
LISTENING COMPREHENSION

The first section of the TOEFL test is the Listening Comprehension section. This section consists of fifty questions (some tests may be longer). You will listen to recorded materials and respond to questions about the material. You must listen carefully, because you will hear the recording one time only, and the material on the recording is not written in your test book.

There are three parts in the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEFL test:

1. **Part A** consists of thirty short conversations, each followed by a question. You must choose the best answer to each question from the four choices in your test book.
2. **Part B** consists of two longer conversations, each followed by a number of questions. You must choose the best answer to each question from the four choices in your test book.
3. **Part C** consists of three talks, each followed by a number of questions. You must choose the best answer to each question from the four choices in your test book.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

1. **Be familiar with the directions.** The directions on every TOEFL test are the same, so it is not necessary to listen carefully to them each time. You should be completely familiar with the directions before the day of the test.
2. **Listen carefully to the conversations and talks.** You should concentrate fully on what the speakers are saying on the recording because you will hear the recording one time only.
3. **Know where the easier and more difficult questions are generally found.** Within each part of the Listening Comprehension section, the questions generally progress from easy to difficult.
4. **Never leave any questions blank on your answer sheet.** Even if you are unsure of the correct response, you should answer the question. There is no penalty for guessing.
5. **Use any remaining time to look ahead at the answers to the questions that follow.** When you finish with one question, you may have time to look ahead at the answers to the next question.

THE LISTENING PART A QUESTIONS

For each of the thirty questions in Part A of the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEFL test, you will hear a short conversation between two speakers followed by a question. The conversations and questions are not written in your test book. After you listen to the conversation and question, you must choose the best answer to the question from your test book.

Example

On the recording, you hear:

(man) *I need a car to drive to Arizona, and I don't have one.*

(woman) *Why not rent one?*

(narrator) *What does the woman suggest?*

In your test book, you read:

- (A) Getting a red car.
- (B) Renting an apartment in Arizona.
- (C) Not driving to Arizona.
- (D) Renting a car for the trip.

Answer (D) is the best answer to the question. *Why not rent one?* is a suggestion that he rent a car for his trip to Arizona.

STRATEGIES FOR THE LISTENING PART A QUESTIONS

1. As you listen to each short conversation, focus on the second line of the conversation. The answer to the question is generally found in the second line of the conversation.
2. Keep in mind that the correct answer is probably a restatement of a key word or idea in the second line of the conversation. Think of possible restatements of the second line of the conversation.
3. Keep in mind that certain structures and expressions are tested regularly in Listening Part A. Listen for these structures and expressions:
 - restatements
 - negatives
 - suggestions
 - passives
 - conclusions about *who* and *where*
 - expressions of agreement
4. Keep in mind that these questions generally progress from easy to difficult. This means that questions 1 through 5 will be the easiest questions and questions 26 through 30 will be the hardest questions.

5. Read the answers and choose the best answer to each question. Remember to answer each question even if you are not sure of the correct response. Never leave any answers blank.
6. Even if you do not understand the complete conversation, you can find the correct answer.
 - If you only understood a few words or ideas in the second line, choose the answer that contains a restatement of those words or ideas.
 - If you did not understand anything at all in the second line of the conversation, choose the answer that sounds the most different from what you heard.
 - Never choose an answer because it *sounds like* what you heard in the conversation.

The following skills will help you to implement these strategies in Part A of the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEFL test.

SKILL 1: RESTATEMENTS

Often the correct answer in Listening Part A is an answer that contains a restatement of the ideas in the second line of the conversation.

Example

On the recording, you hear:

(woman) *Steve, is something the matter? You don't look very good.*

(man) *Oh, I'm feeling a little sick today.*

(narrator) *What does the man mean?*

In your test book, you read:

- (A) He's not very good-looking.
- (B) He's a bit ill.
- (C) He looks worse than he feels.
- (D) His feet are a little thick.

In this conversation, *sick* means *ill*, and *a little* means *a bit*. The best answer to this question is therefore answer (B) because answer (B) restates the idea in the second line of the dialogue. Please note that answer (D) is definitely *not* a correct answer because it contains *feet* instead of *feel* and *thick* instead of *sick*. These words are similar in sound but not in meaning to the words that you hear on the recording.

The following chart outlines the most important strategy in Listening Part A.

THE BEST STRATEGY: CHOOSE ANSWERS WITH RESTATEMENTS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As you listen to the second line of the conversation, you should focus on the key idea(s) in that line. 2. If you see a restatement of the key idea(s) in a particular answer, then you have probably found the correct answer. 3. Do not choose answers with words that sound similar to the words on the recording.

NOTE: In Appendix A there are drills to practice distinguishing similar sounds. You may want to complete these practice drills before trying the following exercises.

EXERCISE 1: In this exercise, underline the key idea(s) in the second line of each short conversation. Then underline restatements of these key words in the answers, and choose the best answer to each question. Remember that the best answer is probably the answer that contains a restatement of the key idea(s) in the second line of the conversation.

- (woman) *What do you like about your new house?*

(man) *It's very close to a park.*

(narrator) *What does the man mean?*

(A) The house is closed up now.
(B) He parks his car close to his house.
(C) His home is near a park.
(D) He doesn't really like his new house.
- (man) *Mark said some really nice things to me.*

(woman) *He's very grateful for what you did.*

(narrator) *What does the woman say about Mark?*

(A) He did a great job.
(B) He bought a crate full of fruit.
(C) He made a great fool of himself.
(D) He's thankful.
- (woman) *Sam, you've been working at the computer for hours.*

(man) *Yes, and I need to take a break.*

(narrator) *What does the man mean?*

(A) The computer's broken.
(B) He needs to relax for a while.
(C) He should keep working.
(D) He's broke.

TOEFL EXERCISE 1: In this exercise, listen carefully to the short conversation and question on the recording, and then choose the best answer to the question. You should look for restatements of key ideas in the second line.



NOW BEGIN THE RECORDING AT TOEFL EXERCISE 1.

1. (A) The dance was fun.
(B) It was a good time to dance.
(C) She thinks the man is such a good dancer.
(D) Tonight is the last time to dance.
2. (A) She's quite thirsty.
(B) She'll be ready in a half hour.
(C) She needs to leave now.
(D) She was ready thirty minutes ago.
3. (A) The woman should teach the class herself.
(B) The woman should see a psychiatrist.
(C) It's a good idea to speak with the instructor.
(D) He would like to discuss psychology with the woman.
4. (A) She has a starring role.
(B) She has not found a job yet.
(C) She found the lost dog.
(D) She just began working.
5. (A) He shares everything he has.
(B) He has to find his lost shirt.
(C) He is climbing the stairs to the apartment.
(D) He has to get a roommate.
6. (A) His vacation is full of activities.
(B) In autumn he'll have a vacation.
(C) He can't have a vacation because he suffered a fall.
(D) He's foolish to take a vacation now.
7. (A) The book was very enjoyable.
(B) It was unpleasant to get rid of the bugs.
(C) She only reads when it is quiet.
(D) It is pleasant to ride a bike.
8. (A) He hasn't traveled much lately.
(B) There were a lot of cars on the road.
(C) He needs to lose weight.
(D) The tray was thick and heavy.
9. (A) He doesn't know how to play the game.
(B) He has to write a story for class.
(C) He needs to complete an assignment.
(D) He has already finished the report.
10. (A) He always minds his own business.
(B) He manages to avoid working.
(C) He is the manager of the department.
(D) He is the boss of his own company.

SKILL 2: NEGATIVES

Negative expressions are very common in Listening Part A. The most common kind of correct response to a negative statement is a positive statement containing a word with an opposite meaning.

Example

On the recording, you hear:

(woman) *Did you get a lot of work done at the library today?*

(man) *I couldn't. It wasn't very quiet there.*

(narrator) *What does the man mean?*

In your test book, you read:

(A) The library was noisy.

(B) He got a lot done.

(C) He couldn't quite get to the library today.

(D) The library's a good place to work because it's quiet.

The correct answer is answer (A). If it was *not quiet* in the library, this means that it was *noisy*. Notice that the correct answer uses *noisy*, the opposite of *quiet*.

The following chart shows how negatives can be tested on the TOEFL test.

NEGATIVE SENTENCES		
EXAMPLE	CORRECT ANSWER	NEGATIVE EXPRESSION
Tom is <i>not sad</i> about the results.	Tom is <i>happy</i> about the results.	<i>not sad = happy</i>
The door <i>isn't open</i> .	The door is <i>closed</i> .	<i>not open = closed</i>
Steve <i>did not pass</i> the class.	Steve <i>failed</i> the class.	<i>did not pass = failed</i>

EXERCISE 2: In this exercise, underline the negative expression in the second line of each short conversation. Then read the question, and choose the best answer to that question. Remember that the best answer is one that uses an opposite meaning.

- (woman) *You made so many mistakes in this homework.*

(man) *I wasn't very careful.*

(narrator) *What does the man mean?*

(A) He was rather careless.
 (B) He does not care about mistakes.
 (C) He took care of the work at home.
 (D) He did not carry the work home.

2. (man) *Is there a lot of soup? I'm kind of hungry.*
 (woman) *Sorry, there's not a lot.*
 (narrator) *What does the woman mean?*
- (A) There's not very much soup.
 (B) She doesn't like soup.
 (C) There's only a little soup.
 (D) The man should not be hungry.
3. (woman) *How was the weather on your trip?*
 (man) *There wasn't a cloud in the sky.*
 (narrator) *What does the man mean?*
- (A) It was cloudy.
 (B) He couldn't see the sky.
 (C) It wasn't very crowded.
 (D) There was a lot of sunshine.

TOEFL EXERCISE 2: In this exercise, listen carefully to the short conversation and question on the recording, and then choose the best answer to the question. You should pay particular attention to negative expressions.



NOW BEGIN THE RECORDING AT TOEFL EXERCISE 2.

1. (A) He was on time.
 (B) He's sorry he was late.
 (C) He doesn't know why he was late.
 (D) He hasn't come there lately.
2. (A) She's sorry she brought the book.
 (B) She remembered to say she was sorry.
 (C) She forgot the book.
 (D) She didn't remember the ring.
3. (A) The baby's nodding off.
 (B) The baby's asleep.
 (C) The baby's on the way home.
 (D) The baby's just waking up.
4. (A) He wants to go by himself.
 (B) He isn't going on the trip.
 (C) He has a large number of friends.
 (D) He isn't traveling alone.
5. (A) She does not have time to park the car.
 (B) She has some free time.
 (C) She has not been to the park in a while.
 (D) The park is too wild.
6. (A) He closed the windows.
 (B) It didn't rain.
 (C) The windows were open during the storm.
 (D) He saw the rain through the windows.
7. (A) She's certain the plant's alive.
 (B) She's not sure what happened to the plant.
 (C) She planned to throw it out.
 (D) She's sure the plant should be thrown out.
8. (A) The apple is good because it's sweet.
 (B) There is an apple in each suite.
 (C) The apple doesn't look good.
 (D) The apple is sour.
9. (A) It's cheap.
 (B) It costs a lot.
 (C) It has a few problems.
 (D) It's hard to find.
10. (A) She must leave the rock there.
 (B) She needs a big rock.
 (C) She should take the rock with her.
 (D) She should take a bigger rock.

TOEFL REVIEW EXERCISE (Skills 1–2): In this exercise, listen carefully to the short conversation and question on the recording, and then choose the best answer to the question.



NOW BEGIN THE RECORDING AT TOEFL REVIEW EXERCISE (SKILLS 1–2).

1. (A) She couldn't think of a single answer.
(B) The test was easy.
(C) It was impossible to think during the exam.
(D) It was too quiet.
2. (A) He will finish quickly.
(B) He works slowly.
(C) He isn't worried.
(D) He doesn't like to work.
3. (A) Her mother and father were hungry.
(B) She was angry at her parents.
(C) Her mother and father got home too late.
(D) Her parents were mad.
4. (A) He didn't get a car.
(B) The car he got wasn't real; it was a toy.
(C) He really wanted a car but couldn't get one.
(D) The car that he just bought is old.
5. (A) Take some seeds.
(B) Sit down.
(C) Make an appointment.
(D) Take some time.
6. (A) It was difficult to play because of the wind.
(B) He's unhappy because they lost.
(C) He doesn't like playing football in the winter.
(D) He's not very happy about the way they won.
7. (A) He paid the rent two days ago.
(B) The rent wasn't due the day before yesterday.
(C) One day earlier he'd rented an apartment.
(D) Yesterday he spent the whole day ranting.
8. (A) Barry's too old to enjoy camping.
(B) Not enough people are going camping.
(C) This weekend is not a good time for camping.
(D) Barry's too young to go camping.
9. (A) He has to water the lawn.
(B) He's sorry about having to move.
(C) He's washing his clothes.
(D) He can't move right now.
10. (A) He thinks the weather there is great.
(B) He prefers dry weather.
(C) The weather there is good for humans.
(D) He likes wet weather.

SKILL 3: SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions are common in Listening Part A, so you should become familiar with them. The following example shows an expression of a suggestion.