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The Integrated Writing Task



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DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage from the Integrated Writing Task on the TOEFL iBT. Then read the transcript of a lecture on the same topic.

Reading Passage

Psychologists have studied the nature of expertise for more than a century. What happens in the mind of an expert? How do experts acquire their skills? How much simply depends on natural talent, and how much on training? Psychologists have sought answers to these questions in their studies of chess masters. Because the skills of a chess master can be broken into logical components and analyzed, chess has served as the greatest single laboratory for testing psychological theories about expertise.

One of the common misconceptions about top chess players is that their expertise chiefly reflects heightened analytical skills. But what studies show is that top players analyze no more variations in a typical chess position than anyone else. What makes chess masters different is not their ability to analyze but to quickly spot the correct course of action. This ability, along with the famous ability of top players to play blindfolded, or to reconstruct complicated chess positions from memory, indicates that chess players rely on a well-organized system of learned mental connections: standard positions arising from well-known openings of previous games. In

well-organized system of learned mental connections: standard positions arising from well-known openings of previous games. In other words, they depend on the memory of past games.

One thing most expertise theorists agree on is that it takes effortful study to build these connections in the mind. In other words, experts always push themselves to learn things they do not know—at all stages in their advancement. They continue to study and learn. The more they study and learn, the better they make these connections. On the other hand, novices in every field engage in effortful study at first, but once their performance reaches an acceptable level, they drop off and stop improving. In contrast, promising experts reexamine their own knowledge all the time. This is true even in young experts, known as chess prodigies. The main difference between chess prodigies and novice learners is that prodigies constantly push themselves to improve. This supports the theory that experts, even child experts, are made and not born.

Lecture

Professor: We've all heard about prodigies, you know, young children who seem to have a natural ability to perform certain skills at a highly accomplished level, like Mozart, who was composing music at age 5, or young math geniuses who can multiply long strings

a highly accomplished level, like Mozart, who was composing music at age 5, or young math geniuses who can multiply long strings of numbers in their heads. There have been studies of such people to find out what makes them tick. And these studies have found that these kids all have phenomenal memories. They grasp complex relationships between ideas and create associations in their mind. And they *remember* these associations. How? Well, they organize them in meaningful ways and this lets them store what they've learned in their long-term memories. And one thing that's interesting about this is that the prodigies don't possess this ability in all areas; it's usually confined to just one skill. So even though a math prodigy can remember the steps to do complex calculations in his head, his ability to recall historical facts might be just average, like anybody else's.

But natural ability isn't enough to make a prodigy, there's something else, namely motivation. A famous example of this is the Hungarian chess player back in the 1970s and 80s who conducted an educational experiment on his daughters. He decided to train his three girls and see if he could make them expert chess players. He taught them at home and also hired chess professional chess players to teach them. And in fact, by the time they were teenagers, they were already playing at the master level and winning international competitions. A key factor in their success is that all three girls were extremely competitive. Each wanted to be a better chess player than her sisters. So they were never satisfied with the level of skill they had attained and kept practicing to improve so that they could beat the other two at chess.



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- 1 Now, complete the notes table below. The main topic, the main idea, the key supporting points and the conclusion for the passage you have just read can all be seen in the "Notes" column. However, they have been arranged randomly. Drag and drop the items in the Notes column to the correct slots. One of the items in the Notes column is not related to the passage and will not be used.

1) Main Topic of Passage

2) Main Idea of Passage

3) Key Point 1 + Supporting Information

4) Key Point 2 + Supporting Information

5) Conclusion

Experts are made due to natural ability, not through training or practice.

Even in the first stages of being an expert, a person will constantly try to become better.

Does expertise depend upon natural talent or training?

Experts can figure out what actions to take to be successful, and they can later remember these actions clearly.

What makes someone an expert?

People are not naturally experts at anything; they make themselves experts.



Writing

DIRECTIONS: Are the following items examples of summarizing, paraphrasing, citing, or synthesizing? Choose the correct answer.

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- 2 "According to the passage, A is true."

The sentence above is an example of

- ☐ summarizing
- ☐ paraphrasing
- ☐ citing
- ☐ synthesizing



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DIRECTIONS: Are the following items examples of summarizing, paraphrasing, citing, or synthesizing? Choose the correct answer.

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- 3 "In other words, . . ."
"To put it another way, . . ."

The examples above demonstrate

- ☐ summarizing
- ☐ paraphrasing
- ☐ citing
- ☐ synthesizing



Writing

DIRECTIONS: Are the following items examples of summarizing, paraphrasing, citing, or synthesizing? Choose the correct answer.

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- 4 "The passage states that A should be considered X; however, the professor disagrees, pointing out that it is often the case that A is Y, not X."

The sentence above is an example of

- ☐ summarizing
- ☐ paraphrasing
- ☐ citing
- ☐ synthesizing



Writing

DIRECTIONS: Are the following items examples of summarizing, paraphrasing, citing, or synthesizing? Choose the correct answer.

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- 5 Now, complete the response table below. Read the four-paragraph response in the Answer Choices column on the right. The response is based on the passage that you read and on a lecture that a professor gave on the same topic. *However, the paragraphs have been arranged randomly.* Put the paragraphs in order. Type the number of each paragraph in the correct box.

1 Introduction

2 Body Paragraph 1

3 Body Paragraph 2

4 Conclusion

(1) The passage mentions that people do not become experts because of a natural ability to analyze situations. Rather, experts appear to have two key skills. First, they can figure out the best thing to do in a given situation in order to achieve success. Second, they have the mental ability to organize the things they learn. The passage illustrates these key points by talking about chess players who can play blindfolded and then remember each move long after the game is over. The professor supports this idea by talking about prodigies, very young people who display a natural ability to do a thing very well. He says that these people all have something in common—they have the ability to organize their memories well and can give meaningful organization to complex associations between things for a long time. Interestingly, this ability is not necessarily related to other skills, which explains why a child can be extremely good at math, for example, and just average in other subjects.

(2) Both the passage and the lecture ask whether experts are born that way or whether they become experts through training. The passage says that a person becomes an expert in something through training and because he or she has an excellent memory. The lecture agrees with this idea and supports it with examples.

(3) To sum up, the author and the professor show that experts are people with excellent long-term memories who continually try to improve their skills. These characteristics support the theory that people can learn expertise and are not necessarily experts from birth.

(4) The passage emphasizes the fact that most theorists agree that expertise takes practice—"effortful study." Experts must challenge themselves beyond their present level of ability. The author mentions that novices in all fields typically do this when they start learning any new task. The difference between these people and experts is that experts never stop improving, while the typical novice reaches an acceptable level and then stops improving. Essentially, experts constantly push themselves to get better in their chosen field of expertise. The professor gives an example of this. He talks about the case of a famous chess player who taught his daughters how to play chess. Even as children, these kids were playing at the master level. One of the reasons given for their playing ability was the fact that they were never satisfied with their level of expertise, and so they tried to improve continually.



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DIRECTIONS: Are the following items examples of summarizing, paraphrasing, citing, or synthesizing? Choose the correct answer.

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6 Response Introduction

"Both the passage and the lecture ask whether experts are born that way or whether they become experts through training. The passage says that a person becomes an expert in something through training and because he or she has an excellent memory."

	True	False
The introduction includes the main idea of both the passage and lecture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It includes both the author's and the professor's stance on the main idea.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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DIRECTIONS: Are the following items examples of summarizing, paraphrasing, citing, or synthesizing? Choose the correct answer.

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7 Response Body

"The professor begins by talking about prodigies, very young people who display a natural ability to do a thing very well. He says that these people all have something in common--they have the ability to organize their memories well and can give meaningful organization to complex associations between things for a long time. Interestingly, this ability is not necessarily related to other skills, which explains why a child can be extremely good at math, for example, and just average in other subjects.

"The passage emphasizes the fact that most theorists agree that expertise takes practice--"effortful study." Experts must challenge themselves beyond their present level of ability. The author mentions that novices in all fields typically do this when they start learning any new task. The difference between these people and experts is that experts never stop improving, while the typical novice reaches an acceptable level and then stops improving anymore. Essentially, experts constantly push themselves to get better in their chosen field of expertise."

	True	False
Each paragraph focuses on only one key point.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The relationship between the ideas in the lecture and those in the reading is explained in each paragraph.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Writing

DIRECTIONS: Are the following items examples of summarizing, paraphrasing, citing, or synthesizing? Choose the correct answer.

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8 Response Conclusion

"To sum up, the author and the professor show that experts are people with excellent long-term memories who continually try to improve their skills. These characteristics support the theory that people can learn expertise and are not necessarily experts from birth. I feel that both the author and the professor are correct. Indeed, the people I know whom I would call "experts" have gained their expertise through a great deal of hard work and practice."

	True	False
There is no personal opinion in the conclusion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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- 9 If the following underlined items have grammatical or mechanical errors, fix them in the blank provided. If not, write the word "correct" in the blank.

(1) According to the passage the government should not regulate herbal medications in any way. The author mentions the fact that most of these herbal remedies (2) are complete safe (3) when taking properly. The author supports this position by mentioning the fact that many herbal remedies have been proven safe in both governmental and private studies. (4) The professor disagree with the passage on this point. She says that the government should absolutely (5) start regulating the sells of herbal remedies as soon as possible. She mentioned the fact that (6) mixing herbal medications with other types of medicine can be extremely harmful in certain situations. To illustrate this, she talked about several cases that occurred (7) in Los Angeles California in which many people became very sick when they mixed some locally grown herbs with a certain kind of prescription heart medication.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)



The Independent Writing Task



DIRECTIONS: After reading the summary of each prompt for the Independent Writing Task, decide whether it is accurate or not.

10 Prompt:

If you could make one important change to the place where you live, what change would you make? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Summary:

"This prompt says that there are two kinds of changes that I can make to the place where I live. I must choose one of these kinds of changes and then support my answer with reasons and examples."

- ☐ Accurate
- ☐ Inaccurate



Writing

DIRECTIONS: After reading the summary of each prompt for the Independent Writing Task, decide whether it is accurate or not.

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11 Prompt:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

All students should be required to take physical education classes while attending university.
Use specific reasons to support your answer.

Summary:

"This prompt asks me to create an essay that gives my opinion on a topic. The topic is whether I feel students should have to take physical education classes while attending university. I must support my answer with specific reasons."

- ☐ Accurate
☐ Inaccurate



Writing

DIRECTIONS: After reading the summary of each prompt for the Independent Writing Task, decide whether it is accurate or not.

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12 Prompt:

Choose one of the following climates in which to live and explain why you would like to live there.

- A very cold climate
- A very wet climate
- A very dry climate

Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Summary:

"This prompt asks me to choose one kind of climate I'd like to **live** in from a list of three possible climate types. I have to support my answer with specific reasons and examples."

- ☐ Accurate
☐ Inaccurate



Writing

DIRECTIONS: Complete each of the following sentences with one of the words or phrases below. Do not use any item more than once.

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13 Complete each of the following sentences with one of the words or phrases below.

- 1) Having fun and playing games is very important for children. _____, adults should always find some time to have fun and play a game.
- 2) There are many reasons why I would like to work at a large company, rather than at a small one. _____, I feel that large companies offer more opportunities to learn new things.
- 3) "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy" is a popular English saying. _____, I completely agree with this statement.
- 4) Some people love to take risks and try new things. _____, others prefer to be safe and enjoy old, familiar things.
- 5) The population keeps growing in the country where I live. _____, it is absolutely necessary for us to continue clearing the forests and building new apartments.
- 6) Good politicians must first earn the respect of the people whom they serve. _____, they must be trustworthy and kind.

Likewise

For example

Personally

Furthermore

However

Therefore

On the other hand

Similarly



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DIRECTIONS: Read the following prompt for an Independent Writing Task.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

The most important aspect of friendship is loyalty.

Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.



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- 14 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

The most important aspect of friendship is loyalty.
Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Now, complete the response table that is based on the above prompt. The paragraphs of a sample response are in the "Answer Choices" column. However, these paragraphs have been arranged randomly. Type the number of the paragraph in the Answer Choices column in the right box.

- 1 Introduction

- 2 Body Paragraph 1

- 3 Body Paragraph 2

- 4 Conclusion

(1) Yet perhaps even more importantly, loyalty also affects how much support friends give each other. Loyal friends will make sure to provide the amount of support their friends need, when they need it. A friendship is based not only on mutual interests but also on mutual support. Friends who have proven themselves loyal will do everything within their power to make sure that they are there to support their friends in times of crisis. This is a direct result of the value they place on the friendship, and value inspires loyalty. For example, last year my grandfather, with whom I was very close, passed away. It was near the end of the school year, and everyone was busy taking final exams. My friend took the time to go to the funeral with me, even missing two study sessions to do so. He did this because he places a high value on our friendship. Our friendship is worth more to him than his grades or his time. This is true loyalty.

(2) It is obvious that loyalty is the most important aspect of a healthy friendship, because it inspires confidence in a friend's ability to keep information confidential. It also ensures that a friend will provide necessary emotional support. Finally, friendship is based on a sense of mutual loyalty. A friendship cannot survive without loyalty; therefore, this is the most important aspect of a genuine friendship.

(3) Of all the qualities a friend should possess, loyalty is the most important. Loyalty really impacts the health of a relationship because it determines how the people in the friendship interact. This is because loyalty directly affects how well friends guard each other's personal information, as well as how much support they offer to each other.

(4) In a healthy friendship, personal information is shared on a regular basis. It can be used to help or to hurt a person. Loyal friends carefully guard personal information that has been entrusted to them as if it were their own. Without loyalty, however, this secret information is quickly repeated to others and becomes a source of potential embarrassment, anger, and feelings of betrayal. It is loyalty that motivates friends to keep this information confidential. For example, I once had a friend who was considered to be one of the smartest people in school. But he actually did very badly in math, and needed a tutor to help him. He was embarrassed that he needed a tutor to pass his math class. I kept this information to myself because it would have been a betrayal to repeat the information he had entrusted me with.