

Test of english as a foreign language

[Linguistics](#), [Language](#)



English, the third most common language spoken after Mandarin and Spanish, is spoken by around 370 to 390 million people in around 50 different countries. Many renowned universities, require their students, in the undergraduate, graduate and post graduate programs to first prove their proficiency in the English language, as an entrance criteria.

This created a need for a standard test, accepted and recognized by these universities, to be created. Test of English as a Foreign Language or TOEFL as it is commonly referred to as, is such a test. This test is developed and conducted by the Educational Testing Service. TOEFL can be administered via the internet (TOEFL iBT) or can be written as a paper based test (TOEFL PBT). Written Tests are only administered in places where Internet Based Testing Centers for TOEFL are unavailable.

This test score along with the applicant's other academical information becomes the foundation for their admission process. The test score scale ranges from 0 to 120, for TOEFL iBT, and from 310 to 677 for TOEFL PBT. The minimum test score acceptable, varies from university to university, depending on factors like courses undertaken or whether the applicant is an undergrad, grad or post grad.

TOEFL iBT

TOEFL iBT tests the four basic skills needed for effective communication namely- Reading, Speaking, Listening and Writing. They test the takers to

- read, listen, and then speak in response to a question
- listen and then speak in response to a question

- read, listen, and then write in response to a question

The test is 4 hours long and it is essential that all the four sections of the test be taken on the same day itself.

Test Format

SECTION FORMAT TIME

- READING 3-5 passages(700words), 12-14 question each 60-100 minutes
- LISTENING 2-3 conversations, 5 questions each
- 4-6 lectures, 6 questions each 60-90 minutes
- 10 MINUTES BREAK
- SPEAKING 6 tasks which include 2 independent and 4 integrated 20 minutes
- WRITING 2 tasks which include 1 integrated task and
- 1 independent task 50minutes(20 for integrated and 30 for independent)

The time displayed above is not an actual representation, and may vary on the number of questions.

Reading Section

The reading sections tests the applicant's ability to, comprehend, learn and to find information from university levelacademicpassages and texts. The questions asked in the reading section are of the following format

- Multiple choice questions- asking the applicant to select a single answer from a given set of options

- Multiple choice questions asking the applicant to select an option to "insert a sentence" where it fits best in a passage
- Questions with more than four choices and more than one possible correct answer.

Listening Section

This section tests the applicants ability to understand Spoken English, by testing his/her ability to understand lectures and conversations.

The applicant is allowed to take notes while listening to the material provided. These notes will be collected at the end of the test and destroyed. Questions asked in the Listening section, are usually asked in the following formats

- Multiple choice questions with a single correct answer
- Multiple choice questions with more than one correct answer
- Questions that require the user to order events
- Questions that require the applicant to match objects or text to categories in a chart

Some questions replay a portion of the audio material provided, so that the applicant need not memorize the material before answering the question.

Speaking Section

Here the applicant is tested for his ability to communicate, participate in casual conversations, respond to questions etc. This section includes six tasks that the applicant must undertake before proceeding further. The first two tasks are independent speaking tasks, where the user is asked to

express their opinion or idea on topics provided, or on topics that the applicant is comfortable with.

The next four tasks are integrated tasks where the applicant must use more than one of their skills before responding. These skills may include reading, listening and speaking. The user is only allowed to spend 20 minutes in this section.

Writing Section

This section tests the applicants ability to present their ideas in a clear and well organized manner. Here students are required to undertake two tasks, one integrated and one independent. Independent tasks include writing essays, articles, expressing opinions etc. The student's range of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuations and layout are tested under Independent tasks. Under Integrated tasks students are required to summarize, paraphrase, and cite accurate information from the source material. The total time sanctioned for both these tasks is 50 minutes.

TOEFL scores are valid for 2 years. These scores are visible, 10 days after the exam on the TOEFL registration website. Printed Scores are mailed after 13 days.

More than 10, 000 universities in around 130 countries accept TOEFL scores for their admission process. So when you plan on an education abroad, Think TOEFL.