



ePrepz
Introduction to
TOEFL

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INTRODUCTION TO TOEFL

TOEFL stands for Test of English as a Foreign Language. TOEFL is an exam that tests your knowledge of the English language. The TOEFL test was developed in the United States, which means testing is based predominantly on American English, in contrast to the Cambridge exam that is based on British English.

The TOEFL test measures the ability of non-native English speakers to communicate in English in an academic setting. It accurately measures how well students can read, listen, speak and write in English in the college or university classroom. TOEFL testing takes place in more than 180 countries, and more than 6,000 institutions and agencies in 130 countries accept TOEFL scores. More institutions accept TOEFL scores than any other English-language proficiency test in the world.

The most common mistake for students who are preparing for the TOEFL test is that they try to learn the complete English language rather than just focusing on the exam. What you have to learn is how to approach the TOEFL, to understand test taking strategies and to get familiar with the test format.

Of course, you should also try to improve your knowledge of the English language but avoid making that your primary focus when studying for the TOEFL.

A way to quickly increase your vocabulary and understanding of the English language is to listen to music while reading the lyrics, or watch movies in English using subtitles in your native language.

Reading news and books is also a way you can increase your language skills quickly, but remember that the emphasis should be on preparing for the TOEFL test rather than simply learning the English language itself.

Most students who take the TOEFL exam do so to enter a University in the U.S. Today over 2400 universities in North America use the TOEFL exam as an entry requirement for international students who do not have English as their native language.

If you want to study at the university level in North America and do not have English as your native language, it's almost always necessary to submit TOEFL test score for your admission process. The required score on the TOEFL varies among universities, but it is usually around +80 for the TOEFL IBT. The TOEFL score is only valid for two years.

You must take the test at an accredited testing center. These are available in most countries. The easiest way to register for the TOEFL is to do it online at www.ets.org/toefl. You can also register by phone or mail. When you register, there is a test fee of around \$140.

Here are some suggestions for the registration.

Be sure that you spell everything correctly, as you will have to bring identification with you to the test. ETS accepts major credit cards/debit cards.

It is important to remember that registration closes 7 days before the testing date. Late registration closes 3 days before the test date, and when registering late there is a \$35 fee.

You need to bring two things to the testing center when you are about to take the TOEFL test.

The first thing is your registration confirmation, which you should receive after you register for the test. It is also available on the account you created to register for the TOEFL.

The second thing you will need to bring to the testing center is a valid ID.

TOEFL TEST FORMAT

The TOEFL IBT is organized into the following sections:

- Reading (60-100 minutes)
- Listening (60-90 minutes)
- Speaking (20 minutes – six tasks)
- Writing (50 minutes – two tasks)

Scoring System for the TOEFL IBT:

- Listening: 00-30
- Reading: 0-30
- Speaking: 00-30
- Writing: 00-30
- Total: 0-120

STRUCTURE OF THE READING SECTION

This section contains between 36 and 70 questions. The Reading test includes three to five academic reading passages followed by comprehension questions. The students are tested on their ability to understand and analyze the meanings of the passages. Students are expected to demonstrate that they have learned what they read, either by filling out a table or by completing a narrative summary.

STRUCTURE OF THE LISTENING SECTION

The listening section has a range of questions from 34-51. This test involves the student listening to two or three conversations on their headphones. The conversations may include two or more speakers in each. Apart from this, there are four to six lectures, which include classroom dialogue.

STRUCTURE OF THE SPEAKING SECTION

The speaking test consists of a total of six tasks. Two of the tasks are independent tasks about familiar topics. The test taker is required to state, explain, and support their response using personal knowledge and experience.

Two tasks are based on reading and listening materials. These tasks include a short reading passage and a short conversation. The questions require test takers to answer using the information provided in the reading and the listening materials. One question is based on a campus-related situation, and the other is based on academic classroom material.

The remaining two tasks are based on Listening material. This includes a short lecture or conversation. The questions require test takers to summarize key ideas from the conversations in the responses.

Test-takers are judged on the basis of the following criteria:

1. **Topic development:** The student's ability to understand the matter and draw connections between topics as well as their capability to convey relevant information.
2. **Delivery:** The ability to use clear, smooth, sustained speech.
3. **Language use:** Trained evaluators pay attention to the use of correct grammar and vocabulary. Close notice is paid to the response of logical answers.

The six tasks in the Speaking section are rated by at least two individuals scoring on a scale of 0-4. The six individual scores are averaged to arrive at an aggregate value. This aggregate value is then converted to the scale of 0 to 30.

STRUCTURE OF THE WRITING SECTION

The first task will require you listen to a lecture, read a passage, and then write your response.

The second task is an independent task about a familiar topic. Test takers must state their response and support it with information from personal knowledge and experience.

Trained evaluators measure the ability to understand the material, as well as write clearly, accurately, and in an organized manner. The two tasks are scored by at least two individuals scoring from 0 to 5 and then the new scores are combined before scaling them to the range of 0 to 30.

Now let's take a deeper look into to the TOEFL test and what strategies you can use to improve your test score.

TOEFL STRATEGIES AND TIPS

You do not have to answer every question right on the TOEFL test to get a good score.

Each question has 4 possible answers, so you have a 25 percent chance to get an answer right without knowing the correct answer and guessing. If you can exclude one answer, you increase your chances to 33 percent and if you can rule out two answers (which is almost always possible), you have a 50 percent chance of guessing the correct answer. This is called the process of elimination.

Never leave a question blank. Eliminate all of the answers you know that are wrong and then make an educated guess. Whether you are reading, listening or answering a question, put all of your concentration on the task at hand.

STRATEGIES FOR THE READING SECTION OF THE TOEFL TEST

For each question answered right in the reading section, you get a point. However, the questions have different difficulty level. Therefore, a good strategy is to answer the easy questions first, then focus on the more difficult questions later.

Remember that no matter how hard a question appears to be, the answer is always somewhere in the text.

Remember that you do not get points for reading the text but only when you answer the questions. Therefore, you need to be able to scan a text and obtain the most important information.

STRATEGIES FOR THE LISTENING SECTION OF THE TOEFL TEST

The key for the listening section is not to memorize every detail. Rather, you should try to understand the big picture.

Process of Elimination is very helpful in the listening section.

If you missed something, don't bury your head in the sand. Usually, you can guess the questions from the context as long as you can comprehend the full story.

STRATEGIES FOR THE SPEAKING SECTION OF THE TOEFL TEST

The voice recordings are evaluated on the basis of three characteristics: content, language, and following the thread.

It is important to speak clearly and precisely. No one expects a native-English accent.

The TOEFL speaking section is always structured the same way, you either have to explain your own opinion on a topic or listen to a statement and describe the statement.

STRATEGIES FOR THE WRITING SECTION OF THE TOEFL TEST

The most important factor in the writing section is structure. Try to structure your text as accurately as possible. The entire text structure should be apparent at first glance (introduction, body, and conclusion).

Always focus on the question. An essay that is structured perfectly but did not answer the question, receives no points.

TOEFL TEST TIPS

Here are some tips for you when you are about to take the TOEFL test.

- Wear comfortable clothes
- Eat a good and hearty breakfast and bring a snack.
- Arrive at the test center at least 30 minutes early.
- Do not waste time, read directions carefully.
- Be economic, do not waste time over-thinking a question.
- Do not leave questions blank. If you don't know the answer, guess!
- Bring enough equipment to the test center.
- Study and get familiar with the test before taking the test.
- Do not stress, remember to read the text carefully.

BE PREPARED TO TAKE NOTES

When you take the TOEFL test, you should be excellent at taking notes that will help you explain a story just by looking at your notes. The difference between a good score and a bad score can be your ability to take good notes.

STUDY TIPS FOR THE READING SECTION

Read thoroughly and try to understand the big picture, practice skimming to find key details in articles.

STUDY TIPS FOR THE LISTENING SECTION

Watch movies in English, first with subtitles in your language and then without subtitles.

STUDY TIPS FOR THE SPEAKING SECTION

Read articles and essays out loud. Work on your pronunciation and grammar skills.

STUDY TIPS FOR THE WRITING SECTION

Keep it simple; write an introduction, body, and conclusion. Read academic essays to learn the structure. The computer during the TOEFL test will not show you spelling errors or grammatical errors.

LEARN THE TOEFL TEST FORMAT

Take practice tests and study the format you will be given on the test. Remember that the sections are timed, so when you practice you should time yourself as well.

KNOW THE TOEFL SCORE REQUIREMENT FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Before you take the test, be aware of the required scores the school you are interested in attending will accept. Also, remember that your test score is only valid for two years.

PRACTICE TYPING

Remember that the TOEFL test is timed so it is important that you know how to type quickly and without errors. Practice writing short essays in English with a time limit. Correct your errors and see what you can improve in your writing.

BE PREPARED

To learn more about the TOEFL test and gain access to exercises, quizzes, and a complete TOEFL eBook guide, check out ePrepz TOEFL preparation.

We hope that this introduction to the TOEFL has helped you become more familiar with the exam and we wish you the best of luck on your upcoming TOEFL test!

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