

TOEFL Reading Practice Paper 18

SET 1

This page will help you practise for the TOEFL reading test. This section has a reading passage about the design of green buildings and 11 questions. Think carefully before you select an answer. Your answer is scored on the first click! .

Read the text and answer the questions.

1) There has, in recent years, been an outpouring of information about the impact of buildings on the natural environment; Information which explains and promotes green and sustainable construction design, strives to convince others of its efficacy and warns of the dangers of ignoring the issue. Seldom do these documents offer any advice to practitioners, such as those designing mechanical and electrical systems for a building, on how to utilise this knowledge on a practical level.

2) While the terms *green* and *sustainable* are often considered synonymous, in that they both symbolise nature, green does not encompass all that is meant by sustainability, which can be defined as minimizing the negative impacts of human activities on the natural environment, in particular those which have long-term and irreversible effects. Some elements of green design may be sustainable too, for example those which reduce energy usage and pollution, while others, such as ensuring internal air quality, may be considered green despite having no influence on the ecological balance.

3) Although there are a good many advocates of 'green' construction in the architectural industry, able to cite ample reasons why buildings should be designed in a sustainable way, not to mention a plethora of architectural firms with experience in green design, this is not enough to make green construction come into being. The driving force behind whether a building is constructed with minimal environmental impact lies with the owner of the building; that is, the person financing the project. If the owner considers green design unimportant, or of secondary importance, then more than likely, it will not be factored into the design.

4) The commissioning process plays a key role in ensuring the owner gets the building he wants, in terms of design, costs and risk. At the predesign stage, the owner's objectives, criteria and the type of design envisaged are discussed and documented. This gives a design team a solid foundation on which they can build their ideas, and also provides a specific benchmark against which individual elements, such as costs, design and environmental impact can be judged.

5) Owners who skip the commissioning process, or fail to take 'green' issues into account when doing so, often **come a cropper** once their building is up and running. Materials and equipment are installed as planned, and, at first glance, appear to fulfil their purpose adequately. However, in time, the owner realises that operational and maintenance costs are higher than necessary, and that the occupants are dissatisfied with the results. These factors in turn lead to higher ownership costs as well as increased environmental impact.

6) In some cases, an owner may be aware of the latest trends in sustainable building design. He may have done research into it himself, or he may have been informed of the merits of green design through early discussion with professionals. However, firms should not take it as read that someone commissioning a building already has a preconceived idea of how green he intends the structure to be. Indeed, this initial interaction between owner and firm is the ideal time for a designer to outline and promote the ways that green design can meet the client's objectives, thus turning a project originally not destined for green design into a potential candidate.

7) Typically, when considering whether or not to adopt a green approach, an owner will ask about additional costs, return for investment and to what extent green design should be the limiting factor governing decisions in the design process. (1) Many of these costs are incurred by the increased

cooperation between the various stakeholders, such as the owner, the design professionals, contractors and end-users. (2) However, in green design, they must be involved from the outset, since green design demands interaction between these disciplines. (3) This increased coordination clearly requires additional expenditure. (4) A client may initially **balk at** these added fees, and may require further convincing of the benefits if he is to proceed. It is up to the project team to gauge the extent to which a client wants to get involved in a green design project and provide a commensurate service.

8) Of course, there may be financial advantage for the client in choosing a greener design. Case studies cite examples of green / sustainable designs which have demonstrated lower costs for long-term operation, ownership and even construction. Tax credits and rebates are usually available on a regional basis for projects with sustainable design or low emissions, among others.

The writer's main purpose is to...

- explain to professionals how they can influence clients to choose greener designs.
- explain the importance of green building design in reducing long-term damage to the environment.
- explain to owners commissioning a building why ignoring green issues is costly and dangerous.
- explain to professionals why it is important to follow the correct procedures when a building is commissioned.

2 The examples of green and sustainable designs given in paragraph 2 show that designs must be sustainable in order for them to be described as green.
for the purposes of this paper, the terms green and sustainable have the same meaning.
some sustainable designs are green, while others are not.
some designs are termed green, even though they are not sustainable.

3 According to paragraph 3, the reason for the lack of green buildings being designed is that...
few firms have any experience in design and constructing buildings to a green design.
construction companies are unaware of the benefits of green and sustainable designs.
firms do not get to decide whether a building is to be constructed sustainably.
firms tend to convince clients that other factors are more important than sustainability.

4 Which of the following is NOT true about the commissioning process?
It is conducted before the building is designed.
It is a stage that all clients go through when constructing a building.
It is a step in the design procedure in which the client's goals are identified.
It provides the firm with a measure of how well they did their job.

5 In paragraph 5, what does the phrase 'come a cropper' mean?
experience misfortune
change one's mind
notice the benefits
make a selection

6 In paragraph 6, the writer implies that...
most clients enter the commissioning process with a clear idea of whether or not they want a green building.
designers are usually less concerned about green design than the clients are.
the commissioning process offers a perfect opportunity to bring up the subject of green design.

firms should avoid working with clients who reject green designs in their buildings.

7 Where in paragraph 7 does this sentence belong?

In a typical project, landscape architects and mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineers do not become involved until a much later stage.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

8 In paragraph 7, what does 'balk at' mean?

- display shock towards
- agree to pay
- question the reason for
- understand the need for

9 Green buildings are most likely to incur more expense than conventional buildings due to...

- higher taxes incurred on sustainable buildings.
- higher long-term operational costs.
- the higher cost of green construction materials.
- increased coordination between construction teams.

Read the 6 sentences below. Which 3 sentences best express the most important ideas in the passage? (Do not choose sentences which focus on minor or incorrect facts).

1. Green, sustainable buildings are advantageous not only in terms of environmental impact. There are financial benefits as well.
2. Ensuring good internal air quality is one way of ensuring that occupants are satisfied with a building's design.
3. Since clients are unlikely to choose a green construction design, it is up to the firms to advocate it.
4. Most clients are prepared to pay extra in order to receive the benefits of green building design.
5. Architects are more interested in green building design than other contractors, such as engineers and plumbers.
6. Although the initial costs for designing and constructing green buildings may dissuade clients from building them, there are financial incentives, particularly in the long term.

10. Select first sentence

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- Option 4
- Option 5

Option 6

11. Select second sentence

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

Option 5

Option 6

12. Select final sentence

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

Option 4

Option 5

Option 6

SET 2

1) Anthropology distinguishes itself from the other social sciences by its greater emphasis on fieldwork as the source of new knowledge. The aim of such studies is to develop as intimate an understanding as possible of the phenomena investigated. Although the length of field studies varies from a few weeks to years, it is generally agreed that anthropologists should stay in the field long enough for their presence to be considered 'natural' by the permanent residents.

2) Realistically, however, anthropologists may never reach this status. Their foreign mannerisms make them appear clownish, and so they are treated with curiosity and amusement. If they speak the local language at all, they do so with a strange accent and flawed grammar. They ask tactless questions and inadvertently break rules regarding how things are usually done. Arguably this could be an interesting starting point for research, though it is rarely exploited. Otherwise, anthropologists take on the role of the 'superior expert', in which case they are treated with deference and respect, only coming into contact with the most high-ranking members of the society. Anthropologists with this role may never witness the **gamut** of practices which take place in all levels of the society.

3) No matter which role one takes on, anthropologists generally find fieldwork extremely demanding. Anthropological texts may read like an exciting journey of exploration, but rarely is this so. Long periods of time spent in the field are generally characterised by boredom, illness and frustration. Anthropologists in the field encounter unfamiliar climates, strange food and low standards of hygiene. It is often particularly trying for researchers with middle-class, European backgrounds to adapt to societies where being alone

is considered pitiful. It takes a dedicated individual to conduct research which is not in some way influenced by these personal discomforts.

4) Nonetheless, fieldwork requires the researcher to spend as much time as possible in local life. A range of research methodologies can be utilised to extract information. (1) These can be classified as *emic* or *etic*. (2) While emic descriptions are considered more desirable nowadays, they are difficult to attain, even if the researcher does his utmost to reproduce the facts from the natives' point of view. (3) More often than not, aspects of the researcher's own culture, perspective and literary style seep into the narrative. Moreover, research generally involves translations from one language to another and from speech into writing. In doing this, the meaning of utterances is changed. (4) The only truly emic descriptions can be those given by the natives themselves in their own vernacular.

5) The least invasive type of research methodology is observation. Here, the researcher studies the group and records findings without intruding too much on their privacy. This is not to say, however, that the presence of the researcher will have minimal impact on the findings. An example was Richard Borshay Lee, who, in studying local groups in the Kalahari refused to provide the people with food so as not to taint his research, leading to an inevitable hostility towards the researcher which would not otherwise have been present.

6) A variant on the observation technique, participant observation requires that the anthropologist not only observes the culture, but participates in it too. It allows for deeper immersion into the culture studied, hence a deeper understanding of it. By developing a deeper rapport with the people of the culture, it is hoped they will open up and **divulge** more about their culture and way of life than can simply be observed. Participant observation is still an imperfect methodology, however, since populations may adjust their behavior around the researcher, knowing that they are the subject of research.

7) The participatory approach was conceived in an attempt to produce as emic a perspective as possible. The process involves not just the gathering of information from local people, but involves them in the interpretation of the findings. That is, rather than the researcher getting actively involved in the processes within the local community, the process is turned on its head. The local community is actively involved in the research process.

The main premise of the text is...

the steps to be followed when undertaking anthropological fieldwork.

a history of anthropological fieldwork methodology.

the effects that an anthropological fieldwork has on local communities.

the problems with conducting anthropological fieldwork.

2 The main reason for anthropological researchers remaining in a community for an extended period of time is that...

they can gather as much information as possible.

they can try out a range of different research methodologies.

they want local people to behave naturally around them.

they need time to become accustomed to the conditions.

3 What does the passage say about researchers who are considered a 'clown' by locals?

They do culturally unacceptable things without realising it.

They do not gain respect among high-ranking members of the community.

They cannot conduct any research of value.

They do not study the language and culture of the region before their arrival.

4 What does 'gamut' mean?

- idea or impression
- prohibition or taboo
- range or extent
- secret or mystery

5 The writer believes that the most difficult aspect of fieldwork for educated westerners is

- the lack of companionship.
- poor sanitary conditions.
- failure to meet expectations.
- never being left alone.

6 In paragraph 3, it is implied that...

- the fieldworker's emotions and mood prejudice the research.
- the longer a researcher spends in the field, the more depressed he gets.
- middle-class Europeans find field research more difficult than researchers from other backgrounds.
- anthropological texts tend to exaggerate the difficult conditions that researchers experience.

7 Where in paragraph 4 does this sentence belong?

A native's point of view of his own lifestyle is emic, while the analytical perspective of the outsider is etic.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

8 Which of the following is NOT true about an emic account?

- It is likely to be more analytical in style than an etic account.
- It is told from the perspective of the person being studied.
- It is currently the preferred way of conducting anthropological research.
- It cannot be translated without altering its meaning.

9 Why is the example of Richard Borshay Lee given in paragraph 5?

- to demonstrate that observation is an ineffective method of gathering data.
- to highlight why it is important that researchers minimize their impact on a community.
- to show the dangers of researchers trying to lessen their impact on a community
- to show how a researcher's choice of methodology can influence the validity of his findings.

10 How does participant observation differ vary from straightforward observation?

- It requires the researcher to become actively involved in the daily lives of those being studied.
- It allows the subjects of the research a greater degree of privacy.
- It eradicates the problem of research subjects altering their behaviour towards researchers.
- It takes longer to perform this type of research effectively.

11 In paragraph 6, **divulge** is closest in meaning to...

explain
illustrate
reveal
propose

12 Which of the following is NOT true of the participatory approach?

It attempts to reduce etic accounts of a culture to a minimum.

It does not require a researcher to be present.

It aims to involve the subjects in both information gathering and analysis.

It is the reverse of the participant observation technique.