

Presenting HR Data

Turnover and Retention: Talking Through Your Analysis

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson aims

- Describe trends in HR data with accurate verbs, adverbs and prepositions
- Guide an audience through charts and findings with clear signposting
- Interpret results carefully and make a recommendation
- Handle audience questions politely and professionally

Warm-up: talk about it

- Have you ever presented numbers or charts to a team or manager? What was difficult?
- Which HR figures do managers usually want to see (for example turnover, absence, hiring)?
- What makes a data presentation easy to follow, and what makes it confusing?

1. Key vocabulary

Talking about HR data

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
turnover rate	the percentage of employees who leave a company in a period	Our annual turnover rate is 16%.
retention rate	the percentage of employees who stay with a company	Our retention rate improved to 84% this year.
headcount	the total number of employees	Our headcount is currently 420.
figures	numbers, especially official ones	The latest figures show a clear improvement.
trend	a general pattern of change over time	There is a downward trend in resignations.
benchmark	a standard used for comparison	The industry benchmark is 15%.
breakdown	a division of a total into smaller parts	Here is a breakdown by department.
proportion	a part of a whole	A large proportion of leavers were under 30.
year-on-year	comparing one year with the year before	Year-on-year, turnover has fallen by 3 percentage points.
exit interview	a final interview with an employee who is leaving	We carry out an exit interview with every leaver.

Describing change

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
rise / increase / climb	go up	Turnover climbed from 14% to 22%.
fall / drop / decline	go down	The rate declined after 2023.
remain stable / level off	stay at the same level	Turnover levelled off at 16%.
fluctuate	go up and down without a clear pattern	Absence fluctuated throughout the year.
peak at	reach the highest point	Resignations peaked at 31 in March.
reach a low of	reach the lowest point	Quarterly turnover reached a low of 3.3%.

How big is the change?

Word / phrase	Meaning	Example
sharply / dramatically	a very big change, happening quickly	Resignations rose sharply in Q1.
significantly	a large and important change	Turnover fell significantly after the pay review.
steadily	at a regular, continuous rate	Retention has improved steadily.
gradually	slowly, in small steps	The gap is gradually closing.
slightly	by a small amount	We are slightly above the benchmark.

Prepositions with data

Pattern	Use
rise BY 8 points	the size of the change
rise FROM 14% TO 22%	the starting point and the end point
an increase OF 8 points	the size of the change (noun)
an increase IN turnover	the thing that changes
stand AT 16% / peak AT 31	the level or the highest point

2. Presentation phrases

Function	Useful phrases
Opening	Today I'd like to take you through our turnover figures. The aim of this presentation is to explain why people are leaving. I'll start with the overall trend, then look at the reasons, and finally suggest some next steps.
Signposting	Let's move on to the exit interview results. That brings me to my next point. Turning to the reasons for leaving, ...
Referring to a visual	As you can see from this chart, ... If you look at the line on the right, ... This graph shows / illustrates the trend since 2021.
Highlighting a key point	What's interesting here is that ... I'd like to draw your attention to ... The key point is that ...
Interpreting the data	This suggests that ... One possible explanation is ... This may be due to ...
Recommending	Based on these findings, I recommend that we ... Our next step should be to ...
Concluding	To sum up, ... The main takeaway is that ...
Inviting questions	I'd be happy to take any questions. Does anyone have any questions?

3. Model presentation

Look at the charts, then read the presentation by an HR analyst at Brightwell Logistics. Underline the phrases from Section 2.

Chart 1: Annual staff turnover, Brightwell Logistics

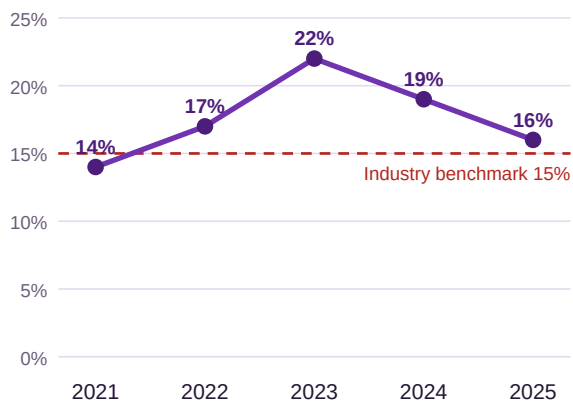


Chart 2: Main reasons for leaving (exit interviews)

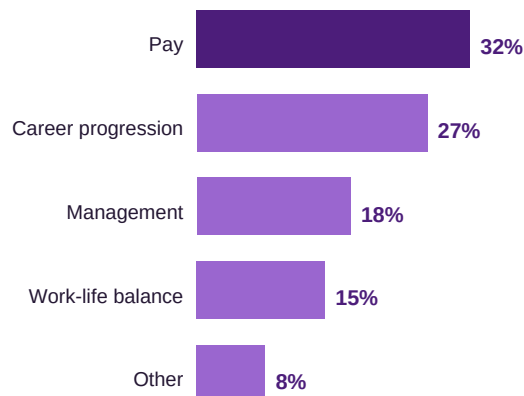


Table: Quarterly turnover in 2025

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.6%	4.2%	3.9%	3.3%

OPENING

Good morning, everyone. Today I'd like to take you through our staff turnover figures for the last five years. I'll start with the overall trend, then look at why people are leaving, and finally I'll suggest some next steps.

THE TREND

Let's begin with this line chart. As you can see, turnover rose sharply between 2021 and 2023, climbing from 14% to 22%. After that, it fell steadily, and it now stands at 16%. That is still slightly higher than our industry benchmark of 15%.

THE REASONS

Turning to the reasons, this bar chart shows the main causes of resignation from our exit interviews. What's interesting here is that pay is the most common reason, at 32%, but career progression is close behind at 27%. This suggests that people are leaving because they can't see a future here, not only because of salary.

RECOMMENDATION AND CLOSE

Based on these findings, I recommend that we review our promotion process and introduce clearer career paths. To sum up, turnover is improving, but we're not there yet. I'd be happy to take any questions.

Exercise 1: Vocabulary in context

Type the missing word or phrase. The first letter is given to help you.

1. Our turnover is 16%, which is slightly above the industry b_____ of 15%.
2. Resignations p_____ at 31 in March, the highest monthly figure of the year. (reached the highest point)
3. A t_____ is a general pattern of change over a period of time.
4. When figures go up and down without a clear pattern, we say they f_____.
5. Turnover has _____ at around 16% for the last three quarters. (it stayed at the same level)
6. The b_____ shows how the total figure is divided between departments, age groups or locations.
7. The r_____ rate shows the percentage of employees who stay with the company over a period of time.
8. The total number of employees in a company is called its h_____.

Exercise 2: Prepositions with data

Choose the correct preposition for each sentence.

at to of by in from on

1. Turnover currently stands _____ 16%.
2. Turnover rose _____ 8 percentage points between 2021 and 2023.
3. Resignations peaked _____ 31 in March.
4. There was a sharp increase _____ resignations in the sales team last year.
5. In 2024 the rate fell to 19%, a decrease _____ 3 percentage points.
6. The rate dropped _____ 3 percentage points between 2024 and 2025.
7. By Q4, quarterly turnover had fallen _____ 3.3%.
8. Between 2021 and 2023, turnover climbed _____ 14% to 22%.

Exercise 3: Check the chart: find and fix the mistake

Look at the charts in the model presentation. Each sentence has one mistake in the highlighted part. Type the correct word or figure.

1. Turnover is now lower than the industry benchmark. Correction: _____
2. Turnover reached its peak in 2022. Correction: _____
3. Career progression is the most common reason for leaving. Correction: _____
4. Turnover fell sharply between 2021 and 2023. Correction: _____
5. Turnover has risen steadily since 2023. Correction: _____
6. In 2025, turnover was 22%. Correction: _____

Exercise 4: Match the data to the description

Read the figures (one number for each quarter). Choose the best description.

1. Resignations: 20 - 12
 - a) Resignations dropped sharply.
 - b) Resignations fell slightly.
 - c) Resignations remained stable.
 - d) Resignations peaked.
2. Headcount: 10 - 14 - 19 - 22 - 24 - 24
 - a) Headcount rose and then fell sharply.
 - b) Headcount rose steadily and then levelled off.
 - c) Headcount fluctuated.
 - d) Headcount fell and then levelled off.
3. Resignations: 21 - 21 - 22 - 21
 - a) Resignations rose sharply.
 - b) Resignations fluctuated widely.
 - c) Resignations fell dramatically.
 - d) Resignations remained stable.
4. Resignations: 9 - 14 - 22 - 31
 - a) Resignations rose slightly.
 - b) Resignations fell sharply.
 - c) Resignations rose dramatically.
 - d) Resignations levelled off.
5. Resignations: 12 - 15 - 11 - 16 - 12
 - a) Resignations fluctuated.
 - b) Resignations rose steadily.
 - c) Resignations remained stable.
 - d) Resignations fell sharply.
6. Turnover (%): 18.0 - 17.5 - 17.0 - 16.5
 - a) Turnover rose slightly.
 - b) Turnover fell gradually.
 - c) Turnover fell sharply.
 - d) Turnover fluctuated.

Exercise 5: What is the speaker doing?

Choose the function of each phrase.

A Interpreting the data	B Inviting questions	C Concluding
D Highlighting a key point	E Referring to a visual	F Giving background
G Signposting	H Recommending	I Opening

1. "What I'd like to cover today is our retention figures." **Function:** ____
2. "I'm happy to answer any questions you may have." **Function:** ____
3. "That brings me to my second point: the exit interviews." **Function:** ____

4. "If you look at the bar chart, you'll see the breakdown by department." **Function:** ____
5. "The key point here is that most leavers are under 30." **Function:** ____
6. "Based on this data, I'd suggest we run a pay review." **Function:** ____
7. "So, to sum up, we've made progress, but there is more to do." **Function:** ____
8. "One possible explanation for this is the lack of training." **Function:** ____

Exercise 6: Build the sentence

Put the words in the correct order to make a sentence from a presentation.

1. **we / findings, / review / recommend / that / Based / pay / on / our / I / these / structure.**

2. **I'd / the / Q1. / your / in / draw / attention / rise / resignations / to / like / to / in**

3. **Let's / move / of / results / exit / the / on / to / the / interviews.**

4. **from / steadily / since / can / fallen / has / see / As / turnover / you / 2023. / this / graph,**

5. **poor / because / suggests / This / of / management. / leaving / are / that / employees**

6. **the / the / for / department / double / The / figure / company / sales / average. / is**

Exercise 7: Best phrase for the situation

Choose the most suitable phrase for a presentation to senior managers.

1. You are opening a formal presentation to the senior leadership team.
 - a) Good morning, everyone. Today I'd like to take you through our latest turnover figures.
 - b) OK, let's get started, shall we? Turnover, it's a problem.
 - c) Hi guys, so, um, today it's about turnover.
 - d) Right, I'm going to tell you about stuff.
2. Turnover in IT is twice the company average and you want people to notice it.
 - a) IT is a lot.
 - b) What's striking here is that turnover in IT is twice the company average.
 - c) Look at this number, it's crazy, isn't it?
 - d) This is a really big number, wow.
3. You are not sure why turnover is high among new employees, but you have an idea.
 - a) This may be due to a lack of support during the first year.
 - b) This proves that managers are the problem.
 - c) This is definitely because of low pay.
 - d) Everybody knows why this happened.

4. You are finishing your presentation.
 - a) That's all, bye.
 - b) So yeah, that's it basically.
 - c) I think I finished now, so any questions or not?
 - d) To sum up, turnover is falling, but we need to act on career progression. I'd be happy to take any questions.
5. You want to move to the next section: the reasons people leave.
 - a) And then there's another thing, which is the next slide.
 - b) Now let's turn to the reasons why people are leaving.
 - c) Next.
 - d) Okay, so the next slide is next.
6. The audience cannot see which line you are talking about.
 - a) The thing with the colours is what I'm talking about.
 - b) You must see the line there.
 - c) If you look at the orange line, you can see how resignations changed month by month.
 - d) Look at the thing on the right.

Exercise 8: Handling audience questions

An audience member asks you a question. Choose the best response.

1. "Is that figure for all departments?" (You do not have the breakdown with you.)
 - a) Yes, definitely.
 - b) I'm afraid I don't have the breakdown with me, but I can send it to you after the presentation.
 - c) Why do you ask?
 - d) No idea.
2. "I don't agree that pay is the main problem. In my department it's management."
 - a) That is not possible. The data is correct.
 - b) You're wrong.
 - c) That's a fair point. Overall, pay is the most common reason, but it may be different in some departments.
 - d) OK.
3. "How reliable is this data?"
 - a) Good question. The figures come from our HR system, and most leavers completed an exit interview.
 - b) Very reliable, trust me.
 - c) I'm not sure.
 - d) Data is data.
4. "Sorry, could you explain what you mean by 'retention rate'?"
 - a) It's retention. You know, retention.
 - b) Please read the report.
 - c) I already explained that.
 - d) Of course. The retention rate is the percentage of employees who stay with the company over a given period.

Exercise 9: Say it yourself

Write one sentence for each situation, as if you were speaking in a presentation. Use the language from this lesson.

1. Absence rates in 2025 were: January 3.1%, June 4.5%, December 6.0%. Describe the trend in one sentence.

2. You have finished the section on turnover. Now you want to move on to the reasons people leave. What do you say?

3. Turnover is highest among employees with less than two years of service. Suggest a possible explanation (you do not have proof).

4. Turnover in the IT department is 30%. The company average is 16%. Highlight this to the audience.

Your turn: plan a mini presentation

Use the new data below. Write one or two sentences for each step, then present for about two minutes. Record yourself if you can.

Training completion rate (% of staff), company target: 90%

2022	2023	2024	2025
61%	68%	77%	85%

1. Opening - Say what you will talk about and how you will organise it.

2. Describe the trend - Use a verb, an adverb and the correct prepositions (from ... to ..., by ..., at ...).

3. Compare with the target - Say how close the company is to 90%.

4. Highlight a key point - Use 'What's interesting here is that...' or similar.

5. Interpret - Suggest one possible reason, using cautious language.

6. Recommend and close - Give a recommendation, sum up and invite questions.

Self-check

- ☐ I used at least three trend verbs or nouns.
- ☐ I used the correct prepositions with the data.
- ☐ I signposted each part of my presentation.
- ☐ I used cautious language when I interpreted the data.
- ☐ I finished with a summary and invited questions.

TEACHER ANSWER KEY - DO NOT DISTRIBUTE**Presenting HR Data: Turnover and Retention: Talking Through Your Analysis (Level B1+)**

The worksheet order is fixed; answers below follow the printed numbering. The interactive HTML version shuffles item order and answer positions each time it is opened.

Exercise 1: Vocabulary in context

1. benchmark
2. peaked
3. trend
4. fluctuate
5. remained stable (also accept: stayed stable, been stable, levelled off, leveled off, remained steady...)
6. breakdown
7. retention
8. headcount

Exercise 2: Prepositions with data

1. at; 2. by; 3. at; 4. in; 5. of; 6. by; 7. to; 8. from

Exercise 3: Check the chart: find and fix the mistake

1. Turnover is now **higher** than the industry benchmark. (accept: higher)
2. Turnover reached its peak in **2023**. (accept: 2023)
3. **Pay** is the most common reason for leaving. (accept: Pay)
4. Turnover **rose** sharply between 2021 and 2023. (accept: rose / increased / climbed)
5. Turnover has **fallen** steadily since 2023. (accept: fallen / declined / dropped)
6. In 2025, turnover was **16%**. (accept: 16%)

Exercise 4: Match the data to the description

1. a; 2. b; 3. d; 4. c; 5. a; 6. b
1. A fall of 8 in one period (40%) is a sharp drop.
2. It goes up regularly, then stays at 24.
3. The numbers hardly change, so the best description is 'remained stable'.
4. The number more than tripled, so 'dramatically' is the best adverb.
5. The figures go up and down with no clear direction: 'fluctuated'.
6. Small, regular falls: 'gradually'.

Exercise 5: What is the speaker doing?

1. I (Opening); 2. B (Inviting questions); 3. G (Signposting); 4. E (Referring to a visual); 5. D (Highlighting a key point); 6. H (Recommending); 7. C (Concluding); 8. A (Interpreting the data)

Letter I (Giving background) is a distractor and is not used.

Exercise 6: Build the sentence

1. Based on these findings, I recommend that we review our pay structure.
2. I'd like to draw your attention to the rise in resignations in Q1.
3. Let's move on to the results of the exit interviews.
4. As you can see from this graph, turnover has fallen steadily since 2023.
5. This suggests that employees are leaving because of poor management.
6. The figure for the sales department is double the company average.

Exercise 7: Best phrase for the situation

1. a; 2. b; 3. a; 4. d; 5. b; 6. c

1. Formal, clear and it says what the presentation is about.
2. 'What's striking here is that...' highlights the point and sounds professional.
3. Use cautious language (may, might, suggests) when you interpret data.
4. A summary, a main message and an invitation for questions.
5. A clear signpost tells the audience what is coming.
6. Be specific: say which line and what it shows.

Exercise 8: Handling audience questions

1. b; 2. c; 3. a; 4. d

1. Be honest when you do not know, and offer a follow-up.
2. Acknowledge the other view politely, then restate what the data shows.
3. Give a reason why the data can be trusted.
4. Polite, clear and helpful.

Exercise 9: Say it yourself

1. Model: Absence rose steadily from 3.1% in January to 6% in December. (Use a trend verb (rose, climbed) and include the end figure.)
2. Model: That brings me to the reasons why people leave. (Use a signposting phrase and name the next topic.)
3. Model: This may be because new employees don't get enough support during their first year. (Use cautious language (may, might, could) because you have no proof.)
4. Model: What's striking here is that turnover in IT is almost double the company average. (Use a highlighting phrase, then compare with the average.)

Accept any accurate, natural sentence that uses suitable language from the lesson.

Teacher notes

- Suggested timing (60 minutes): warm-up 5 min; vocabulary and phrases 10 min; model presentation (listen, then read) 10 min; exercises 1 to 5 in class 20 min; exercises 6 to 9 for homework or the next lesson; 'Your turn' task 15 min (speaking, with feedback).
- Pronunciation to check: word stress on 'percentage' (per-CEN-tage), 'fluctuate' (FLUC-tu-ate), 'benchmark' (BENCH-mark), 'headcount' (HEAD-count) and 'proportion' (pro-POR-tion); the -ed ending in 'peaked' is pronounced /t/ (one syllable).
- Common B1 errors: 'increase of' vs 'increase in'; 'rise to' vs 'rise by'; 'the figures is' (they are plural); saying 'in 2023 year'; using 'raise' (needs an object) instead of 'rise'.
- Extension: ask the student to bring a real chart from her own work (anonymised) and present it using the phrases from this lesson.