*toefl ibt ®

Updated TOEFL iBT® Test Overview

Contents

The Updated TOEFL® Test

The updated TOEFL iBT test measures essential language skills and communication abilities needed in modern learning environments. The test evaluates the four language skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking and is intended to offer academic institutions and other score users reliable insights into a test taker's English language ability.

The updated TOEFL iBT test is designed to optimize both convenience and quality. It has been updated for efficient measurement of both foundational aspects of language proficiency (lexical and grammatical competence) as well as the ability to communicate in English through a range of activities and communicative language tasks. Activities and tasks are drawn from both academic and campus life contexts, and they provide test takers with brief but authentic opportunities to demonstrate their skills.

Some examples of communicative language tasks represented in the test include

- reading passages from academic and campus life sources, such as textbooks, newspapers and magazines, websites, and social media;
- listening to academic talks, public announcements, and personal interactions;
- writing responses for common situations such as emails and online discussions; and
- speaking to a simulated interviewer or retelling information accurately.

The updated TOEFL test can be taken at home or at test centers. It takes under two hours to complete, and official test scores are available in 72 hours.

The TOEFL test is intended to be suitable for language learners across a wide range of abilities. The Reading and Listening sections are multistage adaptive sections that are designed to provide accurate measures of the test taker's language ability efficiently. Performance on the first part of a test section is used to select the content for the second part of the section so that the difficulty of the test tasks matches the ability level of the test taker. Tailoring test content to a test taker's ability level supports the accuracy of the scores with reduced administration time. Overall, the TOEFL test aims to efficiently assess English proficiency by providing reliable and valid results in a short time, at an affordable cost, and in an accessible and engaging format.

Test security during the administration of the test is provided by a combination of trained human proctors and artificial intelligence (AI). AI technology monitors activity and settings on the test taker's computer and sends alerts to proctors about unusual behavior or room conditions. A variety of security measures before and after the administration of the test are also used to minimize content exposure and detect misconduct.

The Updated TOEFL Test Structure

TOEFL test takers will receive the Reading section first, followed by the Listening section, the Writing section, and the Speaking section.

Test Section	Task Types	Number of items[1]	Estimated Time[2]
Reading (multistage)	Complete the Words Read in Daily Life Read an Academic Passage	35–48	About 27 minutes
Listening (multistage)	Listen and Choose a Response Listen to a Conversation Listen to an Announcement Listen to an Academic Talk	35–45	About 18 to 27 minutes
Writing	Build a Sentence Write an Email Write for an Academic Discussion	12	About 23 minutes
Speaking	Listen and Repeat Take an Interview	11	About 8 minutes

1. The number of items may change before January 21, 2026 due to optimization.
   The number of Reading and Listening items depends on whether a test taker receives pretest items. All test takers will receive either Reading or Listening pretest items.
2. The estimated time does not include the time taken for tasks like adjusting audio volume or reading introductory instructions.

Sample Tasks

1. Reading Sample Tasks

The reading questions assess a test taker's ability to comprehend both academic and nonacademic texts from various English-speaking contexts. Reading skills are measured with the following task types: *Complete the Words*, *Read in Daily Life*, and *Read an Academic Passage*.

Complete the Words

The *Complete the Words* task assesses the ability to process written texts for meaning and form. It presents test takers with paragraph-length (about 70–100 words) academic texts. Following an intact first sentence, the second half of every second word is deleted, and the examinee must provide the missing letters. Each text contains 10 words with missing letters.

Example of *Complete the Words* Task Type
Fill in the missing letters in the paragraph.

> We know from drawings that have been preserved in caves for over 10,000 years that early humans performed dances as a group activity. We mi_ _ _ think th_ _ prehistoric peo_ _ _ concentrated on_ _ on ba_ _ _ survival. How_ _ _ _, it i_ clear fr_ _ the rec_ _ _ that dan_ _ _ _ was important to them. They recorded more drawings of dances than any other group activity. Dances served various purposes, including ritualistic communication with the divine, storytelling, and social cohesion.

Fill in the missing letters in the paragraph.

We know from drawings that have been preserved in caves for over 10,000 years that early humans performed dances as a group activity. We mi____ think th___ prehistoric peo____ concentrated on___ on ba____ survival. How _____, it i__ clear fr___ the rec____ that dan _____ was important to them. They recorded more drawings of dances than any other group activity. Dances served various purposes, including ritualistic communication with the divine, storytelling, and social cohesion.

Answer key:

1. ght
2. at
3. ple
4. ly
5. sic
6. ever
7. s
8. om
9. ord
10. cing

Read in Daily Life

The *Read in Daily Life* task includes short, nonacademic texts commonly encountered in daily life around the world. Examples of texts include

- a poster, sign, or notice;
- a menu;
- a social media post or web page;
- a schedule;
- an email;
- a chain of text messages;

- an advertisement;
- a news article;
- a form;
- an invoice; and
- a receipt.

The texts can be anywhere from about 15 to 150 words long, and they are followed by two or three multiple-choice questions depending on the length of the text. The questions require test takers to

- understand information in common, nonlinear text formats;
- identify the main purpose of a written communication;
- understand informal language, including common idiomatic expressions;
- make inferences based on text;
- understand telegraphic language; and
- skim and scan for information.

Example of *Read in Daily Life* Task Type
Read a notice.

> **Municipal Charter**
>
> **Sign up for paperless billing statements today.**
>
> Safe, convenient, easy. Enroll in paperless billing to receive monthly savings account statements in an electronic PDF document. Access your Municipal Charter account through the mobile app and select account preferences in the upper right-hand corner to enroll.

What type of business issued the notice?

A. An Internet provider
B. A computer company

C. A paper company
D. A bank

Read a notice

Municipal Charter
Sign up for paperless billing statements today.

Safe, convenient, easy. Enroll in paperless billing to receive monthly savings account statements in an electronic PDF document. Access your Municipal Charter account through the mobile app and select account preferences in the upper right-hand corner to enroll.

What type of business issued the notice?

○ An Internet provider

○ A computer company

○ A paper company

○ A bank

Answer key: D

Read an Academic Passage

The *Read an Academic Passage* task includes short expository passages typical of those in secondary and higher education. The task is designed so that background knowledge is not required. The passages cover topics drawn from subject areas such as history, art and music, business and economics, life science, physical science, and social science. The texts are approximately 200 words long and are followed by five questions, which may ask about factual information, vocabulary in context, inferences, the relationship between ideas, and the purpose of all or part of the text. The questions require test takers to

• identify the main ideas and basic context of a short, linear text;
• understand the important details in a short text;
• understand the range of grammatical structures used by academic writers;
• infer meaning from information that is not explicitly stated;
• understand a broad range of academic vocabulary;
• understand a range of figurative and idiomatic expressions;
• understand ideas expressed with grammatical complexity;
• understand the relationship between ideas across sentences and paragraphs; and
• recognize the rhetorical structure of all or part of a written text.

Example of *Read an Academic Passage* Task Type

The Mirror Test

Very young children cannot recognize themselves in a mirror; they usually achieve this milestone around 18 months of age. The ability to recognize oneself in the mirror is considered to be a key component of self-awareness and consciousness for humans. But what about animals?
For many years, scientists have known that members of the great ape family could recognize themselves in mirrors. They measured this by the "mirror test," which involved putting a colored mark on an ape's body, and then showing the ape its reflection in a mirror. If the ape tried to remove the mark on its own body, the scientists knew that the ape was recognizing its reflection.
Apes are close relatives of humans, but in recent years, scientists have discovered that other animals also pass the "mirror test." Elephants and dolphins have shown signs of self-recognition. These, like apes, are highly intelligent animals. But in a more recent experiment, a type of fish called the cleaner fish tried to scrape a mark off its body when it saw itself in the mirror. This suggests that even less intelligent animals may possess more self-awareness than previously suspected.

Why did scientists put colored marks on animals' bodies?

1. It made it possible to track the animals' movements.
2. It helped them determine whether the animals recognized themselves.
3. It made it easier to tell the animals apart.
4. It showed whether some animals can detect color differences.

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Why did scientists put colored marks on animals' bodies?

○ It made it possible to track the animals' movements.

○ It helped them determine whether the animals recognized themselves.

○ It made it easier to tell the animals apart.

○ It showed whether some animals can detect color differences.

Answer key: B

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2. Listening Sample Tasks

The questions in the listening section measure the test taker's ability to understand conversations and talks set in academic and campus life contexts. The speakers in the tasks have accents from four regions of the world: North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Listening skills are measured with the following task types: *Listen and Choose a Response, Listen to a Conversation, Listen to an Announcement,* and *Listen to an Academic Talk*.

Listen and Choose a Response

The *Listen and Choose a Response* task is designed to measure the test taker's ability to understand a short, spoken question or statement and recognize an appropriate response in short dialogues on topics related to campus life. Selecting the appropriate response requires understanding both the literal and implied meaning of the speaker, a skill that is important for social interactions. The test taker hears a question or statement, which forms the first part of a short exchange. The question or statement is only heard, and it is not written on the screen. The test taker then reads four possible responses to the question or statement. The test taker must select the most appropriate response to the speaker's question or statement. Test questions require test takers to

• understand common vocabulary and formulaic phrases;
• understand simple grammatical structures, including question-formation patterns;
• recognize socially appropriate responses in short spoken exchanges;
• recognize and distinguish English phonemes and the use of common intonation and stress patterns to convey meaning in carefully articulated speech; and
• infer implied meaning, speaker role, or context in short spoken exchanges.

Example of *Listen and Choose a Response* Task Type

Test takers hear:

> **Didn't I just see you in the library an hour ago?**

Choose the best response.

A. As a matter of fact, I was returning a book.
B. Yes, you can find it in the reference section.
C. I don't think I'll have enough time to do that.
D. Actually, I think I can get there a little earlier.

Choose the best response.

○ As a matter of fact, I was returning a book.

○ Yes, you can find it in the reference section.

○ I don't think I'll have enough time to do that.

○ Actually, I think I can get there a little earlier.

Answer key: A

Listen to a Conversation

The *Listen to a Conversation* task is designed to measure the ability to comprehend a conversation in modern academic situations. This ability involves more than just recognizing the spoken words; listeners must be able to make inferences, recognize speaker roles and purposes, and make predictions. The test taker listens to a short conversation between two speakers and answers two questions about the conversation. The conversation may be on topics in the public domain such as dining, social activities, education, entertainment, services, health, hobbies, home, shopping, communications, and travel. The questions require test takers to

• identify the main ideas and basic context of a conversation,
• understand the important details in a conversation,
• understand the range of grammatical structures used by proficient speakers,
• understand a wide range of vocabulary including idiomatic and colloquial expressions,
• infer meaning from information that is not explicitly stated,
• recognize the purpose of a speaker's utterance,
• make simple predictions about the speakers' future actions, and
• follow the connection between ideas across speaker turns.

Example of *Listen to a Conversation* Task Type

Test takers hear:

Narrator: Listen to a conversation.

Woman: Need anything from the supermarket?

Man: Huh? Aren't we getting ready to go see that play in a few minutes?

Woman: That's tomorrow.

Man: Oh. Wow, I'd forget my head if it wasn't screwed on . . .

Guess I don't need to change my clothes after all.

Woman: So, you weren't planning to prepare dinner?

Man: No, but I can. What do you want?

Woman: Just something light and healthy. So, can you go shopping instead?

Man: Yeah, sure. How about salmon and salad? Want anything else?

Woman: No, that's good. Thanks!

What does the woman imply that she was about to do?

A. See a play
B. Change her clothes
C. Go shopping
D. Eat dinner

Choose the best response.

What does the woman imply that she was about to do?

○ See a play

○ Change her clothes

○ Go shopping

○ Eat dinner

Answer key: C

Listen to an Announcement

The *Listen to an Announcement* task is designed to simulate what a listener would hear either during an in-person or a broadcasted message in an academic context, for example, in a classroom or at a school-related event. The test taker listens to a short academic-related announcement (about 40–85 words) and then answers questions about it. The announcement may include information about schedules, directions, rules and regulations, or student achievements. The questions require test takers to

• identify the main ideas and basic context of a short message,
• understand the important details in a short message,
• understand the range of grammatical structures used by proficient speakers,
• understand a wide range of vocabulary including idiomatic and colloquial expressions,
• infer meaning from information that is not explicitly stated,
• predict future actions based on what a speaker has said, and
• recognize the purpose of a speaker's message.

Example of the *Listen to an Announcement* Task Type
Test takers hear:

Narrator: Listen to an announcement in a classroom.

Man: Good afternoon, everyone. I am excited to inform you that Dr. Cynthia Palmer, a renowned expert in environmental science, will be giving a guest lecture next Monday at 2 P.M. in Waldman Auditorium. Dr. Palmer will discuss the latest advancements in sustainable energy solutions and their impact on global climate change. Due to her popularity and the high interest in her work, I highly recommend arriving early to secure a seat.

What is the announcement about?

A. A guest lecture
B. A different location for a class
C. Requirements for a class
D. A new university science course

Choose the best response.

What is the announcement about?

○ A guest lecture

○ A different location for a class

○ Requirements for a class

○ A new university science course

Answer key: A

Listen to an Academic Talk

The *Listen to an Academic Talk* task is designed to simulate academic talks given by educators. The test taker listens to a short (about 100–250 words) academic-related talk and answers four questions about it. The task is designed so that background knowledge is not required. Topics are taken from fields such as history, art and music, life science, physical science, business and economics, and social science. Test questions require test takers to

• understand the main and supporting ideas of a short academic talk;
• understand a range of grammatical structures;
• make inferences based on what is said;
• recognize the organizational features of the talk; and
• understand vocabulary that is sometimes uncommon, colloquial, or idiomatic.

Example of *Listen to an Academic Talk* Task Type
Test takers hear:

Narrator: Listen to a talk on a podcast about psychology.
Woman: Did you see that new thriller movie that came out last week? I did and loved it. The action, the plot twists . . . I was totally captivated. Time just flew by. Not a single thought occurred to me that was unrelated to the movie. What I experienced is what psychologists call hard fascination. Hard fascination means intense focus and concentration. Whether it's TV programs, video games . . . hard fascination is all too easy to come by in this modern world.

There's another type of fascination—soft fascination. There's still effortless attention, meaning that no special effort is required for you to stay focused, but there's still room for other thoughts. When I take a walk in the park and look at the flowers and trees, for example, I might be thinking in the back of my mind about my dinner plans.

Now, one thing to know is hard fascination causes mental fatigue. The mind is so intensely focused that it gets tired fast. What follows mental fatigue? You might find yourself easily distracted, irritable, and stressed. Soft fascination, in contrast, engages a different part of the brain—the DMN, or Default Mode Network, which soothes the mind and helps combat mental fatigue. So next time you feel like your mind is on overload, turn off the TV, put down your phone. Take a walk, or simply sit and stare at the clouds.

Why does the speaker mention a movie?

A. To compare different types of movies
B. To introduce a concept in psychology
C. To explain how movies affect emotions
D. To encourage listeners to watch more movies

Choose the best response.

Why does the speaker mention a movie?

○ To compare different types of movies

○ To introduce a concept in psychology

○ To explain how movies affect emotions

○ To encourage listeners to watch more movies

Answer key: B

3. Writing Sample Tasks

Writing skills are measured with the following task types: *Build a Sentence, Write an Email,* and *Write for an Academic Discussion*.

Build a Sentence

In the *Build a Sentence* task, test takers see one intact sentence followed by another sentence with words or phrases in the wrong order. The two sentences form an exchange between speakers. Test takers move the words and phrases to form a grammatical sentence that is an appropriate reply in the context. This task measures the test taker's command of sentence structures, a skill that is essential for communication.

Example of *Build a Sentence* Task Type
Make an appropriate sentence.

What was the highlight of your trip?

The _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ fantastic.

were   the   was   old city   showed us around   who   tour guides

Make an appropriate sentence.

What was the highlight of your trip?

were   the   was   old city   showed us around   who   tour guides

The _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ fantastic.

Sample High-Level Response
The tour guides who showed us around the old city were fantastic.

Write an Email

In the *Write an Email* task, test takers are presented with a scenario in text regarding either an academic or social setting. Test takers are asked to share information in writing for a specific communicative purpose—for example, making a recommendation, extending an invitation, or proposing a solution to a problem. Test takers have 7 minutes to complete this task. This writing task measures the test taker's ability to produce a multisentence written text that

- achieves the designated communicative goal, following basic social conventions;
- is adequately elaborated, clear, and cohesive;
- makes accurate and appropriate use of a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary; and
- follows the mechanical conventions of English (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization).

Example of *Write an Email* Task Type

A new poetry magazine has asked its readers for submissions, and you decided to submit two of your poems. However, you had a problem using the online submission form, and you are not certain that your submissions were received.

Write an email to the editor of the magazine. In your email, do the following.
- Tell the editor what you like about the new magazine.
- Describe the problem you experienced.
- Ask about the status of your submissions.

Write as much as you can and in complete sentences.

Your Response:
To: editor@sunshinepoetrymagazine.com
Subject: Problem using submission form

A new poetry magazine has asked its readers for submissions, and you decided to submit two of your poems. However, you had a problem using the online submission form, and you are not certain that your submissions were received.

Write an email to the editor of the magazine. In your email, do the following.

- Tell the editor what you like about the new magazine.
- Describe the problem you experienced.
- Ask about the status of your submissions.

Write as much as you can and in complete sentences.

Your Response:

To: editor@sunshinepoetrymagazine.com
Subject: Problem using submission form

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Sample High-Level Response

Hi Editor,

I hope you are well! I wanted to say that I really love the new Sunshine Poetry Magazine. It's refreshing to see such a diverse range of voices, and the layout is very engageing. However, I had some trouble with online submission form when I tried to submit two of my poems. After I uploaded the files and hit submit, the page just kept loading and loading, and eventually, I wasn't sure if my poems can sucessfully sent. Could you please confirm if you recieved my submissions? I'm really excited to be a part of your magazine and would appreciate any help you can provide to fix this issue. Looking forward to your response.

Best regards.

Write for an Academic Discussion

In the *Write for an Academic Discussion* task, test takers are asked to state and support an opinion within the context of an online class discussion forum. A post from the professor briefly frames the topic and poses an opinion question related to the topic for the class to discuss. Brief posts from two students then provide different positions on the issue. The test takers contribute their own position on the question, supporting their opinion with their own reasoning, experiences, or knowledge. They have 10 minutes to complete this task. This task measures the test taker's ability to produce a multisentence written text that

• clearly elaborates an argument for a position, responding to arguments,
and/or using information provided in short texts;
• is adequately supported, clear, and cohesive;
• makes accurate and appropriate use of a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary; and
• follows the mechanical conventions of English (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization).

Example of *Write for an Academic Discussion* Task Type

Your professor is teaching a class on social studies. Write a post responding to the professor's question. In your response, you should do the following.

• Express and support your opinion.
• Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

[professor post]

Volunteerism refers to the act of offering your time and service without financial compensation to benefit a community, organization, or cause. While many people volunteer mainly to help others, some institutions have mandatory volunteer programs. High schools are one example, where students may be required to complete a certain number of volunteer hours to graduate. What do you think? Should high school students be required to do volunteer work? Why or why not?

[student post 1]

Yes, I think high schools should require volunteer hours because it helps students build a sense of civic responsibility. Many teenagers don't naturally think about helping others, and this requirement can introduce them to the idea that their time and effort can make a real difference in the lives of others.

[student post 2]

I don't think volunteer hours should be required because many students already have limited free time. Some have part-time jobs or take care of younger siblings after school. Adding a mandatory volunteer requirement could create extra stress and make it harder for those students to balance their existing responsibilities.

Your professor is teaching a class on social studies. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.

- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Volunteerism refers to the act of offering your time and service without financial compensation to benefit a community, organization, or cause. While many people volunteer mainly to help others, some institutions have mandatory volunteer programs. High schools are one example, where students may be required to complete a certain number of volunteer hours to graduate. What do you think? Should high school students be required to do volunteer work? Why or why not?

Yes, I think high schools should require volunteer hours because it helps students build a sense of civic responsibility. Many teenagers don't naturally think about helping others, and this requirement can introduce them to the idea that their time and effort can make a real difference in the lives of others.

I don't think volunteer hours should be required because many students already have limited free time. Some have part-time jobs or take care of younger siblings after school. Adding a mandatory volunteer requirement could create extra stress and make it harder for those students to balance their existing responsibilities.

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Sample High-Level Response

While I get Andrew's point about limited free time, I think it's good to have mandatory volunteer hours at high schools. Volunteering teaches students empathy and community service, helping them grow into responsible adults. Schools can give flexible options that fit student's schedules, like weekend or summer volunteering. What's more, volunteering can be a break from academic pressure, allowing students to engage in meaningful activities outside school. For example, helping at a comunity garden is both fulfilling and educational.

4. Speaking Sample Tasks

The tasks in the speaking section measure both foundational language skills as well as the ability to communicate. Foundational skills, such as the ability to process language and produce fluent and intelligible speech, are measured when test takers reproduce spoken input. Communicative ability is measured when test takers speak about their opinions and experiences in the context of a simulated conversation. Speaking skills are measured with the following task types: Listen and Repeat and Take an Interview.

Listen and Repeat

The *Listen and Repeat* task measures the test taker's ability to process the sentences they hear and then to accurately and intelligibly reproduce these sentences. In the Listen and Repeat task, test takers repeat seven sentences within a scenario in an academic or campus life setting. The scenario provides a communicative purpose for listening and repeating the sentences. Each series of sentences is associated with a visual representation of the setting, and progress through the sentences corresponds to visual movement through related parts of the illustration on the screen. After each sentence, there is a pause, and then test takers repeat exactly what was said. Sentences get progressively longer and more complex as test takers progress through the scenario. For each sentence, test takers have a maximum of 8 to 12 seconds to record a response. The Listen and Repeat task measures the test taker's ability to process the sentences they hear and then produce a spoken response that is

- an accurate repetition and
- clearly intelligible.

Example of *Listen and Repeat* Task Type
Test takers hear:

> **Narrator:** You are learning to welcome visitors to the zoo. Listen to your manager and repeat what she says. Repeat only once.
> **Woman:** We have a variety of wildlife.
> **Woman:** Bears, wolves, and large cats are to the right.
> **Woman:** You can find sea lions and elephants further down the path.
> **Woman:** Please, no outside food or drinks, and do not feed the animals.
> **Woman:** Avoid banging or tapping on the displays and enclosures.
> **Woman:** For those with children, we offer summer camps and educational opportunities.
> **Woman:** The visitor's center, located near the front entrance, can give you more information.

Listen and repeat only once.

RESPONSE TIME
🎙 00:00:08

Sample High-Level Response

We have a variety of wildlife.
Bears, wolves, and large cats are to the right.
You can find sea lions and elephants further down the path.
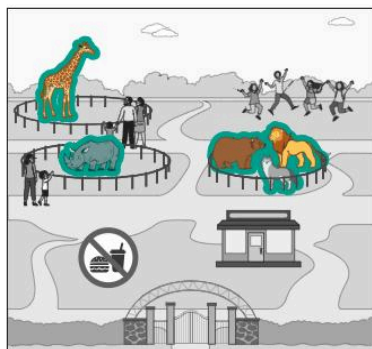Please, no outside food or drinks, and do not feed the animals.
Avoid banging or tapping on the displays and enclosures.
For those with children, we offer summer camps and educational opportunities.
The visitor's center, located near the front entrance, can give you more information.

Take an Interview

In the *Take an Interview* task, test takers participate in a simulated conversation with a prerecorded interviewer. The interview takes place during a variety of situations, such as applying for scholarships or participating in a research study. During the interview, test takers answer four questions related to the interview topic, where they describe their experiences and opinions. They have 45 seconds to answer each question. Initial questions focus on factual information and personal experience, whereas later questions ask test takers to express and support opinions regarding broader issues. The Take an Interview task measures the test taker's ability to respond to a range of questions on general and academic topics, producing a spoken response that

• answers the question with appropriate and coherent elaboration;
• maintains a good conversational speaking pace;
• is intelligible and makes good use of rhythm and intonation to convey meaning; and
• makes effective and accurate use of a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Take an Interview Task Type

Test takers hear:

Narrator: You have agreed to take part in a research study about urban life. You will have a short online interview with a researcher. The researcher will ask you some questions.

Interviewer: Thank you for speaking with me today. Now, I'd like you to think back to the last time you visited a city in your country—a city that you didn't live in. Why did you travel to that city? What did you like about that city?

Interviewer: Great. Cities affect people in different ways. Some people find cities dynamic and exciting. Others find that cities are overwhelming and drain them of energy. What kind of reaction do you have to cities? Why do you think you react in this way?

Interviewer: OK. Next, I'd like to ask your opinion. Some people believe that those who live in cities lead more interesting lives. They would argue, for example, that people who live in cities have more access to professional opportunities and interesting leisure activities. Do you agree that people who live in cities lead more interesting lives? Why or why not?

Interviewer: Good points. Let me ask you one final question. For some time now, researchers have been interested in whether green spaces, such as parks, make people who live in cities happier. Do you think that city governments should create more parks in urban areas to promote a general sense of happiness and life satisfaction? Why or why not?

Please answer the interviewer's questions.

RESPONSE TIME
🎤 00:00:45

Sample High-Level Response

The last time I visited a city was... Delhi. I went there to, um, visit my friend who is living there. I, uh... I really liked the historical places, like... um, Red Fort and the Qutub Minar. There was a lot of, uh... cultural activities going on. The food was also—was amazing, especially the, um, street food. I enjoyed the busy atmosphere and, um, the way it mixes the old and the new buildings.

I usually feel, um... excited and kind of energized in cities. I think it's because there's always... always something happening, and, there's so many people around. It makes me feel like... I'm part of a big community. Um, I also love the, uh... the variety of things to do and see. Sometimes it gets a bit, like, tiring... but overall, I like the, um... dynamic environment.

I, uh... I agree that people in cities live more interesting lives. There's more access to... professional opportunities and, um, fun activities. You can meet, like, many different kinds of people and... you learn a lot of new things. The city has... cultural events, nice restaurants, and, um, different kind of places to visit. I think... it makes the life more, uh, exciting.

Yeah, I think, um, city governments should really try to create more parks. Parks provide, like, green space where people can relax and, um, feel a bit more calm or happy? They're also good for physical activities—like jogging or, uh, doing yoga—and for, um, meeting friends. In a busy city, it's really helpful to have these quiet areas to kind of get away from the noise and stress. I think... yeah, it definitely helps improve people's, uh, overall well-being and just makes the city better.

Scoring

TOEFL iBT is introducing a banded scoring scale that aligns more intuitively with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), while simplifying score interpretation by scoring all tests and sections on a 1–6 scale.

Performance on each of the four sections and the overall test are reported in the form of band scores from 1 to 6, in increments of 0.5, rounded to the nearest whole or half band. The overall test score is derived by averaging the individual section band scores. Table 1 presents the raw score and band score ranges for the TOEFL test. In addition to the section and overall band scores for the current test administration, the score report includes MyBest® score report data. These scores are the highest section scores achieved in any test administration within the last 2 years. The overall band score for MyBest scores reflects the average of the highest section scores.

Table 1. Raw Score and Band Score Ranges for TOEFL Test Sequence

Test	Raw Score Range	Band Score Range
Reading	0-30	1-6
Listening	0-30	1-6
Writing	0-20	1-6
Speaking	0-55	1-6
Overall	--	1-6

The following table shows the mapping of the updated TOEFL scores to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Table 2. Mapping TOEFL Scores to CEFR Levels

CEER Level	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking	Overall
C2	6	6	6	6	6
C1	5-5.5	5-5.5	5-5.5	5-5.5	5-5.5
B2	4-4.5	4-4.5	4-4.5	4-4.5	4-4.5
B1	3-3.5	3-3.5	3-3.5	3-3.5	3-3.5
A2	2-2.5	2-2.5	2-2.5	2-2.5	2-2.5
A1	1-1.5	1-1.5	1-1.5	1-1.5	1-1.5

For two years, TOEFL will provide references to the old score scale in the score reports. Table 3 shows the concordance between the 1–6 band levels and the 0–30 and 0–120 score scales.

Table 3. Score Concordance Between the 1–6 Band Levels and the 0–30 and 0–120 Score Scales

Overall or Section Score (1–6)	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking	Overall (0–120)
6	29-30	28-30	29-30	28-30	114
5.5	27-28	26-27	27-28	27	107+
5	24-26	22-25	24-26	25-26	95+
4.5	22-23	20-21	21-23	23-24	86+
4	18-21	17-19	17-20	20-22	72+
3.5	12-17	13-16	15-16	18-19	58+
3	6-11	9-12	13-14	16-17	44+
2.5	4-5	6-8	10-12	13-15	34+
2	3	4-5	5-9	11-12	24+
1.5	2	2-3	3-6	5-9	12+
1	0-1	0-1	0-4	0-2	0+

Scoring Guides

TOEFL Writing Scoring Guides

For two of three TOEFL Writing task types, test takers produce written responses: the *Write an Email* task and the *Write for an Academic Discussion* task. Separate scoring guides are used to evaluate test taker responses.

Write an Email

In the *Write an Email* task, test takers are presented with a scenario in text regarding either an academic or a social setting. Scores for this task type range from 0 to 5.

Scoring guide for the *Write an Email* Task:

Score: 5	Description
	A fully successful response The response is effective, is clearly expressed, and shows consistent facility in the use of language. A typical response displays the following: • Elaboration that effectively supports the communicative purpose • Effective syntactic variety and precise, idiomatic word choice • Consistent use of appropriate social conventions (e.g., politeness, register, organization of information and formulation of actions such as requests, refusals, criticisms, etc.) • Almost no lexical or grammatical errors other than those expected from a competent writer writing under timed conditions (e.g., common typos or common misspellings or substitutions like there/their

Score: 4	Description
	A generally successful response The response is mostly effective and easily understood. Language facility is adequate to the task. A typical response displays the following: • Adequate elaboration to support the communicative purpose • Syntactic variety and appropriate word choice • Mostly appropriate social conventions • Few lexical or grammatical errors

Score: 3	Description
	A partially successful response The response generally accomplishes the task. Limitations in language facility may prevent parts of the message from being fully clear and effective. A typical response displays the following: • Elaboration that partially supports the communicative purpose • A moderate range of syntax and vocabulary • Some noticeable errors in structure, word forms, use of idiomatic language and/or social conventions

Score: 2

Description

A mostly unsuccessful response
The response reflects an attempt to address the task, but it is mostly ineffective. The message may be limited or difficult to interpret.
A typical response exhibits one or more of the following:
• Limited or irrelevant elaboration
• Some connected sentence-level language, with a limited range of syntax and vocabulary
• An accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or language use

Score: 1

Description

An unsuccessful response
The response reflects an ineffective attempt to address the task. The message may be limited to the point of being unintelligible.
A typical response exhibits one or more of the following:
• Very little elaboration, if any
• Telegraphic language (i.e., short and/or disconnected phrases and sentences) with a very limited range of vocabulary
• Serious and frequent errors in the use of language
• Minimal original language; any coherent language is mostly borrowed from the stimulus.

Score: 0

Description

The response is blank, rejects the topic, is not in English, is entirely copied from the prompt, is entirely unconnected to the prompt or consists of arbitrary keystrokes.

Write for An Academic Discussion

In the *Write for an Academic Discussion* task, test takers are asked to state and support an opinion within the context of an online class discussion forum. Scores for this task type range from 0 to 5.

Scoring guide for the *Write for an Academic Discussion* Task

Score: 5

Description

A fully successful response
The response is a relevant and very clearly expressed contribution to the online discussion, and it demonstrates consistent facility in the use of language.
A typical response displays the following:
• Relevant and well-elaborated explanations, exemplifications and/or details
• Effective use of a variety of syntactic structures and precise, idiomatic word choice
• Almost no lexical or grammatical errors other than those expected from a competent writer writing under timed conditions (e.g., common typos or common misspellings or substitutions like there/their)

Score: 4 **Description**

A generally successful response
The response is a relevant contribution to the online discussion, and facility in the use of language allows the writer's ideas to be easily understood. A typical response displays the following:
• Relevant and adequately elaborated explanations, exemplifications and/or details
• A variety of syntactic structures and appropriate word choice
• Few lexical or grammatical errors

Score: 3 **Description**

A partially successful response
The response is a mostly relevant and mostly understandable contribution to the online discussion, and there is some facility in the use of language.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• Elaboration in which part of an explanation, example or detail may be missing, unclear or irrelevant
• Some variety in syntactic structures and a range of vocabulary
• Some noticeable lexical and grammatical errors in sentence structure, word form or use of idiomatic language

Score: 2 **Description**

A mostly unsuccessful response
The response reflects an attempt to contribute to the online discussion, but limitations in the use of language may make ideas hard to follow.
A typical response displays the following:
• Ideas that may be poorly elaborated or only partially relevant
• A limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary
• An accumulation of errors in sentence structure, word forms or use

Score: 1 **Description**

An unsuccessful response
The response reflects an ineffective attempt to contribute to the online discussion, and limitations in the use of language may prevent the expression of ideas.
A typical response displays the following:
• Words and phrases that indicate an attempt to address the task, but with few or no coherent ideas
• Severely limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary
• Serious and frequent errors in the use of language
• Minimal original language; any coherent language is mostly borrowed from the stimulus

Score: 0 **Description**

The response is blank, rejects the topic, is not in English, is entirely copied from the prompt, is entirely unconnected to the prompt or consists of arbitrary keystrokes.

TOEFL Speaking Scoring Guides

For both of the TOEFL Speaking task types—the *Listen and Repeat* task and the *Take an Interview* task—test takers produce spoken responses. Separate scoring guidelines are used to evaluate test taker responses.

Listen and Repeat

In the *Listen and Repeat* task, test takers repeat a series of sentences within a scenario in an academic or campus life setting. Scores for this task type range from 0 to 5.

Scoring guide for the *Listen and Repeat* Task

Score: 5   **Description**

The response exactly repeats the prompt.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• The response is fully intelligible and is an exact repetition of the prompt.

Score: 4   **Description**

The response captures the meaning expressed in the prompt, but it is not an exact repetition.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• Minor changes in words or grammar are present that do not substantially change the meaning of the prompt. For example:
• one or two function words may be missing or changed,
• a content word may be missing (in longer stimuli) or replaced with a related word,
• markers of tense/aspect/number may be missing or incorrect, or • two words may be transposed.
• One or two content words may be ambiguous because of imprecise pronunciation. The speaker may self-correct, but successfully completes the response.

Score: 3   **Description**

The response is essentially full, but it does not accurately capture the original meaning.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• The response contains a majority of the content words or ideas in the prompt.
• Multiple function words may be changed or missing; one or more content words may be missing or substantively changed.
• The response is a full sentence.
• In some cases, intelligibility issues cause occasional difficulty in understanding meaning. The speaker may struggle over a word or phrase or run words together, reducing intelligibility.

Score: 2

Description

The response is missing a significant part of the prompt and/or is highly inaccurate.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• A large portion of the prompt is missing, and important original meaning is left out.
• The speaker may repeat the first part of the sentence. Then the speaker may stop or fill with inaccurate content and/or include the last few words.
• The response is not a self-standing sentence; meaning is fragmentary.
• Intelligibility is low; the response would be difficult to understand for a listener unfamiliar with the prompt.

Score: 1

Description

The response captures very little of the prompt or is largely unintelligible.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• A minimal response of a few words is made; most of the prompt is missing.
• The response is recognizable as an attempt to repeat the prompt, but it is mostly unintelligible.

Score: 0

Description

No response OR the response is entirely unintelligible OR there is no English in the response OR the content is entirely unconnected to the prompt (or consists only of phrases such as "I don't know").

Take an Interview

In the *Take an Interview* task, test takers participate in a simulated conversation with a prerecorded interviewer. Scores for this task type range from 0 to 5.

Scoring Guide for the *Take an Interview* Task

Score: 5

Description

A fully successful response The response fully addresses the question, and it is clear and fluent.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• The response is on topic and well elaborated.
• Good conversational speaking pace is maintained with appropriate and natural use of pauses.
• Pronunciation is easily intelligible; rhythm and intonation effectively convey meaning.
• A range of accurate grammar and vocabulary allows clear expression of precise meanings.

Score: 4

Description

A generally successful response
The response addresses the question, and it is reasonably clear.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• The response is on topic and elaborated, but it may lack effective sentence-level connectors.
• Good speaking pace is generally maintained, with some pausing that may minimally affect flow.
• Intelligibility and meaning are not impeded by pronunciation, rhythm and intonation, although occasional words/phrases may require minor effort to understand.
• Grammar and vocabulary are adequate to express general meanings most of the time.

Score: 3

Description

A partially successful response
The response addresses the question but with limited elaboration and/or clarity.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• The response is generally on topic, but elaboration may be relatively limited. • Frequent or lengthy pauses result in a choppy pace; filler words are frequent.
• Intelligibility is sometimes affected by inaccuracies in word-level pronunciation or stress/rhythm.
• Limited range and accuracy of grammar and vocabulary noticeably restrict the precision and clarity of meanings.

Score: 2

Description

A mostly unsuccessful response
The response reflects an attempt to address the question, but it is not supported in a meaningful and/or intelligible way.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• The response is minimally connected to the interviewer's question, but it has little or no relevant elaboration or consists mainly of language from the question.
• Intelligibility is limited; the speaker's intended meaning is often difficult to discern.
• The response shows a very limited range of grammar and vocabulary.

Score: 1

Description

An unsuccessful response
The response minimally addresses the question, and it may demonstrate very limited control of language.
A typical response exhibits the following:
• The response is only vaguely connected to language in the interviewer's question.
• The response is mostly unintelligible.
• The response consists mainly of isolated words or phrases

Score: 0

Description

No response OR the response is entirely unintelligible OR there is no English in the response OR the content is entirely unconnected to the prompt (or consists only of phrases such as "I don't know").

Resources

For more resources, visit ETS TOEFL.