

TOEFL Test Tips and Techniques

Test Tactics and Sectional Strategies for the TOEFL

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All Decks of Flash Cards Written by Judd Robbins, M.A., M.S., Licensed High School Teacher, former University Instructor, and Published Author of over 80 textbooks, videos, correspondence courses, seminars, and training CD ROMs.	

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These tips should only be used as an adjunct mechanism for preparing to take the TOEFL and obtain the best possible score. Students should also practice speaking English, listening to English, and reading printed materials in English. Further, you should study vocabulary words, as well as the fundamentals of English language word construction (prefixes, roots, and suffixes).

OVERALL TEST TACTICS:

1. Learn the section directions now. Use the time saved during the test to work on questions.
2. Successful answers to the earliest questions in computer adaptive versions of the test will lead to higher scores.
3. Do not write on any test booklet or materials.
4. Use the process of elimination to decide which answers are wrong.
5. In the computer adaptive section, Double check your work and answer before you click on the screen bubble. You cannot skip any question and you cannot go back after you've answered a question.
6. Answer every question, making educated guesses if you have to. Just try to eliminate one or more choices before guessing.

7. Don't spend too much time on any one question. You should spend only seconds on the easiest questions, and hesitate to spend more than 1/2 minute on even the hardest ones.
8. Practice, practice, practice!
9. Bring a watch to the test center. You can't be guaranteed that there'll be a working clock there.
10. Bring a couple of IDs to the test center. Make sure at least one of the pictures actually looks like you. Also bring any authorization voucher you may have received from the Educational Testing Service.

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SPECIFIC SECTIONAL STRATEGIES

SENTENCE COMPLETION:

1. If there is no main verb, you should first identify the 'subject' of the sentence. Then, you can eliminate any choice that does not contain a conjugated verb. Further, any selected conjugated verb must agree with the subject (in number and tense).
2. If there is no main subject, you should identify what the verb in the sentence is. Then plug in the choices and verify that the one you select agrees with the verb.
3. Eliminate choices that contain extra words, especially pronouns, verbs, or modifiers.
4. If the sentence contains a main subject and a main verb, you should eliminate any choice that is an incorrect part of speech, or does not agree in form, number, or tense with the rest of the sentence.
5. If the sentence contains neither a main subject nor a main verb, you can eliminate any choice that does not provide both a subject and a verb, and does not agree completely with the remainder of the sentence.

WRITTEN EXPRESSION:

1. Learn about verb tense and agreement. Each verb must agree (in tense, form, number) with the noun it references.
 2. Observe whether a noun is singular or plural. Learn the most common 'collective' nouns (such as money, or audience, or amount) that refer to a group or quantity of things or people.
 3. Learn about pronouns. They must agree with the noun they replace in number, case, and gender.
 4. Recognize when a pronoun is required in a sentence. Missing pronouns are a common error that may be seen in questions.
 5. Learn also when a pronoun is not necessary. Extra pronouns are often added after a noun in a sentence, as they sometimes are in other languages.
 6. Be wary of questions that use a noun in place of a verb form; many words look very close to one another.
 7. Be wary of questions that confuse an adjective for an adverb, or a noun for an adjective.
 8. Items in a list or series must be in the same grammatical form. This usually appears as a series of sentence elements separated by commas.
 9. When a sentence indicates a quantity of a countable noun, you should use words like *fewer* or *many* or *number*.
 10. When a sentence indicates a quantity of a noncountable noun, you should use words like *much*, *amount*, or *less*.
 11. When comparing two items, use the *-er* ending for comparisons.
 12. When comparing three or more items, use the *-est* ending for comparisons.
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