

Writing Practice

PRACTICE 6 Using Statistics as Support

Choose one of the graphs that follow below and on page 54, and write a paragraph explaining its significance.

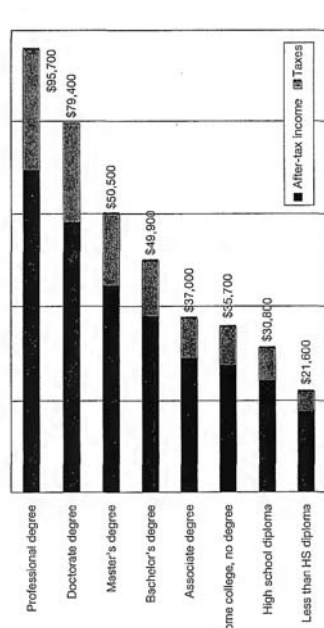
Step 1 Decide what main idea the graph illustrates, and write this idea as a topic sentence.

Step 2 Write five to ten supporting statements, using the statistical information shown in the graphs.

Step 3 Use a reporting verb or phrase to identify the source of your statistics.

Step 4 Write an in-text citation in the proper form at the end of your paragraph.

Graph 1. Median Earnings and Tax Payments by Level of Education, 2003²

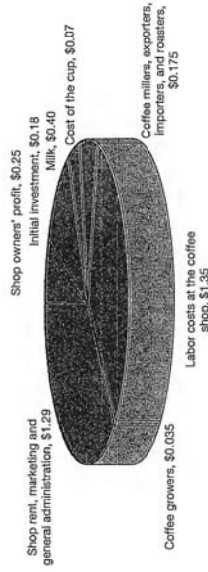


Notes: Includes full-time year-round workers age 25 and older. Tax payments are based on 2002 tax rates and do not incorporate the 2003 federal income reductions.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2004, PINC-03; Internal Revenue Service, 2003, Table 3; McIntyre, et al. 2003; Calculations by the authors.

The bars in this graph show median earnings at each level of education. The color segments represent the average federal, state, and local taxes paid at these income levels. The black segments show after-tax income.

²Education, Earnings, and Tax Payments." Graph. Baum, Sandy, and Kathleen Froyen. Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society. College Board Online, 21 Oct. 2004. <www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/press/cost04/EducationPays2004.pdf>. (The graph appeared on page 10.)

Graph 2. Cost of a Double Cappuccino at Specialty Coffee Shops¹



These are the important points covered in this chapter:

1. In academic writing, you are expected to use information from outside sources to support your ideas. Keep in mind that the U.S. system of education values students' original thinking and writing. Use outside sources to support your own ideas. Don't write a paper that contains only the ideas of others.
2. Search for specific supporting details in the library or on the Internet.
 - Direct quotations: Repeat the writer's or speaker's exact words, and place them inside quotation marks.
 - Indirect quotations: Report the author's words, making changes in pronouns and verb tenses as necessary. Do not use quotation marks.
 - Use appropriate statistics to support your points.
3. Don't just drop a quotation or a statistic into your paper. Make the connection between the borrowed information and your idea clear.
4. Cite your sources to avoid plagiarizing.

Review

¹Source of data: Day, Sherri. "Move Over Starbucks, Juan Valdez Is Coming." New York Times 29 Nov. 2003: B1.