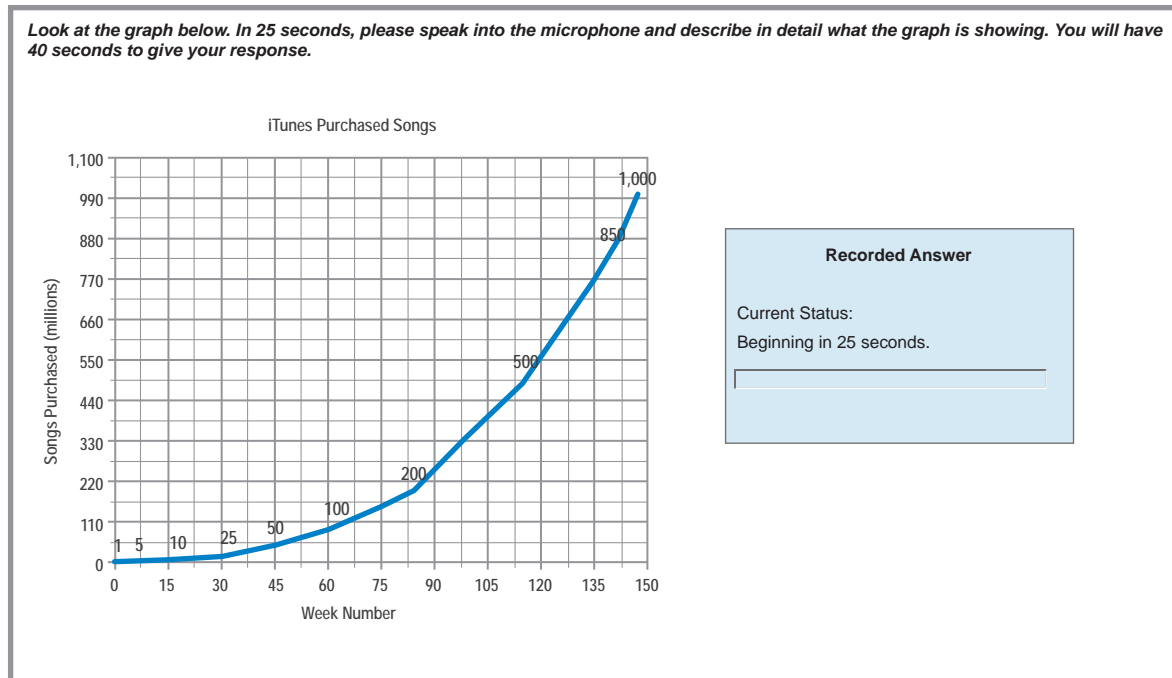


## Describe image

This is a long-answer item type that assesses speaking skills, and requires you to describe an image from an academic source such as a graph, map, chart, table or picture.



## Item Type Strategies

### Strategy 1

You have 25 seconds to study the image. Try to understand the main ideas or features of the graph, map, chart, table or picture.

### Strategy 2

Use appropriate statistical vocabulary to describe bars or segments, and their values in pie charts and bar charts, and to describe movements or trends in line graphs. Use a different set of language expressions when describing pictures.

### Strategy 3

Make sure your description is simply and logically structured. Start with an introduction, followed by the main body, and end with a conclusion.

## Explanation and Practice of Each Strategy

### Strategy 1

You will only have 25 seconds to look at the image before the microphone opens. You should use the time to study the image and identify the main features by answering questions such as, *What is happening?* *What are the smallest numbers?* and *What are the biggest numbers?* If the image is a time graph, you should understand the changes or the trends.

To practice this strategy, do the following activities:

- Look at Item 1. Give yourself 30 seconds to identify two to three main ideas represented in the graph, e.g., 1) *during the first 60 weeks, the songs purchased increased gradually*; 2) *there was a rise in week 60*; 3) *sales shot up in week 90*.
- Support each idea with details from the graph, e.g., 1) *between week 1 and week 60, only 100 million songs were purchased*; 2) *after week 60, the number of songs purchased rose to 200 million in 30 weeks (almost doubled)*; 3) *after week 90, there was a rapid rise to 1,000 million songs in only 60 weeks*.

### Strategy 2

It is important to use correct vocabulary to describe statistical information. You may also need to use a different set of expressions to describe pictures.

To practice this strategy, do the following activities:

- Think of some categories related to statistical information: *prepositions, movements down, movements up, adjectives, adverbs, no movement*, list appropriate vocabulary for each category. For example,

*Prepositions: from/between 1990 to/and 2010*

*Movements up: increased, rose, grew, went up*

*Movements down: decreased, declined, dropped, went down*

*Adjectives: slight, gradual, sharp, sudden, steady*

*Adverbs: slightly, gradually, sharply, suddenly, steadily*

*No movement: remained steady/stable, was unchanged, stabilized*

- Look at Item 1 and make appropriate sentences to describe different features or trends within the graph using the vocabulary you have listed.
- Think about the phrases you can use to describe a picture. Look at the following categories: *kinds of pictures and perspectives, structure, scene description, impression, intention*, and think of appropriate vocabulary or expressions for each category. For example,

*Kinds of pictures and perspectives: viewer, photograph, bird's eye view, worm's eye view*

*Structure: foreground, background, in the upper/lower part, in front of, behind, next to, on the right/left, from behind/above/below*

*Scene description: describes, shows a scene, shows an image of (place), from a distance,*

*Impression: attention focused on*

*Intention: evoke/express something, put forth a perspective*

### Strategy 3

You should include an introduction, a main body and a conclusion in your description. The first sentence should introduce the image and provide a brief description, e.g., *The graph shows/displays the number of iTunes songs bought ...*, *In this graph, we can see the number of iTunes songs purchased ...*, *The photo/image shows a (scene, buildings, place) from a distance.*

In the body, you should describe each feature or main idea as identified in Strategy 1, and provide supporting details. You should conclude with one sentence summarizing your description and draw the relevant conclusion, e.g., *The information indicates ...*, *From the chart/graph, we can conclude that ...*

To practice this strategy, do the following activities:

- Think of one sentence to introduce the graph, e.g., what is being described in the graph.
- Decide on the most logical order to present the main ideas or features, e.g., time graphs/charts usually present information in chronological order so the most logical order would be to structure your descriptions from earliest to latest.
- Now summarize your description.
- Since this item type may also include pictures, think about the most logical structure for a picture description, e.g., from left to right; from the foreground to the background, or from general impressions to details.
- Find some suitable pictures to describe (e.g., of famous buildings) and plan the structure of your description.

## Respond to a Describe Image Item

You will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. You will have 25 seconds to study the image and 40 seconds to give your response. Remind yourself of the three strategies for this item type and apply them.

Record your response using the recording device on your mobile phone or computer.

## Assess your Response

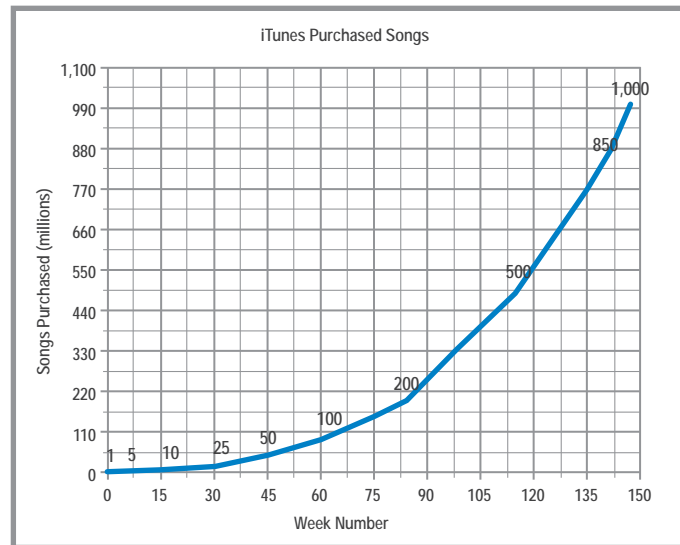
Were you able to use the strategies? Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do you think was the most useful?

Play back your response and compare it to the three sample responses in audio files [L3\_Describe\_image\_1\_Response\_B1], [L3\_Describe\_image\_1\_Response\_B2] and [L3\_Describe\_image\_1\_Response\_C1].

Read the explanation about each response. Which one do you think your response was closest to? What do you think you need to improve?

## Item 1

Look at the graph below. In 25 seconds, speak into the microphone and describe in detail what the graph is showing. You will have 40 seconds to give your response.



## Item 1: Explanations

### **Audio** [L3\_Describe\_image\_1\_Response\_B1]

There is no discussion of the relationships between parts of the graph; only the content of the graph is described and the description is disorganized. This response has an uneven rate, several hesitations and at least two repetitions, which negatively affect fluency. Incorrect pronunciation of vowels and consonants make several words unclear. This response demonstrates limited control over simple grammatical structures and there is frequent pausing. This response is 39 seconds.

### **Audio** [L3\_Describe\_image\_1\_Response\_B2]

While the response describes basic parts of the graph, it is disorganized and there is little discussion of the relationships between parts. The speech is somewhat uneven, but the speed is acceptable and contains several long utterances. Incorrect pronunciation of vowels and consonants make several words unclear. Ideas are linked together. Language use is acceptable, although there are several grammar and vocabulary errors. This response is 30 seconds.

### **Audio** [L3\_Describe\_image\_1\_Response\_C1]

Although the main parts of the graph are accurately described, the test taker misinterprets one aspect. This response contains several long descriptions with an even speed. Word and phrase stress is appropriate. Incorrect pronunciation of some groups of consonants does not affect understanding. This response demonstrates good control of standard English grammar with very few grammatical errors. The vocabulary used is precise and appropriate. This response is 35 seconds.