

OFFICIAL COURSE STUDY GUIDE

TOEFL iBT Complete Prep

*Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing strategies for the TOEFL iBT,
section by section.*

TEST PREP · ALL LEVELS · 7 MODULES · 13 HR 6 MIN

Course by TST Prep TOEFL · Curated and published by MegaCourse

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TOEFL iBT Complete Prep: The Complete Study Guide

2026 Edition

Published by MegaCourse · megacourse.app

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Contents

<i>About This Course</i>	4
CHAPTER 1 TOEFL Course: Start Here	6
CHAPTER 2 Reading Strategies for the TOEFL iBT	12
CHAPTER 3 Listening	16
CHAPTER 4 Speaking	21
CHAPTER 5 Writing	26
CHAPTER 6 Your TOEFL iBT Orientation	31
CHAPTER 7 Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy	35
<i>Glossary</i>	37
<i>Answer Key</i>	41
<i>Where to Go Next</i>	46

INTRODUCTION

About This Course

This study guide supports the "TOEFL iBT Complete Prep" course, designed to help you achieve your target score on the TOEFL iBT. The TOEFL iBT is a critical assessment for academic and professional opportunities worldwide. This course provides comprehensive strategies for the Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing sections of the exam.

We have organized this learning path into 7 modules and 35 lessons. TST Prep TOEFL, experienced instructors, teach the core content. MegaCourse enhances the original video series by adding structure, clear learning outcomes, and a final knowledge-check quiz. This guide will help you apply the strategies taught in the video lessons.

You will learn to master the specific task formats for each section. The course teaches effective note-taking systems, particularly for integrated speaking and writing tasks. You will also practice delivering structured spoken responses within strict time limits.

Regular practice with authentic-style tasks prepares you thoroughly before you book your official test. This structured approach ensures you build confidence and skill systematically.

Course Facts

FORMAT	7 modules · 35 lessons
VIDEO INSTRUCTION	About 13 hr 6 min
LEVEL	All Levels
CATEGORY	Test Prep
INSTRUCTOR	TST Prep TOEFL
CERTIFICATE	Included with course completion on MegaCourse
COURSE HOME	megacourse.app/courses/toefl-ibt-complete-prep

What You Will Learn

- Master the task formats in all four TOEFL iBT sections.
- Use note-taking systems built for integrated speaking and writing tasks.
- Deliver structured spoken responses under tight time limits.
- Practice with authentic-style tasks before booking your test.

Who This Course Is For

This course serves any student preparing for the TOEFL iBT. It is suitable for individuals aiming to study at English-speaking universities or pursue professional opportunities requiring English proficiency.

To benefit fully from this material, you should possess an intermediate level of English, roughly B1 or above. This foundational proficiency allows you to focus on test-taking strategies rather than basic language acquisition.

Before You Start

- Possess intermediate English proficiency (B1 or above).
- Access to the online course videos at megacourse.app.
- A reliable internet connection for video content.

How to Use This Guide

This printed study guide is a companion to the "TOEFL iBT Complete Prep" online course. We recommend watching the video lessons first, then using this guide to reinforce your understanding and complete practice exercises. The course is structured into 7 modules and 35 lessons, totaling about 13 hours and 6 minutes of instruction. Plan a consistent study schedule to cover the material effectively.

Use the practice tasks in this guide to apply the strategies presented in the videos. These exercises help solidify your skills in reading comprehension, active listening, structured speaking, and clear writing. Review your answers carefully, comparing them against any provided explanations or sample responses.

Consider creating your own study notes as you progress. Regularly revisit challenging concepts. The goal is to build muscle memory for the test formats and question types. This systematic review will prepare you for the final assessment and the actual TOEFL iBT.

CHAPTER 1

TOEFL Course: Start Here

This chapter introduces you to the TOEFL iBT, a crucial test for academic and professional English proficiency. We will cover essential strategies and common pitfalls across all four sections: Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. This guide provides a solid foundation for your preparation, offering practical tips and guiding you through initial practice exercises. You will learn how to approach each section effectively, manage your time, and begin building the skills needed for a strong score.

Mastering the Reading Section: Tips and Practice

Covers: TOEFL Reading 2026: Tips to Score Higher on the NEW Test (video, 19 min) · TOEFL Reading Practice Test 2026 (Answers Included) (video, 26 min)

The TOEFL iBT Reading section assesses your ability to understand academic English passages. You will encounter two passages, each followed by 10 questions. You have 35 minutes to complete this section, which means approximately 17.5 minutes per passage. Efficient time management is critical for success.

Strategies for Scoring Higher

To maximize your score, engage in active reading. Do not simply read passively. Instead, focus on identifying main ideas, supporting details, and the author's overall purpose. Consider briefly jotting down main points for each paragraph. This note-taking method aids recall and helps you navigate questions more efficiently.

Familiarize yourself with the common question types. These include detail questions, inference questions, vocabulary questions, purpose questions, and summary questions. Each type requires a specific approach.

- For *detail questions*, scan the passage for keywords mentioned in the question.
- For *inference questions*, read between the lines, but ensure your answer is directly implied by the text. Avoid using outside knowledge.
- For *vocabulary questions*, use context clues from the surrounding sentences to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
- For *summary questions*, identify the main ideas from the entire passage and eliminate choices that focus on minor details or contain inaccurate information.

Always use an elimination strategy. First, remove any answer choices that are clearly incorrect. This significantly increases your probability of selecting the correct answer, even if you are initially unsure.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Many students make common errors in the Reading section. One frequent mistake is spending too much time on a single question. If a question is proving difficult, make your best guess, mark it, and move on. You can return to it later if time permits. Another error is reading the questions before the passage. It is

more effective to read the passage first to grasp its overall meaning before tackling the questions. Also, avoid bringing outside knowledge into inference questions. Your answer must be based strictly on the information presented or implied in the text. Finally, ensure you understand what each question type is asking. Misinterpreting the question leads to incorrect answers.

Approach to Practice Tests

When you take a practice Reading test, simulate actual test conditions. Set a timer for 35 minutes for two passages. After completing the test, review your answers thoroughly. Do not just check whether your answer was right or wrong. Understand *why* the correct answer is correct and *why* your incorrect answer was wrong. Analyze your mistakes: Was it a vocabulary issue, a misunderstanding of the passage, or a misinterpretation of the question? If you struggled with a passage, re-read it along with the questions to pinpoint areas for improvement. Aim for consistent performance across different passage types to build confidence and skill.

Effective Strategies for the Listening Section

Covers: TOEFL Listening Practice Test 2026 (Answers Included) (video, 26 min)

The TOEFL iBT Listening section evaluates your ability to understand conversations and academic lectures in English. You will hear both conversations and lectures, each followed by a set of questions. You hear the audio only once, making effective strategies and note-taking essential.

Key Strategies for Listening

Active listening is paramount. This means your brain must actively process information, connect ideas, and identify key points as you hear them. Your attention must be sustained throughout the entire audio segment.

Note-taking is critical for the Listening section. Since you hear the audio only once, your notes serve as your primary reference for answering questions. Use abbreviations and symbols to write quickly. Focus on capturing main ideas, key details, definitions, examples, and the speaker's attitude or purpose. Organize your notes visually, perhaps using bullet points or a simple outline, to make them easy to review. Do not attempt to write down every word; instead, capture the essence of the information.

Before the audio begins, quickly read the topic if it is provided. This brief preview helps activate relevant vocabulary and concepts in your mind. Understand the different question types you will encounter:

- *Main idea questions* ask for the overall purpose or topic of the audio.
- *Detail questions* require you to recall specific facts mentioned.
- *Function questions* ask *why* the speaker says something, such as to clarify or contradict.
- *Attitude questions* assess your understanding of the speaker's opinion or feeling.
- *Organization questions* focus on how the information is structured within the audio.

Some questions may require you to integrate information from different parts of the audio. Pay attention to how ideas connect and develop throughout the conversation or lecture.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

One of the most common mistakes is not taking notes. Relying solely on memory for a spoken passage can be risky. Conversely, over-noting, or trying to write too much, can cause you to miss subsequent important points. Getting distracted during the audio is another pitfall; maintain focus throughout. Misinterpreting the speaker's intent or attitude can lead to incorrect answers, so pay close attention to tone and context. Finally, avoid choosing answers based on single words or phrases; ensure the entire answer choice accurately reflects the audio's meaning.

Approach to Practice Tests

When practicing for the Listening section, strictly simulate test conditions. Play the audio only once. Use a timer for the questions that follow. After listening, try to answer the questions using only your notes first. Then, if your practice materials include a transcript, review it to check your comprehension and note-taking accuracy. Analyze your mistakes: Did you miss a key detail in your notes? Did you misunderstand the main idea? Was your note-taking system effective for this type of audio? Practice with varied English accents to broaden your exposure. The Listening section demands sustained concentration, so practice longer listening tasks to build your stamina.

Crafting Clear and Structured Spoken Responses

Covers: TOEFL Speaking TIPS for a Perfect Score - 2026 Edition (video, 14 min) • TOEFL Speaking Practice Test 2026 (Sample Speaking Answers Included) (video, 12 min)

The TOEFL iBT Speaking section evaluates your ability to communicate effectively in English. It includes both independent and integrated tasks, each with specific preparation and response times. The "new test" has fewer tasks and a shorter overall time, emphasizing concise and well-structured responses.

Key Tips for a Perfect Score

Structure is paramount for every speaking task. Your response must have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

- For the *Independent Task (Task 1)*, state your opinion clearly, provide two distinct reasons, and support each reason with specific examples or details.
- For *Integrated Tasks (Tasks 2, 3, 4)*, you will summarize a reading passage, summarize a listening passage, connect the two, and state the speaker's opinion or main point as it relates to the reading.

Use your preparation time effectively. For Task 1, brainstorm ideas and quickly outline your main points and examples. For integrated tasks, take concise notes from both the reading and listening, focusing on main points and connections between them. Outline your response to ensure logical flow.

Your delivery is also critical. Focus on:

- *Fluency and Coherence*: Speak smoothly, without excessive pauses or repetitions. Ensure your ideas are connected logically and easy to follow.
- *Pronunciation*: Speak clearly and naturally. Pay attention to word stress and intonation patterns, which affect meaning.

- *Lexical Resource (Vocabulary)*: Use a range of appropriate vocabulary. Avoid overly simple or repetitive words. Demonstrate your command of English words.
- *Grammatical Range and Accuracy*: Use varied sentence structures correctly. Show your ability to form complex sentences without making errors.

For integrated tasks, effective note-taking is crucial. For reading passages, identify the main topic and 2 to 3 supporting details. For lectures or conversations, capture the speaker's main point, key examples, and how these relate to the reading. A split-page method or T-chart can help you organize reading and listening notes side-by-side.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Avoid speaking too quickly or too slowly. Find a natural, steady pace that allows you to articulate clearly. Running out of time is a common issue; practice timing your responses precisely. Ensure you address all parts of the prompt. For Task 1, avoid using generic examples; be specific and personal. For integrated tasks, do not simply restate the reading and listening passages without connecting them. You must explain the relationship. Finally, minimize excessive pausing or filler words like "umms" and "uhhs." Practice thinking on your feet to maintain a smooth flow.

Approach to Practice Tests

The most effective way to improve your speaking is to record yourself. Listen back critically to identify areas for improvement in structure, delivery, and content. Compare your responses with sample answers to understand how high-scoring responses are structured, what vocabulary they use, and their delivery style. Focus on mastering one task type at a time; for example, perfect your Task 1 structure before moving to integrated tasks. Always practice with a timer, strictly adhering to the preparation and response times. If possible, seek feedback from an English speaker or tutor on your recorded responses.

Structuring and Refining Your Writing for the TOEFL iBT

Covers: How to Avoid Common TOEFL Writing Mistakes - 2026 Edition (video, 12 min) · TOEFL Writing Practice Test 2026 (Answers Included) (video, 26 min)

The TOEFL iBT Writing section evaluates your ability to write clear, well-organized, and grammatically correct English. It consists of two tasks: the Integrated Writing Task and the Academic Discussion Task. The "new test" replaced the Independent Writing with the Academic Discussion, requiring different skills.

Integrated Writing Task

Purpose: You will read a short passage and then listen to a lecture on the same topic. Your task is to summarize the lecture, explaining how it challenges or supports specific points made in the reading passage.

Structure:

- *Introduction (1 paragraph)*: State the main topic, mention both the reading and the lecture, and briefly state the lecture's relationship to the reading (e.g., "The lecture refutes the points made in the reading passage.").

- **Body Paragraphs (2-3 paragraphs):** Each body paragraph should discuss one main point from the reading and then explain how the lecture contradicts or supports it. Provide specific details from both sources.
- **Conclusion (optional, 1 sentence):** Briefly restate the main relationship between the lecture and reading.

Key Skills: Accurate summarization, synthesis of information, and clear comparison or contrast.

Note-taking: Use a T-chart to organize points from the reading and corresponding counter-points or supporting details from the lecture. This helps you see the connections clearly.

Academic Discussion Task

Purpose: You will read a professor's question and two student responses. You then write your own response, stating your opinion and contributing to the ongoing discussion.

Structure:

- **Introduction (implied):** Directly address the professor's question in your opening sentence.
- **Body (1-2 paragraphs):** State your opinion clearly and support it with reasons and examples. You can agree or disagree with previous students, or introduce a new perspective. Refer to the previous posts to show engagement with the discussion.
- **Conclusion (implied):** Summarize your main point or offer a final thought.

Key Skills: Expressing and supporting opinions, engaging with others' ideas, and using appropriate academic language.

Common Writing Mistakes to Avoid

Integrated Task: Avoid paraphrasing without summarizing; you must rephrase ideas in your own words, not just copy phrases. Do not ignore one source; you must discuss both the reading and the lecture. Crucially, clearly explain the relationship between the lecture and reading; do not just present them separately. The Integrated task requires objective summary and synthesis, so avoid expressing personal opinions.

Academic Discussion Task: Do not simply agree or disagree without providing explanation and support. Ensure you engage with the previous student posts, not just the professor's prompt. A lack of specific examples or reasoning to support your opinion will lower your score. Maintain an academic tone, avoiding informal language.

General Mistakes: Grammar and spelling errors significantly impact your score; proofread carefully. Vary your sentence length and complexity to avoid poor sentence structure. Use precise and appropriate vocabulary. Finally, ensure you meet the word count expectations (Integrated: 150-225 words; Academic Discussion: 100+ words).

Approach to Practice Tests

When practicing, time yourself strictly for both writing tasks. Write full essays for practice; do not just outline your ideas. Review sample answers to understand the structure, content, and language of high-

scoring responses. Keep a list of your common grammar or vocabulary mistakes and actively work to correct them in subsequent practices. Regularly practice brainstorming and outlining quickly to improve efficiency under timed conditions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The TOEFL iBT assesses your English proficiency across Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing sections.
- Effective note-taking is crucial for the Listening, Speaking integrated, and Writing integrated tasks.
- Structure your spoken and written responses clearly to convey your ideas logically and efficiently.
- Time management is vital for all sections; practice adhering to strict time limits.
- Thoroughly review practice test answers to understand mistakes and improve strategies.
- Focus on developing both general English skills and specific TOEFL task strategies.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.

1. What is the primary purpose of taking notes during the TOEFL iBT Listening section?
2. How does the approach to the Integrated Writing Task differ from the Academic Discussion Task?
3. What are two common mistakes students make in the Speaking section, and how can they be avoided?
4. Why is it important to review practice test answers thoroughly, beyond just checking right or wrong?
5. What is the main strategy for answering vocabulary questions in the Reading section?

CHAPTER 2

Reading Strategies for the TOEFL iBT

This chapter focuses on the Reading section of the TOEFL iBT. You will learn about the various question types you will encounter and develop effective strategies for approaching them. The goal is to build your comprehension skills and improve your ability to answer questions accurately and efficiently under timed conditions.

Mastering the Reading section requires more than just good English. It demands specific test-taking techniques, including active reading, time management, and a systematic approach to each question type. This guide provides the tools and methods necessary to succeed.

Understanding TOEFL Reading Question Types and Step-by-Step Strategies

Covers: TOEFL Reading Practice (2026): Every Question Type Step-by-Step

The TOEFL iBT Reading section evaluates your ability to understand academic English passages. You will read two passages, each followed by 10 questions. You have 35 minutes to complete this section. Each passage is approximately 700 words long. Success depends on recognizing question types and applying specific strategies.

Factual Information Questions

These questions ask for specific details or facts stated directly in the passage. Look for keywords in the question and scan the passage to locate the relevant sentence or sentences. The answer will be a direct restatement or a close paraphrase of information found there.

Negative Factual Information Questions

These questions ask you to identify which of the answer choices is *not* stated in the passage. Three choices will be true according to the text, and one will be false or not mentioned. Read each option carefully and check it against the passage. Eliminate choices that are explicitly supported by the text.

Inference Questions

Inference questions require you to understand information that is implied but not directly stated. The answer will be a logical conclusion based on evidence in the passage. Look for clues, connections, or implications within the text. Avoid bringing in outside knowledge.

Rhetorical Purpose Questions

These questions ask why the author included a particular piece of information, a specific word, or a phrase. Common purposes include providing an example, defining a term, or presenting a contrast. Identify the specific text referenced and consider its relationship to the surrounding sentences or the main idea of the paragraph.

Vocabulary Questions

Vocabulary questions ask for the meaning of a specific word or phrase as it is used in the passage. Do not simply choose a common definition of the word. Instead, use context clues from the sentences surrounding the word to determine its meaning within that specific passage. Often, the correct answer will be a synonym that fits the context.

Sentence Simplification Questions

For these questions, you are given a complex sentence from the passage and must choose the option that best expresses the essential meaning of that sentence in a simpler form. The correct answer will retain all the important information from the original sentence without adding new ideas or omitting crucial details. Break down the original sentence into its core components.

Insert Text Questions

These questions present a new sentence and ask you to place it correctly within a specified paragraph. Look for transitional words, pronouns, and logical connections between the new sentence and the existing sentences in the paragraph. The new sentence must fit smoothly in terms of meaning and grammar.

Prose Summary Questions

This is a multiple-choice question where you select three sentences that best summarize the main ideas of the entire passage. The incorrect options will often be minor details, inaccurate statements, or points not mentioned in the passage. Focus on identifying the central theme and the most important supporting points presented throughout the text.

To practice, read a passage and try to anticipate potential questions for each paragraph. Then, attempt the questions and review your answers against the passage to understand why each correct answer is right and why incorrect answers are wrong. This systematic approach improves both speed and accuracy.

Maximizing Your Score: Essential Tips and Practice Strategies for the New TOEFL Reading Test

Covers: TOEFL Reading 2026: Tips to Score Higher on the NEW Test · TOEFL Reading Practice Test 2026 (Answers Included)

Achieving a high score on the TOEFL Reading section involves more than just understanding the question types. It requires strategic reading, effective time management, and consistent practice. The updated 2026 test format emphasizes efficiency and accurate comprehension.

Time Management is Crucial

You have 35 minutes for two passages and 20 questions. This means roughly 17 minutes per passage. Do not spend too much time on any single question. If a question is difficult, make an educated guess, mark it for review if possible, and move on. You can return to it later if time permits. Practice reading passages and answering questions within these strict time limits to build your pace.

Skimming and Scanning Techniques

Before reading in detail, skim the passage quickly (1-2 minutes) to grasp the main topic, the author's purpose, and the overall structure. Pay attention to headings, topic sentences, and concluding sentences of paragraphs. When answering specific questions, scan the passage for keywords from the question to locate relevant information quickly. This saves time compared to reading every word for every question.

Active Reading and Note-Taking

Engage with the text as you read. Identify the main idea of each paragraph and how it supports the overall passage. Briefly note down key points, important dates, names, or definitions. These notes can help you locate information faster and answer summary questions more accurately. Do not write full sentences; use abbreviations and symbols.

Dealing with Unfamiliar Vocabulary

It is normal to encounter words you do not know. Do not panic. Use context clues. Look at the words and phrases surrounding the unfamiliar term. Often, the sentence itself or the sentences before and after provide enough information to infer the meaning. If context clues are insufficient, eliminate obviously incorrect answer choices and make an educated guess.

Process of Elimination

For every question, try to eliminate at least two incorrect answer choices. This significantly increases your chances of selecting the correct answer, even if you are unsure. Incorrect options often contain information that is too specific, too general, not mentioned, or contradicts the passage.

The Importance of Practice Tests

Regularly taking full-length practice tests is essential. This helps you become familiar with the test format, build stamina, and refine your time management skills. After each practice test, review your answers thoroughly. Understand why you got certain questions wrong. Was it a misunderstanding of the question type, a misinterpretation of the passage, or a time constraint issue? Learning from mistakes is key to improvement. Simulate actual test conditions as closely as possible during your practice sessions, including timing and environment. This preparation builds confidence and reduces test-day anxiety.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Understand the structure of the TOEFL Reading section, including time limits and question count.
- Master each question type: Factual Information, Inference, Rhetorical Purpose, Vocabulary, Sentence Simplification, Insert Text, and Prose Summary.
- Practice effective time management by allocating approximately 17 minutes per passage and avoiding excessive time on any single question.
- Utilize skimming to grasp the main idea and scanning to locate specific details quickly.
- Employ active reading and brief note-taking to identify main points and passage structure.
- Use context clues to infer the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary words.
- Regularly take full-length practice tests under timed conditions and thoroughly review your answers to learn from mistakes.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.

1. What are three common TOEFL Reading question types, and what does each type assess?
2. How can you manage your time effectively during the Reading section?
3. What is the purpose of skimming a passage before reading it in detail?
4. When encountering unfamiliar vocabulary, what strategy should you use?
5. Why is it important to take full practice tests under timed conditions?

CHAPTER 3

Listening

Chapter 3 focuses on the Listening section of the TOEFL iBT. This section assesses your ability to understand spoken English in academic and conversational contexts. You will hear lectures and conversations and answer questions based on the content.

Mastering this section requires effective note-taking strategies, active listening, and consistent practice. This chapter provides a complete guide to these essential skills, helping you prepare thoroughly for the exam.

Mastering Listening Strategies and Note-Taking

Covers: A Complete Guide to Taking Notes in the TOEFL Listening • TOEFL Listening SECRETS Every Student Should Know

The TOEFL iBT Listening section evaluates your comprehension of spoken English. You will encounter two types of audio recordings: conversations and lectures. There are typically two to three conversations, each about five minutes long, followed by five questions. You will also hear three to four lectures, each three to six minutes long, followed by six questions. The total number of questions ranges from 28 to 39, and the section lasts 41 to 57 minutes. You hear each audio recording only once. You cannot replay any part of it. This makes effective note-taking a critical skill.

The Power of Effective Note-Taking

Notes serve as your memory aid during the Listening section. Since you cannot re-listen to the audio, your notes must capture the essential information. Focus on these elements:

- **Main Ideas and Topics:** Identify the central subject and the speaker's primary points.
- **Key Definitions and Examples:** Note any new terms introduced and the examples used to explain them.
- **Speaker's Attitude or Purpose:** Pay attention to the speaker's tone, opinions, or reasons for discussing a topic.
- **Relationships Between Ideas:** Look for connections such as cause and effect, comparisons, or contrasts.
- **Supporting Details:** Capture specific facts or data that elaborate on the main points.

Note-Taking Techniques

Develop a personal system for efficient note-taking:

- **Abbreviations and Symbols:** Use common abbreviations (e.g., w/ for with, b/c for because, info for information). Create symbols for concepts like increase (↑), decrease (↓), equals (=), or not equal (≠). Consistency is key.

- **Structure and Organization:** Use headings for main topics. Indent for sub-points and supporting details. Draw lines to separate different speakers in conversations. Employ bullet points or numbered lists. Leave some space to add details later if needed.
- **Focus on Keywords:** Do not attempt to write down every word. Instead, listen for nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that convey the core meaning. For example, if a professor discusses 'photosynthesis,' write 'photo.' and key steps, not the entire definition verbatim.
- **Separate Speakers:** In conversations, clearly mark who is speaking. Use initials or symbols to distinguish between the student and the professor.
- **Active Listening:** Engage with the material. Try to anticipate what the speaker might say next. Connect new information to points already made. This helps you organize your thoughts and notes in real time.

Common Note-Taking Mistakes to Avoid

Many students make common errors that hinder their performance. Avoid these pitfalls:

- **Writing Too Much:** Trying to transcribe the audio verbatim is counterproductive. It distracts you from understanding the overall meaning.
- **Writing Too Little:** Insufficient detail in your notes will make it difficult to answer specific questions accurately.
- **Disorganized Notes:** If your notes are messy or illogical, you will struggle to find the information you need quickly during the question period.
- **Not Practicing:** Note-taking is a skill that improves with consistent practice. Integrate note-taking into all your listening practice sessions.

General Listening Secrets and Strategies

Beyond note-taking, specific strategies can enhance your listening comprehension:

- **Predicting Content:** Before the audio starts, if a title is provided, quickly read it. Think about potential topics or vocabulary that might come up. This prepares your mind for the material.
- **Identify Main Ideas:** Most questions test your understanding of the overall message. Focus on the core topic and the speaker's main argument or purpose.
- **Recognize Rhetorical Purpose:** Understand *why* a speaker says something. Why do they provide an example? Why do they ask a question? This helps with questions about function and implication.
- **Eliminate Incorrect Answers:** When answering questions, rule out options that are clearly wrong, contradict the audio, or were not mentioned. This increases your chances of selecting the correct answer.
- **Time Management:** You have a limited time to answer each question. Do not dwell too long on a single question. Make your best educated guess and move on if you are unsure.
- **Stay Focused:** The audio recordings can be long. Maintain concentration throughout the entire recording. Avoid distractions and actively process the information presented.
- **Understand Question Types:** Familiarize yourself with the various question formats. Knowing what to expect helps you listen for specific information.

Applying Strategies Through Practice

Covers: TOEFL LISTENING Practice Questions (Answers Included)

Consistent practice is essential for improving your TOEFL Listening score. Regular exposure to authentic-style materials helps you become accustomed to the pace, accents, and academic language used in the test. It also solidifies your note-taking habits, making them more natural and efficient.

How to Approach Practice Questions

To maximize the benefit of your practice sessions, follow these steps:

1. **Simulate Test Conditions:** Use official or high-quality practice materials. Play the audio only once, without pausing or rewinding. Adhere strictly to the time limits for answering questions. This builds stamina and helps you manage pressure.
 2. **Apply Note-Taking:** Actively take notes during the audio, using the strategies discussed in the previous section. Treat each practice session as if it were the actual test.
 3. **Answer Questions Systematically:** Read each question carefully. Refer to your notes to recall details. Evaluate all answer choices thoroughly before making a selection.
 4. **Thorough Review of Answers:** This is perhaps the most crucial step for learning. Do not just check if your answer was right or wrong. Understand *why*.
- **For Correct Answers:** Confirm why your choice was the best option. Locate the supporting evidence in the audio or your notes.
 - **For Incorrect Answers:** Identify the specific reason for your mistake. Did you miss a key detail? Was your note-taking insufficient? Did you misinterpret the question? Was a distractor confusing? Was it a vocabulary issue? Listen to the audio again (if available in practice materials) to pinpoint where the correct information was provided. Analyze the question type. If you consistently struggle with certain types of questions, dedicate more practice to those areas.

Common Listening Question Types

Familiarize yourself with these typical question formats:

- **Gist-Content Questions:** These ask about the main topic or subject of the lecture or conversation. Example: "What is the main topic of the lecture?" Listen for the overall theme and central argument.
- **Gist-Purpose Questions:** These ask about the speaker's purpose or reason for mentioning something. Example: "Why does the professor mention X?" Listen for the speaker's intention behind a specific statement or example.
- **Detail Questions:** These require you to recall specific facts, definitions, or steps mentioned in the audio. Example: "According to the speaker, what caused Y?" Your notes should contain these precise pieces of information.
- **Function Questions:** These ask about the role a statement plays in the audio. Example: "What is the purpose of the student's question?" Listen for how a statement contributes to the flow of information, such as to clarify, challenge, or agree.

- **Attitude Questions:** These assess your understanding of the speaker's feelings or opinions. Example: "What is the professor's opinion of X?" Listen for tone of voice, specific word choices (e.g., "unfortunately," "surprisingly"), and explicit expressions of opinion.
- **Organization Questions:** These focus on how information is structured or presented. Example: "How does the professor organize the information about Z?" Listen for signal words like "first," "next," "however," or "in contrast," and the overall structure of the presentation.
- **Connecting Content Questions:** These require you to infer relationships between ideas, implications, or conclusions that can be drawn from the stated information. Example: "What can be inferred about X and Y?" You must connect different pieces of information to form a logical conclusion.

Practice Cues and Drills

Incorporate these drills into your study routine:

- Find practice conversations and academic lectures from various sources. University websites, educational podcasts, and online learning platforms offer a wealth of material.
- Practice note-taking without answering questions initially. Focus solely on refining your system for capturing key information and organizing your notes.
- Work on listening for specific types of information, such as numbers, names, dates, or causes and effects.
- After listening to a lecture, try to summarize its main points in one or two sentences. This helps you identify the core message.
- Practice identifying the main idea within the first minute of any audio recording. This skill is vital for gist questions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Effective note-taking is crucial because you hear each audio recording only once.
- Active listening requires focusing on main ideas, key details, and the speaker's purpose.
- Develop a consistent system of abbreviations and symbols for efficient note-taking.
- Familiarize yourself with various question types to know what information to listen for.
- Consistent practice under simulated test conditions significantly improves listening skills.
- Thoroughly review both correct and incorrect answers to understand your strengths and weaknesses.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.

1. What is the primary purpose of taking notes during the TOEFL Listening section?
2. Name two common types of listening questions you might encounter.

3. What should you focus on when listening to a lecture or conversation to take effective notes?
4. How can you improve your listening skills during practice sessions?
5. Why is it important to review incorrect answers thoroughly after practice?

CHAPTER 4

Speaking

Chapter 4 prepares you for the TOEFL iBT Speaking section. This section assesses your ability to communicate effectively in English by speaking about familiar topics and integrating information from reading and listening passages. You will encounter four distinct speaking tasks, each with specific requirements and time limits.

This chapter provides a comprehensive breakdown of each question type, offering proven strategies, useful templates, and essential tips for maximizing your score. You will learn how to structure your responses, manage your time, and develop strong arguments or summaries. We also cover critical aspects like effective note-taking, vocabulary expansion, and practical study plans to help you prepare confidently for test day.

Mastering Question 1: The Independent Speaking Task

Covers: TOEFL Speaking Question 1: Templates, Tips, and Sample Answers · TOEFL Speaking SECRETS Every Student Should Know · TOEFL Speaking TEMPLATES, Quick and Easy · TOEFL Speaking: The ONLY Strategy You Need in 2025

The TOEFL iBT Speaking section begins with an independent task, Question 1. Here, you will be asked to state your opinion or preference on a familiar topic and support it with reasons and examples. You have 15 seconds to prepare your answer and 45 seconds to speak. Your response is scored on delivery, language use, and topic development.

To excel on Question 1, a clear, structured approach is vital. Start by directly stating your opinion. Then, provide two distinct reasons that support your view. For each reason, offer specific details or examples to elaborate. This structure ensures your answer is coherent and well-supported within the time limit.

Consider this template for Question 1:

"I prefer [Your Preference] because of two main reasons. First, [Reason 1]. For example, [Specific Example/Detail for Reason 1]. Second, [Reason 2]. To illustrate, [Specific Example/Detail for Reason 2]. For these reasons, I believe [Restate Preference]."

Let's practice with an example. If the question asks, "Do you prefer to study alone or with a group?" you might say:

"I prefer to study alone because of two main reasons. First, studying alone allows me to focus without distractions. For example, when I am by myself, I can concentrate fully on difficult concepts without interruptions from others. Second, studying alone helps me manage my own pace. To illustrate, I can spend more time on subjects I find challenging and quickly move past those I understand well. For these reasons, I believe studying alone is more effective for me."

Common mistakes include speaking too fast, repeating ideas, or failing to provide sufficient detail. Practice speaking at a natural pace. Ensure each reason has a unique, concrete example. Use transition

words like "first," "second," "for example," and "to illustrate" to guide the listener. Record yourself and listen back to identify areas for improvement. Focus on clear pronunciation and intonation. Developing a strong opening and closing statement can also enhance your overall delivery. Remember, the goal is not just to state an opinion, but to explain *why* you hold that opinion with convincing support.

Navigating Integrated Tasks: Questions 2 and 3

Covers: TOEFL Speaking Question 2: Templates, Tips, and Sample Answers · TOEFL Speaking Question 3: Templates, Tips, and Sample Answers · TOEFL Speaking SECRETS Every Student Should Know · TOEFL Speaking TEMPLATES, Quick and Easy

Questions 2 and 3 are integrated speaking tasks, requiring you to combine information from a short reading passage and an audio lecture. Effective note-taking is paramount for these tasks. You will read a passage for 45 to 50 seconds, then listen to a conversation or lecture for 60 to 90 seconds. After a 30-second preparation time, you will speak for 60 seconds.

Question 2: Campus Situation

Question 2 presents a reading passage about a university policy, plan, or announcement. This is followed by a conversation between two students discussing the information. One student typically expresses a strong opinion about the policy, providing reasons. Your task is to summarize the policy and then explain the student's opinion and the reasons behind it.

Note-taking strategy: For the reading, identify the main topic and the proposed change or plan. For the listening, note the speaker's main opinion (agree or disagree) and two to three specific reasons they provide. Use abbreviations and symbols to capture information quickly.

Template for Question 2:

"The university is planning to [summarize the plan/policy from the reading]. The man/woman expresses a strong opinion about this plan. He/She believes [state opinion: agrees/disagrees] with the plan. He/She feels this way for two main reasons. First, he/she mentions that [Reason 1 from listening]. Second, he/she points out that [Reason 2 from listening]."

Question 3: General Academic Task

Question 3 involves a reading passage defining an academic term or concept. This is followed by a lecture where a professor elaborates on the concept, usually with two examples. Your response should summarize the definition from the reading and then explain how the professor's examples illustrate that concept.

Note-taking strategy: For the reading, capture the main term and its definition. For the listening, identify the two main examples the professor uses and how each example relates to the definition. Focus on keywords and phrases.

Template for Question 3:

"The reading passage defines [Term] as [Definition from reading]. The professor then expands on this concept by providing two examples. First, he/she describes [Example 1 from lecture]. This illustrates [how Example 1 relates to the definition]. Second, the professor discusses [Example 2 from lecture]. This demonstrates [how Example 2 relates to the definition]."

For both integrated tasks, practice synthesizing information. Do not just list points. Connect the reading to the listening clearly. Use transition phrases to move smoothly between summarizing the reading and the lecture points. Ensure you allocate enough time to each part of your response.

Conquering Question 4: The Integrated Academic Lecture

Covers: TOEFL Speaking Question 4: Templates, Tips, and Sample Answers · TOEFL Speaking SECRETS Every Student Should Know · TOEFL Speaking TEMPLATES, Quick and Easy

Question 4 is another integrated academic task, similar to Question 3, but often more focused on a scientific or academic phenomenon explained through a lecture. You will read a short passage (45 to 50 seconds) that introduces an academic concept or term. Then, you will listen to a lecture (60 to 90 seconds) where a professor explains this concept in detail, typically providing two specific examples or aspects. You have 30 seconds to prepare and 60 seconds to speak.

The core of your response for Question 4 is to summarize the concept from the reading and then explain how the professor's lecture illustrates or elaborates on that concept using specific examples. The challenge lies in accurately capturing the academic details and presenting them clearly and concisely.

Note-taking strategy: When reading, identify the main academic term and its core definition or characteristic. During the lecture, focus on the two main examples or points the professor uses to explain the concept. For each example, note key details and how it directly relates back to the initial definition. Organize your notes logically to easily recall the connection.

Template for Question 4:

"The reading passage introduces the concept of [Concept from reading], which is defined as [Definition/Characteristic from reading]. The professor in the lecture provides further explanation of this concept by presenting two examples. First, he/she discusses [Example 1 from lecture]. This illustrates how [explain the connection between Example 1 and the concept]. Second, the professor describes [Example 2 from lecture]. This demonstrates [explain the connection between Example 2 and the concept]."

Let's consider an example. If the reading defines 'mimicry' as an adaptation where one species evolves to resemble another, and the lecture gives examples of a harmless snake mimicking a venomous one and a butterfly mimicking a distasteful one. Your response would follow the template, explaining each example and its link to mimicry.

Practice is essential for this task. Focus on clearly articulating the relationship between the reading and the lecture. Avoid simply listing points from each source. Instead, show how the lecture *expands upon* or *exemplifies* the concept introduced in the reading. Pay attention to academic vocabulary used in both the reading and the lecture, and try to incorporate it naturally into your response. Ensure your examples are distinct and well-explained within the time limit.

Boosting Your Score: Vocabulary, Practice, and Strategic Study

Covers: TOEFL Speaking Practice: 10 Sample Questions and Answers · TOEFL Speaking Vocabulary - 14 Words You Need to Score 30/30 · TOEFL Speaking SECRETS Every Student Should Know · If I Had to Take the TOEFL Tomorrow (FAST Study Plan) · TOEFL Speaking: The ONLY Strategy You Need in 2025

Achieving a high score on the TOEFL Speaking section requires more than just understanding the task formats. It demands consistent practice, strategic vocabulary use, and a solid study plan. Your overall score is a reflection of your delivery, language use, and topic development across all four questions.

Vocabulary Enhancement

Using precise and varied vocabulary significantly impacts your score. Instead of repeating simple words, incorporate synonyms and more sophisticated terms. For instance, instead of always saying "good," consider "beneficial," "advantageous," or "positive." When describing a problem, use words like "challenge," "dilemma," or "obstacle." Learn common academic vocabulary, especially for Questions 3 and 4. Create flashcards or a vocabulary journal. Practice using new words in full sentences to ensure you understand their context.

Effective Practice Techniques

Regular practice with authentic-style questions is crucial. Use the provided sample questions and answers. Record yourself speaking. Listen critically to your own responses. Pay attention to:

- **Fluency:** Do you speak smoothly, or do you hesitate frequently? Practice speaking continuously.
- **Pronunciation:** Are your words clear? Do you articulate sounds correctly? Focus on common mispronunciations.
- **Intonation:** Does your voice rise and fall naturally? Varying your pitch makes your speech more engaging.
- **Timing:** Can you complete your response within the time limit without rushing or stopping short? Use a timer for every practice session.
- **Content:** Are your ideas well-developed and supported? Do you answer the question fully?

Seek feedback from a native English speaker or a tutor if possible. They can offer insights you might miss.

Strategic Study Plans

Fast Study Plan (1-2 weeks): If your test is soon, focus intensely on templates and time management. Practice at least two full speaking sections daily. Record and review every response. Prioritize understanding the structure of each question type. Memorize key transition phrases.

Comprehensive Study Plan (1 month+): Begin with a diagnostic test to identify weak areas. Dedicate specific days to each question type. For example, Monday for Question 1, Tuesday for Question 2, and so on. Incorporate daily vocabulary building. Practice active listening for integrated tasks. Gradually increase the number of full speaking section practices. Review your progress weekly. The key is consistent effort and targeted practice based on your performance.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The TOEFL Speaking section has four tasks: one independent and three integrated, requiring distinct strategies for each.
- For independent tasks, state your opinion clearly and support it with two distinct reasons and specific examples.
- Integrated tasks require strong note-taking skills to synthesize information from both reading and listening passages.
- Use structured templates for each question type to organize your thoughts and ensure a complete response within time limits.
- Practice speaking consistently, focusing on fluency, clear pronunciation, natural intonation, and effective time management.
- Expand your vocabulary with precise and varied language to enhance your score, especially for academic topics.
- Record your practice responses and critically review them to identify areas for improvement in delivery and content.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.

1. What are the three main scoring criteria for the TOEFL Speaking section?
2. How should you structure your response for TOEFL Speaking Question 1?
3. What is the primary difference between an independent and an integrated speaking task?
4. Why is effective note-taking crucial for integrated speaking tasks?
5. Name two specific practice techniques that can help improve your TOEFL Speaking score.

CHAPTER 5

Writing

This chapter focuses on the TOEFL iBT Writing section. It covers both tasks: the Integrated Writing Task (Question 1) and the new Academic Discussion Task (Question 2). You will learn specific strategies for approaching each question type, including effective note-taking, structuring your responses, and managing your time.

The chapter also provides guidance on common mistakes to avoid, essential tips for improving your score, and how to use templates to organize your thoughts. Finally, we will explore how artificial intelligence tools can assist your preparation process ethically and effectively. Mastering these techniques will help you produce clear, coherent, and well-supported written responses on test day.

Understanding the Academic Discussion Task (Question 2)

Covers: New TOEFL Writing Question: Guide to Academic Discussion Questions (video, 20 min) · TOEFL Writing Academic Discussion: Sample Questions and Answers (video, 34 min) · TOEFL Writing Question 2 Guide (2025) - SECRET FORMULA for 26+ (video, 13 min)

The TOEFL iBT Writing section includes a new task called Academic Discussion, also known as Question 2. This task assesses your ability to contribute to an online academic discussion. You will read a short prompt that introduces a topic and then read two brief posts from professors offering different perspectives. Your job is to write your own post, expressing an opinion and supporting it, while also engaging with the professors' ideas.

You have 10 minutes to complete this task. Your response should be at least 100 words long. The goal is to demonstrate clear communication, logical reasoning, and the ability to connect your ideas to an ongoing discussion. This task requires you to think critically and present a well-reasoned argument in a concise format.

Task Structure and Strategy

When you begin, carefully read the initial prompt to understand the central topic. Next, read both professor posts. Identify the main point or stance of each professor. Do they agree, disagree, or offer complementary views? Your response should acknowledge these perspectives.

Your own post needs a clear opinion. Decide if you agree with one professor more, disagree with both, or have a unique perspective that builds on their points. It is crucial to support your opinion with specific reasons, examples, or explanations. Do not simply state an agreement or disagreement. Elaborate on *why* you hold your view.

A strong response for the Academic Discussion task typically follows a clear structure:

- **Introduction:** Briefly acknowledge the discussion and state your position. You can refer to one or both professors here. For example, "I agree with Professor A's point about X."

- **Development:** Explain your reasoning. Provide specific details or examples to support your stance. Connect your ideas back to the professors' posts. You might explain how your experience confirms one professor's view or offers a different angle.
- **Conclusion:** Briefly summarize your main point or offer a final thought.

Achieving a High Score (26+)

To achieve a high score, aim for more than the minimum word count. A response between 120 and 150 words often allows for better development of ideas. Focus on clarity, coherence, and precision in your language. Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures naturally. Avoid grammatical errors and awkward phrasing.

Engaging directly with the professors' points is essential. Use phrases like, "As Professor Miller mentioned..." or "While Professor Lee suggests X, I believe Y because..." This shows you are actively participating in the discussion. Ensure your arguments are logical and well-supported. Practice writing under timed conditions to improve your speed and accuracy. Review sample answers to understand what makes a strong response. Pay attention to how high-scoring responses integrate ideas and use academic language.

Mastering the Integrated Writing Task (Question 1)

Covers: TOEFL Integrated Writing PRACTICE: Question 1 (video, 28 min) · TOEFL Writing Question 1 Guide: Sample Question and Essay Included (2025) (video, 26 min)

The Integrated Writing Task, also known as Question 1, requires you to synthesize information from two different sources: a reading passage and an audio lecture. You will first read an academic passage for three minutes. Then, you will listen to a lecture on the same topic. Your task is to write an essay that summarizes the main points of the lecture and explains how they relate to specific points in the reading passage. Typically, the lecture will challenge or contradict the claims made in the passage, but sometimes it may support them.

You have 20 minutes to write your response. The recommended word count is 150 to 225 words. The key to success is demonstrating your ability to understand, select, and report information from both sources accurately and coherently.

Effective Note-Taking Strategy

Efficient note-taking is critical for this task. During the three minutes you have to read the passage, identify the main idea and three main points supporting it. Jot these down concisely. When the lecture begins, focus on how the speaker addresses each of the points from the reading. Listen for direct refutations, alternative explanations, or supporting evidence. Note the lecturer's main argument and the specific examples or reasons provided for each point.

Organize your notes clearly, perhaps in two columns: one for the reading points and one for the corresponding lecture points. This makes it easier to structure your essay.

Essay Structure and Key Phrases

A well-structured Integrated Writing essay typically includes:

- **Introduction:** State the main topic and the overall relationship between the reading and the lecture. For example, "The reading passage discusses X, while the lecture challenges these points."
- **Body Paragraph 1:** Present the first main point from the reading passage. Then, explain how the lecture contradicts or supports this specific point, providing details from the lecture.
- **Body Paragraph 2:** Repeat the pattern for the second main point.
- **Body Paragraph 3:** Repeat the pattern for the third main point.
- **Conclusion (Optional but Recommended):** Briefly summarize the main disagreement or agreement.

Use specific transition phrases to show the connection between the reading and the lecture. Examples include:

- "The reading claims that..., however, the professor disputes this by explaining..."
- "Contrary to the passage's assertion that..., the lecturer argues that..."
- "While the article suggests..., the speaker provides a different perspective, stating..."
- "The lecture supports the reading's idea that..., adding that..."

Practice and Refinement

Practice integrated tasks regularly. Focus on accurately summarizing both sources without introducing your own opinions or outside information. Ensure your essay clearly links the lecture points to the reading points. Do not just summarize the lecture and then summarize the reading separately. The integration is what scores points. Pay close attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Allocate a minute or two at the end to quickly proofread your essay for any obvious errors. Review sample essays provided by ETS or in study guides to understand how high-scoring responses integrate information effectively and use academic language.

Essential Strategies and Tools for TOEFL Writing

Covers: TOEFL Writing: 5 Mistakes You Must Avoid (video, 11 min) · AI for TOEFL Writing: A Step-by-Step Guide (video, 11 min) · TOEFL Writing SECRETS Every Student Should Know (video, 14 min) · TOEFL Writing TEMPLATES, Quick and Easy (video, 4 min)

Succeeding in the TOEFL Writing section involves more than just understanding the task formats. It requires strategic preparation and careful execution. This section covers common pitfalls, effective templates, and how to use modern tools like AI to your advantage during practice.

5 Mistakes to Avoid

Many students lose points due to preventable errors. Be aware of these common mistakes:

1. **Misunderstanding the Prompt:** For the Integrated task, failing to connect the lecture to the reading is a major error. For Academic Discussion, not engaging with the professors' points or failing

to state a clear opinion will lower your score. Always ensure you address all parts of the prompt.

2. **Poor Time Management:** Running out of time means an incomplete response or no time for proofreading. Practice timing yourself strictly. Allocate specific minutes for planning, writing, and reviewing each task.
3. **Lack of Structure:** Disorganized essays are difficult to follow. Use clear paragraphs, topic sentences, and transition words. A logical flow of ideas is crucial for coherence.
4. **Grammar and Vocabulary Errors:** While some errors are expected, too many basic mistakes or misusing complex vocabulary will negatively impact your score. Focus on accuracy first. Expand your vocabulary gradually, using new words correctly in context.
5. **Not Meeting Word Count:** Both tasks have minimum word counts (150-225 for Integrated, 100+ for Academic Discussion). Falling short indicates insufficient development of ideas and will result in a lower score. Aim to exceed the minimum slightly.

Using Templates for Structure

Templates provide a framework for your essays, helping you organize your thoughts quickly and efficiently.

- **Integrated Writing Template:**

- Paragraph 1 (Introduction): State the main topic and the lecture's stance on the reading.
- Paragraph 2 (Body 1): Reading point 1, Lecture counter-point 1 with details.
- Paragraph 3 (Body 2): Reading point 2, Lecture counter-point 2 with details.
- Paragraph 4 (Body 3): Reading point 3, Lecture counter-point 3 with details.
- Paragraph 5 (Conclusion, optional): Briefly restate the overall relationship.

- **Academic Discussion Template:**

- Paragraph 1: Acknowledge the discussion, state your opinion, and refer to one or both professors.
- Paragraph 2: Explain your first reason or example, elaborating on your point.
- Paragraph 3: Offer a second reason or example, possibly connecting to the other professor's view or a new angle.
- Paragraph 4 (Conclusion): Briefly summarize your position.

AI for TOEFL Writing Practice

Artificial intelligence tools can be valuable for practice, but they must be used ethically. Never use AI during the actual TOEFL exam. For practice, AI can:

- **Generate Prompts:** Ask AI to create practice questions for the Academic Discussion task on specific topics.
- **Provide Feedback:** After you write your own response, input it into an AI tool and ask for feedback on grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and even structural coherence.
- **Compare to Samples:** Ask AI to generate a high-scoring sample response to a prompt you have completed. Compare it to your own work to identify areas for improvement.

- **Explain Concepts:** Use AI to clarify grammar rules or vocabulary usage.

Remember, AI is a tool. It complements your study, but it does not replace the need for genuine understanding and practice of writing skills. Always critically evaluate AI feedback.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Academic Discussion task requires you to state an opinion and support it while engaging with professors' posts within 10 minutes.
- For the Integrated Writing task, summarize how a lecture relates to a reading passage, focusing on specific points of agreement or disagreement.
- Effective note-taking is essential for accurately capturing details from both sources in the Integrated Writing task.
- Structured templates help organize your thoughts and ensure comprehensive coverage for both writing tasks.
- Avoid common mistakes like poor time management, lack of structure, and not meeting word count requirements.
- AI tools can assist practice by generating prompts and providing feedback, but they must not be used during the actual test.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.

1. What are the main requirements for the Academic Discussion Task (Question 2)?
2. How should you approach note-taking for the Integrated Writing Task (Question 1)?
3. What is the primary purpose of using templates in TOEFL Writing?
4. Name two common mistakes students make in the TOEFL Writing section.
5. How can AI tools be used ethically to prepare for the TOEFL Writing section?

CHAPTER 6

Your TOEFL iBT Orientation

This chapter introduces you to the TOEFL iBT, explaining how it evaluates your English skills in an academic context. You will learn the specific demands of the Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing sections, with a focus on the integrated tasks that are central to the test. Also, we will guide you through the invaluable free practice resources provided directly by ETS, showing you how to build an effective study plan around authentic materials. Understanding the test format and utilizing official practice are your first critical steps toward a successful score.

Understanding How the TOEFL iBT Tests Your Skills

Covers: How the TOEFL iBT Tests the Four Skills (reading, 2 min)

The TOEFL iBT is designed to simulate the English language demands of a university environment. Its core premise is to assess your ability to read, listen, speak, and write in academic settings. A crucial point to remember is that ETS, the test developer, revises the TOEFL periodically. Always confirm the most current test structure for your specific test date by visiting ets.org.

Reading

This section presents academic passages, similar to textbook excerpts. You will answer questions on vocabulary in context, factual details, inferences, rhetorical purpose, and main ideas. A smart approach is to work through the passage paragraph by paragraph, answering questions as they appear, rather than reading the entire passage first. Vocabulary questions directly reward knowing academic words. Building your academic word list will significantly benefit your performance here.

Listening

In the Listening section, you will hear university lectures and campus conversations. Each audio clip plays only once. Note-taking is allowed and is absolutely essential. Questions will test your understanding of main ideas, specific details, the speaker's attitude, and the pragmatic purpose behind what a speaker says (why they say it). Focus your note-taking on identifying the structure and key relationships, such as a professor presenting two theories and favoring one. Avoid trying to transcribe every word.

Speaking

This section consists of short, timed tasks. One is an independent task, where you express your opinion on a familiar topic. The others are integrated tasks. For these, you will read a brief text, listen to related audio, and then combine information from both sources into a spoken summary. You have only seconds of preparation time. Since nobody can speak perfectly with such limited preparation, using templates is highly effective. A rehearsed structural skeleton, for example, 'The reading proposes X, and the lecturer challenges this with two main points...', frees your mental energy to focus on the content. Scoring emphasizes clarity, organization, and complete coverage of the task, not your accent.

Writing

The Writing section includes an integrated task and a discussion-style task. In the integrated task, you summarize how a lecture responds to a reading. It is vital to accurately report information from both sources. The lecture typically challenges or elaborates on the reading. The discussion task requires you to contribute a supported opinion to an academic conversation quickly. Typing speed is a significant factor. If you type slower than 30 words per minute, consistent typing practice is a direct form of TOEFL preparation.

The Meta-Skill: Integrated Tasks

Integrated tasks are the TOEFL's signature. They are essentially transformation exercises: you absorb information in one format, restructure it, and then reproduce it in another. Every practice session should conclude with you producing a spoken or written response based on source material. This consistent practice builds the core skill that the test evaluates.

Your Official Free Practice Arsenal and Study Plan

Covers: Your Official (Free) Practice Arsenal (reading, 2 min)

Authentic TOEFL questions originate from ETS. Fortunately, a substantial amount of free, official practice material is available. This course focuses on teaching effective strategies and directs you to these official resources, rather than replicating them. Practicing with the real interface and under actual timing conditions is a critical part of your training.

Free Resources from ETS

- **TOEFL iBT Free Practice Test:** This is a full-length practice test covering all four sections. It is available on the ETS TOEFL website (ets.org/toefl) after creating a free ETS account. Use this test twice: once early in your preparation as a diagnostic tool, and again in your final two weeks of study.
- **Official Sample Questions and Scoring Guides:** ETS provides sample Speaking and Writing responses at various score levels, along with detailed commentary. Studying why a response received a particular score teaches you more than simply memorizing model answers. It helps you understand the scoring rubric from the grader's perspective.
- **TOEFL Go Official App and Practice Sets:** The ETS app offers free sample questions. It also provides options for paid practice with authentic scoring.
- **Format Updates:** Always check ets.org for any announced test changes. For example, with the 2026 revision, verify section timings, the number of tasks, and the score scale for your specific test date before finalizing your study plan.

Building a Study Block with Official Material

1. **Diagnose:** Begin with the free full-length practice test. Record your Speaking responses and honestly score your Speaking and Writing sections using the official sample-response commentary. Recording yourself for Speaking practice is essential.

2. **Learn:** Progress through the section strategies taught in this course's videos, focusing on one skill per week.
3. **Drill Daily Integrations:** Make it a daily habit to complete at least one read-listen-speak cycle and one read-listen-write cycle. You can even use non-TOEFL sources, such as a news article paired with a related podcast clip. Strengthening your integration skills is central to success on this test.
4. **Confirm:** Take the second official practice test approximately 10 to 14 days before your planned test date. Book your official test only when the result of this practice test falls within your target score range.

Score Planning

Research each target university's specific TOEFL requirements. Note both the total score needed and any minimum scores required for individual sections. Be aware that institutions sometimes update requirements when score scales change. Structure your preparation around improving your weakest section relative to its requirement. Focusing solely on the total score can obscure critical gaps that admissions offices will check.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The TOEFL iBT simulates academic English through integrated tasks that combine different skills.
- Always confirm the current test format, timings, and scoring at ets.org before your test date.
- Effective note-taking, focusing on structure and main ideas, is critical for success in the Listening section and integrated tasks.
- Using rehearsed response templates for Speaking and Writing tasks helps manage time pressure and organize your answers.
- Practice integrated tasks daily, even with non-TOEFL materials, to build the core skill of absorbing and transforming information.
- Utilize all free official ETS practice materials, including the full-length practice test and scoring guides, for authentic preparation.
- Start your preparation with a diagnostic practice test to identify your strengths and weaknesses, then tailor your study plan accordingly.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.

1. What is the primary purpose of the TOEFL iBT?
2. Why is it important to check ets.org for format updates before your test date?
3. How do integrated tasks differ from independent tasks in the TOEFL iBT?
4. What is the key strategy for note-taking during the Listening section?

5. Name two free official practice resources provided by ETS.
6. When should you consider booking your official TOEFL iBT test date?

CHAPTER 7

Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy

This chapter focuses on the Final Assessment for the TOEFL iBT Strategy course. This assessment serves as a crucial checkpoint in your preparation. It allows you to evaluate your understanding of the strategies and skills taught throughout the course.

The assessment helps identify your strengths and pinpoint areas that may require further review. Approaching this final quiz strategically will maximize its benefit to your overall TOEFL iBT preparation.

What You Should Have Mastered

Covers: Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy

By this point, you should have a solid grasp of the TOEFL iBT's structure and question types. You should be familiar with the task formats across all four sections: Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. A key skill is effective note-taking, especially for integrated speaking and writing tasks. You should also be able to deliver structured spoken responses within strict time limits. Finally, you should have practiced with authentic-style tasks, applying the strategies learned in previous modules. This foundation prepares you for the official test.

How to Approach the Final Assessment

Covers: Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy

Treat this final assessment as a mini-test. Find a quiet environment where you can concentrate without interruption. Pay close attention to the time limit for each question or section. The goal is to apply the strategies you have learned, not just to recall facts. Read each question carefully. Consider all options before selecting your answer. Do not rush, but also do not spend too much time on any single item. If you are unsure, make your best guess and move on. This mimics the real test experience.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Covers: Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy

One common mistake is rushing through the questions without fully understanding them. Take a moment to read instructions and questions completely. Another error is second-guessing correct answers. Trust your initial strategic thinking unless you find a clear reason to change your mind. Poor time management can also hinder performance. Practice pacing yourself during the assessment. Finally, do not view this quiz as merely a pass or fail. Its purpose is diagnostic. Use it to identify specific areas for improvement, rather than simply focusing on the final score.

Interpreting Your Results

Covers: Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy

After completing the final assessment, review your results thoroughly. Do not just look at your score. Examine which questions you answered correctly and, more importantly, which ones you missed. Identify patterns in your incorrect answers. For example, did you struggle with a particular question type? Was time a significant factor? Your results should guide your final study plan. If you performed well in Reading but struggled with integrated Writing tasks, dedicate more time to reviewing Module 6. Use the feedback to refine your strategies and target your weaknesses before the actual TOEFL iBT.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Final Assessment evaluates your overall readiness for the TOEFL iBT.
- Approach the assessment strategically, treating it like a practice test.
- Effective time management and careful reading are crucial for success.
- Common mistakes include rushing and not fully understanding questions.
- Interpret your results diagnostically to identify specific areas for review.
- Use your performance to refine your study plan and target weaknesses.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.

1. What is the primary purpose of the Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy?
2. How should you approach the Final Assessment to maximize its benefit?
3. Name two common mistakes students make during such assessments and how to avoid them.
4. Beyond the score, what is the most important aspect of interpreting your Final Assessment results?
5. How should your Final Assessment results influence your future study plan?

REFERENCE

Glossary

Academic discussion

A writing task where you respond to a professor's question and engage with other students' posts, expressing and supporting your opinion.

Academic discussion task (question 2)

A TOEFL writing task where you contribute to an online discussion by stating an opinion and supporting it, engaging with two professors' posts.

Academic english

The style of English used in university settings, characterized by formal vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and specific rhetorical patterns.

Active listening

A listening approach where you fully concentrate on the speaker, understand their message, comprehend the information, and respond thoughtfully, often by anticipating content and connecting ideas.

Coherence

The logical and clear connection of ideas in spoken or written communication.

Context clues

Hints or information within the surrounding text that help determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word or phrase.

Conversation

A dialogue between two speakers, usually a student and a university staff member or professor, in the TOEFL Listening section.

Delivery

One of the scoring criteria for the Speaking section, assessing your pronunciation, intonation, pace, and overall clarity of speech.

Detail question

A question that requires recalling specific facts, definitions, or pieces of information mentioned in the audio.

Diagnostic

Relating to the identification of the nature or cause of a problem. In this context, the assessment helps identify areas of strength and weakness.

Diagnostic test

An initial practice test taken to identify a student's current skill level, strengths, and areas needing improvement before beginning a study program.

Factual information question

A question asking for specific details or facts explicitly stated in the reading passage.

Final assessment

A comprehensive quiz designed to evaluate overall understanding and readiness for a larger goal, such as the TOEFL iBT.

Fluency

The ability to speak or write smoothly, easily, and accurately.

Gist-content question

A question that asks for the main topic or overall subject of an audio recording.

Gist-purpose question

A question that asks for the speaker's reason or intention behind a specific statement or the entire recording.

Independent task

A task that requires you to formulate and express your own opinion or ideas based on general knowledge and experience.

Inference question

A question requiring you to draw a logical conclusion based on implied information in the passage, not directly stated.

Integrated task

A task that requires combining information from multiple sources, typically a reading passage and a listening passage.

Integrated tasks

Test questions that require you to combine information from two or more sources (typically reading and listening) to produce a spoken or written response.

Integrated writing task (question 1)

A TOEFL writing task where you summarize and explain the relationship between a reading passage and a lecture on the same topic.

Language use

A scoring criterion evaluating your grammar, vocabulary, and ability to use complex sentence structures accurately and appropriately.

Lecture

An academic talk given by a professor or expert, typically longer and more detailed than a conversation in the TOEFL Listening section.

Note-taking

The practice of writing down key information while reading or listening to aid memory and comprehension.

Note-taking symbols

Short-hand characters or abbreviations used to quickly record information during a lecture or conversation, such as arrows for cause/effect or plus signs for addition.

Prose summary question

A question asking you to choose three sentences that accurately summarize the main ideas of the entire reading passage.

Rhetorical purpose question

A question asking why the author included a specific piece of information or used a particular phrase in the passage.

Rubric

A scoring guide that outlines the specific criteria and standards used to evaluate performance on a task, such as a Speaking or Writing response.

Scanning

Quickly looking through a text to find specific information, such as keywords or names.

Sentence simplification question

A question where you select the answer choice that best expresses the essential meaning of a complex sentence from the passage in a simpler form.

Skimming

Reading a text quickly to get a general overview of its main topic and structure.

Synthesis

The process of combining information from multiple sources to form a coherent new understanding or summary.

Task format

The specific structure and requirements of a particular question or section on the TOEFL iBT.

Template

A pre-defined structural outline used to organize ideas and ensure all required components of an essay are included.

Templates

Pre-structured frameworks for organizing your speaking responses, providing a consistent way to address each question type effectively.

Time management

The process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness or efficiency.

Toefl ibt

Test of English as a Foreign Language, Internet-Based Test, a standardized test for non-native English speakers.

Topic development

A scoring criterion that assesses how well you answer the question, organize your ideas, and support them with relevant details and examples.

Word count

The minimum and recommended number of words required for each writing task, indicating the expected depth of development.

REFERENCE

Answer Key

Chapter 1: TOEFL Course: Start Here

1. What is the primary purpose of taking notes during the TOEFL iBT Listening section?

Notes are crucial because you hear the audio only once. They help you capture main ideas, key details, and the speaker's attitude, which are essential for answering questions accurately and remembering information effectively.

2. How does the approach to the Integrated Writing Task differ from the Academic Discussion Task?

The Integrated Writing Task requires you to objectively summarize and synthesize information from a reading and a lecture. The Academic Discussion Task asks you to state and support your own opinion, engaging with a professor's prompt and other student responses.

3. What are two common mistakes students make in the Speaking section, and how can they be avoided?

Two common mistakes are running out of time and not structuring responses clearly. These can be avoided by strictly practicing with a timer to manage pace and by consistently outlining responses with a clear introduction, main points, and conclusion.

4. Why is it important to review practice test answers thoroughly, beyond just checking right or wrong?

Thorough review helps you understand *why* an answer is correct and *why* your incorrect answer was wrong. This analysis identifies specific weaknesses, such as vocabulary gaps, comprehension issues, or misinterpretation of question types, allowing for targeted improvement.

5. What is the main strategy for answering vocabulary questions in the Reading section?

The main strategy for vocabulary questions is to use context clues from the surrounding sentences. Even if you know the word, confirm that its meaning fits the specific context of the passage to avoid common distractors.

Chapter 2: Reading Strategies for the TOEFL iBT

1. What are three common TOEFL Reading question types, and what does each type assess?

Three common question types include Factual Information, which assesses your ability to locate specific details; Inference, which tests your capacity to draw logical conclusions from implied information; and Rhetorical Purpose, which evaluates your understanding of why an author includes certain elements in the text.

2. How can you manage your time effectively during the Reading section?

To manage time effectively, allocate approximately 17 minutes per passage. Avoid spending too much

time on any single difficult question. Make an educated guess if needed, mark the question, and move on, returning only if time allows at the end of the section.

3. What is the purpose of skimming a passage before reading it in detail?

Skimming a passage helps you quickly grasp the main topic, the author's overall purpose, and the general structure of the text. This initial overview provides a framework for understanding the details and helps you locate information more efficiently when answering questions.

4. When encountering unfamiliar vocabulary, what strategy should you use?

When you find an unfamiliar word, use context clues. Look at the words and phrases immediately surrounding the unknown term. The sentence or nearby sentences often provide enough information to infer the word's meaning within that specific passage.

5. Why is it important to take full practice tests under timed conditions?

Taking full practice tests under timed conditions is crucial because it familiarizes you with the test format, builds your stamina for the entire section, and allows you to refine your time management strategies. It also helps reduce test-day anxiety by simulating the actual exam environment.

Chapter 3: Listening

1. What is the primary purpose of taking notes during the TOEFL Listening section?

The primary purpose of taking notes is to create a reliable memory aid. Since you hear each audio recording only once and cannot replay it, notes help you recall main ideas, specific details, and the overall structure when answering questions.

2. Name two common types of listening questions you might encounter.

Two common types of listening questions are Gist-Content questions, which ask about the main topic, and Detail questions, which require recall of specific facts. Other types include Gist-Purpose, Function, Attitude, Organization, and Connecting Content questions.

3. What should you focus on when listening to a lecture or conversation to take effective notes?

When listening, focus on main ideas, key definitions, examples, the speaker's attitude or purpose, and relationships between ideas. Do not try to write every word; instead, capture keywords and use abbreviations and symbols to organize your thoughts efficiently.

4. How can you improve your listening skills during practice sessions?

Improvement comes from consistent practice under simulated test conditions, including playing audio only once and adhering to time limits. Also, thoroughly reviewing answers to understand mistakes and focusing on specific question types that challenge you are vital steps.

5. Why is it important to review incorrect answers thoroughly after practice?

Reviewing incorrect answers thoroughly helps you identify the specific reasons for your mistakes. This could be due to missed details, inadequate notes, misinterpreting the question, or confusion by distractors. Understanding these reasons allows you to target and improve your weak areas.

Chapter 4: Speaking

1. What are the three main scoring criteria for the TOEFL Speaking section?

The three main scoring criteria for the TOEFL Speaking section are delivery, language use, and topic development. Delivery refers to your clarity and pace. Language use assesses your grammar and vocabulary. Topic development evaluates how well you answer the question and support your ideas.

2. How should you structure your response for TOEFL Speaking Question 1?

For Question 1, you should structure your response by first stating your clear opinion or preference. Then, provide two distinct reasons to support your opinion. For each reason, offer specific details or examples to elaborate and strengthen your argument within the 45-second limit.

3. What is the primary difference between an independent and an integrated speaking task?

An independent speaking task (Question 1) requires you to generate ideas solely from your own knowledge and experience. An integrated speaking task (Questions 2, 3, 4) requires you to synthesize information presented in both a reading passage and an audio recording.

4. Why is effective note-taking crucial for integrated speaking tasks?

Effective note-taking is crucial for integrated speaking tasks because you must recall and combine specific details from both a reading passage and an audio lecture or conversation. Good notes help you organize these points, remember key information, and structure a coherent response within tight time limits.

5. Name two specific practice techniques that can help improve your TOEFL Speaking score.

Two specific practice techniques are recording yourself speaking and critically listening to your responses, focusing on fluency, pronunciation, and timing. Another technique is to use structured templates for each question type to ensure you cover all necessary points and manage your time effectively.

Chapter 5: Writing

1. What are the main requirements for the Academic Discussion Task (Question 2)?

For the Academic Discussion Task, you must read a prompt and two professor posts, then write your own post. Your response needs to state an opinion, support it with reasons or examples, and engage with the professors' ideas. The task has a 10-minute time limit and requires a minimum of 100 words.

2. How should you approach note-taking for the Integrated Writing Task (Question 1)?

For the Integrated Writing Task, first identify the main idea and three key points from the reading passage. Then, during the lecture, focus on how the speaker addresses each of those specific points. Organize your notes, perhaps in two columns, to easily link the reading's claims to the lecture's counter-arguments or supporting details.

3. What is the primary purpose of using templates in TOEFL Writing?

Templates provide a clear structural framework for your essays, helping you organize your thoughts

efficiently under timed conditions. They ensure that you include all necessary components of a high-scoring response, such as introductions, body paragraphs with supporting details, and connections between sources. This improves coherence and helps meet word count requirements.

4. Name two common mistakes students make in the TOEFL Writing section.

Two common mistakes include misunderstanding the prompt, which leads to irrelevant responses, and poor time management, resulting in incomplete essays or no time for proofreading. Other mistakes involve a lack of clear structure and numerous grammar or vocabulary errors.

5. How can AI tools be used ethically to prepare for the TOEFL Writing section?

AI tools can ethically assist practice by generating additional prompts for the Academic Discussion task or providing feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and structure for your self-written essays. You can also use AI to compare your responses to high-scoring samples. It is crucial never to use AI during the actual test.

Chapter 6: Your TOEFL iBT Orientation

1. What is the primary purpose of the TOEFL iBT?

The primary purpose of the TOEFL iBT is to simulate the English language demands of a university environment. It assesses a test taker's ability to read, listen, speak, and write in academic contexts, preparing them for higher education where English is the language of instruction.

2. Why is it important to check ets.org for format updates before your test date?

ETS periodically revises the TOEFL iBT format and scoring. Checking ets.org ensures you have the most current information regarding section timings, task counts, and score scales for your specific test date. This prevents you from preparing for an outdated test structure.

3. How do integrated tasks differ from independent tasks in the TOEFL iBT?

Integrated tasks require you to combine information from multiple sources, typically a reading passage and an audio lecture, to formulate a spoken or written response. Independent tasks, conversely, ask for your personal opinion or experience on a familiar topic without requiring you to synthesize external information.

4. What is the key strategy for note-taking during the Listening section?

The key strategy for note-taking in the Listening section is to focus on capturing the structure and main ideas of the lecture or conversation. Instead of trying to transcribe every word, concentrate on identifying key points, relationships between ideas, and the speaker's purpose or attitude.

5. Name two free official practice resources provided by ETS.

Two free official practice resources provided by ETS are the TOEFL iBT Free Practice Test, a full-length test available on the ETS website, and the Official Sample Questions and Scoring Guides, which offer example responses with commentary for Speaking and Writing tasks.

6. When should you consider booking your official TOEFL iBT test date?

You should consider booking your official TOEFL iBT test date only after taking a second full-length practice test, typically 10 to 14 days before your desired test date, and confirming that your score falls within your target range. This ensures you are adequately prepared.

Chapter 7: Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy

1. What is the primary purpose of the Final Assessment: TOEFL iBT Strategy?

The primary purpose is to evaluate your overall understanding of the course material and your readiness for the TOEFL iBT. It acts as a diagnostic tool, helping you identify your strengths and pinpoint areas that still need improvement. This assessment helps consolidate your learning.

2. How should you approach the Final Assessment to maximize its benefit?

You should approach it as a practice test in a quiet environment, paying close attention to time limits. Apply all the strategies learned throughout the course. This simulates the actual test conditions and allows for a realistic evaluation of your skills.

3. Name two common mistakes students make during such assessments and how to avoid them.

Two common mistakes are rushing and second-guessing. To avoid rushing, take time to read instructions and questions carefully. To avoid second-guessing, trust your initial strategic thinking unless there is a clear reason to change your answer.

4. Beyond the score, what is the most important aspect of interpreting your Final Assessment results?

The most important aspect is to identify patterns in your incorrect answers and pinpoint specific areas of weakness. This diagnostic review helps you understand *why* you missed questions. You can then use this information to create a targeted study plan.

5. How should your Final Assessment results influence your future study plan?

Your results should directly inform your future study plan by highlighting specific modules or skill sets that require more attention. If you struggled with a particular section, dedicate more time to reviewing that content. This targeted approach makes your remaining preparation more efficient.

CLOSING

Where to Go Next

After completing the "TOEFL iBT Complete Prep" course and this study guide, continue practicing your English skills. Focus on areas where you feel less confident. Take several full-length, timed practice tests to simulate the actual exam environment. This will help you manage your time effectively and reduce test-day anxiety.

Consider reviewing your performance on these practice tests. Identify any recurring errors or weaknesses. Dedicate additional study to those specific sections or task types. Consistent, focused practice is key to maximizing your score.

Once you feel prepared, proceed with booking your official TOEFL iBT. Your score on this exam can open doors to academic programs and professional roles. Remember that your dedication to this preparation will serve you well in your future endeavors.



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