

TOEFL Listening Practice Paper 15

Question 1-2

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is based on the idea that people experience their world through their language, and that they therefore understand their world through the culture embedded in their language. The hypothesis, which has also been called linguistic relativity, states that language shapes thought. Studies have shown, for instance, that unless people have access to the word 'ambivalent' they don't recognize an experience of uncertainty due to conflicting positive and negative feelings about one issue which is the definition of ambivalent. Essentially, the hypothesis argues, if a person can't describe the experience, the person is not having the experience.

1. *What is the topic of the lecture?*

- a. If certain words don't exist in your language, there's a reason
- b. The idea that language affects our experiences
- c. How linguistic relativity shapes the way we think
- d. You can predict what someone is thinking based on their language

2. *Why does the professor talk about the word 'ambivalent'?*

- a. To prove that linguistic relativity is a viable hypothesis
- b. To provide an example of linguistic relativity
- c. To argue that linguistic relativity is not an accurate hypothesis
- d. To further explain the concept of linguistic relativity

Question 3-8

<https://soundcloud.com/user-827804196/toefl-listening-practice-question-1>

3. What was Claudia upset about?

- a. The status of a group project for her philosophy class
- b. A difficult project designing a bridge for her engineering class
- c. She was having trouble understanding Aristotle's philosophies and influences
- d. Receiving a poor grade on her midterm exams

4. What were the components of the group project assignment? Mark the two correct choices.

- a. A 10-page paper
- b. A 20-page paper
- c. A 20-minute presentation
- d. A 10-minute presentation

5. In Claudia's sentence: "Thanks for commiserating with me Miguel," the word commiserating most nearly means which of the following?

- a. Communicating
- b. Correcting
- c. Agreeing
- d. Sympathizing

6. Why does Claudia think her group is not taking the project seriously? Pick two correct answers.

- a. Because one student does not enjoy philosophy class
- b. Because one student did a poor job covering his material
- c. Because two group members have not yet started on the project
- d. Because they know the project will not impact their grade

7. Read the following statement from the conversation and then answer the question:

Male student: I had to carry the weight of the whole group since no one held up their end.

What does the male student mean when he says he “had to carry the weight of the whole group”?

- a. His bridge design had to hold the entire load dictated by the assignment
- b. He needed to manage everyone in his group and assign them various roles in the project
- c. He had to take on the bulk of the group work by himself
- d. He had to demonstrate how much weight the bridge could hold before it collapsed

8. Why does the female student say: “Before this, I always loved group projects, but now, my opinion has shifted”?

- a. She used to enjoy group projects, but after the current negative experience, she no longer likes them
- b. She didn't used to like group projects, but after the current negative experience, she now enjoys them
- c. She has changed her views of things after learning about the ideals of notable philosophers
- d. She didn't used to like philosophy class, but after this project, she now enjoys it

Questions 9-10

The Passage

Now for the practice questions! Here's the passage to start you off:

STUDENT: Good morning, Professor. I'm here to talk about my paper.

PROFESSOR: Oh, yes. What's giving you trouble with it? You're doing so well in class...

STUDENT: Well, um. I'd like to ask for an extension on the due date because I had it on my laptop, but then my roommate spilled his drink on the computer and it just - it won't turn on, and so now I have to write everything over again. I don't think I can get it done by this evening.

PROFESSOR: Hmm, and you didn't have it backed up anywhere else?

STUDENT: I know I should have. I feel really dumb.

PROFESSOR: Have you gone to the tech support desk at the library?

STUDENT: No. What's that?

PROFESSOR: It's a - a walk-in service to help students with computer problems. They might be able to help you get your files off the computer, even if it won't turn on.

STUDENT: Oh, that would be wonderful. Thanks so much. I'll go right now and see if they can help me.

PROFESSOR: Good. Do that, and if they still can't help you, come back and we'll talk about an extension.

STUDENT: Thank you!

Questions

Got that? Now keep your notes out while you work on the questions.

9. Why is the student asking for an extension?

- A. The laptop where he saved his paper is broken.
- B. He works at the tech support desk at the library.
- C. He doesn't understand the class material.
- D. His roommate told him his paper needed a lot of work.

The correct answer is A. This is a listening for basic comprehension question because it just asks you about a fact in the passage.

10. Listen to the following two lines again:

PROFESSOR: Hmm, and you didn't have it backed up anywhere else?

STUDENT: I know I should have. I feel really dumb.

When the student says 'I know I should have,' what is he implying?

- A. He had another backup, but the roommate destroyed it as well.
- B. He had another backup somewhere else.
- C. He did not back up the essay anywhere else.
- D. He didn't know he could back up his essay.