



Free TOEFL Practice Questions

Introduction

About the TOEFL

The TOEFL is formatted in four sections, each of which tests one language skill -- reading, listening, speaking, and writing. In this PDF, you'll find practice questions from each of those four sections. If you'd like to know more about the TOEFL, you can check out our free, 150+ page [eBook](#).

How to Use This PDF

Before each set of questions, we've provided directions for that section--be sure to read them! The best way to use this PDF is to first answer the questions, and then check those answers with the answer key at the end. We've also provided detailed explanations, so you should read those as well.

These practice questions came from the [Magoosh TOEFL product](#). If you like what you see here, be sure to [sign up for a free trial](#). :)

Happy studying!

The Magoosh Team

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The Magoosh Team

Who is Magoosh?

We are a group of passionate educators in Berkeley, California.

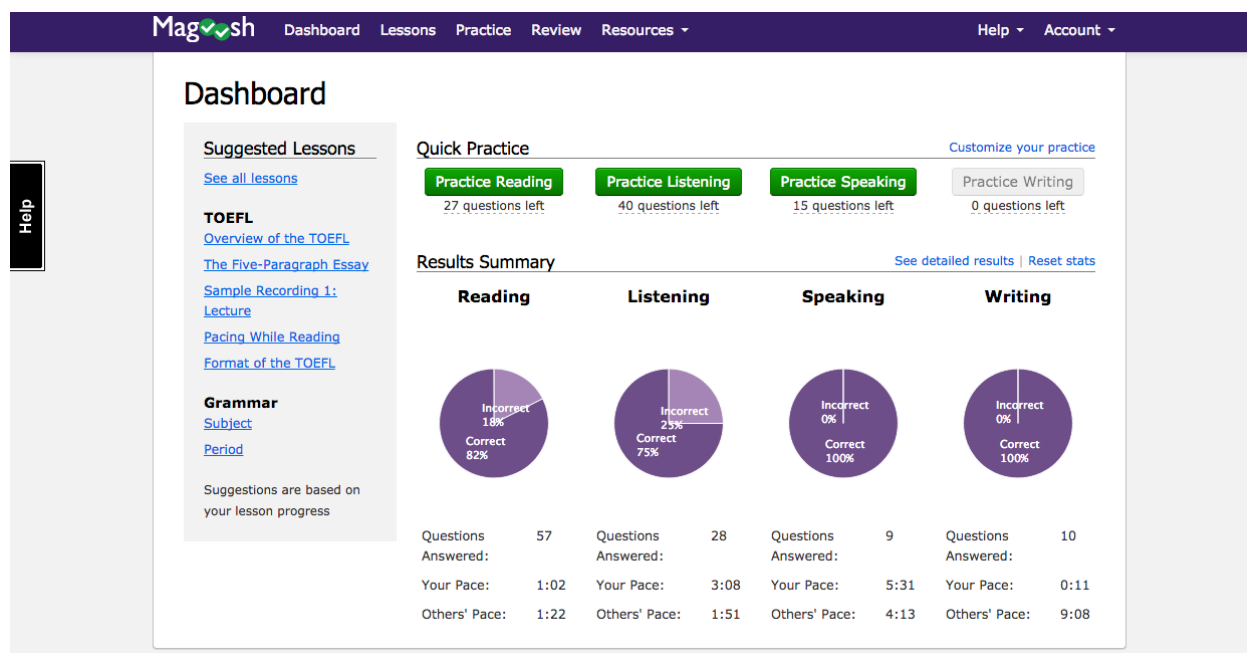


Email us at help@magoosh.com if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions!

What is Magoosh?

Magoosh is an [online TOEFL prep course](#) that offers:

- over 100 TOEFL video lessons
- practice questions
- material created by expert tutors
- e-mail support
- personalized statistics based on performance
- access anytime, anywhere from an internet-connected device



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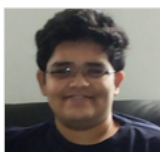


Why Our Students Love Us

These are survey responses sent to us by students after they took the TOEFL. All of these students and many more have used the [Magoosh TOEFL prep course](#) to improve their scores!



What was your overall score on the actual TOEFL?	102
What was your reading score?	27
What was your listening score?	23
What was your speaking score?	24
What was your writing score?	28
How did Magoosh help you? I used it to find how the flow and the structure of the test is like. I did not have a lot of time to prepare for the test so reading the official ETS book was not advisable. I wanted something quick, interactive and not too pricey. I am glad that I turned to Magoosh! The videos, especially on the writing section gave really good tips and I am proud to say, it is the section that I scored the highest!	



What was your overall score on the actual TOEFL?	103
What was your reading score?	26
What was your listening score?	25
What was your speaking score?	24
What was your writing score?	28
How did Magoosh help you? Magoosh TOEFL is really good and i especially loved the reading and listening questions.	



What was your overall score on the actual TOEFL?	110
What was your reading score?	27
What was your listening score?	27
What was your speaking score?	28
What was your writing score?	28
How did Magoosh help you? Primarily, Magoosh taught me the test much faster than I ever would if I had to do it by myself. Considering I had very little time, and that I had very good experience with Magoosh previously with their GRE product, I thought I'd give it a go. From the time I had registered, I had about 3 weeks to my TOEFL.?? Being a non-native speaker, it helps to have your academic background in English medium--which I did. So, what I needed was to learn the TOEFL i.e. the test pattern, the kind of questions, how to practice (especially note-taking!), what counts as a good answer, etc. Mr. Lucas Fink of Magoosh did a great job at breaking every section down and explaining the best ways to prepare for and tackle them. Additionally, it was nice to see they had quite a lot of well-made grammar lessons to help those not quite as adept in English, especially in their sentence-making. Although many tend to overlook the need to learn the test, I believe it is crucial to anyone who wants to attain a good score. And for that, I highly recommend prepping with Magoosh. They have helped me familiarize with and understand the TOEFL very quickly--all from the comfort of my home.	

The Reading Section

The reading section is designed to test how well you understand and interpret college-level academic writing similar to that found in introductory textbooks.

Below, you will find a sample reading passage and 14 questions.

Directions: Read the passage below and answer the questions.

History of the Chickenpox Vaccine

Chickenpox is a highly contagious infectious disease caused by the *Varicella zoster* virus; sufferers develop a fleeting itchy rash that can spread throughout the body. The disease can last for up to 14 days and can occur in both children and adults, though the young are particularly vulnerable. Individuals infected with chickenpox can expect to experience a high but tolerable level of discomfort and a fever as the disease works its way through the system. The ailment was once considered to be a “rite of passage” by parents in the U.S. and thought to provide children with greater and improved immunity to other forms of sickness later in life. This view, however, was altered after additional research by scientists demonstrated unexpected dangers associated with the virus. Over time, the fruits of this research have transformed attitudes toward the disease and the utility of seeking preemptive measures against it.

A vaccine against chickenpox was originally invented by Michiaki Takahashi, a Japanese doctor and research scientist, in the mid-1960s. Dr. Takahashi began his work to isolate and grow the virus in 1965 and in 1972 began clinical trials with a live but weakened form of the virus that caused the human body to create antibodies. Japan and several other countries began widespread chickenpox vaccination programs in 1974. However, it took over 20 years for the chickenpox vaccine to be approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), finally earning the U.S. government’s seal of approval for widespread use in 1995. Yet even though the chickenpox vaccine was available and recommended by the FDA, parents did not immediately choose to vaccinate their children against this disease. Mothers and fathers typically cited the notion that chickenpox did not constitute a serious enough disease against which a person needed to be vaccinated.

Strong belief in that view eroded when scientists discovered the link between *Varicella zoster*, the virus that causes chickenpox, and shingles, a far more serious, harmful, and longer-lasting disease in older adults that impacts the nervous system. They reached the conclusion that *Varicella zoster* remains dormant inside the body, making it significantly more likely for someone to develop shingles. As a result, the medical community in the

U.S. encouraged the development, adoption, and use of a vaccine against chickenpox to the public. Although the appearance of chickenpox and shingles within one person can be many years apart—generally many decades—the increased risk in developing shingles as a younger adult (30-40 years old rather than 60-70 years old) proved to be enough to convince the medical community that immunization should be preferred to the traditional alternative.

Another reason that the chickenpox vaccine was not immediately accepted and used by parents in the U.S. centered on observations made by scientists that the vaccine simply did not last long enough and did not confer a lifetime of immunity. In other words, scientists considered the benefits of the vaccine to be temporary when given to young children. They also feared that it increased the odds that a person could become infected with chickenpox later as a young adult, when the rash is more painful and prevalent and can last up to three or four weeks. Hence, allowing young children to develop chickenpox rather than take a vaccine against it was believed to be the “lesser of two evils.” This idea changed over time as **booster shots** of the vaccine elongated immunity and **countered** the perceived limits on the strength of the vaccine itself.

Today, use of the chickenpox vaccine is common throughout the world. Pediatricians suggest an initial vaccination shot after a child turns one year old, with booster shots recommended after the child turns eight. The vaccine is estimated to be up to 90% effective and has reduced worldwide cases of chickenpox infection to 400,000 cases per year from over 4,000,000 cases before vaccination became widespread. ■ **(A)** In light of such statistics, most doctors insist that the potential risks of developing shingles outweigh the benefits of avoiding rare complications associated with inoculations. ■ **(B)** Of course, many parents continue to think of the disease as an innocuous ailment, refusing to take preemptive steps against it. ■ **(C)** As increasing numbers of students are vaccinated and the virus becomes increasingly rarer, however, even this trend among parents has failed to halt the decline of chickenpox among the most vulnerable populations. ■ **(D)**

1. The word *tolerable* in the passage is closest in meaning to
- (A) sudden
 - (B) bearable
 - (C) infrequent
 - (D) unexpected
2. According to paragraph 1, which of the following is true of the chickenpox virus?
- (A) It leads to a potentially deadly disease in adults.
 - (B) It is associated with a possibly permanent rash.
 - (C) It is easily transmittable by an infected individual.
 - (D) It has been virtually eradicated in the modern world.
3. Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the *highlighted sentence*? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
- (A) U.S. parents believed that having chickenpox benefited their children.
 - (B) U.S. parents believed that chickenpox led to immunity against most sickness.
 - (C) U.S. parents wanted to make sure that their children developed chickenpox.
 - (D) U.S. parents did not think that other vaccinations were needed after chickenpox.

4. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 2 about the clinical trials for the chickenpox vaccine?

- (A) They took longer than expected.
- (B) They cost a lot of money to complete.
- (C) They took a long time to finish.
- (D) They were ultimately successful.

5. The word *notion* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) history
- (B) findings
- (C) fact
- (D) belief

6. According to paragraph 3, which of the following is true of *Varicella Zoster*?

- (A) It typically attacks adults who are over 60 years old.
- (B) It is linked to a serious disease that occurs more commonly in adults.
- (C) It likely is not a serious enough threat to human health to require a vaccine.
- (D) It is completely eradicated from the body after chickenpox occurs.

7. According to paragraph 3, all of the following is true about the chickenpox virus EXCEPT:

- (A) It causes two distinct yet related ailments.
- (B) People did not view it as a serious public health threat.
- (C) It tended to quickly become dormant and remain inoperative over time.
- (D) Vaccination against it would help prevent the onset of shingles.

8. The author uses *booster shots* as an example of

- (A) a scientifically approved medicine to eliminate chickenpox
- (B) a preferred method of chickenpox rash and fever treatment
- (C) a way to increase the effectiveness of the chickenpox vaccine
- (D) a strategy for parents to avoid vaccinating their child altogether

9. The word *countered* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) affirmed
- (B) refuted
- (C) supported
- (D) defied

10. According to paragraph 4, many parents did not choose the chickenpox vaccine because

- (A) they believed that the virus was weak and not especially harmful
- (B) they thought that scientists did not have enough data to reach a conclusion
- (C) they were unsure about the utility of the vaccine given its expected duration
- (D) they were convinced it was potentially very toxic, particularly for older children

11. According to paragraph 5, which of the following was true of the rates of chickenpox before the chickenpox vaccine became widely used?

- (A) it was 10 times higher
- (B) it was consistently rising
- (C) it declined over time
- (D) it fluctuated over several decades

12. The word *prevalent* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) dangerous
- (B) widespread
- (C) infectious
- (D) contaminated

13. Look at the four squares [•] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

Meanwhile, some continue to remain unconvinced, citing a supposed potential of the vaccine to do harm.

Where would the sentence fit best?

(A) A

(B) B

(C) C

(D) D

14. Directions: Complete the table below by indicating which statements describe chickenpox and which describe shingles. Two answer choices will NOT be used. ***This question is worth 3 points.***

	Chickenpox
●	
●	

	Shingles
●	
●	
●	

- A. Public vaccination campaigns against it began in the 1970s.
- B. It was considered an irksome but relatively harmless ailment.
- C. It primarily afflicts adults.
- D. It is a serious, lingering illness.
- E. It negatively affects the nervous system.
- F. Infection primarily occurs as a result of close contact with infected rashes.
- G. There is confusion as to exactly what virus causes it.

[\(Skip to Reading Section Answers and Explanations\)](#)

The Listening Section

The listening section tests your ability to understand, remember, and respond to spoken English.

Below, you will find one lecture with 6 questions and one conversation with 5 questions.

Directions: First, you will listen to part of a lecture from a university classroom. Don't read the questions before listening! Be sure to take notes while you listen. Get a pen and paper, and when you're ready, click the link below.

Five-minute lecture



Questions (AFTER LISTENING)

Now, answer these questions about the lecture.

1. What is the main topic of the lecture?

- (A) The technical definition of EMDR
- (B) Differences between different types of therapy
- (C) Various non-traditional treatments for trauma
- (D) The value and usefulness of EMDR treatment

2. According to the professor, what does “processing” mean?

- (A) Explaining the complicated way that EMDR works
- (B) Mentally revisiting a traumatic event
- (C) Understanding an experience via a healthy state of mind
- (D) Talking about a painful experience through EMDR

3. What is the speaker’s attitude toward EMDR?

- (A) She believes it is a unique form of therapy with a proven track record and promising future.
- (B) She thinks it will require time before EMDR’s benefits can be fully understood by psychologists.
- (C) She is unsure of whether or not the results achieved by the method are long-term.
- (D) She believes it will one day be considered the preferred form of treatment for most victims of trauma.

4. The professor describes various features of EMDR compared to other forms of therapy. For each of the following, indicate whether it is a feature of EMDR or of another form of therapy.

For each item, check the appropriate box.

	EMDR	Other Therapy
Focuses more on the mental state of patients than on bodily responses		
May be slow in cases of multiple levels of trauma		
Involves moving the eyes back and forth while looking at a beam of light		

5. [Click this link to listen again to part of the lecture. Then answer the question.](#)



What does the professor mean when she says this?

- (A) Traumatic experiences feel like they take a long time to reach completion.
- (B) Traumatic experiences can haunt the memory and never leave a person's mind.
- (C) Traumatic experiences sometimes occur in repetitious patterns in people's lives.
- (D) Traumatic experiences can seem more debilitating than they really are.

6. [Click this link to listen again to part of the lecture. Why does the professor say this?](#)



- (A) To caution against hurrying through treatment to obtain fast results
- (B) To clarify why EMDR is a time-limited treatment approach
- (C) To suggest that other forms of therapy are slower and less effective
- (D) To warn her students against using EMDR with patients whom they do not know well

Next, listen to a conversation between a professor and a student. Don't read the questions before listening! Be sure to take notes while you listen. Get a pen and paper, and when you're ready, click the link below.

[Four-minute conversation](#)



Questions (AFTER LISTENING)

Now, answer the questions about the conversation.

1. Why does the student visit the professor?

- (A) To discuss how to make a potentially dry topic more engaging
- (B) To inform her about recent changes in his and his family's lives
- (C) To fill in a gap in the student's knowledge of English history
- (D) To complain about the difficulty of an assignment given by another professor

2. What can be inferred about William III, Stephen of Blois, and Richard II?

- (A) They did not rule England for long enough periods of time to have notable impacts.
- (B) They make uninteresting topics for lectures because there is little recorded information on them.
- (C) They are generally disliked by historians and therefore rarely discussed.
- (D) Many students are less familiar with them than with Henry VIII.

3. Which of the following does the student believe is true of King Henry VIII?

- (A) He is well known primarily for his colorful personality.
- (B) The details of his life are often exaggerated in stories.
- (C) He was a cruel man for executing several of his wives.
- (D) His legacy continues to shape the politics of contemporary Europe.

4. What does the student suggest he should do before giving the lecture?

- (A) Discuss his lesson plan with another professor
- (B) Give a practice lecture to polish his storytelling skills
- (C) Research more dramatic details of Henry VIII's life
- (D) Listen to a peer explain the history of Henry VIII for ideas

5. [Click this link to listen again to part of the conversation. Then answer the question.](#)



What does the professor mean when she says this?

- (A) She believes Professor Williams is overly harsh with his students and assistants.
- (B) She does not think the student's concern is warranted in his situation.
- (C) She wants the student to feel comfortable asking for her guidance.
- (D) She is willing to help the student teach his lesson so it will be less stressful.

[\(Skip to Listening Section answers and explanations\)](#)

The Speaking Section

This section tests your ability to speak English, and your score will be dependent on your performance in three categories: delivery, language use, and topic development.

Below you'll find two speaking tasks - one independent task and one integrated task.

(Question type: Task 1 - Independent)

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

Describe a teacher who was important to you and why he or she was important. Be sure to include specific examples in your response.

Preparation time: 15 seconds

Response time: 45 seconds

(Question type: Task 3 - Integrated)

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 them. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.

Reading passage:

A university has announced a new scholarship opportunity on its website. You will have 45 seconds to read the announcement. Begin reading now.

New Scholarship Offers Opportunity to Study in Rome

The university is pleased to offer an exciting new opportunity for students in the Romance Languages department. The prestigious Buonocore Scholarship allows students to study tuition-free for two semesters in Rome. Students must submit an essay exploring a specific aspect of Italian culture to the selection committee. They must also submit a detailed plan explaining how a year in Italy would provide the opportunity to further research and improve the essay. Please note that students in departments other than Romance Languages are ineligible for this opportunity.

Now listen to this conversation on the same topic.

Two-minute conversation



Directions: Prepare a response to the following.

The female student expresses her opinion about why she disagrees with the university's new policy. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.

Preparation time: 30 seconds

Response time: 60 seconds

[\(Skip to Speaking Section sample responses\)](#)

The Writing Section

The TOEFL writing section includes an integrated task and an independent task, which work together to test your ability to communicate through writing in an academic environment.

Below, you will find one independent writing task to practice.

*For this task, you will write an essay in response to a question that asks you to state, explain, and support your opinion on an issue. Typically, an effective essay will contain a minimum of 300 words. The quality of your writing includes the development of your ideas, the organization of your essay, and the quality and accuracy of the language you use to express your ideas. You have **30 minutes** to plan and complete your essay.*

Prompt:

Some parents forbid young children from owning smartphones (cell phones with Internet access), while others disagree and believe that they are important tools for keeping in touch. Which point of view do you think is better, and why?

[\(Skip to Writing Section sample response\)](#)

Answer Key and Explanations

This section contains answer keys and detailed explanations to each of the practice questions in this PDF.

Reading Section Answer Key and Explanations

You can find tips and preparation resources for the Reading Section [here](#).

Answer Key

1. B
2. C
3. A
4. D
5. D
6. B
7. C
8. C
9. B
10. C
11. A
12. B
13. B
14. Chicken Pox: A, B
Shingles: C, D, E

Explanations

1. B

Question: The word *tolerable* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) sudden
- (B) bearable
- (C) infrequent
- (D) unexpected

Explanation: The verb “to tolerate” means to allow or live through something that is unpleasant, without choosing to try to stop it. The adjective “tolerable,” therefore is used to describe things that are bad, but are possible to live through without major problems.

You might see a parallel between the structure of “tolerable” and (B) *bearable*, which would help to answer this correctly, because the verb “to bear” means the same thing as “to tolerate.” But if you don’t know the meanings of those words, the other answer choices might seem possible.

If we look at the passage, we see that “tolerable” is contrasted with “high” in the phrase “*a high but tolerable level of discomfort*.” That must mean it is positive neutral, because “high discomfort” would be a negative thing. So it is “high” but not very high, or not extremely bad, or something similar.

(A) *sudden* doesn’t work because “high but sudden” doesn’t make much sense. Both of those, when about “discomfort,” would be bad things. The contrast doesn’t work.

(B) *bearable*, based on the verb “to bear,” meaning “to tolerate,” is our correct answer. Something that is “bearable” is not extremely bad.

(C) *infrequent* is tempting, because if the discomfort was infrequent that would not be very bad, but it is incorrect because it doesn’t match the meaning of “tolerable.” We can possibly see this by the structure of the word, since “-able” means that something is **possible**. “Infrequent” doesn’t have any meaning connected to possibility.

(D) *unexpected* is very similar to (A). “Unexpected discomfort” would be a bad thing. We need something to contrast with “high.” “Unexpected” does not contrast well.

Here are some [more tips](#) for Vocabulary in Context Questions.

2. C

Question: According to the paragraph 1, which of the following is true of the chickenpox virus?

(A) It leads to a potentially deadly disease in adults.

(B) It is associated with a possibly permanent rash.

(C) It is easily transmittable by an infected individual.

(D) It has been virtually eradicated in the modern world.

Explanation: Much of paragraph 1 is about the chickenpox virus, so we might need to look at our answer choices before we look at specific details in the passage. But notice that the virus is named in the first sentence (“Varicella zoster”). That will be a good starting point.

(A) is very tempting, because shingles is a serious disease in adults that is caused by the chickenpox virus. But (A) is incorrect because that is **later in the passage**. It’s not in paragraph 1. Besides, we don’t know that shingles is “potentially deadly” (it can kill you).

(B) is incorrect because there is no information that says the chickenpox rash may be permanent. In fact, the passage says that “the disease can last for up to 14 days.” That is far from permanent.

(C) is correct. The word “contagious” means that a disease can be given from one person to another person. “Highly contagious” means it is easy to infect somebody (easy to transmit the disease).

(D) is partly tempting because of later parts of the passage, but it is wrong. Even if there is less chickenpox today than there was in the past, that fact is mentioned in the final paragraph—not in paragraph 1.

3. A

Question: Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

(A) U.S. parents believed that having chickenpox benefited their children.

(B) U.S. parents believed that chickenpox led to immunity against most sickness.

(C) U.S. parents wanted to make sure that their children developed chickenpox.

(D) U.S. parents did not think that other vaccinations were needed after chickenpox.

Explanation: This sentence tells us two things:

- Parents considered chickenpox a “rite of passage”
- Parents thought chickenpox might give their children greater immunity to other illnesses

A “rite of passage” is an event in your life that shows you’re growing older. Graduation, for instance, might be a rite of passage. So parents felt that chickenpox was normal. They also thought it might actually help their children: “greater and improved immunity” is a good thing.

(A) is correct. It may seem simple at first, but this is the **most** important information from the given sentence. If you are unsure, and think that it needs more detail to be complete, then mark it as correct but check the other answers for something more complete.

(B) is close, but it is incorrect because of the word “most.” Although parents believed that chickenpox helped immunity, the passage does not say anything about “most” or the majority. It was possible only one or two sicknesses.

(C) is incorrect like (B) in that it is too strong. While chickenpox was not so bad, and possibly a bit helpful, those parents did not **try** to get their children sick. That’s what “make sure” would mean.”

(D) is wrong and says almost the same thing as (B) but in different words. If parents thought vaccinations after chickenpox were unnecessary, then that means they thought their children were immune to almost all diseases. The text does not say how many diseases parents thought their children would be immune to. Besides, this sentence misses the focus on parents’ attitude toward the disease—not on the vaccines.

This is a “paraphrase” type question. Here’s a [blog post](#) about this type of question.

4. D

Question: Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 2 about the clinical trials for the chickenpox vaccine?

- (A) They took longer than expected.
- (B) They cost a lot of money to complete.
- (C) They took a long time to finish.
- (D) They were ultimately successful.

Explanation: This is an [inference question](#). To answer this correctly, we have to look very carefully at the question. We want to know about the **clinical trials** of the vaccine.

Here's the relevant sentences:

Dr. Takahashi began his work to isolate and grow the virus in 1965 and in 1972 began clinical trials with a live but weakened form of the virus that caused the human body to create antibodies. Japan and several other countries began widespread chickenpox vaccination programs in 1974.

So one of the things that we see that those trials happened in Japan between 1972 and 1974 (when vaccination programs were started). We also know that the trials were done with a weak form of the chickenpox virus.

(A) is very tempting because it took the USA many years to approve the vaccine. But it's incorrect because we don't know that was because of **clinical trials**. It's possible that the trials ended in Japan in 1974 (or earlier). Besides that, we don't know what was "expected."

(B) is incorrect. There is no mention of money in the paragraph.

(C) is also very tempting. It is almost the same as (A) but there is no mention of expectations. And the same problem with (A) applies: the FDA took a long time, but that is not necessarily because of "*clinical trials*."

(D) is correct. We know that the trials were successful because Japan started distributing the vaccine (and other countries did too).

5. D

Question: The word *notion* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) history
- (B) findings
- (C) fact
- (D) belief

Explanation: A “notion” is an idea. In the passage, we see that parents “*cited the notion that chickenpox did not constitute a serious enough disease.*” In other words, they said chickenpox was not a big problem, so children did not need vaccinations. This is false—the rest of our text says that the chickenpox virus **can** lead to serious health problems (shingles). So even if we don’t know the meaning of a “notion,” we know that “notion” must be false.

(A) is incorrect. While it’s true that parents in the past believed the chickenpox virus wasn’t serious, we can’t say that belief is a “history.” In fact, it turned out not to be true.

(B) “findings” are what information we collect from a scientific study. There was no study, here, so (B) is incorrect.

(C) is wrong because these parents only **believed** that chickenpox was not a problem. The fact was actually the opposite—the virus was a problem after all.

(D) is correct. A “belief” is an idea that is not proven to be true. Parents thought it was true, but they didn’t definitely know.

6. B

Question: According to paragraph 3, which of the following is true of *Varicella Zoster*?

- (A) It typically attacks adults who are over 60 years old.
- (B) It is linked to a serious disease that occurs more commonly in adults.
- (C) It likely is not a serious enough threat to human health to require a vaccine.
- (D) It is completely eradicated from the body after chickenpox occurs.

Explanation: We see “Varicella zoster” mentioned twice in paragraph 3, so we should look at those sentences first. They describe the discovery of a link between Varicella zoster and shingles. We should look for information about that link in the answer choices.

(A) is tempting, but it is incorrect; the passage says that shingles is actually more common in **younger** adults. Also, earlier the text, we saw that children are more often infected with chickenpox, which is caused by varicella zoster virus.

(B) is correct. The text says that “Varicella zoster, the virus that causes chickenpox, and shingles, a far more serious, harmful, and longer-lasting disease in older adults that impacts the nervous system.” The virus is linked to a serious disease in adults: shingles.

(C) is opposite of the text and so is incorrect. In fact, the link between Varicella zoster and shingles convinced doctors that the virus was serious enough that we should prefer a vaccine.

(D) is also wrong because it is opposite of the text. “Completely eradicated” means the virus is destroyed and does not exist in the body. In reality, the text says that after chickenpox, the virus can remain dormant, meaning it doesn’t leave the body.

7. C

According to paragraph 3, all of the following is true about the chickenpox virus EXCEPT:

- (A) It causes two distinct yet related ailments.
- (B) People did not view it as a serious public health threat.
- (C) It tended to quickly become dormant and remain inoperative over time.
- (D) Vaccination against it would help prevent the onset of shingles.

Explanation: This is a [detail question](#). So, let's go through the answer choices one by one to find the answer that's **not** in the text.

(A) is true, so it is a wrong answer. The chickenpox virus causes chickenpox **and** shingles. Those two are separate (distinct), but because they are caused by the same virus, they must be related.

(B) is incorrect. This idea is definitely in other paragraphs. The first and second paragraphs say very directly that parents did not believe the chickenpox virus was a big problem. They even believed it might help their children. This is also referenced in the first and last sentences of paragraph 3. In fact, the whole paragraph is about how scientists and people began to accept that chickenpox vaccines were a good idea. That change of opinion implies that people **used to** think that vaccines were not necessary—that the virus wasn't a big problem.

(C) is not in the text; it is the correct answer. There are a couple of problems with (C). For one, we don't know that the virus becomes "**quickly** dormant." The text does not tell us when, exactly, the virus went dormant. Besides that, it does not "remain inoperative." That would mean the virus does not have any effect after it goes dormant. The opposite is true—it might come **back** as shingles, later. So it does not stay dormant.

(D) is in the text, and so it is wrong. Doctors found a link between Varicella zoster and shingles. Then, they started to support the vaccination more strongly. That's because the virus can be stopped with a vaccination. Stopping the virus means preventing shingles.

8. C

The author uses **booster shots** as an example of

- (A) a scientifically approved medicine to eliminate chickenpox
- (B) a preferred method of chickenpox rash and fever treatment
- (C) a way to increase the effectiveness of the chickenpox vaccine
- (D) a strategy for parents to avoid vaccinating their child altogether

Explanation: The final sentence in paragraph 4 talks about booster shots. We should look there for our answer:

This idea changed over time as booster shots of the vaccine elongated immunity and countered the perceived limits on the strength of the vaccine itself.

So what are these “booster shots”? Well, they gave longer immunity. We saw earlier in the paragraph that the vaccine might give only temporary immunity. But because of booster shots, that idea “*changed over time.*” They countered the limits of the vaccine—these booster shots challenged the idea that the vaccine wasn’t strong enough or didn’t last long enough.

So they were an example of how to make the vaccine longer, strong, or more effective.

(A) is too extreme, so it is wrong. Booster shots do not “eliminate chickenpox.” Nothing has totally eliminated chickenpox. The passage says there are still many cases of the disease every year.

(B) is false because children get the vaccine and booster shots to **prevent** chickenpox, not to treat it. That is, parents vaccinate their children before the children ever have the disease.

(C) matches our prediction. It is correct.

(D) is incorrect because it is opposite of the truth. The booster shots “countered the perceived limits on the...vaccine.” In other words, it made parents **want** to use the vaccine, not avoid it.

9. B

Question: The word **countered** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) affirmed
- (B) refuted**
- (C) supported
- (D) defied

Explanation: To “counter” something means that you fight against it or try to show that something isn’t true.

In this text, the booster shots “*countered the perceived limits on the strength of the vaccine.*” Notice that earlier in the paragraph, we read that parents and scientists believed the vaccine was not permanent enough—children might still get the disease later, after getting a vaccine. Booster shots “elongated immunity,” which changed parents’ ideas of the vaccine. So the booster shots proved those limits to be false. Th

(A) *affirmed* is incorrect, because the verb “to affirm” means “to say that something is true.” This is actually opposite of what we need. We want something that made the limits **false**.

(B) *refuted* is correct. To “refute” means to prove that something isn’t true. These limits were not true anymore after the booster shots were introduced. The booster shots changed people’s ideas (what they “perceived”)

(C) *supported* is opposite of what we want, so it is wrong. If the booster shots “supported the limits,” there would be no change. But the text tells us there was a change.

(D) *defied* is tempting, but it doesn’t quite match the meaning of “countered” (proved or argued to be false) If you defy a limit, that means you break the limit. These booster shots did change the physical limits of the vaccine, but this part of the sentence is about people’s **beliefs** (the “perceived limits”). We are not defying their beliefs, but rather proving the beliefs to be wrong.

10. C

According to paragraph 4, many parents did not choose the chickenpox vaccine because

- (A) they believed that the virus was weak and not especially harmful
- (B) they thought that scientists did not have enough data to reach a conclusion
- (C) they were unsure about the utility of the vaccine given its expected duration
- (D) they were convinced it was potentially very toxic, particularly for older children

Explanation: The first sentence in this paragraph starts with immediate information about why parents didn't choose the vaccine: *"the vaccine simply did not last long enough and did not confer a lifetime of immunity."* The next couple of sentences explains that idea in more detail, telling about what happens after the vaccine stops working. Our correct answer will probably be related.

(A) is similar to information in other parts of the passage, but not of paragraph 4, so it is incorrect. Be sure to look at the correct part of the text—working from memory is not a good idea, because you might remember information from an irrelevant part of the passage.

(B) is opposite of the text. The scientists **also** said that the vaccine didn't last very long. So parents believed the scientists, and therefore didn't choose the vaccine.

(C) is correct. Because the expected duration (the length of time) was too short, parents didn't believe that the vaccine was useful (they were unsure of the utility).

(D) may be tempting because older children were at risk according to the passage, but that's not because the vaccine was toxic. Instead, the parents believed the vaccine didn't last for long enough. The **disease** was harmful; the vaccine was just too weak, not harmful itself.

11. A

According to paragraph 5, which of the following was true of the rates of chickenpox before the chickenpox vaccine became widely used?

- (A) it was 10 times higher
- (B) it was consistently rising
- (C) it declined over time
- (D) it fluctuated over several decades

Explanation: This question gives us some very specific information to look for, so we want to use that and check the passage before reading our answer choices. Because we're looking for "rates," it's a good idea to check the numbers in the paragraph first.

The vaccine is estimated to be up to 90% effective and has reduced worldwide cases of chickenpox infection to 400,000 cases per year from over 4,000,000 cases before vaccination became widespread.

We also see the phrase "*before the vaccination became widespread*" in this sentence, which matches up very well with the question ("before the chickenpox vaccine became widely used"). So let's look carefully at that sentence. The vaccine **reduced** chickenpox infections. So there are two rates: before the vaccine and after the vaccine. The rate after the vaccine is lower. Specifically, the number went from 4 million to 4 hundred thousand.

(A) is correct. 4,000,000 is ten times 400,000. So the rate used to be ten times higher.

(B) has two problems, and so is false. First, the number actually went *down*. Second, we don't know that the number changed at all **before** the vaccine was introduced. We only know that the number changed **because** of the vaccine.

(C) has the same problem as (B), partly: the number did not go down before the vaccine became common. It went down **after** the vaccine became widespread.

(D) again shares the same problem as (B) and (C). We don't know about what happened to the number before the vaccine was used. It may have just been the same all the time

until the vaccine became common (“fluctuate” means the numbers went up and down a lot).

12. B

The word *prevalent* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) dangerous
- (B) widespread
- (C) infectious
- (D) contaminated

Explanation: “Prevalent” is an adjective that means “very common”; it means that there are very many of something or that something covers a lot of area.

If we don’t know the meaning, then looking at the text, we see that the chickenpox rash is “more painful and prevalent and can last up to three or four weeks” in young adults. So there are three reasons why this rash is bad:

- it’s more painful
- it takes more time
- it’s more _____

What else could be in this blank? It must be something bad.

(A) *dangerous* is definitely something bad, and it’s very tempting. We might be able to cross it out because the disease isn’t really “dangerous”—we know that it’s painful, but the passage never says that it does permanent damage. But still, “dangerous” works relatively well in the place of “prevalent.” The best way to cross this off is simply by definition.

(B) *widespread* is correct. The rash covers a larger (wider) area; there is more of it.

(C) *infectious* is very tempting, but it is incorrect. Notice that chickenpox was already called “highly contagious,” even when children are young. Meanwhile, the text said that

chickenpox among young children is tolerable and short. That is what is being contrasted with chicken pox in young adults. We are not showing a difference in infectiousness, because the disease was **already** infectious.

(D) *contaminated* isn't possible. A rash is always contaminated. It cannot become "more contaminated." Besides, we don't use "contaminated" to refer to people. It refers to objects.

13. B

Look at the four squares [•] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

Meanwhile, some continue to remain unconvinced, citing a supposed potential of the vaccine to do harm.

Where would the sentence fit best?

(A) A

(B) B

(C) C

(D) D

Explanation: This is an example of an ["insert text" question](#). The [transition word](#) "meanwhile" is an important clue, as is the pronoun "some." Some of what? Well, "some" are "unconvinced," so these must be people. The previous sentence must contrast with "some" and show other people who are **convinced**, rather than "*unconvinced*."

(A) is incorrect because there is nothing for "some" to reference in the previous sentence. Also, there is no opinion or idea that people could be "convinced" of. There is only plain fact.

(B) is correct. "Some" can refer back to doctors. This is a nice contrast between what "most doctors" believe and what others believe: most believe that shingles is riskier than problems with the vaccine, **but** some believe that the vaccine could be harmful.

(C) is tempting because “some” could refer to “parents.” But it is incorrect because the parents in the previous sentence already are “unconvinced”—they continue to believe that the disease doesn’t need any steps against (a vaccine). So there can’t be a contrast between those parents and the “some” in our sentence, because they are **both** unconvinced. The word “meanwhile” makes this impossible.

(D) is wrong because, again, there is nothing about ideas that people are “convinced” or “unconvinced” of in the previous sentence. Instead, that sentence just tells us that more students receive the vaccine and so the virus is becoming less common. That is not a belief to “convince” people.

14. A, B = Chicken pox; C, D, E = Shingles; F, G = Incorrect

Question: Directions: Complete the table below by indicating which statements describe chickenpox and which describe shingles. Two answer choices will NOT be used. ***This question is worth 3 points.***

Chickenpox
●
●

Shingles
●
●
●

- A. Public vaccination campaigns against it began in the 1970s.
- B. It was considered an irksome but relatively harmless ailment.
- C. It primarily afflicts adults.
- D. It is a serious, lingering illness.
- E. It negatively affects the nervous system.

- F. Infection primarily occurs as a result of close contact with infected rashes.
- G. There is confusion as to exactly what virus causes it.

Explanation: This strange-looking diagram is a '[categorization](#)' question. This is a great example of starting from the simplest sentence. If we start from (C), we can cross off one answer very quickly.

(A) is about chickenpox, and is a correct answer. We can find evidence for it in the second paragraph. That tells us that *“Japan and several other countries began widespread chickenpox vaccination programs in 1974.”*

(B) is about chickenpox, too, and is correct. The first and second paragraphs give us some evidence: *“Individuals infected with chickenpox can expect to experience a high but tolerable level of discomfort and a fever as the disease works its way through the system”* and *“mothers and fathers typically cited the notion that chickenpox did not constitute a serious enough disease.”*

(C), (D) and (E) are all about shingles. They can all be found in this sentence: *Strong belief in that view eroded when scientists discovered the link between Varicella zoster, the virus that causes chickenpox, and shingles, a far more **serious, harmful, and longer-lasting** disease **in older adults** that **impacts the nervous system**.*

(F) is not in the passage. We know that chickenpox is very contagious, but we don't know how it is transmitted. Also, we don't say that rashes are infected—that would be redundant because all rashes are infected. A person becomes infected, not a rash.

(G) is not true of either shingles or chickenpox. This sentence tells us that one virus causes both: *“...scientists discovered the link between Varicella zoster, the virus that causes chickenpox, and shingles...”*

Listening Section Answer Key and Explanations

If you'd like additional listening help and practice, check out the [Listening Section](#) on our blog. In particular, here's how you can [improve your listening skills](#).

Lecture Answer Key

1. D
2. C
3. A
4. B and C
5. B
6. A

Lecture Answer Explanations

You can listen to the audio again [here](#), and below you'll find the script.

Female Professor

As you all know, psychological trauma has lasting and very damaging effects on a person. People who have survived abuse or neglect from a very young age, soldiers coming back from a war, and other kinds of people too are all at risk for...for the disabling symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, for years and years. Some types of therapy can provide... err, some relief and some symptom resolution. These therapies can be long term or short term. They can teach people many useful skills. They can focus on past, present and future, and be very helpful.

However, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, or EMDR, has the promise to do something unique. It can help on a SOMATIC level, which means that it helps the BODY feel different, and not just the mind, like other therapies. EMDR allows the BODY to feel safe again and to learn that a new life is possible. It is a set of standardized protocols that incorporates elements from many different treatment approaches... and it has helped millions of people of all ages find RELIEF from many types of psychological stress. It involves learning new ways to process traumatic memories, and... uh... a somewhat unconventional approach, in which patients follow a beam of light back and forth with their eyes as they work with their therapists. The big goal of EMDR therapy is to understand completely the experiences that are causing problems, and to include new ones that are needed for full health. To PROCESS these experiences does not mean just to describe them and talk about them. Instead, it means setting up a state of mind that will allow these experiences to be

understood in a healthy way. In other words, the big, strong emotional reaction will become much smaller over time. The person will feel better and not have as much difficulty doing day to day activities. The inappropriate emotions, beliefs, and body sensations will be removed. Negative emotions, feelings and behaviors are generally caused by unresolved earlier experiences that are pushing you in the wrong directions. The goal of EMDR therapy is to leave the patient with the emotions, understanding, and perspectives that will lead to healthy and useful behaviors and interactions.

No one knows exactly how any form of psychotherapy works in the brain. However, we do know that when a person is very upset, their brain cannot PROCESS information normally and clearly. The traumatic experience can become frozen in time and continue to repeat endlessly. Remembering a trauma may feel as bad as experiencing it again and again. The images, sounds, smells, and feelings often do not change, but remain very present. Such memories have a lasting negative effect that interferes with the way a person sees the world and the way they relate to other people.

EMDR seems to have a direct effect on the way that the brain PROCESSES information. Normal information processing is resumed, so following a successful EMDR session, a person no longer experiences the images, sounds, and feelings when the event is brought to mind. The patient will still remember what happened, but in a much less upsetting way. Researchers think that this has to do with the way the person's eyes move when he is thinking of a bad memory. In EMDR, the patient sits in a chair and is taught to think about a memory that is very painful. Then, with the guidance of the therapist, the patient thinks about this memory while following a light moving from side to side with his eyes. This causes his eyes to move from one side of his head to the other. The movement of the eyes stimulates the brain in a way that helps the person feel better.

Although EMDR may produce results more quickly than previous forms of therapy, speed is not the issue, and it is important to remember that every client has different needs. For instance, one client may take weeks to feel safe enough with the therapist to be able to do the work that is required by the treatment. Another reason why EMDR may not be very fast in the eyes of many psychologists...why it sometimes has that reputation... is that some patients have layers of long-term trauma, so that when one issue is resolved, another one comes up. Sometimes, the next issue may even more important. Also, treatment is not complete until EMDR therapy has focused on the past memories that are contributing to the problem, the present situations that are disturbing to the patient, and what skills the client may need for the future. All three elements need to be addressed – past, present and future. The good news is that this treatment works and people really do get better... a lot better.

1. D

Question: What is the main topic of the lecture?

- (A) The technical definition of EMDR
- (B) Differences between different types of therapy
- (C) Various non-traditional treatments for trauma
- (D) The value and usefulness of EMDR treatment

Explanation: Every listening sample begins the same way: with a [main idea question](#).

Although the professor never says clearly that the lecture will be about EMDR, it is discussed for almost the full five minutes. Only in the very beginning does she talk about therapy in general. Because she returns to EMDR so many times, we should definitely look for that in our answer choices as the main topic. But be careful: it might say “a specific type of therapy” or “an unconventional treatment method” or some other phrase that describes EMDR instead of actually including the name of this treatment.

(A) is tempting, but the professor only defined EMDR at the beginning of the lecture. After defining it, she talked about who uses it, how it works, and its results. That’s much more than just a “technical definition.” The professor cares about the real-world use of EMDR very much.

(B) is incorrect. No other types of therapy are explained in the lecture. The only time EMDR is compared to other therapies is in this sentence: “Although EMDR may produce results more quickly than previous forms of therapy...” The main topic should be much clearer.

(C) is wrong mainly because of the word “various.” The professor talks about one specific type of therapy, EMDR. She does not talk about many other types.

(D) is the best answer. The professor explains the problem that EMDR helps people with and how the therapy works. Throughout the whole lecture, she supports EMDR as a useful, helpful therapy.

2. C

Question: According to the professor, what does “processing” mean?

- (A) Explaining the complicated way that EMDR works
- (B) Mentally revisiting a traumatic event
- (C) Understanding an experience via a healthy state of mind
- (D) Talking about a painful experience through EMDR

Explanation: The professor mentions “processing” a few times between 1:35 and 3:45 in the lecture. First, she explains what it is. Then, she explains why people with trauma can’t process an experience. And finally, she explains how EMDR helps those people to process information normally again. From about 1:35 to 2:00 answers this question:

“To PROCESS these experiences does not mean just to describe them and talk about them. Instead, it means setting up a state of mind that will allow these experiences to be understood in a healthy way. In other words, the big, strong emotional reaction will become much smaller over time. The person will feel better and not have as much difficulty doing day to day activities. “

(A) is incorrect. The professor explains EMDR and how it works, whereas the people who get EMDR therapy are the people who “process” information. Those people don’t explain the therapy.

(B) is wrong. Revisiting a traumatic event might be a part of processing, but it is not all of it. In fact, according to the professor, people who can’t process an event will repeat it “endlessly.” That’s a lot of revisiting, but no processing.

(C) is the correct answer. It is extremely similar to this sentence in the lecture: “[Processing] means setting up a state of mind that will allow these experiences to be understood in a healthy way.”

(D) is wrong because it is too specific. Processing experiences is something everybody does, not just EMDR patients. Processing is the goal of EMDR, but they are not the same thing.

3. A

Question: What is the speaker's attitude toward EMDR?

(A) She believes it is a unique form of therapy with a proven track record and promising future.

(B) She thinks it will require time before EMDR's benefits can be fully understood by psychologists.

(C) She is unsure of whether or not the results achieved by the method are long-term.

Explanation: The key to answering this question correctly is keeping in mind the lecture as a whole. Notice that there is no specific detail referenced in the question: the whole lecture was about EMDR, and this question is about the professor's general attitude.

Throughout the lecture, the professor talks about what EMDR is, who it helps, and how it helps them. The final lines of the lecture are our best clue to her attitude: "The good news is that this treatment works and people really do get better... a lot better." She definitely believes that EMDR is a good, helpful treatment.

(A) is correct. This is a very positive statement. The professor has said that EMDR produces results, especially in her final sentence. She also stated earlier that EMDR was not like other therapies and that it promises to help patients in ways that other therapies do not.

(B) is wrong because she believes the benefits are here now—we do not have to wait to find out what the benefits are. Although she did say that "No one knows exactly how any form of psychotherapy works in the brain," that is not the focus of the lecture and she does not continue talking about researching the unknowns.

(C) is incorrect because the professor never says this. She does say that “therapies can be long term or short term,” she does not mention whether EMDR specifically has short- or long-term effects.

(D) is too strong, so it is incorrect. The professor thinks that EMDR is very helpful, but she does not say that it will be better than all other forms of therapy. She also does not say EMDR is helpful for “most victims.” It might be useful for only some people.

You can learn more about attitude questions [here](#).

4. B and C

Question: The professor describes various features of EMDR compared to other forms of therapy. For each of the following, indicate whether it is a feature of EMDR or of another form of therapy.

For each item, check the appropriate box.

	EMDR	Other Therapy
Focuses more on the mental state of patients than on bodily responses		
May be slow in cases of multiple levels of trauma		
Involves moving the eyes back and forth while looking at a beam of light		

Explanation: **(Focuses more on the mental state of patients than bodily responses)**

This is about other therapy because of this line: “[EMDR] helps the BODY feel different, and not just the mind, like other therapies.”

(May be slow in cases of multiple levels of trauma)

This is about EMDR in the lecture. It could also be true of other therapies, but the professor does not mention that. She only says that “EMDR may not be very fast”

because “some patients have layers of long-term trauma, so that when one issue is resolved, another one comes up.”

(Involves moving the eyes back and forth while looking at a beam of light)

This describes how EMDR works, not other therapies. The professor says this: “In EMDR, the patient sits in a chair and is taught to think about a memory that is very painful. Then, with the guidance of the therapist, the patient thinks about this memory while following a light moving from side to side with his eyes.”

If you thought this question was tough, here are some more tips about [‘categorizing’ questions](#).

5. B

Question: [Listen again to part of the lecture. Then answer the question.](#)

- (A) Traumatic experiences feel like they take a long time to reach completion.
- (B) Traumatic experiences can haunt the memory and never leave a person’s mind.
- (C) Traumatic experiences sometimes occur in repetitious patterns in people’s lives.
- (D) Traumatic experiences can seem more debilitating than they really are.

Explanation: Like many [function questions](#), this one requires you to understand a metaphor. Of course, memories can’t really be “frozen.” So what does the professor mean by “frozen in time?”

Well, the professor basically defines that idea directly afterward by saying “continue to repeat endlessly.” The next sentence also mentions repeating an experience “again and again.” So “frozen in time” is probably related. It probably means that something happens again and again. And if we think about the metaphor, that makes a little bit of sense: When water freezes into ice, it stops moving. It becomes hard and doesn’t change

shape. For these people who experienced trauma, time doesn't change—their mind stops moving, and their thoughts stay stuck on that one experience.

(A) is very tricky, because it sounds very similar to “frozen in time.” But it is wrong because (A) says the experience takes a long time. In reality, it's the memory of the experience that doesn't stop. A traumatic experience might feel very short, but it is repeated “endlessly,” so a person is “frozen” (or stuck) in that very short experience.

(B) is correct. A person with a traumatic experience might continue thinking and imagining the trauma. That is repeating “endlessly”—never leaving the person's mind. The word “haunt” here means that the memory is unwanted, but it doesn't leave.

(C) is also very close, but it is incorrect. The memories of the trauma repeat. The actual events do not repeat.

(D) is incorrect. A “debilitating” experience makes normal life difficult. Experiencing a traumatic experience “again and again” would be debilitating. (D) says that these experiences aren't actually debilitating, which is not true: they are..

6. A

Question: [Why does the professor say this?](#)

(A) To caution against hurrying through treatment to obtain fast results

(B) To clarify why EMDR is a time-limited treatment approach

(C) To suggest that other forms of therapy are slower and less effective

(D) To warn her students against using EMDR with patients whom they do not know well

Explanation: There are three things said in this sentence:

- EMDR is sometimes faster than other therapy

- Speed of therapy is not important
- Different people need different things

Note the word “although.” The professor is contrasting speed with knowing the needs of the EMDR patient (the “client”). She thinks that knowing the needs of the patient is more important than speed. Also note the words “it is important to remember.” This shows us that she is giving advice to her students—telling them how to think.

(A) is the right answer. The professor thinks that EMDR therapists should think about the needs of their client, not about the speed of the therapy.

(B) is incorrect because EMDR is not “time-limited.” In fact, the professor said that EMDR can sometimes take a long time, and that “one client may take weeks to feel safe enough with the therapist.” She believes that therapists should be careful and think about the clients’ needs, not move fast in a limited time.

(C) is tempting but wrong. The focus is on the wrong part of the sentence. We don’t care about the other therapies—we care about EMDR. This is tempting, though, because the professor does say that EMDR “may produce results more quickly” (i.e. it is possible). However, she does not say that other therapies are “less effective.”

(D) is close but incorrect because it is too strong. The professor wants people to think about their clients’ needs. That does not mean new patients, who the therapists “don’t know well,” should not get EMDR treatment. Instead, it only means that their “different needs” are important.

Conversation Answer Key

1. A
2. D
3. A
4. B
5. C

Conversation Answer Explanations

You can listen to the conversation again [here](#), and here is the script:

Listen to a conversation between a professor and a student.

Female Professor: Oh, Jason! Long time, no see. How've you been?

Male Student: I guess it has been a while...amazing how time flies. I've been well...you know, graduation is coming up pretty quickly, but I've been enjoying my senior year.

Female Professor: And how's your older sister...uh...Amy?

Male Student: Amy? She's good. She just got an internship at the Library of Congress...

Female Professor: (Approving sound)

Male Student: (Continued) ...but I don't see her much nowadays... Anyway, I'm kinda coming to you for some specific ADVICE, if you have a moment.

Female Professor: Well, my schedule's wide open. What's on your mind?

Male Student: Okay, so I'm helping out Professor Williams in his Intro to English History class, right?

Female Professor: Mm-hm. I heard that.

Male Student: He's letting me take over the class one day—to teach it. And that's exciting, but I've never designed a lesson before, and I'm...I'm kind of EMBARRASSED to go talk to Professor Williams about what I'm planning. He can be a little...intimidating.

Female Professor: Ahh... Don't sweat it. I remember how nerve-wracking it can be when you first get up to teach. So what's the lesson?

Male Student: Oh, uh, the lesson is gonna be on King HENRY VIII. Just like, an introduction, an overview of his life and influence, y'know?

Female Professor: Got it.

Male Student: So far, I outlined all of the ways he impacted England, both in the Renaissance and today. It's just...well, it seems BORING. Here—you can take a look at my lesson plan, if you want.

Female Professor: That'd help. Hmmm. (Flipping pages). Well, I do think you've accounted for all of the major elements of his legacy, but, um...even glancing at the plan, I don't see any real FOCUS. It looks more like a LIST.

Male Student: A list? I guess so...

Female Professor: How can I put this... Alright, let me just ask you this: What do you think the most important part of Henry VII's legacy is? I mean, what do you think of his overall STATUE as a ruler?

Male Student: What do you mean?

Female Professor: I mean...well...um...consider his place in history outside of England for a moment. Would you agree that, along with the current Queen Elizabeth II and his own daughter, Elizabeth I, that he's one of the most famous English rulers ever?

Male Student: Sure. We don't learn nearly as much about, um...kings like William III or Stephen of Blois, or Richard II, even in really in-depth history courses.

Female Professor: Exactly. Why do you think that is?

Male Student: A number of reasons...he was married six times, he had two of his wives beheaded, he was famously fat by the end of his life, and he went from being a staunch Catholic to... well, defying the Pope and founding his own church. Henry VIII was...um...kind of LARGER THAN LIFE.

Female Professor: Exactly! You can paint a really engaging picture with that character. You can deliver the dry facts during the story, but you might want to keep the class's ATTENTION with a bit of a flourish—with focus on those over-the-top details. Does that make sense?

Male Student: I think so, yeah. That's a great point. Maybe I should try out the lecture with somebody willing before I have to actually give it...like, REHEARSE, so I can tell the story better.

Female Professor: I think that's a great idea.

1. A

Question: Why does the student visit the professor?

- (A) To discuss how to make a potentially dry topic more engaging
- (B) To inform her about recent changes in his and his family's lives
- (C) To fill in a gap in the student's knowledge of English history
- (D) To complain about the difficulty of an assignment given by another professor

Explanation: Questions like this one, about the [purpose of conversation](#), are usually answered by the first few lines of the conversation. But this specific recording is a special case. First, the student and professor talk about something that's not why the student went to see the professor. But after a bit of small talk, the student says this:

“Anyway, I’m kinda coming to you for some specific ADVICE, if you have a moment.”

That’s a great hint that you’ll soon hear the answer to the first question—and remember that the first question is always about the purpose or main topic of a conversation!

But still, the student gives limited detail at first, because he has to give background information. We find out that the student is helping another professor in class, and he is going to teach a lesson to other students in that class. So our answer could be that the student wants help designing a lesson plan (that’s true!), but there is no matching answer choice. Instead, even later in the conversation, the student says what specifically he wants help with:

“It’s just...well, it seems BORING. Here—you can take a look at my lesson plan, if you want.”

And then the rest of the conversation is related to that problem: how to make the lesson more interesting. (A) is the correct answer, because “dry” can mean “uninteresting.”

(B) is tempting, but the student does not choose to talk about his family. He only answers the professor’s question, then moves on to talk about why he’s actually visiting.

(C) is incorrect because of the words “fill in a gap.” The student knows the history, but is having trouble deciding how to teach it. He does not need to learn more information.

(D) uses the word “complain,” which doesn’t match. The student wants help—he doesn’t simply want to complain.

2. D

Question: What can be inferred about William III, Stephen of Blois, and Richard II?

(A) They did not rule England for long enough periods of time to have notable impacts.

(B) They make uninteresting topics for lectures because there is little recorded information on them.

(C) They are generally disliked by historians and therefore rarely discussed.

(D) Many students are less familiar with them than with Henry VIII.

Explanation: This is an [inference question](#) and it’s about a very short time in the conversation, so it’s a hard question! The student only mentions these three names once. You don’t really need to know them, though—you only need to remember when and why the student talked about other kings. If you don’t remember that these names are in fact other kings, then the answer choices can help: all the answer choices show that these are historical names that can be compared with Henry VIII.

The answer to the question is in this line from the student:

“We don’t learn nearly as much about, um...kings like William III or Stephen of Blois, or Richard II, even in really in-depth history courses.”

Remember that inference questions are not very different from detail questions! This inference is very small: because students learn little about those kings, they are less familiar with them. (D) is the correct answer.

(A) is tempting, because we know those Kings don’t make large impacts on students, but we don’t know what their histories were, and we definitely did not hear any information about how long they ruled for. So (A) is wrong, not in the conversation.

(B) is very, very close to correct, but it is wrong for two reasons. First, it’s a bit too strong, using the word “uninteresting.” Students might not know those kings well, but that doesn’t mean the stories are boring. Second, we don’t know how information there is in books about these kings. Although professors talk about them less in classes, it is possible that plenty information was recorded.

(C) is far too strong! Maybe students aren’t very familiar with those three kings, but dislike is a strong word that’s unsupported by the conversation.

3. A

Question: Which of the following does the student believe is true of King Henry VIII?

(A) He is well known primarily for his colorful personality.

(B) The details of his life are often exaggerated in stories.

(C) He was a cruel man for executing several of his wives.

(D) His legacy continues to shape the politics of contemporary Europe.

Explanation: The student says many things about Henry VIII, so we might not make a good prediction about the answer to this one before looking at the answer choices. That means we have to use process of elimination, looking at all four possibilities.

(A) matches the conversation well, and it is correct. The word “colorful” is basically synonymous with “interesting” when used to describe a personality. The student thinks

that Henry VIII was “larger than life,” meaning that he is more like a character from a story than like a real person—he was interesting!

(B) is wrong because of the word “exaggerated.” The student says that the details are very interesting, but he doesn’t state that the details were wrong. “Exaggerated” means they’re not really factually true. But the details about Henry VIII’s life are facts, albeit very unique, interesting facts.

(C) may be true, but the student never says it. He only says that Henry VIII killed his wives. The student doesn’t say anything about “cruel.”

(D) is very tempting, because the student does say that Henry VIII impacted the world both in his own time and “today.” But this answer choice is about politics and Europe. Maybe Henry VIII only influenced other aspects or England in specific, and European politics are not impacted. Because the student never talks about modern politics, we can’t infer this answer.

4. B

What does the student suggest he should do before giving the lecture?

(A) Discuss his lesson plan with another professor

(B) Give a practice lecture to polish his storytelling skills.

(C) Research more dramatic details of Henry VIII’s life

(D) Listen to a peer explain the history of Henry VIII for ideas

Explanation: This question asks about what the student might do after the conversation is finished. Information about that is usually near the end of a conversation, after the problem or question is at least partly resolved, and the student has heard some opinions/advice/instructions from the professor. When you hear a student or professor say what the student should do later, take note!

In this case the answer is in just a short sentence at the end of the conversation:

“Maybe I should try out the lecture with somebody willing before I have to actually give it...like, REHEARSE, so I can tell the story better.”

(B) matches that statement very closely, and it is the correct answer. “Polish” means “improve” in this context.

(A) is not mentioned in the conversation, so it is wrong. It’s logical to assume the student might talk about his lecture with Professor Williams (the professor of his history class whom the student is helping), but we it is never mentioned in the conversation.

(C) makes some sense, but more research is never mentioned, so this is incorrect. The student already knows the information he needs. He is only worried about how to present the information.

(D) is also not mentioned in the conversation. It is actually the opposite of what the student will do. He won’t listen to a peer; he will teach that student in a rehearsal lecture.

5. C

Question: *Listen again to part of the conversation. Then answer the question.*

What does the professor mean when she says this?

(A) She believes Professor Williams is overly harsh with his students and assistants.

(B) She does not think the student’s concern is warranted in his situation.

(C) She wants the student to feel comfortable asking for her guidance.

(D) She is willing to help the student teach his lesson so it will be less stressful.

Explanation: This question asks about a very interesting idiom. “Don’t sweat it” really just means “don’t worry.” So we need a bit more context to get a correct answer. The professor says the student shouldn’t worry about what?

Well, the student is concerned about his lesson plan for a class that he will teach. And the woman professor also says that she remembers “how nerve-wracking it can be when you first get up to teach.” If you don’t know the word “nerve-wracking,” you can figure

out the meaning by context (teaching for the first time must be hard!) and root words (“nerve” is related to “nervous”).

So the student is worried about teaching for the first time, and the woman professor tells him “Don’t worry. I have been in the same situation.” She wants to comfort him! (C) is the correct answer.

(A) is a strong opinion. But this woman professor never gives an opinion on the other professor (Williams), so (A) is incorrect.

(B) sounds close, but it’s actually the opposite of the truth. The professor remembers that beginning to teach is “nerve-wracking.” (B), on the other hand, says that teaching should not make the student nervous. There is a difference between comforting and dismissing a concern. (B) is dismissive and unsympathetic, so it is wrong.

(D) is close, but it is wrong because of the word “teach.” This professor will help the student, but only with preparing his lesson plan! She is not going to teach with him.

If you’d like more listening practice, here are [some suggestions](#).

Speaking Section Sample Responses

You can find a scoring rubric for speaking responses [here](#) and learn how to improve your speaking score [here](#).

Task 1 - Independent

Prompt: Describe a teacher who was important to you and why he or she was important. Be sure to include specific examples in your response.

Explanation

It's easiest to just choose a favorite teacher, then think about the reasons why you liked them. Don't get stuck thinking about the details before you make the choice.

When speaking, it's easy to make the mistake of giving only abstract adjectives like "nice" and "smart" to compliment the teacher. Do more than that! The question asks for specific examples, so try to include that as much as possible. Mention an event that you still remember, or something specific that you learned from the teacher.

Sample Notes

- Charest
 - ed. games
 - care

Sample Response

My favorite teacher was Ms. Charest. She... uhh, I had her in third grade. She was basically a great teacher for two reasons. First, she played games with us in class that were actually very educational. For example, we played this game that taught us our multiplication tables using rhymes. It made learning fun. And the second reason she was great was that she took a personal interest in her students. She really cared about us. When I visited her last year, she even remembered my name, even though I, like, hadn't seen her in ages.

Here are some [more topics](#) you may have to speak about in your independent task.

Task 3 - Integrated

For reference, here's the speaking script for the lecture. You can also go back and listen to the audio again [here](#).

Narrator

Now listen to two students discussing the announcement.

Female Student

I think it's totally unfair that the Buonocore Scholarship is only being offered to students in the Romance Languages department. Like, it's an amazing opportunity, and it's SAD to see it monopolized in this way.

Male Student

Is it really such a bad thing to limit the scholarship to one department, though? I mean, uhh... the fewer students compete for the prize, err... the easier it will be for students like US to win it. After all, there are only seven other students in the whole Romance Languages department besides us.

Female Student

That doesn't change the fact that it's wrong for the scholarship to be limited to our single department. It's a matter of principle. First of all, there are students in other departments, like History and Classics and Renaissance studies, all of whom... all of whom would definitely benefit from a year in Italy. Why shouldn't THEY get a chance to submit their work to the committee?

Male Student

But if they also submitted their essays, it would be harder for US to get the prize.

Female student

Look, just because something benefits me personally doesn't make me think that it's right. I mean, I have a lot of FRIENDS in History and Classics and Renaissance Studies, and I totally agree with them that it's wrong for them to be...ineligible to compete for the scholarship. After all, Romance Languages is a very SMALL department, and it seems abusive for us to keep this resource all to ourselves.

Male Student

I guess I see where you're coming from.

Female Student

Also, I think that it TAKES SOMETHING AWAY from the honor of winning a scholarship if the competition isn't very strong. I'd rather know that I earned the opportunity to study in Rome by competing against the very best students... instead of thinking that I was only honored because other talented people were unnecessarily EXCLUDED from the process.

Explanation

This text offers notable detail that you can definitely expect the student to disagree with: the scholarship is only for specific people. Other students aren't allowed. That is very likely a problem for some students, so listen for a reaction to that in the conversation.

And when you do hear the student speak, both of the reasons she's unhappy are related to the restriction of the scholarship to one department. She thinks other students can benefit from the scholarship (she says this: "It's a matter of principle. First of all, there are students in other departments, like History and Classics and Renaissance studies, all of whom... all of whom would definitely benefit from a year in Italy. Why shouldn't THEY get a chance to submit their work to the committee?").

And she also thinks that winning the scholarship feels less important if few people compete. She wants the winner to be honored because of talent, not because of exclusion—she says this at the end, very quickly. It's good to note that, because on the TOEFL, the two student's reasons for disagreeing don't always take an equal length of time. Sometimes they spend more time talking about one reason, then talk quickly about the second reason.

Sample notes

Reading:

- Buonocore Scholarship
 - Essay + plan=>study in Rome
 - Only Rom. Lang. Dept.

Listening:

- Others students? Not fair
 - Hist., Class., Renaissance
- Wants compete w/ all

Sample Response

The female student thinks that it's unfair that the... Buono...uhh, that the scholarship to study in Rome is only being offered to students in the Romance Languages department. Instead of that, she thinks that the application should be open to all students. She mentions students in the History, Classics, and Renaissance Studies departments, especially. Uhh...the male points out... he says the lesser... the fewer people apply for the scholarship, the easier it will be to get it. But the female says that the scholarship will lose meaning to her unless she competes against the very best that the school has to offer. She also believes it is wrong for a very small department to monopolize the money. It should benefit everybody at the—

Writing Section Sample Response

You can find a writing rubric [here](#) and learn how to improve your writing score [here](#).

Prompt

Some parents forbid young children from owning smartphones (cell phones with Internet access), while others disagree and believe that they are important tools for keeping in touch. Which point of view do you think is better, and why?

Explanation

Be sure to structure your essay clearly! Planning first can really help. It is easier to communicate clearly if you have a set structure.

As you write it's important that you give clear reasons for your opinions. Grammar and spelling are important, too, but they don't have to be perfect. Don't get stuck editing your sentences again and again.

Also, use structures that you are comfortable with—this is not time to try something new! It's dangerous to use a structure or phrase that you don't know is correct. Instead, use sentences structures that you are very familiar with. If you have difficulty making yourself clear, then try separating your thought into two or more sentences. It's great to have complex sentences if possible, but a long sentence that's hard to understand is worse than two short, clear sentences.

Sample Outline

Phones cause problems during school and after

- distractions during school + homework
- price
- health

Sample Essay

In my opinion, it is absolutely the wrong idea for parents to allow their children to have smart phones. They are immensely distracting, expensive, and unhealthy.

Cell phones have the power to distract young students from school work. Rather than paying attention in class, students try to sneak opportunities to play on their phones. Instead of thinking about schoolwork, they obsessively text each other and try to check sites like Facebook. This takes time away from valuable studying. This is a problem both during school and afterwards, when youngsters should be working on their homework.

At the same time, smart phones can be extremely costly. Many plans require parents to pay abusively high monthly rates. At times, these rates can climb even higher if children use too much data due to things like downloading songs on the Internet. Rather than wasting money on a phone, parents should use the funds on better causes, like tutors for their children, or a home computer on which supervised learning can take place.

Finally, smart phones can be dangerous for young children. We are still unsure medically what the long term effects of exposure to cell phones are, particularly on vulnerable groups such as children. It would be better to be safe than sorry. The less exposure children have to potential toxins, the better. At the same time, kids are sometimes targeted on social media sites by dangerous strangers. If parents allow young children to have smart phones, it might be difficult to protect them in the long term from these kinds of threats.

While older children may sometimes need them to stay in touch with their parents due to their many obligations outside of the house after school, there is little cause for younger children to own them. Parents should encourage their children to read and think in their spare time, developing their minds. Smartphones are unhelpful when it comes to this goal.

Additional Resources

Need more TOEFL help? Check out these free resources.

Study Plans

Whether you're planning to study for a long time, or you've waited until the last minute, it helps to add some structure to your TOEFL study plan to keep you organized and on track. Planning out a study schedule is the key first step in scoring well on the TOEFL.

To help take the guesswork out of all of this, we've created some schedules to help you get started.

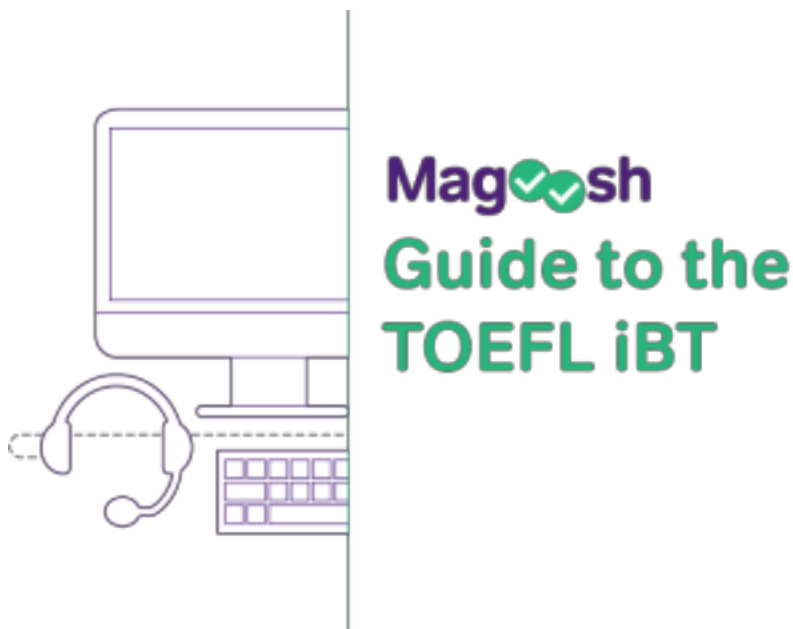
- [Two-Week Study Schedule](#)
- [One Month Study Schedule](#)
- [Preparing for the TOEFL in 20-30 Minutes per Day](#)



Pro-tip: Before getting started with your study plan, we recommend reading our top tips for [making the most of your TOEFL study schedule](#).

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Vocabulary Resources

Learning vocabulary helps with every aspect of the exam - speaking, reading, listening, and writing! So, you should make some time in your schedule to work on your vocabulary. Here are some resources to help!

[Free Vocabulary Flashcards](#)

Use these free flashcards to master the 200 most important words on the exam.



[\[eBook\] TOEFL Vocabulary Comics](#)

In this eBook, we help you memorize and review vocabulary words with the help of mnemonic devices. To make these words more fun and memorable, these mnemonics are illustrated with entertaining comics, like this one:

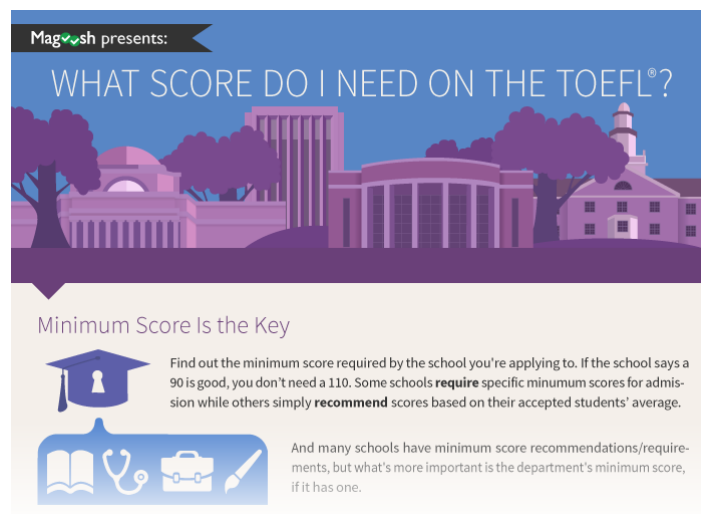


Infographics

Here at Magoosh, we *love* to make infographics -- they're both fun and educational! Here are our two TOEFL infographics:

[TOEFL Scores for Top Universities](#)

What score do you need on the exam? In this graphic, we provide the required scores for many of the top universities in the US. See the entire infographic [here](#).



[TOEFL Speaking](#)

If you need more help figuring out the speaking section, be sure to check this one out!



Book Reviews

There are many TOEFL review books on the market that promise to give you “the key” to acing the TOEFL. That’s a big promise!

And while it’s true that many of these books provide excellent strategies and tips for TOEFL success, the real “key” to acing the TOEFL is experience with English learned through repeated practice.

So, which books provide the best resources, the best strategies, and the best practice? Check out our book reviews and find the books that are right for you.

To make your life a little bit easier, we’ve organized our reviews in order from most to least highly recommended. Click on each link for more detailed reviews!

Recommended

- [The Official Guide to the TOEFL Test \(4th Edition\)](#)
- [Official TOEFL iBT Tests](#)
- [The Complete Guide to the TOEFL Test](#)
- [Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test](#)

Okay

- [Barron’s TOEFL iBT](#)
- [Delta’s Key to the TOEFL iBT Advanced Skill Practice](#)
- [Oxford TOEFL](#)

Not Recommended

- [Kaplan TOEFL iBT Premier 2014](#)
- [The Princeton Review’s Cracking the TOEFL iBT \(2014\)](#)

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