Unit 1 Gender issues

Unit overview

Part	This part will help you to …	By improving your ability to …
A	**Understand data presented in lectures**	• understand descriptions of data in spoken language • understand references to graphic data • understand and evaluate a speaker's interpretation of data.
B	**Understand and evaluate data and graphics**	• recognize patterns and trends in data • understand graphic presentations of data • evaluate, compare and critically analyze graphic data • incorporate graphic information and data into writing.
C	**Keep accurate records of your research**	• prepare a list of references • use secondary citations • keep records of research.
D	**Contribute to discussions**	• discuss the meaning and implications of numerical data • use statistical data in support of claims • refer to graphics in support of claims.
E	**Write standard academic reports**	• identify different types of report • understand the core features of a typical written report • write a literature review • build paragraphs in academic writing • create a poster to report results.

Understanding spoken information

By the end of Part A you will be able to:

- understand descriptions of data in spoken language
- understand references to graphic data
- understand and evaluate a speaker's interpretation of data.

1   Understanding descriptions of data in spoken language

> Speakers can use data as evidence to support their claims. Using data can make the claims more credible, as they are supported by research evidence.

1a The term *gender gap* refers to significant differences between men and women in terms of education, political representation, health, and economic opportunities. In small groups, brainstorm ideas about types of gender gap that might exist. Add your ideas to the table below.

Issue	Type of gender gap
1 Health	*Significant gender gap between men and women worldwide in terms of life expectancy*
2 Education	
3 Salary	
4 Job satisfaction	

1b Listen to the beginning of an academic lecture about the *gender gap* and make notes. Which (if any) of the issues in your table does the lecturer discuss?

1.1

1c Listen again. Make a note of any numerical data used to support the claims the speaker makes about the gender gap in health and education.

1d Listen to the next part of the lecture. What claims does the speaker make about the gender gap in salaries and job satisfaction?

1.2

1e Listen again. Make a note of any numerical data the speaker uses to support their claims about salaries and job satisfaction.

1f Check your answers with a partner.

1g Work in pairs. Use the information in your notes to answer this question:

Which of the following best describes the speaker's overall position on the topic of the gender gap?

a The gender gap can be seen in the inequality between men and women in many fields. Because of unfair treatment and discrimination, women suffer more disadvantages than men in education and employment.

b There are gender gaps in many areas of education and employment. However, while many people assume that the gender gap describes only a disadvantage for women, this is not always the case.

> In higher education, students are expected to develop their own ideas based on their understanding of expert opinions. It is common for students dealing with a new topic to adopt one or more positions presented in a lecture as their own. However, even if you adopt your lecturer's position as your own, you should search for more evidence to support the position by yourself, and be prepared to explain and defend the position in your own words.

1.3

1h Listen to two students and their tutor in a seminar discussing the gender gap. Read the speakers' claims about the gender gap in the first column of the table, then listen to the discussion and make notes of evidence they give for these claims in the second column of the table.

Speaker	Evidence
Bruce **Claim 1** There is some inequality in favour of women in higher education.	
Anna **Claim 1** There is an imbalance in the type of subject that men and women study, with more women on 'soft' courses.	
Anna **Claim 2** The number of senior academic staff who are women is very low, compared to the number of men.	

1i Work in pairs. Decide if these statements are true (T) or false (F). Use the data from the discussion to support your ideas.

1 Bruce believes that the higher education gender gap favours women.

2 Anna believes that women in higher education suffer inequalities compared to men.

3 According to Bruce, the future prospects for women in higher education are positive.

4 Anna probably thinks that the prospects for women in higher education are negative.

1j Discuss the speakers' claims in small groups. Which person's claims do you find more convincing? Why?

## 2 Understanding references to graphic data

> Displaying numerical data in graphics and tables can be a powerful way of supporting a claim. Graphics (for example, bar charts, pie charts, pictograms and line graphs) are particularly useful for communicating general patterns and trends in large amounts of data, while numerical data presented in a table allows both the speaker and audience to analyze the information in more detail.
>
> Speakers normally emphasize the following points when referring to graphics and tables:
>
> **a** high and low values
> **b** average values
> **c** overall trends or patterns
> **d** a comparison of different sets of data.

2a Work in groups of five. Each member should choose one of the graphics below, and prepare to explain the following to the rest of the group:

  1 What type of graphic is this (e.g. bar chart, pie chart, table)?

  2 What information does the graphic or table present?

 **3** What might a speaker want to emphasize with this graphic or table?

a
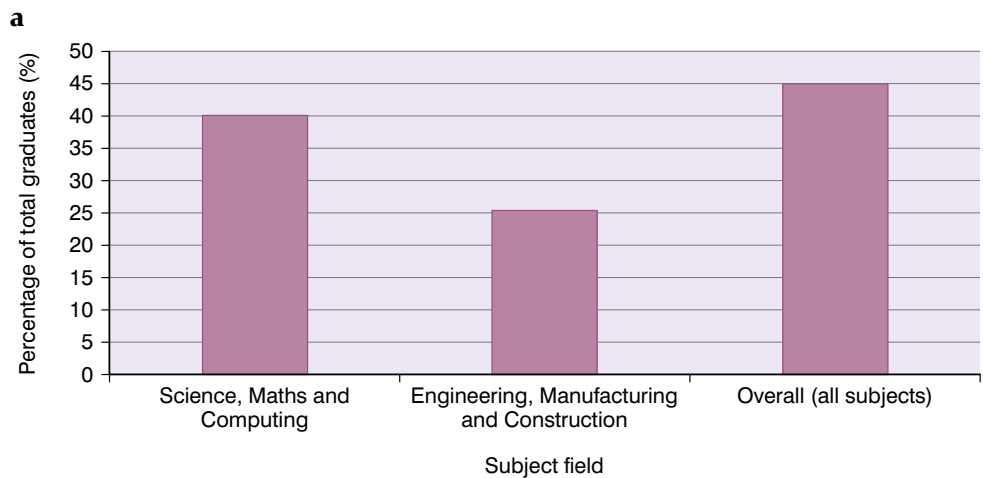
Source: European Commission She Figures, 2009

Figure 1: Proportion of PhD graduates who are female

b
Table 1: Proportion of senior academic staff who are female by age group, 2007

	<35	35–44	45–54	55+	Total
EU Average	25%	23%	21%	18%	19%
Germany	28%	17%	14%	7%	12%
Italy	*	20%	20%	18%	19%
UK	15%	17%	20%	15%	17%

Source: European Commission, 2009

c
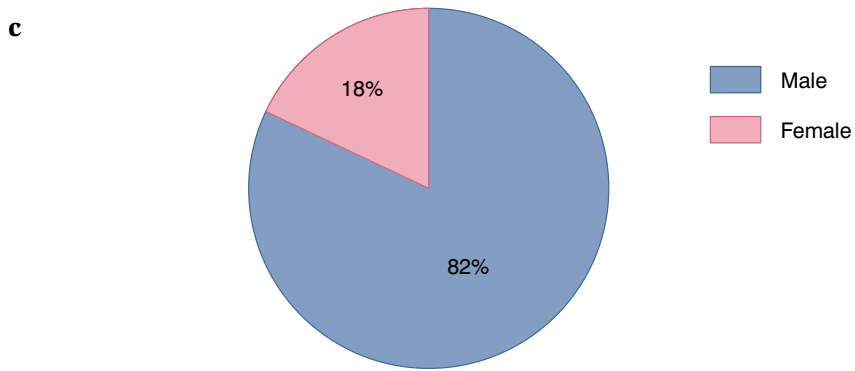
*Source: European Commission She Figures, 2009*

Figure 2: Proportion of women in top-level academic positions

d

Table 2: Female PhD researchers as a percentage of total, by field

Field	2001	2006
Education	55%	64%
Humanities and Arts	48.9%	52%
Science, Maths and Computing	35.7%	41%
Health and Social Services	49%	54%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	20.6%	25%
Social Science, Business and Law	39.3%	47%

Source: European Commission She Figures, 2009

e
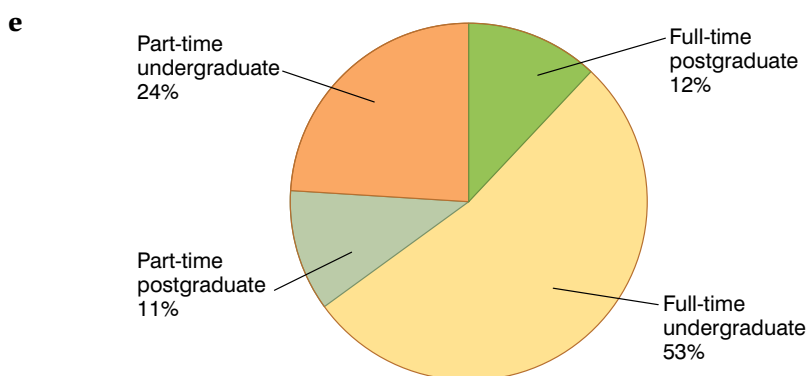
Source: HESA, 2010

Figure 3: Higher education students by level of study, 2008/9

2b Take turns telling the rest of your group about the graphic that you have looked at.

2c Listen to a series of excerpts from another lecture about the gender gap in higher education. In each excerpt, the speaker refers to a graphic (a–e from 2a) in order to support a point. As you listen, note which of the graphics the speaker is referring to.

2d Listen again and make a note of the speaker's claims.

Excerpt	Claim
1	
2	
3	

2e Work in pairs. Check your answers.

2f Write notes to summarize the information about the gender gap that you have learned about so far. You will use the information in these notes to help you throughout the rest of the unit. Think about: higher education, employment, health.

Notes

3 Understanding and evaluating a speaker's interpretation of data

> Speakers may use secondary data (the results of published research) or primary data (results of their own research) to support their claims. However, students need to think critically about how the data is used, and why the speaker thinks this is evidence for their claim. As a successful active listener, it is necessary to reach your own conclusions about what the data presented to you means.

3a You are going to listen to a section of a lecture about the gender gap in pay. Before you listen, work in small groups. Review the information on the gender gap from your notes in 2f.

3b Work in small groups to discuss whether or not you agree with these statements.
  1 Male and female university graduates probably earn similar salaries.
  2 Because there are more female than male students in higher education, women in the future will enjoy more and better career opportunities than ever before.

▶ **3c** Listen to the lecture. According to the lecturer, what causes the gender gap in pay?

1.5

3d Listen to the lecture again and complete the notes in the table below.

Notes on the gender pay gap			
Male and female employment rates in the UK in 2008			
Pay gap in average hourly earnings in the UK in 2003			
	At age 22	**At age 50**	**On average**
Male university graduate	£7/hr		
Female university graduate	£7/hr		
Male non-graduate			
Female non-graduate		£9/hr	
Possible reasons for the gap in earnings			

3e Compare your notes with a partner, and discuss how this information relates to the statements in 3b.

3f Listen again to some excerpts from the same lecture. As you listen, answer these questions.

Excerpt 1
1 What claim does the speaker make about women's career opportunities?
2 What data does the speaker use as evidence?

Excerpt 2
1 According to the speaker, why do men have less incentive to go to university?

Excerpt 3
1 What does the speaker claim causes the gender gap in pay?
2 What data does the speaker use as evidence?

3g After you listen, complete these sentences to summarize the speaker's claims.

Excerpt 1: Women's career opportunities are …

Excerpt 2: Men have less incentive to go to university because …

Excerpt 3: Women tend to earn lower salaries than men because …

3h Discuss these questions in small groups.
a To what extent do you agree with the speaker's claim in Excerpt 1?
b To what extent do you agree with the speaker's claim in Excerpt 2?
c To what extent do you agree with the speaker's interpretation of the data in Excerpt 3?

3i Can you think of any alternative interpretations for the data in Excerpt 3?

➤ **UNIT TASK** **The gender gap**

The Unit 1 task is about the gender gap. At the end of each part, you will be asked to complete a stage of the task as follows:

Part A: Listen to an introduction on the topic.

Part B: Read two texts about it.

Part C: Do some further research for relevant material.

Part D: Have a group discussion on the topic.

Part E: Write an essay with one of these titles:

Assignment 1
Thinking only about economic opportunities, give an overview of the progress made towards gender equality over the last decade. You may concentrate on a single country of your choice, or you may consider this from a global perspective.

Assignment 2
Compare the gender gap in higher education in two countries of your choice.

Assignment 3
Compare male and female rates of participation in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. Identify possible reasons for any differences between participation rates.

a You are going to listen to a lecturer talking about different aspects of the gender gap around the world. Before you listen, work in small groups to consider these questions.

 1 What kinds of gender gap are you aware of in your own society?

 2 Do you think educational and occupational gender gaps will ever be completely eliminated?

 3 What do you think the ratio of female to male politicians is in your own society?

b You are going to listen to this lecture to help you think of things to contribute to a discussion on the topic of the gender gap. The lecture will help you to discover other possible sources of information and focus your own ideas. Listen to the first part of the lecture and take notes on the framework the lecturer used in her research in the table on p.15.

1.7

c Now listen to the second part of the lecture. Make a note of the speaker's claims about the status of women in society and the gender gap overall.

1.8

Notes on the gender gap

Methodology/framework:

Key information	Supporting data or statistics	Names of other sources of information
Claims about the status of women in society:		
Health and primary education –		
Tertiary education –		
Economic opportunities –		
Political participation –		
Gender parity across different regions and countries –		
Claims about the gender gap overall:		

d Spend some time reflecting on your notes; compare what you have heard in this lecture with other information about the gender gap that you have discovered while working through Part A. Discuss your ideas with your group and then add any new comments, questions or ideas to the notes.

Go to the checklist on p.241 and read the tips relating to Unit 1 Part A.