MATHEMATICS · GRADES 7-9

Interpreting Trends

Difficulty level: Intermediate

Mathematics: Grades 7-9

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Overview of the concept

This is how you describe what a graph is doing over time, like sales rising before Christmas and falling after, so the pattern is clear in one sentence. A trend is the big picture hiding in the ups and downs, and naming it is how you turn a messy chart into a decision. A shop owner uses it to plan stock for the holidays, a coach uses it to see if a team is improving, and anyone reading a news chart uses it to say whether things are getting better or worse.



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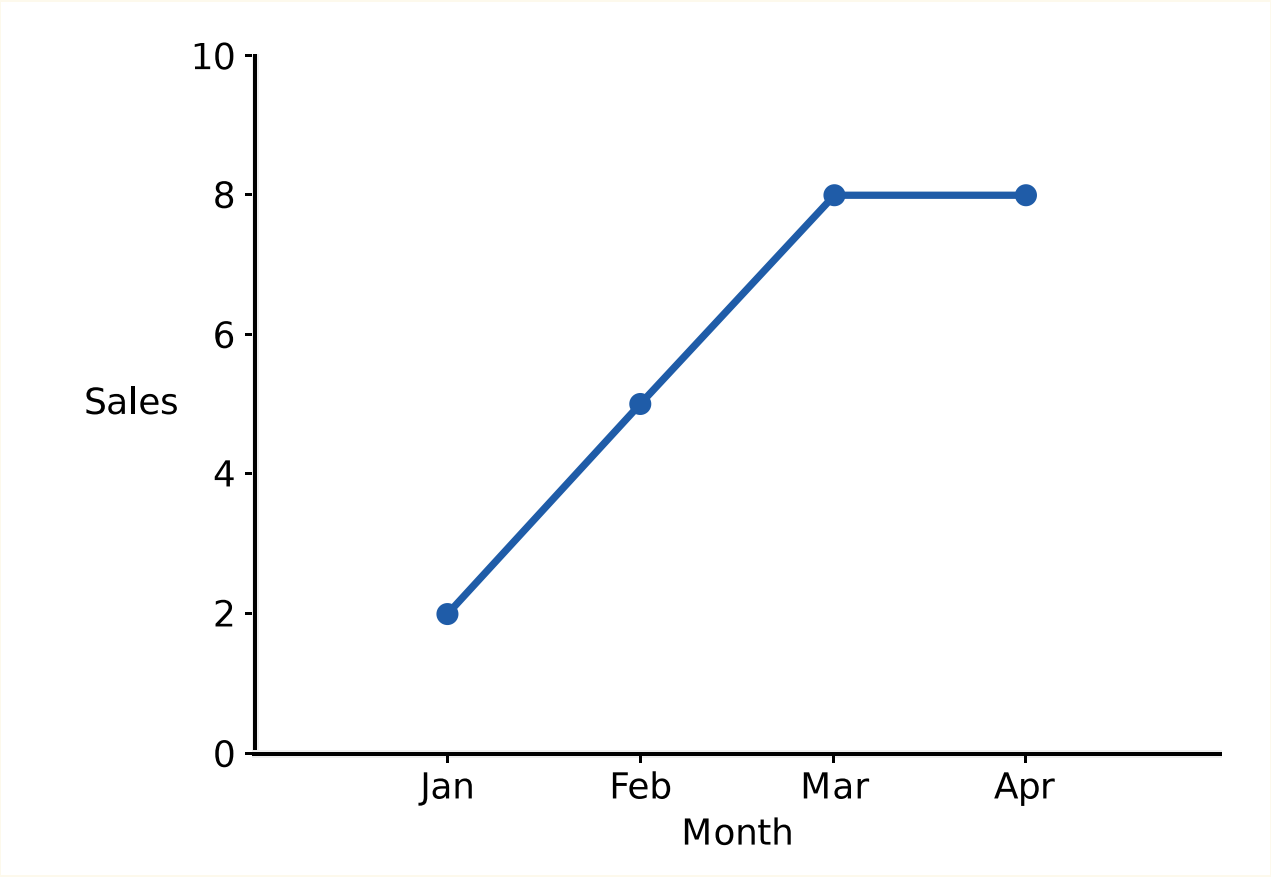
Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q A shop's sales from January to April are graphed: sales rise from January to March, then stay the same. Describe the trend.



SOLUTION

This is a describe-the-trend question, and the one rule to remember is to read the graph left to right and name each stretch: rising, falling, or flat.

From January to March the line goes up, so sales rose.

From March to April the line is flat, so sales stayed the same.

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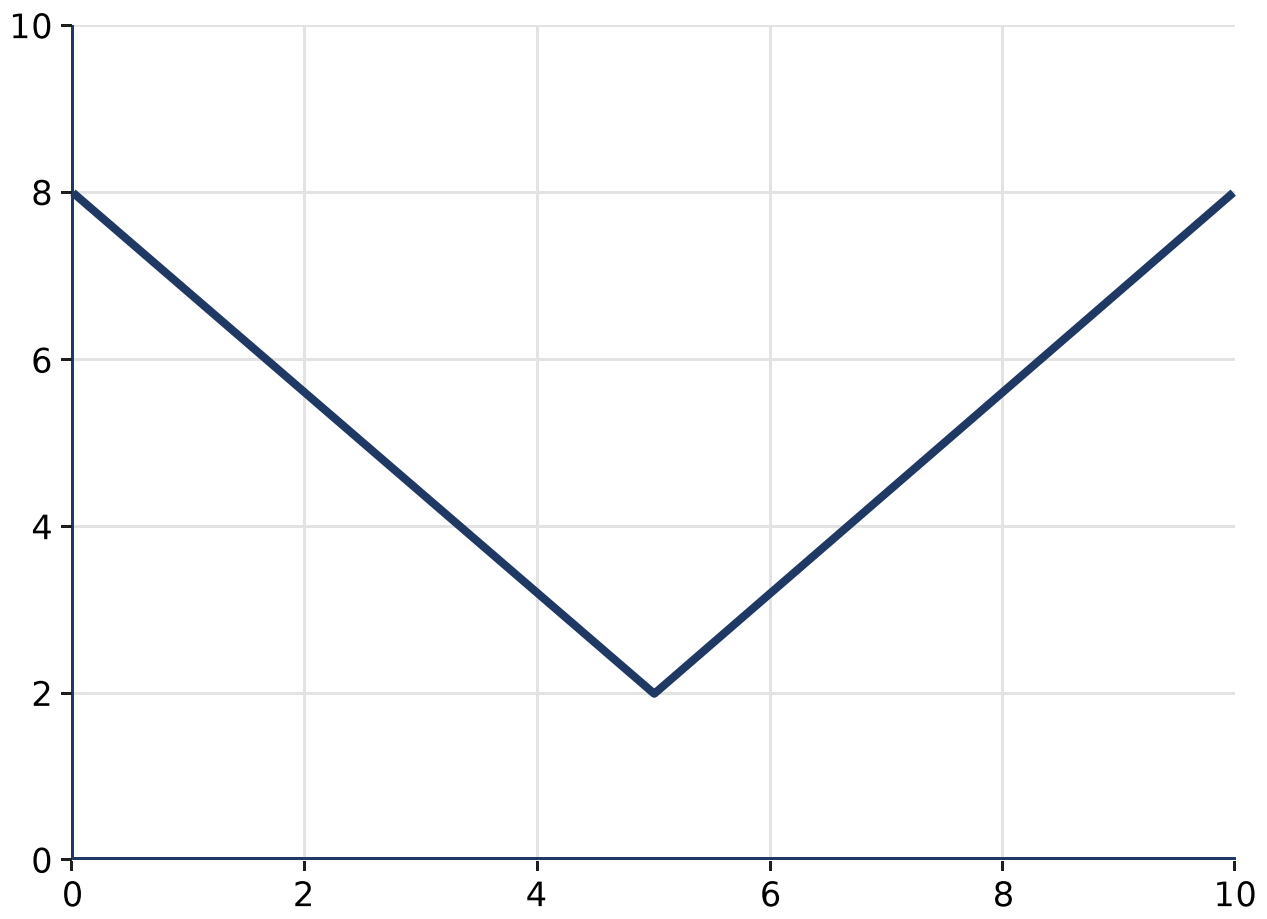
EXAMPLE 2

Q A day's temperature is graphed: it falls, then rises back to where it started. Describe the trend.



SOLUTION

Read it left to right: the line goes down first, so the temperature fell.

Then the line goes back up to where it started, so the temperature rose back to its starting level.

The trend is: fall, then rise back to the start.

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Practice questions

1 **A cafe's sales from September to December are graphed. Sales fall from September to October, then rise to December. Describe the trend.**

- **A** Sales fell from September to October, then rose
- **B** Sales rose from September to October, then stayed the same
- **C** Sales stayed the same all four months
- **D** Sales fell the whole time

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2

A lake's water level over a week is graphed. It rises, then falls back to its starting level. Describe the trend.

A. The water level fell, then rose back to its starting level

B. The water level rose, then fell back to its starting level

C. The water level stayed the same all week

D. The water level fell the whole week

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3 **Park visitors over six months are graphed. The numbers rise every month, from 200 in January to 900 in June. What is the trend?**

- **A** Rising
- **B** Falling
- **C** Staying the same
- **D** Rising, then falling

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4 **The temperature over six months is graphed. It falls every month, from 28 degrees in January to 4 degrees in June. What is the trend?**

- **A** Rising
- **B** Falling
- **C** Staying the same
- **D** Falling, then rising

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5 **A shop's sales over six months are graphed. Sales stay at 500 dollars every month. Describe it.**

A It stayed the same

B It rose the whole time

C It fell the whole time

D It rose, then fell

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6 **The price of apples over six months is graphed. It rises to its highest point in March, then falls. In which month was the price highest?**

A January

B February

C March

D June

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7 A town's population over time is graphed. Each year the population grows by more than the year before: 100 more, then 200 more, then 400 more. What changed?

- **A** The population stayed the same
- **B** The population fell faster and faster
- **C** The population grew by the same amount each year
- **D** The rate of increase grew (population is growing faster and faster)

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8 What does peak mean?

- **A** The highest value
- **B** The lowest value
- **C** The middle value
- **D** The first value

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9

What does dip mean?

A The highest value

B The lowest value

C The middle value

D The last value

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10

Energy use in Australia and the USA over several years is graphed. In the last year shown, the USA used 100 units of energy and Australia used 40 units. Which country used more energy?

A Australia

B The USA

C Both used the same

D Neither used any energy

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ANSWER KEY

1. Sales fell from September to October, then rose

2. The water level rose, then fell back to its starting level

3. Rising

4. Falling

5. It stayed the same

6. March

7. The rate of increase grew (population is growing faster and faster)

8. The highest value

9. The lowest value

10. The USA

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