

## Listening Comprehension Practice Questions — Section 1

The **Listening Comprehension** section tests your ability to understand both short and long conversations in English. The section contains recorded material that is similar to what you might hear if you were with a group of students at an English-speaking college or university. The language includes

- vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to spoken English
- special grammatical constructions used in speech

### Directions and Practice Questions

Directions and examples of the types of questions you will find in the **Listening Comprehension** section of the *TOEFL*® test are below.

There are three parts to this section, with special directions for each part. Answer all questions based on what is stated or implied by the speakers you hear.

Do **not**:

- take notes or write in your test book at any time
- turn the pages until you are told to do so.

### Part A

**Directions:** In Part A, you will hear short conversations between two people. After each conversation, you will hear a question about the conversation. The conversations and questions will not be repeated. After you hear a question, read the four possible answers in your test book and choose the best answer. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

Sample Answer



*Here is an example.*

**On the recording, you will hear:**

- (woman) *I don't like this painting very much.*  
(man) *Neither do I.*  
(narrator) *What does the man mean?*

**In your test book, you will read:**

- A. He doesn't like the painting either.
- B. He doesn't know how to paint.
- C. He doesn't have any paintings.
- D. He doesn't know what to do.

You learn from the conversation that neither the man nor the woman likes the painting. The best answer to the question, "What does the man mean?" is A, "He doesn't like the painting either." Therefore, the correct choice is A.

### **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**1. You will hear:**

- (man) *Shall I lock up the computer lab now before I go home?*  
(woman) *Don't bother. I'm not leaving for a while, I can check it on my way out.*  
(narrator) *What will the woman probably do?*

- You will read:**
- A. Lock the computer lab later.
  - B. Leave with the man.
  - C. Buy a new lock for the computer lab.
  - D. Show the man where the lab is.

**2. You will hear:**

- (man) *Do you mind if I turn the television off?*  
(woman) *Well, I'm in the middle of watching a program.*  
(narrator) *What does the woman imply?*

- You will read:**
- A. The man should watch the program too.
  - B. The man should leave the television on.
  - C. The program will be over soon.
  - D. She'll watch television later.

**3. You will hear:**

- (woman) *I heard the math requirements for graduation are being changed.*

- (man) *Yes. And I may be short one course.*  
(narrator) *What does the man mean?*

- You will read:**
- A. He isn't sure what course to take.
  - B. The math course is too short.
  - C. He may not meet the graduation requirements.
  - D. The graduation date has been changed.

## Part B

**Directions:** In this part of the test you will hear longer conversations. After each conversation you will hear several questions. The conversations and questions will not be repeated.

After you hear a question, read the four possible answers in your test book and choose the best answer. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

Remember, you are **not** allowed to take notes or write in your test book.

## SAMPLE CONVERSATION AND PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (narrator) Questions 4 through 7. Listen to a conversation about a trip.
- (man) Are you ready for "The Big Apple"?
- (woman) Excuse me?
- (man) You know, New York City. You are going to New York with us, aren't you? I wanted to show everybody around my old neighborhood.
- (woman) Oh...sure! I wouldn't miss it especially when the tour guide is a native New Yorker.
- (man) I thought we could start at the Museum of Modern Art. Right now there's an exhibit on twentieth-century American painters.
- (woman) Fine with me...but what were you saying about...a big apple?
- (man) "The Big Apple." It's a nickname for New York. I think I heard once that it started with jazz musicians in the 20's.
- (woman) Oh.
- (man) Whenever they played a concert in a city, they called that city an "apple." In those days, New York was the biggest city in the country, so they called it "The Big Apple."
- (woman) Hey, I have an idea! Let's go to a jazz club while we're there.
- (man) Sounds good.

### Questions:

#### 4. You will hear:

(narrator) What is the man planning to see?

- You will read:
- A. An art exhibit.
  - B. A Broadway play.
  - C. A modern dance production.
  - D. An opera.

**5. You will hear:**

**(narrator)**

*What can be inferred about the man?*

**You will read:**

- A. He is a jazz musician.
- B. He wants to join the woman's club.
- C. He is in his twenties.
- D. He was born in New York.

**6. You will hear:**

**(narrator)**

*What does the word "Apple" in the phrase "The Big Apple" refer to?*

**You will read:**

- A. An instrument.
- B. A city.
- C. A theater.
- D. A concert.

**7. You will hear:**

**(narrator)**

*Who gave New York its nickname?*

**You will read:**

- A. Painters.
- B. Tour guides.
- C. Musicians.
- D. Grocers.

**Part C**

**Directions:** In this part of the test you will hear several talks. After each talk, you will hear some questions. The talks and questions will not be repeated.

After you hear a question, read the four possible answers in your test book and choose the best answer. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

*Here is an example.*

**On the recording, you will hear:**

**(narrator)**

*Listen to an instructor talk to his class about a television program.*

*I'd like to tell you about an interesting TV program that'll be shown this coming Thursday. It'll be on from 9 to 10 p.m. on Channel 4. It's part of a series called "Mysteries of Human Biology." The subject of the program is the human brain — how it functions and how it can malfunction. Topics that will be covered are dreams, memory, and depression. These topics are illustrated with outstanding computer animation that makes the explanations easy to follow. Make an effort to see this show. Since we've been studying the nervous system in class, I know you'll find it very helpful.*

**(man)**

Sample Answer

- A  B  C  D

**Here is an example.**

**You will hear:**

**(narrator)** *What is the main purpose of the program?*

**In your test book, you will read:**

- A. To demonstrate the latest use of computer graphics.
- B. To discuss the possibility of an economic depression.
- C. To explain the workings of the brain.
- D. To dramatize a famous mystery story.

The best answer to the question, "What is the main purpose of the program?" is C, "To explain the workings of the brain." Therefore, the correct choice is C.

**Sample Answer**



**Here is another example.**

**You will hear:**

**(narrator)** *Why does the speaker recommend watching the program?*

**In your test book, you will read:**

- A. It is required of all science majors.
- B. It will never be shown again.
- C. It can help viewers improve their memory skills.
- D. It will help with course work.

The best answer to the question, "Why does the speaker recommend watching the program?" is D, "It will help with course work." Therefore, the correct choice is D. Remember, you are **not** allowed to take notes or write in your test book.

## **PRACTICE TALK AND PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**(narrator)**

*Questions 8 through 10. Listen to a talk about animal behavior. Today's discussion is about a common animal reaction — the yawn. The dictionary defines a yawn as "an involuntary reaction to fatigue or boredom." That's certainly true for human yawns, but not necessarily for animal yawns. The same action can have quite different meanings in different species. For example, some animals yawn to intimidate intruders on their territory. Fish and lizards are examples of this. Hippos use yawns when they want to settle a quarrel. Observers have seen two hippos yawn at each other for as long as two hours before they stop quarreling. As for social animals like baboons or lions — they yawn to establish the pecking order within social groups, and lions often yawn to calm social tensions. Sometimes these animals yawn for a strictly physiological reason — that is, to increase oxygen levels. And curiously enough, when they yawn for a physical reason like that, they do what humans do — they try to stifle the yawn by looking away or by covering their mouths.*

**(woman)**

**Questions:**

**8. You will hear:**

**(narrator)**

*What is the speaker's main point?*

**You will read:**

- A. Animals yawn for a number of reasons.
- B. Yawning results only from fatigue or boredom.
- C. Human yawns are the same as those of other animals.
- D. Only social animals yawn.

**9. You will hear:**

**(narrator)**

*According to the speaker, when are hippos likely to yawn?*

**You will read:**

- A. When they are swimming.
- B. When they are quarreling.
- C. When they are socializing.
- D. When they are eating.

**10. You will hear:**

**(narrator)**

*What physiological reason for yawning is mentioned?*

**You will read:**

- A. To exercise the jaw muscles.
- B. To eliminate fatigue.
- C. To get greater strength for attacking.
- D. To gain more oxygen.

## Structure and Written Expression Practice Questions

### — Section 2

The **Structure and Written Expression** section contains sentences that test your knowledge of important structural and grammatical elements of standard written English. These sentences include a variety of topics and give no particular advantage to individuals in any specific field of study.

When topics have a national context, they refer to the United States or Canadian history, culture, art, or literature. However, you do not need to have a prior knowledge of these contexts to answer the structural or grammatical points being tested.

### Directions and Practice Questions for Section 2

Following are directions and examples of the types of questions you will find in the **Structure and Written Expression** section of the *TOEFL®* test. If you would like to see the correct answers for the Structure and Written Expression questions, use the [answer key](#) to check your answers.

This section is designed to measure your ability to recognize language that is appropriate to use in standard written English. There are two types of questions in this section, with special directions for each type.

### Structure

**Directions:** Questions 1–4 are incomplete sentences. Beneath each sentence you will see four words or phrases, marked A, B, C and D. Choose the **one** word or phrase that **best** completes the sentence. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

**Look at the following examples:**

**Example 1**

Geysers have often been compared to volcanoes \_\_\_\_\_ they both emit hot liquids from below the Earth's surface.

1. due to
2. because
3. in spite of
4. regardless of

The sentence should read, "Geysers have often been compared to volcanoes because they both emit hot liquids from below the Earth's surface." Therefore, you should choose answer B.

**Example II**

During the early period of ocean navigation, \_\_\_\_\_ any need for sophisticated instruments and techniques.

1. so that hardly
2. where there hardly was
3. hardly was
4. there was hardly

The sentence should read, "During the early period of ocean navigation, there was hardly any need for sophisticated instruments and techniques." Therefore, you should choose answer D.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Refrigerating meats \_\_\_\_\_ the spread of bacteria.
  - A. retards
  - B. retarding
  - C. to retard
  - D. is retarded
2. Throughout the animal kingdom, \_\_\_\_\_ bigger than the elephant.
  - A. whale is only the
  - B. only the whale is
  - C. is the whale only
  - D. only whale is the
3. The fact \_\_\_\_\_ money orders can usually be easily cashed has made them a popular form of payment.
  - A. of
  - B. that
  - C. is that
  - D. which is
4. The first article of the United States Constitution gives Congress \_\_\_\_\_ to pass laws.
  - A. the power
  - B. has the power
  - C. the power is
  - D. of the power



## Written Expression

**Directions:** In questions 5–10, each sentence has four underlined words or phrases. The four underlined parts of the sentence are marked A, B, C and D. Identify the one underlined word or phrase that must be changed in order for the sentence to be correct. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

Look at the following examples:

### Example I

Guppies are sometimes call rainbow fish because  
of the males' bright colors.  
A B C D

### Sample Answer

B  C  D

The sentence should read, "Guppies are sometimes called rainbow fish because of the males' bright colors." Therefore, you should choose answer A.

### Example II

Serving several term in Congress, Shirley  
Chisholm became an important United States  
politician.  
A B C D

### Sample Answer

A  B  C  D

The sentence should read, "Serving several terms in Congress, Shirley Chisholm became an important United States politician." Therefore, you should choose answer B.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

5. Electrical disturbances on Earth are frequently caused with storms  
A B C  
on the surface of the sun.  
D
6. Inventor Granville Woods received him first patent on January 3,  
A B  
1884, for a steam boiler furnace.  
C D
7. A deficient of folic acid is rarely found in humans because the  
A B C  
vitamin is contained in a wide variety of foods.  
D
8. The gopher digs with the big strong claws of its two front foot  
A B C  
and with its overhanging front teeth.  
D
9. An internationally famous ballerina, Maria Tallchief demonstrated  
A B  
that the quality of ballet in North America could equal those of the  
C D  
ballet in Europe.
10. As two nuclei move closer together, their mutual electrostatic  
A B  
potential energy becomes more large and more positive.  
C D

## Reading Comprehension Practice Questions — Section 3

The **Reading Comprehension** section contains reading passages and questions about the passages. The questions are about information that is stated or implied in the passage and about some of the specific words in the passages. Because many English words have more than one meaning, it is important to remember that these questions concern the meaning of a word or phrase within the context of the passage.

### Directions and Practice Questions for Reading Comprehension

Directions and examples of the types of questions you will find in the **Reading Comprehension** section of the *TOEFL*® test follow. Use the [answer key](#) to see the correct answers for the Reading Comprehension questions.

Section 3 measures your ability to read and understand short passages similar in topic and style to those that students are likely to encounter in North American universities and colleges. This section contains reading passages and questions about the passages.

**Directions:** In the Reading Comprehension section you will read several passages. Each one is followed by a number of questions about it. You are to choose the **one** best answer, A, B, C or D, to each question. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

#### Sample Answer

A  B  C  D

Answer all questions about the information in a passage on the basis of what is **stated** or **implied** in that passage.

#### Read the following passage:

The railroad was not the first institution to impose regularity on society, or to draw attention to the importance of precise timekeeping. For as long as merchants have set out their wares at *Lin*edaybreak and communal festivities have been celebrated, people (5) have been in rough agreement with their neighbors as to the time of day. The value of this tradition is today more apparent than ever. Were it not for public acceptance of a single yardstick of time, social life would be unbearably chaotic: the massive daily transfers of goods, services, and information would proceed in fits and (10)starts; the very fabric of modern society would begin to unravel.

### Example I

What is the main idea of the passage?

1. In modern society we must make more time for our neighbors.
2. The traditions of society are timeless.
3. An accepted way of measuring time is essential for the smooth functioning of society.
4. Society judges people by the times at which they conduct certain activities.

The main idea of the passage is that societies need to agree about how time is measured in order to function smoothly. Therefore, you should choose answer C.

### Example II

In line 6, the phrase "this tradition" refers to

1. the practice of starting the business day at dawn
2. friendly relations between neighbors
3. the railroad's reliance on time schedules
4. people's agreement on the measurement of time

The phrase "this tradition" refers to the preceding clause, "people have been in rough agreement with their neighbors as to the time of day." Therefore, you should choose answer D.

### Now begin work on the questions.

#### PRACTICE PASSAGE

The Alaska pipeline starts at the frozen edge of the Arctic Ocean.

It stretches southward across the largest and northernmost state in the United States, ending at a remote ice-free seaport village nearly

*Line*800 miles from where it begins. It is massive in size and extremely

(5) complicated to operate.

The steel pipe crosses windswept plains and endless miles of delicate tundra that tops the frozen ground. It weaves through crooked canyons, climbs sheer mountains, plunges over rocky crags, makes its way through thick forests, and passes over or

(10)under hundreds of rivers and streams. The pipe is 4 feet in diameter,

and up to 2 million barrels (or 84 million gallons) of crude oil can be pumped through it daily.

Resting on H-shaped steel racks called "bents," long sections of the pipeline follow a zigzag course high above the frozen earth.

(15) Other long sections drop out of sight beneath spongy or rocky ground and return to the surface later on. The pattern of the pipeline's up-and-down route is determined by the often harsh demands of the arctic and subarctic climate, the tortuous lay of the land, and the varied compositions of soil, rock, or permafrost

(20) (permanently frozen ground). A little more than half of the pipeline is elevated above the ground. The remainder is buried anywhere from 3 to 12 feet, depending largely upon the type of terrain and the properties of the soil.

One of the largest in the world, the pipeline cost approximately (25) \$8 billion and is by far the biggest and most expensive construction project ever undertaken by private industry. In fact, no single business could raise that much money, so 8 major oil companies formed a consortium in order to share the costs. Each company controlled oil rights to particular shares of land in the oil fields and

(30) paid into the pipeline-construction fund according to the size of its holdings. Today, despite enormous problems of climate, supply shortages, equipment breakdowns, labor disagreements, treacherous terrain, a certain amount of mismanagement, and even theft, the Alaska pipeline has been completed and is operating.

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## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. The passage primarily discusses the pipeline's
  1. operating costs
  2. employees
  3. consumers

4. construction
  
2. The word "it" in line 4 refers to
  1. pipeline
  2. ocean
  3. state
  4. village
  
3. According to the passage, 84 million gallons of oil can travel through the pipeline each
  1. day
  2. week
  3. month
  4. year
  
4. The phrase "Resting on" in line 13 is closest in meaning to
  1. Consisting of
  2. Supported by
  3. Passing under
  4. Protected with
  
5. The author mentions all of the following as important in determining the pipeline's route EXCEPT the
  1. climate
  2. lay of the land itself
  3. local vegetation
  4. kind of soil and rock
  
6. The word "undertaken" in line 26 is closest in meaning to
  1. removed
  2. selected
  3. transported
  4. attempted
  
7. How many companies shared the costs of constructing the pipeline?
  1. 3
  2. 4
  3. 8
  4. 12
  
8. The word "particular" in line 29 is closest in meaning to
  1. peculiar
  2. specific
  3. exceptional

4. equal
  
9. Which of the following determined what percentage of the construction costs each member of the consortium would pay?
  1. How much oil field land each company owned
  2. How long each company had owned land in the oil fields
  3. How many people worked for each company
  4. How many oil wells were located on the company's land
  
10. Where in the passage does the author provide a term for an earth covering that always remains frozen?
  1. Line 3
  2. Line 13
  3. Line 19
  4. Line 32

## **Answer Key for Listening Comprehension**

### **Section 1 — Listening Comprehension, Parts A, B and C**

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. A
5. D
6. B
7. C
8. A
9. B
10. D

## **Answer Key for Structure and Expression**

### **Section 2 — Structure and Written Expression**

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. C
6. A
7. A
8. C
9. D
10. D



## Answer Key for Reading Comprehension

### Section 3 — Reading Comprehension

1. D
2. A
3. A
4. B
5. C
6. D
7. C
8. B
9. A
10. C