

## Independent Writing Topics

The following is a list of Independent Writing topics that were used as actual test topics in former versions of the *TOEFL*® test or developed as practice topics for the current TOEFL test. You will see topics very similar to these on the *TOEFL iBT*® test. Whatever the topic, you will be asked to give your opinion and to support your opinion with specific reasons and examples.

It does not matter whether you agree or disagree with the topic; the raters are trained to accept all varieties of opinions. What matter are the skills discussed in the previous section: your ability to respond directly to the question, to take a clear position, and to write an essay characterized by good organization, proper use of supporting examples, sentence variety, correct sentence structures, and appropriate vocabulary. Remember that raters will not consider examples or reasons expressed in a completely memorized language to represent your own writing.

None of the topics requires specialized knowledge. Most topics are general and are based on the common experience of people in general and students in particular.

What should you do with this list of topics? To prepare for the test, choose topics from the list and practice writing essays in response. Make sure you time yourself, taking 30 minutes to read the question, plan your work, and write your essay. After completing the essay, read it over and compare it with the scoring guide. Or better yet, have a friend or teacher evaluate the essay against the scoring criteria and give you feedback.

### Topic List

- The expression “Never, never give up” means to keep trying and never stop working for your goals. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Why do you think some people are attracted to dangerous sports or other dangerous activities? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- What are the important qualities of a good son or daughter? Have these qualities changed or remained the same over time in your culture? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- People work because they need money to live. What are some **other** reasons that people work? Discuss one or more of these reasons. Use specific examples and details to support your answer.
- Some people like to do only what they already do well. Other people prefer to try new things and take risks. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.
- If you could study a subject that you have never had the opportunity to study, what would you choose? Explain your choice, using specific reasons and details.

- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Grades (marks) encourage students to learn. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.
- Some people say that computers have made life easier and more convenient. Other people say that computers have made life more complex and stressful. What is your opinion? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Your city has decided to build a statue or monument to honor a famous person in your country. Whom would you choose? Use reasons and specific examples to support your choice.
- Describe a custom from your country that you would like people from other countries to adopt. Explain your choice, using specific reasons and examples.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Technology has made the world a better place to live. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The content of advertisements in a particular country can tell you a lot about that country. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Modern technology is creating a single world culture. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.
- A foreign visitor has only one day to spend in your country. Where should this visitor go on that day? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.
- If you could go back to some time and place in the past, when and where would you go? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.
- What discovery in the last 100 years has been most beneficial for people in your country? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Dancing plays an important role in a culture. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- If you could meet a famous entertainer or athlete, who would that be, and why? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.
- If you could ask a famous person one question, what would you ask? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.
- Your teacher has given you a large assignment that must be completed in one month. You can complete the assignment gradually by working on it a little bit each day, or you can complete the work quickly by working on it intensively for three or four days. Which method do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

- You have a choice of movies to see. What influences you the most in choosing which movie to see?
  - Whether your favorite actors are in it
  - What kind of movie it is (action, romance, comedy, etc.)
  - What other people are saying about it

Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

- Many people believe that greed, or the desire to have more wealth than other people have, is a bad characteristic; people who are greedy are often considered selfish or unkind. However, some people argue that greed is actually a good characteristic for a person to have because greedy people will work harder than others to become successful. Do you believe that greed can be a good characteristic? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Which is more important for a leader: the ability to win an argument about an issue or the ability to help others come to an agreement about an issue? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Your city or province has received a large donation of money to improve the education of children. It must choose between spending the money on improvement of early childhood education (for children ages 4 to 7) and spending the money on the improvement of education for older children (ages 11 to 14). Which do you think is the better option? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students who are planning to work in business, learning about psychology is more important than learning about technology. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Practice and hard work are more important to an athlete's success than natural ability and talent. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Today's media (TV and online news sites, for example) offer a lot of information on many topics, but people do not use this information to really learn something thoroughly and in depth. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People who have had difficulty learning a skill go on to become better teachers of that skill than people who learned it easily. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Children today would be happier if they had fewer possessions. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Traditional ways of celebrating holidays are much less important today than they were in the past. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Improving transportation is the best way for governments to promote economic growth. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? As long as they meet deadlines and attend meetings, company employees should be allowed to work any hours they choose. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Although technology has made communication easier, there are still as many misunderstandings among people as there were in the past. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? People today are much better informed about international news than they were in the past. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For students, the ability to listen well is just as important as the ability to read well. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? For most jobs or areas of work, understanding the limits of your knowledge is more important than the knowledge you have. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Television does not give people an accurate view of human nature. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is more interesting to read a good book or see a good movie the second time than the first. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? All jobs should provide some opportunity for physical exercise. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.