

TOEFL Practice Paper

TOEFL Speaking Practice Paper 4

TOEFL Speaking Independent Task

PREPARATION TIME: 15 seconds

RESPONSE TIME: 45 seconds

Task 1

- Who is the best teacher you've had? What qualities make him/her such a good teacher?
- What is your favorite holiday? Describe what you normally do on this holiday and why it is your favorite.
- Where would you like to travel for your next vacation? Describe what the place is like and why you want to visit it.
- What is your ideal career? Describe what it would be like and why it appeals to you.
- What is an activity you like to do with your friends? Describe it and explain why you find it enjoyable.

Task 2

PREPARATION TIME: 15 seconds

RESPONSE TIME: 45 seconds

- Some people believe students should attend gym classes in school to improve their health and fitness, while others believe school should only focus on academic subjects. Do you think students should have gym classes in school? Why or why not?
- Some people prefer to travel with other people, while others like to travel on their own. Which method of traveling do you prefer and why?
- Do you prefer living in an urban or rural area? State your preference and give reasons as to why you feel that way.

- Is it better to save the money you earn for future expenses or spend it now on things you enjoy? Give reasons to support your choice.
- Some people believe that students should spend more time in math and science classes rather than humanities and social science classes. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons to support your choice.

TOEFL Speaking Integrated Task

READING TIME: 45 seconds

LISTENING TIME: about 60 seconds

PREPARATION TIME: 30 seconds

SPEAKING TIME: 60 seconds

Task 3

Read the following text and the conversation that follows it. Then answer the question.

The following text is an excerpt from the Great Plains University student newspaper.

The student dean announced yesterday afternoon that, due to professor preferences and changing academic schedules, starting next semester, more classes will now be held on Fridays. Classes that were previously held for 90 minutes on Mondays and Wednesdays will now be held Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for 60 minutes each. Tuesday and Thursday classes will keep their original schedule.

(Female student): Did you see the announcement in the student newspaper that we're going to have more Friday classes?

(Male student): I did, and I think it's great news.

(Female student): Why do you feel that way? I was really disappointed to read that.

(Male student): I think it will be helpful to see your professor more often during the week. For some of my classes, if I have a question on a Thursday, I need to wait all the way until Monday to see the professor again.

(Female student): Don't your professors have office hours when you can stop by and ask them a question?

(Male student): Some of them do, but they're not always at a good time for me. With Friday classes, I'm guaranteed to see them. Also, I think shorter classes will make it easier to learn new information without feeling overwhelmed like I sometimes did with longer classes.

(Female student): I suppose that's true. I'm still disappointed about it though because I usually spend my Fridays at my job.

(Male student): You can't work with Friday classes?

(Female student): No, even one class in the afternoon would mean I couldn't work a full shift, so it really messes up my work schedule, and I'm using that money to help pay for tuition.

(Male student): Yeah, Friday classes may make it harder for me to go home on the weekends since I can't leave on Thursday, but I still think it's a good decision overall.

Question: The man expresses his opinion on the announcement in the student newspaper. State his opinion and explain the reasons he gives for holding that opinion.

Task 4

Lecture transcript:

6. Read part of a lecture in a biology course and then answer the question.

(Female professor) Human beings aren't the only animals that use tools. It's generally recognized that other animals use tools as well . . . use them naturally, in the wild, without any human instruction. But when can we say that an object is a tool? Well, it depends on your definition of a tool. And in fact, there are two competing definitions—a narrow definition and a broad one. The narrow definition says that a tool is an object that's used to perform a specific task . . . but not just any object. To be a tool, according to the narrow definition, the object's gotta be purposefully changed or shaped by the animal, or human, so that it can be used that way. It's an object that's made. Wild chimpanzees use sticks to dig insects out of their nests . . . but most sticks lying around won't do the job . . . they might be too thick, for example. So the sticks have to be sharpened so they'll fit into the hole in an ant hill or the insect nest. The chimp pulls off the leaves and chews the stick and trims it down that way until it's the right size. The chimp doesn't just find the stick . . . it . . . you could say it makes it in a way.

But the broad definition says an object doesn't have to be modified to be considered a tool. The broad definition says a tool is any object that's used to perform a specific task. For example, an elephant will sometimes use a stick to scratch its back . . . it just picks up a stick from the ground and scratches its back with it . . . It doesn't modify the stick, it uses it just as it's found. And it's a tool, under the broad definition, but under the narrow definition it's not because, well, the elephant doesn't change it in any way.

Question: Using points and examples from the talk, describe the two different definitions of tools given by the professor.

Preparation Time: 20 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

Task 5

Conversation transcript

The Northfield College Student Association recently decided to make a new purchase. Read the following announcement in the college newspaper about the decision. (Reading time in an actual test would be 45-50 seconds.)

Good News for Movie Fans

The Student Association has just purchased a new sound system for the Old Lincoln Hall auditorium, the place where movies on campus are currently shown. By installing the new sound system, the Student Association hopes to attract more students to the movies and increase ticket sales. Before making the purchase of the new equipment, the Student Association conducted a survey on campus to see what kind of entertainment students liked best. Going to the movies ranked number one. "Students at Northfield College love going to the movies" said the president of the Student Association, "so we decided to make what they already love even better. We're confident that the investment into the sound system will translate into increased ticket sales."

(Male student) I really think the Student Association made a bad decision.

(Female student) Really? Why? Don't you like going to the movies?

(Male student) Sure I do. But this new purchase is just a waste of money.

(Female student) What do you mean? It's supposed to sound really good.

(Male student) Yeah, well, I'm sure it does, but, in Old Lincoln Hall? I mean that building must be 200 years old! It used to be the college gym! The acoustics are terrible.

(Female student) So you're saying there'll be no improvement?

(Male student) That's right. And also, I seriously doubt that going to the movies is the number one social activity for most students.

(Female student) Yeah, but that's what students said.

(Male student) Well, of course that's what they said. What else is there to do on campus?

(Female student) What do you mean?

(Male student) I mean, there isn't much to do on campus besides go to the movies. If there were other forms of, uh recreation, or other social activities, you know, I don't think most students would have said that going to the movies was their first choice.

Question: The man expresses his opinion of the Student Association's recent purchase. State his opinion and explain the reasons he gives for holding that opinion.

Preparation Time: 30 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

Task 6

Read part of a lecture in an art history course and then answer the question.

(Male Professor): Beginning in the 1400s, Western Europe began to undergo numerous changes. People were coming out of a time filled with disease, warfare, and turmoil in the Catholic church. As their fortunes began to improve, people began to focus more on cultural movements, eventually leading to a cultural rebirth known as the Renaissance. The Renaissance lasted approximately two hundred years and resulted in many changes. Today we're going to be focusing on artwork created during the Renaissance period.

Renaissance art began in Italy, and, even though it eventually spread to other areas, Italy remained the epicenter of this art style. One of the biggest innovations of Renaissance art was that human emotions were depicted much more in art. Most of the art produced in the Middle Ages, the time period before the Renaissance, was commissioned by the Catholic church and was used mainly for religious purposes. The point of the art was to further religious devotion, not to contemplate emotions of human still on Earth. That changed drastically with Renaissance art. During this time, there was a much larger emphasis on how humans lived life on Earth and how they felt. While most figures in art produced during the Middle Ages had flat, expressionless faces, the emotions of figures were often very clear in Renaissance art. If someone in a painting was sad, there might be tears falling from their eyes. If they were angry, their face might be contorted in a grimace, if they were happy, they might be smiling.

One example of this is Michelangelo's Pietà, a sculpture completed in 1499 that depicts the body of Jesus on the lap of his mother, Mary. In the sculpture, Mary is looking downcast while Jesus' outstretched body suggests pain and suffering. Another is da Vinci's Mona Lisa with her famous, mysterious smile. Generations of people have wondered what she was thinking while her portrait was painted.

Another defining feature of Renaissance art was how realistic the art appeared. Previous works of art often appeared flat and stylized and didn't depict people or the world very realistically. During the Renaissance, there were many new patrons willing to pay for art, and since they had different tastes, artists had more flexibility to study new techniques and create more realistic art. Perspective, vanishing points, shadows, and light began to be used frequently to create more lifelike figures and landscapes. A famous painting that shows the rules of perspective is Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper, painted in 1498. Even though it was painted on a flat surface, you get the sense that Jesus and the twelve apostles are actually in a three-dimensional room.

Question: Using points and examples from the lecture, describe two ways Renaissance art differs from art in the Middle Ages.