

Reading and Interpreting Graphs

Chapter 12: Tales by Dots and Lines · Topic 2

Key Concept

When interpreting any graph, it's important to check the scale on each axis carefully, since a graph can visually appear to show a dramatic change simply due to how the scale is set, even if the actual numerical change is small — a common way graphs can be misleading if not read carefully. Practising graph interpretation with real data builds critical thinking skills valuable not just in mathematics, but in understanding news reports, scientific studies, and everyday statistics presented visually.

Quick Revision Notes

- Interpreting a graph requires reading its title, axes, scale, and data points carefully.
- A steep line indicates rapid change; a flat line indicates no change.
- Checking the axis scale is essential, since scale choice can make changes look bigger or smaller than they are.
- Graph interpretation builds critical thinking for understanding real-world statistics.

Practice Questions

- 1 Interpret a given line graph and describe the trend it shows.
- 2 Explain why checking a graph's axis scale is important before drawing conclusions.
- 3 Describe a situation where a graph's scale could make a small change look misleadingly large.