ETS® TOEFL®

Frequently Asked Questions
about *TOEFL*® **Practice Online**

SECTION 1: Features

What is *TOEFL*® Practice Online?

TOEFL® Practice Online is the only official practice test that gives you the experience of taking the real *TOEFL iBT*® test. You will practice by using authentic questions from past tests and receive your scores with performance feedback within 24 hours.

How will using *TOEFL* Practice Online help me?

TOEFL Practice Online simulates the real *TOEFL iBT* testing experience and provides scores within 24 hours. You will also receive performance feedback that helps you assess your readiness for test day.

What are the technical requirements to run the practice tests on a computer?

Operating Systems: Mac OS® X 10.11 or higher; Microsoft® Windows® 8 minimum or higher.

Browsers: Mac®: Safari® 10.1 or higher, Firefox® and Google Chrome™;
Windows®: Internet Explorer® 11 or higher, Firefox® , Google Chrome™

- Installation of the Audio Browser for Windows OS

- Installation of *TOEFL* Practice Online Browser for Mac OS

A headset and a non-voice activated microphone are recommended for the Speaking section. Mac users may also use the internal speakers and microphone located in the computer.

Please Note: You must complete the practice test on the same operating system that you start on. You cannot switch between operating systems once the test has been started.

Can I choose how I take the practice tests?

TOEFL Practice Online allows you to customise your test prep experience by selecting timed or untimed mode.

What is the difference between timed and untimed mode?

Timed mode is closer to the actual *TOEFL* testing experience. When time expires for a section, you can continue to work on that section, but it will not simulate the real *TOEFL iBT* experience. If you choose to take the test in untimed mode, the time you have for each section will not expire. Untimed mode also allows you to highlight text and check your answers. In either mode, once you leave a section, you cannot go back to that section. **Please Note:** Once you choose your mode, you may not go back and change it. Also, you can pause and restart the practice test as often as you want.

Does the practice test need to be completed within a certain number of days?

Yes, once you register your code you have 6 months to complete the practice test. Once you complete the practice test, you will have 30 days to access the test and save or print your score report for your records. When you are logged in to the practice test, you will be able to view the date to complete it by.

Can I pause a partially completed practice test and then take the remaining part later?

Yes, the test may be paused and restarted at a later time.

Can I retake a practice test?

No. Each practice test can be taken only once.

SECTION 1: Features

When will I receive my practice test scores?
You must complete the entire test in order to receive a score for all four sections. You will receive your scores within 24 hours.

Are any of the questions repeated in other practice tests or other *TOEFL* learning resources?
On rare occasions, a small set of questions may be repeated in another resource, but complete tests are never repeated in full.

SECTION 2: Speaking

How are my responses scored?
Your responses are scored by a computer using a program specifically designed as an automated scoring system for the *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking section. The *SpeechRater*^{SM} computer program uses speech recognition and analysis technology to analyse your responses. The important features of your spoken responses that are analysed to produce your scores are pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar.

Why are responses to the *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking section rated by a computer?
Using a computer instead of a human rater allows ETS to report your scores on the practice test within 24 hours.

How is my *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking section score different from a *TOEFL iBT* Speaking section score?
Both the *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking section and the *TOEFL iBT* Speaking section report your score on a scale of 0-30. However, the scores differ in two distinct ways: (1) the *TOEFL* Practice Online test is scored by a computer rather than by human raters; and (2) the *TOEFL* Practice Online test is scored by evaluating some, but not all, of the features evaluated by human raters for the *TOEFL iBT* Speaking section.

How is *SpeechRater* automated scoring different from human rater scoring?
SpeechRater scoring is an automated prediction of a score a human rater would assign for the same response. The score is produced by combining the evaluation of several important features of each response (pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar). Together these features cover part of the scoring criteria used by human raters to score the *TOEFL iBT* Speaking section. Human raters scoring the *TOEFL iBT* test evaluate each response in the areas of Delivery (pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, rate of speech, pause structure, fluidity), Language Use (vocabulary and grammar) and Topic Development (content and coherence).* While the *SpeechRater* service analyses features of Delivery and Language Use, it is currently limited in its evaluation of Topic Development features. In general, *SpeechRater* scoring is based on a subset of the criteria currently evaluated by human raters for the *TOEFL iBT* Speaking section.

How can I get the most benefit from my *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking score?
A number of circumstances could cause this score to be a poor predictor of the scores human raters would have assigned to your responses. Speakers who respond casually or carelessly to the speaking tasks, such as by responding with rehearsed speech that is not based on the speaking task, by responding in their native language, by reading from texts or notes, or by providing partial or incomplete responses are more likely to receive inaccurate scores. On the other hand, speakers who respond to the tasks seriously, as they would during a *TOEFL iBT* testing situation, are more likely to obtain a score reflecting their performance on practice speaking tasks.

How does computer scoring work?
Your responses to each of the six speaking questions are recorded and sent to ETS, where they are analysed by the *SpeechRater* service, the automated speech recognition and analysis software system designed especially for *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking section scoring. In developing the system, numerous responses to *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking section questions were processed to establish a scoring model that defined the relationship between scores by human raters and the response features (pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar) that are analysed by the *SpeechRater* service. This scoring model was then slightly modified to reflect language experts' judgments about how the score and important features of a response should be related. This modified scoring model is used to determine a speaker's score on each of the six tasks, which are then added together. The final score is converted to a 0-30 scale.

SECTION 2: Speaking

Has the computer scoring been reviewed by experts?
Language-learning specialists and testing experts, both internal and external to ETS, were invited to advise and participate in selecting the speech features used to compute automated scores. The features currently used in the computer scoring were determined by these experts to represent important aspects of the scoring rubrics used to score the *TOEFL iBT* Speaking section. The resulting combination of features was determined to provide an acceptable overall evaluation of spoken responses for use in the *TOEFL* Practice Online test.

Is my *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking section score a prediction of my score on the *TOEFL iBT* test Speaking section?
While these practice materials are designed to help you better prepare for the *TOEFL iBT* test, the score you receive on the practice materials may not be the same as what you would receive on the actual *TOEFL iBT* test. Studies have not yet been completed to compare performance on the *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking section and the *TOEFL iBT* test Speaking section. Until such studies are completed, it will not be known how closely *TOEFL* Practice Online Speaking scores predict *TOEFL iBT* test Speaking section scores.

*More information about *TOEFL iBT* Scoring Rubrics is available on the ETS website.

SECTION 3: Writing

How are my responses scored?
Your responses are scored by the *e-rater*® automated essay scoring technology. Developed at ETS, the *e-rater* engine is trained on each essay topic through an analysis of hundreds of essays that expert faculty readers have scored according to *TOEFL* scoring standards. The important features of your written responses that are analysed to produce your scores include grammar, usage, mechanics, style, organisation, and development.

Why are responses to the *TOEFL* Practice Online Writing section rated by a computer?
Using a computer instead of a human rater allows ETS to report your scores on the practice test within 24 hours.

How is my *TOEFL* Practice Online Writing section score different from a *TOEFL iBT* test Writing section score?
Both the *TOEFL* Practice Online Writing section and the *TOEFL iBT* Writing section report your score on a scale of 0-30. However, the scores differ in two distinct ways: (1) the practice test is scored by a computer rather than by human raters; and (2) the computer scoring of the practice test does not factor in the meaning expressed in a response in the same way human raters do.

How is *e-rater* automated scoring different from human rater scoring?
Scoring by the *e-rater* engine is an automated prediction of a score a human rater would assign for the same response. The score is produced by combining the evaluation of several important features of each response (including grammar, usage, mechanics, style, organisation, and development). While the features of the *e-rater* engine measure overall writing quality, they do not measure the correctness of the content within a response, which may be an important factor in the scoring of the *TOEFL* Integrated Writing tasks.

How can I get the most benefit from my *TOEFL* Practice Online Writing section score?
A number of circumstances could cause this score to be a poor predictor of the scores human raters would have assigned your responses. Students who respond casually or carelessly to the writing tasks, such as by copying a pre-written text that is not based on the task, by responding in their native language, or by providing partial or incomplete responses, are more likely to receive inaccurate scores. On the other hand, students who respond to the tasks seriously, as they would during a *TOEFL iBT* testing situation, are more likely to obtain a score reflecting their performance on practice writing tasks.

SECTION 3: Writing

How does computer scoring work?

TOEFL Practice Online uses *e-rater* models that emulate the performance of trained *TOEFL* test essay readers. *TOEFL iBT* test essays are scored on a 5-point holistic scale. The essay is rated for its overall quality and receives a score from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). If your response is too brief to evaluate, you will receive an advisory notice indicating that no score will be assigned.

Please note that the score for very long essays (more than 1,000 words) may not be as reliable an estimate of performance as the scores for other essays. This is because essays from the *TOEFL iBT* test were used to construct the scoring models and very few long essays were available. Essays in the *TOEFL iBT* test, which are scored by human readers, can be of any length, although very long essays are rarely submitted.

Your written responses to each of the two speaking questions are sent to ETS, where they are analysed by the *e-rater* engine. The *e-rater* engine scores for the two tasks are then added together. The final score is converted to a 0-30 scale.

Is my *TOEFL* Practice Online Writing section score a prediction of my score on the *TOEFL iBT* test Writing section?

While these practice materials are designed to help you better prepare for the *TOEFL iBT* test, the score you receive on the practice materials may not be the same as what you would receive on the actual test. Studies have not yet been completed to compare performance on the *TOEFL* Practice Online Writing section and the *TOEFL iBT* test Writing section. Until such studies are completed, it will not be known how closely *TOEFL* Practice Online Writing section scores predict *TOEFL iBT* test Writing section scores.

Why didn't my essay response receive a score?

Essay responses that are too brief to evaluate with confidence or do not indicate paragraph breaks properly constitute attempts to fool the scoring model and will not be scored by the *e-rater* engine. If you submit a response for scoring that meets one of these conditions, you will receive an advisory notice indicating that no score will be provided.

Note: If you receive an advisory notice, you are not entitled to a refund.

To learn more about *TOEFL*® Practice Online:

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