

Describing a bar chart

Learn how to write about trends in a bar chart.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and tips and do the exercises.

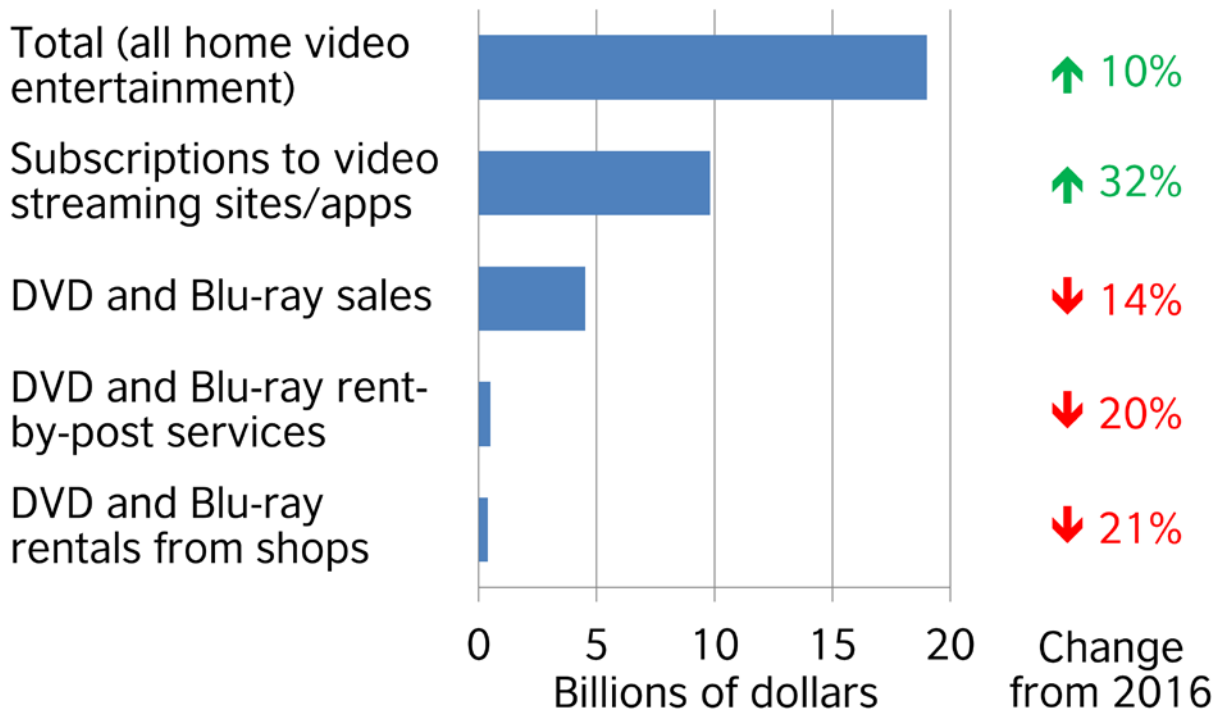
Preparation task

Put these words in the correct group.

to grow	to fall	to remain at (+ number)
to be steady	to increase	to jump up
to drop	to be unchanged	to decrease
to rise	to decline	to be constant

to go up	to go down	to stay the same

Reading text: Describing a bar chart

**Consumer spending on home video entertainment
(selected categories: USA, 2017)**


The chart shows the sales revenue of a selection of home video entertainment formats in the USA in 2017. It also shows the percentage change from the previous year.

Online video streaming was the most popular format in 2017. US consumers spent \$9.8 billion on services such as Netflix, which was a rise of 32 per cent from the previous year. For the average American, this accounted for nearly half of their spending on video entertainment at home.

At the same time, customers were moving away from the three physical formats in the chart. DVD and Blu-ray sales dropped by 14 per cent over the twelve-month period to \$4.5 billion in 2017, and rent-by-post revenues went down by 20 per cent to \$0.5 billion. DVD rental shops saw the largest decline, as spending fell by 21 per cent to just \$0.4 billion.

Overall, there was a clear downward trend in spending on physical video formats, as they all showed relatively low sales and they were all in decline. However, there was an upward trend in paying for streaming.

Please note: This page was designed for writing practice only. Information in the charts may not be accurate.

Tips

1. In the first paragraph, give basic details about the chart including what it shows, where it refers to and when.
2. When you describe chart data, be specific. Mention the category and figure, e.g. *Online video streaming was the most popular format in 2017. US consumers spent \$9.8 billion ...*
3. A trend is a change over time. To describe trends, focus on what is increasing or decreasing compared to some time in the past, e.g. ... *which was a rise of 32 per cent from the previous year.*
4. If several categories show the same trend, talk about them together, e.g. *customers were moving away from the three physical formats in the chart.*
5. State the units of measurement, e.g. *US consumers spent \$9.8 billion.*
6. Many of the verbs for up and down trends can also be used as nouns, e.g. *Spending fell by 21 per cent = There was a 21 per cent fall in spending.* (You can write % or per cent, but be consistent.)
7. Write a conclusion. Say what we learn from the data overall.

Tasks

Task 1

Circle the best answer.

1. In 2017, what percentage of the average American's home entertainment expenses was spent on streaming services?
 - a. 14 per cent
 - b. 31 per cent
 - c. about 50 per cent
 - d. not stated
2. How much did American consumers spend on buying DVDs and Blu-rays in 2016?
 - a. under \$4.5 billion
 - b. \$4.5 billion
 - c. over \$4.5 billion
 - d. not stated
3. Which of the following saw the biggest drop in spending in 2017?
 - a. Streaming services
 - b. DVD and Blu-ray sales
 - c. DVD and Blu-ray subscriptions
 - d. DVD and Blu-ray rental shops

4. Which of the following saw the only growth in 2017?
 - a. Streaming services
 - b. DVD and Blu-ray sales
 - c. DVD and Blu-ray subscriptions
 - d. DVD and Blu-ray rental shops

5. What does the writer conclude from the data?
 - a. Physical video formats will eventually disappear.
 - b. Video streams were becoming more popular, while physical formats were becoming less so.
 - c. Digital distribution is cost-effective.
 - d. American consumers will spend more on home entertainment in the future.

Task 2

Choose the correct answer.

1. Which is the best first sentence?
 - a. The bar chart shows spending on entertainment.
 - b. In 2017, US consumers spent \$9.8 billion subscribing to streaming services, which was 32 per cent higher than the previous year.
 - c. The bar chart shows American consumer spending on various home video entertainment formats in 2017.

2. Which of these sentences describes a trend?
 - a. Spending at DVD rental shops fell by 21 per cent over the twelve-month period.
 - b. Spending at DVD rental shops was \$0.4 billion.
 - c. Spending at DVD rental shops was the lowest of all the categories in the chart.

3. Which is the correct way to write this amount of money?
 - a. In 2017, US consumers spent 9.8 billion.
 - b. In 2017, US consumers spent \$9.8 billion.
 - c. In 2017, US consumers spent 9.8 billion \$.

4. Which sentence gives a more complete description?
 - a. Rent-by-post revenues were \$0.5 billion.
 - b. Rent-by-post revenues went down by 20 per cent.
 - c. Rent-by-post revenues went down by 20 per cent to \$0.5 billion.

5. Which is the best conclusion?
- Spending on video entertainment in the home was growing overall, thanks to streaming.
 - For DVD rental shops, spending fell by 21 per cent to just \$0.4 billion.
 - In total, spending on home video entertainment reached \$19 billion.

Task 3

Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first. Write a noun or verb related to the verb or noun in the first sentence.

- There was a 31 per cent rise in spending.
Spending by 31 per cent.
- DVD sales dropped 14 per cent.
There was a 14 per cent in DVD sales.
- There was a 60 per cent fall in prices.
Prices by 60 per cent.
- The temperature increased by 15 degrees.
There was a 15-degree temperature
- There was no decline in sales revenue.
The sales revenue did not
- The population grew by 20 per cent.
There was population of 20 per cent.

Discussion

What trends do you notice in the way people spend their money in your country?

Answers

Preparation task

to go up	to go down	to stay the same
to grow to increase to jump up to rise	to fall to drop to decrease to decline	to remain at (+ number) to be steady to be unchanged to be constant

Task 1

1. c
2. c
3. d
4. a
5. b

Task 2

1. c
2. a
3. b
4. c
5. a

Task 3

1. rose
2. drop
3. fell
4. increase
5. decline
6. growth