DATA COMMENTARY
(adapted from *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* by Swales & Feak, 1994, pp. 77-104)

1) **Summary:** Tell what it shows.
   This line graph/bar graph/pie-chart/table shows . . .
   The x-axis/y-axis represents . . .
   The shaded/dark/light area indicates . . .

2) **Highlighting statements:** Point out generalizations from the details of the data.
   As shown in the . . ./As revealed by the . . ./As can be seen in the . . .
   It is interesting to see that . . ./Notice that . . .

3) **Concluding a commentary:** Explain the data and/or discuss implications
   This was probably because . . ./The could have been the result of . . .
   This trend indicates that if . . ./This has several implications for the future.

- **Qualifying comparisons:** Which is the most effective comparison?
  a. **Sixty-nine percent of girls** reported restrictions on going out late at night as opposed to **thirty-five percent of boys**.
  b. **More girls** reported restrictions on going out late at night than did boys.
  c. **Thirty-four percent more girls** reported restrictions on going out late at night than did boys.
  d. **Almost exactly twice as many girls** reported restrictions on going out late at night as did boys.

- **Other useful alternatives**
  A marginally smaller percentage of X reported . . .
  Slightly over twice as many X reported . . .
  Close to three times as many X reported . . .
  X exceeded Y in the times they reported . . . by a ratio of 3.5 to 1.
  The percentage of X who reported . . . is roughly twice that of Y.

- **Useful vocabulary in talking about graphs**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>increase</td>
<td>upward/downward</td>
<td>trend</td>
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<tr>
<td>decrease/decline</td>
<td>gradual/dramatic</td>
<td>increase/decrease</td>
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<td>level off</td>
<td>high/low</td>
<td>point</td>
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