

# BARRON'S

The Leader in Test Preparation



# ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR THE TOEFL®

**7TH EDITION**

Steven J. Matthiesen

- A fully updated list of 500 words that frequently appear on the TOEFL
- Definitions, sample sentences, and practice exercises to build your word power
- An overview of each section of the TOEFL iBT and ITP
- A practice reading test with answers to help you assess your test-taking readiness

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**BARRON'S**

**ESSENTIAL  
WORDS  
FOR THE**

**TOEFL<sup>®</sup>**

**Test of English as a Foreign Language**

**7TH EDITION**

**Steven J. Matthiesen**



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# INTRODUCTION

## SUCCESS ON THE TOEFL

### **What vocabulary is necessary to score high on the TOEFL?**

Why is it especially important to have a strong vocabulary for the current TOEFL?

Why must I improve my vocabulary and how can I succeed?

How can I be a better TOEFL test taker?

*Essential Words for the TOEFL* answers these questions and provides you with a proven plan for improving your English vocabulary while also preparing you for the TOEFL. The words and practice questions that appear throughout this book will help you to maximize your understanding of words that will likely appear in every section of the TOEFL. Important information about how to maximize your score on the TOEFL is given in addition to vocabulary building hints and exercises. By following the program and mastering the words in this book, you will be ready to earn a higher score on the TOEFL.

This 7th edition of *Essential Words for the TOEFL* has an extensive, revised list of 500 words with improved exercises and updated reading selections. This edition makes *Essential Words* one of the most thoroughly researched books of its kind. It is the product of extensive study of previous TOEFLs and academic materials from which the questions on the TOEFL are produced. The result of this research is this powerful book of words that will lead you to success on the TOEFL.

### **MAXIMIZING YOUR VOCABULARY POTENTIAL— A DESCRIPTION OF THIS PROGRAM**

This book is divided into six chapters. This introduction gives you basic information about their contents and how to use the book. Let's look at the six chapters.

#### **Getting to Know the iBT**

Chapter 1 describes the complete iBT test format and contains sample questions from each part. The questions are explained in detail and test-taking strategies are introduced.

## **Understanding the Internet-Based TOEFL**

Chapter 2 describes the importance of building a strong vocabulary in order to score well on the iBT. You will find sample reading passages typical of those found in Section One of the iBT with a detailed analysis of the kinds of words and questions that are found on the TOEFL. In this chapter you will learn important strategies and hints to follow that will increase the probability of maximizing your score on the TOEFL.

## **Improving Your TOEFL Vocabulary**

Chapter 3 gives you a plan for studying vocabulary. You should use the plan when studying the words in this book.

## **Building Your TOEFL Vocabulary**

Chapter 4 provides powerful information that helps you build your TOEFL vocabulary. You will be introduced to “roots, prefixes, and suffixes”; parts of words that provide or add meaning. You will also be introduced to dictionary and thesaurus use, both print and online resources that contribute to any strategy to build your TOEFL vocabulary.

## **The Essential TOEFL Vocabulary**

Barron’s TOEFL Vocabulary Building Program is explained in Chapter 5. The carefully selected words that appear on the list are important for all TOEFL test takers. An explanation of the program is given, including how to study the list, how to understand the words, and how to follow the program from beginning to end. Thirty carefully developed vocabulary lessons follow the explanation. Each lesson ends with practice questions like those that appear on both the iBT and the ITP, the paper-based TOEFL.

## **The iBT Practice Reading Test**

Chapter 6 contains a complete practice iBT reading test, typical of those found in Section 3 of the TOEFL. The test gives you practice with reading comprehension and vocabulary questions that closely follow the iBT format. At the conclusion of the practice test, you will be able to assess your iBT knowledge and skills by using the included answer key and conversion tables to convert your number of correct answers to a score on the TOEFL scale. Both the iBT and ITP scales are included. Chapter 6 is followed by an index of the 500 essential words presented in this book, followed by the page number where the word can be found in the text.

## **A Final Word**

This 7th edition of *Essential Words for the TOEFL* is a product of more than 25 years of research and continuous updating. Among the thousands of words that professional TOEFL test makers can use, this edition of *Essential Words for the TOEFL* includes those that are most likely to appear on the Internet-based TOEFL (iBT) and on the Institutional TOEFL (ITP). By mastering the words and applying the strategies presented in this book, you will be well on your way to success on the TOEFL.

Steven Matthiesen



# CHAPTER 1

## GETTING TO KNOW THE TOEFL

### **WHAT IS THE TOEFL?**

The TOEFL is a comprehensive English language examination that helps colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and other parts of the world make admission decisions. It is also used by some organizations to certify professionals to practice their vocations both in the United States and abroad.

### **ABOUT THE iBT (INTERNET-BASED TOEFL)**

Many years ago, the TOEFL was administered only in a paper-based format. Examinees marked their answers with a pencil on an answer sheet. The test primarily assessed listening comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills. Then, beginning in the late 90s, the Educational Testing Service (the maker of the TOEFL) began offering a computer-based TOEFL known as the iBT. Taking advantage of advances in technology, the iBT has expanded the range of skills tested by adding speaking and writing sections to the test as well as integrating reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills to mimic how we use language every day.

### **ABOUT THE ITP (INSTITUTIONAL TOEFL PROGRAM)**

Some educational institutions use a paper-based TOEFL, known as the ITP TOEFL. The Educational Testing Service makes this form of the TOEFL available to institutions who often use the test to generally assess individuals' English language skills for placement purposes. Institutions also use results to assess the effectiveness of their English language instructional programs. These TOEFLs are typically previously administered paper-based TOEFLs. Generally, colleges and universities do not accept ITP TOEFL scores in place of an iBT score. The two versions of the TOEFL are quite different. A description of both formats follows.

## THE iBT

The iBT is a timed test that consists of the four sections listed below.

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Reading</b> 3–4 Passages	<b>60–80 minutes</b> 12–14 questions per passage
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Listening</b> 2–3 Conversations 4–6 Lectures	<b>60–90 minutes</b> 5 questions per conversation 6 questions per lecture
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Speaking</b> 2 Independent Tasks 4 Integrated Tasks	<b>20 minutes</b>
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Writing</b> 1 Integrated Task 1 Independent Task	<b>50 minutes</b>

## SECTION 1: READING

The iBT reading section is presented in two formats. The short format iBT gives you three passages of approximately 700 words. The long format contains four passages. After each passage, you will answer 12–14 test questions. If you are taking the long format iBT, only three sets of the test questions will be answered. The responses to the questions for the other two passages will be evaluated by ETS for use on future iBTs. You will have 60 minutes to read all of the passages and respond to the questions (80 minutes for the long format). You will be allowed to take notes while you read. You will see some words or phrases highlighted. You may see an explanation or definition of the word or phrase by clicking on it.

The majority of questions in this section are in the multiple-choice format. Make your answer choice for each and proceed to the next question by clicking on **Next**. To return to the previous question, click on **Back**. At any time, you can click on **Review** to see a list of the questions that you have and have not answered. You may return to any question while you are working on this section, but once you have left the reading section, you may not return to it. A clock will appear on the screen to help you manage your time.

In this section, you first read the passage completely. You do so by using the scroll bar to view the entire passage on the screen. The

computer will not give you the questions until you have scrolled the entire reading selection. At that point, click on **Next**.

There are different response formats in the reading section. These involve clicking on a word, phrase, or sentence. Vocabulary items are usually tested by asking you to click on another word in the text that means the same thing as a bolded word. Sometimes you will be asked to click on a sentence or group of sentences where the answer to a particular question can be found. Sometimes, you may be asked to insert a sentence into the text. On cohesion items, you will be asked to click on the word or phrase in the bolded part of the passage that the cohesion word refers to. After you click on the word or phrase, it will darken.

Finally, another type of test question (“reading to learn”) will require you to complete a summary or fill in a chart by selecting which provided text options to include. The summary questions are worth up to two points each, and the chart questions are worth three to four points, depending on whether five or seven options are presented.

## **SECTION 2: LISTENING**

The listening section of the iBT tests your ability to understand spoken English that is typically found on the campuses of colleges and universities. The listening tasks are those that are typical of social and academic conversations found in these settings.

There are two formats for the listening section. In the short listening section, you will hear two conversations and four lectures. The long format contains three conversations and six lectures. Each conversation and lecture requires you to respond to five or six questions, most of which are multiple choice. The responses to the questions of the extra conversation and lectures do not count. These questions will be evaluated by ETS for use on future iBTs. Since you do not know which passages will count, it is important for you to do your best on all of the test questions. You have 25 minutes on the short format listening section and 30 on the long format section. A clock appears on the screen to help you manage your time. It does not include the time while you are listening to the lectures and conversations.

You will hear each lecture and conversation and each of the questions only one time. You are allowed to take notes as you listen and use them to answer questions. Once a question is answered, you are not allowed to return to it, so be sure to choose your answers carefully.

On the iBT, stimuli will come to you through headphones, not aloud as is the case with the ITP TOEFL. On the iBT, you will both see and hear each question; on the ITP TOEFL, you only hear the question. Following the question, the answer choices appear on the screen; the question stays on the screen until you have made your response. For

multiple-choice items, each option is preceded by an oval [ ◯ ], instead of the letters (A), (B), (C), or (D).

On the iBT, you will be told both the context and the topic of the conversation. The extended conversations typically involve a main presenter who gives the information, and one or two other persons who ask questions of the main presenter. All speakers are pictured on the screen. Each stimulus is normally followed by three or four questions on what was said.

The iBT lectures also include an introduction that tells you who is speaking and the topic. Going back to the minitalk on Chicago, the introduction might be as follows:

“Listen to a tour guide as he tells a group of visitors about the city of Chicago.”

In the iBT lectures, the presentations usually simulate a lecture by a professor who is using visuals. The professor and the visuals are depicted on the screen. Using your mouse, you answer each question, after it is asked.

The iBT uses a greater variety of response types. For example, there may be more than one correct answer, and you will be asked to click on the oval next to all correct answers. Whenever there is more than one correct answer, you will be told how many correct answers you should identify. To see an example, read the minitalk about Chicago on page 8. Then answer the following question:

What can be inferred about the weather in Chicago?  
(Click on 2 answers)

- It is influenced by a glacier.
- Summers are unpleasantly warm.
- The wind is usually accompanied by cold.
- It is very dry during the winter months.
- It is temperate and stable.

In the above example, you would click on the ovals to the left of the second and third statements.

Sometimes, a response format is visual. In that case, you click on the correct visual with your mouse. Sometimes, a response will involve matching. In that case, you must classify each new piece of information you are given into three or four categories, according to classifications or distinctions you learned when reading the stimulus. You do this with your mouse.

### **SECTION 3: SPEAKING**

The speaking section tests your ability to use spoken English in academic settings. This section contains six speaking tasks. Each task requires you to respond to a single question, a talk, conversation, or lecture. The tasks will require you to listen to a lecture or conversation or to read a short passage. You will then respond to a question. You may take notes and use them to help you respond to the questions.

Your speaking proficiency is evaluated on the general fluency and accuracy with which you use the English language.

The speaking section lasts 20 minutes. You are given 45 to 60 seconds to respond to each question. Before responding to questions, you will be given 15 to 20 seconds to think about how you will respond to the question. A clock appears on the screen to help you manage your time.

### **SECTION 4: WRITING**

The writing section tests your ability to perform the writing tasks that are typically required in college courses.

In the iBT, you will respond to two writing prompts. There are two types of writing tasks, an integrated essay task and an independent writing task.

The integrated essay task combines the language skills of reading, listening, and writing.

You will read a short passage, hear a short lecture on the topic, and then write an essay in response to a specific set of directions for the essay. You may take notes and use them to help you write your essay. You will have 20 minutes to plan and write your essay.

The independent writing task asks you to give your opinion on a familiar topic. You will have 30 minutes to plan and write your essay.

A clock appears on the screen to help you manage your time as you complete your essays.

## THE ITP (THE PAPER-BASED TOEFL)

The paper-based ITP TOEFL is a timed test that consists of three sections. It is administered in two forms: Level 1 (Intermediate to Advanced) and Level 2 (High Beginning to Intermediate). Throughout the years, the Educational Testing Service has determined which questions from previously administered TOEFLs are appropriate for each of the two TOEFL levels. The Level 1 TOEFL is longer than the Level 2 test, but each form of the test has the same types of questions. Section One tests Listening Comprehension, Section Two, Structure and Written Expression, and Section Three, Reading Comprehension. Here is the format of each section:

### ITP TOEFL—LEVEL 1 (Intermediate to Advanced)

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Listening Comprehension</b>	<b>50 questions</b> <b>35 minutes</b>
Part A	Short Conversations	30 questions
Part B	Extended Conversations	7–8 questions
Part C	Minitalks	12–13 questions
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Structure and Written Expression</b>	<b>40 questions</b> <b>25 minutes</b>
Part A	Structure	15 questions
Part B	Written Expression	25 questions
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	<b>50 questions</b> <b>55 minutes</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115 minutes</b>

### ITP TOEFL—LEVEL 2 (High Beginning to Intermediate)

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Listening Comprehension</b>	<b>30 questions</b> <b>22 minutes</b>
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Structure and Written Expression</b>	<b>25 questions</b> <b>17 minutes</b>
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	<b>40 questions</b> <b>31 minutes</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70 minutes</b>

## SECTION 1: LISTENING

This section of the TOEFL tests your ability to understand spoken American English. After you hear taped conversations you will answer questions.

### Short Conversations

Part A contains short dialogues between two people followed by a question about what the people said in their conversation. They may have different purposes for speaking to each other. A speaker may give advice, apologize, or ask for information. Generally, key information is found in the second speaker's sentence. You will need to understand the meaning of the conversation and also the context, such as the time or place in which it could occur. The correct choice is the one that directly answers the question.

YOU WILL HEAR:

- (Man) Did you get to go shopping last night?  
 (Woman) They'd already locked the doors by the time I got there.  
 (Man) What does the woman mean?

YOU WILL SEE:

- Ⓐ She arrived in time to shop.
- Ⓑ She was too late.
- Ⓒ She locked the doors.
- Ⓓ She had to buy the door.

The correct choice is **(B)**. Since the doors were locked when she arrived, she could not have gone shopping. Note that the other choices use words heard in the conversation. Choices that contain such words are usually not correct. Part A contains samples of informal American English. Idiomatic expressions and two-word verbs are common in this part.

### Extended Conversations

In Part B you will hear extended conversations between two or more people, a student and either a professor or a campus service provider. Usually, there are two conversations, and the language is more formal. After each conversation, there are between three and four spoken questions about its content. Choose your answer from among the four choices that appear in your test booklet.

The extended conversations and minitalks (see below) are generally preceded by an introductory statement that tells you the context for the conversation. Pay particular attention to this information as it prepares you for what follows.

### Minitalks

Part C contains short presentations given by a single speaker. There are usually three. The English in this section is generally more academic, typical of English lectures that take place in a university or college setting. There are generally three lectures followed by four to five spoken questions about its content. You may take notes while you listen and refer back to them when you answer the questions. Choose your answer from among the four choices that appear in your test booklet. Look at the example of the minitalk below.

YOU WILL HEAR:

Listen to this talk by a tourist guide.

(Man) Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this tour of one of the nation's most important cities, Chicago. Before we begin, I'd like to give you some background information that will make the tour more enjoyable for you. The city was founded in 1837. Its strategic location on Lake Michigan quickly made it the center of commerce for the Midwest section of the country. It currently is the third largest metropolitan area in the United States. The city's site is generally level, built mostly on a glacial plain. The narrow Chicago River extends one mile inland from Lake Michigan, where it splits, dividing the city into North, West, and South sides. Chicago's weather is subject to rapid changes, but generally the climate is cold and windy in the winter, and hot and humid in the summer.

(Woman) What gave Chicago an advantage over other Midwestern cities?

YOU WILL SEE:

- Ⓐ Its level site
- Ⓑ Its location on Lake Michigan
- Ⓒ Its large population
- Ⓓ Its location along the Chicago River



According to the minitalk, **(B)** would be the correct choice. Remember that you will not have a written copy of the speaker's presentation or conversation and you will only hear it once. You must concentrate on details, such as names, dates, and the main idea of the selection that you hear. Do not read the choices as you listen to the talk. Listen carefully and try to remember what you hear.

## SECTION 2: STRUCTURE AND WRITTEN EXPRESSION

This section contains two types of questions, both designed to test your ability to recognize correct style and grammar in written English. The sentences are academic; ones that you typically find in college-level texts, journals, and encyclopedias. The sentence topics include the social sciences, physical and life sciences, and the humanities.

### Structure

The structure questions test your ability to recognize correct structure and word order. These questions consist of a sentence with one or more words missing. You must make the choice that best completes the sentence. Here is an example of this type of question.

YOU WILL SEE:

\_\_\_\_\_ a short time after the Civil War, Atlanta has become the principal center of transportation, commerce, and finance in the southeastern United States.

- Ⓐ While rebuilt
- Ⓑ It was rebuilt
- Ⓒ Rebuilt
- Ⓓ When rebuilt

The correct choice is **(C)**. The other choices make the sentence incorrect or awkward.

### Written Expression

The written expression questions test your ability to recognize errors in grammar or expression. These questions consist of complete sentences with four underlined words or phrases. You must identify the underlined part of the sentence that needs to be changed in order to make the sentence correct. An example follows.

YOU WILL SEE:

The Navajo Indians have displayed a marked ability to  
incorporate aspects of other cultures into a changing,  
flexibility lifestyle.

(A) (B)  
(C)  
(D)

The correct choice is **(D)**. *Flexibility*, a noun, appears where an adjective must occur. In addition to inappropriate parts of speech, be sure to check for missing words or extra words that are inappropriate for the context.

### SECTION 3: READING COMPREHENSION

Good reading skills and an ample vocabulary are keys to doing well on all sections of the TOEFL. In this section of the TOEFL, these skills are specifically tested. Many TOEFL test takers complain that they do not have enough time to carefully answer all questions in this section. It is very important that you follow the instructions in this book, so that you will use all the allotted time to your advantage.

#### Reading Comprehension Items

Your ability to read and understand college-level reading material is tested on this part of the TOEFL. You will find five or six reading passages, each followed by nine to eleven questions. You must work quickly and efficiently. Here is a sample passage.

YOU WILL SEE:

- (5) A lens has one or more curved surfaces that refract, or bend, light rays passing through it to form an image on a surface beyond the lens. Examples of such surfaces are the retina of the eye or a movie screen. The distance from the lens to the focal plane is known as focal length. In cameras, telescopes, and similar devices, the lens is turned on a screw-thread mounting to adjust the focal length. This action allows focusing of images of objects at various distances. In the human eye, focal length is
- (10) adjusted by muscles that alter the lens curvature. Light rays of different colors are bent by varying degrees as they pass through a curved surface. This causes a distortion of the image, known as chromatic aberration. In cameras, sharp images are obtained by arranging two

- (15) or more lenses so that the aberration of one cancels out the aberration of another. Such an arrangement of lenses is called an achromatic lens.

YOU WILL SEE:

According to the passage, what is focal length?

- Ⓐ A curved surface that refracts light
- Ⓑ The distance from the focal plane to the lens
- Ⓒ Adjustment by the muscles that alters lens curvature
- Ⓓ The degree that light rays of different colors are bent by the lens

This is a factual question. The information needed to answer this question is directly stated in the text. Choice **(B)** is the correct answer. Some questions will ask you to draw conclusions based on material in the passage; others will ask about the main idea of a selection. Some may even ask what information does not appear in the passage.

### Vocabulary Items

The vocabulary questions in this section test your English vocabulary. There are between 12 and 17 questions focusing on specific words from the reading passage. Each word is taken from a specific line in the text; the line is referred to in the question. You must choose the word that has the same meaning from among the four choices given. Here's an example from the previous text.

YOU WILL SEE:

The word "distortion" in lines 12 and 13 is closest in meaning to

- Ⓐ classification
- Ⓑ deformation
- Ⓒ reaction
- Ⓓ reflection

The word that is the closest in meaning to the tested word, **distortion**, is choice **(B)**. Additional hints for vocabulary questions can be found in Chapter 2.

### Cohesion Items

Another type of question that is used to test reading comprehension is called cohesion. Cohesion occurs when elements of a passage are linked to other elements. Cohesion allows the author to refer to previously mentioned information, and it allows the reader to keep pre-

viously mentioned information in mind while continuing to read the passage. To understand cohesion when it is used, one must understand the passage. Thus, TOEFL uses cohesion to test reading comprehension. Cohesion items typically test object pronouns (it, they, them) and demonstrative pronouns (this, these, those). Here is an example of a question that involves cohesion.

YOU WILL SEE:

The word "This" in line 12 refers to

- Ⓐ surface
- Ⓑ adjusting
- Ⓒ light
- Ⓓ bending

The word that "this" refers to is **bending**, option **(D)**. A typical version of the TOEFL will contain about five such items, or an average of one per passage.

During your experience taking the TOEFL, you will see process verbs. These words give you important clues as to the type of response that the question or task requires, so it is necessary for you to have a good understanding of them. Among the process verbs commonly seen on the TOEFL are:

<b>Process Verb</b>	<b>Definition</b>
claim	to express an unproven opinion
clarify	to explain in more detail
contradict	to express an opposite belief
define	to identify the meaning of a concept
demonstrate	to show or explain a process or idea
describe	to list the characteristics of an idea or object
discuss	to give information or ideas
infer	to form a new idea or opinion from stated facts
prove	to show by factual explanation
rebut	to prove that something is false by factual explanation
refute	to defend by explaining why something is not true
show	to give information supporting an idea
state	to express or give information
stress	to give special attention to an idea
support	to provide information that confirms an idea or opinion

## SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR BOTH FORMATS OF THE TOEFL

You can get most of the answers to your questions about the TOEFL at [www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl).

Information on testing centers, practice questions, and general descriptions of the TOEFL can be found at the official TOEFL website.

On all parts of the TOEFL, be sure to answer all questions. On the iBT, you are penalized for not answering questions. On multiple-choice test items, if you must guess, choose (B) or (C), since they are slightly more likely than (A) or (D) to be the correct response.

On the iBT, some questions will have more than one answer, particularly if the question deals with factual information presented as a series in the passage or text. A box under a question may tell you to “Click on two answers.” You may also have to manipulate data with the mouse. For example, you may be given a series of events to place in a specific order. You will click on the sentences and drag them to the appropriate slots that appear on the test item screen.

Because the iBT requires a greater variety of response formats, always read the directions for each test item carefully. Ask yourself, “What do I need to do here?”

Manage your time wisely! Both the ITP TOEFL and iBT are timed. The amount of time available is stated at the beginning of each section. If you are taking the ITP TOEFL, be sure to wear a watch (deactivate any sounds your watch may make before entering the test session) and be aware of the time you have remaining. No watches are allowed in the room for the iBT. Whether you are taking the iBT or the ITP TOEFL, you should become familiar with the directions and the examples for each section before you take the tests.

Remember, when time has expired on a section, you may not return to it. Work quickly and accurately. If it seems obvious to you that you will not have enough time to finish a section of the TOEFL, GUESS (B) or (C).

In the reading section of the iBT, you may skip questions, or go back and change answers. However, do not waste time doing this unless you are fairly certain that you have made a mistake! You cannot return to questions in a previous part once you have clicked on **Continue** after the last question in that part. Change your answer only if you find a better answer.

Prepare yourself for the test. Being well prepared will give you the confidence you need to achieve the very best result for you. In addition to this book, *Barron's TOEFL iBT (Internet Based Test)* provides you with practical hints designed to help you maximize your TOEFL score, a CD-ROM that simulates the experience of taking the iBT, and academic skills hints, including tips on note taking, paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing.

# CHAPTER 2

## UNDERSTANDING THE TOEFL READING SECTION

Developing a good English vocabulary is the most important way to prepare for the vocabulary you will see and hear on the TOEFL. It is also a good way to prepare for the test generally. In addition to developing a good English vocabulary, it is very important to know the kind of vocabulary you will see on the TOEFL and to understand how it is tested.

The reading section of the iBT contains approximately three to five passages with 12–14 questions for each passage. In the ITP, there are four to five reading passages and up to 50 questions. It is important for you to remember that your general vocabulary is tested in all sections of the TOEFL. However, it is in this section of the TOEFL where your knowledge of specific vocabulary items is tested.

Passages from which vocabulary questions are drawn are written in a formal, academic style, typical of most college- or university-level texts and journals. The topics of these passages are those a first-year college student in North America would be likely to encounter. The topics come from such areas as the Natural Sciences, Business, Liberal Arts, and the Social Sciences. Some passages contain references to North American places and personalities. Others will refer to historical events and may include dates. It is important for you to understand that your knowledge of these North American places and personalities is never tested on the TOEFL. You do not have to be familiar with the content of the passages to be successful on this section of the TOEFL.

### **SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The following passage and the questions that follow are used to illustrate and discuss the types of reading comprehension questions and tasks that you will find on the TOEFL. First, as a warm-up, you will read a sample passage for the ITP and work through the test questions. Then you will read a sample iBT passage and work through those questions.

Through a somewhat controversial process, Hawaii was the last territory to become a state. In 1842, the United States recognized the Kingdom of Hawaii as an independent country. In subsequent years, Americans and other foreign groups moved to the islands. They began to influence local politics. In 1887, Hawaiian King Kalakaua gave the United States exclusive rights to use Pearl Harbor as a naval base in exchange for certain trading privileges. [A ■] After the King died, his sister, Queen Liliuokalani, followed him to the throne. In 1894, a bloodless revolution led by American businessmen removed her from office. She was replaced by Stanford B. Dole. With the support of the Americans running the local government, Hawaii became a U.S. territory in 1900. [B ■] In 1959, the U.S. Congress approved legislation permitting Hawaii to convert to statehood. [C ■] Shortly afterward, Hawaiians voted almost 17 to 1 in favor of statehood. [D ■]

1. What does the passage mainly discuss?
  - (A) Democracy in Hawaii
  - (B) The history of Hawaiian monarchs
  - (C) The evolution of Hawaii's political status
  - (D) American military control in Hawaii

On the ITP TOEFL, you would darken the oval containing the letter **(C)** on your answer sheet.

2. The word "controversial" is closest in meaning to
  - (A) adversarial
  - (B) remarkable
  - (C) gratifying
  - (D) debatable

This type of vocabulary item is typically used on the ITP TOEFL. The correct response is **(D)**.

3. The word "They" in the passage refers to
  - (A) the United States
  - (B) Americans and other foreign groups
  - (C) in subsequent years
  - (D) the islands

This is an antecedent question. The item tests whether you understand what **they** refers to. The correct answer is **(B)**.

4. Look at the phrase “in exchange for” in the passage. In saying that the United States got exclusive access to Pearl Harbor “in exchange for certain trading privileges,” the author means the United States:
- Ⓐ traded access to its markets for a naval base in Hawaii.
  - Ⓑ offered to rent the land it needed for a base in Hawaii.
  - Ⓒ absorbed Hawaii by granting it membership in the union.
  - Ⓓ was excluded by the Hawaiian king from Hawaiian markets.

This is a whole phrase item. It tests whether you can separately understand the words in a group and then assemble them to arrive at an understanding of their meaning as a group. One clue to the meaning of this phrase is the word **exchange**. Since you are already familiar with exchanging money or exchanging addresses, you can probably guess that this has something to do with a two-way transfer—in this case, the right to use some land in Hawaii for access to U.S. markets. Once you have pieced together the larger context, it is easier to see that the correct response is **(A), traded access to its markets for a naval base in Hawaii**.

5. According to the passage, which of the following is true about King Kalakaua?
- Ⓐ He was replaced by Stanford B. Dole.
  - Ⓑ He made a trade agreement with the United States.
  - Ⓒ He welcomed foreign groups into the island.
  - Ⓓ He supported bloodless revolution.

This is an example of a fact question. The response to the question is directly stated in the passage. You would darken circle **(B)**, since he was the leader of Hawaii who gave the United States exclusive military rights in exchange for a trade agreement.



6. Why does the author mention Americans and foreign groups in the passage?
- Ⓐ They exerted a powerful influence in local politics.
  - Ⓑ They promoted trade between Hawaii and other countries.
  - Ⓒ They approved legislation giving Hawaii its statehood.
  - Ⓓ They supported Queen Liliuokalani's plan to remain an independent nation.

This item requires you to identify the author's purpose for mentioning a specific fact in the passage. You would darken circle **(A)**, since the foreign groups that arrived in Hawaii did, indeed, exert great political power in local Hawaiian politics.

7. Find the phrase "in favor of" in the passage. In saying that "Hawaiians voted 17 to 1 in favor of statehood," the author means that they:
- Ⓐ supported independence.
  - Ⓑ voted against statehood.
  - Ⓒ wanted to join the union.
  - Ⓓ became a favorite resort.

Here, you would darken circle **(C)**, **wanted to join the union**. In the passage, the word **favor** is a good clue to the meaning of the whole phrase, as is the adjoining phrase **voted almost 17 to 1**. This phrase strongly suggests that a vote has been taken and that the Hawaiians supported statehood by the margin given. Therefore, **in favor of** must indicate a positive vote, or formal support for a particular proposition or candidate.

Examine the task below. In this type of task, you must insert the sentences into the appropriate place in the passages. Your choices are marked with a box **[■]**.

8. Look at the four squares **[■]** that show where the following sentence could be inserted into the passage

*In so doing, it became the fiftieth state.*

Where could the sentence best be added? [A], [B], [C], or [D]

The correct placement for this sentence is **[D ■]**.

9. An introduction for a short summary of the passage appears below. Complete the summary by choosing three of the six choices that best summarize the information in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they are not included in the passage or are minor points from the passage.

The story of Hawaii's path to statehood is a subject of controversy.

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- Ⓐ Hawaii's climate played a major role in its acceptance of statehood. Its agricultural products were sought by many nations around the world.
- Ⓑ After the death of Hawaiian King Kalakaua, and the ousting of Queen Liliuokalani, foreign interests became intensely involved in the political matters of the island.
- Ⓒ Largely due to American influence in local politics, the United States recognized Hawaii as an independent nation just before achieving statehood.
- Ⓓ An American businessman seized the opportunity that weak leadership presented and led a peaceful movement to remove Queen Liliuokalani from her position of power.
- Ⓔ Due to the political power that the Americans had in local government, a very close relationship formed with the United States that permitted the suggestion of statehood for the island nation.
- Ⓕ Because of the agreements that were made between Hawaii and the United States, Pearl Harbor was able to play an important role in World War II.

The best sentences to be added to the summary are **(B)**, **(D)**, and **(E)**. You would darken those three circles.

### iBT Reading Comprehension Sample

Single causation rarely accounts for complex historical events. Instead, most noteworthy historical events are caused by a plethora of conditions and events. For example, many scholars believe that the Great Depression in the United States can be attributed to several national and worldwide conditions.

First, though it may not have been a direct cause of the Great Depression, the Mississippi Valley in America experienced a severe drought around the time of the Great Depression. The area affected included 100,000,000 acres in parts of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas. Along with the drought, farmers had not rotated crops or used cover crops to prevent erosion. Thus, when they plowed the topsoil, the natural grasses that would normally trap moisture and keep the soil in place were displaced. As a result, the region experienced severe dust storms and agricultural damage.

[A ■] In fact, the term “Dust Bowl” is often used to refer to this period of severe dust storms when the soil dried and blew away in dark clouds. [B ■] With the land useless, many farmers could not pay their taxes and debts. They had little choice but to sell their farms and travel to other states to find work, even if it meant migrating from farm to farm to pick fruit for low wages. [C ■] Their plight was captured by the American writer John Steinbeck, in books such as *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men*. [D ■]

Second, the stock market crash of 1929 resulted in stockholders losing more than \$40 billion. On “Black Tuesday,” October 29, 1929, share prices of the New York Stock Exchange plummeted. As stock prices fell, more and more investors decided to leave the stock market, resulting in about 16 million shares traded on Black Tuesday. Although some prominent investors, such as members of the Rockefeller family, bought large quantities of stock to demonstrate their confidence in the market, their efforts could not prevent the crash. While it is true that the stock market began to recover in the days and weeks after the crash, it did not recover enough to prevent America from entering the Great Depression. The Great Crash sparked a twelve-year economic slump that affected Western industrialized countries.

Third, over 9,000 banks failed during the 1930s. Unlike today, bank deposits were not insured, meaning that many people lost their savings. Banks also became more hesitant to loan money. Fourth,

Americans stopped purchasing items and, as a result, production  
(40) fell. In turn, because production was reduced, employers reduced  
their workforces. Unemployment rose to over 25 percent in 1933. As  
people lost their jobs, they became unable to pay for items they  
bought on installment plans, and so their goods were repossessed,  
which resulted in an increase in businesses' inventories.

(45) Fifth and finally, the U.S. government passed the Smoot-Hawley  
Tariff Act, or the Tariff Act of 1930. The act was sponsored by U.S.  
Senator Reed Smoot, a Republican from Utah and chairman of the  
Senate Finance Committee, and Representative Willis C. Hawley,  
a Republican from Oregon and chairman of the House Ways and  
(50) Means Committee. The act, which raised U.S. tariffs on over 20,000  
imported goods, had as its main purpose the protection of American  
jobs from global competition. The act was not without its opponents,  
however. For example, in May 1930, 1,028 economists signed a  
petition asking President Hoover to veto the legislation. Henry Ford  
(55) and J.P. Morgan chief executive Thomas Lamont also met with the  
president to request that he veto the act. President Hoover opposed  
the bill but nevertheless signed it into law. Foreign governments  
also opposed the act. While the bill was moving through Congress,  
foreign governments had threatened retaliation by raising the tariff  
(60) rates on American goods imported into their countries. After the bill  
was signed into law, foreign governments lived up to their threats.  
For example, Canada, the U.S.'s largest trading partner, retaliated  
by imposing new tariffs on products that accounted for approxi-  
mately 30 percent of U.S. exports to Canada.

1. What does the passage mainly discuss?
  - (A) Policies involving U.S. trade
  - (B) Causes of the Great Depression
  - (C) Reasons for stock market crashes
  - (D) Books written by American authors

You would click the oval next to the second option.

2. The word **plethora** in line 2 is closest in meaning to

- Ⓐ few
- Ⓑ shortage
- Ⓒ complexity
- Ⓓ overabundance

The correct response is **(D)**.

3. According to the passage, all of the following are mentioned as causes of the Great Depression EXCEPT

- Ⓐ bank failure
- Ⓑ higher tariffs
- Ⓒ installment plans
- Ⓓ stock market crash

The correct response is **(C)**.

4. Find the word **it** in line 32. Using your mouse, click on the word or phrase in the passage that **it** refers to.

This is an antecedent question. The item tests whether you understand what the pronoun **it** refers to. Using your mouse, you would highlight the phrase by clicking on **the stock market** in the passage.

5. According to the passage, which of the following is true about President Hoover?

- Ⓐ He refused to meet with Henry Ford.
- Ⓑ He followed the advice of Thomas Lamont.
- Ⓒ He supported the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act.
- Ⓓ He signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act into law.

This is an example of a fact question. The response to the question is directly stated in the passage. You would click on response **(D)**.

6. Why does the author mention economists in the last paragraph of the passage?
- Ⓐ Because they caused the economic crisis.
  - Ⓑ Because they opposed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act.
  - Ⓒ Because they acted in ways that worsened the economy.
  - Ⓓ Because they exerted undue influence on President Hoover.

The correct response is **(B)**.

7. The word **sparked** in line 34 is closest in meaning to
- Ⓐ started
  - Ⓑ hastened
  - Ⓒ hampered
  - Ⓓ anticipated

The correct response is **(A)**.

8. The word **sponsored** in line 46 is closest in meaning to
- Ⓐ backed
  - Ⓑ paid for
  - Ⓒ attacked
  - Ⓓ subsidized

The correct response is **(A)**.

9. The word **veto** in line 54 is closest in meaning to
- Ⓐ bar
  - Ⓑ reject
  - Ⓒ revise
  - Ⓓ consider

The correct response is **(B)**.