



Practice Test #10

FOR THE TOEFL®
LISTENING SECTION



Practice Test #10
For the TOEFL®
Listening Section



The TOEFL Listening Section: *Directions*

 This section measures your ability to understand conversations and lectures in an academic setting in English.

You will first listen to a passage and then answer questions about it. You may listen to each passage **only once**. You are allowed to take notes while you listen.

You will be asked about the main idea and supporting details from each passage. Sometimes, you will be asked to infer meaning and determine the author's purpose. These answers are usually not explicitly stated in the passage but must be answered based on your own ideas in regard to the speaker's attitude, tone, and the context in which he or she is speaking.

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

Most questions are worth one point each. If a question is worth more than one point, it will be indicated in the directions.

Answer each question in sequential order. You will not be allowed to skip or go back to questions during the actual TOEFL iBT exam.

At the end of this test, you will find a scoring chart to help you determine your score and an answer key with explanations to help you understand the questions.

When you're ready, turn the page to listen to the first passage.



Passage #1

 Directions: Now listen to a conversation between a student and a professor.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.

 [**Listen to a conversation between a student and a professor**](#)



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. What is the conversation mainly about?

- a. The information the student needs to prepare for the midterm
- b. General information about the teacher assistant position
- c. The typical workload of a teacher's assistant
- d. The application process to become a teacher's assistant

2. What is the student implying about the TA position when he asks the professor about the papers he will have to grade?

- a. He believes the position will require more work than what is stated in the job description
- b. He wants to clarify what is involved in the position
- c. He is unsure of what a teacher assistant actually does
- d. He is hoping not to work more than twenty hours per week

3. Why does the professor want the student to apply to become a TA? Select two.

- a. It will look good when he applies for future jobs
- b. The student will learn a lot
- c. The student will gain respect
- d. The student will be able to help the professor complete her research

4. Why hasn't the student applied to be a TA yet? Select two.

- a. He does not think he will like the job
- b. He wants to know how many hours he will have to work
- c. He is worried he will not know the answers to the students' questions
- d. He wants to apply after he has taken the midterm



5. What does the professor tell the student to do if he does not know the answer to a question from a student?

- a. He should make up something in class so the students do not lose confidence in him
- b. He should tell the students he will look up the correct answer later
- c. He should ask her and then email the student afterward
- d. He should tell the students to look it up on their own



Passage #2

 Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an American history class.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.

 [Listen to part of a talk in an American history class](#)

Source: Corbett, P.S., Janssen, V., Lund, J. M., Pfannestiel, T., Waskiewicz, S., & Vickery, P. (2014).

******Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student but essential for understanding the lecture.***

the cotton gin

Mississippi River

Saint Louis, Missouri

Memphis, Tennessee



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- a. How New Orleans came to be a thriving city
- b. How the cotton boom shaped the economy
- c. What life was like as a slave on a cotton plantation
- d. What led to the widespread use of steamboats

2. What part of the cotton growing process took place in March and April?

- a. Slaves would plant rows of seeds
- b. Slaves would expend a lot of energy tending to the plants
- c. Slaves would pick the cotton for harvest
- d. Slaves were able to rest before the next cotton season started

3. Why does the professor talk about steamboats?

- a. To illustrate how much money was made by people in the South at this time
- b. To provide an example of the sailing skills of Southerners
- c. To show how these new ships helped transport slaves around the area
- d. To provide an example of the economic impact of the cotton industry

4. What does the professor imply about the slaves working on the cotton plantations?

- a. Life was comfortable because they were allowed to have their own animals to raise for food
- b. Many slaves likely fell ill because they ate so little
- c. Slaves were exploited by owners of cotton plantations
- d. Cotton picking was one of the worst jobs for a slave



5. Why does the professor say this? | 🔊

- a. To change the location where she is standing in the room
- b. To explain to the students that she forgot to talk about something earlier
- c. To indicate a need to talk about events even further in the past
- d. To point out that it will be easier to answer the student's question if she provides some background information

6. What does the professor imply about slave owners?

- a. Their farms would not have been able to survive without slaves
- b. Without slaves, they would not have been able to buy steamboats
- c. They were so eager to earn money that they were willing to enslave people
- d. They were the richest people in society



Passage #3

 Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an economics class.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.

 [Listen to part of a talk in an economics class](#)

Source: OpenStax. (2018). Intertemporal choices in financial capital markets.

*****Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student but essential for understanding the lecture.**

behavioral economics

\$1000 credit card debt 15% interest
\$2000 savings account 2% gain
= (equals)

\$130/loss per year



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- a. Why the traditional model of economics is outdated
- b. How to handle money rationally and irrationally
- c. Why people often make mistakes when handling their finances
- d. How behavioral economics is different from the traditional model

2. Based on the information from the listening, indicate which characteristic on the left belongs to either traditional economists or behavioral economists. This question is worth two points.

	Traditional economists	Behavioral economists
A dollar is always just a dollar		
The value of money depends on the situation		
Loss aversion		

3. How does the professor organize the lecture?

- a. He compares and contrasts two concepts related to economics
- b. He introduces an economic topic and then provides several supporting examples
- c. He compares the new economic topic to something the students learned earlier
- d. He begins the lecture on traditional economics and then changes the subject to behavioral economics

4. According to the professor, if you lost ten dollars yesterday but then found ten dollars on the ground today, how would you feel about it from a traditional economist's point of view?

- a. You would feel indifferent since you lost ten dollars and then simply gained the same amount back
- b. You would still be angry that you lost ten dollars yesterday
- c. You would feel like you could spend the ten dollars irrationally since it was free
- d. You would invest the ten dollars and make more money with it



5. What does the professor imply about traditional and behavioral models of economics?

- a. He thinks traditional economists have stronger support from the scientific community
- b. He thinks that behavioral economists better understand why individuals make certain decisions
- c. He believes that both models have their flaws
- d. He thinks that the students should only study the behavioral model because it is more correct

6. Why does the professor say this? 

- a. To emphasize that people make decisions inconsistent with traditional economics
- b. To show why he believes people often make irrational decisions
- c. To describe what happens when people adhere to the behavioral model of economics
- d. To prove that the smartest people only make rational decisions regarding money



Passage #4



Directions: Now listen to a conversation between a student and an office worker.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.



[Listen to a conversation between a student and an office worker](#)



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. Why does the student want to talk to the records and registration worker?

- a. She has the wrong grades on her grade report
- b. She wants to discuss one of her grades to see if she can get it changed
- c. She has the same name as another student
- d. She has three days to get her grade report fixed

2. Listen again to part of the passage. Why does the campus worker say this? | 🔊

- a. He thinks the student wants to change some of her grades, and he cannot help
- b. Only the student's professors can help with her problem
- c. The student is lost, and he will point her in the right direction
- d. He does not understand why the student came to see him

3. Why does the student have an incorrect grade report?

- a. The professors did not enter her grades correctly
- b. The campus worker filed the grade report incorrectly
- c. Her report was mixed up with another student with the same name
- d. Another student with the same name switched the reports so she could have better grades

4. How will the campus worker help solve the student's problem?

- a. He will submit a report to investigate the incorrect grades
- b. He will compare the student's ID with the student's grades
- c. He will talk to the student's professors
- d. He will talk to the other student first

5. How will the student know when her problem is resolved?

- a. She will receive an email in three days if the problem is not fixed
- b. She will receive an email saying her problem is resolved
- c. She will need to return to the office to check if the problem is resolved
- d. She will need to contact her professors and ask them



Passage #5

 Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.

 [Listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class](#)

Source: Fraknoi, A., Morrison, D., & Wolff, S. C. (2016).

******Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student but essential for understanding the lecture.***

luminosity

carbon dioxide



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- a. What will happen as the Sun continues to expand
- b. Why humans may need to move to other planets in the future
- c. The decreasing levels of carbon dioxide and rising temperatures on Earth's surface
- d. Ways for humanity to survive after the Sun expands

2. Why does the professor say this? 

- a. To prove that the Earth and the Sun are definitely dying
- b. To ensure the students do not lose sleep over the fact that the Earth and Sun are dying out
- c. To explain that there is no need to worry because this will not happen for a long time
- d. To emphasize how important it is to know that the Sun and Earth are living things

3. According to the passage, which of the following is a way to preserve life on Earth suggested by astronomers?

- a. To inhabit other planets and sporadically visit Earth
- b. To create more advanced technology that will protect Earth
- c. To find ways that humans can live in extreme heat
- d. To use an asteroid to move Earth farther away from the Sun

4. What does the professor imply about the future of the Earth?

- a. Astronomers will have probably figured out some solution in the future
- b. The fate of Earth is something humanity needs to consider now
- c. The Earth is likely to be sucked into the Sun like Mercury and Venus
- d. The rising heat and melting ice caps are preventable problems



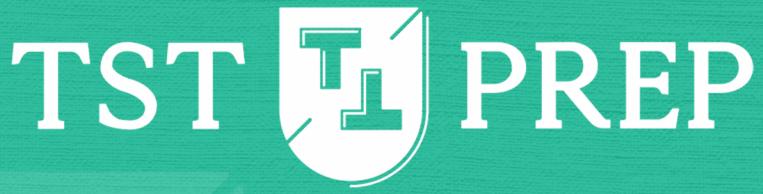
5. What change in the Sun is going to cause problems on Earth?

- a. It will only emit 70 percent of the energy it does today
- b. The luminosity is increasing
- c. It will become a red giant soon
- d. Its core is heating up too quickly

6. What does the professor say are some possible ways that we might survive as the Sun continues to grow? Select two.

- a. Humans might evolve to withstand the climate changes on Earth
- b. Astronomers will use spacecrafts to help push the Earth into Jupiter's orbit
- c. Advances in technology will allow astronomers to slow the growth of the Sun
- d. Humans will move to other planets instead





Private Lessons for the TOEFL®

Get the help you deserve from
an experienced TOEFL® teacher.

[Learn more](#)



Complete Practice Test Pack for the TOEFL®

10 complete practice tests for the
TOEFL® with answer keys, grading
rubrics and sample responses.

[Learn more](#)



Score Builder Program for the TOEFL®

All you need to take the TOEFL® with
confidence and get your best score!

[Learn more](#)



Emergency Course for the TOEFL®

Learn Everything you need to know
about the TOEFL® to achieve your
dream score.

[Learn more](#)



Get 10% off all lessons, classes, evaluations, tests, courses
and practice materials for the TOEFL® with the coupon code

tstprep10

www.tstprep.com



Practice Test #10
For the TOEFL® Listening Section
Answer Key



The Grading Rubric

Use the chart below to determine your score in the listening section.

There are only 28 questions in this section, but the highest raw score **might be** different. Questions that require multiple answers, usually in the form of tables, are worth two points.

For questions with two choices, if two choices are correct, you get one point. If one of the choices is incorrect, you earn zero points for the given question.

If you correctly filled out the given table, award yourself two points. If you made one mistake in the table, award yourself one point. If you made two mistakes or more, you earn zero points for the given question.

Raw Points	Score Estimate	Raw Points	Score Estimate	Raw Points	Score Estimate
29	30	19	20	9	9
28	29	18	18	8	8
27	28	17	17	7	7
26	27	16	16	6	6
25	26	15	15	5	5
24	25	14	14	4	4
23	24	13	13	3	3
22	23	12	12	2	2
21	22	11	11	1	1
20	21	10	10		



Passage #1: Answer Key

1. B (Gist-Content)

While the student originally comes to ask questions about what information will be on the midterm, the professor interrupts and asks the student if he has applied to be a teacher's assistant (TA) yet, so **A** is not correct. The student replies that he has not yet applied and that he has some questions before he fills out the application, which is mainly what the rest of the conversation is about. So, **B** is the correct answer.

2. A (Making Inferences)

A is the correct answer because the student is concerned that, although the job description says the position requires 20 hours a week of work, it seems as though it may be a much harder job than that. He asks if the position takes up more than 20 hours a week and uses the idea of papers to grade and research to do as a way to emphasize his point that there is a lot of work to do as a TA. He never implies that he only wants to work 20 hours a week, so **D** is not correct. He says: *"The job description says it will be a commitment of about 20 hours a week, but in reality, does it end up being more than that? Just considering all the papers to grade and research to do..."*

3. A, B (Detail)

A and **B** are correct. The professor says it will look good on the student's job applications, and it will be a great opportunity and learning experience when he is a TA. She says:

"There is another student who already applied, and she got the position, so now there is just one slot left, and I would hate to see you miss out on it. It would be a great opportunity and learning experience for you, not to mention look good on your job applications."

4. B, C (Detail)

The answers to this question lie within the student's questions to the professor. He has not applied to the TA position yet because he has a couple of questions, and those include how many hours he will have to work and what he should do if he doesn't know the answer to a student's question, so **B** and **C** are the correct answers.

"- You're right. I definitely don't want to lose the position. I just have a couple of questions, though, before I submit my application... The job description says it will be a commitment of about 20 hours a week, but in reality, does it end up being more than that? Just considering all the papers to grade and research to do... - In the beginning, it might take you a bit longer than 20 hours to get all of your work done, but once you get the hang of it, you should be just fine. Of course, you can always put in more hours with me doing research, but I also understand if you need to cut back a little if you have a test coming up or something like that."



- That's good to know... and also, what do I do if I don't know how to answer a student's question? I'm worried that the students won't have confidence in me if I'm unsure of what to say."

5. B (Detail)

At the end of the conversation, after the student asks the professor what to do if he does not know the answer to a question, the professor says that he should be honest with his students and admit that he does not know, so **A** is not correct. She says:

"Don't be worried! It's fine if you don't know the answer to something, and all you need to do is be honest, but let the students know that you promise to look it up and get back to them as quickly as possible. The last thing you want to do is lie about it"

So, **B** is the correct answer.



Passage #1: Transcript

Man: Hey, Professor, do you have a minute to chat?

Woman: Absolutely Chris, what's going on?

Man: I thought the midterm would just be about the adaptation of animals in the Savannah, but now we have started reviewing other ecosystems... will we have to know ...

Woman: (interrupts) Oh, Chris, sorry to interrupt, but before I forget... have you applied for the teacher's assistant position yet?

Man: Oh, you mean the TA job? No, I haven't. I was planning on doing that later tonight, actually.

Woman: OK, great because the deadline is in two weeks, and I would really love for you to come on as a TA so we can do research together.

Man: Of course, yeah, that's the plan.

Woman: There is another student who already applied, and she got the position, so now there is just one slot left, and I would hate to see you miss out on it. It would be a great opportunity and learning experience for you, not to mention look good on your job applications.

Man: You're right. I definitely don't want to lose this position. I just have a couple of questions though before I submit my application, though. The job description says it will be a commitment of about 20 hours a week, but in reality, does it end up being more than that? Just considering all the papers to grade and research to do....

Woman: In the beginning, it might take you a bit longer than 20 hours to get all of your work done, but once you get the hang of it, you should be just fine. Of course, you can always put in more hours with me doing research, but I also understand if you need to cut back a little if you have a test coming up or something like that.

Man: That's good to know... and also, what do I do if I don't know how to answer a student's question? I'm worried that the students won't have confidence in me if I'm unsure of what to say.

Woman: Don't worry! It's fine if you don't know the answer to something, and all you need to do is be honest, but let the students know that you promise to look it up and get back to them as quickly as possible. The last thing you want to do is lie about it.

Man: Yeah, that makes sense. I guess I can do that... Alright, well, then, I think I will go to the library right now and get in my application so I don't miss out! Thank you for reminding me and answering my questions. I'm excited!

Woman: Great, now what was it you wanted to ask about the midterm...



Passage #2: Answer Key

Source: Corbett, P.S., Janssen, V., Lund, J. M., Pfannestiel, T., Waskiewicz, S., & Vickery, P. (2014).

1. B (Gist-Content)

The professor mentions something related to all of these answers at some point throughout the lecture, but **B** is the only answer that encompasses the main idea of the whole lecture.

2. A (Detail)

This is a very specific detail from the lecture. Near the beginning, the professor says, "*Okay, cotton planting took place in March and April, when slaves planted seeds in rows around three to five feet apart,*" so **A** is the correct answer. **B** and **C** happen later in the year. **D** is never mentioned.

3. D (Understanding Organization)

Think back to the main idea, and it becomes much easier to answer this question. **A** and **B** can be eliminated right away because they seem to have no relation to the main idea. **C** is never mentioned, making **D** the best option.

4. C (Making Inferences)

D can be eliminated because the professor does not make any comparison to other types of work slaves performed. **B** is also incorrect because the professor does not provide any information on the health of the slaves. **A** is also incorrect because the professor spends a good amount of time describing how poor the working conditions were for slaves and how they barely even had time to eat once all day, so **C** is the correct answer.

5. D (Understanding the Function)

The professor says: "*But I think it would be helpful to take a step back and take a closer look at how cotton was grown.*". She does not literally mean she will physically take a step back, eliminating **A**, but rather she means that she wants to talk about some more background information that precedes the answer to the student's question. This can sometimes mean looking at it from a historical perspective, or in this case, it helps provide a better answer to the student's question, so **D** is the correct answer. **B** can also be eliminated because there is no indication that the professor forgot to talk about something.



6. C (Making Inferences)

While **A** and **B** are probably true statements, they do not summarize what the professor is implying about slave owners in the lecture. After the professor describes what life was like for slaves on cotton plantations, and the student brings up the idea that treatment was so inhumane, the professor says, "*Well, there are a lot of reasons, but one of the biggest factors was greed, to be honest.*". From this, it can be inferred that greed was a good enough reason for slave owners to treat slaves horribly.



Passage #2: Transcript

Source: Corbett, P.S., Janssen, V., Lund, J. M., Pfannestiel, T., Waskiewicz, S., & Vickery, P. (2014).

So much of the American South, particularly cities today like New Orleans and others along the Mississippi, grew out of the immense success of one particular crop: cotton.

In the era before the Civil War of the 1860s, planters in the American South continued to grow mostly tobacco and rice, as they had done for over 100 years. Cotton, however, emerged as the South's major commercial crop, replacing tobacco, rice, and sugar in economic importance. By 1860, much of the American South was producing two-thirds of the world's cotton. In 1793, Eli Whitney revolutionized the production of cotton when he invented the cotton gin, a device that separated the seeds from raw cotton. Suddenly, a process that was extraordinarily labor-intensive when done by hand could be completed quickly and easily.

Wait, so cotton wasn't popular before the invention of the cotton gin?

Well, yes, I would say that's accurate. Almost no cotton was grown in the United States in 1787. And by 1840, cotton became the key cash crop for the Southern economy.

But, I think it would be helpful to take a step back and take a closer look at how cotton was grown. Okay, cotton planting took place in March and April, when slaves planted seeds in rows around three to five feet apart. Over the next several months, from April to August, they carefully took care of the plants, which took significant energy and time. In August, after the cotton plants had flowered and the flowers had begun to give way to actual cotton, all the farm's slaves—men, women, and children—worked together to pick the crop.

Cotton picking occurred as many as seven times a season as the plant grew and continued to produce through the fall and early winter. During the picking season, slaves worked from sunrise to sunset with a ten-minute break at lunch; many slaveholders tended to give them little to eat since spending on food would cut into their profits. The slaves' day didn't end after they picked the cotton; first, they had to bring it in to be weighed, then they had to care for the animals and perform other chores. Indeed, slaves often maintained their own gardens and livestock, which they tended after working the cotton fields, in order to supplement their supply of food.

This is really terrible. It's hard for me to imagine that no one thought of how inhumane it all was.

Well, there are a lot of reasons, but one of the biggest factors was greed, to be honest. As the cotton industry boomed in the South, the Mississippi River quickly became the essential water highway in the United States. This led to the growth of other industries besides just cotton. Steamboats, as a crucial part of the transportation revolution, became an integral part of the cotton trade in the American South.



Investors poured huge sums of money into steamships. In 1817, only seventeen operated in the rivers in and around the Mississippi, but by 1837, there were over seven hundred steamships in operation. Major new ports developed to handle all these ships, which brought about the development of modern-day cities like St. Louis, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee.

Wow, so is this how New Orleans grew into such a large city?

Exactly. New Orleans had been part of the French Empire before the United States purchased it in 1803. In the first half of the nineteenth century, it rose in importance largely because of the cotton boom and its position near the mouth of the Mississippi River. Steamboats moved down the river, transporting cotton grown on plantations along the river and throughout the South to the port at New Orleans. From there, the bulk of American cotton went to England, where it was sold to British manufacturers who ran the cotton mills. This lucrative international trade brought new wealth and new residents to the city. By 1840, New Orleans alone had 12 percent of the nation's total banking capital, and visitors often commented on the great cultural diversity of the city, becoming a thriving metropolis that rivaled New York in importance.



Passage #3: Answer Key

Source: OpenStax. (2018). Intertemporal choices in financial capital markets

1. D (Gist-Content)

At first, **A** may seem like the correct answer, but just because the traditional model came before the behavioral model of economics does not mean it is outdated. Also, the professor never mentions that the traditional model is necessarily wrong, but rather he spends the lecture comparing the behavioral model to the traditional model, so **D** is the correct answer.

2. (Connecting Content)

	Traditional economists	Behavioral economists
A dollar is always just a dollar	X	
The value of money depends on the situation		X
Loss aversion		X

3. A (Understanding Organization)

D is incorrect because the professor talks about both behavioral and traditional models of economics throughout the lecture. **B** seems like it could be true since the professor provides several examples in the lecture, but in each example, he is comparing and contrasting traditional and behavioral economists. Therefore, **A** is correct.

4. A (Detail)

The answer to this comes from the first example that the professor gives us about traditional economists versus behavioral economists. The professor says that a person would feel neutral if they lost ten dollars and then gained it back. He says:

"Now, according to traditional economists, you would feel completely neutral about this. After all, you lost \$10 and then gained \$10. You are financially the same as you were before, so you shouldn't feel much of anything about this entire situation."

B and **C** are the behavioral economists' points of view, so they are not correct. **D** is not correct because the professor does not say why someone would or would not leave the ten dollars on the ground.



5. B (Making Inferences)

B is the correct answer. At the end of the lecture, the professor reveals an opinion towards traditional and behavioral economists. He says that both have advantages, but behavioral economists are able to explain something better. The professor says:

"Which view is right, the behavioral economists' or the traditional view? Both have their advantages, but behavioral economists have at least shed a light on trying to describe and explain behavior that has historically been dismissed as irrational. If most of us are engaged in some 'irrational behavior,' perhaps there are deeper underlying reasons for this behavior in the first place."

So we can infer that he thinks behavioral economists better understand why we make certain decisions. **D** is not correct because he does not say students should only study this model, as he is clearly teaching both models in the lecture.

6. A (Understanding the Function)

In this part of the lecture, the professor is talking about another example of behaviors that people do that aren't in line with the views of traditional economists. Remember that to traditional economists, people make rational decisions with their money, meaning that they consider all possible options and choose the best one, i.e. what might save them the most money over time. When the professor says, "that doesn't seem wise," he's adding emphasis to the fact that the person in the example did not make the rational decision and, instead, did the exact opposite of what is expected by traditional economists, so **A** is the correct answer. **B** is not correct because this is not his personal belief.



Passage #3: Transcript

Source: OpenStax. (2018). Intertemporal choices in financial capital markets.

As we all know, people sometimes make decisions that seem “irrational” and not in their own best interest. These decisions can seem inconsistent from one day to the next, and they even deliberately ignore ways to save money or time. The traditional economic models assume rationality, which means that people take all available information and make consistent and informed decisions that are in their best interest all the time.

Now, I'm laughing because it probably seems obvious to you that this is clearly not the case. People are impulsive and moody. Still, it's important to keep in mind that this traditional model of economics was almost universally agreed upon until Behavioral Economics came around in the 1970s.

Let's look at an example of the traditional model of economics:

Imagine that yesterday you had a \$10 bill in your pocket, but you lost it. The next day, you received an extra \$10 bill in your paycheck. Simple. Now according to traditional economists, you would feel completely neutral about this. After all, you lost \$10 and then gained \$10. You are financially the same as you were before, so you shouldn't feel much of anything about this entire situation.

Behavioral economists argue that the traditional method leaves out something very important: people's state of mind.

Research has shown that people tend to focus much more on a loss than a gain. A loss of \$10 is more likely to be accompanied by anger and frustration, while a gain of \$10 will elicit much less intense emotions. This is known as loss aversion, where a \$1 loss pains us more than twice as much as a \$1 gain helps us. This insight has implications for investing, as people tend to “overplay” the stock market by reacting more to losses than to gains. Indeed, this behavior looks irrational to traditional economists but is consistent once we understand better how the mind works.

Another area that seems illogical is the idea of mental accounting or putting dollars in different mental categories where they take different values. Economists typically consider dollars to have equal value to the individual, regardless of the situation.

You might, for instance, think of the \$25 you found in the street differently from the \$25 you earned from three hours working in a fast-food restaurant. The street money might well be treated as extra money with little rational regard to getting the best value. This is, in one sense, strange since it is still equivalent to three hours of hard work in the restaurant. Yet the “easy come, easy go” mentality replaces the rational economical mind because of the situation, or context, in which the money was attained.



Practice Test #10

For the TOEFL® Listening Section

In another example of mental accounting that seems inconsistent to a traditional economist, a person could carry a credit card debt of \$1,000 that has a 15% yearly interest cost and simultaneously have a \$2,000 savings account that pays only 2% per year. That means she pays \$150 a year to the credit card company while collecting only \$20 annually in bank interest, so she loses \$130 a year. That doesn't seem wise.

The "rational" decision would be to pay off the debt since a \$1,000 savings account with \$0 in debt is the equivalent net worth, and she would now net \$20 per year. But curiously, it is not uncommon for people to ignore this advice since they will treat a loss to their savings account as higher than the benefit of paying off the credit card. The dollars are not being treated equally in all circumstances, so it looks irrational to traditional economists.

Which view is right, the behavioral economists' or the traditional view? Both have their advantages, but behavioral economists have at least shed a light on trying to describe and explain behavior that has historically been dismissed as irrational. If most of us are engaged in some "irrational behavior," perhaps there are deeper underlying reasons for this behavior in the first place.



Passage #4: Answer Key

1. A (Gist-Purpose)

Almost immediately, it is clear what the student's problem is, even though the campus worker is confused about the problem at first.

- "- Excuse me, I just got my grade report, and I think there has been a mistake. It says my name on it and everything, but when I went to look at it, I noticed that these aren't my grades."*
- You're barking up the wrong tree here. If you have a problem with your grades, you'll have to talk to your professors about that.*
- No, it's not that. I know what my grades should be, and it's not these. I think something happened, like, my grades got mixed up with someone else's. I'm positive this grade report is not correct."*

Therefore, **A** is the correct answer. **C**, while true, is not the student's reason for seeing the campus worker. **B** is incorrect because more than one grade is incorrect. **D** is incorrect because there is no deadline by which she must get her grade report fixed.

2. A (Understanding the Function)

A is the correct answer. The campus worker thinks that the student is unhappy with her grades and wants to change them, which is why the campus worker tries to send the student away, saying that she came to the wrong place because he cannot change a student's grades. Although the other answers appear true, **A** is the best choice because the worker is trying to tell the student that he cannot help her if she wants to change her grades.

3. C (Detail)

About a minute in, the campus worker investigates what the problem is with the student's grade report, and we find out that it may be that the student's grades were mixed up with another student who happens to have the same name, so **C** is the correct answer.

- "- Ok... so... I have your report on my screen. Does this match what you have?"*
- Hmm, umm, no... I mean, that looks like the grades I was supposed to have... but... Oh, wait! This isn't my grade report, but maybe this is the person that my report got switched up with. Look, her name is also Jessica Simpson, but the middle initial is different. Mine is L, but this one says Jessica J. Simpson. That's got to be it!"*
- Hmm, that's possible now that I think about it. That shouldn't have happened, but I guess it really could have been a mistake."*

D is not correct because there is no evidence from the conversation that this was intentionally done by the other student. **A** and **B** are incorrect because we do not know who made the error.



4. A (Detail)

Although the campus worker mentions the need to confirm the other student's ID and to reach out to the professors, he states that what he will do to solve the problem is submit a report so the problem can be investigated further. Therefore, **A** is the best choice. He says:

"Of course... OK, so, for now, here's what I can do. First, I need to make a copy of your ID so I can confirm your identity. Then I can submit a report to have this investigated. We will have to confirm the other student's identity and reach out to the professors to confirm grades."

5. B (Detail)

B is correct because the campus worker says that the student should be notified via email that the report was resolved. **A** and **C** are not correct because the student will only need to return to the office if she has not heard anything in three days. The worker says:

"Once all of that has happened, you should get a notice by email that the report was resolved. If you don't see a message from us within three days, please stop by again to check in and see what's going on, okay?"



Passage #4: Transcript

Woman: Excuse me, I just got my grade report, and I think there has been a mistake. It says my name on it and everything, but when I went to look at it, I noticed that these aren't my grades.

Man: You're barking up the wrong tree here. If you have a problem with your grades, you'll have to talk to your professor about that.

Woman: No, it's not that. I know what my grades should be, and it's not these. I think something happened, like, my grades got mixed up with someone else's. I'm positive this grade report is not correct.

Man: Alright, well, before we jump to any conclusions, let me pull up your report so I can see what's going on. What's your name?

Woman: Jessica Simpson.

Man: Ok... so... I have your report on my screen. Does this match what you have?

Woman: Hmm, umm, no... I mean, that looks like the grades I was supposed to have... but... Oh, wait! This isn't my grade report, but maybe this is the person that my report got switched up with. Look, her name is also Jessica Simpson, but the middle initial is different. Mine is L, but this one says Jessica J. Simpson. That's got to be it!

Man: Hmm. that's possible now that I think about it. That shouldn't have happened, but I guess it really could have been a mistake.

Woman: So what do we do about it? How can we fix this? I want to have my correct grades on my transcript, and it's not my fault the grades got mixed up!

Man: Of course... Ok, so for now, here's what I can do. First, I need to make a copy of your ID so I can confirm your identity. Then I can submit a report to have this investigated. We will have to confirm the other student's identity and reach out to the professors to confirm grades. Once all of that has happened, you should get a notice by email that the report was resolved. If you don't see a message from us within three days, please stop by again to check in and see what's going on, ok?

Woman: Ok, I will keep an eye out for an email from you. Thank you so much. Hopefully, this can all be fixed easily!

Man: Of course. Can I help you with anything else?

Woman: Nope, that's it, have a great day!



Passage #5: Answer Key

Source: Fraknoi, A., Morrison, D., & Wolff, S. C. (2016).

1. A (Gist-Content)

B, C, and D are all words and phrases mentioned at some point throughout the lecture but are only minor points. **A** is the only answer that most accurately describes what the lecture is about as a whole.

2. C (Understanding the Function)

B is too literal, so it can be eliminated right away. **A** and **D** are not as literal, but they do not exactly have to do with what the professor is saying. After mentioning that the Sun and Earth are dying, she says, "Sad, I know, but take comfort in the fact that these things will most likely not come to pass for another billion years, so I wouldn't lose any sleep over it." Therefore, **C** is the best answer.

3. D (Detail)

B can be eliminated right away because it is not very specific and probably would not be an idea that is proposed by astronomers. **C** can be eliminated because the professor mentions that heat will get extreme on Earth, but not that there is anything astronomers can do about this. **D** is correct because the professor says:

"One alternative may be to move the entire Earth progressively farther from the Sun. I know it sounds ridiculous, but we astronomers are fairly serious... Calculations show that if we were to redirect an asteroid so that it follows just the right orbit between Earth and Jupiter, it could transfer orbital energy from Jupiter to Earth and move Earth slowly outward, pulling us away from the expanding Sun."

A is not correct because this is something that the professor mentions later as a potential once technology advances and not a way that astronomers currently propose.

4. A (Making Inferences)

B can immediately be eliminated because the professor told the students that the expanding Sun will not be a problem for at least a billion years. **C** can be eliminated because it is not an implication but rather a fact suggested by the professor. Lastly, **D** can be eliminated because the professor never implies that these problems are preventable since he says they are caused by the inevitable expansion of the Sun. **A** is the best fit because most of the lecture revolves around possible solutions to the problem of the expanding Sun, so the professor is implying that astronomers will probably figure out some solution in the future.



5. B (Detail)

Near the beginning of the lecture, the professor spends a small amount of time describing the characteristics of the Sun and how it is changing over time. **A** can be eliminated because the professor says that the Sun used to emit 70 percent of the energy that it emits today. **C** can be eliminated because the professor says it is not known when the Sun will become a red giant. It could be anytime soon or far in the future, so it cannot be assumed soon. Lastly, **D** can be eliminated because the professor never mentions the heat of the Sun's core, just that changes are happening. The professor says:

"As a result of changes at its core, the Sun will continue to increase in luminosity as it grows older, and more and more radiation will reach Earth. For a while, the amount of carbon dioxide will continue to decrease. Eventually, the heating of Earth will melt the polar ice caps and increase the evaporation of the oceans."

Therefore, **B** is the correct answer.

6. A, D (Detail)

A and **D** are the correct answers which come from the very end of the lecture. The professor describes several different possibilities of what we might be able to do in the future to survive as the Sun expands and creates an uncomfortable climate on Earth. The professor says:

"It may also be that if humans survive for hundreds of millions of years, we may spread to planets or habitats around other stars. Indeed, Earth, by then, might be a museum world to which youngsters from other planets return to learn about the origin of our species. It is also possible that evolution will by then have changed us in ways that allow us to survive in very different environments."

B is not correct because it misstates the facts about a current idea to survive the Sun's expansion. Astronomers want to redirect asteroids, not spacecrafts, to push Earth's orbit outward, not necessarily into Jupiter's orbit.



Passage #5: Transcript

Source: Fraknoi, A., Morrison, D., & Wolff, S. C. (2016).

It may not look it to us, but the Earth and the Sun are living things, just like you and I. They were born at some point, and now they live, and unfortunately, one day, they will die.

Sad, I know, but take comfort in the fact that these things will most likely not come to pass for another billion years, so I wouldn't lose any sleep over it.

Still, as astronomers, it's important for us to consider how it would look when the Sun starts to age and what type of effect it might have on the Earth. And, perhaps more importantly, what can we do to save our Earth from the same Sun that gives us so much life.

Well, let's look at the Sun first. Not literally, of course. I don't want any of you going blind while in my class.

Okay, so the Sun is somewhere in the neighborhood of four and a half billion years old. In its younger days, it produced only about 70% of the energy that it radiates today.

Carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere has steadily declined as the Sun has increased what we astronomers refer to as luminosity, which is the strength and brightness of the Sun's energy.

This increase in luminosity and decrease in carbon dioxide on Earth has led to a fairly stable climate, which has been the key in the development of complex life forms on our planet.

As a result of changes at its core, the Sun will continue to increase in luminosity as it grows older, and more and more radiation will reach Earth. For a while, the amount of carbon dioxide will continue to decrease.

Eventually, the heating of Earth will melt the polar ice caps and increase the evaporation of the oceans. About one billion years from now, Earth will lose its water vapor. In the upper atmosphere, sunlight will break down water vapor into hydrogen, and the fast-moving hydrogen atoms will escape into outer space. Earth will start to resemble the planet Venus of today, and temperatures will become much too high for life as we know it.

All of this will happen before the Sun even becomes a red giant. Then the really bad news starts. The Sun, as it expands, will swallow Mercury and Venus, and friction with our star's outer atmosphere will make these planets spin inward until they are completely destroyed. It is not completely clear whether Earth will escape a similar fate.

What, then, can we Earthlings do to preserve life on our planet?

One alternative may be to move the entire Earth progressively farther from the Sun. I know it sounds ridiculous, but we astronomers are fairly serious. The idea is to use gravity in the same way rockets have used it to send spacecrafts to distant planets. When a spacecraft flies near a planet, the planet's motion can be used to speed



Practice Test #10

For the TOEFL® Listening Section

up the spacecraft, slow it down, or redirect it. Calculations show that if we were to redirect an asteroid so that it follows just the right orbit between Earth and Jupiter, it could transfer orbital energy from Jupiter to Earth and move Earth slowly outward, pulling us away from the expanding Sun.

Now It may seem crazy to think about projects to move an entire planet to a different orbit but remember that we are talking about the distant future. If, by some miracle, human beings are able to get along for all that time and don't blow ourselves to bits, our technology is likely to be far more sophisticated than it is today. It may also be that if humans survive for hundreds of millions of years, we may spread to planets or habitats around other stars. Indeed, Earth, by then, might be a museum world to which youngsters from other planets return to learn about the origin of our species. It is also possible that evolution will, by then, have changed us in ways that allow us to survive in very different environments. The possibilities are endless.



References

Corbett, P.S., Janssen, V., Lund, J. M., Pfannestiel, T., Waskiewicz, S., & Vickery, P. (2014). The economics of cotton. In *US History*. Retrieved from:

<https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/12-1-the-economics-of-cotton>

Fraknoi, A., Morrison, D., & Wolff, S. C. (2016). Further evolution of stars. In *Astronomy*. Retrieved from:

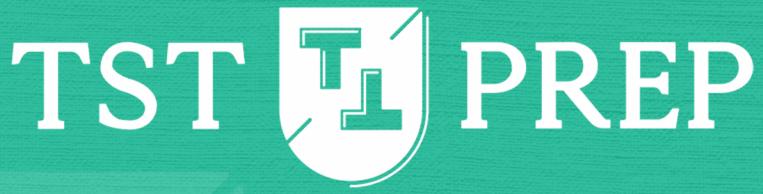
<https://openstax.org/books/astronomy/pages/22-4-further-evolution-of-stars>

OpenStax. (2018). Intertemporal choices in financial capital markets. In *Principles of Economics*.

Retrieved from:

<https://cnx.org/contents/aWGdK2jw@11.347:LNUY0ci8@15/Intertemporal-Choices-in-Financial-Capital-Markets>





Private Lessons for the TOEFL®

Get the help you deserve from
an experienced TOEFL® teacher.

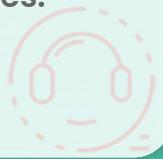
[Learn more](#)



Complete Practice Test Pack for the TOEFL®

10 complete practice tests for the
TOEFL® with answer keys, grading
rubrics and sample responses.

[Learn more](#)



Score Builder Program for the TOEFL®

All you need to take the TOEFL® with
confidence and get your best score!

[Learn more](#)



Emergency Course for the TOEFL®

Learn Everything you need to know
about the TOEFL® to achieve your
dream score.

[Learn more](#)



Get 10% off all lessons, classes, evaluations, tests, courses
and practice materials for the TOEFL® with the coupon code

tstprep10

www.tstprep.com

