#### Practice Test 1: [Test1](https://magoosh.com/toefl/toefl-practice-test/)

#### Practice Test – ETS: [Test2](https://www.ets.org/toefl/test-takers/ibt/prepare/tests)

#### TOEFL iBT Writing Skills

It consists of two parts: the integrated writing task (150-225 words) and the independent writing task (300-350 words).

INTEGRATED WRITING

The integrated writing task comes first and is organized in the following way:

1. You **read** a passage - 3 minutes
2. You **listen** to a related lecture - 2 minutes
3. You **write** an essay - 20 minutes

In your response to the integrated question, you will be asked to summarize the points made in the lecture **and** either show how the lecture supports the points made in the reading passage **or**show how the lecture casts doubt on the points made in the reading passage.

It is helpful to **make notes of the main points as you read**, though the reading passage does reappear when it is time to write. More importantly, **you must make notes while listening**, as you have only one opportunity to hear the lecture. Listen carefully for **arguments**, **explanations** and **examples** which support or challenge the points made in the reading. It is essential that you take detailed notes while listening or you won’t have enough material to write about.

A high-scoring essay will be well-organized, will give clear arguments and examples to support those arguments, and will include all of the important information from the given sources (on the integrated task, of course). To get a high score, you need to have a clear main point, and everything in your essay should contribute in some way to that point.

Your essay may be set up as**one long paragraph or three paragraphs**. In terms of organization, you have two ways in which you could structure your response: You could compare and contrast each point as you go along. For example, “The reading passage states that….” , “On the other hand, the lecture argues that… .” Alternatively, you could list all of the points made in the reading passage in one paragraph and all the points made in the lecture in the next paragraph.

Bear in mind that for the integrated task, you are not being asked to give your opinion, but to relate what you have read and heard. **Do only what the question asks you to do - no more and no less.**

**The question will be of one of these types (the 1st and the 2nd are most common; the lecture will contrast with the reading):**

* Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they cast doubt on specific points made in the reading passage.
* Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they challenge specific claims/arguments made in the reading passage.
* Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to specifically explain how they answer the problems raised in the reading passage.
* Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to specifically explain how they support the explanations in the reading passage.
* Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to specifically explain how they strengthen points made in the reading passage.

It’s **very important to draw from both the written and the spoken sources**. If you only reference the written passage, the very best score your essay can get is a 1. In many ways, the integrated essay is a summary of the lecture that you heard, but be sure to mention *both* sources.

**Outline of essay**:

I. Introduction

A. General statement about the relationship between the resources you heard

and read

B. Short description of the structure of the lecture

II. Body

A. Paragraph on first point

1. Paraphrase the professor’s point

2. Contrast/compare with the reading

*3. Give extra detail on the professor’s point (optional)*

B. Paragraph on second point

1. Paraphrase the professor’s point

2. Contrast/compare with the reading

*3. Give extra detail on the professor’s point (optional)*

C. Paragraph on third point

1. Paraphrase the professor’s point

2. Contrast/compare with the reading

*3. Give extra detail on the professor’s point (optional)*

III. Conclusion

1. *Restate the relationship between the two sources (optional)*

**Don’t copy the words in the reading text.**

But you will have a text, and it may be tempting to copy directly from that text. But that is **a bad idea.** You do not need to copy the exact words of **anything** on the TOEFL. Instead, you’ll want to learn how to paraphrase. Here are some tips to help you stay on the right side of the border between using sources appropriately and copying them.

**Work from Your Notes**

Use shorthand and your own words for the thoughts in the lecture or text. If you don’t

copy the materials word-for-word into your notes, it’s very unlikely that you’ll accidentally

copy something inappropriately.

If you do put a direct quote into your notes or response, put quotation marks around it so

that it’s clear to you and to the graders that you did not come up with that phrase

yourself. Do not do this with long sentences, though—quotes should be just a couple of

words, maximum, and only in special situations. If you're not sure about including a

quote, then don't.

**Change Direct Quotes to Indirect Quotes**

By turning direct speech into indirect speech, you dramatically improve your ability to

paraphrase the content of conversations. Here’s an example of paraphrasing:

*John said, “I think the university’s new policy is a bad idea." = Direct speech*

*John said that the university’s new policy was a bad idea. = Indirect speech*

But go one step further: change some of the wording, too!

*John said that the changes the university made to their policy seemed like a mistake. =*

*Paraphrasing*

INDEPENDENT WRITING

The second task in the Writing section is the independent essay. You have 30 minutes to write a four or five paragraph essay (about 300-350 words) in response to a single question.

**The first thing you need to do is to identify the task clearly.** The question may ask you to agree or disagree, make an argument, give an explanation or state a preference. Make sure you understand what you are being asked to do.

**The next point is to take up to 5 minutes to plan your essay.** Sometimes students avoid doing this because they feel it will take away from the amount of time they have to write the essay. However, by planning in advance, you focus first on ***what***to write and can then concentrate on ***how*** best to express your ideas.

If, while planning, you discover that you can’t think of enough reasons or examples to write a convincing essay, then you might consider adopting the opposite point of view. **The emphasis is on generating lots of ideas and examples to write a strong essay, even if it’s not your true view on the subject.** Having enough "meat" in your essay is more important than choosing a particular point of view.

**You then have 20 minutes to write your essay.** After deciding on your approach, state your position clearly in the first line or at least in the first paragraph. The examiner should not be left guessing where you stand on the given topic. After the introductory paragraph, you need to write two or three supporting paragraphs, which provide reasons and examples, and last, the conclusion. **Always begin your essay with a strong introduction and end with a powerful conclusion** so that the first impression and the last one is powerful and convincing.

Try to **allot about 5 minutes at the end to review your essay and correct**any obvious spelling, grammatical or vocabulary errors. **If you're running out of time, try to add at least a one-line conclusion**, so that your essay gives the impression of being complete.

**Practice writing essays within the 30-minute time limit** so that you feel comfortable doing so on the day of the test.

**Outline of essay:**

Here’s a brief outline you can model your essays on:

I. Introduction

A. Very general statement about the world

B. Specify the topic

*C. Optional: show the other side*

D. Give your opinion

II. Body

A. State your first reason

1. Explain the reason if needed

2. Give a concrete example or detail

*3. Optional: Second example or detail*

4. Explain why the example supports your opinion

B. State your second reason

1. Explain the reason if needed

2. Give a concrete example or detail

*3. Optional: second example or detail*

4. Explain why the example supports your opinion

III. Conclusion

A. Restate main idea

*B. Optional: Reference reasons or opposite opinion*

C. Real-world result of your argument

**Right use of examples:**

**Source 1 - Personal Experience**

Probably 80% of independent essay arguments come from personal experience,

because it’s your own experiences that typically shape your opinions. You can draw on

your friends’ stories and your family, in addition to those things you’ve personally done or

seen. Personal experience arguments are particularly useful in questions that deal with

education, raising children, and general lifestyle like questions like these:

* Your family and friends are encouraging you to buy a new car. What are some benefits and downsides of purchasing a brand-new vehicle? Explain your thoughts using examples.
* What are some good things and bad things about continuing to live with your parents? In your essay, include supporting details.

**Source 2 - Famous Person or Event**

You can also draw examples from well-known stories and personalities, whether they be

historical or fictional. If you choose a fictional or literary example, make it clear that

although it’s fictional, it demonstrates something that is applicable to real life. This is a

great tactic for questions of national interest and for ones like these:

* If you could choose any place to visit in the world, where would you live? Explain your thoughts using examples.
* Who is your favourite singer or singing group? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

**Source 3 - Knowledge of the Subject**

You don’t need to have any prior knowledge to answer your TOEFL essay questions, but

if you do know something about the topic you’re given, you may want to draw on that

knowledge. This is likely to be a more successful tactic than personal experiences or

famous events when your question deals with a social or political issue like one of these:

* Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Modern mass media has helped people to be better informed than before. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
* Extracurricular activities (such as sports, band, debate, or a hobby club) can enhance a student’s education. What is an extracurricular activity they you would recommend to students? Why? Use reasons and specific examples to support your choice.

**Using Examples Well**

Simply having a good example isn't enough. You have to use it well in your writing. That

means connecting the concrete example to the more abstract ideas—your opinion or the

reasons for that opinion. Say, for instance, I answer the following question about

technology:

*It could be argued that technology makes our lives easier and simpler. But there are*

*certainly people who feel life has become more complicated due to modern inventions.*

*Which opinion do you agree with? In your essay, include supporting details.*

Here's my main idea:

*Technology has improved our lives.*

And then I give you a reason why I think that:

*It has made long-distance communication better*.

Now, I can easily bring up a specific example to support that reason:

*For instance, I live many hundreds of miles away from my parents, but I talk to them by*

*video chat every month.*

All of that is great, but I need to make the connections between the parts. The most

important thing I need to do is explain my example. Here are a couple of sentences that

would help:

*The technology behind the video chat is very new. Twenty years ago, before we had*

*that technology, I wouldn't have been able to see my parents' faces so often. That*

*change in technology has allowed me to communicate better with people I love even*

*though I'm far away.*

Notice how this makes a clear connection between the specific example of video chat

and the general idea of technological changes improving my life.

And of course, transition words (such as "for example," and "for instance") and

referencing your previous sentences (such as "That change in technology") are very, *very*

important for writing smoothly. Be sure to link your thoughts together!

**Common Transitions**

SIMILARITY: similarly, like, as, likewise, in the same way, in addition, plus

CONTRAST: nevertheless, yet, still, on the other hand, despite, although

TIME/LISTING: First, second, etc…; next, then; at first; after that; currently; simultaneously

EMPHASIS: actually, even, indeed, especially, in fact

CONCLUSION: In conclusion, finally, therefore, thus

**14 Day Plan**

Day 1: Do one reading passage and check it. Write down unfamiliar words.

Day 2: Scan the reading from yesterday and review the questions you missed. Do you understand now why you missed them? Answer two independent speaking topics (record your answers). Add to your vocabulary list any words that you needed and didn’t know to answer the questions.

Day 3: Listen to your speaking answers from yesterday and take written notes on your strengths and weaknesses. Read over your vocabulary list a few times.

Day 4: Do 3 listening passages and check them. Use the rest of your time to review anything you missed.

Day 5: Review the most difficult listening from yesterday. Do one reading passage and check your answers.

Day 6: Scan the reading passage. Do one listening passage.

Day 7: Review your vocabulary list. Plan and write one independent essay.

Day 8: Review and edit your essay.

Day 9: Do 3 listening passages. Check your answers.

Day 10: Review the questions you missed in yesterday’s listening. Do three integrated speaking questions (one of each type). Write down any words you needed and didn’t have.

Day 11: Do one reading passage. Write down unfamiliar words.

Day 12: Listen to your speaking answers and review the words you wrote down yesterday. Read/listen to the materials for an integrated writing assignment, and plan your answer.

Day 13: Write the integrated essay.

Day 14: Read/listen to the integrated writing materials again. Correct your essay.

**Types of TOEFL Essay Topics**

* Agree or Disagree
* Preference
* Description / Explanation
* If / Imaginary
* Compare & Contrast

**Agree (or) disagree topics:**

1) People are never satisfied with what they have; they always want something more or something different.

2) People should read only those books that are about real events, real people, and established facts.

3) It is more important for students to study history and literature than it is for them to study science and mathematics.

4) All students should be required to study art and music in secondary school.

5) There is nothing that young people can teach older people.

6) Reading fiction (such as novels and short stories) is more enjoyable than watching movies.

7) Some young children spend a great amount of their time practicing sports. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this.

8) Only people who earn a lot of money are successful. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

*It is said that money makes the world go round. We spend the majority of our waking hours at work - earning a living, providing for our families and saving for our retirement. Although money no doubt plays a critical role in determining the quality and nature of our lifestyles, in my opinion, the size of one’s paycheque is not a measure of one’s success in life. The bases of my views are philosophical, social and personal.*

*Philosophically, success can be defined in myriad ways. For some, success is an external concept to be measured in terms of high income, huge bank balances, fancy cars, expensive mansions, luxurious holidays and so on. However, in my view, success is a reflection of internal human qualities, such as compassion, kindness, honesty, understanding and more. By this definition, the mere fact of earning a high income does not determine or define success.*

*Socially, success depends on how we treat other human beings. Do we regard others with respect or do we impose our will on them? Are we mindful of their needs and desires or do we behave selfishly? Do we encourage and support our friends, family and communities or do we insist they only follow the path we think best? It is clear that a critical aspect of success lies in the answers to such questions for they reveal the quality of relationships we share with our fellow human beings.*

*Personally, success can only be self-defined. My idea of success may not be the same as another person’s vision. This is as it should be. Each of us is a product of diverse social, cultural, economic, political, religious and ideological influences. When we add to that mix the free will that each of us exercises, we can understand clearly how each of us fashions his / her own aspirations for what we consider to be success in our own lives.*

*In conclusion, success is a concept which can be interpreted in a million different ways. Each individual’s version adds to the richness of our world and makes our planet a more delightful, amazing and colourful place to live.*

9) A person’s childhood years (birth to 12 years) are the most important years of life.

10) Children should be required to help with household tasks as soon as they are able to do so.

*We are born into a complex, demanding world. From infancy to adulthood lies a period in which we must prepare for the responsibilities and obligations of communal living. Although childhood should be a period of relative freedom, in my view it also needs to provide a strong preparation for the future. From this perspective, assigning household tasks to children is beneficial from a personal, social and economic point of view.*

*Personally, children need to learn the value of responsibility. Parents should involve children in household chores such as dusting furniture, raking leaves, washing dishes and so on. By including youngsters in this way, parents acknowledge the children’s ability to contribute meaningfully to the smooth running of the home. What’s more, such tasks teach them about being reliable, working efficiently and developing integrity. This early training strengthens their self-images and self-confidence.*

*Socially, young people need to be absorbed into the social nexus. While developing independence is a desirable trait, it is equally important to realize that we live in an interdependent world. Our decisions, choices and actions affect others around us. When a child sets the table, he / she not only learns how to create an aesthetically pleasing dining environment, but also that guests are to be honoured and appreciated. Such experiences are a part of the socialization process whereby social and cultural norms are passed on to future generations.*

*Economically, children need to understand the connection between effort and reward. Initially, when children are young the compensation for their efforts may be in the form of a warm hug, a word of praise or a public compliment. Later, parents may link pocket money to the performance of household duties. This arrangement allows youngsters to realize that by exchanging their free time for work, they can earn money to buy the things they like. In this way, young people develop a strong sense of the financial realities that await them.*

*In conclusion, participating in household duties and chores is beneficial at myriad levels. Most important, it enables children and youngsters to understand the philosophical equation that to receive, we must also give.*

11) Playing a game is fun only when you win.

12) High schools should allow students to study the courses that students want to study.

13) Decisions can be made quickly, or they can be made after careful thought. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The decisions that people make quickly are always wrong.

14) People behave differently when they wear different clothes. Do you agree that different clothes influence the way people behave?

15) Parents are the best teachers.

16) Schools should ask students to evaluate their teachers.

17) “When people succeed, it is because of hard work. Luck has nothing to do with success.”

18) Universities should give the same amount of money to their students’ sports activities as they give to their university libraries.

19) It is better for children to grow up in the countryside than in a big city.

20) People should sometimes do things that they do not enjoy doing.

*Life is challenging. In order to be happy and successful, we need to prepare ourselves on many fronts. Although participating in enjoyable activities is always desirable, in my view it is also necessary at times to do things we do not enjoy. The bases for my view are personal, social and financial.*

*Personally, doing things we don’t care for builds character and helps us mature. For instance, when parents have their first baby they are forced to give up their freedom in order to look after the child. There are times when parents barely get enough sleep and still have to get up and go to work in the morning. Similarly, when students are in school and university, they need to spend a lot of time studying. In spite of being tempted to go out with friends and attend parties, those who have self-control and keep their priorities straight are the ones who get high grades. Through such life experiences people become stronger, wiser and more responsible.*

*From a social perspective, we live in an interdependent world which imposes its obligations on us. Each person belongs to diverse social groups and plays various social roles. Each of us has to attend birthday parties, weddings and funerals to show we care about our fellow human beings. Participating in events for the sake of others teaches us to go beyond our own selfish needs and to share in the joys and sorrows of others.*

*Financially-speaking, people need to work - and spend - to keep the local, national and international economy growing. We need to support our own family in particular and our community in general. In fact, most of us work many more hours than we would like to work. What propels us to continue working is our financial needs, commitments and obligations. Only in this way are we able to live comfortable lifestyles and save for our retirement days.*

*In conclusion, life places huge demands on us. By participating in a wide variety of activities, both pleasant and unpleasant, we can discover more about our unique selves and live fuller lives.*

SKILLS

21) Television, newspapers, magazines, and other media pay too much attention to the personal lives of famous people such as public figures and celebrities.

22) Businesses should hire employees for their entire lives.

23) Attending a live performance (for example, a play, concert, or sporting event) is more enjoyable than watching the same event on television.

24) Progress is always good.

25) Learning about the past has no value for those of us living in the present.

26) With the help of technology, students nowadays can learn more information and learn it more quickly.

27) The expression “Never, never give up” means to keep trying and never stop working for your goals.

28) Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls.

29) The most important aspect of a job is the money a person earns.

30) One should never judge a person by external appearances.

31) A person should never make an important decision alone.

32) Games are as important for adults as they are for children.

33) Parents or other adult relatives should make important decisions for their older (15 to 18 year-old) teenage children.

34) Most experiences in our lives that seemed difficult at the time become valuable lessons for the future.

35) Classmates are a more important influence than parents on a child’s success in school.

36) The best way to travel is in a group led by a tour guide.

37) Children should begin learning a foreign language as soon as they start school.

38) Boys and girls should attend separate schools.

39) Technology has made the world a better place to live.

40) Advertising can tell you a lot about a country.

41) Modern technology is creating a single world culture.

42) Telephones and email have made communication between people less personal.

43) Dancing plays an important role in a culture.

44) Teachers should be paid according to how much their students learn.

45) It is better to be a member of a group than to be the leader of a group.

46) Playing games teaches us about life.

47) Watching television is bad for children.

48) A zoo has no useful purpose.

49) It is sometimes said that borrowing money from a friend can harm or damage the friendship.

**Preference topics:**

1. Some people say that physical exercise should be a required part of every school day. Other people believe that students should spend the whole school day on academic studies. Which opinion do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

2. A university plans to develop a new research centre in your country. Some people want a centre for business research. Other people want a centre for research in agriculture (farming). Which of these two kinds of research centres do you recommend for your country? Use specific reasons in your recommendation.

3. Some high schools require all students to wear school uniforms. Other high schools permit students to decide what to wear to school. Which of these two school policies do you think is better? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

4. What do you consider to be the most important room in a house? Why is this room more important to you than any other room? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

5. Some items (such as clothes or furniture) can be made by hand or by machine. Which do you prefer items made by hand or items made by machine? Use reasons and specific examples to explain your choice.

6. A gift (such as a camera, a soccer ball, or an animal) can contribute to a child’s development. What gift would you give to help a child develop? Why? Use reasons and specific examples to support your choice.

7. Some people choose friends who are different from themselves. Others choose friends who are similar to themselves. Compare the advantages of having friends who are different from you with the advantages of having friends who are similar to you. Which kind of friend do you prefer for yourself? Why?

8. Some people enjoy change, and they look forward to new experiences. Others like their lives to stay the same, and they do not change their usual habits. Compare these two approaches to life. Which approach do you prefer? Explain why.

9. People learn in different ways. Some people learn by doing things; other people learn by reading about things; others learn by listening to people talk about things. Which of these methods of learning is best for you? Use specific examples to support your choice.

10. Some people prefer to plan activities for their free time very carefully. Others choose not to make any plans at all for their free time. Compare the benefits of planning free-time activities with the benefits of not making plans. Which do you prefer planning or not planning for your leisure time? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your choice.

11. Some people think that the family is the most important influence on young adults. Other people think that friends are the most important influence on young adults. Which view do you agree with? Use examples to support your position.

*As social beings, we are naturally influenced by those we meet in the course of our lives. This is particularly true for young people whose character and personality are still malleable. Although friends play a central role in the lives of teenagers, in my opinion, it is the family which has a greater impact on young people. My view is based on psychological, intellectual and financial reasons.*

*Psychologically, the family is the central grounding factor for a young person, because the parents, brothers and sisters are the ones who actually love him or her. It is through thousands of life situations and family discussions that norms, values, customs, traditions and expectations are passed on to the youngster. The depth of relationship, developed over the years through shared joys and sorrows, place family members in an incomparably close bond which cannot easily be replicated by friends or anyone else.*

*Intellectually, the family impacts the young person’s ability to think. Parents create the intellectual climate in the home. Whether children develop the habit of reading, studying hard or striving to achieve their goals depends largely on the parents' example. Whether youngsters agree or disagree with their parents’ political or religious views, the family remains a reference point against which young people develop their individuality. In Asian cultures, where respect for elders is an important value, the family plays an even more central role in shaping the young person's world view.*

*Financially, the family influences the youngster by providing a certain type of lifestyle. Home, school, friends, hobbies, clothes, holidays and material possessions - all of these are impacted by the family's prosperity. The same holds true for the youngster growing up in a poor family- a totally different reality will surround that young person. No friend could have this powerful or tangible an influence on the teenager.*

*In conclusion, though friends can have a strong influence on a young person, it is finally the family which provides the more powerful backdrop in a young person’s life. The family's influence is permanent, unforgettable and inescapable.*

12. Some people think that governments should spend as much money as possible on developing or buying computer technology. Other people disagree and think that this money should be spent on more basic needs. Which one of these opinions do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

13. Some people like doing work by hand. Others prefer using machines. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

14. People listen to music for different reasons and at different times. Why is music important to many people? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

15. Groups or organizations are an important part of some people’s lives. Why are groups or organizations important to people? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

16. Imagine that you are preparing for a trip. You plan to be away from your home for a year. In addition to clothing and personal care items, you can take one additional thing. What would you take and why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

17. When students move to a new school, they sometimes face problems. How can schools help these students with their problems? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

18. Every generation of people is different in important ways. How is your generation different from your parents’ generation? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

19. Some students like classes where teachers lecture (do all of the talking) in class. Other students prefer classes where the students do some of the talking. Which type of class do you prefer? Give specific reasons and details to support your choice.

20. The 21st century has begun. What changes do you think this new century will bring? Use examples and details in your answer.

21. What are some of the qualities of a good parent? Use specific details and examples to explain your answer.

22. In your country, is there more need for land to be left in its natural condition or is there more need for land to be developed for housing and industry? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

23. Many people have a close relationship with their pets. These people treat their birds, cats, or other animals as members of their family. In your opinion, are such relationships good? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

24. Films can tell us a lot about the country where they were made. What have you learned about a country from watching its movies? Use specific examples and details to support your response.

25. Some students prefer to study alone. Others prefer to study with a group of students. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

26. You have been told that dormitory rooms at your university must be shared by two students. Would you rather have the university assign a student to share a room with you, or would you rather choose your own roommate? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

27. Some people prefer to live in a small town. Others prefer to live in a big city. Which place would you prefer to live in? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

28. Some universities require students to take classes in many subjects. Other universities require students to specialize in one subject. Which is better? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

29. Is it more important to be able to work with a group of people on a team or to work independently? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

30. Some people say that the Internet provides people with a lot of valuable information. Others think access to so much information creates problems. Which view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

31. Some people prefer to live in places that have the same weather or climate all year long. Others like to live in areas where the weather changes several times a year. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

32. Some people prefer to eat at food stands or restaurants. Other people prefer to prepare and eat food at home. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

33. Some people believe that university students should be required to attend classes. Others believe that going to classes should be optional for students. Which point of view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

*Going to university is a coveted goal for most students around the world. Many parents dream of their children having the opportunity to receive a university education, as a gateway to a successful future. Although it is possible to receive a degree without attending classes, in my view, attendance plays a critical part in the university experience. The bases for my views are educational, social and intellectual.*

*From an academic standpoint, attending classes simply enables students to learn more. After all, professors do not simply parrot what is written in university textbooks; they add to this knowledge from their own professional experience, reading and research. This provides an opportunity for students to receive key perspectives, as well as relevant and up to date information in their specialized fields. Since acquiring knowledge and developing critical thinking skills are important goals of higher education, attendance at classes should be considered a mandatory requirement for graduation.*

*Socially, university life offers young people the opportunity to form meaningful friendships, relationships and connections, some of which last for life. One can make good friends or even meet a future life partner while in college or university. In addition, one’s classmates may become the movers and shakers of tomorrow’s corporations and industries. These important contacts are also made while attending university classes, studying and partying together.*

*Lastly, from an intellectual perspective, a student can gain tremendously by matching wits with other bright students from around the world. In the context of classes, students can discuss issues, exchange views, explore ideas, solve problems and develop cross-cultural skills through interaction with international students. This can be a critical experience that helps students define themselves and their political and ideological place in the world.*

*In summary, attending university classes benefits students in myriad ways. Broadly speaking, it enables students to make the best of their years in university. Therefore, it should be regarded as a desirable and meaningful means to achieving various important life goals.*

34. Some people think that they can learn better by themselves than with a teacher. Others think that it is always better to have a teacher. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons to develop your essay.

35. Some people believe that the Earth is being harmed (damaged) by human activity. Others feel that human activity makes the Earth a better place to live. What is your opinion? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

36. Some people spend their entire lives in one place. Others move a number of times throughout their lives, looking for a better job, house, community, or even climate. Which do you prefer: staying in one place or moving in search of another place? Use reasons and specific examples to support your opinion.

37. Is it better to enjoy your money when you earn it or is it better to save your money for some time in the future? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

38. You have received a gift of money. The money is enough to buy either a piece of jewellery you like or tickets to a concert you want to attend. Which would you buy? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

39. Choose one of the following transportation vehicles and explain why you think it has changed people’s lives:

* automobiles
* bicycles
* airplanes

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

40. Some people think that human needs for farmland, housing, and industry are more important than saving land for endangered animals. Do you agree or disagree with this point of view? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

41. Some people like to travel with a companion. Other people prefer to travel alone. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

42. Some people prefer to get up early in the morning and start the day’s work. Others prefer to get up later in the day and work until late at night. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

43. Some people prefer to work for a large company. Others prefer to work for a small company. Which would you prefer? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

44. Some people like to do only what they already do well. Other people prefer to try new things and take risks. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

45. Some people believe that success in life comes from taking risks or chances. Others believe that success results from careful planning. In your opinion, what does success come from? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

46. A company is going to give some money either to support the arts or to protect the environment. Which do you think the company should choose? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

47. Some movies are serious, designed to make the audience think. Other movies are designed primarily to amuse and entertain. Which type of movie do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

48. Some people are always in a hurry to go places and get things done. Other people prefer to take their time and live life at a slower pace. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

49. Some people prefer to work for themselves or own a business. Others prefer to work for an employer. Would you rather be self- employed, work for someone else, or own a business? Use specific reasons to explain your choice.

50. Some people think that the automobile has improved modern life. Others think that the automobile has caused serious problems. What is your opinion? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

51. Which would you choose: a high-paying job with long hours that would give you little time with family and friends or a lower-paying job with shorter hours that would give you more time with family and friends? Explain your choice, using specific reasons and details.

52. Some people say that computers have made life easier and more convenient. Other people say that computers have made life more complex and stressful. What is your opinion? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

53. Some people think governments should spend as much money as possible exploring outer space (for example, traveling to the Moon and to other planets). Other people disagree and think governments should spend this money for our basic needs on Earth. Which of these two opinions do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

54. Students at universities often have a choice of places to live. They may choose to live in university dormitories, or they may choose to live in apartments in the community. Compare the advantages of living in university housing with the advantages of living in an apartment in the community. Where would you prefer to live? Give reasons for your preference.

55. Some people believe that a college or university education should be available to all students. Others believe that higher education should be available only to good students. Discuss these views. Which view do you agree with? Explain why.

56. Some people prefer to spend most of their time alone. Others like to be with friends most of the time. Do you prefer to spend your time alone or with friends? Use specific reasons to support your answer.

57. Some people believe that students should be given one long vacation each year. Others believe that students should have several short vacations throughout the year. Which viewpoint do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

58. Would you prefer to live in a traditional house or in a modern apartment building? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

59. Some people say that advertising encourages us to buy things we really do not need. Others say that advertisements tell us about new products that may improve our lives. Which viewpoint do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

60. Some people prefer to spend their free time outdoors. Other people prefer to spend their leisure time indoors. Would you prefer to be outside or would you prefer to be inside for your leisure activities? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your choice.

61. Your school has received a gift of money. What do you think is the best way for your school to spend this money? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

62. You have enough money to purchase either a house or a business. Which would you choose to buy? Give specific reasons to explain your choice.

63. What is the most important animal in your country? Why is the animal important? Use reasons and specific details to explain your answer.

64. Many parts of the world are losing important natural resources, such as forests, animals, or clean water. Choose one resource that is disappearing and explain why it needs to be saved. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

65. In some countries, people are no longer allowed to smoke in many public places and office buildings. Do you think this is a good rule or a bad rule? Use specific reasons and details to support your position.

66. Some famous athletes and entertainers earn millions of dollars every year. Do you think these people deserve such high salaries? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

67. People remember special gifts or presents that they have received. Why? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

68. Plants can provide food, shelter, clothing, or medicine. What is one kind of plant that is important to you or the people in your country? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

69. In the future, students may have the choice of studying at home by using technology such as computers or television or of studying at traditional schools. Which would you prefer? Use reasons and specific details to explain your choice.

70. When famous people such as actors, athletes and rock stars give their opinions, many people listen. Do you think we should pay attention to these opinions? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

71. The twentieth century saw great change. In your opinion, what is one change that should be remembered about the twentieth century? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

72. When people need to complain about a product or poor service, some prefer to complain in writing and others prefer to complain in person. Which way do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

73. Is the ability to read and write more important today than in the past? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

74. People do many different things to stay healthy. What do you do for good health? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

75. You have decided to give several hours of your time each month to improve the community where you live. What is one thing you will do to improve your community? Why? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

76. People recognize a difference between children and adults. What events (experiences or ceremonies) make a person an adult? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

77. Your school has enough money to purchase either computers for students or books for the library. Which should your school choose to buy computers or books? Use specific reasons and examples to support your recommendation.

78. Many students choose to attend schools or universities outside their home countries. Why do some students study abroad? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

*Pursuing higher studies abroad has become a popular choice for students from around the globe. Each year, young people spend thousands of dollars to travel, live and study in universities, colleges and schools overseas. In my view, this life-changing decision is based on the premise that education is an investment in one’s future. My opinion is based on academic, professional and personal reasons.*

*In my opinion, the primary reason for studying abroad is academic. Students wish to reap the benefits associated with attending a reputable educational institute. In addition, gaining admission to prestigious college or university is often regarded as an achievement in itself. The quality of the academic programs, the level of specialized instruction and the availability of professional resources are all high. It is no wonder that students long to graduate from well-known institutes.*

*From a professional viewpoint, graduating from foreign universities is often a gateway to a successful career. The connection is direct and provides strong motivation for young people to study abroad. The hope is that such graduates have an added advantage over their peers in a highly competitive job market. In some cases, top students from prestigious universities land job offers even before completing their studies. Furthermore, well-known corporations vie to attract the fresh new talent, who will help achieve corporate profitability in the future.*

*From a personal angle, studying abroad enables young people to mature quickly and develop independence. For instance, joining a foreign academic institution is often the first experience students have of living away from parents, siblings and friends. In one’s home country, this strong nexus provides support, assistance and guidance. However, while abroad, students must overcome the initial homesickness and culture shock, conform to a different teaching style, adapt to unfamiliar social and cultural expectations and develop proficiency in a new language. These challenging tasks enable youngsters to emerge with greater maturity and self-confidence.*

*In conclusion, the desire to study abroad is based on several concrete benefits for students in terms of the present and the future. This is why most students would gladly accept an opportunity to go abroad and would work quite diligently to turn this opportunity into a resounding success.*

**Description/Explanation topics:**

1. In your opinion, what is the most important characteristic (for example, honesty, intelligence, a sense of humour) that a person can have to be successful in life? Use specific reasons and examples from your experience to explain your answer. When you write your answer, you are not limited to the examples listed in the question.

2. If you were asked to send one thing representing your country to an international exhibition, what would you choose? Why? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

3. Your city has decided to build a statue or monument to honour a famous person in your country. Who would you choose? Use reasons and specific examples to support your choice.

4. Describe a custom from your country that you would like people from other countries to adopt. Explain your choice, using specific reasons and examples.

5. A foreign visitor has only one day to spend in your country. Where should this visitor go on that day? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

6. If you could go back to some time and place in the past, when and where would you go? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

7. What discovery in the last 100 years has been most beneficial for people in your country? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

8. Many students have to live with roommates while going to school or university. What are some of the important qualities of a good roommate? Use specific reasons and examples to explain why these qualities are important.

9. People have different ways of escaping the stress and difficulties of modern life. Some read; some exercise; others work in their gardens. What do you think are the best ways of reducing stress? Use specific details and examples in your answer.

10. People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation, increased knowledge). Why do you think people attend college or university? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

11. Nowadays, food has become easier to prepare. Has this change improved the way people live? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

12. A company has announced that it wishes to build a large factory near your community. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this new influence on your community. Do you support or oppose the factory? Explain your position.

13. It has recently been announced that a new restaurant may be built in your neighbourhood. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

14. It has recently been announced that a new movie theatre may be built in your neighbourhood. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

15. It has recently been announced that a new high school may be built in your community. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details in your answer.

16. What is a very important skill a person should learn in order to be successful in the world today? Choose one skill and use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

17. It has recently been announced that a large shopping centre may be built in your neighbourhood. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

18. Why do you think some people are attracted to dangerous sports or other dangerous activities? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

19. How do movies or television influence people’s behaviour? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

20. Many people visit museums when they travel to new places. Why do you think people visit museums? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

21. Should governments spend more money on improving roads and highways, or should governments spend more money on improving public transportation (buses, trains, subways)? Why? Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

22. In general, people are living longer now. Discuss the causes of this phenomenon. Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

23. In some countries, teenagers have jobs while they are still students. Do you think this is a good idea? Support your opinion by using specific reasons and details.

24. A person you know is planning to move to your town or city. What do you think this person would like and dislike about living in your town or city? Why? Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

25. Neighbours are the people who live near us. In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good neighbour? Use specific details and examples in your answer.

26. What are the important qualities of a good son or daughter? Have these qualities changed or remained the same over time in your culture? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

27. What are some important qualities of a good supervisor (boss)? Use specific details and examples to explain why these qualities are important.

28. We all work or will work in our jobs with many different kinds of people. In your opinion, what are some important characteristics of a co-worker (someone you work closely with)? Use reasons and specific examples to explain why these characteristics are important.

29. People work because they need money to live. What are some other reasons that people work? Discuss one or more of these reasons. Use specific examples and details to support your answer.

30. What change would make your hometown more appealing to people your age? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

31. What do you want most in a friend — someone who is intelligent, or someone who has a sense of humour, or someone who is reliable? Which one of these characteristics is most important to you? Use reasons and specific examples to explain your choice.

32. Should a city try to preserve its old, historic buildings or destroy them and replace them with modern buildings? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

33. Many teachers assign homework to students every day. Do you think that daily homework is necessary for students? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

**If/Imaginary topics:**

1. If you could invent something new, what product would you develop? Use specific details to explain why this invention is needed.

2. Imagine that you have received some land to use as you wish. How would you use this land? Use specific details to explain your answer.

3. You have the opportunity to visit a foreign country for two weeks. Which country would you like to visit? Use specific reasons and details to explain your choice.

4. If you could make one important change in a school that you attended, what change would you make? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

5. If you could change one important thing about your hometown, what would you change? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

6. If you were an employer, which kind of worker would you prefer to hire: an inexperienced worker at a lower salary or an experienced worker at a higher salary? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

7. If you could study a subject that you have never had the opportunity to study, what would you choose? Explain your choice, using specific reasons and details.

8. If you could travel back in time to meet a famous person from history, what person would you like to meet? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

9. If you could meet a famous entertainer or athlete, who would that be, and why? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

10. If you could ask a famous person one question, what would you ask? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

11. Holidays honour people or events. If you could create a new holiday, what person or event would it honour and how would you want people to celebrate it? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

**Compare/Contrast topics:**

1. It has been said, “Not everything that is learned is contained in books.” Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books. In your opinion, which source is more important? Why?

2. When people move to another country, some of them decide to follow the customs of the new country. Others prefer to keep their own customs. Compare these two choices. Which one do you prefer? Support your answer with specific details.

3. Some people trust their first impressions about a person’s character because they believe these judgments are generally correct. Other people do not judge a person’s character quickly because they believe first impressions are often wrong. Compare these two attitudes. Which attitude do you agree with? Support your choice with specific examples.

4. Some young children spend a great amount of their time practicing sports. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

5. A friend of yours has received some money and plans to use all of it either:

* to go on vacation
* to buy a car

Your friend has asked you for advice. Compare your friend’s two choices and explain which one you think your friend should choose. Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.

6. Movies are popular all over the world. Explain why movies are so popular. Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

7. Some people believe that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends. Other people believe that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. Compare the advantages of these two different ways of learning about life. Which do you think is preferable? Use specific examples to support your preference.

8. You need to travel from your home to a place 40 miles (64 kilometers) away. Compare the different kinds of transportation you could use. Tell which method of travel you would choose. Give specific reasons for your choice.