Unit 3

What Do You Think?

Warm Up

Surveys are a widely used research method. When presenting survey results, researchers often need to compare the views of different respondent groups as well as the proportions they represent. **Pie charts** and **bar charts** facilitate the clear and effective presentation of survey findings.

In Unit 3, we will learn to:

- Interpret key information in pie charts and bar charts and describe it in English;
- Compare information presented in charts with everyday experiences and thereby express personal opinions.

Useful Strategies and Language

1 Pie Charts

When planning to study abroad, what factors do students typically consider when choosing their destinations? The pie chart below presents the results of a survey of U.S. college students. Let us use it to practice describing the information shown in the chart.
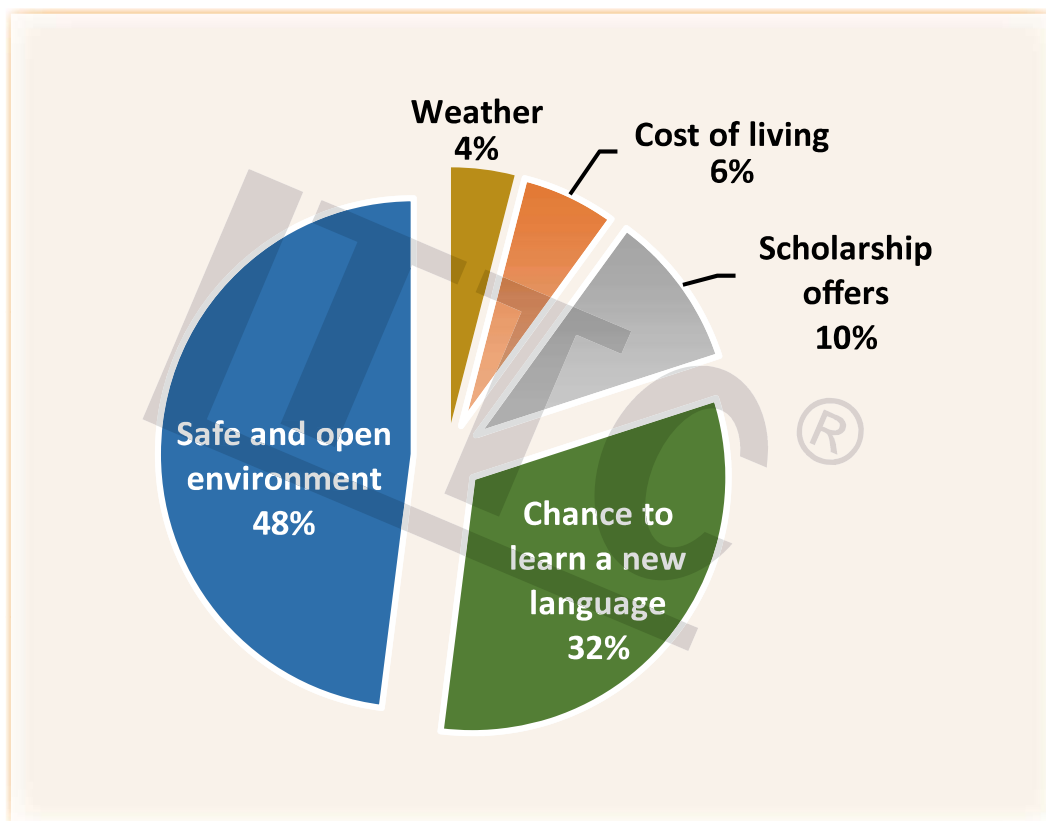

Figure 1   Factors students consider most important when choosing a destination overseas

Note: The results are based on survey responses from 1,600 U.S. students.

➡ Explanatory Techniques and Sample Sentences ||||||

(1) Introducing the topic and purpose of a pie chart

- The pie chart shows the factors that students think about when they choose universities worldwide.
- The chart **illustrates** the factors that influence students' selection of overseas universities for their studies.

📖 **illustrate** (v.)

(2) Highlighting the opinions or items with the highest percentages

- Among the factors listed in the chart, a safe and open environment is the most **common** choice, and the chance to learn a new language **ranks** second.
- Most survey **respondents view** a safe and open environment or the chance to learn a new language **as** the most important factors.

📖 **common** (adj.)
📖 **rank** (v.)
📖 **respondent** (n.)
📖 **view … as** (v.)

(3) Reporting the percentage of a particular opinion or item

$\left\{\begin{array}{l}\text{Exactly 32 percent} \\ \text{Around a third} \\ \text{More than 30 percent}\end{array}\right\}$ of all the respondents **consider** the

chance to learn a new language **to be** an important factor.

📖 **consider … to be** (v.)

2 Bar Charts

When reporting survey results, bar charts can be used to present the opinions of different respondent groups. For example, when students choose a country for studying abroad, the factors that students from different domains of study consider important may vary, as illustrated in the bar chart below.
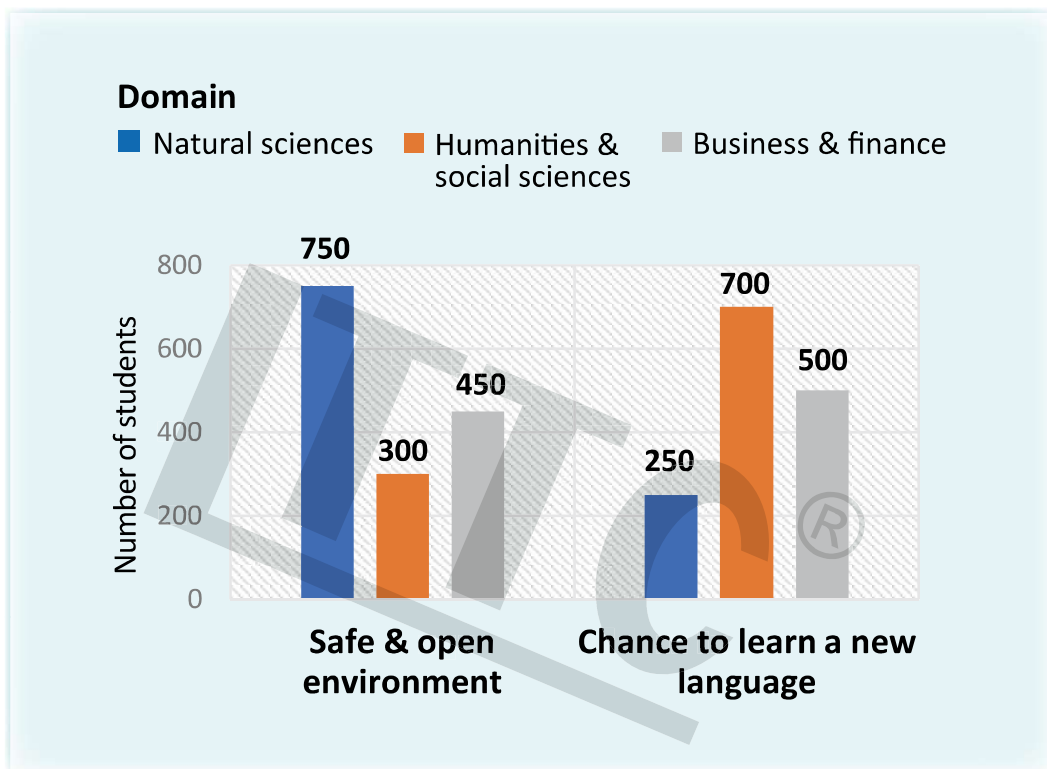

Figure 2   Number of students choosing the top two factors by domain

Note: The results are based on survey responses from 1,600 U.S. students.

Explanatory Techniques and Sample Sentences

(1) Presenting the topic and purpose of a bar chart

- The chart shows how many students from each of the three domains chose one of these two factors.
- The bar chart compares the numbers of students who selected one of these two factors within each of the three domains.

(2) Comparing the views of different respondent groups

- In the domain of natural sciences, more students think that a safe and open environment is more important than the chance to learn a new language.

- In contrast, more students studying humanities and social sciences view the chance to learn a new language as a more significant factor.

- For the business and finance domain, the numbers of students selecting these two factors are quite close.

3 Advanced Explanation Techniques: Integrating and Comparing Chart Information

(1) Identifying relationships between two charts

The pie chart summarizes the **overall** opinions of students, **while** the bar chart compares the **perspectives** of students from three different domains.

📖 **overall** (adj.)

📖 **while** (conj.)

📖 **perspective** (n.)

(2) Comparing data from two charts and identifying differences

According to the pie chart, 80 percent of the respondents view a safe and open environment or the chance to learn a new language as important factors. **However**, the bar chart shows that the views of students from different domains are not exactly the same. For instance, students studying in the domain of natural sciences think that a safe and open environment is more important than the chance to learn a new language. **In contrast**, students studying humanities and social sciences consider the chance to learn a new language to be a more significant factor.

📖 **however**

📖 **in contrast**

Speaking Task

1 Task Content

In class, your professor presents the two figures below during her talk on U.S. students studying in Asia.
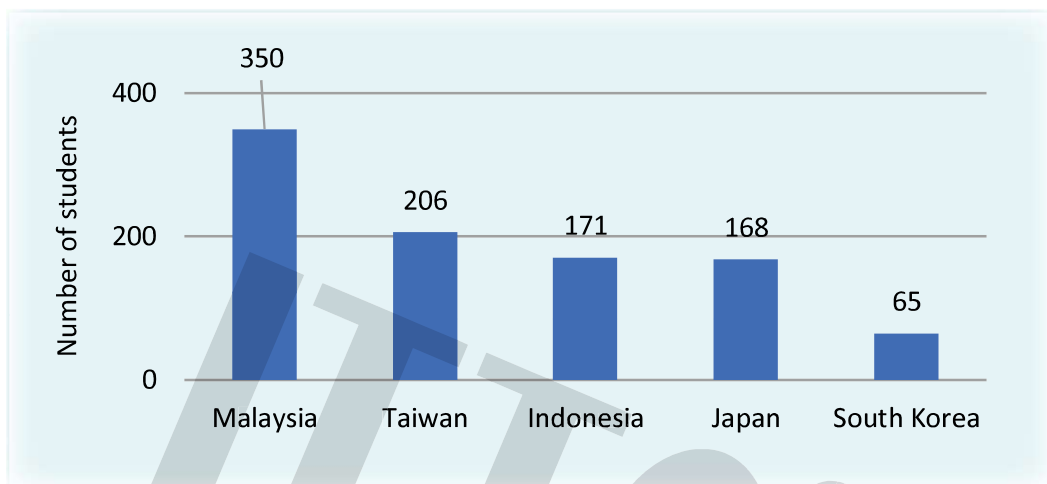

Figure 1   What is the best Asian destination for U.S. students?

Note: The results are based on survey responses from 960 students in the U.S.
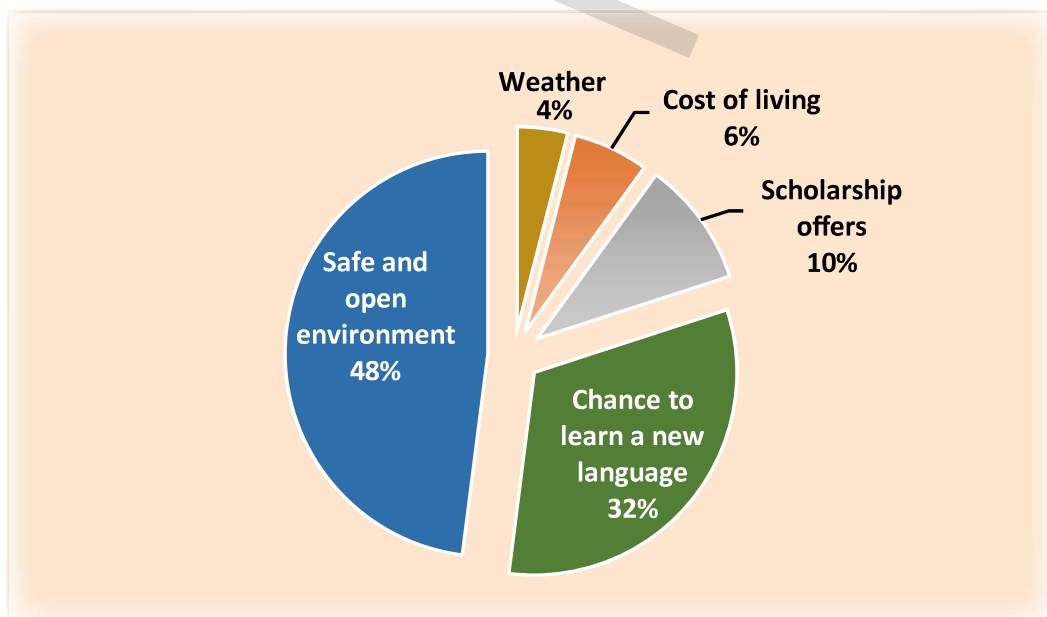

Figure 2   Factors students consider most important when choosing
             a destination overseas

Note: The results are based on survey responses from 1,600 U.S. students.

② Task Requirements

You have 3 minutes to answer the following 3 questions based on the bar chart and pie chart on the previous page.

(1) Summarize the main points shown in **Figure 1**.

(2) In your opinion, why does Taiwan appeal to international students? You can refer to **Figure 2**.

Challenge

(3) Look at **Figure 2** again. What factors do you think are important when selecting an overseas university to study at? Please explain.

Writing Task

① Task Content

The student union of a university conducted a survey of students' and teachers' opinions about online learning, and they released the two figures below on their website.
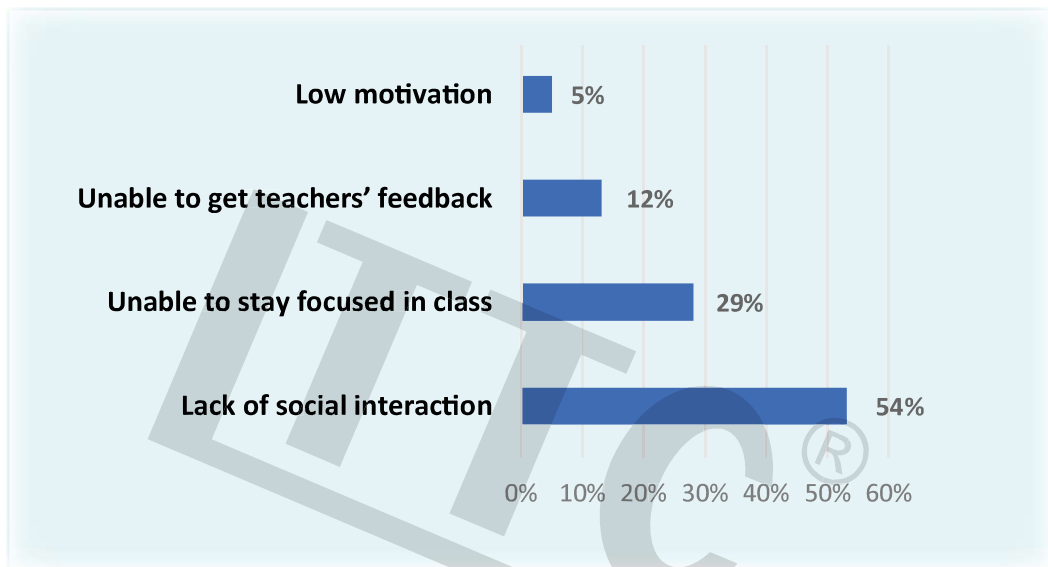

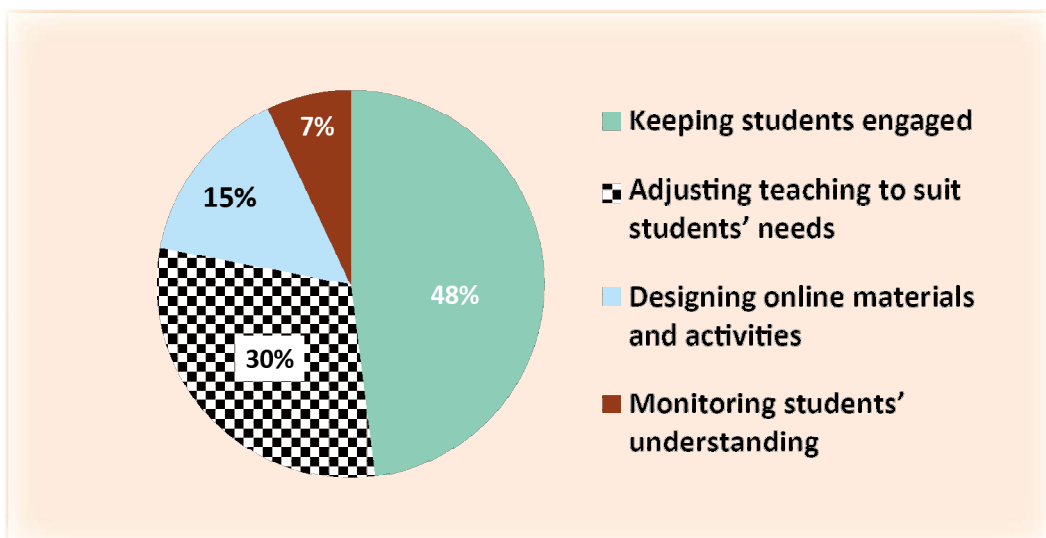*Figure 1*   Students' main concerns with online learning (N=800)

Figure 2   Main challenges for teachers of online classes (N=121)

2 Task Requirements

Based on the two figures released by the student union, write an essay to discuss the following topic:

Should online learning be part of regular instruction?

In your essay, you should:

(1) summarize the main points shown in the two charts;

(2) state your own opinion on the topic, comparing the information from the two figures with your own experiences.

Your essay should be 120–150 words in length.