



# Practice Test #12

FOR THE TOEFL®  
SPEAKING SECTION



**Practice Test #12**  
For the TOEFL®  
*Speaking Section*



## The TOEFL Speaking Section: *Directions*

 The following Speaking section of the test will last between 20-30 minutes. To complete it, you will need a recording device that you can play back to listen to your responses. You should also have a pen and a piece of paper ready to take notes.

During the test, you will answer four speaking questions. One of the questions asks about familiar topics. Three questions ask about short conversations, lectures, and reading passages.

When you see the audio icon  it means that there is an audio passage you must listen to. [Please click the icon to get redirected to the audio file.](#)

The time you will have to prepare your response and to speak is printed below each question. You should answer all of the questions as completely as possible in the time allowed.

If you would like to read and listen to a sample response to the question you are answering, you can refer to the answer key.

When you are ready, turn the page to see the directions for the first speaking task.



## Speaking Task 1

 Directions: You will now be asked a question about a familiar topic. After you hear the question, you will have 15 seconds to plan your response and 45 seconds to speak.

*Some people prefer to read physical books made from paper, while others prefer to read electronic books on a digital device. Which do you prefer and why?*

**Preparation Time:** 15 seconds

**Response Time:** 45 seconds



## Speaking Task 2

 **Directions:** You will now read a short passage and then listen to a conversation on the same topic. You will then be asked a question about the passages. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.

You have 45 seconds to read the passage below. You may begin reading now.

### Switching to Electronic Books

Beginning next semester, students will no longer be able to buy paper books. Instead, students will be required to download all of their books to an electronic book reader. After hearing from students involved in the Environmental Protection Club, we believe it is socially irresponsible to continue to force students to buy books that require the use of natural resources, like the trees needed to produce the paper used in textbooks. We have also received countless complaints about the price of books from students. Switching to an e-book format will be a more affordable option that will reduce the cost of buying textbooks by up to 50%.

 **Now listen to a conversation about the same topic**

**Now answer the question.**

*The man expresses his opinion on the change from physical to electronic books. Briefly summarize the change. Then state his opinion about the change and explain the reasons he gives for holding that opinion.*

**Preparation Time:** 30 seconds

**Response Time:** 60 seconds



## **Speaking Task 3**

 **Directions:** You will now read a short passage and then listen to a lecture on the same topic. You will then be asked a question about the passages. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.

You have 45 seconds to read the passage below. You may begin reading now.

### **Culture Shock**

When traveling or living abroad, people encounter some situations that they may find surprising, even shocking. This phenomenon is known as culture shock. It is a state of discomfort provoked by cultural differences that could include but are not limited to mindset, behavior, practices, and style of communication. Cultural practices and traditions are sometimes difficult for travelers to comprehend because they are starkly different from his or her own upbringing. Conversely, expatriates, living for extended periods of time abroad, may begin to adopt the practices of the culture they reside in and identify with it more than the society in which he or she was born and raised. Upon returning home, these individuals may actually experience reverse culture shock.

 [\*\*Now listen to a lecture about this topic in a sociology class\*\*](#)

**Now answer the question.**

*Using the examples from the lecture, describe the idea of culture shock.*

**Preparation Time:** 30 seconds

**Response Time:** 60 seconds



## Speaking Task 4

 Directions: You will now listen to part of a lecture. You will then be asked a question about it. After you hear the question, you will have 20 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.

 [Now listen to part of a lecture in an art history class](#)

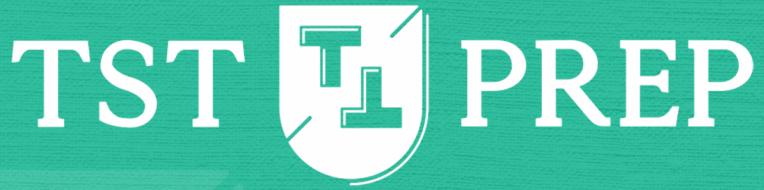
**Now answer the question.**

*Using points and examples from the lecture, describe two characteristics of the modernist art movement.*

**Preparation Time:** 20 seconds

**Response Time:** 60 seconds





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**Practice Test #12**  
For the TOEFL® Speaking Section  
Answer Key



## **Speaking Task 1: Sample Answer**

*Some people prefer to read physical books made from paper, while others prefer to read electronic books on a digital device. Which do you prefer and why?*

 Personally speaking, I prefer to read real, physical books, not e-books. I remember when I was a child and my father bought me a copy of the new Harry Potter novel, The Sorcerer's Stone I think was the name, and I can still feel that book in my hand, the crisp sound of the page turning, the smell of fresh paper, and even the weight of the book resting in my lap as I learned more about Hogwarts. Also, when I have a book sitting on my shelf, I am much more likely to read it. I have tried using an e-reader before and I just downloaded a bunch of books that I still haven't read. That's why I would much rather read a book I can hold.



## **Speaking Task 2: Sample Answer**

 The reading passage announces a change to the school's textbook policy: students will now have to download e-books instead of buying paper books. The school is hoping that this new change will help reduce the amount of wasted paper used up by physical books while also making texts more affordable for students. The man in the conversation loves the idea. He starts off by saying that he had discussed the issue in his environmental studies class before, and they came to the conclusion that the production of paper for books and other materials is having a huge impact on the environment. He also mentions that electronic readers are much cheaper. Students will only have to pay a one-time fee up front, \$300 I think, and then everything else is included, which is much cheaper than buying each individual textbook. As you can see, the man is a big fan of this new school policy.



## Speaking Task 2: Transcript

**Man:** Hey Margaret. Where are you off to?

**Woman:** Well, I am going to buy a couple of new books for next semester.

**Man:** Really? Didn't you hear the announcement?

**Woman:** What announcement?

**Man:** Well, the school board has decided that the entire campus is going to switch to electronic books starting next semester. Basically, we'll have to pay \$300 just once, and then we can download all the books we need for class for free. So, what do you think?

**Woman:** Hmm... I don't know, I'd still prefer paper books.

**Man:** Really? Well, I love the idea! We actually talked about this in my environmental studies class last semester. We use up so many natural resources to produce the paper in books. And think of how many tens of thousands of books that are produced every year. We could really reduce our carbon footprint if we started relying on digital materials.

**Woman:** Yeah, well I guess it's hard to argue with that. I like the feel of real books but I suppose I can get used to an electronic reader.

**Man:** Right. And best of all, it's cheap! Right now we spend hundreds, even thousands of dollars on books each semester. My Biology textbook cost me over \$100 alone last year. And now, all we have to pay is \$300 one time, and that's it. Everything is included. Cool, right?

**Woman:** Interesting. I guess I'll approach this change with an open mind. It's got to be better than lugging around all these heavy books.



### **Speaking Task 3: Sample Answer**

 The reading passage discusses culture shock, which is the discomfort experienced by travelers who encounter different cultural practices from their own. The professor in the listening passage provides a crystal clear example of this. When she lived in Chile, she was shocked to find that no one showed up on time. This was very different from her own upbringing which taught her to always be punctual. For parties, even job interviews, everyone in Chile is expected to be late. Another example of the difference between her culture and Chilean culture is how people view marriage. Couples will live together for years and years, even raise a family together, without ever tying the knot. This was surprising and starkly different from her own culture. So, as you can see, culture shock is a very real thing experienced by travelers to new places with different cultures from their own.



### Speaking Task 3: Transcript

*"Now I'm sure many of you who have traveled can relate to the idea in the reading. Culture shock is a common phenomenon and, even though most of us immediately think of differences on the international level, we could also experience within our very own country. Anyway, personally speaking, when I think of culture shock, I immediately think of the time I spent traveling in South America.*

*First of all, I was living in Chile for a couple of years and I prided myself on being punctual. I had been trained by my parents and friends to be sure to arrive five minutes early to classes, appointments, meetings, and so on. But in Chile, they don't expect anyone to show up on time, even for a job interview. I remember the first time I was invited to a friend's barbecue that started at 9:00 pm. When I arrived at 8:55, there was no one there. Guests started arriving almost an hour later and the meal wasn't served till close to midnight. It took me a long time to get used to this kind of behavior.*

*Another thing about Chile that was really surprising was the way dating and marriage work. You see, few people in Chile actually officially marry. There is a popular arrangement called a "pololeo." Couples who are in a "pololeo" may live together for years or even have kids together but never get married. They are basically considered a live-in boyfriend and girlfriend. They never bother marrying because they don't see much of a point. They could stay together for decades and raise a family together without ever tying the knot. This approach to starting a family was very surprising to me since it was so different than what I experienced in my own culture."*



### **Speaking Task 4: Sample Answer**

 You know, I have never heard of modernism before, but it's really interesting. Basically, this is when traditional forms of art based on realism were replaced with new and innovative artwork. One characteristic of modernist art is the use of collage. This is a combination of painting with other materials like newspapers, photos, or textiles. The professor gives the example of one modern artist who used a stuffed eagle, a picture of his son, and an empty tube of paint in one of his pieces. The second characteristic of modernist art is the use of color. Instead of painting a scene the way it really looks, some modern artists exaggerate reality by using bold colors. For instance, Paul Cezanne was one of the first to use vivid colors in his paintings. This technique was later used by the famous Vincent Van Gogh. So, that's pretty much how the professor describes modernism.



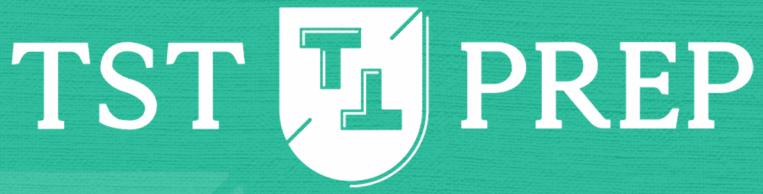
## Speaking Task 4: Transcript

"Modernism is an art movement that gained in popularity during the late 19th and early 20th century. The main ideology of modernists was an escape from tradition and a focus on new and innovative forms of expression through experimentation. Traditional forms of art were considered outdated and a different way of thinking was welcomed. In their artwork, they turned away from realistic art to a form that focused on expressing emotion.

One of the most interesting techniques in modernist art is collage, where artists combine their painting with some non-traditional materials like pieces of newspapers, photos, and textiles. Some painters incorporated everyday objects, like boxes, or rather strange objects, like parts of animals. For example, Robert Rauschenberg in his famous work *Canyon* used a stuffed eagle, pieces of fabric, a photo of his son, and an empty tube of oil paint. The rationale behind collage work is debatable, but certain artists used it to create familiar images with a more surreal tone, while others believe everyday objects help viewers connect more with the work, making it feel like a combination of the familiar and the sublime.

Many modernist works of art are also characterized by their expressive use of colors. In the past, when realism was the popular mode of painting, there was a desire for the canvas to reflect reality. However, once modernism took hold, artists began to exaggerate reality through color. There are many examples of this, but Paul Cezanne, sometimes considered the father of modernism, was one of the pioneers in the use of vivid colors. This is particularly pronounced in his outdoor scenes where sunlight is not represented directly, but through the vivid color of the entire painting. This use of bright colors to capture a feeling, rather than a realistic depiction of a scene, would later be adopted by other famous painters like Vincent Van Gogh."





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