


TOEFL iBT Test 3

SPEAKING

This section measures your ability to speak in English about a variety of topics.

There are six questions in this section. For each question, you will be given a short time to prepare your response. When the preparation time is up, answer the question as completely as possible in the time indicated for that question. You should record your responses so that you can review them later and compare them with the answer key and scoring rubrics.

Directions: You will now be asked to speak about a familiar topic. Give yourself 15 seconds to prepare your response. Then record yourself speaking for 45 seconds.

1. Listen to Track 79. 

Talk about an interesting book you have read. Explain why you thought the book was interesting. Give specific details and examples to explain your answer.

Preparation Time: 15 seconds

Response Time: 45 seconds

Directions: You will now be asked to give your opinion about a familiar topic. Give yourself 15 seconds to prepare your response. Then record yourself speaking for 45 seconds.


2. Listen to Track 80. 

Some people think that children should be allowed to watch whatever television programs they choose to. Others think that parents should exercise control over the television programs their children watch. Which do you agree with? Explain why.

Preparation Time: 15 seconds

Response Time: 45 seconds


Directions: You will now read a short passage and listen to a conversation on the same topic. You will then be asked a question about them. After you hear the question, give yourself 30 seconds to prepare your response. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

Listen to Track 81. 

Reading Time: 45 seconds

Housing Renovations Planned

Over the last ten years, the number of Central College students living on campus in dormitories has decreased by twenty percent. In an effort to counteract the trend, the college has announced a plan to renovate its on-campus housing. The renovations will take two years, and they will include improvements to the bathrooms, lighting, and heating in the dormitories. “A lot of people are moving off campus because the dorms aren’t in great shape,” explained the college president. “By renovating the dorms, we can make them more appealing than off-campus housing, and more students will choose to remain on campus.”

Listen to Track 82. 




- The woman expresses her opinion about the college’s plan. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.

Preparation Time: 30 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds


Directions: You will now read a short passage and listen to a lecture on the same topic. You will then be asked a question about them. After you hear the question, give yourself 30 seconds to prepare your response. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

Listen to Track 83. 

Reading Time: 45 seconds

Outsider Art

Outsider Art is a term used to describe art that is made by people who choose to live and work outside society. The artists who produce this kind of art—Outsider Artists—work in isolation from other artists and have little or no formal artistic training. Because they do not learn conventional artistic techniques from teachers or other artists, Outsider Artists must invent their own ways of doing things. As a result of the unconventional methods that Outsider Artists often use, their work can look strange and not at all like traditional art to the observer.

Listen to Track 84. 




4. Explain why Henry Darger is considered an Outsider Artist.

Preparation Time: 30 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

Directions: You will now listen to part of a conversation. You will then be asked a question about it. After you hear the question, give yourself 20 seconds to prepare your response. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

Listen to Track 85. 




5. The students discuss a problem and two possible solutions. Briefly summarize the problem. Then state which of the two solutions you prefer and explain why.

Preparation Time: 20 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

Directions: You will now listen to part of a lecture. You will then be asked a question about it. After you hear the question, give yourself 20 seconds to prepare your response. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

Listen to Track 86. 



6. Using the points and examples from the lecture, explain what unity and contrast are, and how they make interior design more effective.

Preparation Time: 20 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

ANSWERS

Speaking Section

Prompts, Important Points, and Sample Responses with Rater Comments

Use the sample Independent and Integrated Speaking Rubrics in Appendix A to see how responses are scored. The raters who listen to your responses will analyze them in three general categories. These categories are Delivery, Language Use, and Topic Development. All three categories have equal importance.

This section includes important points that should be covered when answering each question. All of these points must be present in a response in order for it to receive the highest score in the Topic Development category. These important points are guides to the kind of information raters expect to hear in a high-level response.

This section also refers to sample responses, which can be found on the

accompanying DVD. Some responses were scored at the highest level, which others were not. The responses are followed by comments from certified ETS raters.

Question 1

Prompt

Talk about an interesting book you have read. Explain why you thought the book was interesting. Give specific details and examples to explain your answer.

Important Points

When answering this question, you should choose one book you have read and explain why you found it interesting. You are not required to spend time giving a summary of the book, but you should be sure to provide examples from the book while you are explaining why it was interesting.

High-level Response: Listen to Track 89.



Rater Comments

This speaker states the book that she has chosen to talk about and provides two reasons why she likes the book and thinks it is interesting. She does not spend time specifically talking about the story that takes place in the book, but rather focuses on what she likes about the book, and in her description of what she likes, she reveals parts of the story. For example, she provides some description of the book while focusing on answering the question when she says, *“I like this because . . . it shows how a boy grows up . . . he’s different from others . . . the book describes that he’s special situation in this world.”* She also describes characteristics of the book that don’t have to do with the story: *“The way the writer uh communicate with the readers . . . their beautiful language is um very enjoyable . . .”* Although the speaker pauses and hesitates at times during her response and makes minor grammatical errors, it is easy to understand her and follow what she is saying.

Low-level Response: Listen to Track 90.



Rater Comments

This speaker does not make it clear that she is talking about a specific book, and it seems that she is talking about a type of book that she enjoys instead. She does not connect her reason for finding this type of book interesting/enjoyable to an actual book, and instead just talks about her own interests. When she does start to try and connect her ideas to a book, she runs out of time, partly due to her slow and choppy pace of speaking: *“It’s—in the book, it’s, it’s really interesting is because it’s—.”* Her use of vocabulary is at times imprecise and leads to confusion for the listener, such as when she says, *“. . . the different character and behavior will impact on the decision that they make . . .”* She should more precisely have said, *“. . . the different characteristics and how they affect buying behavior.”* Overall, her

response is incomplete and somewhat difficult to follow.

Question 2

Prompt

Some people think that children should be allowed to watch whatever television programs they choose to. Others think that parents should exercise control over the television programs their children watch. Which do you agree with? Explain why.

Important Points

In this question you need to choose the statement that you agree with and explain why you agree with it. In order to give an effective response, you should provide clear, specific reasons that support your opinion. You will not be scored on which statement you agree with, but rather on how effectively you are able to present and support your opinion. A reason to support the first statement could be that learning to make good decisions is an important part of growing up and rather than restricting a child’s viewing, a parent should focus on teaching the child to make good decisions. A reason to support the second statement might include an example of an inappropriate program that parents should not let their children watch and explain why watching that program might have a negative effect on a child.

High-level Response: Listen to Track 91.



Rater Comments

This speaker demonstrates good control in language use and accurately uses a variety of grammatical structures and effective vocabulary. Her pronunciation is clear throughout and her use of intonation is appropriate. She chooses to develop the idea of parental responsibility towards children and explains why she thinks this is important. The response would have been even fuller if she had given an example of a program that is not suitable for young children and why.

Mid-level Response: Listen to**Track 92.** 

Rater Comments

This speaker states his opinion clearly but does not develop his ideas fully with clear support. He does provide a reason for his opinion that children should be able to watch whatever they want: that they can tell real things apart from “*not real things*.” He then repeats the same basic idea in other words with imprecise language: “*I sure that a child view television with an enjoy and not with a real situation.*”

The speaker does not demonstrate that he can use a variety of grammatical structures or that he has a wide range of vocabulary. Though an accent is evident, pronunciation is generally clear overall.

Question 3

Prompt

The woman expresses her opinion about the college’s plan. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.

Important Points

To respond to this item, you should explain that the woman does not believe that the university’s plan to renovate the dormitories in order to get more students to live on campus will work. To explain the points she makes, you could say that she argues that the renovations will create noise or disturbances, and that people will actually move off campus because of that in the short term. You should also point out her argument that in the long term students will likely remain in off-campus housing after the construction ends, since the university will have to raise the cost of housing to pay for the renovations.

High-level Response: Listen to**Track 93.** 

Rater Comments

This speaker demonstrates a clear understanding of the information from both the reading and the conversation. He doesn’t say until the end of his response that the woman disagrees with the plan, and that she doesn’t think

it will work. However, this doesn’t prevent the listener from following the logic of the response. Consider this sentence from his response: “*She saying the price of the dorm fee will be raised . . . and it will go back to the student, and therefore student will look for the off campus apartment, which seems cheaper.*” We see some minor grammatical errors here, and the speaker mispronounces a few select words (*price, cheaper*), but he uses intonation well and is able to communicate the point effectively. Overall, this is a well-developed and easy to understand response.

Mid-level Response: Listen to**Track 94.** 

Rater Comments

In this response, the speaker touches on most of the important points; however, she does not do so with the fluidity and clarity characteristic of a high-level response. Her vocabulary is limited, and she hesitates and repeats words and phrases frequently, which requires listener effort. For example, it is hard to follow when she says, “*and and after the construction, the man was saying that maybe it’s good after the construction.*” She also does not explicitly explain that the noise from the renovations will cause students to move off-campus, and that later on, they will not move back because the renovations will be paid for by raising the price of housing.

Question 4

Prompt

Explain why Henry Darger is considered an Outsider Artist.

Important Points

In this item, you need to explain how Henry Darger fits the description of an Outsider Artist as described in the reading passage. Since Outsider Artists live and work outside of society, they produce art that is unusual and is made in ways that are different from other artists. Henry Darger fits this description because he lived and worked alone and taught himself to paint. Therefore his art looked different

from other artists' work; for example, in one painting he cut out pictures of children from magazines and put them in his painting (and they also had more detail and were longer than paintings by most other artists).

High-level Response: Listen to

Track 95.

Rater Comments

The speaker does a very good job of choosing details from the lecture that illustrate why Henry Darger is considered an Outsider Artist. He first describes characteristics of Outsider Artists, then describes how Darger matches these characteristics: *"He lived alone; he had no friends . . . he never showed those paintings to anybody; he never studied art. And his work is a unique work, and he has his own style."* Occasionally he uses the wrong vocabulary word, such as using "conversation" instead of "lecture," but these errors do not ever make his ideas hard to follow. His response is also fluent, and his pronunciation is almost always easy to understand.

Mid-level Response: Listen to

Track 96.

Rater Comments

The speaker organizes her response well, giving two main reasons that Darger was considered an Outsider Artist. However, she does not quite show how living and working alone or lacking a formal art education made him an Outsider Artist—she just seems to be explaining why he is a modern artist. Most of her pronunciation is clear, but sometimes it is difficult to understand certain phrases. She also makes a number of grammar mistakes *"that's why he has make a big difference," "his production was totally innovate," "he was a man who were different."* Because of how often she makes these mistakes, the listener sometimes has to work harder to follow her ideas.

Question 5

Prompt

The students discuss a problem and two possible solutions. Briefly summarize the problem.

Then state which of the two solutions you prefer and explain why.

Important Points

For this task, the prompt asks you to summarize the man's problem and recommend *one* of the solutions. Summarizing both solutions is not required and may take up too much of your response time. It is important to offer reasons to support the solution you choose. In this conversation, the man has been offered a summer research position, but he found out about the position too late to apply for campus housing for the summer. He has two possibilities: he can live with his parents (who are far from campus), or he can rent an apartment off-campus. If you recommend the first solution—that he live with his parents and drive to campus everyday—you could provide the reasons for your choice by explaining why the alternate solution is not good. For example, it may be difficult to find an apartment to rent for just a few months. Paying rent for an apartment will probably cost him more than he would pay for gas.

High-level Response: Listen to

Track 97.

Rater Comments

In this response, the speaker begins with a brief summary of the problem and the two possible solutions. Even though she mentions both solutions, which is not necessary, she is able to summarize both quickly and allow time for her opinion. She runs out of time at the end, but it does not hurt her response because her opinion is clear and she justifies it well (*" . . . even if the cost is higher because he has to concentrate on this important research project and it will benefit on the long run . . . "*). She has a good command of vocabulary; however, she does make some minor grammar mistakes, especially at the end, when she is trying to finish her response. However, for the most part, her response is clear and easy to follow. Overall, she is a fairly fluent speaker, although there is sometimes an unevenness caused by rephrasing or searching for words.

Mid-level Response: Listen to Track 98.

Rater Comments

The speaker does summarize the problem from the conversation, but his explanation is a little unclear (“*he didn’t hear from his professor or his instructor any-anything, so he didn’t apply to the dormitory or in campus . . .*”). He also spends too much time summarizing the two possible solutions, which does not leave him enough time to explain his opinion fully. He does manage to insert his opinion briefly into the summaries of the solutions (“*I think it’s a headache to drive . . .*”), but if he had focused on only including important details from the problem, he would have had more time to develop his opinion. Overall, he has good pronunciation and only minor grammar mistakes, but he also has several very noticeable pauses in his response, which suggest that he is searching for words and not able to give a full response without hesitation.

Question 6

Prompt

Using the points and examples from the lecture, explain what unity and contrast are, and how they make interior design more effective.

Important Points

In this item, your summary of the key ideas from the lecture should include the definitions of unity and contrast described by the professor. You should also describe how interior designers use unity and contrast, connecting the concepts to the specific examples mentioned. *Unity* is the repetition of similar elements, which creates a sense of order and comfort. For example, a designer might use similar colors throughout a room. *Contrast* is an occasional break in unity, which makes the design more interesting. For example, a designer might introduce a strikingly different color in one or two places. Contrast makes the design more interesting; however, too much contrast will make the room feel busy. Effective design creates a balance between

unity and contrast. The order in which you present these ideas does not matter, as long as the response is logical and coherent.

High-level Response: Listen to

Track 99.

Rater Comments

This is a complete and coherent response that presents the principles of unity and contrast, connects them clearly to the examples given, and explains why both are necessary for effective interior design. The speaker’s logical organization of information and effective use of transitions make the response easy to follow (for example “*however, too much of unity is also boring . . . and therefore, comes into picture the second important aspect, which is contrast*”). Note that although the speaker makes occasional minor errors in grammar and usage, the meaning remains clear. The influence of the speaker’s native language may be heard in the pronunciation and intonation, but he is still easy to understand. The speaker generally uses pauses and stress to communicate emphasis appropriately and make the response easier to follow, for example “*what it will bring is [pause] disruption.*”

Mid-level Response: Listen to

Track 100.

Rater Comments

This response describes unity and contrast and provides examples, but the explanation is not as full and clear as it could be. For example, the speaker describes unity as just using the same colors in a design, rather than similar elements in general, and does not mention the purpose of unity (order and comfort). At times, inaccurate words or phrases make it difficult to guess what the speaker means (“*You need contrasting thing to blend [plant?] the application*”). The speaker would also benefit from more careful pronunciation in general as some sections are very difficult to understand, thus obscuring her ideas. Overall, the speaker does not communicate her ideas as clearly as the high-level speaker does.

Now, providing too much information can also prove to be counter-productive. How does a consumer pick the right information, when there is so much available online? How does he filter to get the data that he needs? Is there a chance that the data he needs is buried somewhere in the middle? It is highly probable, or let me say, this was the case a few years back. So, technically, people were correct when they said too much information also created problems.

Fortunately, Technology finds ways to make it easier to use an innovation over a period of time. In the last few years, Internet search engines have been getting smarter everyday. They enable a user to enter a search string and then it searches the Internet for the most relevant and appropriate data and presents them to the user, with the results listed in the order of importance. They also offer the user several options to further filter the provided results, making it easier to zone on the correct data.

In summary, while it is true that there is a lot of not very valuable information on the web, which may be counter-productive for users, there are also means to effectively seek and find the appropriate information, thus providing a great deal of value to people who

are looking to learn about a subject, buy the best product for their needs, or any one of many other activities that people need to do nowadays.

Rater Comments

This 5-level response acknowledges the merits of both positions, while ultimately coming out in favor of the idea that the Internet provides a lot of valuable information. The writer describes some reasons why people use the Internet, explains how helpful it can be for both individuals and companies, and concedes in the fourth paragraph that access to too much information online can be a bad thing. In the fifth paragraph, the writer explains how technology is advancing so that the negative aspects mentioned in the preceding paragraph are becoming less and less problematic. The writer goes on to conclude that in spite of some drawbacks, overall the Internet is quite valuable in what it provides to us. This is a good progression of ideas, and the writer has expressed those ideas by using, mostly accurately, a good range of vocabulary and sentence structure. Errors such as “reach out for the consumers” instead of “reach out to consumers” are minor and do not interfere with meaning.

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