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Introduction to Listening comprehension

Guide to the Listening Test

The first section of the TOEIC test is Listening Comprehension. In this section, the test focuses on how well you understand spoken English. There are four parts in this section.

Part 1: Photographs 6 questions
Part 2: Question-Response 25 questions
Part 3: Short Conversations 39 questions
Part 4: Short Talks 30 questions

You will have 45 minutes to complete this section of the TOEIC test.

Directions are given for each part. You need to mark your answers on the separate Answer Sheet provided.

Quick Check

- How many parts are there in the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEIC test?
- How many questions are there?
- How much time do you have to complete the Listening Comprehension section?
- Where do you mark your answers?

Guide to this section of the book

The Listening Comprehension section is divided into the same four parts as the TOEIC test. Each part begins with an *Overview*, which gives one or more examples and explains the main challenges you will face. You then study important skills and useful language in *Improve Your Performance*. In *Steps to Success* you practice special strategies for taking each part of the test, before *Strategy Review and Tips* summarizes key guidance and gives useful advice. Finally, you put everything into practice in a *Review Test*.

For all Examples, the gender and accent of each speaker is given using these abbreviations:

[M-Am] American man[F-Am] American woman[M-Br] British man[F-Br] British woman[M-Au] Australian man[F-Au1 Australian woman[M-Cn] Canadian man[F-Cn] Canadian woman

The gender and accent of every speaker for every recording is given in the Audioscript.

PART 1: PHOTOGRAPHS

- Overview
- > Improve Your Performance
 - Previewing photographs
 - Avoiding Errors
- > Steps to Success
 - Practice 1
 - Practice 2
- > Strategy Review and Tips

OVERVIEW

This part of the TOEIC test consists of six black-and-white photographs. For each photograph, you will hear four short statements. You must choose the statement that best describes what you see in the photograph.

The purpose is to find out how well you relate what you hear with what you can see. Photographs often involve an individual or group of people, but they sometimes feature a scene or an object instead. Most statements describe the general context, or the more obvious features of the photograph, but some statements focus on smaller details or objects that are less prominent.

Importantly, the statements are spoken only once. There is a short pause between items, but there are no pauses between the statements that describe each photograph, and they are not written in your test book. You only have one chance to process the information you hear.

Quick check

- How many photographs are in this part of the TOEIC test?
- How many statements are there for each photograph?
- How many times do you hear each statement?
- As well as photographs of people, what other types of photographs are there?
- Is there a pause between the statements you hear that describe each photograph?
- What do most of the statements tend to focus on?

OVERVIEW

(Track 01) EXAMPLE

Look at the photograph and listen to the four statements.



[M-Am]

- (A) A man's pointing to some plastic cups on the desk.
- (B) A man's giving a presentation to a small group of people.
- (C) Some office furniture has been rearranged for display.
- (D) The audience is applauding a product demonstration.

The best description of the picture is statement (B), "A man's giving a presentation to a small group of people." You should mark answer choice (B).

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Answer choice (A) partly true. There are some cups on the desk, but none of the men are pointing at them. Answer choice (C) incorrectly interprets the situation. We can see some furniture, and this might be in an office, but there is no indication it has been *rearranged*, or that the furniture is *for display*. Answer choice (D) confuses the context. This might be a product demonstration, but the audience is not applauding.

Remember

On the actual test, you will hear but NOT see the four answer choices.

Challenges

Part 1 presents few problems for advanced TOEIC test-takers. Most statements tend to be short and use fairly simple grammatical structures. In many cases, it is not unusual for all four of the statements that describe a photograph to begin with the same subject (He's, There's, A woman is, People are, etc.). Many statements use the present simple or present continuous tense. They are therefore generally easy to understand, so you should aim to achieve a high score on this part of the test.

However, there are a number of ways that the difficulty level of statements in Part 1 can be increased, and it is useful to be aware of them.

> Length

Some statements can be a few words, but others are much longer. Longer statements have more information to process, and there is more scope to be misled by distractors.

Subject

While many statements start with the same subject (She's, A man is, etc.), sometimes you will hear different subjects for up to four of the statements. This means you need to think quickly.

Grammar

The level of grammatical complexity may be higher in some statements than others. Typically, the more challenging statements will use the passive.

Vocabulary

You may also hear uncommon or specialized vocabulary that you do not know.

Pace

You need to think quickly and mark your answer right away. You won't be able to remember the statements after you hear them, and you have little time to reflect.

Aural distractors

Incorrect statements may include words that sound the same as, or similar to, something you can see in the photograph. You may also hear words that relate to what you see, but confuse the context or are only partially correct.

It is these more complex statements that you will focus on in the following sections.

IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE

In this section you will practice ways to improve your score on Part 1 of the TOEIC test.

These are the exercises you will cover:

Previewing Photographs

learning how to quickly and effectively preview different types of photographs

Avoiding Errors

identifying incorrect statements, and understanding why they are incorrect

As you work through *Improve Your Performance*, try to identify any weaknesses you have, and focus on the areas you need to improve.

Previewing Photographs

In Part 1 of the TOEIC test there is a short pause of a few seconds between each question. You should use this time to *preview* the photograph. This means looking quickly at the photograph to find out as much information as you can.

Most photographs feature one or more people. However, sometimes you will see a photograph of a scene, or an object.

How to preview Part 1 photographs

Photographs of people

Step 1: Look at the photograph from a "general" perspective. Ask yourself:

Where is this?

What is happening?

Step 2: Look more closely at the people. Ask yourself:

Who are these people? What is their job? What is their relationship?

What are they doing?

Photographs of a scene

Step 1: Look at the photograph from a "general" perspective. Ask yourself:

Where is this?

What can you see?

Step 2: Look more closely and notice any details. Ask yourself:

What is in the foreground? What is in the background?

What is significant about this scene?

Photographs of a scene

Step 1: Look at the photograph from a "general" perspective. Ask yourself:

What is it?

Where is it?

Step 2: Look more closely and notice any details. Ask yourself:

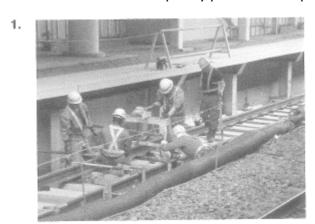
What is it made of?

What is it used for?

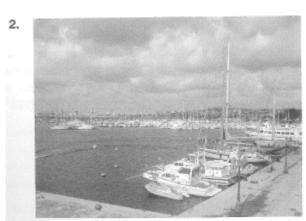
Note: Sometimes there may be several objects.

MINI TEST: Previewing Photographs

(Track 02) For each photograph, you will hear four statements. Listen and choose the statement: (A), (B), (C), or (D), that best describes the photograph. Use the time before you hear the statements to quickly preview each photograph.











Avoiding Errors

In Part 1, you need to listen carefully and quickly identify whether the statements you hear accurately describe what you can see in the photographs. An incorrect answer choice is known as a distractor. To maximize your score on this part of the test, you need to be familiar with the types of distractors commonly used. This will help you avoid unnecessary mistakes.

There are three main types of distractors that are intended to confuse you.

Incorrect interpretations

Statements often include one or two things you can see in the photograph, but nevertheless they misinterpret the situation. For example, a photograph shows a line of cars parked outside a building, but the statement you hear says "The cars are stuck in traffic." Alternatively, a statement might refer to something you associate with what you can see. For example, a photograph shows a man looking around a shoe store, but the statement you hear says "The man is trying on some shoes." In both examples, the statements misinterpret the situation. This is the most common type of distractor.

TIP Immediately after you hear each statement, always ask yourself if it describes what you actually see.

Partially true statements

Some statements may include just *one* detail that is incorrect. For example, a photograph shows a vase of flowers of a coffee table, but the statement you hear says "There's a vase of flowers next to the table." In this case, the preposition "next to" is incorrect. In other cases, it may be a verb, an adjective, or a noun that is incorrect.



Pay particular attention to key words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions).

Similar-sounding words

Occasionally, statements try to trick you by using words that sound similar to something you see in the photograph. For example, a photograph shows two people meeting in a park, but the statement you hear says "They're eating in a park." The words *eating* and *meeting* sound similar.

TIP

Make sure you listen closely to every word.

Photograph 1

(Track 03) Listen carefu by distractor	ılly and ch												
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4. Correct		Incorre	ct		11			, is				20	
5. Correct		Incorre	ct									A	
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(Track 0	03) Exercis	е В					1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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8. Correct		Incorre	ct			M							-

(Track 04) Exercise B Listen again to the statements. For each incorrect statement, check (✓) the type of distractor used.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Incorrect interpretation								
Partially true statement								
Similar-sounding word								
Correct								

Photograph 3

(Track 05) Exercise A Quick Listen carefully and check (✓) Coby distractors.												
1. Correct Incorr	ect		17			100						
2. Correct Incorr	ect	60			4							
3. Correct Incorr	ect	100		T.	1							
4. Correct Incorr	ect	- ST - B										
5. Correct Incorr	ect	S										
6. Correct Incorr	ect		n			A	5					
7. Correct Incorr	ect	18	No.				48					
8. Correct Incorr	ect		ST. ST.	11/20			Mil					
(Track 05) Exercise B		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
Listen again to the	Incorrect interpretation											
statements. For each	Partially true statement											
incorrect statement, check	Similar-sounding word											
(✓) the type of distractor	Correct											
Photograph 4 (Track 06) Exercise A Quick Listen carefully and check (✓) Coby distractors.	orrect or Incorrect for each											
1. Correct Incorr			-									
2. Correct Incorr		Ġ.										
3. Correct Incorr 4. Correct Incorr												
5. Correct Incorr				111/1	7	Ting	NIN II					
6. Correct Incorrect						B	15					
7. Correct Incorr				w o								
8. Correct Incorr	ect						200					
(Track 06) Eversica P		4	2	2	1	 -		7	O			
(Track 06) Exercise B	In an area of the control of	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
Listen again to the	Incorrect interpretation											
statements. For each	Partially true statement											
incorrect statement, check	Similar-sounding word											
(√) the type of distractor used.	Correct											

Photograph 5

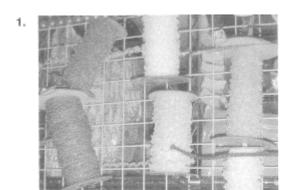
(Track 07) Exercise A Listen carefully and check by distractors.			· ·				_				
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1. Correct	Incorr	ect						-200-000	**************************************	781	
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5. Correct	Incorr	ect				7				9	
6. Correct	Incorr	ect	220						H		
7. Correct	Incorr	ect									
8. Correct	Incorr	ect									
(Track 07) Exercise	В			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	_
Listen again to the		Inco	rrect interpretation	_	_					-	_
statements. For each			ially true statement								
incorrect statement, che		Sim	ilar-sounding word								
(√) the type of distracto used.	r	Corı	rect								
Photograph 4 (Track 08) Exercise A Listen carefully and check by distractors.											
1. Correct	Incorr	ect								10000	
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3. Correct	Incorr	ect					-				
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5. Correct	Incorr	ect		A		2	000	- M			
6. Correct	Incorr	ect							7	-	
7. Correct	Incorr	ect							1		
8. Correct	Incorr	ect								nacrodit	

(Track 08) Exercise B
Listen again to the
statements. For each
incorrect statement, check
(✓) the type of distractor
used.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Incorrect interpretation								
Partially true statement								
Similar-sounding word								
Correct								

MINI TEST: Avoiding Errors

(Track 09) For each photograph, you will hear four statements. Listen and choose the statement: (A), (B), (C), or (D), that best describes the photograph. Do not be misled by incorrect interpretations, partially true statements, or similar-sounding words.











STEPS TO SUCCESS

This section presents an effective, step-by-step approach to use when answering questions on Part 1 of the TOEIC test. The steps shown here are designed to help you maximize your score on this part of the test.

- Quickly preview the photograph to get a general idea of the context.

 Ask yourself:

 Where is this?

 What is happening?
- Examine the photograph in more detail. Ask yourself more questions, depending on the type of photograph.
 - For a photograph involving people, ask yourself:
 Who are these people? What is their job/relationship?
 What exactly are they doing?
 - For a photograph of a scene, ask yourself:
 What is in the foreground/background? What is significant about this scene?
 - For a photograph of an object, ask yourself:
 What exactly is it? What is made of/used for?
- Listen carefully to *all four* statements. As you listen, eliminate any statements you are sure are incorrect. To help you eliminate incorrect statements:
 - listen closely for key words
 - ask yourself if what you hear describes exactly what you can see
 - be wary of incorrect interpretations and partially true statements
 - watch out for words that sound similar to things and activities you can see in the photograph
- Mark your answer. Then immediately move on and preview the next photograph.

Practice 1



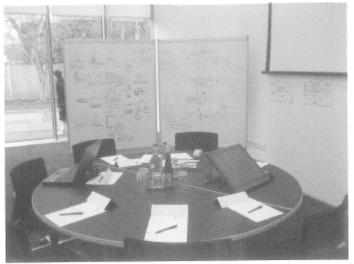
Step 1	Quickl	y preview the photo	ograph. Note your answers to these questions.					
	• W	Where is this?						
Step 2	Look a	t the photograph in	more detail.					
	Who are these people?							
	What is their relationship?							
	What exactly are they doing?							
		, ,	<u> </u>					
Step 3	(Tr	ack 10) Listen to fou	ur statements about the photograph. As you listen,					
	elim	inate any statement	s you are sure are incorrect.					
	(A)	[] eliminate	[] consider					
	(B)	[] eliminate	[] consider					
	(C)	[] eliminate	[] consider					
	(D)	[] eliminate	[] consider					
Step 4	Select	the one statement	that best describes what you see in the photograph.					
	Mark	your answer (A) B C D					

Practice 2



Step 1	Preview the photograph. Note your answers to these questions.						
	Where is this?						
	What is happening?						
Step 2	Look at the photograph in more detail.						
	Who are these people?						
	What is their relationship?						
	What exactly are they doing?						
Step 3	(Track 11) Listen to four statements about the photograph. As you listen, eliminate any statements you are sure are incorrect. (A) [] eliminate [] consider (B) [] eliminate [] consider (C) [] eliminate [] consider (D) [] eliminate [] consider						
Step 4	Select the one statement that best describes what you see in the photograpl	h.					
	Mark your answer (A) (B) (C) (D)						

Practice 3



Step 1	Preview the photograph. Note yo	our answers to these questions.					
	Where is this?						
	What is happening?						
Step 2	Step 2 Look at the photograph in more detail. What can you see? Make a list of						
'	prominent objects, and note thei	r location.					
	Objects:	Locations:					
	bottles	in the center of the table					
							
							
Step 3	(Track 12) Listen to four state	ments about the photograph. As you listen,					
Step 3	eliminate any statements you a						
	(A) [] eliminate [] consider					
	(B) [] eliminate [
	(C) [] eliminate [
	(D) [] eliminate [] consider					
Step 4	Step 4 Select the one statement that best describes what you see in the photograph.						
	Mark your answer (A) (B)	© D					

STRATEGY REVIEW AND TIPS

Strategy Review Listening Test – Part 1

Remember, in the test...

- Quickly preview each photograph before you hear the statements. Ask yourself
 where it is and what is happening. For any people you see, ask yourself who
 they are, what they are doing, etc. Some statements might focus on small
 details, so notice what the people are wearing, and also try to identify any
 objects you think might be significant.
- Listen carefully to all four statements before marking your answer.
- While you listen, eliminate any answers that you are sure are wrong.
- If you are not sure which answer choice is correct, decide quickly. Choose an answer from the remaining possible choices, and move on.
- As soon as you answer, preview the next photograph.

Tips

Here is some advice that people taking the TOEIC test have found useful for this part. Choose the tips you like, and try to use them.

"Don't waste time worrying about answers once you have marked them. You won't be able to remember the statements anyway, so go straight on and preview the next photograph."

Andi Osmani

"Remember that most statements describe the general context. Just keep looking at the photograph and find the one statement that actually describes what you see."

Shik Gwon

"If you hear a word you don't know, don't assume the statement is correct. However, after you've heard all four statements if you are still not sure which answer is correct, then choose the one with the word you don't know."

Naoko Iwata