

## **TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language**

### ***General Information***

Test of English as a Foreign Language, or TOEFL, evaluates the potential success of an individual to use and understand Standard American English at a college level. A TOEFL score is valid for two years and then is deleted from the official database.

The TOEFL is the most widely used standardized test to measure a prospective student's English ability. Most American universities require international students for both undergraduate and graduate programs to take the TOEFL. Universities in other countries will generally accept either TOEFL or IELTS scores.

The TOEFL test is a registered trademark of Educational Testing Service (ETS) and is administered worldwide. The test was first administered 1964 and has since been taken by nearly 20 million students.

### ***Description of the Test***

There are two formats for the exam: Internet- and Paper-based. In Yangon, you will probably need to take the paper-based format.

#### ***Internet-based***

Since its introduction in late 2005, the Internet-based test (iBT) has progressively replaced both the computer-based (CBT) and paper-based (PBT) tests. The iBT has been introduced in phases, with the United States, Canada, France, Germany, and Italy in 2005 and the rest of the world in 2006, with test centers added regularly. The demand for test seats remains very high even after almost a year after the introduction of the test: Candidates have to wait for months since short-term test dates are fully booked. The four-hour test consists of four sections, each measuring mainly one of the basic language skills (although some tasks may require multiple skills) and focusing on language used in an academic, higher-education environment. Note-taking is allowed during the iBT.

- **Reading:** After each academic reading passage (out of 3–5), questions are posed about content, intent of the author, and ideas inferred from the passage. New types of questions in the iBT require paraphrasing, filling out tables, or completing summaries. Generally prior knowledge of the subject under discussion is not necessary to come to the correct answer, though a priori knowledge may help.
- **Listening:** Questions refer to the content and intent of the phrases, as well as to the speakers' attitude and meaning, either in short conversations or in lectures.
- **Speaking:** New to the iBT, this section contains questions relating to personal experiences or preferences, as well as tasks that also involve reading passages and listening to short

conversations and lectures. Test takers are expected to convey information, explain ideas, and defend opinions clearly, coherently, and accurately.

- **Writing:** One task requires test takers to defend a position relative to a specified general topic. In the other task, a reading passage and a lecture are presented, and test takers must answer a question relating the main points of both the passage and the lecture.

### *Paper-based*

In areas where the iBT is not available, a paper-based test (PBT) is given. The PBT tests essentially the same skills as the old computer-based test, albeit with some differences, noticeably the number of questions (which is higher in the PBT) and the score scales.

### **Scoring**

*Internet-based:* Each of the four sections of the TOEFL test – reading, writing, listening and speaking – is scored on a scale of 0 – 30. You receive a score for each section of the test as well as an overall score, which is the total of the section scores added together. The highest overall score you can get on the TOEFL iBT is 120. Different universities accept various minimum scores for admission purposes. In addition, universities may ask for a minimum score in a particular section of the test, based on the academic program you are applying for. Usually, your TOEFL score is posted on the TOEFL iBT online registration system 15 days after the date of the test. It is then mailed to you and to those score recipients that you have designated in advance. If you need additional official score reports to be sent, other than those you identified when you registered, you may request this be done for an additional fee. TOEFL iBT scores are generally valid for a period of up to 2 years after the exam.

*Paper-based:* The final PBT score ranges between 310 and 677 and is based on three subscores: Listening (31–68), Structure (31–68), and Reading (31–67). Unlike the CBT, the score of the Writing section (referred to as the Test of Written English, TWE) is not part of the final score; instead, it is reported separately on a scale of 0–6. The score scales for the paper-based TOEFL range from 310 to 677. Most U.S. schools only consider students with scores of 550 or sometimes higher. A few schools will accept slightly lower scores. The equivalent of 550 on the computer-based test is 213.

### **Test Fee and Registration**

If you register after 'early registration' period, you pay \$25US extra.

The TOEFL Internet-based test fee is \$150 in the United States. This fee varies in other countries.

Australia: \$165US

Malaysia: \$150US

Myanmar: \$140US

Singapore: \$150US

Thailand: \$140US

This fee includes the test administration, one score record for you, and 4 score reports that will be sent to the institutions of your choice (you must designate these institutes when you register).

*Online: For the fastest and most convenient service, register online:*

<https://toefl-registration.ets.org/TOEFLWeb/extISERLogonPrompt.do>

- A valid credit card is required (American Express®, Discover®, JCB®, MasterCard®, or Visa® card), or an electronic check (e-check) if you have a bank account in the United States or its territories.
- Registration is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Early registration closes seven days prior to the test date (not including the day of the test).
- Late registration closes three days prior to the test date (not including the day of the test).
- Registrations received after the early registration deadline incur a late fee of US\$25.

*By Phone*

- A valid credit card is required (American Express®, Discover®, JCB®, MasterCard®, or Visa® card), or an electronic check (e-check) if you have a bank account in the United States or its territories.
- Early registration closes seven days prior to the test date (not including the day of the test).
- Late registration closes three days prior to the test date (not including the day of the test).
- Registrations received after the early registration deadline incur a late fee of US\$25.
- Review the TOEFL® iBT Registration Form (PDF) for the information you will be asked to provide when you call.

*Testing Location and Phone*

United States, Canada, or U.S. Territories\* 1-443-751-4862 or 1-800-GO-TOEFL (1-800-468-6335)

Outside the United States, Canada, or U.S. Territories\* Call your Regional Registration Center (PDF)

If you live outside the U.S. and want to test in the United States 1-443-751-4862

When registering by phone, you are given a:

- registration number, which you must bring to the test center on test day
- test date
- reporting time
- test center address

### *Limits on Repeating the iBT*

You may take the TOEFL iBT test only once in any seven-day period, even if you took the test and canceled your scores. If you test more than once in a seven-day period, your new scores will not be reported and your test fee will not be refunded. Violation of this policy may result in additional action being taken. This policy is effective as of August 1, 2006.

### ***List of Regional Registration Centers in Asia***

#### *Bangladesh*

To Register:

REGION 6 - ASIA

CALL: 60-3-467-8610 (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

FAX: 60-3-467-8606

Test Center: Dhaka

Test Center Number: 8815

Tests Offered: GMAT, GRE, TOEFT

Permanent Center

#### *India*

To Register:

REGION 14 - INDIA

CALL: 91-11-651-1649 (New Delhi, India)

FAX: 91-11-652-9741

Test Center: Calcutta

Test Center Number: 8906

Tests Offered: GMAT, GRE, TOEFL

Permanent Center

Test Center: New Delhi

Test Center Number: 8913

Tests Offered: GMAT, GRE, TOEFL

Permanent Center

#### *Singapore*

To Register:

REGION 6 - ASIA

CALL: 60-3-467-8610 (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

FAX: 60-3-467-8606

Test Center: Singapore

Test Center Number: 8855  
Tests Offered: GMAT, GRE, TOEFL  
Permanent Center

### *Thailand*

To Register:  
Region 11 - Thailand  
CALL: 66-2-639-2703 (Bangkok, Thailand)  
FAX: 66-2-639-2706

Test Center: Bangkok

Test Center Number: 8461  
Tests Offered: GMAT, GRE, TOEFL  
Permanent Center

Test Center: Bangkok Pathumwan  
Test Center Number: 8481  
Tests Offered: GMAT, GRE, TOEFL  
Permanent Center

Test Center: Chiang Mai

Test Center Number: 8462  
Tests Offered: GMAT, GRE, TOEFL  
Permanent Center

*In Thailand, you can also obtain more information at:*  
The Institute of International Education  
G.P.O. Box 2050  
Bangkok 10501  
Telephone: 66-2-639-2700

### ***How to Prepare***

The best way to prepare for the exam is to find out information about the exam such as:

- Ask the test center if they have any preparation materials, like books or CDs you can borrow.
- Find out what the the sections on the exam are?
- What is the style of the exam: essay, multiple choice, short answer, true/false, etc?
- How long is the exam?
- Take a preparation course before the exam
- Take practice exams
- Look for information on their website

*Study Plans:*

To score highly in the TOEFL exam, it is best to develop a systematic study plan. Guidebooks such as Barron's provide sample syllabus or study options you can follow. Their standard syllabus covers 80 hours in 16 weeks and their accelerated syllabus covers 80 hours in 8 weeks. They also provide an abbreviated syllabus for those who have limited time. Delta's Guidebook offers a 75-hour / 15-week preparation program.

### *Comprehensive Preparation:*

Most important, give yourself sufficient time to develop the various English language skills, mentioned above. The TOEFL iBT is a demanding exam, and you need time to prepare yourself for it. Stay calm. Don't be in a rush. Start studying well in advance. Immerse yourself in English, and consider studying at an ESL school or exam prep centre in an English speaking country, if possible. Refer to a variety of TOEFL guidebooks, attend TOEFL exam preparation classes and successfully complete a number of practice tests. Finally, evaluate your strengths and weaknesses realistically, review as much as necessary, and take the test only when you feel you're confident and ready.

### *TOEFL Reading Skills:*

Reading is the first section of the TOEFL iBT. It includes 3 to 5 reading passages (about 700 words long) and 12-14 questions following each passage. You are given 60 -100 minutes to answer all the questions in the entire section.

Do not be frightened if the subject of the reading passage is unfamiliar to you. All of the information you need to choose the right answer is given. In addition, you will find the definition to some of the technical terms in the glossary that is available during the test.

Skim through the passage to get the main idea and organization of ideas in the passage. Since you can reread the text while answering the questions, it's not necessary to read the passage in depth. This technique will enable you to devote more time to the question and answer choices. Nevertheless, if you're running out of time, guess at an answer as it can only increase your score. There is no penalty for incorrect answers.

### *Question Types:*

There are 10-12 different types of multiple choice TOEFL iBT reading questions. The way to get a high score is to become familiar with all types of questions. This will help you to narrow down the options and select the right answer.

TOEFL iBT reading questions fall into three categories: basic information, inferencing skills and reading to learn skills. These questions can be of different kinds:

- understanding facts and details
- identifying negative facts

- locating referents
- understanding vocabulary in context
- making inferences
- determining purpose
- paraphrasing
- understanding coherence
- identifying main ideas
- following logic
- summarizing important points

Each of the major TOEFL iBT guidebooks, such as ETS, Delta, Barron's, Longman, Kaplan, and Cambridge, provide you with lots of guidelines and practice in answering each of these questions. While completing their practice exercises and tests, it's helpful to keep track of the type of questions you usually get wrong, so you can identify what you need to work on.

#### *More Reading Tips:*

Learning and practicing certain reading and academic strategies can help you succeed on the TOEFL and after the TOEFL. While preparing for the test, read on a variety of topics to expand your vocabulary. You can read from textbooks, newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals and websites. Guess at the meaning of unfamiliar words and try to grasp the main idea even when you don't know the meaning of each word. Other skills worth developing include: pre-viewing, reading faster, using context, making inferences, skimming, scanning, making connections, summarizing, taking notes and synthesizing. Improving each of these sub-skills will enable you to get a higher overall score in the reading section.

#### *TOEFL Listening Skills:*

The Listening section of the TOEFL, which lasts about 40-60 minutes, measures your ability to understand the English spoken in academic settings in North America. There are 6-9 listening tasks, which include the following:

- A minimum of 2 questions between two people - such as two students or a student and a professor, a librarian, a counsellor, etc; followed by questions
- A minimum of 2 lectures, followed by questions
- A minimum of 2 lectures, with student comments and questions interspersed, followed by questions

You will need headphones for this portion of the test. You can adjust the volume during the test. You may also take notes at any time and use your notes to help you answer the questions. Your notes will be destroyed before you leave the exam hall. Each question in the listening section must be answered before

you can go on to the next question. You are not permitted to go back to previous questions once you have left a question.

### *Types of Listening Questions:*

TOEFL iBT listening questions fall into three different categories:

- basic comprehension questions
- pragmatic understanding questions
- connecting information question

There are 6-7 different types of questions, as shown below:

- identifying the main idea
- determining the purpose
- understanding detail
- determining attitude
- understanding implication
- making inferences
- connecting content

### *Listening Topics:*

Most of the academic lectures featured in the TOEFL listening section are at a first-year university level. Though the topics can cover a wide range of subjects, they typically fall into four major categories: arts, life science, physical science, and social science. Arts lectures may include architecture, music, literature, photography, urban planning, crafts, and industrial design. Life science could include public health, animal communication, conservation biochemistry, medicine, bacteria, nutrition, and animal behaviour. Physical science could include climate, geography, landforms, environment, pollution, astronomy, optics, physics, technology, mathematics, and computer science. Social science lectures could include anthropology, linguistics, education, history, business, psychology, and mass communication.

### *Listening Strategies:*

To improve your listening skills, tune in to the radio and television news, interviews, and discussions. Listen to various academic talks, lectures, and educational documentaries.

Begin a systematic vocabulary improvement program to expand your vocabulary. Books such as Barron's Essential Words for the TOEFL and Longman's North Star series, Building Skills for the TOEFL iBT are particularly helpful.

One of the best TOEFL resources for improving your listening skills is Longman's Learn to Listen, Listen to Learn by Roni S. Lebauer. By working through this book and tape set, you will pick up some valuable strategies for the TOEFL iBT test and for life.

In addition, most TOEFL guidebooks include audio CDs, which provide practice in listening exercises. However, if you are weak in this area, you may wish to select a guidebook which includes several CDs and plenty of listening practice. For example, Barron's TOEFL iBT guidebook comes with 10 CDs, for a reasonable price, and provides great value for the student.

### *TOEFL Speaking Skills*

The third section of the TOEFL iBT is the Speaking section. This part is made up of six tasks: two independent and four integrated. You do not meet a live examiner, but speak directly into a microphone. Your responses are recorded on the computer and then graded by two qualified evaluators.

You are given from 45–60 seconds to record your response. Because this time is relatively short, it is essential to practice extensively before appearing for the exam. Recording and then listening to yourself can be helpful. However, this is one part of the test where you can benefit the most by working with an ESL teacher or joining a TOEFL exam preparation class because you need the objective feedback and advice.

In general, speaking clearly, logically and simply are what matter most in the speaking section. Many students think they must use complex sentence structures and high-level vocabulary to impress the examiner and then end up getting nervous and making mistakes. Communicating simply and correctly in an organized way will get you a higher score every time.

Remember, in this section of the test, more than any other, you can do very well if you learn how to implement the right strategies and conversely, you can lose points easily by not understanding all that is asked of you.

### *Independent Tasks:*

The two independent tasks measure your ability to speak about a familiar topic. In other words, your own experience and ideas are the basis for your answer. You hear and see a question, you have 15 seconds to prepare your answer and you speak for 45 seconds.

The first independent task usually requires you to do two things:

1. Describe a person, place, object or event that you know.
2. Give reasons why you chose this example.

An example of the first independent question is:

“Choose a teacher you admire and explain why you admire him or her. Please include specific examples and details in your explanation.” (ETS)

The second independent task presents you with two actions, options, situations or opinions and asks you to choose. You must:

- state which one you prefer
- explain why

It doesn't matter which position you choose to support, but how clearly and how well you do so.

An example of the second independent question type is:

“Do you prefer to take essay exams or multiple choice exams? Use reasons to support your response.” (Longman)

### *Integrated Tasks:*

These tasks test your ability to integrate information from different sources. Two of the integrated tasks require you to read, listen and speak. The other two integrated tasks ask you to only listen and speak.

In the third speaking task, you are first given 40–45 seconds to read a short passage – an announcement, a bulletin, a letter, etc. – describing a campus-related issue. You then hear one or two students expressing their opinion about the issue. The question then asks you to integrate what you have read and heard by synthesizing or summarizing what the speaker said. It does not ask you for your opinion.

In the fourth speaking task, you are given 40-45 seconds to read a short passage about an academic subject. You then listen to a professor lecturing briefly about the same subject. Next, you are asked a question based on what you read and heard.

In the fifth speaking task, you are not given a reading selection. You listen to a short conversation about a campus-related situation and then answer a question about what you heard. Specifically, you are asked to:

- describe the problem being discussed
- state which of the two solutions or options you prefer
- explain why you chose that option.

You can justify your choice based on what the speakers said or on your own experience.

The sixth speaking task is based on academic content. You listen to a brief excerpt from a professor's lecture and are then asked to explain a point, giving examples from the lecture. It will be important for you to take notes here so that you can speak easily, confidently and comprehensively.

It is best to prepare for each of the speaking tasks separately by doing as many practice sessions as possible, ideally with an experienced teacher at hand to give you valuable feedback.

### *TOEFL Writing Skills:*

The last section of the TOEFL is Writing, which lasts for about 50 minutes. It consists of two parts: the integrated writing task (150-225 words) and the independent writing task (300-350 words).

If you feel overwhelmed by the thought of writing so much in such a short time, remember that writing is a skill that can be developed. Many TOEFL guidebooks, such as Delta, Longman, Cambridge, and Barron's, present detailed strategies to help you organize and focus your writing. They also provide sample essays and an analysis of high- and low-scoring responses. In addition, you will need to work with an experienced TOEFL teacher or register in a TOEFL exam prep program so that you can receive corrections and meaningful feedback on how to improve and strengthen your writing skills.

### *Integrated Writing:*

The integrated writing task comes first and is organized in the following way:

You read a passage - 3 minutes

You listen to a related lecture - 2 minutes

You write an essay - 20 minutes

In your response to the integrated question, you will be asked to summarize the points made in the lecture and either show how the lecture supports the points made in the reading passage or show how the lecture casts doubt on the points made in the reading passage.

It is helpful to make notes of the main points as you read, though the reading passage does reappear when it is time to write. More importantly, you must make notes while listening, as you have only one opportunity to hear the lecture. Listen carefully for arguments, explanations and examples which support or challenge the points made in the reading. It is essential that you take detailed notes while listening or you won't have enough material to write about.

Your essay may be set up as one long paragraph or three paragraphs. In terms of organization, you have two ways in which you could structure your response: You could compare and contrast each point as you go along. For example, "The reading passage states that..." , "On the other hand, the lecture argues that..." . Alternatively, you could list all of the points made in the reading passage in one paragraph and all the points made in the lecture in the next paragraph.

The Princeton Review's *Cracking the TOEFL iBT* gives a detailed essay structure you could follow in developing your integrated answer.

Bear in mind that for the integrated task, you are not being asked to give your opinion, but to relate what you have read and heard. Do only what the question asks you to do - no more and no less.

*Independent Writing:*

The second task in the Writing section is the independent essay. You have 30 minutes to write a four or five paragraph essay (about 300-350 words) in response to a single question.

The first thing you need to do is to identify the task clearly. The question may ask you to agree or disagree, make an argument, give an explanation or state a preference. Make sure you understand what you are being asked to do.

The next point is to take up to 5 minutes to plan your essay. Sometimes students avoid doing this because they feel it will take away from the limited time they have to write the essay. However, by planning in advance, you focus first on what to write and can then concentrate on how best to express your ideas.

You will also be able to organize your essay more effectively by setting out the points and examples in advance. Use concept maps, venn diagrams, mind maps or other brainstorming tools to help you conceptualize your essay. These planning techniques, along with practice exercises, are explained at length in *Barron's How to Prepare for the TOEFL Essay*.

If, while planning, you discover that you can't think of enough reasons or examples to write a convincing essay, then you might consider adopting the opposite point of view. The emphasis is on generating lots of ideas and examples to write a strong essay, even if it's not your true view on the subject. Having enough "meat" in your essay is more important than choosing a particular point of view.

You then have 20 minutes to write your essay. After deciding on your approach, state your position clearly in the first line or at least in the first paragraph. The examiner should not be left guessing where you stand on the given topic. After the introductory paragraph, you need to write two or three supporting paragraphs, which provide reasons and examples, and last, the conclusion. Always begin your essay with a strong introduction and end with a powerful conclusion so that the first impression and the last one are powerful and convincing.

Try to allot about 5 minutes at the end to review your essay and correct any obvious spelling, grammatical or vocabulary errors. If you're running out of time, try to add at least a one-line conclusion, so that your essay gives the impression of being complete.

Practice writing essays within the 30-minute time limit so that you feel comfortable doing so on the day of the test. Lastly, familiarize yourself with the full list of topics given in the ETS guidebook, *The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT*, so that you know the kind of topics to expect on your test.

### *Grammar:*

Grammar is no longer tested directly on the TOEFL iBT. However, it is still important for you to be comfortable using a wide range of grammatical structures, which will be evaluated indirectly in the speaking and writing sections of the test.

For example, in each of the six tasks in the speaking section, you have only one minute in which to express your ideas on a given topic. In that short time, you want to be able to speak confidently and clearly, without obvious grammatical errors, which could distort your meaning. According to the speaking rubrics, published by ETS, a respondent should “demonstrate effective use of grammar” and “exhibit a high degree of automaticity, with good control of basic and complex structures.”

Similarly, in the writing section of test, a level 5 essay is one which “displays consistent facility in the use of the language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice, and idomaticity, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical errors.”

There are many excellent grammar books on the market which you can use to perfect your grammar.

In addition, various older TOEFL PBT and CBT guidebooks review grammar points quite effectively, though perhaps in excessive detail. These include Barron’s, Delta, Princeton Review, Cambridge and Kaplan. If you are looking for more focused grammar study, you may want to use Peterson’s “TOEFL Grammar Flash” by Milada Broukal, which has short lessons to help you master essential grammar.

The most important grammar points to cover are: verb tenses, nouns, pronouns, modals, parts of a sentence, verbs, prepositions, gerunds, infinitives, articles, noun clauses, adjective clauses, adverb clauses, prepositional phrases, comparatives, superlatives, conjunctions, connectives. In addition, you will want to check your writing for: parallel structures, word order, word forms, word choice and redundancy.

Remember the main difference between the older exams and the new one is that you no longer have to choose the right answer to a multiple choice question, but you do have to choose the correct grammatical structures from your own mind to convey your ideas effectively and clearly, in speech and writing.

### *Vocabulary:*

In any language, having a rich vocabulary is a distinct advantage for academic, personal and professional success. In the case of the TOEFL iBT, having access to a large vocabulary will enable you to obtain a

high score in every section – reading, listening, speaking and writing. From a long-term point of view, as well, research has shown that students who wish to pursue university studies may need up to 10,000 words.

For the TOEFL, you will want to concentrate on academic vocabulary as this is the main focus of the test. An excellent resource for this purpose is the Academic Word List (AWL), put together at the Victoria University of Wellington. They have identified 570 word families that are frequently used in academic texts.

#### *Indirect Strategies:*

There are many indirect strategies you can employ to enrich your vocabulary. You can read newspapers, magazines, textbooks, brochures, children's books, and various types of literature. You can also listen to radio broadcasts, the news, interviews, documentaries, movies, conversations and audio books. If your intention is to improve your vocabulary, you will have to listen for new words, check their meaning, keep track of them in a vocabulary notebook and then try to use them in conversation or writing.

#### *Direct Strategies:*

Better still, is to combine this strategy with a specific vocabulary building program. You can allot even a short time a day, from as little as a few minutes to up to 30 to 60 minutes, and if you work steadily, the results will be impressive. There are a great number of vocabulary books available for ESL students, as well as specific ones to prepare you for the TOEFL iBT.

#### *Vocabulary Resources:*

To identify the best vocabulary textbook for your needs, visit the local library or bookstore and browse through the wide range of books available. If you are an auditory learner, you may prefer to use an audio vocabulary building program, which you can listen to while commuting, jogging, etc. Whatever you choose, find the book or program whose style and system appeals to you. You could also ask the librarian, your ESL teacher or a friend for recommendations, but let the final choice be yours. Building your vocabulary takes time and you need to find a system you are comfortable with and will use consistently.

One of the most recent publications in this area is *Focus on Vocabulary* by Diane Schmitt and Norbert Schmitt. Intended for intermediate to advanced students, the book helps students to master vocabulary from the academic word list. It provides excerpts from college texts to enable students to reach a fuller understanding of new vocabulary in a variety of fields. This book is ideal if you are patient and have more time available to prepare for your test.

If you prefer to work on targeted vocabulary, without long reading passages, you will like McGraw Hill's *400 Must Have Words for the TOEFL*. It covers a wide range of subject areas and each chapter can be completed in about half an hour.

Yet another general series, published by Longman, is *ETS' North Star Building Skills for the TOEFL iBT*,

which is available at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Each chapter covers a different subject area and provides integrated and independent practice in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

### *Vocabulary Games:*

In addition, many ESL websites offer a huge variety of vocabulary building games for all levels, which can provide you with additional practice.

### *Pronunciation:*

On the speaking section of the TOEFL iBT, you will need to speak clearly enough that a native speaking examiner can understand what you are saying. You are not being asked to imitate an American or British accent. You are being judged on whether your speech is intelligible.

For people to understand what you're saying, it is essential that you improve your pronunciation. Of course, everyone who speaks English has an accent, and all native speakers do as well. For example, the British sound different from the Americans, Indians, South Africans, Canadians and Australians. You will, no doubt, have noticed this when you watched television and movies.

### *Native Language Influence:*

Nevertheless, when you, as a second-language learner speak English, you face special difficulties based on the influence of your native language. In some cases, these interferences can be so strong that English words sound like other words (rice can sound like lice, for example) and the meaning is lost or confused.

According to the Speaking Rubrics developed by ETS, your speech will be assessed on whether it is well-paced, clear, and articulate, with effective intonation and rhythm, which does not obscure the message.

### *Recommendations:*

The best way to improve your pronunciation is in a pronunciation class or with a private teacher. Develop your ear by listening carefully to newscasts on CNN or BBC. You can also benefit greatly from using some of the English pronunciation programs on the market today, which will enable you to practice at home, while driving, etc.

### ***More Information***

For information on the TOEFL test, test dates and locations, fees and requirements, and practice questions go to: [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org)

You can also get information about the TOEFL from the USIS office in your country or from: The Educational Testing Service, P.O. Box 6151, Princeton, New Jersey 08541-6151, USA.

## Enrolling in an Online TOEFL Course

### Steps

1. Step One: Get online and go to your favorite search engine. Perform a search for “Online TOEFL Course.”
2. Step Two: Look through the results list and click on websites that sound professional. See "tips" for some of the criteria to help you determine if it is a legitimate course offering.
3. Step Three: Select several websites and compare criteria such as TOEFL course curriculum, cost and the credentials of the organization offering the course.
4. Step Four: Follow the steps on the chosen TOEFL course website to enroll.

## Enrolling in a Classroom-Based TOEFL Course

### Steps

1. Step One: Do an online search for “TOEFL Course and (your state).” For example, try “TOEFL course and New York.” This search will bring up results from both state colleges and universities offering TOEFL prep courses and courses at designated testing preparation centers as well.
2. Step Two: Select links to course offerings at local colleges and universities.
3. Step Three: Read about course curriculum to determine if the course will cover the areas of study you require.
4. Step Four: Locate cost information for the TOEFL course on the college or university website.
5. Step Five: Select links to test preparation centers from your search engine result list.
6. Step Six: Read the curriculum of the TOEFL prep courses at the preparation centers and compare with that of local colleges and universities.
7. Step Seven: Note cost information for TOEFL courses at test prep centers and compare with costs of similar courses at local colleges and universities.
8. Step Eight: Follow instructions to enroll in TOEFL prep course on either the college or university’s website, or the testing prep center’s website.