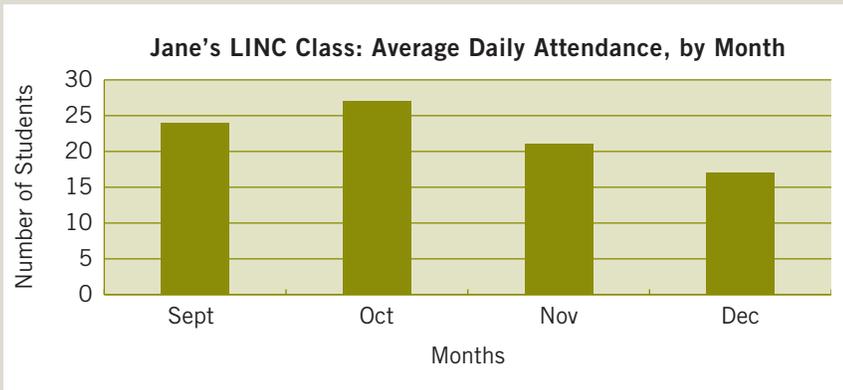# Paragraphs to Describe Graphs and Charts

Often in academic writing, students will use information and facts presented in charts and graphs to support the topic sentence of their paragraph. Often, the data presented in a graph or table show change over time. There are specific verbs, adjectives and adverbs that can help you describe these changes. For example:

Verbs for describing how data have changed:

- *to increase*
- *to go up*
- *to rise*
- *to climb*

- *to remain (unchanged)*
- *to be steady*
- *to plateau*

- *to decrease*
- *to go down*
- *to decline*
- *to drop*

Adjectives and adverbs to describe how fast the change occurred:

- *sharp*
- *dramatic*
- *significant*

- *steady*
- *gradual*
- *slight*

- *sharply*
- *dramatically*
- *significantly*

Jane's LINC Class: Average Daily Attendance, by Month

(Bar graph — Number of Students vs. Months)

Sept: 24, Oct: 27, Nov: 21, Dec: 17

You can describe the changes presented in the graph in two ways:

From October to December, attendance decreased steadily.
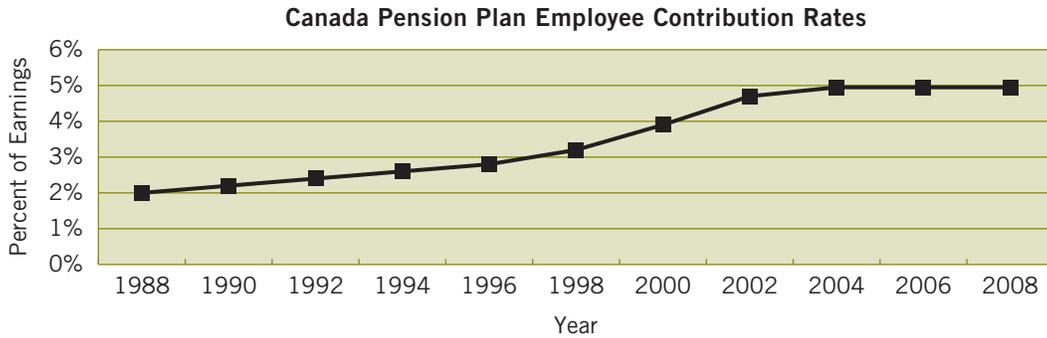
or

From October to December, there was a steady decrease in attendance.

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1 | Write a paragraph to describe the bar graph above. Write three details to support the topic sentence.

Topic sentence: Average attendance in Jane's LINC class followed a distinct pattern over time.

2 Examine the graph below. Complete the paragraph that follows with appropriate supporting details.

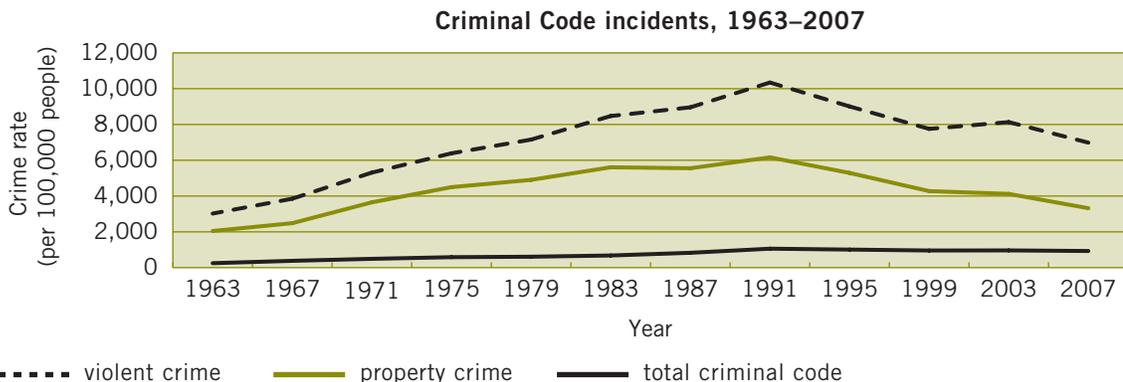**Canada Pension Plan Employee Contribution Rates**

Data Source: Canada Revenue Agency

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) is one of Canada's retirement income pension plans. It provides a monthly income to people (who contributed during their working years) when they become disabled or retire. Every person over 18 who earns more than about $3,500 a year contributes to the CPP, usually through paycheque deductions.

Employees contribute about 4.5 per cent of their employment earnings to the CPP, but the contribution rate was not always this high.

_____

_____

_____

3 Write a paragraph to describe the graph below. Begin with the provided topic sentence and prompts, and indicate possible reasons for the highs and lows in your supporting details.

The crime rate has changed significantly over the past 45 years.

Criminal Code incidents, 1963–2007

- - - - - violent crime   ——— property crime   ——— total criminal code

Data Source: Statistics Canada. Total criminal code refers to crimes addressed by criminal law and excludes rtraffic offences.