

A summary of a line graph

Learn how to describe a line graph.

Before reading

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

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary

1. to account for
2. to shrink
3. steady
4. to overtake
5. to illustrate
6. to peak

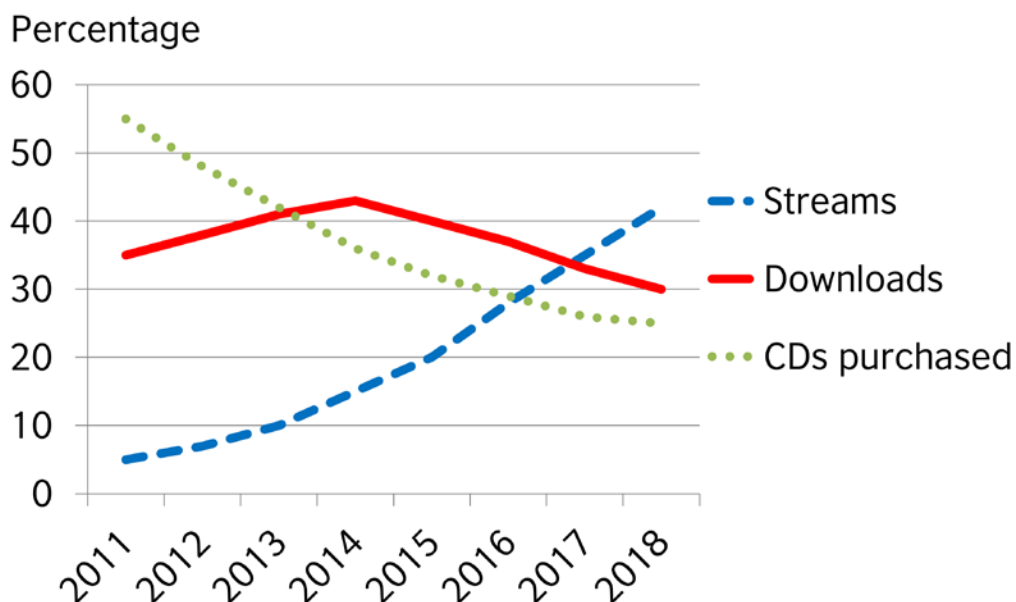
Definition

- a. to show
- b. to reach the highest point
- c. to cause or explain
- d. to get smaller
- e. regular and continuous, without sudden changes
- f. to go past something by being bigger or faster, etc.

Reading text: A summary of a line graph

The graph below shows how people buy music. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Percentage of total music sales by method



The graph illustrates trends in music buying habits between 2011 and 2018. It presents three different methods: streaming, downloading and buying CDs.

Overall, both downloads and physical sales of music have steadily declined. The latter has slumped since 2011, while the downturn for the former began in 2014. However, there has been a sharp rise in people streaming music since 2013.

In 2011, the majority of music sales were of CDs, at 55% of all sales. In contrast, streaming was not common at all at only 5%. Also, although people had started to download music, it only represented 35% of sales. As sales of CDs began to fall, downloads started to rise. They rose steadily and downloads overtook physical sales in mid-2013. During the same period, streaming doubled to 10% but then it started to grow more dramatically.

Downloads peaked in 2014 at about 43% of sales but fell to 30% by 2018. This was slightly higher than physical sales, which shrank to 25%. Streaming, on the other hand, overtook both of them and accounted for just over 40% of sales in 2018.

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

Tips

1. Change the words in the question to introduce your answer, e.g. *This graph shows = This graph illustrates.*
2. The second paragraph should give an overview of the main points the graph shows (imagine you're describing the results to someone who can't see the graph).
3. The following paragraphs should describe the main patterns or trends in more detail.
4. Use precise vocabulary like *steadily declined* and *a sharp increase* to describe trends. Use linking expressions like *while* and *in contrast* to make comparisons.
5. The question asks you only to 'Summarise the information'. Don't give reasons why these trends might have occurred, or your personal preferences on the topic.

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Downloads and physical sales of music gradually fell after 2014.	True	False
2. There was a dramatic increase in people streaming music after 2013.	True	False
3. In 2011, the majority of music sales were downloads.	True	False
4. Physical sales overtook streaming in 2016.	True	False
5. Streaming grew steadily between 2011 and 2013.	True	False
6. Downloads reached an all-time low in 2014.	True	False
7. Physical sales reduced to 25% by 2018.	True	False
8. Streaming represented just over 40% of sales in 2018.	True	False

Task 2

Put the words and phrases in order to make sentences.

1. since 2012. have sales Overall, steadily declined
2. rose In downloads contrast, 5%. by
3. a rise 2000. saw in dramatic Sales
4. 2012. a in Downloads peak reached
5. both overtook downloads and physical sales. Streaming
6. of just over accounted for in 2012. 10% sales Downloads

Task 3

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

overtook	dramatically	steadily	peaked
shrank	sharp	doubled	contrast

1. Sales of PCs increased from 1984 to 2010. (in a gradual and regular way)
2. Smartphone sales PC sales in 2010. (went past)

3. There was a rise in smartphone sales between 2009 and 2015. (sudden and dramatic)
4. PC sales in 2010. (reached their highest point)
5. Smartphone sales continued to grow from 2010 to 2013. (suddenly and obviously)
6. In, PC sales started a slow decline around the same time. (on the other hand)
7. PC sales as the popularity of the smartphone grew. (got smaller)
8. Smartphone sales in five years, then continued to increase dramatically. (became twice as many)

Discussion

What are the trends in the way you have been buying and listening to music over the last five to ten years?

Answers

Preparation task

1. c
2. d
3. e
4. f
5. a
6. b

Task 1

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. True

Task 2

1. Overall, sales have steadily declined since 2012.
2. In contrast, downloads rose by 5%.
3. Sales saw a dramatic rise in 2000.
4. Downloads reached a peak in 2012.
5. Streaming overtook both downloads and physical sales.
6. Downloads accounted for just over 10% of sales in 2012.

Task 3

1. steadily
2. overtook
3. sharp
4. peaked
5. dramatically
6. contrast
7. shrank
8. doubled