

Basics

There is a common expression that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. Images and charts are often an excellent way to make a point more clearly and more quickly than you can using words. They give your audience the chance to process information visually as well as aurally. Here are some common uses of images and charts:

- To present complex information clearly, while avoiding lengthy explanations
- To keep the audience engaged and provide variety
- To indicate a transition to a new topic
- To summarize the main points at the end
- To create a greater impact (e.g. with shocking/amusing/inspiring photos)



The academic context

You need to be a very good speaker to keep people interested over several minutes. In presentations, lectures, seminars and workshops, visual aids can help you keep people's attention and strengthen the points you want to make. They can also help you present complex information without the need for a long description, which audiences might find tiring.

The use of images varies across academic disciplines; science and business subjects, for example, use more charts and graphs than the arts.

Key features

- Images and charts should be relevant to what you are talking about.
- They should not be over-complicated.
- Your audience must be able to see them clearly.
- You should not use too many, as this can be tiring or confusing for the audience.
- They should be clearly labelled.
- If you plan to use electronic equipment, learn to use it before you give your talk.

Challenges / difficulties

To include images or charts in your presentation, you either need to research existing material or create your own. Either option can be very time-consuming. Make sure you allow enough time for researching or creating your images when you are planning and preparing your presentation.

How can I develop this skill?

Watch videos of people giving talks. Look out for the images and charts they choose, and for how they use them. Use the list of Key features to help you. Then practise as much as you can – first alone, and then with an audience. Try videoing yourself – this can help you to identify what you need to improve.

Learning outcome

When you learn this skill, you will be able to keep your audience interested and on your side. You will be able to select and create images and charts to use in a presentation, and you will feel confident referring to them.

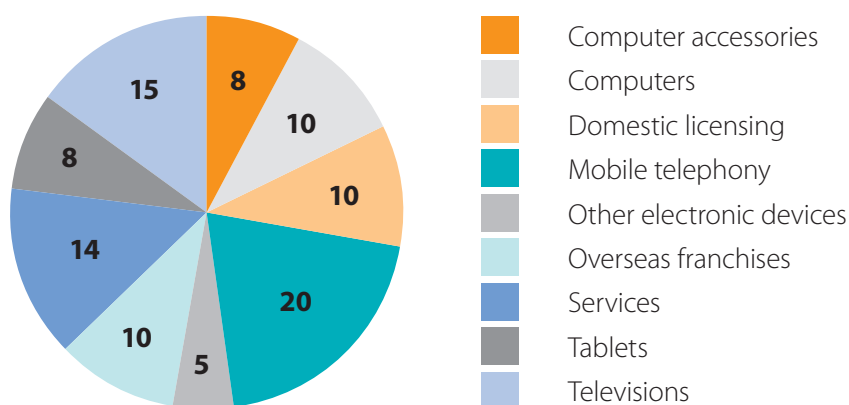
Theory to practice

Read part of a presentation and choose the graphic (1, 2, 3 or 4) that the speaker should use. Say why.

If I bring up the next image now, you'll see on the chart that, of all the sectors, three of them make up almost exactly half of the income. Of these, mobile telephony has the greatest share, at 20%, followed by televisions at 15% and services at 14%.

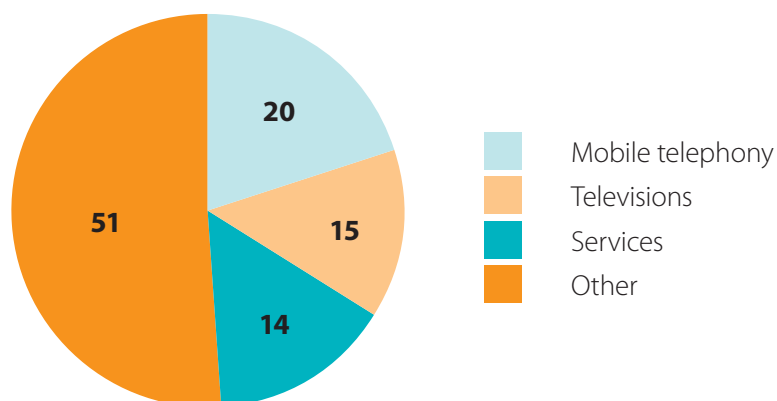
1

Percentage of income by sector



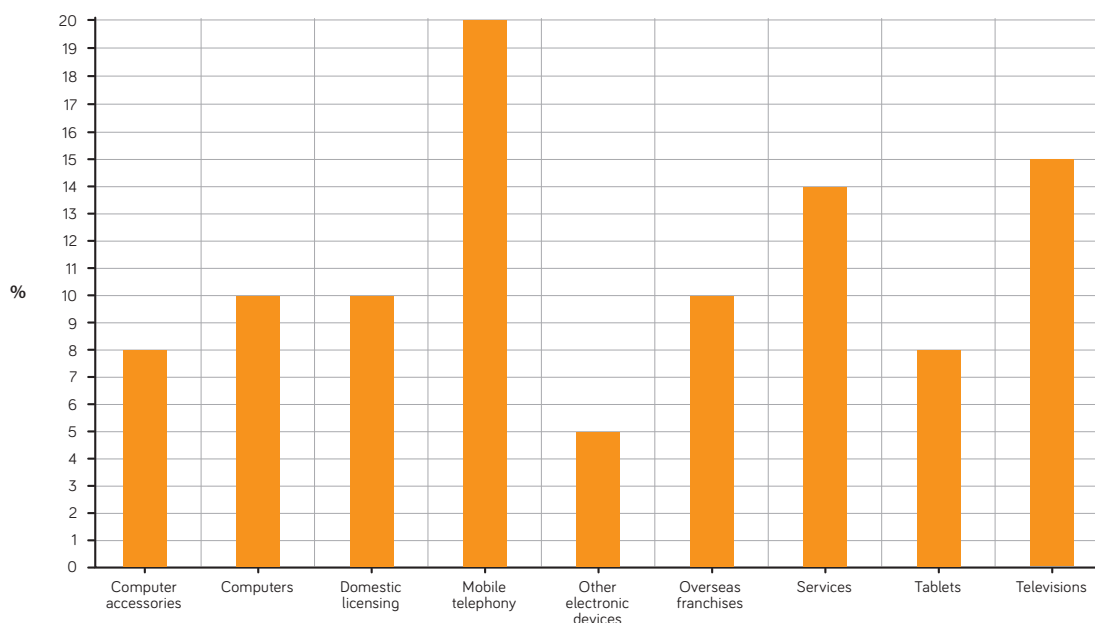
2

Percentage of income by sector



3

Percentage of income by sector



4

Sector	%
Computer accessories	8
Computers	10
Domestic licensing	10
Mobile telephony	20
Other electronic devices	5
Overseas franchises	10
Services	14
Tablets	8
Televisions	15

Ways to get more practice

The Worksheet will give you the opportunity to try out several strategies. Then, the more you practise, the better you will become. If you are going to give a talk using visual aids, practise giving the talk to some friends, or on your own, first. When you practise, time yourself. You might find that you can make your talk shorter and more effective by cutting out some words and introducing a chart or image.