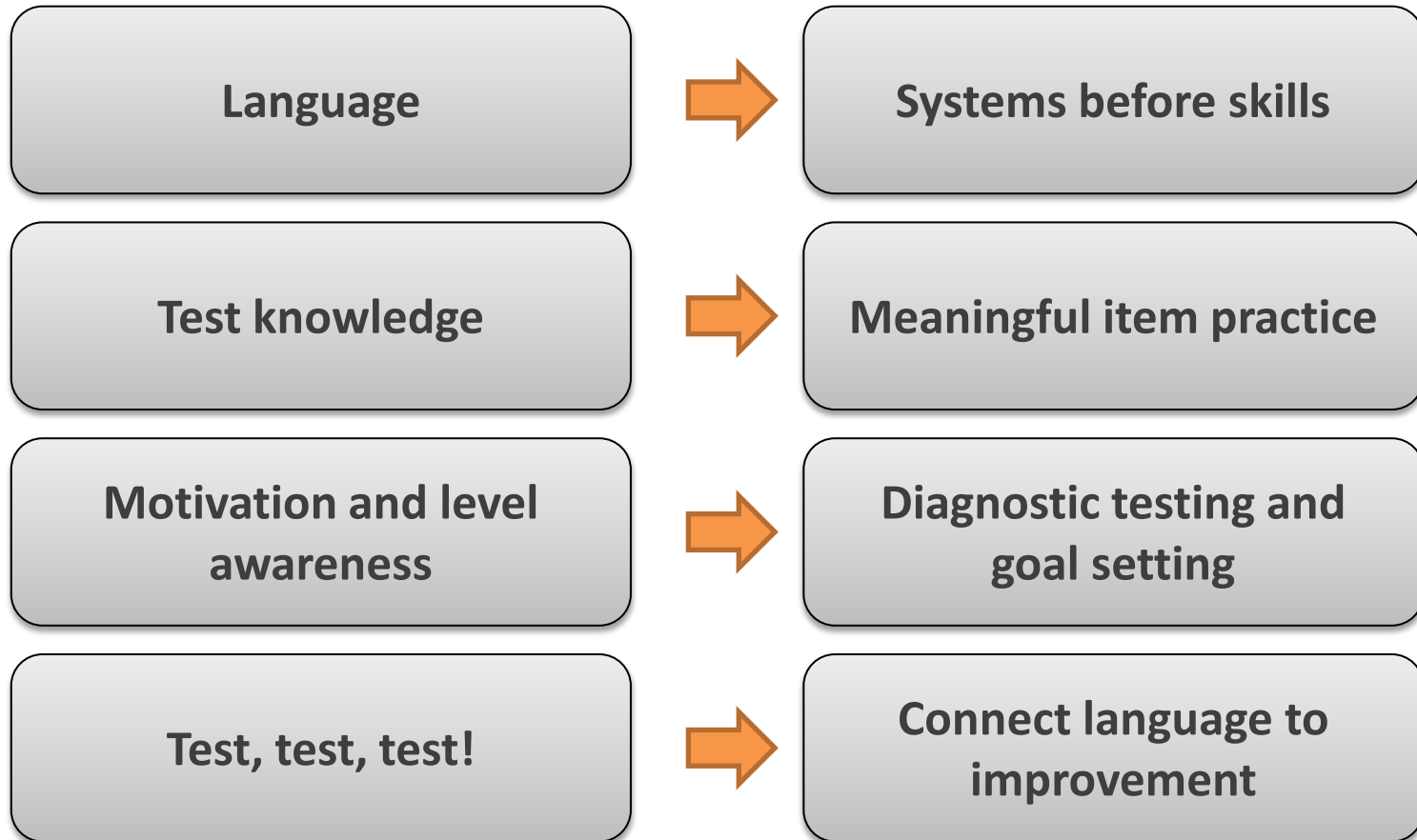
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Over to you...

- ⇒ Do you teach IELTS to lower levels? What levels?
- ⇒ What challenges does this bring?
- ⇒ How do you overcome them?

Concepts at lower levels



Teaching lower levels

**IELTS listening and
reading**

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Tools for listening

Explore item construction

- in order to help your students understand what they will hear.

Get students to create language for listening

- motivational tool and good language practice for a receptive skill

Grade listening where possible

- work to their level by task type/section/sourcing own material

Include the basics!

- give spelling tests
- practise places, times, dates.

Use noticing tools

- Include self assessment and guided discovery.
- Use the audio script

SECTION 2

Questions 11 – 20

Questions 11 – 13

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B** or **C**.

- 11 The Bridge Hotel is located in
- A** the city centre.
 - B** the country.
 - C** the suburbs.
- 12 The newest sports facility in the hotel is
- A** a swimming pool.
 - B** a fitness centre.
 - C** a tennis court.

You will hear a recorded message giving information about an English hotel.

Welcome to the Bridge Hotel Information Line. The Bridge Hotel is part of the Compact Group, which is a large association of family-owned hotels offering a warm friendly atmosphere and high quality service at competitive prices. All of them cater for a wide range of people – from business to leisure clients.

Set in a quiet residential area on the attractive outskirts of Belford, about three miles from the city centre, the Bridge Hotel is a popular choice for conferences. After recent refurbishment and expansion, it now has 25 double rooms and 20 singles. All 45 are en suite with TV and coffee- and tea-making facilities.

The Bridge Hotel is set in three and a half hectares of grounds with an open-air swimming pool and four tennis courts. There is also a newly opened gym with fitness suite, which is considered one of the best equipped in the area. Non-resident membership is available.

Features identified

From looking at the audioscript and analysing the questions and answers, we can see:

- the distractors are sometimes mentioned
- the distractors are mentioned using the direct words from the question paper
- the answers are mentioned using a synonym or synonymous phrase

This is just one pattern we can identify. It is not the rule.

How can we use this?

- Explore correct and incorrect answers with the students.
- Make the student the examiner. Use a reinforcement activity where the students explore the questions or audio script.
- With lower levels, stage this with focused grammar/vocabulary.

The hotel is most popular with...

A. the elderly

B. families

C. business people

1. Brainstorm the vocabulary

over 65s

staying for work

parents and children

2. Paraphrase the stem (include any grammar/vocabulary work)

Other ways of saying 'most popular' (passive/active focus)

The hotel is especially liked by... / ...especially like(s) this hotel.

The hotel is a particular favourite of... / ...particularly favour(s)
the hotel.

Other ways of saying 'hotel'

Our establishment / The Bridge Hotel

The hotel is most popular with...

- A. the elderly
- B. families
- C. business people

3. Introduce possible ideas/structures for distraction

e.g. “Both families and business people enjoy everything the hotel has to offer, but... **the Bridge is particularly liked by the over 65s.**”

Task

In groups, students write the audioscript for this question. Choose any answer to be the correct word. Include:

- 1 or 2 of the other (incorrect) answers
- The other wrong answers in the same form as they are in the question
- The answer in a synonymous form

Tools for reading

Focus on intensive reading

- reduce skimming/scanning activities and give a linguistic focus
- look at paragraph level texts

Scaffold reading

- pre-teaching needs to be done
- where possible, restrict the language focus and consider materials carefully

Understanding question types

- prediction techniques for certain questions
- how questions are reformulated and organised in the text

Use noticing tools

- include self assessment and guided discovery.
- Always explore the answers

Read the paragraphs from an IELTS Writing Task 2 and write the noun, sentence or idea that the underlined reference word matches. The first one has been done for you.

What are the causes and effects of obesity and how does it affect society?

One of the largest causes of obesity is the rising cost of food over the years. Although nowadays many supermarkets claim that (1) they provide low cost food, fruit and vegetables have increased considerably in price. (2) This means that it is more difficult for low income families to feed their children fresh, healthy food. As a result, we have seen a rise in obesity and other health related problems. (3) These issues have negative effects on healthcare and education. For example, my mother worries that (4) she will not be able to cook healthy meals for her family if food costs continue to increase.

One of the causes of obesity is the rising cost of food. Many supermarkets today claim that (1) they provide low cost food, but fruit and vegetables have increased in price. (2) This means that it is more difficult for low income families to feed their children healthy food. As a result, we have seen more obesity and other health problems. (3) These issues have negative effects on healthcare and education.

What do the underlined words refer to? Write the nouns below:

1. _____ provide low cost food, but fruit and vegetables are becoming more expensive.
2. _____ makes it more difficult for low income families to feed their children healthy food.
3. _____ have negative effects on healthcare and education.

One of the causes of obesity is the rising cost of food. Many supermarkets today claim that (1) they provide low cost food, but fruit and vegetables have increased in price. (2) This means that it is more difficult for low income families to feed their children healthy food. As a result, we have seen more obesity and other health problems. (3) These issues have negative effects on healthcare and education.

What do the underlined words refer to? Write the nouns below:

1. **Supermarkets** provide low cost food, but fruit and vegetables are becoming more expensive.
2. **The high cost of fruit and vegetables** makes it more difficult for low income families to feed their children healthy food.
3. **Obesity and health problems** have negative effects on healthcare and education.

One of the causes of obesity is the rising cost of food. Many supermarkets today claim that (1) they provide low cost food, but fruit and vegetables have increased in price. (2) This means that it is more difficult for low income families to feed their children healthy food. As a result, we have seen more obesity and other health problems. (3) These issues have negative effects on healthcare and education.

IELTS style questions.

Complete the summary in NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS.

It is difficult for poorer families to eat healthy food because _____ have not reduced the price of _____. This leads to obesity and other problems which more widely affect _____.

Teaching lower levels

**IELTS writing and
speaking**

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Tools for writing

Task 1:

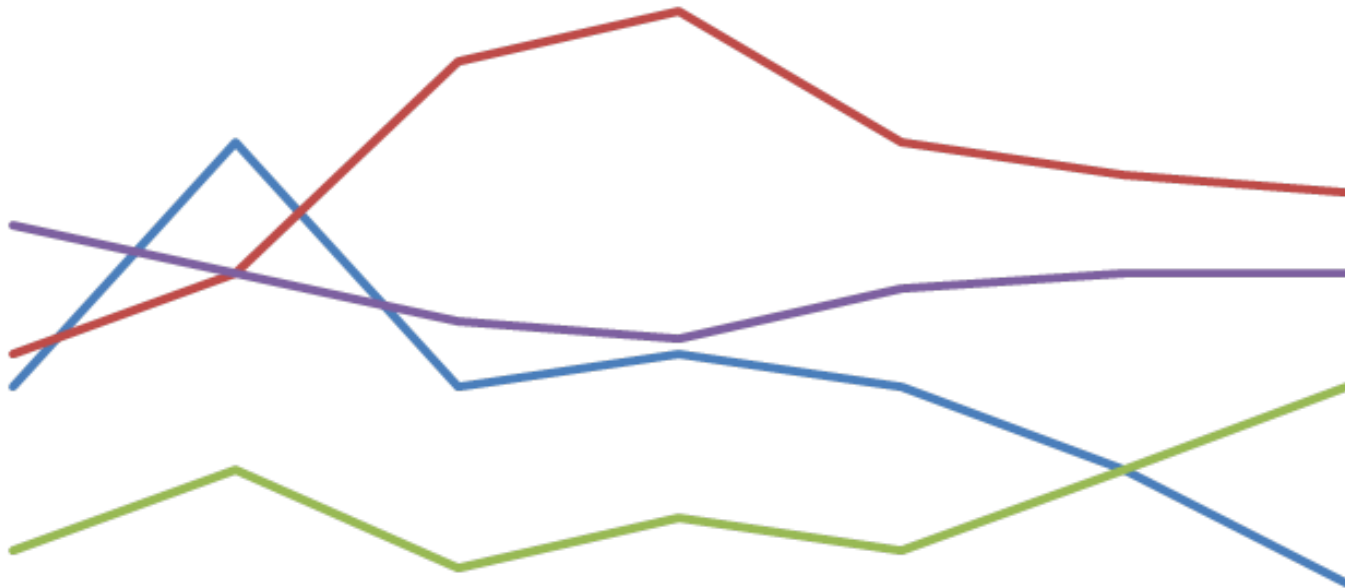
- Give meaningful practice
- Help students with meaning from context
- Focus on 'essential grammar' e.g. tense, s/v/o, prepositions
- Get students to rewrite and recycle activities with small changes e.g. a tense change
- Give detailed feedback to individuals and groups

Task 2:

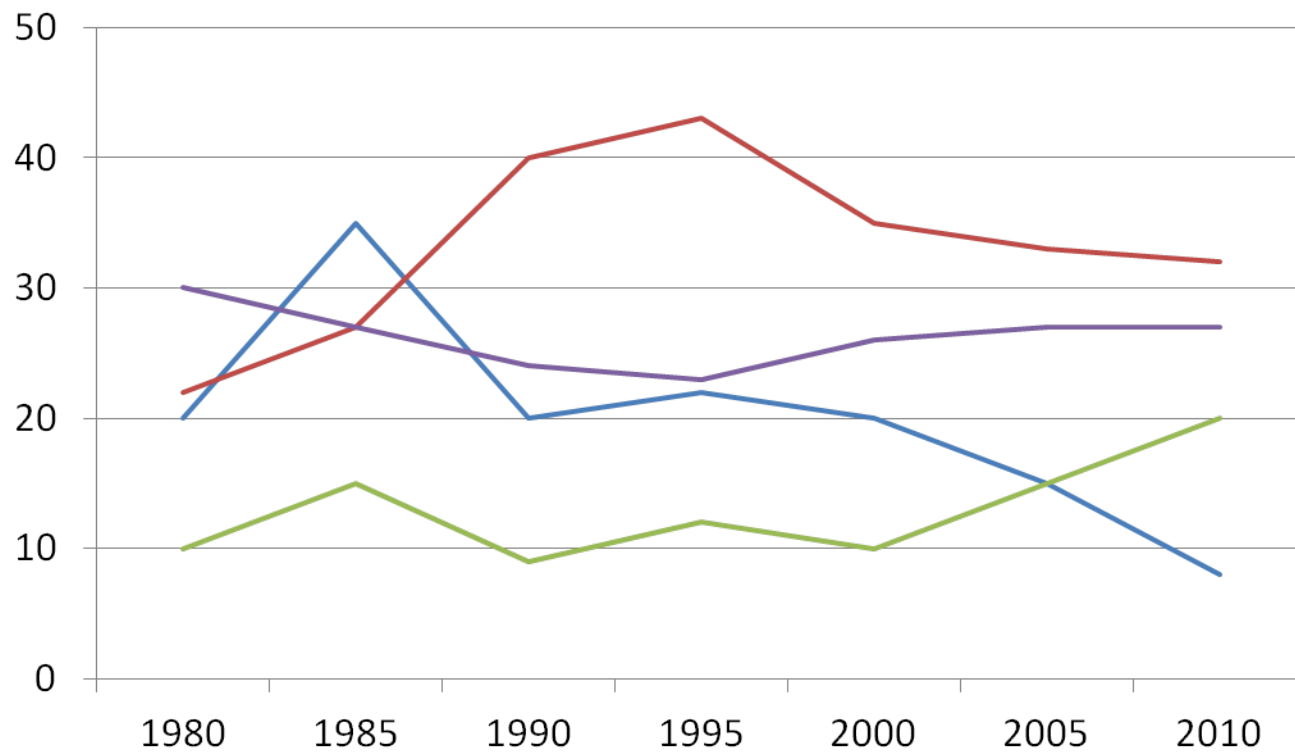
- Explore how to answer the question NOT write about the topic
- Focus on essay grammar (e.g. modals, basic noun phrases)
- Teach subject specific lexis and collocations
- Guided paragraph/idea development (even simplistic ones)
- Give students checklists for self-editing and peer review

Decoding writing task 1

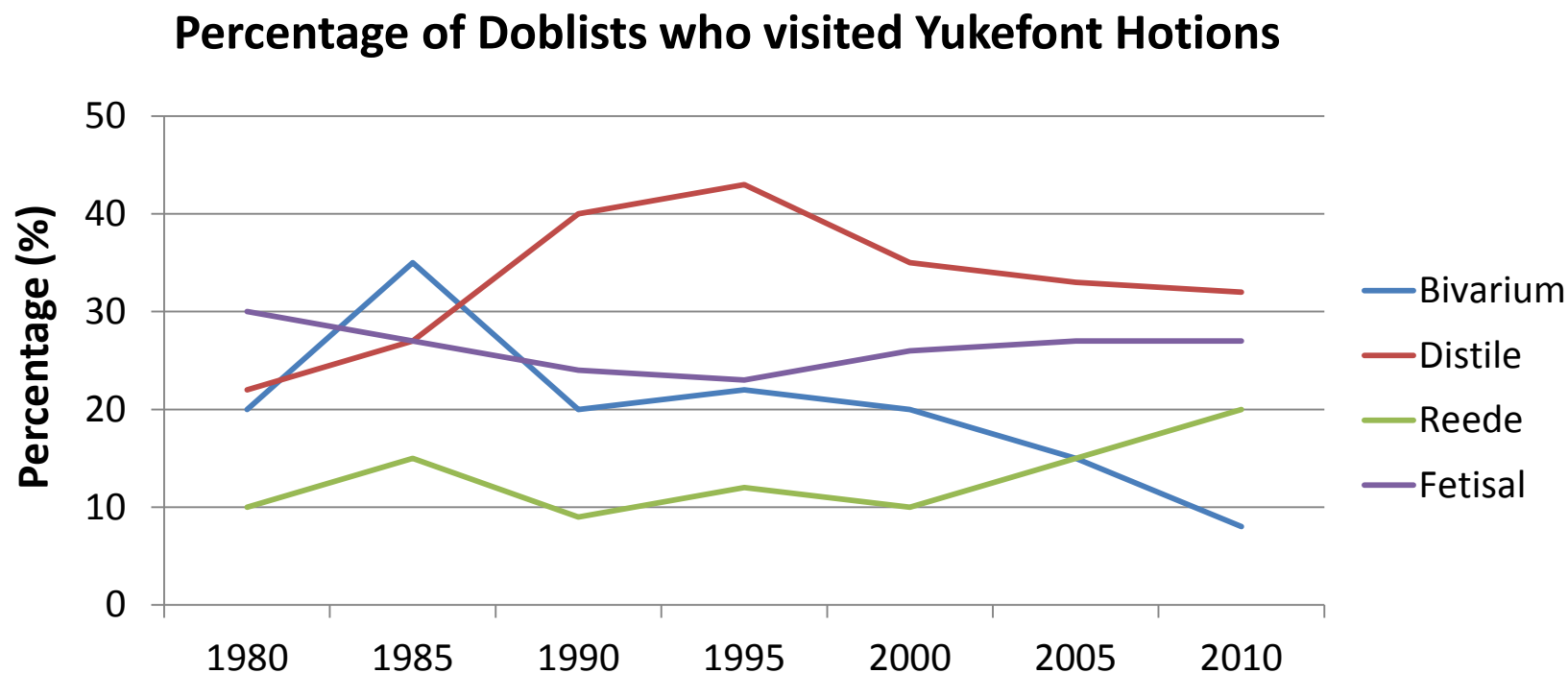
Describe the movements of each of the coloured lines.



What else can you say about the lines now?



The line graph below shows the percentage of Doblists who visited four different Yukefont Hotions. Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features and make comparisons where relevant.





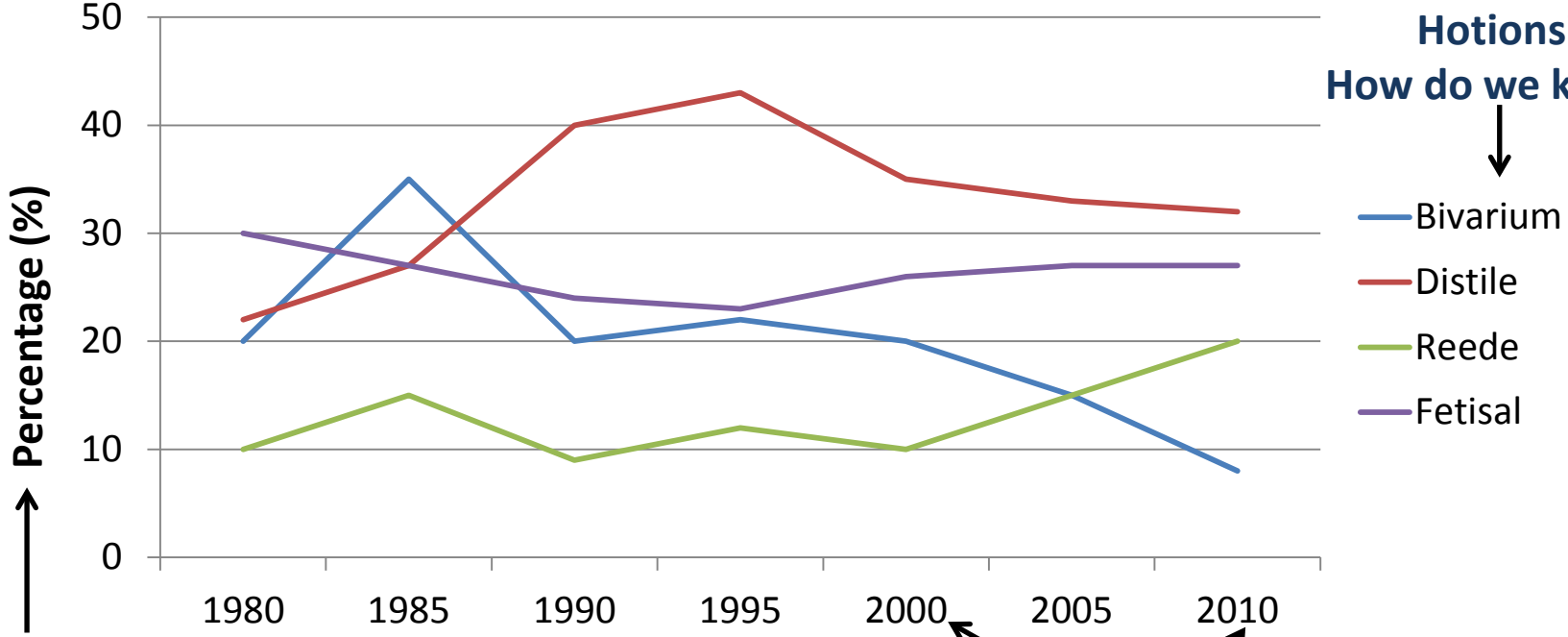
The line graph below shows the percentage of Doblits who visited four different Yukefont Hotions.

What pronoun can you use with this? Why?

Do people or things 'visit'?
What do they visit?

Percentage of Doblits who visited Yukefont Hotions

Are these Doblits or Yukefont Hotions?
How do we know?



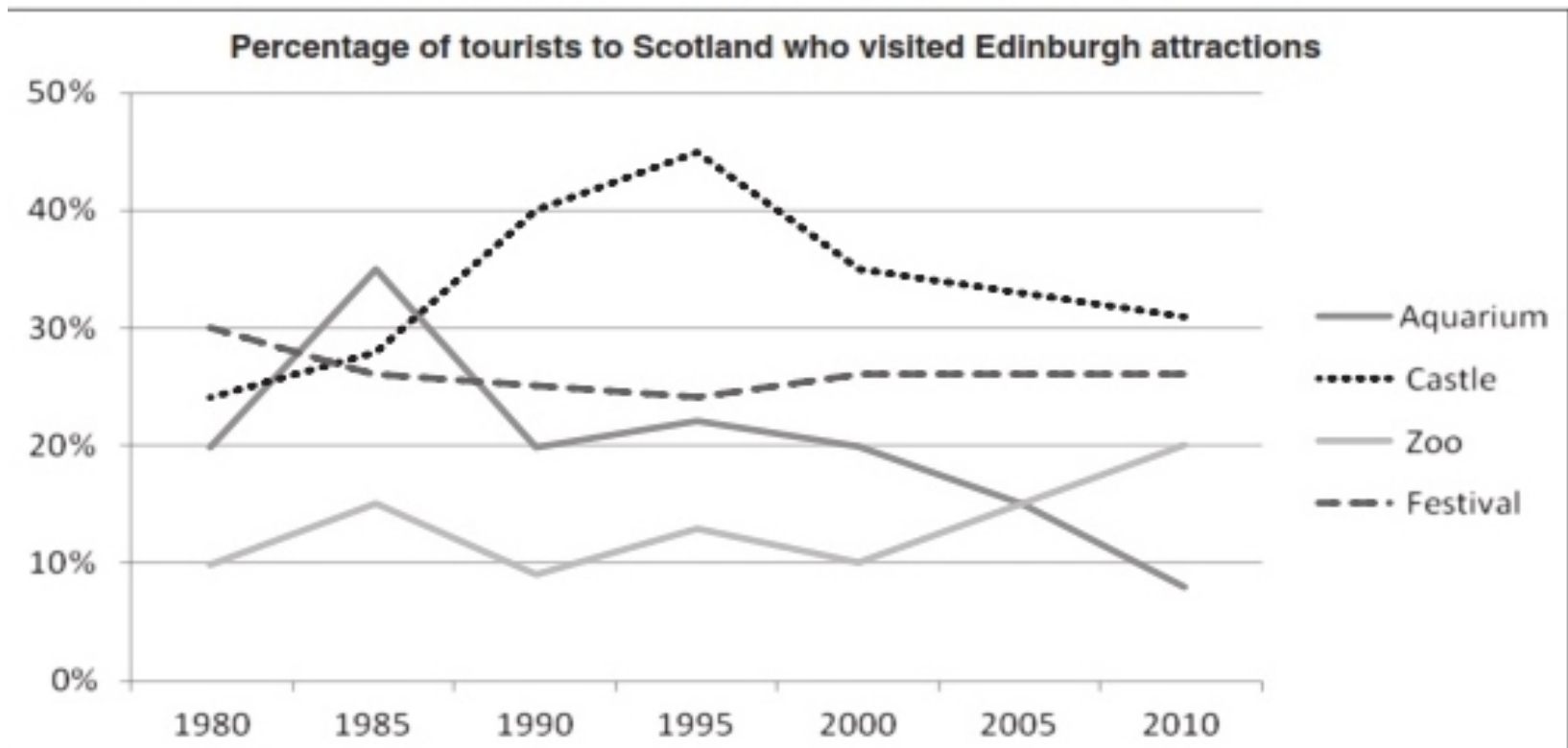
Does this refer to Doblits or Yukefont Hotions?

What tense is needed?

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The line graph below shows the percentage of tourists to Scotland who visited four different attractions in Edinburgh. Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Tools for speaking

Familiarise students with the tasks

- ensure students understand the focus of each part
- explain how the marking works

Provide building blocks

- practise topic-based vocabulary & sentence substitutions (E.g. My main reason for is/ In my ... there is/ are ...)
- focus on building up answers using basic linking words (E.g. and, but, so, because)

Recycle language and tasks

- reinforce activities by repetition with small changes (E.g. tense, topic, question words)

Use noticing tools

- use model answers and get students to record themselves
- encourage students to assess their own spoken output

Vocabulary: Describing cities

4 Match the meanings of sentences 1–5 with a–e.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 It's a <u>busy</u> city. | a I go swimming there at the weekend. Sometimes we go sailing too. |
| 2 It's near the <u>beach</u> . | b They are polite and they're very happy when you speak their language. |
| 3 It's got <u>different neighbourhoods</u> . | c There's a lot of traffic and people say the city never sleeps! |
| 4 It is famous for the <u>markets</u> . | d Tourists buy clothes or souvenirs. You can even go on tours. |
| 5 I really like it because <u>the people are very friendly</u> . | e There's a financial district, a busy downtown and quiet suburbs. |

5 Replace the underlined words and phrases in Exercise 4 to make more sentences about cities. Use the ideas below or your own ideas.

airport beautiful museums mountains traditional food
lots of tourist attractions modern the weather is good

Example: *It's a modern city.*

Vocabulary: Connecting ideas



3 Read the description of Steven's trip. Put a-f in gaps 1-6. Then listen and check.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a It was a special trip for me because ... | d My best friend went too . |
| b but it wasn't very nice. | e Then we visited another city |
| c it was very exciting! | f we walked to the city centre. |

Last year I travelled to Rio and visited my cousin and his family. (1) We went to my cousin's house and we had a delicious traditional meal. **After** we ate dinner, (2) **When** we saw the carnival, (3) We danced and sang. We watched the parade. It was fun, but we were very tired. (4) and stayed at a famous hotel (5) We stayed for two days then we went home. (6) I travelled without my parents for the first time.

4 Look at the bold words in Exercise 3. Then choose the correct word to complete the sentences.

- 1** I enjoyed the parade and the carnival, *but / because* I was very tired.
- 2** We went to a local restaurant for lunch, *then / but* we went to visit some friends.
- 3** I got a present from my parents. I got a present from my brother *after / too*.
- 4** *After / When* the graduation ceremony, my family met my friends from university.
- 5** I didn't enjoy the trip *too / because* I don't like travelling by bus.
- 6** *When / but* the fireworks started, we were very excited.

In summary

Systems before skills

Meaningful item practice

Diagnostic testing and
goal setting

Connect language to
improvement

Thank you for listening

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