

# Standardized Testing Preparation: The TOEFL

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## Introduction

This packet reviews basic testing strategies for the TOEFL. It is highly recommended to use this packet in a Conversation Partner session, but it can also be used for self-study. Start with general vocabulary, speaking and reading practice for comprehensive language review relevant to multiple tests. Further practice can be found under “Web Resources.”

All answers to grammar exercises are included. You will also need headphones and internet access for some of the listening and speaking prompts.

The TOEIC and IELTS packets also offer questions that are similar in nature and could be used for additional practice.

## Which test should I take?

I am a non-native speaker applying to...

An undergraduate program in the U.S.	TOEFL; ACT or SAT	TOEFL is more commonly accepted in U.S. universities, although some schools now take the IELTS too.
An undergraduate program in the UK, New Zealand, or Australia	IELTS and Cambridge English Language Assessment tests	As of 2014, the British council is no longer accepting TOEFL or TOEIC scores to obtain UK visas!
A graduate program in the U.S.	GRE; TOEFL	The GRE is the test required for most native and non-native speakers applying to graduate level programs. In addition, non-native speakers may be required to take the TOEFL or IELTS exam.
A graduate program in the UK, New Zealand, or Australia	Cambridge English Language Assessment	As of 2014, the British council is no longer accepting TOEFL or TOEIC scores to obtain UK visas!
Business school	GMAT; TOEIC	The TOEIC is similar to the TOEFL and IELTS, but it specifically tests workplace English.
Law school	LSAT	The LSAT is taken by native and non-native speakers applying to law school.

## Philadelphia Testing Sites and Fees

**TOEFL ibt: \$180** Test dates usually offered twice a month

Prometric Testing Center  
 601 Walnut Street  
 Curtis Center  
 Suite 150 West  
 United States of America  
 19106  
 215-238-8410

[https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/centers\\_dates/](https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/centers_dates/)

## Creating a TOEFL Study Plan

There are a few different ways to study for the test. First, we recommend the following:

1. **First, take a full-length practice test to identify areas that are most difficult for you.** You may need to study some portions of the test more than others. Plan to take at least one practice test every 1-2 weeks to familiarize yourself with the test format.
2. **When taking practice tests, pretend it is a real test.** Go to a room with no distractions and if taking a paper-based version of the test, set a timer to follow the exact time allotment of the actual test.
3. **We also recommend purchasing your own, up-to-date test prep book** (check the publication date!). ETS has many book recommendations, as does Amazon. Although there are a lot of online resources, it's helpful to have a book that you can write in and highlight.
4. **Take at least one “rest day” to read fun things in English that aren't study materials.** Read news articles, watch a movie in English, or try reading a short story or poem (Here's a local literary magazine with fiction stories and poems: <http://www.philadelphiastories.org/>)

### **Plan 1: Devote each week to a different portion of the test.**

Example:

Week 1: Speaking

Week 2: Listening

Week 3: Writing

Week 4: Vocabulary (it actually helps to study a little vocabulary each week, since you likely won't remember words if you memorize them quickly and in large quantities).

### **Plan 2: Combine questions from each section for a daily study plan.**

Here's one way you could structure a daily study plan that addresses each section of the test.

**Daily Plan: Study 1-2 new vocabulary words a day from a TOEFL list (10 per week).** Don't just memorize the definitions; practice using them in actual sentences! Most dictionaries have examples of sentences.

**Study one listening and one speaking question, and outline or write one practice essay.** Take time to review the essay for grammatical issues. If you've forgotten a grammar rule, pick up a grammar textbook or go online and do a few practice grammar exercises.

**Learn one or two new idiomatic or transitional phrases a week.** A good list can be found here:

[http://www.elc.byu.edu/classes/buck/w\\_garden/classes/buck/transitions.html](http://www.elc.byu.edu/classes/buck/w_garden/classes/buck/transitions.html) and here:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/02/>

**Learn one or two Latin and Greek roots a week.** These are very helpful because even if you don't know a word's definition, you can guess its meaning if you know the root! A good list can be found here: <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/40406> and here: <http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/506.HTM>

**Online Study Plans:**

<http://toeflgoanywhere.org/toefl-practice#whats-your-study-personality> Using this website, figure out how you learn best, then download a free study guide.

The Magoosh TOEFL blog also has a one-month study plan: <http://magoosh.com/toefl/2013/one-month-toefl-study-schedule/>

Do NOT try to study the day before the test. Instead, just try watching a TV show you like in English or reading a short news article to keep yourself immersed in the language.

## General Testing Vocabulary

This page includes vocabulary that is good to study for any standardized test, as well as example sentences that might be used on a test.

**Affect and effect:** How does the globalization of English **affect** other languages?

According to the passage, what are the long-term **effects** of radiation exposure?

**Analogy:** In the passage above, “a pack of wolves” is an **analogy** for what?

**Classification:** The Dewey Decimal system is a form of book **classification** used in libraries.

**Conclude:** What did the researchers **conclude** at the end of their study?

**Condition:** What **conditions** must be met for a number to be prime?

**Connotation:** In the passage, fast food has a negative **connotation** with laziness.

**Determine:** How did scientists **determine** the origin of the fossils?

**Discourse:** In sentence 5, the phrase “academic **discourse**” refers to language used in the classroom.

**Draw conclusions:** We can **draw conclusions** about the author’s emotions based on his word choice.

**e.g.** (for example) Legumes (**e.g.**, beans and lentils) contain healthy fats.

**Genre:** What is the **genre** of the passage?

**i.e.** (in other words): The recent boycott (**i.e.**, the embargo on imported goods) has slowed business.

**Impact:** According to the argument above, how does pollution **impact** the fishing industry?

**Metaphor:** In the text, “the lion” is a **metaphor** for the government.

**Passage:** What can we infer from this **passage**?

**Significant:** What **significant** changes does the author propose?

**Symbol/symbolize:** What does the color black **symbolize** in the passage?

**Text:** What is Smith’s analysis of the **text**?

**Tone:** Which sentence below proves that the author’s tone is humorous?

**Valid/Invalid:** If  $a=c$ , which argument is **invalid**?

**Period:** In what time **period** does the story take place?

## General Testing Speaking Practice

For this section, you will need headphones and/or a quiet space and an internet connection.

Most of these practice questions use 3-minute TED talks and Upworthy videos. Note that there are a variety of accents: non-native, American, and British.

### Practice 1:

Ariana Huffington: How to succeed? Get more sleep

[http://www.ted.com/talks/arianna\\_huffington\\_how\\_to\\_succeed\\_get\\_more\\_sleep](http://www.ted.com/talks/arianna_huffington_how_to_succeed_get_more_sleep)

Based on what the speaker says in the video, decide if the statements below A: support the speaker's claims B: do not support the speaker's claims or C: information is not given.

1. Many people think that sleep deprivation is a sign of being productive and busy.
2. People are making poor decisions because they get too much sleep.
3. Having a high I.Q. means that you're a good leader.

### Practice 2:

Lee Cronin: Print your own medicine

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lee\\_cronin\\_print\\_your\\_own\\_medicine](http://www.ted.com/talks/lee_cronin_print_your_own_medicine)

True or False?

The 3-D printer in the talk is being used to print:

- a. Fabrics
- b. Beakers and test tubes
- c. Food

How will the 3-D printer make medicine?

- a. Using special ink that prints molecules
- b. Using hair samples
- c. Using a superbug

Someday, the 3-D printer will be able to print medicine specific to a person by using:

- a. That person's special ink
- b. That person's DNA
- c. That person's image

**Practice 3: True or False**

Lalitesh Katragadda: Making Maps to Fight Disaster, Build Economies

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lalitesh\\_katragadda\\_making\\_maps\\_to\\_fight\\_disaster\\_build\\_economies](http://www.ted.com/talks/lalitesh_katragadda_making_maps_to_fight_disaster_build_economies)

1. Only 20% of the world was mapped in 2005.
2. Google Map Maker allows people to map things locally.
3. Maps could help in times of disaster by revealing hospitals and unknown roads.

**Practice 4: Matching**

1. GPS
2. Characteristics of storms
3. Names of storms in 2010
4. Early origins of humanizing storms
5. Sixth sense

- A. Greek gods
- B. Alex, Bonnie, Collin
- C. Service area in 0.5 miles
- D. Mind reading
- E. Dangerous and unexpected

## More Advanced Listening Practice

### Short Answer Listening Practice 5

Sarah Parcak: Archeology from Space

[http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_parcak\\_archeology\\_from\\_space](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_parcak_archeology_from_space)

- a. In what country was this research conducted?
- b. What kind of data was used to find an ancient city?
- c. What did the archeologists find five meters down underneath the mud?
- d. Who is being trained to use the satellite technology so that they can make discovers?

### Multiple Choice Listening Practice 6

Robin Nagle: What I discovered in New York City Trash

[http://www.ted.com/talks/robin\\_nagle\\_what\\_i\\_discovered\\_in\\_new\\_york\\_city\\_trash](http://www.ted.com/talks/robin_nagle_what_i_discovered_in_new_york_city_trash)

1. Who cleans up the trash in New York City?
  - a. Private companies
  - b. Volunteers
  - c. The Department of Sanitation
2. What is one reason that being a sanitation worker a dangerous job? Choose the best answer.
  - a. People throw away too much trash
  - b. Motorists do not pay attention when driving around garbage trucks
  - c. People ignore sanitation workers
3. What does the speaker suggest at the end of the talk?
  - a. Clean up your own trash
  - b. Pay sanitation workers more
  - c. Thank sanitation workers for what they do

Answer Key:

Practice 1:

1. A
2. B (people are making poor decisions because they are getting too little sleep, not too much)
3. B (The speaker says that having a high I.Q. does not mean you are a good leader)

Practice 2:

1. B. Beakers and test tubes
2. A. Using special ink that prints molecules
3. B. that person's DNA

Practice 3:

1. False (15% of the world was not mapped in 2005)
2. True
3. True

Practice 4:

- A: 4
- B: 3
- C: 1
- D: 5
- E: 2

Practice 5:

- a. Egypt
- b. Satellite data (or topography data)
- c. Pottery
- d. Young Egyptians

Practice 6:

1. C. Department of Sanitation
2. B. Motorists do not pay attention when driving around garbage trucks
3. C. Thank sanitation workers for what they do

## Practice Speaking Prompts

Listen to the video “Hannah Brencher: Love letters to strangers.”

[http://www.ted.com/talks/hannah\\_brencher\\_love\\_letters\\_to\\_strangers](http://www.ted.com/talks/hannah_brencher_love_letters_to_strangers)

Do you ever write letters? For whom do you write them and why?

Do you think letters are better than writing emails or texts? Why or why not?

## General Writing Practice

Look at a chart or graph and summarize information from the chart by selecting important features and comparing/contrasting them.

Read a statement about a specific topic and provide your opinion on the topic. Provide relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Should more money be put into space exploration? Why or why not?

## TOEFL Overview

The TOEFL iBT (internet-based test) is the most common test form used, although some countries still use the pBT (paper-based test). The test has a reading, speaking, listening, and writing section.

Reading: 60-80 Minutes (36-56 questions)

Listening: 60-90 minutes (34-51 questions)

Break (10 minutes)

Speaking: 20 minutes (6 tasks)

Writing: 50 minutes (2 tasks)

## Speaking Tips

For the speaking portion, you have 60 seconds to prepare and respond to a question. Do not use words that you do not know how to pronounce or properly use in a sentence. You lose points for incorrect pronunciation or wrong usage of idioms and vocabulary words.

Note that some questions will require you to read a passage, and some will require you to read a passage and then listen to two people discussing the topic.

To practice, set a timer and try answering some basic questions first.

Basic structure:

1. State your main opinion or argument
2. Provide 2-3 examples (use details to support your answer)
3. Brief concluding statement

As you get more practice, you can move on to the difficult questions.

## Sample questions

1. Who is an important figure in the history of your country? Explain why he/she is or was important.
2. Air pollution is a huge problem in many big cities. What are three ways that people can lessen pollution in their everyday life?
3. Online courses are becoming popular alternatives to studying in a classroom. Would you prefer to study online or in a class? Provide examples and details to support your answer.
4. Describe a hobby you love. Why is it so important to you? Why does it interest you?

**Example of a question and answer:**

*Reading books is one of my favorite hobbies because there is always something new and interesting to read.*

*First, reading is important to me because I can learn about new topics that I might not study in school. I can learn about new worlds, cultures, and vocabulary just from reading.*

*Second, I love to read because it reduces my stress. I love to enter a new world and follow the characters in their emotional journey.*

*Third, reading allows me to practice my English and better understand English grammar.*

*In conclusion, I never get bored while I'm reading. There are so many new worlds to explore.*

## Reading Sample Question

### **Despite Protests, Canada Approves Northern Gateway Oil Pipeline**

By Ian Austin

Excerpted from: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/18/business/energy-environment/canada-approves-northern-gateway-pipeline.html?ref=science&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/18/business/energy-environment/canada-approves-northern-gateway-pipeline.html?ref=science&_r=0)

- 1 The Canadian government's approval of a major pipeline running from the Alberta oil sands to a new port on the coast of British Columbia has intensified opposition from aboriginal groups, environmentalists and community advocates.
- 4 The Northern Gateway project, which the government approved on Tuesday as expected, would send heavy, oil-bearing bitumen to Asia, giving Canadian producers better access to the world markets. The pipeline, being built by Enbridge, has been championed by the federal government as a way to diversify Canada's energy industry from its current dependence on exports to the United States.
- 10 But opponents in British Columbia, who span the political spectrum, threatened to block the pipeline altogether. The fear is that the pipeline would make the province vulnerable to an oil spill, damaging the rugged and scenic coastline.
- 13 Tom Mulcair, the leader of the opposition New Democratic Party, said that Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative government had ignored broad public opinion.
- 16 "Stephen Harper continues to act as if this is 1948," Mr. Mulcair told reporters outside of the House of Commons. "You can no longer force pipelines from the top down." Calling oil tankers off the coast of British Columbia "madness," Mr. Mulcair said that the decision was a "severe threat to social order, social peace."

- 20 [In the statement](#), Greg Rickford, the minister of natural resources, acknowledged that Enbridge’s efforts to win over British Columbia and native groups had fallen short. “The proponent clearly has more work to do in order to fulfill the public commitment it has made to engage with aboriginal groups and local communities.”
- 25 The president and chief of Enbridge, Al Monaco, seemed to agree during a conference call with reporters. “The economic benefits are not enough to secure public support,” he said.
- 28 The company must meet about 100 conditions imposed by the regulator before construction begins. Mr. Monaco declined to say how long that would delay construction, but he suggested at one point that it would take at least four years.
- 31 The most pressing problem is addressing the concerns of the native Canadian tribes. About a decade ago, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that such native groups must be consulted and accommodated about projects that cross their land. The definition of both terms remains fuzzy, but most legal experts say that the native groups do not have a veto.
- 36 Still, such groups are preparing for a fight. Art Sterritt, the executive director of Coastal First Nations, an alliance of nine native groups opposed to the pipeline, said his organization would take legal action and form political alliances to block the project. On Monday, the Coastal First Nations formed a group with Unifor, formerly the Canadian Auto Workers union, and several environmental groups to quash the project.
- 42 The main issue for his members, Mr. Sterritt said, was the oil industry’s inability to demonstrate that it could effectively clean up coastal oil spills. If legal and political challenges are ultimately unsuccessful, Mr. Sterritt added, “our people will be out there stopping the bulldozers.”

**1. The word “championed” in line 7 is closest in meaning to:**

- a. Won
- b. Supported
- c. Competed
- d. Agreed

**2. In paragraph 9, why does the author include that the native groups must be consulted and accommodated?**

- a. To support the claim that environmentalists fear oil spills
- b. To support the economic benefits of the pipeline
- c. To explain why aboriginal groups have a stake in the discussion
- d. To explain why aboriginal groups are powerless

- 3. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 2 about the federal government's support of the pipeline?**
- a. The pipeline has full support
  - b. The pipeline will be built quickly with the help of the Northern Gateway project
  - c. Lessening U.S. imports will strengthen the Canadian economy
  - d. The Asian oil market is failing
- 4. According to paragraph 3, who opposes the construction of the pipeline?**
- a. Aboriginal groups
  - b. Politicians
  - c. Various stakeholders
  - d. The Northern Gateway project
- 5. The word "spectrum" on line 10 is closest in meaning to:**
- a. Range
  - b. Diversity
  - c. Level
  - d. Ratio
- 6. The word "pressing" on line 31 is closest in meaning to:**
- a. Forceful
  - b. Desperate
  - c. Urgent
  - d. Complex
- 7. According to paragraph 2, all of the following phrases are true EXCEPT:**
- a. Canada will now have access to Asian oil markets.
  - b. The Canadian government wants to diversify its energy industry.
  - c. The energy industry will stop exporting to the U.S.
  - d. Enbridge will be building the pipeline.
- 8. The phrase "from the top down" on lines 17 and 18 is closest in meaning to:**
- a. Power relationships that move from the weakest to the strongest group
  - b. Lying face-down
  - c. Analyzing in detail
  - d. Power relationships that move from the strongest to the weakest group
- 9. The word "fuzzy" on line 34 is closest in meaning to:**
- a. Furry
  - b. Unclear
  - c. Mysterious
  - d. Diverging

**10. Paragraph 5 supports which of the following statements?**

- a. Building the pipeline could lead to an oil spill.
- b. The decision-making process used to approve the pipeline is antiquated.
- c. The pipeline must be approved from the top down.
- d. Oil tankers off the coast of British Columbia are angry.

**11. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the following sentence?**

*The definition of both terms remains fuzzy, but most legal experts say that the native groups do not have a veto.*

Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- a. Although legal experts agree that native groups cannot overturn the decision, their other rights are clear.
- b. The native groups' rights are weak, but the native groups have legal rights.
- c. The native groups' rights are in disagreement, but the majority of legal experts agree that no one can oppose the vote.
- d. The native groups' rights remain unclear, but most legal experts agree that the native group cannot vote against the decision.

**12. According to the passage, who is opposed to the pipeline for environmental reasons?**

- a. Al Monaco
- b. Greg Rickford
- c. Steven Harper
- d. Art Sterritt

**13. Look at the four letters (A, B, C, and D) that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage in paragraph 6.**

*If the environment were harmed, this could reduce tourism to the region and also affect wildlife habitats.*

Where would the sentence best fit?

(A) But opponents in British Columbia, who span the political spectrum, threatened to block the pipeline altogether. (B) The fear is that the pipeline would make the province vulnerable to an oil spill, damaging the rugged and scenic coastline. (C)

Tom Mulcair, the leader of the opposition New Democratic Party, said that Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative government had ignored broad public opinion. (D)

Choose the place where the sentence fits best.

- a. Option A
- b. Option B
- c. Option C
- d. Option D

**14.** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the **THREE** answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

Write your answer choices in the spaces where they belong. You can write in the number of the answer choice or the whole sentence.

<b>A pipeline through Canada has been approved by the federal government, but faces opposition from environmentalists, aboriginal groups, and local communities.</b>
•
•
•

**Answer choices**

- (1) The government has elected to open up its world market by expanding exports to Asia, which will lessen its reliance on the U.S. for business.
- (2) Aboriginal communities have a stake in the decision, although the exact outcome is still unclear.
- (3) Local groups will be out there stopping bulldozers if the pipeline is built.
- (4) Aboriginal groups have a right to accommodations if certain projects cross their land.
- (5) Environmental groups fear that oil spills and damage to the landscape could result from the pipeline construction.
- (6) Enbridge and Northern Gateway Project were both approved by the government.

## TOEFL Writing: Integrated Tasks and Independent Tasks

Integrated tasks ask you to summarize and compare/contrast information. Learn paraphrasing skills to master these questions. You will have three minutes to read an academic text. Then you will listen to a lecture on the same topic. Take notes while you listen.

Independent tasks ask you to form your own opinions and evidence in response to a single question.

### General Tips:

1. **For note-taking, it's okay to abbreviate words so that you can write faster.** Focus on keywords, not whole sentences.

### Some note-taking shortcuts:

= equal to	ex.	Example
> greater than	b/n	between
<less than	w/o	without
 increase	w/	with
 decrease	b/c	because

2. **It's better to use intermediate vocabulary and grammar well than advanced language poorly.**
3. **Have a plan for how you will spend your 20 minutes writing.**

**20 Minute Essay Writing Plan:** 5 minutes (Plan), 15 minutes (Write), 5 minutes (Revise)

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First 2 minutes: Free Writing

*If you're stuck and have no idea what to write about, free writing can help you. Just write down any keywords or ideas you can think about related to the topic (don't try to organize them yet!).*

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2-3 Minutes: Outline

*Choose two or three ideas from your free writing. Now, think of one example or supporting evidence for each one.*

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15 Minutes: Write Essay

*Don't try to edit yet. Just focus on getting your ideas on paper. Focus on a clear introductory statement that summarizes your comparison of the lecture and the article. Don't ignore the conclusion! If you're running out of time, at least write a closing statement to summarize your argument(s).*

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5 Minutes: Edit

*Don't skip this step! Grammar counts in your essay score. Re-read your essay twice if you have time: once for content and once for grammar and spelling mistakes.*

### **Sample TOEFL Writing Questions:**

Integrated Task questions can be found at the links listed at the end of the packet, as well as the links below. There are not that many reliable test questions online, so it's best to go directly to [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) for practice integrated tasks or Youtube.

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[www.testden.com/toefl/writing.htm](http://www.testden.com/toefl/writing.htm)

<https://www.udemy.com/blog/toefl-writing-topics/>

#### **Youtube videos (include article and lecture):**

Subscribe to "Stanislav Alexandrov" channel:

- Writing TOEFL iBT Integrated Task 1 Text and Lecture:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn5tXZmLIXs>

Subscribe to "Nebraska Jones" channel:

- TOEFL Writing Task 1.0 (article can be found in "About" section of video)  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_8ZIGYnPOE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_8ZIGYnPOE)

Sample Independent Writing Questions

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1. When exercising, some people prefer team sports while others like individual sports. Which one do you prefer? Support your answer with details.
2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? All cities should ban cars from roads and only allow public transportation such as busses and trains.
3. The popularity of “fast food” continues to increase in American culture. How has that affected the way we think about food? Provide details to support your answer.
4. How has reality TV affected society? Give reasons to support your answer.
5. “It is better to tell a white lie than hurt someone with the truth.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Provide details to support your answer.
6. Many people prefer living in cities to living in the country. Why do you think some people prefer city life?
7. Your town wants to build a shopping mall next to your neighborhood. Do you support this decision? Why or why not?
8. What makes someone a good supervisor? Provide details to support your answer.

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## Top 100 Words to Know for the TOEFL

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**ABYSS**: a bottomless pit or very deep space (Example: Hell). It can also be used metaphorically to mean “endless”

Example:

His room was so messy that I couldn't find anything in the **abyss** of papers.

**ACQUIESCE**: agree to something without argument

Example:

The employees **acquiesced** to his commands because they feared losing their jobs.

**AFFABLE**: very friendly

Example:

She's an **affable** person with a warm smile.

**AFFLICTION**: pain or suffering

Example:

The cancer was an **affliction** that consumed his thoughts.

**AFFLUENT**: very wealthy

Example:

He's from an **affluent** family, so he has no sense of frugality.

**AGITATE**: to upset or disturb

Example:

The sick boy was **agitated** by the doctor's questions.

**AMBIGUOUS: UNCLEAR OR VAGUE**

Example:

The organization's beliefs are very **ambiguous**. Sometimes, they claim to support us, and other times, they disagree.

**ANNEX**: to attach or incorporate into an existing unit

Example:

The chapel was **annexed** to the main building several years ago.

**AQUEOUS**: of, like, or pertaining to water

Example:

Amphibians thrive in **aqueous** environments.

**ARDUOUS:** difficult or requiring effort

Example:

They began the **arduous** task of moving furniture into the new apartment.

**AROMA:** scent or odor (usually plant, spices, food, or candles)

Example:

The incense has a sweet **aroma** of vanilla and cinnamon.

**ATONE:** to pay for one's sins or make amends for a wrong

Example:

An important concept in Christianity is **atonement** for one's sins.

**AVARICE:** greedy for wealth; materialistic

Example:

The CEO was motivated by **avarice** when he decreased his employee's pay.

**BELLICOSE:** hostile or combative; eager to fight

Example:

The man's **bellicose** nature indicated how unhappy he was with the current political situation.

**CALISTHENICS:** exercises to build body strength, usually including gymnastics movements

Example:

All of the athletes were required to do **calisthenics** at the gym to improve strength and flexibility.

**CAPTOR:** someone who takes someone captive; a kidnapper or jailor

Example:

The prisoners tried desperately to escape their **captors**, but the building was well guarded.

**CONCOCT:** to digest or formulate (common noun form: concoction)

Example:

The bartender **concocts** new beverages based on his customers' likes and dislikes.

**DANGLE:** to hang loosely or swing

Example:

The apples **dangled** from their branches, waiting to be picked.

**DEPRIVE:** to take away or deny access to

Example:

The government continues to **deprive** its citizens of basic healthcare.

**DILIGENT:** hardworking; persistent

Example:

Successful medical students are very **diligent** in their studies.

**DISROBE:** undress

Example:

She **disrobed** and stepped into the hot bath.

**DOCILE:** easily managed, obedient

Example:

Most of the dogs are **docile** and well-trained.

**DOLEFUL:** full of grief; sad

Example:

She preferred to play **doleful** songs on her violin.

**DROUGHT:** a period of abnormally low rainfall; a famine or dry period

Example:

The country is facing one of the longest **droughts** in history with three months of no rain.

**DUBIOUS:** doubtful or questionable

Example:

The research project has **dubious** sources that lack credibility.

**DUMBFOUND:** to make someone perplexed or surprised (adjective: dumbfounded)

Example:

Movie critics were **dumbfounded** by the film's sudden success.

**EFFACE:** to erase or wipe out; to rub

Example:

They **effaced** the graffiti from the building.

**ELUCIDATE:** to make clear or explain; to clarify

Example:

The surgeon **elucidated** the purpose of the procedure to her patient.

**ENCHANT:** to charm by magic; gain control of by magical words or sorcery; to fascinate

Example:

In many fairy tales, a young princess is **enchanted** by a witch or sorcerer and must be rescued.

**ENDEAVOR:** an attempt or struggle

Example:

His latest business **endeavor** is a laundry delivery service to college students.

**ENDORSE:** to condone, support, authorize, or approve

Citizens Bank **endorses** the Phillies baseball team in exchange for public advertising.

**ENTHRALL:** to fascinate or take someone's complete attention

Example:

The botanical gardens **enthralled** her with their beautiful flowers and trees.

**EXPLOIT:** to manipulate something, to use something unfairly

Example:

The consulting firm **exploited** its new employee by giving him all of the worst clients.

**EXTENSIVE:** widespread; wide; far-reaching

Example:

Many universities now offer **extensive** support for their international students.

**EXTOL:** to praise or celebrate highly

Example:

The delegation **extolled** the soldier as a great hero who died for his country.

**FLIMSY:** weak, limp, or without strength

Example:

The **flimsy** tent fell apart after only a few minutes.

**FRAUD:** achieving personal gain (usually money) by lying or cheating; a scam; deceit

The wealthy family went to prison for tax **fraud**.

**GAUDY:** very ornamented, excessive decoration or color; tasteless; vulgar

The Christmas tree looked **gaudy** with its neon lights and plastic ornaments.

**GHASTLY:** horrible; extremely bad or frightening

Example:

The food at the new restaurant was **ghastly**; it had no flavor.

**GRUMBLE:** to complain; to moan with a low voice

Example:

The customers were **grumbling** about the slow service at the checkout counter.

**HARASS:** to torment or annoy someone; to exhaust something

Example:

He kept **harassing** me until I finally agreed to help him.

**HERETIC:** someone who does not believe in the doctrine or practices of an established religion; someone who doesn't conform to popular attitudes or principles

Example:

Galileo was viewed as a **heretic** by the Church for his claims that the Earth revolved around the Sun.

**IMPEDIMENT:** an obstacle; something that makes progress difficult

Examples:

His speech **impediment** prevented him from communicating his ideas effectively.

The school's administrative board was a huge **impediment** to changing outdated policies.

**INDIGENOUS:** native; local

Example:

Many **indigenous** tribes still live in the Amazon, completely separated from modern life.

**INSATIATE:** never satisfied; greedy (other common form: insatiable)

Example:

The old man has an **insatiable** appetite for good food and beer.

**INTREPID:** fearless; courageous

Example:

The **intrepid** crew voyaged to Antarctica, hoping to study parts of the continent that no one has ever seen.

**IRATE:** angry; irritated or annoyed

Example:

The supervisor was **irate** at his employees for being late.

**JEOPARDY:** in danger or at risk of death, loss, or injury

Example:

Many people put their lives in **jeopardy** by texting while driving.

**LEASH:** to control, restrain, or chain (Also note the antonym, unleash: to free or release)

Example:

The public suspects that the President is **leashed** by many corporate advocates.

**LOAFER:** a lazy person (Verb: to loaf)

Examples:

He moved around like a drunken **loafer**.

Now that she's unemployed, she just **loafs** around the house all day.

**LUCRATIVE:** profitable; rewarding

Example:

Website design is a very **lucrative** career field right now.

**LUSTROUS:** reflecting light; shiny

Example:

The company guarantees that their shampoo will transform dull hair into **lustrous** hair.

**MALIGN:** to criticize very harshly; to slander

Adjective: harmful; negative; evil

(Malignant: harmful; cancerous; tending to cause death)

Examples:

The mother's mental illness led to the **malign** neglect of her children.

The doctors discovered that the patient's tumor was **malignant**.

**MEDDLER:** to interfere; to mix; to handle someone's affairs or property without permission

Example:

The administrative assistant was always **meddling** in her coworkers' affairs because it made her feel important.

**MEND:** to make repairs; to fix or restore

Examples:

The tailor **mended** his customer's ripped shirts.

After many years of not speaking, the two women **mended** their friendship.

**MIRTH:** laughter, humor, or amusement

Examples:

The **mirth** of the partygoers was visible on their smiling faces.

The novel was a tragedy, but it had moments of **mirth**.

**NAUSEA:** vomiting; motion or seasickness; queasiness

Example:

**Nausea** is a common side effect of sea travel.

**NEGLECT:** ignore; disregard; pay no attention to

Example:

The car had started to rust due to **neglect**.

**NOCTURNAL:** relating to the night; active at night

Example:

Most **nocturnal** creatures have enhanced vision to see in the dark.

**OBESE:** extremely fat or overweight (Note: "obesity" as a noun is another common form)

Example:

Many morbidly **obese** people decide to undergo surgery to lose weight.

**OBSOLETE:** no longer used; outdated

Example:

DVDs made VHS cassettes **obsolete**.

**PERCH:** a high place, elevated; branch or post

Example:

The cat sat on her **perch** above the window.

**PERVADE:** to spread or pass through

Example:

Artificial ingredients **pervade** the entire food industry.

**PETULANT:** easily annoyed; moody

Example:

The child was **petulant** and always complained when he didn't get what he wanted.

**PILLAGE:** to rob or take by force; to take spoils (rewards) in a time of war

Example:

The guerrilla army **pillaged** many villages of food, ammo, and weapons.

**PRESUMPTUOUS:** overconfident; arrogant; too direct or forward

Example:

It was **presumptuous** of him to use my things without my permission.

**QUASHED:** crushed; cancelled; invalidated

Example:

The company quickly **quashed** their plans to raise prices.

**QUENCHING:** satisfying; satiating

Example:

Soda is not very thirst-**quenching** because it has so much sugar.

**REFURBISHED:** remodeled; to make look new or clean

Example:

The apartment is in poor condition, but the couple plans to **refurbish** it.

**REJOICING:** expressing joy or happiness; pride; triumph (both noun and verb)

Example:

The spectators **rejoiced** after the soccer team defeated its most difficult opponent.

**RETICENT:** reserved; quiet, restrained

Example:

She was very **reticent** about her personal life.

**REVERBERATE:** to echo or ring

Example:

The sound of the explosion **reverberated** across the valley.

**RIGOR:** strictness; accuracy; difficulty or hardship (Plural form: rigors)

Example:

The **rigors** of medical school lead many students to neglect their personal relationships.

**ROTUND:** round; full (Noun form: rotundity)

The old man rubbed his **rotund** belly when he finished eating.

**SALVAGE:** to save or rescue from destruction; to save for future use

Example:

The plane could not be **salvaged** after the crash.

**SCATTERED:** spread out; distributed; not together

The researchers couldn't draw any conclusions because the results were very **scattered**.

**SHATTER:** to break into many pieces; to destroy

Example:

The plate **shattered** on the floor.

Her confidence **shattered** after she failed the test.

**SHUNNED:** avoided, rejected, or ignored

Example:

The organization **shunned** anyone who could not pay the membership fees.

**SKETCHY:** incomplete; vague or unclear; having a rough form or outline of something

Example:

The investigators had only **sketchy** evidence, so they could not convict the killer.

**SPORADIC:** at irregular intervals; no order in time

Example:

The patient had **sporadic** seizures, but no one could determine a pattern of what caused them.

**STIFLED:** suppressed; quiet

Example:

Stem cell research has a history of being **stifled** by the government.

**STRIVE:** to struggle for something; to attempt

The young woman **strives** to be an actress, but it is difficult to find work in this field.

**SUBSEQUENT:** following in time or order; successive; later

Example:

The **subsequent** chapters of this book outline the method of research.

**SUCCUMB:** submit to a powerful force or strong desire; give up or give in

(Note: “succumb to temptation” is a common expression)

Example:

The recovered cigarette addict **succumbed** to temptation when he saw his friends smoking.

**TACITURN:** synonym for reticent; reserved or quiet

Example:

He’s a very **taciturn** man, but he still gets angry from time to time.

**TANTALIZE:** tease or tempt; provoke

Example:

The chef’s colorful, unique food **tantalized** hungry customers.

**TENTATIVE:** hesitant or uncertain; cautious

Example:

I made **tentative** plans to spend time with my friend, if time allows.

**TORPID:** lazy; slow; unmoving

Example:

Many reptiles become **torpid** when they are trying to conserve energy.

**TREACHEROUS:** dangerous; betraying; deceitful

Example:

These roads are **treacherous** in the wintertime when there's lots of ice.

**TREMOR:** shaking or vibrating; the shaking of an earthquake

Example:

The earthquake produced **tremors** up to three hundred miles away.

**TYRO:** amateur; beginner

Example:

He was a military **tyro**, but he refused to be intimidated by the other officers.

**UPROAR:** noise; chaos; excitement

Example:

The entire class was in an **uproar** when the teacher gave them an additional homework assignment.

**VANITY:** pride; emptiness; arrogance (Adjective: vain)

Example:

He lifted weights every day because of his extreme **vanity**; he always had to look good.

**VEHEMENCE:** forcefulness; violence; intensity (Adjective: vehement)

Example:

The **vehemence** of the opposition caused the CEO to resign.

**VIGILANCE:** watchfulness; caution; alertness; paying close attention

Example:

Due to the **vigilance** of the security guard, the intruder was not able to enter the building.

**VINDICATE:** to defend; clear from blame

Example:

The judge **vindicated** him after learning that he was innocent.

**VOLUPTUOUS:** pleasing to the senses; having strong sexual attractiveness

Contrary to the skinny body image portrayed in the media, many Americans find curvy bodies to be more **voluptuous**.

**WAN:** pale or sickly-looking

Example:

I could see the exhaustion in her **wan** face.

**WILE:** trick; deception

Example:

He used his **wiles** to sell his fake product to gullible customers.

**WRINKLE:** a line or crease; a minor difficulty

New evidence adds a wrinkle to the validity of the witness's story.

## Web Resources

<http://www.englishclub.com/esl-exams/ets-toefl-tips.htm>

[http://www.english-itutor.com/TOEFL\\_Speaking\\_Topics.html](http://www.english-itutor.com/TOEFL_Speaking_Topics.html)

Timed TOEFL Vocabulary Test (also useful for other tests):

[http://www.examenglish.com/TOEFL/toefl\\_vocabulary.htm](http://www.examenglish.com/TOEFL/toefl_vocabulary.htm)

<http://www.testden.com/challenge/free-ielts.asp>

Videos to Practice Speaking and Listening: Videojug.com, Esl-bits.net, EnglishClub.com Podcasts, Magoosh.com, [www.testden.com](http://www.testden.com)

<http://www.thithutienganh.com/> (Click "TOEFL ibt Sample" on left and scroll down for tests)

