

14 The language of trends

Trends

A trend is the way a situation is developing or changing. We talk about trends in the financial performance of a company (sales, profits, costs, budgets).

Sales **fell slightly** last quarter.

Profits **have risen 3% year-on-year**.

We talk about trends in marketing.

We saw some **growth in market share** last year.

We talk about trends in the economy (inflation, interest rates, unemployment, house prices).

There has been a **steady rise in inflation**.

Movement up and down

The most common verbs to describe movement up are: go up, rise, increase, grow. The irregular verb forms are:

go up – went up – gone up

rise – rose – risen

grow – grew – grown

The nouns are rise, increase, growth.

Look at these examples with verbs and nouns.

Sales **went up**. (no noun form)

Sales **have risen**. There has been **a rise** in sales.

Sales **increased**. There was **an increase** in sales.

Sales **have grown**. We've seen **some growth** in sales.

The most common verbs to describe movement down are: go down, fall, drop. The irregular verb forms are:

go down – went down – gone down

fall – fell – fallen

The nouns are fall, drop.

Look at these examples with verbs and nouns.

Sales **went down**. (no noun form)

Sales **have fallen**. We have seen **a fall** in sales.

Sales **dropped**. There was **a drop** in sales.

Verb forms

Remember that the past simple (*rose, fell*) is used for a time period that is finished. The present perfect (*have risen, have fallen*) is used for a time period that includes the present.

Costs **rose** last year / in January.

Costs **have risen** this year / since January.

Using adjectives and adverbs

We often want to give more details about the size or speed of a trend. We can use basic words like *small, large, slowly, quickly* and also the words below.

slight – slightly: very small

gradual – gradually: slow and over a long period

steady – steadily: slow but continuing

significant – significantly: noticeable and important

sharp – sharply: large and sudden

Notice the two forms in the example sentences below:

a) adjective + noun, then b) verb + adverb.

a There was a **slight rise** in profits.

b Profits **rose slightly**.

a There was a **small increase** in profits last year.

b Profits **increased a little** last year.

a We have seen **steady growth** in market share.

b Market share **has grown steadily**.

Other types of movement

Sometimes there is no trend:

Costs have **stayed the same / been stable**.

Sometimes there is movement up and down:

Prices have **fluctuated** all year.

Prices have **moved up and down within a range**.

Sometimes there is a high point:

Sales **peaked / reached a peak** in the second quarter and then fell for the rest of the year.

We compare two points using 'be up / down'.

Profits **were 15% down** on the previous year.

('on' = compared to)

Other points

Study these sentences and notice the prepositions and time phrases.

Turnover went up **from** €38m **to** €42m – that's an increase **of** €4m.

Turnover went up (**by**) €4m.

Operating costs were **at** around €8.6m.

There has been a 2% increase **in** inflation.

Sales went up 1.5% **last quarter**.

Sales are up 6% **year on year**.

Here are the sales figures **for last month**.

- 1 Read the text for general understanding.
- 2 Read it again and underline the words you don't know. Check their meaning.

- 3 Highlight words you know passively, but don't use actively. Choose some to write sentences of your own.
- 4 Check pronunciation at macmillandictionary.com

