

TOEFL Prep

Listening Session 1



Listening Test 1

Test Format

Duration: Around 36 minutes

Skills: The TOEFL iBT test measures listening skills by using 3 lectures and 2 conversations.

Scoring: The raw score on the Listening section is converted to a scaled score of 0 to 30.

Conversations

- Last about 3 minutes
- Involve 2 speakers, one of whom is a student in a "service encounter" (with a librarian, for example) or in discussion with a professor
- Use pictures to indicate the setting and the roles of the speakers
- Are followed by 5 multiple-choice questions

Test takers will need to:

- Grasp the main ideas and the supporting details
- Understand the relationship between ideas
- Understand the speaker's attitude and purpose
- Comprehend the implications of the conversation



Listening Test 1

Academic lectures

- Last 4 to 6 minutes
- Are about 500 to 800 words long
- Consist of a professor's monologue or an interactive lecture
- Use pictures to indicate the setting and the role of the speaker(s)
- Are followed by 6 multiple-choice questions
- Include topics from life sciences, arts, physical sciences, and social sciences

Test takers will need to:

- Grasp the main ideas and the supporting details
- Follow the organization of the lecture
- Understand the relationship between ideas
- Understand the speaker's attitude and purpose



Listening Test 1

Types of Questions

Basic Comprehension

Type 1: Main Idea/Gist-content Questions ask about the topic of the lecture or conversation.

This main idea is expressed either directly or indirectly. If it is implicit, it should be clearly inferable.

Example: What are the speakers mainly discussing?

Answer: A research project on climate change

Type 2: Gist-purpose Questions focus on the why of a communication, rather than on the content, the what.

These types of questions occasionally refer to lectures, though they most often follow conversations.

Example: Why does the student come to see her professor?

Answer: To talk about a report she is writing

Type 3: Supporting Detail Questions ask about important details that support the main point.

Example: What does the professor offer to do for the man?

Answer: Review the first version of his paper



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Pragmatic Understanding

Moving beyond a request for information, these questions explore the speaker's intentions and attitudes, which often are not directly expressed. The context of the conversation and the tone of voice also carry meaning.

Type 4: Function Questions explore what the speaker hopes to accomplish, or what motivates the speaker. When a speaker asks a question, for example, is she actually asking for information, or is the question rhetorical (not requiring an answer)?

Example: Why does the professor mention the XYZ Affair and the Jay Treaty?

Answer: To encourage the student to learn the relationship between events

A wrong answer is often a possible interpretation, but not the correct one.



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Type 5: Attitude (Stance) Questions assess whether the test taker understands the attitude or position of the speaker. The question might ask about the speaker's feelings, likes or dislikes, or how certain s/he is about something. For example, the expression "yeah, right" can mean entirely different things, depending on how, where, and by whom it is said.

Example: What is the student's attitude about the people he currently works with?

Answer: He likes them

Part of a listening text might be repeated in a question to focus your attention on a phrase or utterance. Tone and context matter!



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Connecting Information

Can test takers integrate information to better understand the whole? These questions assess whether listeners are making connections between or among pieces of information, and whether they can then use this knowledge to make inferences, draw conclusions, or perform other vital communication functions.

Type 6: Organization Questions are usually asked about lectures rather than conversations. Though they are often straightforward, asking about overall organization, they can also ask how a particular statement connects to the whole. They might, for example, highlight a speaker's rhetorical statement, and test takers will need to recognize when a speaker is digressing, giving an example, or shifting from general to specific information.

Example: Why does the professor tell the student about the appointment at the doctor's office?

Answer: To demonstrate a way of remembering things.



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Type 7: Connecting Content Questions assess whether test takers can identify the relationship between pieces of information, for example, cause and effect. In addition, listeners might have to classify items in categories.

Example: What comparison does the professor make between Guatemala and Mexico?

Answer: The length of their coastlines

Type 8: Making Inference Questions determine whether a listener can make proper inferences (draw conclusions, make generalizations, predict outcomes) based on the evidence presented in the passage.

Example: What does the man imply about the reference books he has already looked at?

Answer: They do not list population by city (He never says this outright, but it is clear he has not found the information he needs.)



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Challenges Faced by Listeners

Native and non-native speakers rarely talk in a completely logical, uninterrupted flow. Listeners need to recognize interruptions, misunderstandings, clarifications, hesitations, and sentence fragments. They also should recognize:

- Digressions** ● when a speaker strays from the main point to make another point that may, at the time, seem unrelated.
- Asides** ● when a speaker makes a parenthetical statement that might reflect the speaker's attitude about the topic.
- Reduced speech** ● when a speaker connects or links words, in the process creating what sounds like a new word. For example, "What did you say?" becomes "Whadja say?"
- False starts** ● beginning a sentence and then starting again, as in "I'd like to talk...I'd like to talk about..."
- Mis-speaks** ● errors in pronunciation or grammar that the speaker may attempt to go back and correct.



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Tips to Improve Your Listening Skills

1. Listen for expressions and vocabulary that tell you the type of information being given. Think carefully about the type of information that these phrases show:

- **opinion** — *I think, It appears that, It is thought that*
- **theory** — *in theory*
- **inference** — *therefore, then*
- **negatives** — *not, words that begin with "un-," "non-," "dis-" or "a-"*
- **fillers** — non-essential information — *uh, er, um*

2. Identify digressions — discussion of a different topic from the main topic — or jokes that are not important to the main lecture. It's OK not to understand these!



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3. Listen for signal words or phrases that connect ideas in order to recognize the relationship between ideas. Think carefully about the connection between ideas that these words show:

- **reasons** — *because, since*
- **results** — *as a result, so, therefore, thus, consequently*
- **examples** — *for example, such as*
- **comparisons** — *in contrast, than*
- **an opposing idea** — *on the other hand, however*

another idea — *furthermore, moreover, besides*

a similar idea — *similarly, likewise*

restatements of information — *in other words, that is*

conclusions — *in conclusion, in summary*



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4. Pay attention to the connections between examples.

- When you hear 2 details, identify the relationship between them.
- Write a sentence connecting the examples, using the appropriate connecting word.

5. Pay attention to intonation and other ways that speakers indicate that information is important. Important keywords are often:

- repeated
- paraphrased — repeated information but using different words
- said louder and clearer
- Stressed

Listen to how native English speakers divide long sentences into "thought groups" to make them easier to understand — a thought group is a spoken phrase or short sentence. Thought groups are separated by short pauses.

Listen to sets of thought groups to be sure you get the whole idea of the talk.

Listen for pauses between important points.

Listen for numbers you might hear in prices, times or addresses.

Listen for verbs and other expressions that show if an event is happening in the past, present or future.



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6. Become familiar with the organization or structure of academic lectures.
 - Pay attention to the difference between main ideas and details presented.
 - Listen for the general (main) ideas.
 - Pay attention to details — facts, examples, opinions.

7. Pay attention to the structure.
 - Lecture or presentation — introduction, body and conclusion
 - Narrative story — beginning, middle and end

8. Learn to recognize different styles of organization.
 - Theory and evidence
 - Steps of a process
 - Cause and effect
 - Comparison of 2 things



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Listening Section Directions

The Listening section measures your ability to understand conversations and lectures in English. You will hear each conversation and lecture only one time. After each conversation or lecture, you will hear some questions about it. Answer all questions based on what the speakers state or imply.

You may take notes while you listen. You may use your notes to help you answer the questions.

Most questions have four possible answers. In some questions, you will see this icon: This means that you will hear, but not see, part of the question.

Some questions have special directions, which appear in a gray box. Most questions are worth one point. If a question is worth more than one point, special directions will indicate how many points you can receive.

You have approximately **36 minutes** to complete the Listening Section. This includes the time for listening to the conversations and lectures and for answering the questions.



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1. What are the students mainly discussing?
 - A. The classes that they are taking
 - B. The theatre program at their school
 - C. The woman's interest in an internship
 - D. The man's experience in a law firm
2. What does the woman like about theatre?
 - A. The chance to meet interesting people
 - B. The opportunity to improve her acting
 - C. The efficiency of theatre management
 - D. The entire atmosphere of theatre
3. What is the woman's opinion of her own acting ability?
 - A. She thinks she needs more acting experience.
 - B. She is excited about learning new acting skills.
 - C. She thinks she is not very skilled at acting.
 - D. She thinks she is better at acting than directing.
4. Why does the man say this?
 - A. To state what he likes about the theatre
 - B. To learn more about the woman's interests
 - C. To imply that the woman should be a director
 - D. To compliment the woman on her abilities



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5. What does the man suggest the woman do?

Click on two answers.

- A. Talk to her adviser
- B. Observe the director
- C. Take an acting class
- D. Write to the theatre

6. Why does the student go to see the professor?

- A. He needs advice about a problem with his house.
- B. He wants to discuss an idea for a paper.
- C. He is confused about an article that he read.
- D. He would like to enroll in her geology course.

7. What topic is the man mainly interested in?

- A. Some houses that are sliding
- B. Effects of groundwater removal
- C. How to build a sturdy home
- D. Why a famous tower is leaning

8. Why does the student say this?

- A. He would like to visit the Leaning Tower of Pisa.
- B. He thinks the local slide may have a similar cause.
- C. He wants to work as an engineer in tall buildings.
- D. He needs information that he missed due to absence



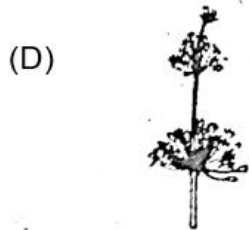
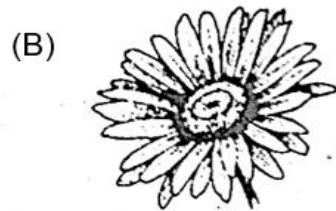
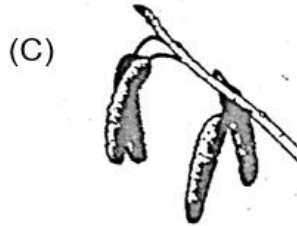
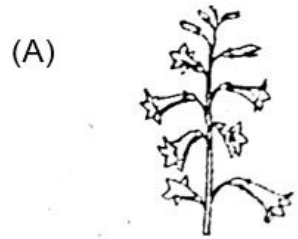
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9. According to the professor, where are mudslides most common?
- A. 30 feet beneath the earth's surface
 - B. On slopes of 27 to 45 degrees
 - C. In places where frozen ground melts
 - D. In the San Joaquin Valley of California
10. What will the man probably include in his research? Click on two answers.
- A. An article about groundwater removal
 - B. A visit to a leaning tower
 - C. A study of the area's geology
 - D. A search for other mudslides in the area
11. What aspects of flowers does the class mainly discuss? Click on two answers.
- A. The evolution of flowers
 - B. The organs of a flower
 - C. The composite family of flowers
 - D. The uses of flowers in art
12. Which part of the flower attracts insects and birds?
- A. Sepals
 - B. Petals
 - C. Stamens
 - D. Carpels



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13. Listen again to part of the discussion. Then answer the question. Why does the professor say this?
- A. To remind the student that his lab report is due today
 - B. To apologize for giving the student incorrect information
 - C. To announce that the location of the lab has moved
 - D. To imply that the student will see examples in the lab
14. Select the drawing that is most likely a member of the composite family.



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15. Based on the information in the discussion, indicate whether each statement below is true or not true. For each sentence, click in the correct box.

	YES	NO
Incomplete flowers do not have all four basic flower organs.		
The sunflower has one large symmetrical flower on its stalk.		
All varieties of the English daisy are white with a yellow centre.		
The arrangement of flowers on the stalk can help identify the plant's family.		

16. According to the professor, how did the daisy get its name?

- A. Its central disk resembles the human eye.
- B. Its flowers open at dawn, the "day's eye."
- C. It blooms for only one day each year.
- D. It was named for an Anglo-Saxon chief.



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17. What is the main idea of the lecture?
- A. Every human society is interested in sports.
 - B. Rules were developed to make sports fair
 - C. Sports contain many elements of hunting.
 - D. Complex cultures have violent sports.
18. Listen again to part of the discussion. Then answer the question. Why does the professor say this?
- A. To find out if the student did her homework
 - B. To contradict the student's answer
 - C. To learn about what food the student likes
 - D. To encourage the student to elaborate
19. According to the professor, why did the ancient Romans build the Coliseum?
- A. To make the hunt an entertainment for spectators
 - B. To compete with other cities in sports architecture
 - C. To put Rome at the center of Olympic Sports
 - D. To shock and offend the enemies of Rome
20. What point does the professor make about track and field sports?
- A. They were performed in the Coliseum of Rome.
 - B. They are shocking because an animal is killed.
 - C. They are the most popular sporting events today.
 - D. They involve skills originally used by hunters.



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21. Which sports contain a symbolic element of the kill?
- A. Fencing
 - B. Running
 - C. Baseball
 - D. Boxing
22. What does the professor imply about the negative element of sports?
- A. People prefer sports with a strong negative element.
 - B. The concept of sportsmanship makes sports less negative.
 - C. Today, only blood sports contain a negative element.
 - D. Sports will become even more negative in the future.
23. What is the talk mainly about?
- A. Epidemics around the world
 - B. Why diseases change over time
 - C. How epidemiologists gather data
 - D. Experimental studies of diseases
24. What factors do epidemiologists study?
Click on two answers.
- A. What causes outbreaks of a disease
 - B. Different names for the same disease
 - C. How diseases spread through populations
 - D. Stages in the treatment of a disease



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25 – 26. Based on the information in the talk, indicate whether each sentence below describes Descriptive, Observational, or Experimental epidemiology.

For each sentence, click in the correct box. **This question is worth 2 points.**

	Descriptive	Observational	Experimental
Statistics are used to describe the trend of a disease over time.			
Researchers intervene to test a hypothesis about cause and effect.			
Researchers examine the eating habits of sick and well people.			
A treatment group is compared with a non-treatment group.			



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27. Why do epidemiologists often study two groups of people?
- A. To learn why some people get a disease and others do not
 - B. To compare different people's attitudes towards work
 - C. To explain why some people take better care of themselves
 - D. To understand cultural differences in approaches to disease
28. Listen again to part of the talk. Then answer the question. Why does the speaker talk about her own work?
- A. To show how one organization uses various approaches to epidemiology
 - B. To describe her organization's efforts to discover a cure for AIDS
 - C. To inform the students that she prefers doing research to giving lectures
 - D. To encourage students to work at her organization after they graduate



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29. What is playing by ear?
- A. Listening to music through ear phones
 - B. Playing an instrument that is held up to the ear
 - C. Paying attention to what the teacher says
 - D. Learning to play music without reading notation
30. Listen again to part of the talk. Then answer the question. Why does the professor ask this?
- A. To suggest that all children should study music
 - B. To introduce the main point he wants to make
 - C. To find out if everyone in class can read music
 - D. To review material for an examination



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31. According to the professor, when should children learn to read musical notation? Click on two answers.
- A. When they first learn how to play an instrument
 - B. When a group of children play music together
 - C. When the music is too complex to learn by ear
 - D. When they are ready to play in front of an audience
32. According to the professor, why should a music teacher play the score for a child the first time?
- A. To demonstrate how the printed notes translate into music
 - B. To suggest that the score can be played in different styles
 - C. To allow the child to memorize the score by listening
 - D. To show the child that the teacher is an excellent player



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33. According to the professor, what is the natural order for children to learn music? Drag each sentence to the space where it belongs.
- A. Learn how to read standard notation.
 - B. Learn how to play the instrument by ear.
 - C. Learn how to play by chord symbols.

1	
2	
3	

34. What does the professor imply about the three methods of playing music?
- A. Each method is appropriate for some students.
 - B. There is no reason to learn all three methods.
 - C. The best method is playing by standard notation.
 - D. Students should use the teacher's favourite method





Thank you