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7 Secrets to Success:
TOEFL iBT®



The advantage you seek - and deserve

Winn Trivette II, MA

7 Secrets to Success: TOEFL iBT®

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7 SECRETS TO SUCCESS: TOEFL IBT®

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Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[7 Secrets to Success: TOEFL iBT®](#)

[Why You Need This Book](#)

[Surprise Gift for You](#)

[Secret #1: Command a strong vocabulary.](#)

[Secret #2: Confidently Answer The 4 Speaking Questions](#)

[Secret #3: Steps to No-Fear TOEFL Writing](#)

[Secret #4: Engage in Active Listening](#)

[Secret #5: Use Academic English.](#)

[Secret #6: Reading is Fundamental](#)

[Secret #7: Know These “Hidden Skills”](#)

[7-Day Online TOEFL Score Booster](#)

[Thank You](#)

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Why You Need This Book

Join the path to a high TOEFL iBT® score!

Welcome to Professor Winn's *7 Secrets to Success: TOEFL iBT®*.

This text is really a series of lectures that guide you to achieve an optimal score on the high-stakes TOEFL iBT exam.

The 7 Secrets are:

1. Command a Strong Vocabulary.
2. Confidently Answer All 4 Speaking Questions
3. No-Fear TOEFL Writing
4. Engage in Active Listening
5. Academic English
6. Reading is Fundamental
7. Know these Hidden Skills

Don't waste any time – you need the best resources possible to ace the exam.

Professor Winn's *7 Secrets to Success: TOEFL iBT®* is your go-to source for rapid preparation!

Every one of the seven secrets is a full TOEFL class to increase your confidence and test result on the big exam day.

You get a briefing on the potential pitfalls awaiting unsuspecting TOEFL test candidates – and how to avoid them!

I know your frustration in preparation to maximize your exam score.

I have more than 12 years of experience as an English teacher helping students just like you!

So, what follows is my compilation of secrets to help you to get the highest score possible on one of the most important exams in your life.

From my own experience in and out of the classroom, I happily present to you a sort of road map to maximize your TOEFL iBT® score!

You need to quickly become aware of these things to achieve a high score on the test.

Thus, you will be well-equipped to obtain your desired TOEFL iBT® result.

Your time is limited. You need results. I give you the steps to follow in your journey.

That's another reason to order Professor Winn's *7 Secrets to Success: TOEFL iBT®* today.

You get timely practical advice that I give my own students.

Now, I happily pass these juicy tidbits to you so you can sharpen both your English and TOEFL skills.

Get your copy of Professor Winn's *7 Secrets to Success: TOEFL iBT®* today and prepare for the high score you need on the TOEFL iBT® exam!

Your future awaits you.

Now, I've got a surprise gift for you next to complement your TOEFL preparation!

Good luck on the TOEFL!

Professor Winn Trivette II, MA

Surprise Gift for You

Sign up for my *TOEFL Email Blog* to further sharpen both your English and exam skills:

<https://englishlanguagetestprep.com/1>

Thank you!

Secret #1: Command a strong vocabulary.

Your understanding of what you read and hear is, to a very large degree, determined by your vocabulary, so improve your vocabulary daily.

- Zig Ziglar, motivational speaker

For Secret #1, you learn the types of vocabulary you need for a high score on the TOEFL exam.

Start now to build your vocabulary – if you haven't!

One of the easiest ways to increase your high score on the TOEFL iBT exam is to enrich your lexicon.

Directly boost your word power given the limited time of test preparation.

You can study vocabulary lists to speed up the expansion of your word power.

Though not explicitly tested on the TOEFL, you cannot do well on the test without a strong vocabulary.

3 Vocabularies

You need 3 types of vocabulary on the TOEFL test:

- 1) regular less common words,
- 2) idioms, phrasal verbs, and collocations, and
- 3) subject vocabulary.

Vocab 1: Less Common Terms

The best strategy with a limited amount of time is to study lists of vocabulary words, grouped by themes.

Unlike reading and recording unfamiliar words, thematic lists of vocabulary words are easier to learn because the words are associated with the same

topic.

Plus, take about 10 words at a time. Don't try to learn too many new words at a time.

Knowing the meaning of a word is useful but knowing how to use it in context is vital.

So, I suggest my own text - *303 Vocabulary Terms You Need* – available at <https://englishlanguageprep.com/303> – to grow your word power today.

You get 30 chapters of 10 words organized by themes which makes it easier to remember and associate your new words with particular topics.

Also, read widely to expand your vocabulary outside of your comfort zone to add less common vocabulary terms to your lexicon.

For example – use *Adroit* or *Adept* for “skillful.”

Synonyms are your friend on the TOEFL test.

Vocab 2: Idioms, Phrasal Verbs, Collocations

Don't stop there!

One of the features of native language proficiency is the use of idioms, phrasal verbs, and collocations.

As an advanced student of English, you should already be able to use these language expressions with fluency.

Idioms

Idioms are meant to be spoken and thus their conversational tone.

Idioms are colorful, less formal expressions that are steeped deep in the culture of native language speakers.

Probably just like in your own language, these phrases express universal truths.

For example:

No pain. No gain.

In other words, you need to suffer a little in order to succeed.

Or **tickled pink.**

You are so happy you are tickled pink!

That is a perfect expression when you receive your maximum score on the TOEFL after all your hard work!

Phrasal verbs

Using phrasal verbs in your speech is a sign of a smart professional.

You demonstrate your skills as a mature student of English and have a more sophisticated command of the language.

Phrasal verbs are usually two-word phrases consisting of verb + adverb or verb + preposition. Think of them as you would any other English vocabulary.

In English, there are lots of actions that we can only express using phrasal verbs.

The best way to learn phrasal verbs is to study them in small groups and also to write your own examples. When you see these verbs in context, they will make more sense!

There are 3 types of phrasal verbs and we cover them right now with examples to get you started.

1. Separable Phrasal Verbs

One type of phrasal verb is separable.

Separable phrasal verbs are when the verb and the preposition can be separated, putting the direct or indirect object in the middle.

For Example – the phrasal verb “to pick up” which in our example means “to get.”

Ex1: I need to pick up some bread and jam at the store.

Ex2: I need to pick some bread and jam up at the store.

We can put the object between the verb and the preposition, or we can put the object at the end.

However, Example 1 is clearer and thus is better to use even though both 1 and 2 are grammatically correct.

You need to know another part of using the separable phrasal verb.

When you use phrasal verbs with pronouns (him, her, them, us, or it), the pronoun must come between the verb and its preposition.

For example:

Ex1: I need to **pick up** Jim from the airport.

Ex2: I need to **pick him up** from the airport.

In Example 2, now you see the pronoun between *pick* – the verb – and the preposition *up*.

2. Inseparable Phrasal Verbs

A second type of phrasal verb is **inseparable**.

Some phrasal verbs cannot be separated.

This means that the verb and particle must stay together and when we want to use a direct or indirect object, it must always come after the complete phrasal verb.

For Example – the phrasal verb “to look after” which in our example means “to care for.”

Ex: Jesse, please **look after** my dogs this weekend.

Here are two more examples of inseparable phrasal verbs:

Ex: I can't believe Josh **backed out of** going to the movies with us.

Back out of – to fail to keep a promise

Ex: Teachers always encourage their students to **keep at** studying in order to succeed.

To keep at – to continue, to persevere

3. Both Separable and Inseparable

A third type of phrasal verbs is both separable and inseparable.

It can often be difficult for students of English to determine whether a phrasal verb is separable or inseparable.

When you encounter a new phrasal verb, you need to study it to determine which is which.

Some examples are:

To drop off – to leave something somewhere.

Please **drop off** my suit at the laundry.

Please **drop** my suit **off** at the laundry.

To fill out – to complete (as a form).

If you don't **fill out** the form, the clerk can't help you.

If you don't **fill** the form **out**, the clerk can't help you.

To put away – to put in its proper place.

The teacher told you to **put away** your cellphone during class.

The teacher told you to **put** your cellphone **away** during class.

Collocations

Using 'chunks' of vocabulary will help you to improve English fluency skills.

Lots of small phrases in English – chunks – go naturally together.

These two or three words often found together in an expression are called collocations.

The word collocation has its root in the Latin term *collocare* (to place).

Some common collocations frustrate students, especially those who speak Romance languages.

For example, in Spanish, French, and Portuguese, there is only verb for to do / to make. In Spanish, it is *hacer*.

However, in English, *collocations with do/make* are separated into the two verbs.

To do the laundry, to make the bed, to do homework, to make a cake

In sum, be sure to sprinkle your TOEFL speaking with idioms, phrasal verbs, and collocations to sound more native-like.

Access 9 more collocations, idioms, and phrasal verbs in the Workbook under *Secret#1*.

Vocab 3: Subject Vocabulary

As you know, the TOEFL is an exam based around the university experience.

Thus, you need some familiarity with terms from academic topics such as history, social science, the natural sciences, business, etc.

While you don't need to be an expert in any of these topics, if you have some vocabulary terms from these topics, this will help you greatly when you listen to the lectures.

Conclusion

Now you know about the 3 types of vocabulary and how important building strong word power is to your TOEFL score.

Strong word power is a potent weapon to maximize your result on the TOEFL exam!

Invest time – set aside study time especially for building your vocabulary – throughout your TOEFL preparation.

Make sure you strengthen both your regular vocabulary and can fluently and appropriately use collocations, idioms, and phrasal verbs on the exam.

More Resources

[303 Vocabulary Words You Need](#)

[181 Best English Collocations, Idioms, and Phrasal Verbs](#)

Secret #2: Confidently Answer The 4 Speaking Questions

For Secret #2, you learn how to prepare for the TOEFL Speaking Section.

In order to be confidently prepared for the TOEFL Speaking Section, this lecture is divided into three main parts:

- 1) An Overview of the 4 Speaking Questions and How to Answer Them,
- 2) Record your voice.
- 3) Make sure your pronunciation is clear.

Outside the TOEFL essay, the Speaking questions probably scare candidates the most.

Stop!

You've got this!

5 General Approaches to TOEFL Speaking Questions

Each of these approaches is discussed below with each question.

First, you need to know how each “questions works.”

As I tell my student, TOEFL success is built on ½ TOEFL skills and ½ English skills.

So, you must understand the setup of each question.

Second, during your preparation, work to upgrade your level of natural English fluency.

Don't think of the TOEFL as a foreign language test.

Instead, consider the exam as just another test because your English is so strong, nothing can make you nervous.

Third, because you have diligently studied vocabulary (regular vocabular words, collocations/idioms/phrasal verbs, and topic vocabulary), you are prepared for any question the test examiners serve up.

Fourth, time management is crucial for TOEFL Speaking and Writing success.

Fifth, be aware of the types of answers each question needs to get the maximum score.

Let's dive into the four TOEFL Speaking questions.

Answering the TOEFL Speaking Questions

TOEFL QUESTION 1 - Independent Speaking Question (Explain a Choice)

Preparation: 15 seconds

Speaking: 45 seconds

How it Works: Give and support your opinion on a familiar topic.

Answer:

State your opinion and develop your response with good examples and relevant details.

As with all speaking tasks, your response should be intelligible, should demonstrate effective use of good grammar and use solid vocabulary.

Develop your answer with good reasons and examples.

For Question 1, either give one reason and two examples or two reasons and two QUICK examples.

Be sure to use collocations, idioms, and phrasal verbs to increase your score.

Please skip "I believe that" or "I think that."

This is elementary English and wastes time. Just make your statement and try not to use “I” in your response.

You need to impress the TOEFL graders; this is the first question.

The graders listen to your English for the first time here.

Make the best impression possible!

TOEFL QUESTION 2 - Integrated Speaking Question (Campus Situation)

Preparation: 30 seconds

Speaking: 60 seconds

How it Works:

Question 2 begins the battery of combined skills questions (2-4).

The combined skills questions are unique to the TOEFL exam.

You are tasked to read, listen, and speak responses to the exam questions.

In Question 2, you begin reading about an issue in a campus announcement.

Listen to two students discuss the issue.

One student is the main talker and provides reasons, usually in opposition to the idea in the announcement.

Note these objections and be ready to paraphrase the vocabulary in the exchange.

Answer:

Your main task is to present the issue and the two or three objections or points of support given by the main talker.

Be sure to include as many details as possible from the audio exchange because that’s where your high score originates.

The reading is only to introduce the topic.

The talk is where the test examiners expect you to draw most of your answer.

The setup is point-counterpoint usually.

You want to match up the points in the reading with those arguments made by the main talker.

The man or woman either supports or contradicts the points from the reading.

Usually, the man or woman counters the points made in the campus announcement.

State the issue.

Combine the main talker's objections as counterpoints to the issue raised in the announcement using good grammar, vocabulary, and within the time limit.

Remember to use your own words for any keywords mentioned in the text or audio.

Also, make sure you use the audio more than the text.

The TOEFL graders are looking for the details from the audio – the most challenging part.

The graders know you can read English, but can you listen to English and relate the main points to the reading.

That is your main task in Question 2.

Like all the four speaking questions, practice, practice, and practice again until you can provide answers to these scenarios – within the test time limits.

TOEFL QUESTION 3 – Integrated Speaking Question (Academic) - Lecture, and Question

Preparation: 30 seconds

Speaking: 60 seconds

How it Works:

Use the reading as background information on the academic subject – only.

Use the points and examples in the audio (the more challenging part!) to answer the question following the lecture.

First, for 45 seconds, you read a short article on an academic topic.

Next, you listen to a short lecture on the topic. Note the points and examples given.

Lastly, include these relevant points and examples only from the lecture to answer the question .

Answer:

A fully developed response is coherent, uses solid grammar and vocabulary, and uses the information + examples given by the professor to explain the concept.

Good grammar includes using transitions– “therefore, however, in contrast” for example – in your response to help guide the listener through your summary of the main concepts.

Some popular topics are: biology and animals, business and marketing, psychology, and art, history and literature.

An example question could be:

Using the points and examples from the lecture, explain the concept / term described by the professor.

Note: Remember to paraphrase the vocabulary from the lecture in your response.

TOEFL QUESTION 4 - Independent Speaking Questions (Academic Lecture)

Preparation: 20 seconds

Speaking: 60 seconds

How it Works:

Imagine yourself in a university classroom.

Listen to a professor's lecture on an academic subject.

You are tasked to summarize the lecture including the main points and any examples.

Answer:

A typical question prompt is:

Using points and examples from the talk, explain the [subject] presented by the professor.

State the topic.

Give the two points with any examples.

Provide a quick conclusion to sum up your response.

Note: Remember to paraphrase the vocabulary from the lecture in your response.

Jot down good notes as you listen and try to organize your response while listening to the lecture to speed up your response.

Record your voice for TOEFL Speaking.

The four (4) TOEFL Speaking questions generate fear in test candidates.

Stop!

Be the best prepared by practicing each at home with your smartphone, tablet, or computer with a stopwatch.

Record your responses!

Remember – this simulates exactly what happens on the exam. You speak into microphone recorder!

Three Analyses

First, do a voice check.

Is your delivery loud enough?

Make sure you can be heard well enough so your answers are understandable.

Do you speak too quickly or slowly?

Don't rush your answer. Be confident and calm.

How is your rhythm and intonation?

Hit the "right notes" in English so you develop a steady and warm delivery of your responses.

Second, check your timing.

As you know, the TOEFL test has strict time limits on your answer.

Do you complete your answer in time?

Do you still have more to say? How much more? Do you need to pick up the pace or slow down a bit?

It's important to stop recording when your smartphone's alarm goes off.

It does no good to keep talking. You won't be able to do so on the test!

Third, check your content.

Is your answer responsive to the task? Do you answer the question?

Do you organize your delivery? Or is your reply just a jumble of fumbled words?

Do you use collocations, idioms, or phrasal verbs in your response?

Do you use appropriately sophisticated vocabulary words – le mot juste ?

Test examiners are waiting for you to use collocations, idioms, phrasal verbs, and adequate terms related to the topic.

Boosting your word power is the best move you can make to prepare for a high TOEFL score.

In fact, your use of the expressions could be the difference between a 25 or 27 for the Speaking Section.

Let your smartphone boost your TOEFL score. Record your voice and lose your nervousness.

Now you know an innovative way to increase your confidence for a higher TOEFL speaking score!

Make sure your pronunciation is clear.

Your pronunciation doesn't have to be perfect, but you do need to speak clearly and be understood under the time constraints of each test section.

Your focus for the Speaking Section should be to use English as naturally as possible.

How?

First, ahead you get a tutorial on speaking English clearly.

Second, you learn tips to develop your confidence to speak English under the test limits.

Finally, follow the suggested plan for practicing English for the exam.

Speaking Clearly

First, three factors influence your ability to be understood in English:

****Intonation**

****Word Stress**

****Sentence Stress**

The above influencers are discussed below.

First, it is important to work on your English pronunciation during your TOEFL test preparation.

Ways to Improve Your Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the producing clear sounds of speech.

You can improve your pronunciation by following these simple suggestions.

Watch television shows. Observe the mouth movements of the actors and/or actresses. Try to imitate the intonation and rhythm (see below) while repeating their words. Indeed, mimicking native manners is a principal way to develop your own voice in the new language.

Speak calmly. Until you have a solid understanding of intonation and rhythm of English, pronounce it slowly, again, to be understood by native speakers. Speaking too fast is a common trait of beginning learners who are (naturally) nervous.

Learn which words are stressed in an English sentence. The correct sounds and the stress (emphasis) given to these sounds in a sentence are two keys to being better understood in English. Why?

English is a stress-timed language.

In short, certain words in an English sentence are more valuable than others.

We discuss this in the section immediately below.

Practice the sounds and words that give you trouble. Ask a native speaker to pronounce the word for you.

Or look up the word in an online dictionary like Merriam Webster at m-w.com.

Pay attention to the stress of the troubled word.

Tone down any heavy accent from your first language. Any pronunciation carried over from your native language make understanding your speech in a new language difficult.

Note: a native accent is not the object here. We discuss how important a neutral accent is below.

Sing in English. Songs are natural examples of connected speech, another key to gaining natural flowing speech.

We rarely utter separate words.

Thus, connected speech, discussed below, is a subconscious way of linking words so chunks (groups) of words are pronounced naturally and logically.

Record your voice reading English aloud. You only know how you sound speaking any language by taping it. While tape recorders are as common as the vinyl record almost these days, your cell phone or tablet probably offers a recording device.

Read a newspaper or magazine article for two minutes.

Replay. How do you sound? Nervous?

Taping your own voice with practice actually will increase your confidence. Increased confidence produces a confident speaker who is understood and who communicates competently.

Intonation

Intonation is the flow or “music” of the language, how we say things rather than what we say.

Every spoken language has intonation so it is not a foreign concept for most students.

However, it is vital to being understood in English because a change in intonation can change the meaning of what you are trying to say.

Look at these examples:

Ex1: I said I wanted three scoops of ice cream. (simple statement)

Ex2: I said I wanted three scoops of ice cream. (the emphasis is on what you did, action)

Ex3: I said I wanted three scoops of ice cream. (the emphasis is on the number, three scoops, not two or four and maybe with some anger).

A simple statement can turn into a question given a shift in intonation.

Ex 1: You are going to the movies tonight. (simple statement)

Ex 2: You are going to the movies tonight? (rising intonation, yes/no question)

Thus, you can quickly see how important intonation is to communicate fluently.

Stress: Words and Sentences

Stress is emphasis given to a word or a group of words (sentence).

In the examples above, different stress on words in the sentences conveyed different meanings.

There are two types of stress in English: word and sentence.

Word stress is the pronunciation found in a dictionary. One syllable is stronger than the weaker ones in a word.

Ex: photographer, America, English, sesame.

If a speaker does not emphasize the highlighted syllable (location of the stress), the listener will have a difficult time to understand the speech and probably will give a frown at hearing the odd sounds of his or her language.

Sentence stress is arguably more important to be understood in English. English is a time-stressed language, not syllabic like Portuguese, Spanish or French.

Native speakers listen for the loud (strong) words in a sentence, not the quiet (weak) ones. Thus, emphasize the loud words in a sentence and

dramatically improve your understanding by other speakers of English.

Which words get emphasized in the English sentence? Content words.

Content words are strong in sentences and receive more emphasis from native speakers. They provide information (thus content) and are essential for understanding.

Notice the examples of **content words** below.

Content Word / Example

Nouns / Juan, baker, street, breakfast, satisfaction

Adjective / big, fat, ugly, tall

Full Verbs / walk, talk, run, catch, understand

Adverbs / slowly, patiently, also, enough

Numbers / one hundred, five, thirty-three, first, fifth

Interjections / Whoa!, phew!, Wow!, well

Negatives / not, never

Thus listen to your next English sentence and notice these types of words receive emphasis or are louder in a sentence.

Those are the content words.

Which words are not emphasized in an English sentence? **Function words**.

Function words are weak in sentences and receive less emphasis from native speakers.

They serve a supporting role (thus function) and are less essential for understanding.

Function Word / Example

Prepositions / in, on, at, between,

Pronouns / he, she, we, it, one

Determiners / the, a, that, my, more, much

Conjunctions and, that, when, although, or

Modals / can, must, will, should, ought

Auxiliary (helping) verbs / be (is, am, are), have, got, do

Ex1: I do not eat green eggs and ham.

Content words: not, eat, green, eggs, ham

Notice these content words receive the stress and are therefore louder and longer when you say the sentence (or they should be!)

Also, if you just spoke these content words, the listener would understand the sentence.

Ex2: I do not eat green eggs and ham.

Function words: I, do, not, and

The function words are barely audible when you say the sentence.

Speaking Confidence

Candidates often struggle with speaking English confidently.

The fact that you have to answer a set of questions within a time limit only ratchets up the pressure.

Stop!

Here are three ways to be better prepared for your performance on the TOEFL® iBT Speaking Section.

First, work on how you speak English (see the above section!). Is your voice jittery?

Or do you say your words clearly and crisply?

Second, get organized! Take notes. Structure your responses according to the Speaking Question.

Third, boost your vocabulary.

Think about it. You need the right word at the right moment to make your point effectively.

Strong word power is your best way to be ready for the Speaking Section.

Speaking Practice

Combine speaking clearly, better pronunciation, and extra confidence in your practice to maximize your exam score.

An extra trick is to practice speaking answers to TOEFL questions with ambient noise.

Don't practice speaking in a quiet room free of distractions!

Why? It's simple. On test day, TOEFL test takers are all speaking their responses at the same time in one big hall or classroom.

You may be very distracted by the other students making their responses on all sides of you if you are not prepared for this.

Some people are literally paralyzed by it!

Instead of complaining about distractions at the exam, prepare for it.

Conclusion

Throughout your TOEFL exam preparation, you want to simulate testing conditions so you are better prepared on the big day.

By this time, you know how you sound when you speak English.

Are you clear? Do you hit the right intonation? Do you give correct stress on words and sentences? Be sure to record your voice during Speaking practice always.

Don't despair.

Work with a native teacher with extensive TOEFL experience to help you speak English more naturally.

And now some final points about the TOEFL Speaking Questions.

Five key things to keep in mind for the TOEFL Speaking Questions:

- 1) Practice with the test limits at home before the exam using your smartphone or tablet. Set a timer and record the delivery of your answers.
- 2) Organize your response and connect your ideas with discourse markers.
- 3) Paraphrase always.
- 4) Use idioms, collocations, and phrasal verbs as appropriate.
- 5) Details, detail, details. Be sure to take accurate notes and diligently weave details from the audio lectures into your responses for Questions 2-4.

More Resources

Please consult the More Resources in the section for Secret #2.

[Practice with Professor Winn](#)

[TOEFL Speaking Practice + Sample Answers](#)

Secret #3: Steps to No-Fear TOEFL Writing

For Secret #3, you improve your writing skills for a higher score on the TOEFL Writing Section.

The main approaches to Writing Tasks 1 and 2 are explored followed by the all-important topic of – Proofreading.

Unfortunately, writing is a neglected subject in many English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in my experience.

While pursuing the communicative method to instruct students (focused on speaking), many English schools (and teachers) forget that writing is also a communicative skill.

When students need a high score on a standardized English exam like the TOEFL or IELTS, all that time focused on speaking seems wasted when the student cannot write an essay.

ESL instructors often skimp on writing because they are also not comfortable with written expression which does not help their students at all.

Stop!

What follows below is an X-ray of the two TOEFL test tasks in the writing section, which approaches are best to answer the questions, and supplemental resources to boost your English writing power!

TOEFL Writing

Two writing tasks confront test candidates: 1) the combined skills writing exercise in Task 1 and 2) the independent writing exercise (essay) in Task 2.

You have 20 minutes to write about 225 words in an effective response to Task 1.

You have 30 minutes to write at least 300 words in an effective response to Task 2.

Get ready to learn how to conquer these two TOEFL writing tasks with ease.

TOEFL Writing Task 1 (Combined Skills Exercise)

This task is the combined skills exercise – you need to read, listen, and write a response.

Format:

1. Read for 3 minutes a passage about a topic.
2. Listen for 2 minutes to a lecture related to the topic, but with a different perspective.
3. Write your response summarizing the points in the lecture and explaining how they relate to specific points in the reading passage.

Approach to Notes:

1. Before you begin, set up your notes.
2. On your paper, draw a “T” and label the Left half “R” for Reading and the Right half “L” for lecture.

Ahead you learn more about this approach.

Approach to Reading Passage:

1. Write the main idea – usually in the first paragraph - in your notes.
2. Note also the three supporting points from the subsequent paragraphs.
3. Don’t memorize them – you will see the reading passage again.
4. Remember – the most important part of the combined skills is the upcoming audio lecture.

Approach to Listening Passage:

1. Take notes and listen for specific points that relate to the points in the reading.
2. Match up the points in the listening with the points in the reading.
3. How are the reading and lecture different? Where do the points match up?

Remember, the lecture supports or refutes what's in the reading.

The Task:

1. Answer the question.
2. Weave information from the lecture and reading into your response.
3. Remember – if you only write about the reading, you will lose points for not answering the question!

Answering Writing Task 1

If you haven't, please make sure you turn now to Secret #3 in your Workbook.

Remember this point:

Responses are graded on the quality of the writing and on how well candidates present the points in the lecture and their relationship to the reading passage.

Now, let's focus on how to maximize your score.

READING:

Candidates have 3 minutes to read the academic text.

******Use the scratch paper provided by the test center.

******Set up your notes.

First, ID the Topic in the reading:

Then, draw a "T grid" on your paper **as shown in your workbook.**

Reading Lecture

As mentioned previously...

On the Left Side - write " Reading."

On the Right Side – write "Lecture"

Skim the text to get the gist of the reading. Remember, the text reappears later.

Pay attention to the first sentence of the paragraphs (typically the topic sentence).

Note down the main focus of the paragraph with the points and examples in on the left side of your T-chart.

Like the setup as shown in your workbook:

Reading Lecture

Pt 1 + Example

Pt 1+ Counter Example

Pt 2 + Example

Pt 2 + Counter Example

Pt 3 + Example (if there is one) Pt 3 + Counter Example (if there is one)

On the left side, you see the reading points.

There are three (3); sometimes there are only two (2).

Make sure you grab the examples that the reading provides.

On the right side, are the notes from the audio or the lecture.

Again, there may be three (3) or there are two (2).

Also, grab the counterexamples and weave these points and examples in your final report.

Normally, the audio opposes what's in the reading.

Don't worry about the details - the reading will appear again.

Focus on the key terms in the reading - you need them for your writing.

LISTENING:

****Listen to the lecture for support OR counterpoints - arguments against what is stated in the reading.**

Remember the Lecture either supports or refutes the idea in the Reading.

You'll know from the beginning where the professor stands.

Write these points in the right column of your "T."

As always keep in mind - use the information from the AUDIO **more than** the reading to write your paper.

Since the audio is more difficult, the TOEFL examiner wants to see your comprehension of the lecture.

****Then, write your paper.**

STRUCTURE OF RESPONSE:

Effective notes allow you to "translate" them into paragraphs for your written answer.

Use your T-chart notes as a "roadmap" to write your paper paragraph by paragraph now.

If there are three major points in the reading and lecture, then write four paragraphs total (starting with an Introduction).

What follows is a paragraph by paragraph outline of an effective response to the Integrated Writing task.

Introduction: *The reading passage states...The lecturer says...*

[in next 3 paragraphs - how does the LECTURE support/oppose the reading]

Body Paragraph 1: The lecturer suggests the reading's point of [Reading Point 1] and its [reading example 1] is wrong/correct because of [lecture point 1] with the example of [lecture example 1].

Body Paragraph 2: The reading's [Reading Point 2] and example [Reading Point 2 example] is supported/opposed by the lecturer because of [lecture point 2] and the example of [lecture example 2].

Body Paragraph 3: The lecturer agrees with/contradicts reading's point of [Reading Point 3] by stating [lecture point 3] as illustrated by [lecture example 3].

[no conclusion!]

EXTRA TIPS:

****Remember** - use Academic English in the response. No personal pronouns (I, you, we, he/she) are allowed.

****Write:** *The lectures states...The professor says...*

****Paraphrase** the key terms from the reading - don't copy them!

****Main Objective:** TOEFL examiners are looking for how well you're able to select important information from the lecture, then clearly present it in relation to the relevant information from the reading.

****Use** the 4-paragraph format above with:

******** good grammar (complex grammar structures – see Chapter 37),

******** vocabulary (paraphrase the key terms, don't repeat them!), and

******** transitions (however, in contrast, nonetheless, etc.).

HOW BEST TO PREPARE:

Practice making summaries.

Read two articles that are on the same topic and write a summary of each. Then, explain the ways in which they are similar and the ways that they're different.

Practice paraphrasing.

Build your vocabulary.

Replace your own words for the key terms in your response.

Conclusion

The Integrated Writing response requires a specific approach (point-counterpoint note taking in the T-chart) and particular written response (4-paragraph essay).

Above all, be sure to answer the question – the #1 TOEFL grading criteria.

Try a TOEFL Writing Test and have [a native English TOEFL professor](#) to grade it for you.

Set up a class time with me – Professor Winn – at:

<https://englishlanguagetestprep.com/consultation>

How to answer Writing Task 2 - the essay.

The TOEFL essay always is a stumbling block for many students.

One of the weakest skills for students of English is writing.

Lamentably, writing instruction and practice are neglected in too many English classrooms around the world.

As a result, students are ill-prepared for communicating written English in the workplace, daily life, and yes, on the TOEFL exam.

Stop!

You can sharpen your writing and associated skills in time to maximize your score on the TOEFL iBT exam.

What follows is a review of opinion essay, how to plan and organize it, and how to start the essay with an Introduction Paragraph.

If you can write a solid Introduction Paragraph, then you can write the whole essay.

Shortly, you get an Introduction Paragraph to answer an essay prompt.

Writing the Opinion Essay

Your Task:

Explain your opinion - 30 minutes, 300 words long, good organization (thesis + paragraphs), Connect Your Ideas (linking words and transitions), vocabulary, solid grammar, using Academic English which we discuss later in Secret #5.

Types of Essays:

- Support your opinion
- Agree or Disagree
- Advantages or Disadvantages (choose 2)
- Explain your preference for something
- Explain the importance of something

Requirements:

****Strong, clear thesis statement + "for three reasons"**

****3 Supporting Ideas organized in paragraphs**

****Paraphrase with Good Vocabulary**

****Use Good Structure**

****Use of connectors to link ideas inside your paragraphs, and between your paragraphs**

****Solid Grammar**

****Proofread!**

Writing the Opinion Essay

Now, you will learn the fine details of writing a solid opinion essay incorporating the above requirements.

You have 30 minutes to cobble together 300 words in an answer to the essay prompt.

Here is a suggested time budget for the essay:

3 minutes – pre-writing

25 minutes – writing

2 minutes – proofread

Now, let's learn more about each of these steps.

3 Stages in Detail

Pre-Writing: [3 minutes]

THINK. Analyze the prompt. What is the question you need to answer? How many parts of the prompt are there? Be sure to address each part in your response.

Before you write one word, you need to think about your answer, organize your response, and plan your essay.

The TOEFL essay should be four paragraphs with the following structure:

Introduction Paragraph

Body Paragraph 1

Body Paragraph 2

Body Paragraph 3

Conclusion

Note your thesis statement.

What are your three (3) supporting arguments for that thesis? They form the basis for your Body Paragraphs.

Also find paraphrases (your own words) for the key terms in the prompt – remember – you don't want to copy!

Given you only have three (3) minutes for the Pre-Writing part of your essay, you need to practice under the test conditions at home and work with a TOEFL instructor to help you, if needed.

Writing an essay is something that does not come natural for many test candidates, but with practice (and patience!) you can succeed. Don't worry.

Let's work with the following essay prompt and set up our essay information before we turn to Step #2 – the writing.

Essay Prompt:

Joblessness is a challenge for recent college graduates. To what extent do you agree?

Now, let's turn to Step #2 – Writing.

Here is one introduction paragraph you could write as a response. Yours may be entirely different but still follow the same format.

Recent university graduates often do not have a job for three reasons. First, those who newly have a college degree do not have the skills a company needs. Second, competition is fierce because of the current difficult job market. Third, graduates may enjoy time off before obtaining employment. These three aspects are discussed below.

Notice the first line is your thesis statement.

Then, three supporting arguments set off using signposting – First...Second...Third...

The keyword “joblessness” has been paraphrased to “do not have a job.”

The key term “recent college graduates” is substituted by “recent university graduates” and “those who newly have a college degree.”

Finally, the last sentence is a Transition to the rest of the essay.

You want your Introductory Paragraph to be “lean and mean.” Tell the reader your answer to the essay prompt right up front in the first line.

Then give your supporting arguments which will be developed in your Body Paragraphs. Finally, end with the transition to start your essay.

In Body Paragraphs 1 2, and 3, you want to develop your three ideas from the Introduction Paragraph.

The Structure of the Body Paragraph:

Topic Sentence

Support Sentence 1

Reason 1

Example 1

Transition Sentence to Body Paragraph 2

Do the same for Body Paragraph 3.

Sample Body Paragraph 1 for our essay prompt:

First, new college graduates often lack practical experience needed to perform their target job well. Universities focus on theory. Thus, students are sometimes ill-prepared to translate book knowledge to the daily needs of a business. For example, an MBA graduate may not have the digital skills to conduct meetings in today’s virtual environment caused by the Covid epidemic. While their education may not be complete, post-college job seekers must also endure a challenging employment market.

Commentary:

“First” – use signposting for each of your body paragraphs, too.

The first line is your topic sentence and tells the reader what single idea you discuss in the paragraph – lack of practical experience – which is consistent

with our Introductory Paragraph's "do not have the skills a company needs."

The second sentence is the reason – "focus on theory."

Next, the connective "thus" is used to show the consequence of this reason – "students are ill-prepared."

Then, "for example" – another connective – illustrates a practical example of not having the skills.

You always want to have a Reason + Example in your paragraph.

The last sentence is your Transition – the "bridge" between Body Paragraph 1 and 2.

The Transition sentence looks backward to the current paragraph and forward to the next paragraph.

This connection between paragraphs builds coherence and cohesion and that increases your score.

Writing the Conclusion

Your conclusion should be one or two sentences.

Your conclusion should refer to the thesis (restate it, don't copy your own words) and provide a summary of what you wrote.

You don't want to write about all three ideas in the paragraphs again.

The conclusion is a summary of your ideas.

However, do leave the reader with a final strong impression about your essay (a clincher as it is known among writers).

For the best result, practice writing with me – Professor Winn –

<https://englishlanguagetestprep.com/consultation>

Now, let's turn to the crucial last part of the writing process – proofreading your material before final submission.

Precise Proofreading, please!

Proofreading is a critical part of the writing process, not an extra step!

Be sure to leave time for proofreading your two written papers on the TOEFL exam.

Proofreading is a system each writer develops in his or her own way.

You need to set an amount of time (5 minutes is normal for the essay, perhaps 3 minutes for Writing Task 1) to devote to editing your paper for the following:

****Grammar mistakes**

****Punctuation errors**

****Capitalization snafus**

****Vocabulary usage problems**

****Spelling issues**

****Ask: Did I answer the question effectively?**

Now, let's take a closer look at each of these elements so your papers are topnotch and are ready for a higher score on the exam!

Your Proofreading System

Develop your own method to make sure your paper is ready to submit!

Here are some suggestions:

1. Read your paper silently line by line. Do your words “flow?” In other words, does the English seem natural to you?

Depending on your level of fluency, your proofreading may differ from another.

I always remind my students to review their papers before submitting them.

However, they rarely do. So, I encourage you to do so in order to get a high score!

2. Check your paragraphs. Are there at least four (4) sentences?

3. In the essay, do you follow good form? Are there four paragraphs? Do you have a conclusion?

What to Proofread for

Do not review your paper for all types of errors at the same time.

So, start with grammar.

Some common mistakes are:

- Does every sentence have a subject and verb and express a complete thought?

For example: After Regina came home from work.

Not a sentence! This is a fragment which costs you points. The “after” notes a dependent clause, not an independent clause (sentence) that can stand alone.

The repair is easy, however.

Correct: After Regina came home from work, she prepared a hot bath.

- Is there good subject-verb agreement?

For example: Alfonso walk to class every day.

Alfonso – singular subject

Walk – for a plural verb

Thus, there is a mismatch!

Correct: Alfonso walks to class every day.

These are two of the biggest grammar snafus students often commit.

Punctuation Errors.

Good punctuation is just as important as good grammar. The two go together!

For example: Liza likes to study on rainy nights, the rain is relaxing.

The above is a classic mistake – the comma splice between the two sentences.

A comma is only a “pause” – not a complete stop.

You may only place a period at the end of a sentence and begin the next sentence with a capital letter.

Or you may add a semicolon which is strong enough to hold two sentences together; just make sure that the sentences are on the same topic.

Capitalization Snafus

If there is one thing that makes a paper just appear horribly wrong, it is misplaced capitalization or no capitalization at all.

Capitalize proper nouns: names of people, languages, rivers, oceans, mountains, companies, and countries.

For example: Juanito, Italian, the Nile River, the Atlantic Ocean, the Alps, Apple, and Botswana.

Capitalize the first word of a sentence.

For example: The young fox jumped over the log.

Even a simple error like capitalization can give a bad impression to the TOEFL grader!

Vocabulary Usage Problems

Use your strong word power to get the high score you seek – and deserve!

You also want to focus on the “le mot juste” – the right word at the right time, always.

Do not use a “fancy” word just to use it. It will seem (painfully) forced and artificial. The TOEFL grader will not be impressed.

However, periodically, use a strong vocabulary term that helps you make a point and you will be rewarded. It is a fine balance.

This also goes back to your writing style.

As the TOEFL grader reads your paper (very quickly I might add), she or he gets a “feel” for your writing.

Double check that you used the vocabulary terms appropriately.

Spelling Issues.

You have total control over the spelling in your paper.

Remember the classic tale most school children learn – “i before e except after c” – for example.

For example: receipt

Good vocabulary and spelling go together.

As you learn a new word in English, make sure you are confident of its spelling!

Ask: Did I answer the question(s)?

Finally, above all, make sure you comply with the #1 grading criteria on the exam: Does the candidate adequately address each part of the essay prompt?

Did you answer the questions?

Then, how well did you answer the questions?

Do you offer reasons and examples to support your arguments?

These are the final review questions.

Just because you have poured all your energy into answering either writing task 1 and the essay does not mean you are finished.

Use the remaining time – hopefully, you planned at least 5 minutes! – to review over your writing.

Use the above system and make the above checks for any mistakes so your paper is in top form before you submit it for grading.

Be sure to make proofreading a part of your practice during TOEFL preparation so when test day arrives you are ready!

Include these 5C's in TOEFL Writing.

Finally, let me introduce you to the 5C's of Writing that you should use in TOEFL writing.

Many candidates are not comfortable writing English.

Fortunately, you get these 5 C's of English writing to help.

Again, this is another reason to start your TOEFL test preparation in advance of the big test day: you have more time to build the necessary test and English skills to achieve an optimal score!

5 C's of English Writing

CLEAR: You have a thesis statement that outline the purpose of your writing for the reader.

COMPLETE: You answer all parts of the writing tasks.

CONCISE: You include only necessary and relevant information while using the least words to say the most.

COHERENT: You write in paragraphs with good sentence structure so the reader easily understands your message.

CORRECT: You proofread your text for any mistakes with grammar, vocabulary, style, or substance.

Conclusion

Now you should feel more confident in regards to the TOEFL essay.

While writing is a challenge for many candidates, you don't have to let your score suffer.

Practice writing the essay during your test preparation, preferably with a TOEFL instructor to maximize your score!

Can you produce a crisply written English essay the includes all five (5) of the above elements?

At first, you probably need some extra guidance.

One of your early moves is to practice writing a journal topic every day.

Writing is like a muscle that needs to be exercised daily.

Once you commit to think in English, master the mechanics of writing, and put down your thoughts on paper (or computer screen!), you're on your way!

More Resources

[Practice your writing with Professor Winn](#)

[Writing Task 1 – What to Write \(video\)](#)

Secret #4: Engage in Active Listening

Most of the successful people I've known are the ones who do more listening than talking.—Bernard Baruch

In Secret #4, active listening and how to do it.

The TOEFL iBT® Listening section is designed to measure your ability to understand conversations and lectures in English by connecting and synthesizing information.

Active listening is a key habit for success on the TOEFL iBT® exam.

And not just on the Listening Section of the test!

On the TOEFL exam, engage in the active process of understanding information using conscious focus and interest.

The combined skills questions – Integrated Writing task and Speaking Questions 3 and 4 – also require a strong listening ability.

On the TOEFL Listening Section, you will encounter a mix of these types of tasks:

****Gist - main idea**

****Detail - find particular information**

****Function - meaning in context**

****Attitude - how the speaker thinks or feels about something**

****Organization - about the examples in a lecture**

****Connecting Content - synthesize information to get an answer**

****Inference - "reading between the lines"**

An excellent introduction to all these questions can be found on the ETS page at: <https://bit.ly/etslisten>

Two aspects about active listening must be known:

****look out for the purpose of the lecture or conversation within the first few seconds of the talk, and**

****identify the reasons and/or examples related to that purpose.**

In other words, on the TOEFL you need **Informational Listening** - learn something new, be open-minded, and focus on the key points like in a lecture.

You need to anticipate the main idea of the audio you hear on the exam.

Note taking is an invaluable skill in TOEFL Listening exercises.

[We discuss note taking in Secret #7 in the last lecture]

Consider answers to the following questions and take notes on your scratch sheet of paper:

1. What are they talking about?
2. How do they feel about it?
3. What are the problems or key points?
4. Why did he or she say that?
5. What are they going to talk about next?

Listen for the main idea of the lecture or conversation and then note details that expand upon that point.

The notes you take will serve as a guide and help you relate essential information.

Next, you may need to infer an opinion, attitude, purpose, or connection among statements which will help you answer a question.

Remember to paraphrase and to not copy the exact words in the audio. You will not earn any points using the phrases in the writing or speaking prompts.

That is why a superior vocabulary is indispensable for TOEFL success.

Instead, think of synonyms you can use to describe the main idea and details while listening to the audio.

In addition, you need to connect details to the main idea and supporting details.

The golden rule to listen actively is to stay attentive, but relaxed.

Even if you miss out something, don't worry and focus what is coming next.

Be alert for signal words that indicate different part of the passage - **introduction, major steps, examples, conclusions, etc.**

Conclusion

Hone your active listening habit during TOEFL preparation.

Practice note taking with academic lectures.

Boost your vocabulary.

Learn to make inferences.

Do outlines to capture the main idea and supporting details.

You'll be better able to score points on the Listening, Writing, and Speaking Sections!

Now, you can engage in Active Listening in the TOEFL Speaking section.

Finally, be sure to check out the More Resources for Secret #4 in your Workbook.

More Resources

[ETS Listening Page](#)

[TOEFL Listening Guide \(video.playlist\)](#)

[TOEFL Listening Practice Test + Answers](#)

Secret #5: Use Academic English.

Academic English is the written language used in universities for research reports and dissertations.

The TOEFL is all about the university and thus candidates need Academic English and solid writing skills to answer both tasks in the Writing Section.

Ironically, many TOEFL candidates aspire to study at a university in an English-speaking country and go on to learn Academic English there.

However, before the exam, you do need to learn a measure of Academic English so you do well on the TOEFL test.

Today you will do two things here:

- better understand and confidently use Academic English
- be better prepared to score higher on the exam as a result.

In this endeavor, we review four (4) aspects of Academic English with examples to help you.

They are:

- A. Formal, Serious (Tone)
- B. Precision, yet Hedging
- C. Clear, Easy to Understand Sentences
- D. Objective, Rational, Intellectual, Impersonal style

Let's get started.

A. Formal, Serious (Tone)

Contrary to too many blog reports and videos on the Internet, you do not want to write like you speak on the TOEFL exam.

You must write at a higher level to get your desired score on the exam.

There is no easy way to get a high score on the TOEFL.

So, we start with the formal tone of Academic English.

The **tone**, the choice of words, and the way the words are put together vary between the formal and serious sentences and informal ones.

Example:

(Formal, Serious): Educational improvements cannot be introduced due to funding restrictions.

(Informal): The improvements in education can't be introduced due to funding restrictions.

Notice the formal and serious sentence has a crisper tone and does not use contractions.

Always use a **formal tone** in Academic English.

B. Precise, yet Hedging

Be accurate in number and description.

Examples 1 and 2 ahead demonstrate the importance of accuracy in your writing.

Example 3 covers hedging, another key part of Academic English.

Example 1:

(Not Precise): *We performed a study of the animals' nighttime behavior.*

(Precise): *Animals were studied for their nighttime behavior.*

"We performed a study" is somewhat wordy when the writer could just say and violates a rule of Academic English: no "we" personal pronouns allowed.

In the Precise example, the passive tense is used to avoid "we."

Though the active voice is preferable in all cases, Academic English is noted for use of the passive voice.

Above all, you always want to write with the most impact and that often *requires less words*.

Example 2:

(Not Precise): *Many reasons exist for why students would pursue classes online rather than traditional classes.*

(Precise): *Students should pursue online classes rather than traditional ones for three reasons.*

For three reasons, students would pursue online classes rather than traditional ones.

Notice the specificity in the Precise example above where “many” from the Not Precise example becomes “for three reasons.”

Academic language also hedges, that is, uses a softer approach to reporting facts.

Modals (could, should, may, might, would...) are used to hedge or qualify language by conditions or exceptions.

Example 3:

(Hedging): The report *may* show that criminals cannot be reformed.

(Not Hedging – too direct): The report shows that criminals cannot be reformed.

The use of modals like **may, might, and must**, is good use of Academic English.

Academic English, while concise in the number of words used, is often softened by using modals to be non-judgmental and to avoid any bias.

C. Clear, Easy to Understand Sentences

University-level writing is transparent and the prose is not so long.

In my experience, TOEFL and IELTS students transfer the writing style from their first language to English.

The result is often “bulky and boxy” language where one sentence occupies four or five lines.

Writers whose first language is Spanish and Portuguese tend to write in this style.

Example: “Bulky and Boxy” Language

Looking back at the turn of the twentieth century as a dangerous time for sea travelers with their limited communication facilities, and shipping technology still in its infancy, we consider ocean travel to have been a risky business. (38 words)

This sample text is packed with information but not written in the academic style.

The first sentence covers three lines and has 38 words.

Plus, the jumble of facts is difficult to untangle.

Example: Corrected for Academic Language

***Academic:** Sea travel at the turn of twentieth century appeared a dangerous time. Limited communication facilities and shipping technology in their infancy would suggest ocean travel was a risky business. (29 words)*

3 improvements

So, the academic text has three (3) improvements over the regular prose.

First, notice the use of the **hedging language** in each sentence in the first paragraph: “appeared” and “would suggest.”

Second, number of words was reduced by nine (9).

Finally, the structure is improved by dividing up the long sentence into two separate ones which adds to the clarity.

Thus, do not clog your text with too many words and a structure that obscures the message to the reader.

D. Objective, Rational, Intellectual, Impersonal Style

The academic writer is usually a professor or researcher of some capacity.

An interest in a subject however cannot overflow with personal bias which interferes with scholarship.

Therefore, in a paper crafted to report facts and new discoveries, the scholar must be dispassionate.

Thus, academic writing is subjective – without opinion.

This is the type of writing the TOEFL wants from candidates.

While not writing a paper for publication, TOEFL candidates do need to effect the same type of writing found in the university.

The paper is infused with rational arguments, not a polemic that reveals any emotion whether happy or angry.

As an intellectual neutral observer, the resulting paper is impersonal and the pronouns “I,” “you,” or “we” are not used.

Ahead, Example 1 shows a contrast between objective and biased text infused with emotion.

Example 2 illustrates how impersonal language is used to write academic text.

Example 1:

Non-Academic Prose:

In 2011, Yale University was humiliated into returning Inca art stolen by the exploitative Hiram Bingham III who discovered Machu Picchu in the 1910s.

Academic Prose:

In 2011, Yale University returned Inca art removed by the explorer Hiram Bingham III who discovered Machu Picchu in the 1910s.

The Non-Academic Prose is judgmental, accusatory, and emotional (*was humiliated, stolen, exploitative*).

The Academic Prose uses less words (21) in an impartial manner without emotion.

Finally, Academic English is **impersonal**.

That is, the personal pronouns “I,” “we,” and “you” are not used.

Many students tend to use personal pronouns in the TOEFL essay. Don’t.

The TOEFL essay is not a personal essay, but an academic one.

Example 2:

Non-Academic Prose:

***I believe that** students should choose remote education over traditional classes.*

Academic Prose:

***Students should** choose remote education over traditional classes.*

While the Non-Academic Prose does use the modal “should,” the “I believe that” beginning is not necessary.

It’s redundant.

I immediately strike such simplistic and informal language from the papers of my own students.

“I” should not be in your paper!

If you just write “students should choose...” then I know that’s what you believe – you wrote it, not me!

Likewise, skip “in my opinion” – again – I know it’s your opinion – you wrote the paper!

You can give your opinion without using “I.”

Oh, this includes skipping “In my opinion.” Again, I know it’s your opinion – you wrote it!

You will need to rephrase the sentence.

Is that challenging? Yes, but that is your task – if you want a high score.

You must upgrade your writing skills to do well on the TOEFL exam.

There is no short cut to a high score.

And be aware!

There are far too many blogs or videos about TOEFL writing that give examples of using “I” – that’s not Academic English that you need for your target score on the TOEFL.

My students who write without “I” do quite well on the exam.

Conclusion

Now, you have a greater idea of what Academic English is and how to use it for a high score on the exam.

I’d suggest working with a native TOEFL instructor like me to sharpen this tool before exam day.

Reserve your English class at:

<https://englishlanguageprep.com/consultation>

Secret #6: Reading is Fundamental

In Secret #6, you learn three key reading skills to help you maximize your score.

Are you a strong reader in English?

If not, start a strong reading habit during your test preparation.

The TOEFL Reading test includes 3 or 4 reading passages, each approximately 700 words long, with 10 questions per passage.

You have just over an hour to answer all the questions in the section which is a major struggle for candidates and thus they never achieve their target reading score.

Think about it – if you cannot finish the reading test, you cannot maximize your score.

In your lecture today, we go over 3 key reading skills, and how to use all 3 to get the answer you need, and quick bonus pointers – all to make sure you are best prepared for success on the big exam day.

3 Skills:

The 3 key reading skills we cover in our lecture today:

- 1) Skimming,
- 2) Scanning, and
- 3) Chunking.

Chunking is a secret skill to read faster that fortunately now you know about since you have my lecture.

Reading, writing, and thinking faster on the TOEFL iBT® exam will provide you some breathing space to avoid making hasty decisions.

Also, you will be better able to answer all of the questions in a section, boosting your chance to increase your score.

Remember, there is no penalty for guessing.

If you can pick up the following skills and employ these tactics during your exam preparation, you can consume data and information faster on the test.

Now, let's take a deeper look at each of these 3 skills.

1. Skimming

Skimming is the process of speedy reading for general meaning.

Let your eyes skip over sentences or phrases which contain detail.

Concentrate on identifying the central or main points.

Skimming helps you preview a selection of text prior to more focused reading.

Here are some common steps for skimming:

Read the title or headline of the article.

Scan for images and read the captions underneath.

Read the first sentence of paragraphs.

Try spotting tables and graphs and see what information they provide.

Read any subheadings for organization of the article.

Your goal is to discover what the article was about - the gist or so-called "big picture" of an article.

However, in addition to the gist, skimming also allows you to know where the main information is located within the article.

The location of information helps you to answer the TOEFL reading questions when you start **scanning**.

2. Scanning

Scanning is the technique you might use when reading a telephone directory.

You quickly glide over information trying to find the exact information you need like a name, date, or dollar amount.

For the TOEFL, you search for the paraphrase of the words or phrases from the question to help you located the answer.

We talk more about that later.

3. Chunking

Chunking involves breaking down a difficult text into more manageable parts.

You group words that go together in logical units.

You can use this strategy with challenging texts of any length.

Chunking helps you identify key words and ideas, develops your ability to paraphrase, and makes it easier for you to organize and synthesize information.

For example:

The red fox jumped over the log to catch the cat.

The red fox jumped / over the log / to catch the cat.

The adjective “red” describes the “fox” so the first four words of the sentence make up one logical unit. They all go together.

Next, “over the log” is a prepositional phrase.

Prepositional phrases are friends in your sentences – always keep them together.

That is another logical unit in the sentence.

Finally, the last four words – “to catch the cat.”

Catch what? The cat. So, that's another connection, a logical unit.

So, you should read those four words – to catch the cat – together.

Now, as you can see, you have three (3) logical units, but the sentence has 11 words.

Is it better to read three logical units or 11 words?

Group your sentences into logical units.

At first, you may need to use a pencil if you are reading a paper book to practice breaking down the sentences.

But, as you get faster of grouping your words together, you will improve your reading speed – and you will read better!

Use The 3 Skills Together

First, start with the questions. What type of information does the question seek?

Note any keywords because you will likely need to locate their paraphrase in the passage.

In many ways, the TOEFL Reading exam is a vocabulary test. Keep that in mind.

Second, skim the passage to get a “feel” for its main idea and locate where the information you need is.

Third, scan that part of the passage where you believe the answer lies.

Fourth, use your Chunking skills to quickly read through a particular part of the passage to get the answer you need.

Quick Bonus Points

Here is a tried and true approach:

For each passage, first answer the quick and easy questions like vocabulary, detail and reference.

Score your easy wins.

Then, return to the difficult questions like inference, purpose, cohesion, and summary.

Remember – don't leave any of the questions unanswered because guessing is not penalized.

During your TOEFL Preparation, keep these points in mind:

Develop a rich vocabulary.

Start with my own text: *303 Vocabulary Terms You Need* available at:

<http://bit.ly/303words>

Make a habit of reading faster and complex English passages

In other words, master chunking and practice!

Read advanced texts and subjects like science, business, and literature.

Read English language newspapers like the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*.

Read every day and read extensively. Keep track of any new words in a vocabulary notebook.

Above all, practice, practice, practice TOEFL Reading exams.

You can start with the Reading play list in More Resources in your workbook at the end of the Secret #6 Lecture.

Conclusion

You can practice these three (3) skills in your own independent study during test preparation along with these steps to answer the questions and using the quick pointers just mentioned previously.

Combine the skills – skimming, scanning, and chunking – to help you find the answers you need on the exam.

Again, if you haven't, start a strong reading program during your TOEFL preparation and now practice these 3 skills to help you speed up your reading and understand better what you read.

Reading wisely on the exam gives you a distinct advantage to maximize your score!

Finally, be sure to check the More Resources section for Secret #6 in order to watch the specially created TOEFL Reading Playlist, including a TOEFL Reading test.

More Resources

[TOEFL Reading Playlist](#)

[303 Vocabulary Terms You Need](#)

Secret #7: Know These “Hidden Skills”

In Secret #7 – which may be the most important lecture of this audio course – we cover the following 8 “hidden skills:”

****notetaking, outlining, signposting, synthesizing and summarizing and paraphrasing,**

****Time Management, and**

****Speedy Typing.**

Why “hidden skills?”

Well, most TOEFL candidates don’t think of these skills when they prepare for the exam. Big mistake!

Do you use outlines to organize your thoughts?

Have you ever used signposting to structure your writing or speech?

Are you already a good note taker?

Can you synthesize information from different sources and choose the main ideas to form an opinion?

How skilled are you summing up a text or conversation and restating information in your own words?

Learn these six important skills for success at the university and on the TOEFL – notetaking, outlining, signposting, synthesizing, and summarizing and paraphrasing.

“Hidden skills” for reading are skimming, scanning, and chunking – covered in the last secret.

Dominating these “hidden skills” is key to obtaining a high TOEFL score. This point will become clearer as you proceed through this lecture.

Plus, practice these “hidden skills” in your TOEFL test prep!

Before we start, please open your Workbook to Secret #7 – Hidden Skills – to follow the lecture.

Notetaking

Remember, just because you understand something, doesn't mean you will remember it.

You need to write it down to remember it.

If you have already attended university, you know how important your class notes are.

On the TOEFL iBT®, notetaking is necessary because you hear the audio in the Listening Section and the conversations in the Speaking Section only once.

Notetaking in the simplest form is listening and recording the main ideas.

While preparing for a high score on the TOEFL, practice taking notes when you listen to news reports, read websites, and watch TV.

You may already have your own shorthand for frequently used words and phrases.

For instance, you may jot down numbers, use <> symbols for less or more, or use other symbols to help you.

Often in notetaking situation – just like on the TOEFL exam! - time is of the essence and you need to note down key information.

All sections of the TOEFL require some degree of notetaking.

Without learning how to note down and organize the information you are receiving, you will not be able to give an effective response or choose the correct answer.

Outlining

Outlining is a complimentary skill to notetaking.

From your notes, you can organize your thoughts into a cohesive and coherent spoken or written response.

You can use outlining techniques in the Listening, Speaking, and Writing sections of the TOEFL iBT®.

Outlining is especially necessary for the TOEFL essay when you need to create a roadmap for you to follow in response to your question.

As you can see, from the previous 6 lectures, your English skills are only part of the exam.

Outlining and note taking are good in any language, but you will use them on the TOEFL so learn them now.

Signposting

Use signposting in your TOEFL writing and speech because it is the mark of Academic English!

Like traffic signs, signage in your writing directs the reader to your argument.

Make it easier for your listener or reader to understand what you are saying.

Signposting creates clarity while writing your paragraph in particular and your overall paper in general.

Simply adding a few connecting words makes your paper more readable.

Plus, signposting is a secret way to add cohesion and coherence to your speech or writing.

TOEFL graders are looking for how well you make your papers understandable and the structure of your responses.

So signposting helps you get a higher score.

Now, let's take a look at some examples.

Signposting often occurs:

****At the beginning of a paragraph which develops a new idea**

Ex: In addition, countries should encourage recycling.

****At the beginning of a paragraph which expands on a previous idea**

Ex: Moreover, each citizen shares a responsibility for the environment.

Use Moreover in writing – not in speaking.

****At the beginning of a paragraph which offers a contrasting viewpoint**

In contrast, penalties should be imposed on those who refuse to clean up their trash.

****At the end of a paragraph to sum up an idea**

As a consequence, more people will be careful of respecting Mother Earth.

****In the conclusion**

In sum, think globally act locally is a useful guide for protecting our environment.

When enumerating a list of factors, signposting occurs with ‘sequence markers’ (First, Second, Third, etc.). These markers help remind the reader of your points.

Example:

I prefer to go to the beach for two reasons.

First, I enjoy smelling the salty air.

Second, I like to surf even though I’m not good at it.

In sum, that’s why I prefer to spend a day at the beach.

Notice the signposts – First, Second, In sum.

Polish your spoken and written responses on the TOELF – use signposting!

Make it easier for the TOEFL graders to follow both your written and spoken English for a higher score on the big test day.

Synthesizing

Simply, the combined skills tasks demand the use of synthesizing (pulling together an answer from different sources of information).

The product of synthesizing is a new perspective, meaning, or idea.

Use your synthesizing skills on the writing and speaking sections of the TOEFL iBT®.

For example, on the integrated writing question, you have 20 minutes to craft a response after reading a short passage and listening to a short lecture.

Likewise, in Question 2 of the Speaking Section, you read an announcement and then listen to a conversation between a man and a woman discussing a campus issue.

With your good notes, you are then tasked to synthesize a summary of what you have read and listened to within one minute.

Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Simply, use summarizing and paraphrasing to improve your TOEFL writing and speaking scores.

The two skills are closely linked, thus our current discussion.

Summing up or expressing the main points in a few words from what you have read or heard is summarizing.

Restating text or speech in your own words is paraphrasing.

Condense key details (summarize) and express them in your own words (paraphrase).

Why is this important on the TOEFL iBT®?

Summarizing is a key skill in the Reading Section, and the written and spoken combined skills tasks.

You will need to quickly sum up the main points of the information presented - and remember your time is limited!

You never want to use the vocabulary (words) they give you in your speaking or writing prompts.

For example -

What is your most important possession? Describe it and say why it is so important.

Forget using the keywords "possession" and "important" in your response.

Instead, you need to use synonyms - where your strong word power is vital!

Again, use your own words to refer to the questions, but don't use the same exact words. Thus, you need to paraphrase – allude to – the questions only.

But just how do you paraphrase?

When you express the same meaning of a text, but in your own words, you have two choices.

First, you can change the vocabulary.

Using your own words, especially under time pressure, requires an extensive vocabulary is a major asset for maximizing your score on the TOEFL iBT.

Second, you can change the grammar.

Shift the structure of texts.

If the sentence is in the active voice, switch to the passive voice.

For example:

Active voice: The government gave assistance to the poor farmers.

Passive voice: The poor farmers were given assistance by the government.

Do the contrary – passive to active voice.

For example:

Passive voice: The city was devastated by the hurricane.

Active voice: The hurricane devastated the city.

Unleash your summarizing and paraphrasing power to notch a high score on the TOEFL iBT exam!

Now, time management.

Learn to manage your time effectively.

Do you know one of the biggest point killers on the exam?

Test candidates run out of time!

That severely limits your chance for a high score.

Stop!

Time is your enemy on the TOEFL iBT exam.

Candidates who have taken the test and did not perform well often complain that they just plain ran out of time on each section.

The TOEFL iBT measures many aspects of your English ability including the speed at which you listen, read, write, speak, and think in English.

Two sections of the TOEFL require maximum time efficiency: Speaking and Writing.

Save Time For Speaking and Writing:

1 – Know the directions of each section of the exam and what type of answer is expected.

2 – Make your stopwatch on your smartphone or tablet your friend during TOEFL preparation.

Simulate test conditions when you practice spoken or written answers.

Stop when the alarm goes off during the writing or listening test.

Don't extend your time because you won't have that extra time on the test!

3 – Time management is doing – you just have to keep practicing within the test time limits until you can give your responses efficiently and effectively.

Make time management a priority during your TOEFL preparation so you are able to finish the exam and get the highest point total.

Type speedily.

Well, the TOEFL iBT requires good typing skills.

So, make practice typing on a standard English (QWERTY) keyboard as part of your TOEFL preparation.

The average typing speed in the world is around 40 wpm (words per minute), but most can belt out only 25-30 words - much slower.

Slow typists can get unbelievably frustrated when they cannot get their ideas down fast enough.

So, just practice at websites like <https://www.typingtest.com/> to crank up your typing speed during your test prep.

Conclusion

Well, that concludes Secret #7 – our review of Hidden Skills.

You and I have now covered the 7 secrets to a high score on the TOEFL iBT exam!

I'm so excited you were with me and I was able to share my insights and recommendations so you now are better able to maximize your exam result.

You now know these 7 secrets about preparing for the test and doing your best on the big exam day:

7 Secrets:

1. Command a Strong Vocabulary.
2. Confidently Answer All 4 Speaking Questions

3. No-Fear TOEFL Writing
4. Engage in Active Listening
5. Academic English
6. Reading is Fundamental
7. Know these Hidden Skills

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Thank You

Thank you for investing in your future so you obtain an optimal score on the TOEFL exam!

Don't forget to extend your learning - sign up for my [TOEFL Email Blog](https://englishlanguagetestprep.com/1) to extend your learning and sharpen both your English and TOEFL skills at:

<https://englishlanguagetestprep.com/1>

I'd be interested to know if this eBook and resources made a difference in your score.

Send me a quick note to: professorwinn@englishlanguagetestprep.com.

I value your feedback!

Until the next time,

Good luck on the TOEFL!

Professor Winn



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