

TOEFL SPEAKING PRACTICE PAPER 6

Directions: The Speaking section in the test measures your ability to speak about a variety of topics.

1. Talk about a pleasant and memorable event that happened while you were in school. Explain why this event brings back fond memories.

Preparation Time: 15 seconds

Response Time: 45 seconds

2. Some people think it is more fun to spend time with friends in restaurants or cafés. Others think it is more fun to spend time with friends at home. Which do you think is better? Explain why.

Preparation Time: 15 seconds

Response Time: 45 seconds

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

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

4. Read a passage from a psychology textbook and the lecture that follows it. Then answer the question. (Reading time in an actual test would be 45-50 seconds.)

Flow

In psychology, the feeling of complete and energized focus in an activity is called flow. People who enter a state of flow lose their sense of time and have a feeling of great satisfaction. They become completely involved in an activity for its own sake rather than for what may result from the activity, such as money or prestige. Contrary to expectation, flow usually happens not during relaxing moments of leisure and entertainment, but when we are actively involved in a difficult enterprise, in a task that stretches our mental or physical abilities.

(Male professor) I think this will help you get a picture of what your textbook is describing. I had a friend who taught in the physics department, Professor Jones, he retired last year. . . . Anyway, I remember . . . this was a few years ago . . . I remember passing by a classroom early one morning just as he was leaving, and he looked terrible: his clothes were all rumpled, and he looked like he hadn't slept all night. And I asked if he was OK. I was surprised when he said that he never felt better, that he was totally happy. He had spent the entire night in the classroom working on a mathematics puzzle. He didn't stop to eat dinner; he didn't stop to sleep . . . or even rest. He was involved in solving the puzzle. And it didn't even have anything to do with his teaching or research; he had just come across this puzzle accidentally, I think in a mathematics journal, and it just really interested him, so he worked furiously all night and covered the blackboards in the classroom with equations and numbers and never realized that time was passing by.

Question: Explain flow and how the example used by the professor illustrates the concept.

Preparation Time: 30 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

5. Read the following conversation between two students and then answer the question.

(Female student) How's the calculus class going? You're doing better?

(Male student) Not really. I just can't get the hang of it. There're so many functions and formulas to memorize, you know? And the final . . . It's only a few weeks away. I'm really worried about doing well.

(Female student) Oh . . . You know, you should go to the tutoring program and ask for help.

(Male student) You mean, in the Mathematics building?

(Female student) Ya. Get a tutor there. Most tutors are doctoral students in the math program. They know what they're talking about, and for the final test, you know, they'd tell you what to study, how to prepare, all of that.

(Male student) I know about that program . . . but doesn't it cost money?

(Female student) Of course. You have to register and pay by the hour . . . But they've got all the answers. (Male student) Hmm . . .

(Female student) Another option, I guess, is to form a study group with other students. That won't cost you any money.

(Male student) That's a thought . . . although once I was in a study group, and it was a big waste of time. We usually ended up talking about other stuff like what we did over the weekend.

(Female student) But that was for a different class, right? I've actually had some pretty good experiences with study groups. Usually students in the same class have different strengths and weaknesses with the material . . . if they're serious about studying, they can really help each other out. Think about it.

Question: Briefly summarize the problem the speakers are discussing. Then state which solution you would recommend. Explain the reasons for your recommendation.

Preparation Time: 20 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

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

7.

Narrator

Describe a class you have taken in school and explain why the class was important to you. Include details and examples to support your explanation.

Please begin speaking after the beep.

[2 secs beep]

[Appearing on screen]

1. Describe a class you have taken in school and explain why the class was important to you. Include details and examples to support your explanation.

Preparation time: 15 seconds

Response time: 45 seconds

8.

Narrator

You may begin to prepare your response after the beep.

[2 secs beep]

Narrator

Some universities require first-year students to live in dormitories on campus. Others allow students to live off campus. Which policy do you think is better for first-year students and why? Include details and examples in your explanation.

Please begin speaking after the beep.

[2 secs beep]

[Appearing on screen]

2. Some universities require first-year students to live in dormitories on campus. Others allow students to live off campus. Which policy do you think is better for first-year students and why? Include details and examples in your explanation.

Preparation time: 15 seconds

Response time: 45 seconds

9.

Narrator

You may begin to prepare your response after the beep.
[2 secs beep]

Narrator

City University is planning to increase tuition and fees. Read the announcement about the increase from the president of City University. You will have 45 seconds to read the announcement. Begin reading now.

Reading Time: 45 seconds

Announcement from the president

The university has decided to increase tuition and fees for all students by approximately 8 percent next semester. For the past 5 years, the tuition and fees have remained the same, but it is necessary to increase them now for several reasons. The university has many more students than we had five years ago, and we must hire additional professors to teach these students. We have also made a new commitment to research and technology, and will be renovating and upgrading our laboratory facilities to better meet our students' needs.

Narrator

Now listen to two students as they discuss the announcement.
[2 seconds]

Student A

Oh great, now we have to come up with more money for next semester.

Student B

Yeah, I know, but I can see why. When I first started here, classes were so much smaller than they are now. With this many students, it's hard to get the personal attention you need...

Student A

Yeah, I guess you're right. You know, in some classes I can't even get a seat. And I couldn't take the math course I wanted to because it was already full when I signed up.

Student B

And the other thing is, well, I am kind of worried about not being able to get a job after I graduate.

Student A

Why? I mean you're doing really well in your classes, aren't you?

Student B

I'm doing ok, but the facilities here are so limited. There are some great new experiments in microbiology that we can't even do here... there isn't enough equipment in the laboratories, and the equipment they have is out of date. How am I going to compete for jobs with people who have practical research experience? I think the extra tuition will be a good investment.

[2 seconds]

Narrator

The woman expresses her opinion of the announcement made by the university president. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.

3. The woman expresses her opinion of the announcement made by the university president. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.

Preparation time: 30 seconds

Response time: 60 seconds

11. Independent Speaking Practice (Explain a Choice): Question

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.

Some people enjoy taking risks and trying new things. Others are not adventurous; they are cautious and prefer to avoid danger. Which behavior do you think is better?

Explain why.

Preparation Time: 15 seconds

Response Time: 45 seconds

12. Directions: The University is making a change in the courses it will offer. Read the article from the university newspaper about the change.

Give yourself 45 seconds to read the article.

Sculpture Courses to Be Discontinued University administrators announced yesterday that the sculpture program, a division of the art department, will be eliminated. "The main reason is a lack of student interest," reported one administrator. "Although the number of art students has increased, fewer and fewer art majors are taking sculpture classes." Furthermore, the department's only sculpture professor is retiring this year. "Given the art department's limited budget," the administrator explained, "it just doesn't make sense to hire a new full-time professor to teach sculpture for only a handful of students."

13. Directions: Give yourself 30 seconds to prepare your response to the following question. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

The woman expresses her opinion of the university's plan. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion. Preparation Time: 30 seconds Response Time: 60 seconds

14. Directions: Read a passage about revealing coloration from a biology textbook. You have 45 seconds to read the passage. Begin reading now.

Revealing Coloration

Many animals use coloration to protect themselves from predators. One defensive strategy involving the use of coloration is what is known as revealing coloration. Animals employing this

strategy have an area of bright color on some part of their body; this bright color is usually hidden from predators' view. When approached by a predator, the animal suddenly reveals the area of bright color; this unexpected display of color startles or confuses the predator and provides the would-be prey with an opportunity to escape.

Narrator: Now listen to part of a lecture from a biology class.

Professor: There's a large tropical insect called the peanut bug—yes, like the peanuts that you eat—uh, and the peanut bug's front wings are colored so that they blend in with their surroundings. But its back wings—which are usually closed and hidden— have these bright, colorful spots on them. And when the peanut bug's attacked, it suddenly opens its back wings, and out pops these big, bright colors. And that surprises the predator, and gives the peanut bug a chance to get away. Um, and then you have a butterfly ... called the morpho butterfly. And parts of the morpho butterfly's wings are very shiny, they reflect a lot of sunlight; when this butterfly is resting, this shiny part of its wings is hidden ... Now, morpho butterflies are often attacked by birds ... So when a bird approaches, the morpho flies away ... and when the morpho flaps its wings, all the bird can see are flashes of light reflected from the morpho's wings. Those flashes of light make it very difficult for the bird to follow the morpho, and the morpho is usually able to get away.

Directions: Give yourself 30 seconds to prepare your response to the following question. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

Using the examples of the peanut bug and the morpho butterfly, explain the concept of revealing coloration.

Preparation Time: 30 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

15. Directions: Read the transcript.

Narrator: Now listen to part of a lecture in a business class.

Professor : Today, we'll talk about how companies determine the initial price for their products, by that I mean, when they first introduce a product in the market. There are different approaches, and today we'll discuss two of them. They are quite different ... each with their own advantages. One approach or strategy sets the initial price of the product high, followed by a lower price at a later stage. Why? Well, ... when introducing a new product, companies want to build a high-quality image for it. Products that cost more are believed to be of higher quality. So, during the early stages of the product life cycle, companies can make very high profits from consumers willing to pay more for a high quality product, and although consumers know that prices will eventually go down, they're also willing to pay more to get the product sooner. This approach works very well with ... oh ... innovative, high-tech products, for example. Now just think about when video recorders, or ... video cameras ... or even cell phones ... first came out. They were very expensive, but then they became much more accessible. Another very common strategy sets an initial price low. Now this happens when the market is already saturated with the product and the strategy is to undercut its competitors. Say, there's a newly starting

computer maker trying to gain market share. So what do they do? Well, they offer a computer at an affordable price, lower than existing brands. By doing this, the company appeals to new consumers who weren't probably even interested in getting a computer and ... well, of course ... to existing consumers who might now be tempted to switch brands. Now, how does this company make profits with its low-priced computer? Well, one thing that's often done is to encourage their customers to buy accessories also manufactured by them, like printers, or software, for example.

Directions: Give yourself 20 seconds to prepare your response to the following question. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

Using the points and examples from the lecture, explain the two pricing strategies described by the professor.

Preparation Time: 20 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

16. 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.

Some people think it is more fun to spend time with friends in restaurants or cafés. Others think it is more fun to spend time with friends at home. Which do you think is better? Explain why.

Preparation Time: 15 seconds

Response Time: 45 seconds

17. Directions: State University plans to build a new auditorium. Read an article about the plan in the campus newspaper. You have 45 seconds to read the article.

Begin reading now.

University to Build New Auditorium The university has decided to demolish the old campus auditorium and replace it with a new one. The auditorium is one of the oldest original buildings on campus, and administrators say it is showing signs of its age: sagging floors, peeling paint, a drafty interior, and outdated decor. The new auditorium, by contrast, will have a clean, modern appearance. Also, the old auditorium is too small to accommodate the number of current students. The new auditorium will be bigger, with a greater number of seats to accommodate a larger student body.

Directions: Read the transcript

Narrator Now listen to two students discussing the article.

Male student I wish they wouldn't do this.

Female student Really? But the place is so old...

Male student Yeah, but I like that. I think it's a nice, historic-looking building.

Female student Hmm ... well, I guess it's kinda pretty...

Male student It's an important part of the university's history. It was one of the first things built on campus...we should preserve that ... not get rid of it.

Female student That's a good point. But what about the need for an expansion?

Male student I don't think it's necessary.

Female student But it was built when the university was so much smaller.

Male student That's true, but think about it: have you ever seen the space completely full?

Female student Well ... uh, no, I guess not.

Male student Me either. There are never any events when the entire student body is there. In fact, there are usually just a small number of students in the audience for a play or a concert.

Female student That's true.

Male student So why make it bigger, if it works as-is?

Female student I see what you mean.

Directions: Give yourself 30 seconds to prepare your response to the following question. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

The man expresses his opinion of the university's plan. State his opinion, and explain the reasons he gives for holding that opinion.

Preparation Time: 30 seconds

Response Time: 60 seconds

Directions: Read a passage from a psychology textbook and the lecture that follows it. You have 45 seconds to read the passage.

Flow

In psychology, the feeling of complete and energized focus in an activity is called flow. People who enter a state of flow lose their sense of time and have a feeling of great satisfaction. They become completely involved in an activity for its own sake rather than for what may result from the activity, such as money or prestige. Contrary to expectation, flow usually happens not during relaxing moments of leisure and entertainment, but when we are actively involved in a difficult enterprise, in a task that stretches our mental or physical abilities.

Directions: Read the transcript

Narrator Listen to part of a talk in a psychology class.

Male professor I think this will help you get a picture of what your textbook is describing. I had a friend who taught in the physics department, Professor Jones, he retired last year. . . . Anyway, I remember . . . this was a few years ago . . . I remember passing by a classroom early one morning just as he was leaving, and he looked terrible: his clothes were all rumpled, and he looked like he hadn't slept all night. And I asked if he was OK. I was surprised when he said that he never felt better, that he was totally happy. He had spent the entire night in the classroom working on a mathematics puzzle. He didn't stop to eat dinner; he didn't stop to sleep . . . or even rest. He was that involved in solving the puzzle. And it didn't even have anything to do with his teaching or research; he had just come across this puzzle accidentally, I think in a mathematics journal, and it just really interested him, so he worked furiously all night and covered the blackboards in the classroom with equations and numbers and never realized that time was passing by.

Directions: Give yourself 30 seconds to prepare your response to the following question. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds.

Explain flow and how the example used by the professor illustrates the concept.

Preparation Time: 30 seconds Response Time: 60 seconds

Directions: Read the transcript.

Narrator Listen to part of a lecture in a biology course.

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.

Directions: Give yourself 20 seconds to prepare your response to the following question. Then record yourself speaking for 60 seconds. 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