

## TOEFL INTEGRATED WRITING PRACTICE PAPER

### QUESTION 1

#### The Chevalier

Toward the end of his life, the Chevalier de Seingalt (1725–1798) wrote a long memoir recounting his life and adventures. The Chevalier was a somewhat controversial figure, but since he met many famous people, including kings and writers, his memoir has become a valuable historical source about European society in the eighteenth century. However, some critics have raised doubts about the accuracy of the memoir. They claim that the Chevalier distorted or invented many events in the memoir to make his life seem more exciting and glamorous than it really was.

For example, in his memoir the Chevalier claims that while living in Switzerland, he was very wealthy, and it is known that he spent a great deal of money there on parties and gambling. However, evidence has recently surfaced that the Chevalier borrowed considerable sums of money from a Swiss merchant. Critics thus argue that if the Chevalier had really been very rich, he would not have needed to borrow money.

Critics are also skeptical about the accuracy of the conversations that the Chevalier records in the memoir between himself and the famous writer Voltaire. No one doubts that the Chevalier and Voltaire met and conversed. However, critics complain that the memoir cannot possibly capture these conversations accurately, because it was written many years after the conversations occurred. Critics point out that it is impossible to remember exact phrases from extended conversations held many years earlier.

Critics have also questioned the memoir's account of the Chevalier's escape from a notorious prison in Venice, Italy. He claims to have escaped the Venetian prison by using a piece of metal to make a hole in the ceiling and climbing through the roof. Critics claim that while such a daring escape makes for enjoyable reading, it is more likely that the Chevalier's jailers were bribed to free him. They point out that the Chevalier had a number of politically well-connected friends in Venice who could have offered a bribe.

### TRANSCRIPT OF THE LECTURE

Narrator

Now listen to part of a lecture on the topic you just read about.

Female Professor

No memoir can possibly be correct in every detail, but still, the Chevalier's memoir is pretty accurate overall and is, by and large, a reliable historical source. Let's look at the accuracy of the three episodes mentioned in the reading.

First, the loan from the merchant: Well, that doesn't mean that the Chevalier was poor. Let me explain. We know that in Switzerland, the Chevalier spent huge amounts of money on parties and on gambling. And he had wealth, but it was the kind of property you have to sell first to get money. So, it usually took a few days to convert his assets into actual money. So, when he ran out of cash, he had to borrow some while he was waiting for his money to arrive—but that's not being poor!

Second, the conversations with Voltaire: The Chevalier states in his memoir that each night, immediately after conversing with Voltaire, he wrote down everything he could remember about that particular night's conversation. Evidently, the Chevalier kept his notes of these conversations for many years and referred to them when writing the memoir. Witnesses who lived with the Chevalier in his later life confirm that he regularly consulted notes and journals when composing the memoir.

Third, the Chevalier's escape from the prison in Venice: Other prisoners in that prison had even more powerful friends than he did, and none of them were ever able to bribe their way to freedom, so bribery hardly seems likely in his case. The best evidence, though, comes from some old Venetian government documents. They indicate that soon after the Chevalier escaped from the prison, the ceiling of his old prison room had to be repaired. Why would they need to repair a ceiling unless he had escaped exactly as he said he did?

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You will now see a question that asks you to summarize the points made in the lecture and to explain how they cast doubt on points made in the reading passage. If this were an actual TOEFL iBT test, you would have 20 minutes to write your response. In this practice test, you may write your response and then compare it to the sample responses.

## **Question: 2**

### **Life on Mars**

#### **Reading Passage:**

For years, scientists have been trying to discover whether life exists on Mars. Most have concluded that the Martian environment today is too harsh to support living organisms. However, three recent discoveries lend support to the idea that there may very well be life on Mars after all. First, large amounts of methane have been detected in the Martian atmosphere. This suggests the presence of living methanogens, tiny organisms that release methane into the atmosphere as a by-product of their life processes. Methanogens get their energy from hydrogen in rocks and do not need oxygen or sunlight to live, so they can

survive in harsh environments like Mars. Since methane can remain in Mars' atmosphere only for a few centuries after it's created, these methanogens must be present and producing methane today.

Second, the existence of life on Mars is also strongly supported by a meteorite discovered in Antarctica in 1996. The particular chemical composition of this meteorite indicates that it is a rock from the surface of Mars. The meteorite also contains chemically pure and flawless crystals of the compound magnetite. Such magnetite crystals are produced in nature only by bacteria. Third, observations of hydrogen on Mars made in 2001 by NASA's Mars Odyssey spacecraft suggest the presence of liquid water there that could support organisms. The spacecraft detected the hydrogen in the top layer of Martian soil. This hydrogen is just what one would expect if there were liquid water under the surface. A subterranean reservoir of liquid water is an extremely suitable environment for microscopic life.

### **Listening:**

**[Narrator] Now listen to part of a lecture on the topic you just read about.**

**[Professor]** Mars is a very unfriendly place for life. The evidence that has been put forward as supporting there being life on Mars is actually very ambiguous. The facts as we know them can easily be accounted for without supposing life on Mars. First, methanogens are not necessarily the source of the methane. Methane can be produced by non biological processes like volcanic eruptions. The same experiments that detected the atmospheric methane also indicated recent volcano activity. Moreover, unlike methanogens, volcanoes have actually been found on Mars. So since no methanogens have been found yet, it's more likely that volcanoes are the source of Mars's methane. Second, while the magnetite crystals found in the meteorite from Mars were probably made by bacteria, there is no indication that the bacteria themselves originated on Mars. The meteorite arrived on Earth about 13,000 years ago, which means it has had thousands of years to become exposed to bacteria on Earth. So it could have been bacteria on Earth that formed the crystals we now observe. Indeed, recent research performed on the meteorite found that, in fact, it has become contaminated by Earth bacteria. Since the sample has been contaminated, the magnetite crystals on the meteorite cannot be used as evidence for life on Mars. Third, what about the supposed existence of liquid water near enough to the surface of Mars to support life? The recent investigations of Mars detected hydrogen; they didn't detect liquid water per se. It's actually much more likely that if there's any water close to the Martian surface, it's frozen; in other words, it's ice, not liquid water. And that's not a great environment for life.

**Prompt: Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they cast doubt on the specific points made in the reading passage.**

### **QUESTION 3**

#### **READING PASSAGE**

There are different types of universities. Some universities focus almost completely on research. These universities reward professors for doing research. They hire professors that are dedicated to discovering new things and publishing their findings. Other universities focus more on teaching. These universities hire professors that are able to explain concepts to their students clearly. Some universities have tried to blend both approaches and focus on both research and quality teaching, which is problematic.

First, both doing research and teaching take time, and having a dual focus will distract professors from being adequately prepared for their classes. Doing research can often be a messy, complex process, and they may end up spending so much time doing research that they don't have time to prepare their lectures or exams. When professors are not adequately prepared for classes, students may struggle more to understand the concepts and do well in class. If professors are expected to both teach and research, they will not have time for both.

Also, there is no real benefit researchers bring to the classroom if they lack teaching skills. Many researchers who teach as professors have had limited teacher training. They have extensive knowledge of their field, but do not know how to manage a classroom, write a reliable assessment, or scaffold student learning. Students are very frustrated by professors who lack these teaching skills. Teaching skills are necessary in order to help students learn; thus, experts without formal teacher training don't have a clear advantage.

Finally, by choosing one focus, professors can become more skilled in what they choose to do. If they choose to be a researcher, they can make a name for themselves in research because they can devote all of their time to research. If they choose to be a teacher, they can gain the teaching skills they need to be an excellent teacher, rather than trying to make time to research as well.

## **TRANSCRIPT**

Professor: Well, as you know from the reading, there are some reasonable concerns about universities that blend teaching and research. You will find some people, especially in this area, are passionate about this topic.

There are some points I want to make today during our class that weren't included in your reading. I think that it's important to understand both sides of this issue.

Something that people don't always think about is how researching can make planning lessons easier. If you have a teacher who is a teacher and a researcher, they are very up-to-date in their field, so they don't have to spend the same amount of time preparing for classes. Their research is their preparation.

Rather than waiting for other researchers to investigate questions and publish their findings, researching professors are on the cutting edge of their field. They attend conferences and find out what other researchers are doing as they are doing it. The time

they spend at these conferences is time well spent to prepare them for their teaching assignments.

While it is true that researching professors may not have the practical teaching skills that other teachers have, they are passionate about their subject because what they research is what they chose to pursue for their career.

One of my colleagues here in the department is famous for staying late to work on a presentation for class the next day because he is so excited to share his latest discovery with his students. His students love his lectures because they can tell how much the topic interests him, and they enjoy seeing the results of his research.

A final point I'll mention on this topic is that by only focusing on one thing, professors often get stuck. Teachers who don't do research tend to use the same books and go over the same material year after year. Teachers who research are able to continue growing because of their involvement in the field.

Researchers can also get stuck in a rut without the fresh perspective that teaching can bring.

Question:

Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they challenge specific arguments made in the reading passage.

There are lots of different kinds of professors. Some teach and do research, but others just teach. The author likes professors to focus in teaching.

The professor says that research makes lesson planning go better, but the article says that teachers who do research don't have time enough for both.

The professor says that when professors research they have a very passion for the subject they teach. On the other hand, the author of the article isn't agree.

The author of the article said that teachers get more skill by focusing on one thing. the professor completely disagrees with this opinion.

In conclusion, there are different types of professors and it is important to know what kind of professors you will have.

#### **QUESTION 4**

#### **READING PASSAGE**

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is one of the most famous of all English novelists, and today her novels are more popular than ever, with several recently adapted as Hollywood movies.

But we do not have many records of what she looked like. For a long time, the only accepted image of Austen was an amateur sketch of an adult Austen made by her sister Cassandra. However recently a professionally painted, full-length portrait of a teenage girl owned by a member of the Austen family has come up for sale. Although the professional painting is not titled Jane Austen, there are good reasons to believe she is the subject.

First, in 1882, several decades after Austen's death, Austen's family gave permission to use the portrait as an illustration in an edition of her letters. Austen's family clearly recognized it as a portrait of the author. So, for over a century now, the Austen family itself has endorsed the claim that the girl in the portrait is Jane Austen.

Second, the face in the portrait clearly resembles the one in Cassandra's sketch, which we know depicts Austen. Though somewhat amateurish, the sketch communicates definite details about Austen's face. Even though the Cassandra sketch is of an adult Jane Austen, the features are still similar to those of the teenage girl in the painting. The eyebrows, nose, mouth, and overall shape of the face are very much like those in the full-length portrait.

Third, although the painting is unsigned and undated, there is evidence that it was painted when Austen was a teenager. The style links it to Ozias Humphrey, a society portrait painter who was the kind of professional the wealthy Austen family would hire. Humphrey was active in the late 1780s and early 1790s, exactly the period when Jane Austen was the age of the girl in the painting.

## **LISTENING PASSAGE**

Professor:

The evidence linking this portrait to Jane Austen is not at all convincing. Sure, the painting has long been somewhat loosely connected to Austen's extended family and their descendents, but this hardly proves it's a portrait of Jane Austen as a teenager. The reading's arguments that the portrait is of Austen are questionable at best.

First, when the portrait was authorized for use in the 1882 publication of her letters, Jane Austen had been dead for almost 70 years. So the family members who asserted that the painting was Jane had never actually seen her themselves. They couldn't have known for certain if the portrait was of Austen or not.

Second, the portrait could very well be that of a relative of Austen's, a fact that would explain the resemblance between its subject and that of Cassandra's sketch. The extended Austen family was very large and many of Jane Austen's female cousins were teenagers in the relevant period or had children who were teenagers. And some of these teenage girls

could have resembled Jane Austen. In fact, many experts believe that the true subject of the portrait was one of those relatives, Marianne Kempian, who was a distant niece of Austen's. Third, the painting has been attributed to Humphrey only because of the style. But other evidence points to a later date. A stamp on the back of the picture indicates that the blank canvas, you know the actual piece of cloth on which the picture was painted, was sold by a man named William Legg. Record showed that William Legg did not sell canvases in London when Jane Austen was a teenager. He only started selling canvases when she was 27 years old. So it looks like the canvas was used for the painting at a time when Austen was clearly older than the girl in the portrait.