

The Complete Guide to the TOEFL® Test READING

BRUCE ROGERS

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The Complete Guide to the TOEFL® Test: READING, iBT Edition

BRUCE ROGERS

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Original ISBN 1-4240-0130-7.

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Printed in Singapore

5 6 7 8 9 10 — 12 11 10 09

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ISBN-13: 978-981-265-986-6
ISBN-10: 981-265-986-2

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انتشارات زبان ملل

نام کتاب: The complete guide to the TOEFL test reading

مؤلف: بروس راجرز

ناشر: انتشارات زبان، ملا

نوبت چاپ: اول

تیراژ: 2000 نسخه

لیتوگرافی: رضا

چاپ: غزال

صحافی: هدف نو

ناظر فنی چاپ: محمود ایومن

قیمت: 70000 ریال

آدرس: میدان انقلاب، خ اردیبهشت، ساختمان دانشجو، طبقه اول، واحد شمالی انتشارات زبان ملل

تلفن: 66965293 - 66965294 - 09121140644 تلفکس: 66978145

ارسال کتب و CD و نرم افزارهای آموزش زبان به تمام نقاط تهران و ایران در اسرع وقت

با شماره تلفن های 66965293 - 66965294

سرشناسه : راجرز، بروس، 1949 - م.

Rogers, Bruce

عنوان و نام پدید آور: The complete guide to the TOEFL test

reading : iBt edition / bruce Rogers

مشخصات نشر : تهران: زبان ملل، 1389 = 2010 م.

مشخصات ظاهری : 268 ص. : مصور

وضعیت فهرست نویسی : فیا

یادداشت : انگلیسی

آوا نویسی عنوان : کامپلیت گاید تو ...

موضوع : زبان انگلیسی - کتابهای درسی برای خارجیان

موضوع: : آزمون نال - راهنمای مطالعه

موضوع: : زبان انگلیسی - آزمون ها - راهنمای مطالعه

موضوع: : خواندن پیشرفته

رده بندی کنگره : 1389 224 ک 2 / PE 1128

رده بندی دیویی : 428/0076

شماره کتابشناسی ملی : 2049996

PREFACE

TO THE STUDENT

If you are preparing for the TOEFL® (Test of English as a Foreign Language) iBT, you are not alone. About a million people all over the world take the test every year. A high score on this test is an essential step in being admitted to undergraduate or graduate programs in the United States and Canada. But preparing for this test can be a difficult, frustrating experience. Perhaps you haven't taken many standardized tests such as the TOEFL test. Perhaps you're not familiar with the format, or you're not sure how to focus your studies. Maybe you've taken the test before but were not satisfied with your scores.

And now the TOEFL iBT (iBT = Internet-Based Test) is a much more communicative test. What new skills are required? What tactics are needed for top scores? How can you best practice for this version of the test?

You need a guide. That's why this book was written—to guide people preparing for this important test so that they can earn the highest scores possible.

The Complete Guide to the TOEFL® Test: READING, iBT Edition is the most complete, accurate, and up-to-date preparation book available. It is based on years of experience teaching preparation classes in the United States and abroad. It is simply written and clearly organized and is suitable for any intermediate to advanced English language student.

This book offers a step-by-step program designed to make you feel confident and well prepared when you sit down in front of the computer on the day of the test. It teaches you the test-taking techniques and helps you polish the language skills you need to do well on the test. And *The Guide* is an efficient way to prepare for the TOEFL iBT. By concentrating only on the points that are actually tested on the TOEFL test, it lets you make the most of your preparation time and never wastes your time.

ABOUT THIS EDITION: WHAT'S NEW?

This edition of *The Complete Guide to the TOEFL® Test: READING, iBT Edition*, like the TOEFL iBT itself, has been completely updated. It reflects the changes made in the format, the items, and the basic philosophy of the revised exam.

On the TOEFL iBT, the first section of the test, Reading, features longer readings and new question types. In the Guide to Reading, you'll work with extended readings similar to those on the test and learn about new item types. One new type of question, for example, asks you to complete an outline or summary of the reading. These questions require you to have a "global" (general) understanding of readings rather than an understanding of individual facts in the reading. There are questions that ask you *why* an author wrote some part of the passage or *how* the author communicates ideas. There are questions that ask you to recognize paraphrases of complex sentences. The Guide to Reading includes explanations and exercises that help you develop the skills you need to answer these new question types.

Another new feature of this textbook is the section containing Communicative Activities, which provides ideas for interactive activities that will further develop students' reading skills.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

Getting Started Two sections introduce you to the book and the test:

- ▶ **Question and Answers about the TOEFL® iBT** This section provides you with basic information about the design of the Internet-based test and helps you understand the revised scoring system.
- ▶ **Ten Keys to Better Scores on the TOEFL® iBT** This section presents the “secrets” of being a good test-taker: arranging your preparation time, using the process of elimination to make the best guess on multiple-choice items, coping with test anxiety, pacing yourself during the test, and other important techniques.

The Guide to Reading consists of the following:

- ▶ **An Introduction** which provides basic strategies for the Reading test.
- ▶ **A preview test** to give you a feel for each part of the test and to provide a basis for understanding the lessons.
- ▶ **Lessons** that break down the knowledge and skills that you need into comprehensible “bites” of information. Each of the eight lessons in The Guide to Reading covers one of the main types of questions that appear in the Reading Section of the TOEFL iBT and is designed to give you extensive practice reading passages and answering these questions. Each lesson contains sample items from the preview tests that illustrate exactly how the point brought up in that lesson is tested on the TOEFL iBT.
- ▶ **A review test** that goes over the points discussed in the lessons. These tests put together the points practiced in isolation in the lessons.
- ▶ **A tutorial** covering important testing points that require more time to master than points brought up in the lessons. The tutorial for this section helps you build your vocabulary.
- ▶ **Communicative activities** that are designed to encourage classroom communication.

Two Practice Reading Tests Taking practice tests is one of the best ways to get ready for the TOEFL® test. You can take these tests in the book or on the accompanying CD-ROM.

Answer Key and Audioscript Answers and explanations for questions and a script for the Audio Program are provided. This resource is also available online at elt.thomson.com/toefl.

TO THE TEACHER

The TOEFL iBT puts a lot of emphasis on communicative skills, and as much as you can, you should put the same emphasis on interaction in the classroom. In the past, a lot of TOEFL test preparation involved coaching students for the Structure Section of the test, but the TOEFL iBT does not directly test grammar. No matter which of the four parts of the test you are preparing for, be sure to have students work in pairs or small groups and encourage lively give-and-take discussion.

Students who feel perfectly comfortable taking long multiple-choice tests may feel more challenged by some of the communicative tasks they are given on this test. It is recommended that in every class you do some practice for the Speaking Tasks. You might, for example, begin with two or three students giving one-minute timed, impromptu talks. These can be "integrated" tasks based on summaries of newspaper articles or news stories from television or radio, or they can be "independent" tasks based on students' own experience. Make sure everyone gets a chance to talk, and get the rest of the class involved in asking the speaker questions about the presentations.

At least once a week it is useful to work on one or more of the Communicative Activities. These are designed to get students involved in talking and working together by playing games, having discussions, or working on projects.

A good way to begin the course is by taking one of the two practice reading tests. This familiarizes students with the test and shows them what to expect when they take the actual exam.

You can work through the lessons starting at the first lesson, or you can begin with the section in which your students seemed to have the most problems on the first practice reading test.

It is certainly important to give your students exposure to computers. However, the computer skills required to take the test are relatively basic and the focus should be on applying language skills and using test-taking strategies, not developing computer proficiency.

Following are the amounts of time suggested to cover each section of *The Guide*. These times are approximate and will vary from class to class.

Getting Started	1 to 2 hours
Guide to Reading	20 to 24 hours
Practice Reading Tests	1 to 2 hours per test section

What if you don't have time to cover everything in *The Guide*? Don't worry! *The Complete Guide to the TOEFL® Test: READING, iBT Edition* was designed so that you can skip parts of the exercises and lessons and still improve your students' scores.

I welcome your thoughts, comments, questions, and suggestions. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail: Bruce_Rogers_CGT@mail.com



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bruce Rogers has taught test preparation and English as a Second/Foreign Language courses since 1979. He has taught in the United States, Indonesia, Vietnam, Korea, and the Czech Republic. He is also the author of Thomson's *The Complete Guide to the TOEIC® Test* and *The Introductory Guide to the TOEIC® Test*. He lives in Boulder, Colorado, USA.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all of the English-language professionals who provided their comments and suggestions during the development of *The Complete Guide to the TOEFL® Test: READING, iBT Edition* as well as earlier editions.

Thanks to the students of Front Range Community College and Cambridge Center for Adult Education who allowed me to use their writing and speaking samples and to the professors at the University of Colorado who allowed me to sit in on their lectures. Thanks to Kevin Keating, University of Arizona, for suggesting some of the Communication Activities.

Special thanks to Jody Stern, Charlotte Sturdy, Linda Grant, Chrystie Hopkins, Merrill Peterson, Jennifer Meldrum, and Anita Raducanu for their expert help and advice.

Thomson ELT would like to thank the following reviewers for their contributions.

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Arlington, TX

Consuelo Fernandes Barbosa Ivo

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Valéria Benévolo França

Cultura Inglesa Rio Brasília
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Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey
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Colegio Patria de Juarez
Mexico City, Mexico

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EG Language School
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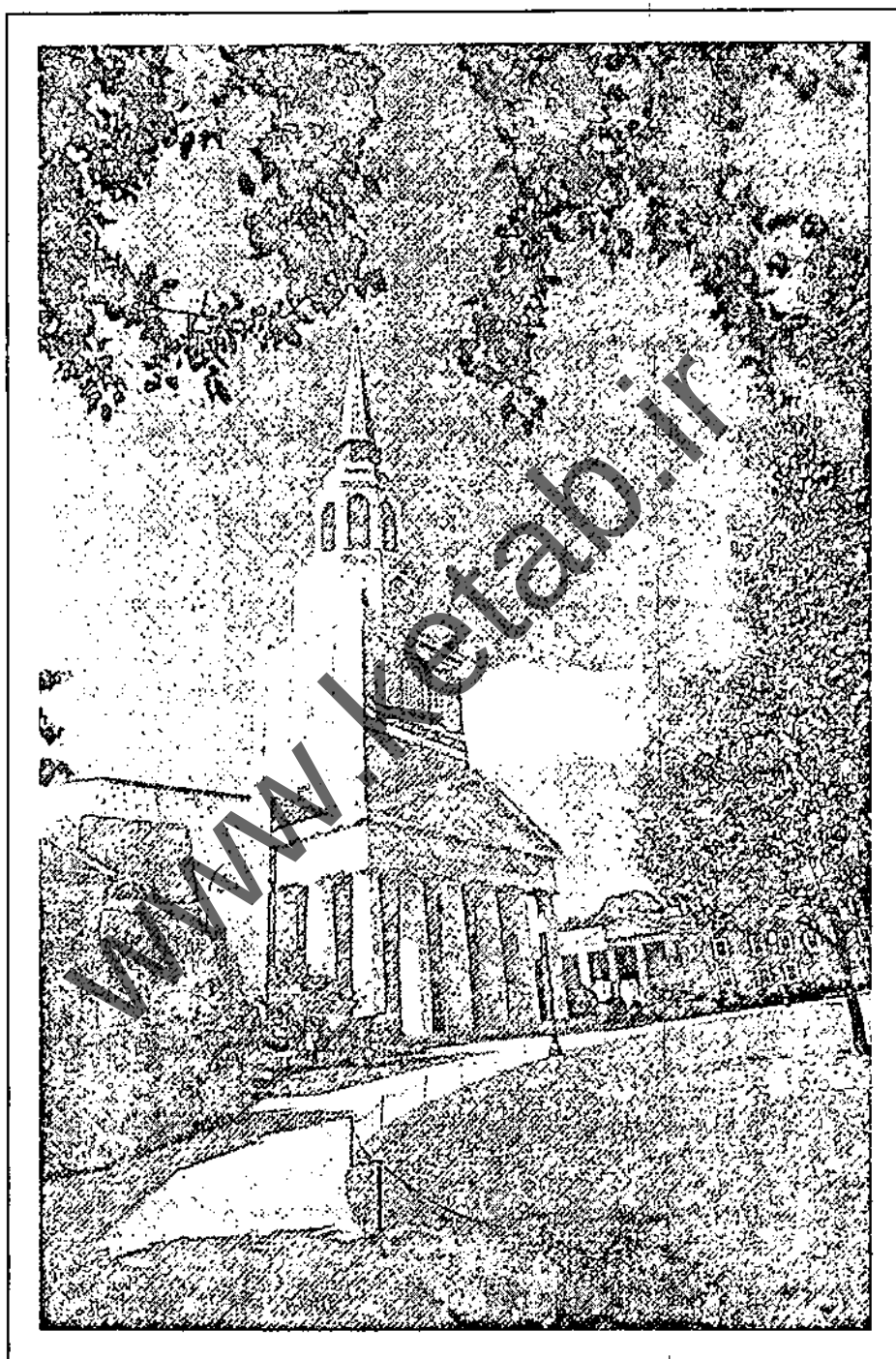
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GETTING STARTED



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE TOEFL® iBT

Q: What is the TOEFL Test?

A: TOEFL stands for *Test of English as a Foreign Language*. It is a test designed to measure the English-language ability of people who do not speak English as their first language and who plan to study at colleges and universities in North America.

Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, prepares and administers the TOEFL test. This organization produces many other standardized tests, such as the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT), and the Graduate Record Exam (GRE).

Although there are other standardized tests of English, the TOEFL test is by far the most important in North America; ETS has offered this exam since 1965. Each year, almost a million people take the TOEFL test at testing centers all over the world. About 5,000 colleges, universities, and other institutions in the United States and Canada either require students from non-English-speaking countries to supply TOEFL test scores as part of their application process or accept TOEFL test scores as evidence of a person's proficiency in English.

Q: And what is the TOEFL iBT?

A: For more than thirty years, the TOEFL test was given as a paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice test. In 1998, a computer-based version of the test became available in many parts of the world. The newest generation of the test, the TOEFL iBT (Internet-based test), was introduced during the 2005–2006 academic year.

As the name implies, the test is delivered over the Internet. Test-takers work on the tests at individual computer stations at official testing centers. The test is offered only on scheduled testing dates.

The TOEFL iBT is significantly different from the computer-based version of the test.

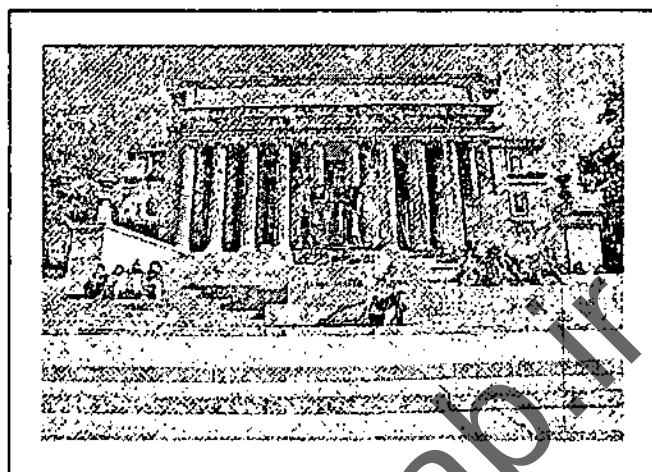
Q: Different? How is the TOEFL iBT different?

A: For one thing, the basic way in which the TOEFL iBT tests English is different. The new test emphasizes a test-taker's ability to *communicate* in an academic setting. For that reason, a Speaking Section has been added and the Writing Section has been expanded.

Specifically, the TOEFL iBT differs from the previous version in the following ways:

- ▶ There is a new Speaking Section that tests your ability to communicate orally. You record responses that are scored by raters at ETS.
- ▶ You are allowed to take notes during all parts of the test.
- ▶ There are “integrated” tasks that require you to combine your speaking and writing skills with your reading and listening skills.
- ▶ Grammar skills are tested indirectly, especially in the Speaking and Writing Sections. There is no separate grammar section.
- ▶ There are some new types of questions in Reading and Listening.
- ▶ The lectures and conversations that you hear on the audio portions of the test are “authentic English.” In other words, the language that you hear is more natural, more like the language used in the “real world.” It contains the pauses, repetitions, self-corrections, and “umms” and “uhs” that you would expect to hear in a real lecture or conversation.

- The test is *not* “computer adaptive” (unlike the previous computer-based version). In other words, if you answer a question correctly, the next item is not more difficult, and if you answer a question incorrectly, the next question is not easier. All test-takers see the same question during each administration of the test.
- There is a new scoring system.



Q: Why did the test change?

A: One reason is that, over the last thirty years, most language teachers have changed the way they teach. The emphasis is no longer on analyzing and learning individual grammar points or memorizing vocabulary. The emphasis is on communicating in the target language in a meaningful way. That's why the new version of the TOEFL test measures your ability to communicate orally and in writing.

Another reason for the changes is that university admissions officers wanted more information about incoming students. Can they read and understand materials in textbooks? Understand and take notes on lectures? Hold conversations with teachers, administrators, and other students? Write papers involving a number of sources? The new test indicates whether candidates have these skills.

Q: Is the TOEFL iBT more difficult than previous versions?

A: The Reading and Listening Sections and the Independent Writing Task have changed only a little, and you will probably not find them more difficult than similar sections in earlier versions of the test. However, the Integrated Writing Task and the Speaking Section may seem challenging because you do not have much experience with this kind of task. With the practice that you get in *The Complete Guide to the TOEFL, iBT Edition*, you should feel much more comfortable and confident when you actually take the test.

Q: What format does TOEFL iBT follow? How long does it take to complete?

A: The Internet-based test is divided into four sections: Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing, each with its own time limit. The four sections are always given in the same order. The first two sections, Reading and Listening, are mostly multiple-choice questions, while the Speaking Section requires you to give short oral presentations and the Writing Section requires you to write short essays.

The entire test takes from three and a half to four hours.

TOEFL® iBT Format**1. Reading**

3 readings (about 600 to 700 words per reading)

39 questions (12 to 14 per reading; mainly multiple-choice)

60 minutes**2. Listening**

2 conversations

4 lectures/discussions

34 questions (5 per conversation, 6 per lecture; mainly multiple-choice)

About 50 minutes**Mandatory break: 10 minutes****3. Speaking**

2 Independent Tasks (based on your own knowledge and experience)

4 Integrated Tasks (based on short readings and/or lectures)

About 20 minutes**4. Writing**

1 Independent Task (based on your own knowledge and experience)

1 Integrated Task (based on a short reading and a lecture)

50 minutes**Total time: 3-1/2 to 4 hours**

The actual numbers in the chart above may vary from test to test. In the Reading Section, there may be four or five readings and from 36–70 questions. The Reading Section may vary in length from 60 to 100 minutes. In the Listening Section, there may be additional conversations or lectures and from 34–50 questions. The Listening Section may last from about 50 minutes to about 90 minutes.

Q: How does the scoring system for the TOEFL iBT work?

A: You will receive a Section Score for each of the four skill areas and a Total Score.

Reading	0 to 30
Listening	0 to 30
Speaking	0 to 30
Writing	<u>0 to 30</u>
Total Score	0 to 120

In addition to the numerical score, ETS will send a score “descriptor,” a short written description of what English-language skills a typical person at your score level has or does not have.

In the following chart, you can compare total scores on the TOEFL iBT with scores that are approximately equivalent to scores on the computer-based test (TOEFL CBT) and the paper-based test (TOEFL PBT).

Total Score		
TOEFL® iBT	TOEFL® CBT	TOEFL® PBT
120	300	677
115	280	650
110	270	637
105	260	620
100	250	600
95	240	587
90	230	570
85	223	563
80	213	550
75	203	537
70	193	523
65	183	513
60	170	497
55	157	480
50	143	463
45	133	450
40	120	433
35	107	417
30	93	397
25	80	377
20	63	350
15	50	327
10	37	317
5	20	310
0	0	310

Q: What is a passing score on the TOEFL test?

A: There isn't any. Each university—and in some cases, each school or department—has its own standards for admission, so you should check the requirements for the universities that you are interested in. (These are generally available online.) Most undergraduate programs require scores between 65 and 80, and most graduate programs ask for scores between 70 and 100. In recent years, there has been a tendency for universities to raise their minimum TOEFL test requirements. Of course, the higher your score, the better your chances of admission.

Q: How and when will I receive my test scores?

A: You can obtain your scores online about fifteen business days after you take the test. You will also receive a written notification of your scores by mail shortly after that. The admissions offices of universities that you designate can also receive your scores online or by mail.

Q: How do I register for the TOEFL iBT?

A: You can register online at <http://www.toefl.org>. You may also register by phone or by mail.

Q: What computer skills do I need to take the TOEFL iBT?

A: The computer skills required are very basic ones. You really only need to know how to point to items on the screen and click on your choice with a mouse, as well as how to scroll up and down through a document. For writing, you also need basic word-processing skills.

Q: What do I do if I need help?

A: There is a Help button on the task bar for each section, but this button will only give you the directions for that part of the test. It will not give you any hints to help you answer questions or solve any technical problems. Clicking on Help is basically a waste of your time.

If you have a problem with your computer or need some other kind of help, raise your hand and a test administrator will come to you.

Q: Where is the TOEFL iBT given?

A: It is administered at a network of testing centers that include universities, bi-national institutes, and ETS field offices all over the world. When you register for the test, you will be assigned the closest test center. Most test centers will offer the TOEFL iBT thirty to forty times a year, depending on the size of the center.

On a given day, ETS will give a different version of each TOEFL test in each of the twenty-four time zones of the world. This prevents a person who takes the test in one time zone from giving information about the test to people in other time zones.

Q: Can I choose whether to take the TOEFL iBT or earlier versions of the test?

A: No. Once the Internet-based test has been phased in, you will no longer have the option of taking the computer-based or the paper-based test.

Q: How much will the Internet-based test cost?

A: The TOEFL iBT will initially cost US\$140.00.

Q: What should I bring with me to the exam site?

A: You should bring your passport or other ID with you. You will have to check all other personal materials before you enter the testing room.

Don't bring any reference books, such as dictionaries or textbooks, or any electronic devices, such as translators, cellular phones, or calculators. You are not permitted to smoke, eat, or drink in the test center. You do not have to bring pencils or paper. (You will get a pen and a booklet of blank paper for note taking.)

Q: How can I get more information about the TOEFL test?

A: You can contact ETS via e-mail or get updated information about the test from the ETS TOEFL iBT home page: <http://www.tocfl.org>.

TEN KEYS TO BETTER SCORES ON THE TOEFL® iBT

➤ #1: INCREASE YOUR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH.

There are two types of knowledge that will lead to better scores on the TOEFL iBT:

- ▶ A knowledge of the tactics and techniques used by smart test-takers
- ▶ A general command of English

Following a step-by-step preparation program for the TOEFL iBT such as the one in *The Guide* will familiarize you with the test itself and with the tactics you need to raise your scores. The practice tests that are part of this program will help you polish your test-taking techniques.

But no matter how many test-taking tips you learn, you won't do well without a solid foundation of English-language study. The best way to increase your general knowledge of English is to use English as much as possible.

If you have the opportunity, taking English-language classes is an invaluable way to prepare for the test. In the past, students would sometimes say, "I can't go to English class today; I have to prepare for the TOEFL test!" This is no longer a good excuse. The TOEFL iBT tests a greater range of English-language skills, and any English class you take will help you prepare for the test. General English classes are now a form of TOEFL test preparation, and TOEFL test preparation classes will now teach more general English.

Conversation classes and presentation-skills classes will help you prepare for the Speaking Section of the test. Of course, reading classes can help you prepare for the Reading Section, listening classes for the Listening Section, and writing (composition) classes for the Writing Section. Although there is no special grammar section on the TOEFL iBT, structure (grammar) classes will be useful for both Writing and Speaking. Academic skills classes can help you with note taking, reading and writing tips, and test-taking skills.

Non-language classes taught in English (business or biology, for example) are also a useful way to improve all of your skills. The TOEFL iBT was designed, after all, to measure your ability to do well in this type of class.

You can also improve your English outside of the classroom. Reading English-language books, magazines, and newspapers can improve your reading skills and build your vocabulary. So can visits to English-language Web sites. Going to lectures and movies, watching TV, and listening to news on the radio are ways to improve your listening skills. If you are living in an English-speaking country, take advantage of this fact and talk to the people around you as much and as often as you can. If possible, join a "conversation partners" program. If you are living in a non-English-speaking country, try to find people—native or non-native speakers—that you can have conversations with.

One important job is to systematically build your vocabulary. An improved vocabulary will help you on every section of the test. You should keep a personal vocabulary list in a notebook, on index cards, or on a computer. When you come across an unfamiliar word, look it up and record the word and its definition.

#2: LEARN AS MUCH ABOUT THE TEST AS POSSIBLE.

It's important to have up-to-date information about the test. ETS has said there may be minor changes in the format of the Internet-based test in the future.

You can get a lot of information about the test from the *TOEFL® Information Bulletin* for the current testing year. You can download it from the TOEFL Web site (www.ets.org/toefl). Paper versions of the bulletin are available at many language schools or international student offices.

There is a lot of other information and practice available on the TOEFL® Web site. You can join the "TOEFL® Practice Online Community" (for free) to get the latest information about the test and to take an official practice test and get daily study tips. There is also a discussion board on which you can read messages from other people who are preparing for the test and you can post your own questions and tips.

#3: MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR PREPARATION TIME.

You need to train for the TOEFL test just as you would train for any important competitive event. Naturally, the sooner you begin training, the better, but no matter when you begin, you need to get the most out of your preparation time.

One good way to organize your preparation time is to make a time management chart. Draw up an hour-by-hour schedule of your activities. Block out those times when you are busy with classes, work, or other responsibilities. Then pencil in times for TOEFL test preparation. You'll remember more if you schedule a few hours every day or several times weekly than if you schedule all your study time for long blocks on weekends.

One good method of studying for the TOEFL test (or almost anything!) is the "30-5-5" Method:

- ▶ Study for thirty minutes.
- ▶ Take a five-minute break.
- ▶ When you return, spend five minutes reviewing what you studied before and previewing what you will study next.

#4: BE IN GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION WHEN YOU TAKE THE TEST.

Of course, you should eat healthful foods and get some exercise during the time you are preparing for the test. The most important concern, however, is that you not become exhausted during your preparation time. If you aren't getting enough sleep, you need to reduce your study time or cut back on some other activity. This is especially important during the last few days before the exam.

#5: GET SOME COMPUTER PRACTICE.

If possible, take at least one of the practice tests on the enclosed CD-ROM. These tests closely simulate the actual test. Also, try to take the test that is available on the ETS Web site.

The computer skills that you need for the Reading and the Listening Sections are very basic: scrolling, pointing, and clicking.

The most difficult skill is the ability to word-process (type) your two essays for the Writing Section. If you are not accustomed to working on an English-language keyboard, you should get as much typing practice as possible to improve your speed and accuracy.

You also will have to record your responses for the six Speaking Tasks by talking into a microphone. Talking into a computer microphone may be a new experience for you. Get as much practice doing this as possible.

#6: BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE FORMAT AND DIRECTIONS.

You should have a clear “map” of the TOEFL iBT in your mind and know what is coming next. You can familiarize yourself with the basic design of the test by looking over the chart in the Questions and Answers section (p. xiv) and by taking practice tests.

The directions for each part of the test will always be the same, and so will the examples. If you are familiar with the directions from using this book, you can immediately click on the Dismiss Directions button and save yourself a little time during the test.

#7: ORGANIZE THE LAST FEW DAYS BEFORE THE EXAM CAREFULLY.

Don't try to “cram” (study intensively) during the last few days before you take the test. Last-minute studying probably won't help your score and will leave you tired. You need to be alert for the test. The night before the test, don't study at all. Find your passport and other documents you will need. Then go to a movie, take a long walk, or do something else to take your mind off the test. Go to sleep when you usually do.

On the day of the test, wear comfortable clothing because you will be sitting in the same position for a long time. If you are testing in the morning, have breakfast before the test. If other people from your class or study group are taking the test on the same day, you can have breakfast together and give one another some last-minute encouragement. Give yourself plenty of time to get to the testing center. If you have to rush, that will only add to your stress.

#8: USE TIME WISELY DURING THE TEST.

In the Reading and Listening Sections, there is no time limit on individual items. However, there are time limits for the sections (60 to 100 minutes for Reading and about 50 to 90 minutes for Listening). These time limits are fairly generous, but you still need to be careful to give yourself a chance to answer all the questions. You need to find a balance between speed and accuracy. Work steadily. Never let yourself get stuck on an item. If you are unable to decide on an answer, guess and go on.

In the Speaking and Writing Sections, there are time limits for each of the tasks. You need to practice these tasks so that you can complete your responses in the amount of time you are given.

For all four parts of the test, the most important timing tools you have are the on-screen clocks. Glance at these now and then to see how much time you have left. However, don't become obsessed with checking the clock.

#9: FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS, USE THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION TO MAKE YOUR BEST GUESS.

Unlike some standardized exams, the TOEFL iBT doesn't have a penalty for guessing on the multiple-choice sections (Reading and Listening). In other words, incorrect answers aren't subtracted from your scores. Even if you have no idea which answer is correct, you should guess because you have a one-in-four chance of guessing correctly. However, whenever possible, try to avoid guessing blindly. It's better to make an educated guess. To do this, use the process of elimination.

The process of elimination is a simple concept. For each multiple-choice question, there is one correct answer (or two on some Listening items). There are also a number of incorrect answers, called *distracters*. They are called distracters because their purpose is to distract your attention from the correct answer. You need to try to eliminate distracters. If you can eliminate one, your chances of guessing correctly are one in three, and if you can eliminate two, your chances improve to one in two. (And if you can eliminate three, you've got the correct answer!) Often, one or even two distracters are fairly easy to eliminate.

What if you eliminate one or two choices but can't decide which of the remaining choices is correct? If you have a hunch (a feeling) that one choice is better than the others, choose it. If not, pick any remaining choice and go on.

Remember, in the Reading and Listening sections, you should *never* leave any items unanswered. *Always* guess. (The Reading Section has a Review Feature that lets you check very quickly what items you left unanswered. You should use this feature just before the end of the Reading Section.

 #10: LEARN TO FIGHT TEST ANXIETY.

The TOEFL iBT and similar tests (such as SAT, ACT, GRE, and GMAT) are often called “high-stakes tests.” This means that a lot depends on these tests. They can have a major influence on your plans for your education and career. A little nervousness is normal. If you were going to participate in a big athletic contest or give an important business presentation, you would feel the same way.

There is an idiom in English that describes this nervous feeling quite well: “butterflies in the stomach.” These “butterflies” will mostly fly away once the test starts. And a little nervousness can actually help by making you more alert and focused. However, too much nervousness can slow you down and cause you to make mistakes.

If you begin to feel extremely anxious during the test, try taking a very short break—a “ten-second vacation.” Close your eyes or look away from the monitor, take your hand off the mouse, and lean back in your chair. Take a few deep breaths, shake out your hands, roll your head on your neck, and relax. Then get right back to work. (Don’t use this technique while you are listening to a lecture or giving a speaking response.)

A positive, confident attitude toward the exam can help you overcome anxiety. Think of the TOEFL test not as a test of your knowledge or of you as a person but as an intellectual challenge, a puzzle to be solved.