

Appendix

Performance Feedback for Test Takers

The scores you receive on the *TOEFL iBT*® test indicate your performance level in each of the four skill areas: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. This appendix provides descriptions of what test takers can typically do at each score level, as well as advice about how test takers at each level can improve their skills.

Only the “Your Performance” descriptions appear on test taker score reports. The “Advice for Improvement” is only a sample of the advice available. More extensive advice is available on the *TOEFL*® test website, www.ets.org/toefl.

TOEFL iBT® Reading Section Performance Descriptors

Advanced

(Score range 24–30, CEFR Level C1)

Test takers who receive a Reading section score at the **ADVANCED** level typically understand academic passages in English at the introductory university level. These passages are dense with propositions and information and can include difficult vocabulary, lengthy, complex sentences and paragraphs, and abstract or nuanced ideas that may be presented in complex ways.

Test takers who score at the Advanced level typically can

- Understand a range of academic and low-frequency vocabulary as well as less common meanings of words.
- Understand explicit connections among pieces of information and make appropriate inferences, even when the passage is conceptually dense and the language is complex.
- Recognize the expository organization of a passage and the purpose that specific information serves within the larger context, even when the purpose of the information is not marked and the passage is conceptually dense.
- Follow a paragraph-length argument involving speculation, qualifications, counterevidence, and subtle rhetorical shifts.
- Synthesize information in passages that contain complex language and are conceptually dense.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Read as much and as often as possible. Make sure to include academic texts on a variety of topics written in different genres and with different degrees of conceptual density as part of your reading.

- Read major newspapers, such as the *New York Times* or *Science Times*, and websites (National Public Radio [NPR] or the BBC).
- Write summaries of texts, making sure they incorporate the organizational pattern of the originals. Continually expand your vocabulary.

Practice using new words you encounter in your reading. This will help you remember both the meaning and correct usage of the new words.

High-Intermediate

(Score range 18–23, CEFR Level B2)

Test takers who receive a Reading section score at the **HIGH-INTERMEDIATE** level typically understand the main ideas and important details of academic passages in English at the introductory university level, but they may have an incomplete or incorrect understanding of parts of passages that are especially dense with propositions and information, or are complex in their presentation of ideas and information.

Test takers who score at the High-Intermediate level typically can

- Understand common academic vocabulary, but sometimes have difficulty with low-frequency words or less common meanings of words.
- Understand explicit connections among pieces of information and make appropriate inferences, but may have difficulty in parts of a passage that contain low-frequency vocabulary or that are conceptually dense, rhetorically complex, or abstract.
- Distinguish important ideas from less important ones.
- Often recognize the expository organization of a passage and the purpose of specific information within a passage, even when such information is not explicitly marked.
- Synthesize information in a passage, but may have difficulty doing so when the passage is conceptually dense, rhetorically complex, or abstract.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Read as much and as often as possible. Study the organization of academic texts and overall structure of reading passages. Read an entire passage from beginning to end.

- Pay attention to the relationship between the **main ideas** and the **supporting details**.
- Outline the text to test your understanding of the structure of the reading passage.

- Write a summary of the entire passage.
- If the text is a comparison, be sure that your summary reflects that. If the text argues two points of view, be sure both points of view are reflected in your summary. Continually expand your vocabulary by developing a system for recording unfamiliar words.
- Group words according to topic or meaning and study the words as a list of related words.
- Study **roots**, **prefixes**, and **suffixes**; study word families.
- Use available vocabulary resources, such as a good thesaurus or a dictionary of collocations (words commonly used together).

Low-Intermediate

(Score range 4–17, CEFR Level B1)

Test takers who receive a Reading section score at the **LOW-INTERMEDIATE** level typically understand some main ideas and important information presented in academic passages in English, but their overall understanding is limited. They are able to understand connections across two or more sentences when the relationships are clear and simple, such as a claim followed by a supporting example. However, they have difficulty following denser or more complex parts of a passage.

Test takers who score at the Low-Intermediate level typically can

- Understand texts with basic grammar, but have inconsistent understanding of texts with complex grammatical structures.
- Understand high-frequency academic vocabulary, but often have difficulty with lower-frequency words.
- Locate information in a passage by matching words or relying on high-frequency vocabulary, but their limited ability to recognize paraphrases results in incomplete understanding of the connections among ideas and information.
- Identify an author's purpose when that purpose is explicitly stated or easy to infer from the context.
- Recognize major ideas in a passage when the information is clearly presented, memorable, or illustrated by examples but have difficulty doing so when the passage is more demanding.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Read as much and as often as possible. Develop a system for recording unfamiliar words.

- Group words into lists according to topic or meaning and review and study the words on a regular basis so that you remember them.
- Increase your vocabulary by analyzing word parts; study **roots**, **prefixes**, and **suffixes**; study **word families**. Study the organization of academic texts

and overall structure of a reading passage. Read an entire passage from beginning to end.

- Look at connections between sentences; look at how the end of one sentence relates to the beginning of the next sentence.
- Look for the **main ideas** and **supporting details** and pay attention to the relationship between them.
- Outline a text to test your understanding of the structure of a reading passage.
- Begin by grouping paragraphs that address the same concept.
- Write one sentence summarizing the paragraphs that discuss the same idea.
- Write a summary of the entire passage.

Below Low-Intermediate

(Score range 0-3)

Test takers with a Reading section score below 4 have not yet demonstrated proficiency at the Low-Intermediate level.

TOEFL iBT® Listening Section Performance Descriptors

Advanced

(Score range 22–30, CEFR Level C1)

Test takers who receive a Listening section score at the **ADVANCED** level typically understand conversations and lectures that take place in academic settings. The conversations and lectures may include difficult vocabulary, abstract or complex ideas, complex sentence structures, various uses of intonation, and a large amount of information, possibly organized in complex ways.

Test takers who score at the Advanced level typically can

- Understand main ideas and explicitly stated important details, even if not reinforced.
- Distinguish important ideas from less important points.
- Keep track of conceptually complex (and sometimes conflicting) information over extended portions of a lecture.
- Understand how information or examples are being used (for example, to provide evidence for or against a claim, to make comparisons or draw contrasts, or to express an opinion or a value judgment) and how pieces of information are connected (for example, in a cause-effect relationship).
- Understand different ways that speakers use language for purposes other than to give information (for example, to express an emotion, to emphasize a point, to convey agreement or disagreement, or to communicate an intention).
- Synthesize information, even when it is not presented in sequence, and make appropriate inferences on the basis of that information.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Further develop your listening ability with daily practice in listening in English and by challenging yourself with increasingly lengthy listening selections and more complex listening material.

- Listen to different kinds of materials on a variety of topics:
 - Focus on topics that are new to you.
 - Listen to academic lectures and public talks.
 - Listen to audio and video material on TV, radio, and the Internet.
 - Listen to programs with academic content, such as NOVA, BBC, and NPR broadcasts.
 - Listen to conversations, phone calls, and phone recordings.
 - Take live and audio-recorded tours (for example, tours of museums).
- Listen actively:
 - Take notes as you listen for main ideas and important details.
 - Make predictions about what you will hear next.
 - Summarize.
 - Write down new words and expressions.

For the more difficult material you have chosen to listen to, listen several times:

1. First listen for the main ideas and key details;
2. Then listen again to fill in gaps in your understanding; to understand the connections between ideas, the structure of the talk, and the speaker's attitude; and to distinguish fact from opinion.

High-Intermediate

(Score range 17–21, CEFR Level B2)

Test takers who receive a Listening section score at the **HIGH-INTERMEDIATE** level typically understand the main ideas and important details of conversations and lectures that take place in academic settings. The conversations and lectures may include difficult vocabulary, abstract or complex ideas, complex sentence structures, various uses of intonation, and information that must be tracked across sequences of utterances. However, lectures and conversations that are dense with information may present difficulty if the information is not reinforced.

Test takers who score at the High-Intermediate level typically can

- Understand main ideas and explicitly stated important details that are reinforced (by repetition, paraphrase, or indirect reference).
- Distinguish main ideas from other information.
- Keep track of information over an extended portion of an information-rich lecture or conversation, and recognize multiple, possibly conflicting, points of view.
- Understand how information or examples are being used (for example, to provide support for a claim) and how pieces of information are connected (for example, in a narrative explanation, a compare-and-contrast relationship, or a cause-effect chain).
- Understand, though perhaps not consistently, ways that speakers use language for purposes other than to give information (for example, to emphasize a point, express agreement or disagreement, express opinions, or convey intentions indirectly), especially when the purpose is supported by intonation.
- Synthesize information from adjacent parts of a lecture or conversation and make appropriate inferences on the basis of that information, but may have difficulty synthesizing information from separate parts of a lecture or conversation.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Practice listening in English daily. Gradually increase the amount of time that you spend listening, the length of the listening selections, and the difficulty of the material.

- Listen to different kinds of materials on a variety of topics:
 - Start with familiar topics; then move to topics that are new to you.
 - Listen to audio and video material on CD/DVD or recorded from TV, radio, and the Internet.
 - Listen to programs with academic content, such as NOVA, BBC, and NPR broadcasts.
 - Listen to conversations and phone recordings.
- Listen actively:
 - Take notes as you listen for main ideas and important details.
 - Ask yourself about basic information. (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?)
 - Make predictions about what you will hear next.
 - Summarize.
 - Write down new words and expressions.

For more difficult material, listen several times:

1. First listen with English subtitles, if they are available;
2. Then, without subtitles, listen for the main ideas and key details;
3. Then listen again to fill in gaps in your basic understanding and to understand the connections between ideas.

Low-Intermediate

(Score range 9–16, CEFR Level B1)

Test takers who receive a Listening section score at the **LOW-INTERMEDIATE** level typically understand the main idea and some important details of conversations and lectures that take place in academic settings. These conversations and lectures can include basic academic language, abstract or complex ideas that are significantly reinforced, complex sentence structures, certain uses of intonation, and a large amount of information that is repeated or significantly reinforced.

Test takers at the Low-Intermediate level typically can

- Understand main ideas, even in complex discussions, when the ideas are repeatedly referred to, extensively elaborated on, or illustrated with multiple examples.
- Understand explicitly stated important details but may have difficulty understanding details if they are not reinforced (such as through repetition or with an example) or marked as important, or if they are conveyed over several exchanges among different speakers.
- Understand some ways that speakers use language to express an opinion or attitude (for example, agreement, disagreement, surprise), especially when the opinion or attitude is related to a central theme, clearly marked as important, or supported by intonation.
- Understand connections between important ideas, particularly if the ideas are related to a central theme or are repeated and can make appropriate inferences from information expressed in one or two sentences, especially when that information is reinforced.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Practice listening in English daily. Gradually increase the amount of time that you spend listening, as well as the length of the individual listening selections.

- Listen to different kinds of materials on a variety of topics:
 - recordings on topics that are familiar to you
 - recordings of English lessons
 - audio and video material on CD/DVD or recorded from TV
 - short programs with some academic content conversations
- Listen actively:
 - Take notes as you listen for main ideas and important details.
 - Ask yourself about basic information. (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?)
 - Make predictions about what you will hear next.
 - Summarize.
 - Write down new words and expressions.

Listen several times to each recording:

1. First listen with English subtitles, if they are available.
2. Then, without subtitles, listen for the main ideas and key details.
3. Then listen again to fill in gaps in your basic understanding and to understand the connections between ideas.

Below Low-Intermediate

(Score range 0–8)

Test takers with a Listening section score below 9 have not yet demonstrated proficiency at the Low-Intermediate level.

TOEFL iBT® Speaking Section Performance Descriptors

Advanced

(Score range 25–30, CEFR Level C1)

Test takers who receive a Speaking section score at the **ADVANCED** level are typically able to communicate fluently and effectively on a wide range of topics with little difficulty.

Test takers who score at the Advanced level typically can

- Speak clearly and use intonation to support meaning so that speech is generally easy to understand and follow; any minor lapses do not obscure meaning.
- Speak with relative ease on a range of general and academic topics, demonstrating control of an appropriate range of grammatical structures and vocabulary; any minor errors may be noticeable, but do not obscure meaning.
- Convey mostly well-supported summaries, explanations, and opinions, including both concrete and abstract information, with generally well-controlled organization and cohesion; lapses may occur, but they rarely impact overall comprehensibility.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Look for opportunities to build your fluency in English.

- Take risks and engage others in conversation in English whenever possible.
- Join an Internet chat room.

Record yourself and then listen and transcribe what you said.

- Read a short article from a newspaper or textbook. Record yourself summarizing the article.
- Transcribe the recording and review the transcription. Think about other ways to say the same thing.

High-Intermediate

(Score range 20–24, CEFR Level B2)

Test takers who receive a Speaking section score at the **HIGH-INTERMEDIATE** level are typically able to communicate effectively on most general or familiar topics, and to make themselves understood when discussing more complex or academic topics.

Test takers who score at the High-Intermediate level typically can

- Speak clearly and without hesitancy on general or familiar topics, with overall good intelligibility; pauses and hesitations (to recall or plan information) are sometimes noticeable when more demanding content is produced, and any mispronunciations or intonation errors only occasionally cause problems for the listener.
- Produce stretches of speech that demonstrate control of some complex structures and a range of vocabulary, although occasional lapses in precision and accuracy may obscure meaning at times.
- Convey sufficient information to produce mostly complete summaries, explanations, and opinions, but some ideas may not be fully developed or may lack elaboration; any lapses in completeness and cohesion may at times affect the otherwise clear progression of ideas.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Practice speaking in English about everyday topics that are important to students' lives. This will develop your fluency and confidence.

- Find a speaking partner. Set aside time each week to practice speaking with your partner in English.
- If you cannot find a native English speaker, find a friend who wants to practice speaking English and promise to speak only English for a certain period.
- Read articles from campus newspapers that can be found on the Internet. Practice speaking for a limited time on different academic topics.

Practice speaking for a limited time on different academic topics.

- Read a short article from a newspaper or a textbook. Write down key content words from the article.
- Write down two or three questions about the article that include the content words
- Practice answering the questions aloud. Try to include the content words in your response
- After practicing, record your answers to the questions.

Low-Intermediate

(Score range 16–19, CEFR Level B1)

Test takers who receive a Speaking section score at the **LOW-INTERMEDIATE** level are typically able to talk about general or familiar topics with relative ease.

Test takers who score at the Low-Intermediate level typically can

- Speak clearly with minor hesitations about general or familiar topics; longer pauses are noticeable when speaking about more complex or academic topics, and mispronunciations may obscure meaning at times.

- Produce short stretches of speech consisting of basic grammatical structures connected with “and”, “because” and “so”; attempts at longer utterances requiring more complex grammatical structures may be marked by errors and pauses for grammatical planning or repair; use vocabulary that is sufficient to discuss general or familiar topics, but limitations in range of vocabulary sometimes result in vague or unclear expression of ideas.
- Convey some main points and other relevant information but summaries, explanations, and opinions are sometimes incomplete, inaccurate, and/or lack detail; long or complex explanations may lack coherence. Basic Score range 10–15 CEFR Level A2 Test takers who receive a Speaking section score at the BASIC level are typically able to communicate limited information about familiar, everyday topics. Test takers who score at the Basic level typically can
- Speak slowly and carefully so that they make themselves understood, but pronunciation may be strongly influenced by the speaker’s first language and at times be unintelligible; speech may be marked by frequent pauses, reformulations, and false starts.
- Produce mostly short utterances, connecting phrases with simple linking words (such as “and”) to make themselves understood; grammar and vocabulary are limited, and frequent pauses may occur while searching for words.
- Convey some limited information about familiar topics; supporting points and/or details are generally missing, and main ideas may be absent, unclear, or not well connected.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Develop friendships with people who want to speak English with you. Interaction with others will improve your speaking ability. If you cannot find a native speaker, find a friend who wants to practice speaking English and promise to speak only English for a certain period.

- Read a short article from a newspaper or a textbook. Write down key content words from the article.
- Write down two or three questions about the article that include the content words.
- Practice answering the questions aloud. Try to include the content words in your response.
- After practicing, record your answers to the questions.

Practice speaking about current events.

- Read newspaper articles, editorials, and information about cultural events in English. Share the information that you read with a friend in English.
- Visit a university class and take notes in the class. Then use your notes to tell a friend about some of the information you heard in English.
- Develop your academic vocabulary. Write down important new words that you come across while reading or listening and practice pronouncing them.
- Listen to a weather report and take notes on what you heard. Then give the weather report to a friend in English.

Below Low-Intermediate

(Score range 0–8)

Test takers with a Speaking section score below 10 have not yet demonstrated proficiency at the Basic level.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Take a conversation class. This will help improve your fluency and pronunciation in English.

Increase your vocabulary and improve your grammar in your speech.

- Study basic grammar rules so that your speech is grammatically correct.
- As you learn new words and expressions, practice pronouncing them clearly. Record yourself as you practice.

TOEFL iBT® Writing Section Performance Descriptors

Advanced

(Score range 24–30, CEFR Level C1)

Test takers who receive a Writing section score at the **ADVANCED** level are typically able to write in English on a wide range of academic and non-academic topics with confidence and clarity.

Test takers who score at the Advanced level typically can

- Produce clear, well-developed, and well-organized text; ungrammatical, unclear, or unidiomatic use of English is rare.
- Express an opinion on a controversial issue and support that opinion with appropriate details and explanations in writing, demonstrating variety and range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- Select important information from multiple sources, integrate it, and present it coherently and clearly in writing, with only occasional minor imprecision in the summary of the source information.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Continue to improve your ability to relate and convey information from two or more sources. For example, practice analyzing reading passages in English.

- Read two articles or chapters on the same topic or issue, write a summary of each, and then explain the ways they are similar and the ways they are different.
- Practice combining listening and reading by searching for readings related to talks and lectures with a teacher or a friend.

Continue to improve your ability to express opinions by studying the ways that published writers express their opinions.

- Read articles and essays written by professional writers that express opinions about an issue (for example, a social, environmental, or educational issue).
- Identify the writer's opinion or opinions.
- Notice how the writer addresses possible objections to the opinions, if the writer discusses these.

High-Intermediate

(Score range 17–23, CEFR Level B2)

Test takers who receive a Writing section score at the **HIGH-INTERMEDIATE** level are typically able to write in English well on general or familiar topics. When writing about complex ideas or ideas on academic topics, they can convey most of the main ideas.

Test takers who score at the High-Intermediate level typically can

- Produce summaries of multiple sources that include most of the main ideas; some important ideas from the sources may be missing, unclear, or inaccurate.
- Express an opinion on an issue clearly; some ideas and explanations may not be fully developed and lapses in cohesion may at times affect a clear progression of ideas.
- Write with some degree of facility; grammatical mistakes or vague/incorrect uses of words may make the writing difficult to follow in some places.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Practice finding main points.

- Record news and informational programs in English from the television or radio or download talks or lectures from the Internet.
- Listen and take notes. Stop the recording about every 30 seconds to write out a short summary of what you heard.
- Replay the recording to check your summary. Mark places where you are not sure if you have understood what was said or where you are not sure if you have expressed yourself well

Write a response to an article or essay in English, taking the opposite viewpoint.

- Outline your response.
- Note the methods you use to support your ideas. Reread what you have written.
- Make sure your supporting ideas are clearly related to your main point.
- Note what method you use to develop each of your supporting points.
- Make sure you have developed each of your points in detail. Is there anything more you could have said to strengthen your points?

Low-Intermediate

(Score range 13-16, CEFR Level B1)

Test takers who receive a Writing section score at the LOW-INTERMEDIATE level are typically able to produce simple written texts in English on general or familiar topics.

Test takers who score at the Low-Intermediate level typically can

- Produce a simple text that expresses some ideas on an issue, but the development of ideas is limited because of insufficient or inappropriate details and explanations.
- Summarize some relevant information from multiple sources, but important ideas from the sources are omitted or significantly misrepresented, especially ideas that require unfamiliar vocabulary or are complex.
- Write with limited facility, with language errors obscuring connections or meaning at key junctures between ideas in the text.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Read and listen to academic articles and other material in your own language. Take notes about what you read and hear.

- Begin by taking notes in your own language and then take notes in English.
- Summarize the points in complete English sentences.
- Ask your teacher to review your writing and help you correct your errors.
- Gradually decrease the time it takes you to read the material and write the summaries.
- Practice typing on a standard English (QWERTY) keyboard.

Study the organization of good paragraphs and essays. A good paragraph discusses one main idea. This idea is usually written in the first sentence, which is called the topic sentence. In essay writing, each paragraph should discuss one aspect of the main idea of an essay.

- Write paragraphs in English that focus on one main idea and contain several complete sentences that explain or support that idea.
- Ask your teacher to review your paragraphs for correctness.

Basic

(Score range 7-12, CEFR Level A2)

Test takers who receive a Writing section score at the BASIC level are typically able to communicate very basic information in written English.

Test takers who score at the Basic level typically can

- Produce some text that is related to the topic, but with little detail and/or lack of organization.
- Convey some information from the sources or some ideas on an issue, but grammatical errors, unclear expressions, and/or poor sentence structure make their writing difficult to comprehend.

ADVICE FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Practice English language comprehension and writing skills, increasing your vocabulary and improving your grammar.
- As your comprehension and writing skills improve, follow the suggestions for the Low-Intermediate level above.

Below Basic

(Score range 0-6)

Test takers with a Writing section score below 7 have not yet demonstrated proficiency at the Basic level.