

How to Prepare Students for the TOEIC® TEST

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Note from the authors

The aim of *How to Prepare Students for the TOEIC® Test* is to give teachers ideas on how to use TOEIC® practice tests as a teaching tool. This publication provides useful activities to help students prepare effectively for the various parts of the Listening and Reading Sections of the TOEIC® Test. These activities enable students to have a better understanding of the purpose of the test tasks and of the skills and sub skills of listening and reading required to complete these tasks in a specific time limit. All activities are adapted from *Practice Exams for the TOEIC® Test* published by the Hellenic American Union in 2007. Similar activities can be included in a preparation course using practice tests from this HAU publication.

Practice tests used as teaching tools need not necessarily be exploited as such in their entirety nor should they be completed in one class session. They should be spread out over several sessions, focusing on one or two parts each time, and should be combined with language consolidation activities (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, etc.). For example, a sample from Part I of the Listening Section could be done during the first hour of the session and examples of grammar and vocabulary items from the Reading Section during the second. On a subsequent session, examples from Part II of the Listening Section could be presented and analyzed during the first hour and examples of reading tasks could be exploited during the second. Of course, not all the practice tests on a TOEIC® Test preparation course syllabus should be used as teaching tools. For example, in a syllabus that uses eight practice examinations (e.g. *45-Hour New TOEIC Preparation Course Syllabus*, HAU Publication 2008), only two of these tests should be reserved for this purpose. The remaining six should be administered to the students as progress or mock tests, or be assigned as homework.

Using practice tests as a teaching tool will provide more effective classroom preparation for the TOEIC® Test. The variety of activities facilitate a more creative learning environment and help students to gain insights on how the TOEIC® Test reflects authentic tasks in the real world.

Note from the publisher

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) has offered the TOEIC® Test for over 25 years. The TOEIC® Test is designed for non native speakers of English who want to measure their English language skills. The Hellenic American Union was entrusted with the responsibility for administering the test in 2001 and since then it has been providing not only high quality examination services, but also strong academic support for the EFL community through over 150 seminars held each year throughout Greece as part of the institution's commitment to furthering teacher development.

This academic support draws on the extensive awareness and experience of current practice in the field of EFL which the Hellenic American Union has acquired through running the largest Teacher Education institution for teachers of EFL in Greece and through its experience as a center for test development, both in cooperation with European programs and from its close cooperation with the University of Michigan.

It was from our close contact with language teachers and language school owners that we realized that there was a strong need for developing *How to Prepare Students for the TOEIC® Test*. This publication takes into account the most recent adjustments to the TOEIC® Test, helping to raise awareness of these changes and to provide support for teachers preparing students for this test.

In producing *How to Prepare Students for the TOEIC® Test*, the Hellenic American Union has drawn on its vast academic knowledge as well as its access to teachers and students. Through the drafting, editing and piloting stages, the institution has contributed its sound academic background and valuable practice experience of teaching this test, producing high quality material that we believe will assist both teachers and candidates for the TOEIC® Test.

Practice Exams for the TOEIC® Test – Test 2

Listening section

Listening Part 1: Photographs

Activity 1

- Get students to brainstorm picture-related vocabulary
- Have students make sentences about the picture using the vocabulary

Example 1 (Item 3):



1. Get students to brainstorm picture-related vocabulary. Ask students to write vocabulary under three headings: **nouns – verbs – adjectives**

Possible answers:

| Nouns | Verbs | Adjectives |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| puppets | working | big |
| man | looking | small |
| glasses | wearing | long |
| apron | etc. | old |
| tools | | etc. |
| etc. | | |

2. Ask students to create factual questions about the picture.

Students can use the...

- present simple: – The man is standing behind the counter.
- present progressive: – The man is holding a tool.
- present perfect: – He hasn't finished yet.

Rationale: By scanning the picture first and making a mental note of picture-related words and actions, students avoid making hypothetical assumptions about the picture. The instructions for this part state that they “must select the one statement that best describes what [they] see in the picture.” Students, therefore, must select the statement that states a truth about the picture. Distractors such as *He has repaired the puppet* cannot be the best response. This is an unsupported hypothetical assumption that does not describe the picture, as we do not know when and whether the puppet was actually repaired. All we know about the picture is that the man is performing some action. The correct response that “best describes the picture” is *He works with his hands*.

Activity 2

Example 2 (Item 7):



Ask students to answer the following questions:

When viewing people:

- Who are the people in the picture? (colleagues, boss- employees)
- What are they doing? (talking)
- What are they wearing? (suits)
- Where are they? (office)
- How many people are there in the picture? (3)
- What makes them different from each other? One man – One elderly woman – One young woman --- one person (man) sitting down, two women standing up. One woman (elderly) is wearing glasses.

When viewing objects:

- What type of object is it? (pencil holder, lap top)
- Where is the object usually found? (pencil holder, on office desk)
- What is the object made of? (pencil holder, glass, metal, plastic)

Rationale: By answering these types of questions, students will develop the technique of quickly scanning the picture on test day so that they can make sound interpretations of what the picture depicts. Answer choices such as *They're all looking at the computer screen* does not “best describe the picture” as only the elderly woman is looking at the computer screen. The best response is *They're discussing a project*. This is a safe interpretation to make as they are in an office and they seem to be discussing something.

Activity 3

Ask students to listen to the four statements and choose the best response. Ask students to justify their answer and explain why the other three answer choices (distractors) are wrong.

Rationale: By getting students to justify why distractors are wrong, they will come to understand that they may make unwarranted assumptions about the picture if they bring in their own background schemata.

Exam strategies:

Before students listen to the choices:

1. They should quickly scan the picture making a mental note of all the nouns, verbs, and adjectives.
2. They should quickly answer the questions in Activity 2.

While they listen to the choices:

1. Students should use the back of their pencil and move across the three answer choices as they eliminate distractors.
2. Students should answer the question as soon as they are certain that they have found the correct answer and quickly scan the next picture. They should be reminded to always be a question ahead.

Listening Part 2: Question-Response

Activity 1

- A. Give students a handout with the following chart. Ask them to place a tick under the type of question they hear.

| | Function Question | Negative Question | Information Question | Alternative Question | Yes/No Question |
|------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Question 1 | | | | | |
| Question 2 | | | | | |
| Question 3 | | | | | |
| Question 4 | | | | | |
| Question 5 | | | | | |

1. When's the best time to meet? (Information question)(Item 13)
2. Can you tell me where the manager is? (Yes/No question) (Item 28)
3. Why weren't we told in advance? (Negative question)(Item 37)
4. Would you care for some coffee or tea? (Alternative question) (Item 14)
5. What would you recommend I do? (Function question) (Item 40)

Rationale: This activity helps students recognize the different types of questions that they will hear in this part of the test.

- B. Then ask students to decide what type of information is needed to answer the question.
1. When is the best time to meet? (Information question) (time reference)
 2. Can you tell me where the manager is? (Yes/No question) (Yes/No or natural response)
 3. Why weren't we told in advance? (Negative question) (reason)
 4. Would you care for some coffee or tea? (Alternative question) (a choice of the two, both, neither, or even a natural response)
 5. What would you recommend I do? (Function) (suggestion/advice)

Rationale: This activity helps students to understand the type of questions asked and the appropriate responses to such questions. Students need not only to understand what type of information the question asks for but also to be aware that many questions may be answered naturally without necessarily following an expected answer pattern. An appropriate answer to *Who's in the photo?* may not necessarily refer to an actual person. A natural response in this case is *I am not sure*.

Activity 2

Ask students to listen to the following questions one at a time and predict an appropriate response:

Example:

1. Who didn't receive the memo? (Item 11)
2. When will the event take place? (Item 21)
3. Do you like the red one or the blue one? (Item 24)
4. What would you recommend I do? (Item 40)
5. Can you tell me where the manager is? (Item 28)

Rationale: This activity provides an actual reason for students to listen to the question or statement and makes them focus on the task. This will reinforce the importance of paying attention to the questions or statements and not only to the answer choices.

Activity 3 (Item 11)

Give students the answer choices below and ask them to come up with an appropriate question. Only one of the answer choices should be the correct answer to the question students create.

- A. The accounting department
- B. The secretary typed the memo.
- C. We received it yesterday.

Rationale: By formulating questions from the answer choices, students will have a better understanding of the type of question that can be answered by the answer choices. Students will be able to eliminate inappropriate answer choices without necessarily understanding the whole question or statement. For example, if the students hear *Who didn't receive the memo?* Choice C can be safely eliminated as it would be a more suitable response to a "when" question.

Activity 4

Have students decide on the time-frame of the question.

Item 21. When will the event take place?

- a. Has the event happened? (no)
- b. How do we know? (will)

Item 15. How many have already registered?

- a. Can people still register? (yes)
- b. How do we know? (have already + ed)

Rationale: This activity helps students understand that an appropriate response must take the time frame of the question or statement into account.

Exam strategies:

While students listen, they should:

1. Try to recognize the type of question heard.
2. Predict possible answer before they listen to the responses.
3. Eliminate inappropriate answer choices.
4. Use the back of their pencil and move across the answer choices as they eliminate distractors.

Listening Part 3: Conversations

Activity 1

Write the questions below on the board. Have students answer as many of these questions as they can while they listen to each conversation:

1. Who are the speakers?
2. What is their profession?
3. What is their relationship?
4. Where are they?
5. What are they discussing?
6. Why are they discussing this?

Questions 50 - 52 refer to the following conversation.

Man: Why is your computer making this beeping noise? Do you have so many incoming messages?

Woman: No, I don't. For some reason I can't log on to my Outlook account to read my messages.

Man: You've probably been locked out for some reason; you need to contact the help desk to unlock you.

Woman: I think I'll just log off my computer first; it might have crashed! It's not that it's state-of-the-art equipment. I should have upgraded it a long time ago.

Suggested answers:

1. Who are the speakers? (colleagues)
2. What is their profession? (secretaries – not computer experts)
3. What is their relationship? (colleagues)
4. Where are they? (office)
5. What are they discussing? (computer problems)
6. Why are they discussing this? (computer making noise – computer old)

Rationale: This activity provides students with the necessary focus to better understand the conversation they hear. Some students do not have time to scan questions beforehand, but having these questions in mind will increase their probability of answering correctly the questions that will follow.

Activity 2

Write the questions below on the board. Do not write the answer choices. First ask students to underline the key words in the question stem. Then they should listen to the conversation and answer the questions by providing their own answers.

Question 41: Why is the man going to Spain?

Question 42: What advice does the woman give him?

Question 43: What can be inferred about the man?

Conversation

Woman: How many days are you going to stay in Spain?

Man: Unfortunately, I'll only be there for four days and I'll be pretty busy in the mornings attending seminars.

Woman: Yes, but you'll be free in the evenings, won't you? I'd really try to make the most out of this visit if I were you.

Man: No, I'm not intending to miss this opportunity. I'll do some sightseeing. I don't know if museums or galleries are open late in the evening though, but I'll definitely try and get a taste of Spanish nightlife.

Suggested answers

Question 41: Why is the man going to Spain? (work-related)

Question 42: What advice does the woman give him? (enjoy himself – visit places)

Question 43: What can be inferred about the man? (he will enjoy himself)

Rationale: This activity helps students focus on the key information they are required to listen for. By paraphrasing the information they hear in the conversation, students will have a better understanding of the conversation and will be able to better predict the correct answer choice while eliminating distractors. Answer choices do not necessarily use the same words from the text and many times distractors echo the text but do not answer the questions.

Exam strategies:

Before students listen:

1. They should skim the questions and answer choices paying attention to the key words.

While listening:

2. Students should keep their eyes on the key words in the question stem and answer choices.
3. Students should mark the correct answer choice as quickly as they hear it.

Listening Part 4: Short Talks

Activity 1

Write the following questions on the board. Ask students to answer as many of these questions as they can while listening to each short talk:

1. Who is the speaker?
2. What is his/her profession?
3. Where is the speaker?
4. What is the purpose of the talk?
5. Who is the audience?

Questions 77 – 79, refer to the following weather report

Thanks, Marcy, Dan ... and yes, that cold front is rapidly approaching. The weather service is predicting snow overnight. For those of you driving in from a weekend get-away, you'll want to be on the road early this afternoon and back home before it starts. And that can be anytime after sundown in the upper elevations. So, if you're coming into town on the national highway, remember to be careful on those high passes on Mt. Patton. The snow will continue until midday tomorrow ... making it less than pleasant for those of you who have to get to work in the morning rush hour. And once the snow stops, temperatures will fall even further. We're looking for a low of minus ten tomorrow night in higher elevations, and zero to minus one, here in the city. So cover your outdoor plants and make sure any outdoor animals have a sheltered place to sleep. It's going to be very chilly for the next few days. That's the local weather. Now for a look at ...

Possible answers:

1. Who is the speaker? (weather forecaster)
2. What is his/her profession? (weather forecaster)
3. Where is the speaker? (radio station studio)
4. What is the purpose of the talk? (to inform – to warn)
5. Who is the audience? (locals)

Rationale: This activity provides students with the necessary focus to better understand the short talk they hear. Some students do not have time to scan questions beforehand, but having these questions in mind will increase their probability of answering correctly the questions that follow.

Activity 2

Give students the question stems and instruct them to underline the key words. Then ask students to listen to the talk and answer the questions by providing their own answers.

Question 77: What is the speaker's job?

Question 78: The report is intended for people in which area?

Question 79: What severe weather conditions will the listeners face?

Rationale: This activity helps students focus on the key information they need to listen for. By paraphrasing the information they hear in the conversation, students will have a better understanding of the conversation and will be able to better predict the correct answer choice while eliminating distractors. Answer choices do not necessarily use the same words from the text and many times distractors echo the text but do not answer the questions.

Exam strategies:

Before students listen:

1. They should skim the questions and answer choices paying attention to the key words.

While listening, students should:

2. Pay attention to the introduction of the talk to understand the type of the talk.
3. Keep their eyes on the key words in the question stem and answer choices.
4. Mark the correct answer choice as soon as they hear it.

Reading section

Reading Parts 5 and 6

Activity 1 – Word forms, Vocabulary and Grammar

Ask students to cover the answer choices and work with the stem only. Students should analyze the question stem only, paying special attention to the structure of complex sentences. They should also decide what part of speech the missing word is. Then they should try to guess the missing word or phrase before they look at the answer choices.

108. Yung Laboratories, a generic-drugs maker based in China, had challenged our company's patents in an attempt to launch a _____ product.
- (A) competent
 - (B) competing
 - (C) competition
 - (D) competitor

Answer: part of speech – adjective

Main clause: Yung Laboratories challenged our company's patents in an attempt to launch a (competing) product.

Appositive: a generic-drugs maker based in China (explains what kind of company Yung Laboratories is)

Possible answer: new (students' word)

122. The company has been seeking a new boss since the shareholders, _____ with a bid for the London Stock Exchange, ousted William Lee.
- (A) dissatisfaction
 - (B) dissatisfied
 - (C) dissatisfy
 - (D) dissatisfying

Answer: part of speech – adjective

Main clause: The company has been seeking a new boss

Subordinate clause: since the shareholders ousted William Lee.

Reduced adjective clause: _____ with a bid for the London Stock Exchange,

Possible answer: who were unhappy or unhappy

116. The President overcame strong opposition and _____ to get re-elected again.
- (A) accomplished
 - (B) fulfilled
 - (C) managed
 - (D) succeeded

Answer: part of speech – verb

Possible answer: was able

Main clauses: The President overcame strong opposition. He managed to get re-elected again. (Two main clauses joined with “and.” In the second main clause the subject is not repeated.)

Rationale: This activity gives students practice in analyzing sentence structure and predicting an appropriate answer while at the same time it reinforces their vocabulary. Students will also benefit from listening to suggested answers from their peers. Class discussion on possible answers will make students aware of the grammar associated with the word they have chosen. The word *succeeded*, for example, would be followed by *in* and a gerund. Students will also consolidate different suffixes.

Activity 2

Ask students to read the question stem and select the correct answer choice. Then students should be asked to use one of the distractors (when appropriate) and to produce a grammatically correct sentence, making the necessary adjustments (syntactical or grammatical) to the stem provided. As an alternative, students could be asked to produce their own sentence using some of the distractors correctly.

118. _____ Jean Paul Watson was a specialist in international retailing, he was not promoted because he did not have hands-on experience.
- (A) Although
 - (B) Besides
 - (C) But for
 - (D) In spite

Possible change: *In spite* of being a specialist in international retailing, Jean Paul Watson was not promoted because he did not have hands-on experience.

Rationale: This activity reinforces students understanding of sentence structure and highlights the need to read the whole sentence again with the choice selected to ensure that it is grammatically appropriate. When students create their own sentences, they will reinforce their vocabulary and knowledge of grammar.

Exam strategies:

Students should:

1. Analyze sentence structure and work out what part of speech is missing.
2. Reread sentence with their answer choice to ensure that it is appropriate for the stem in terms of meaning and form.
3. Pay attention to the co-textual features (clues).
4. Pay special attention to complex sentences.
5. Skim the text quickly first when the item is testing discourse (Part 6).

Reading Part 7

Step 1

Ask students to first read the questions. They should underline key words in direct questions and key words in answer choices in incomplete sentences. Then ask students whether the questions require them to read the entire passage in detail or to skim and scan it to locate specific information.

159. Under which circumstances can a company ask a job applicant to take a polygraph test? (skimming/scanning)
160. According to the notice, if a company asks someone to take a polygraph, the company should ... (skimming/scanning)
- (A) have a lawyer present.
- (B) let the person know in writing.
- (C) ask the Department of Labor.
- (D) give the results to the Federal Government.
161. In the last line of paragraph 6, the word "disclosed" is closest in meaning to ... (detail) (Note: Sometimes students may need to read not only the sentence in which the word is contained but also the one that precedes as well as the one that follows).
162. What is true according to the notice? (skimming/scanning)

Rationale: This activity helps students focus on the key information and provides a real purpose for reading the text. It also makes students aware of the reading skills and subskills they need to employ while reading the text.

Step 2

Have students answer the questions by underlining relevant parts of the text using the appropriate techniques already decided on in Step 1. Emphasize to the students that in order to answer skimming and scanning questions, they should use the key words from the question stem and/or the answer choices. This way they will be better able to locate the relevant information needed to answer the question. The key words may be the same or may be a paraphrase depending on the difficulty of the item.

Questions 159 - 162 refer to the following notice.

NOTICE

EMPLOYEE POLYGRAPH PROTECTION ACT

The Employee Polygraph Protection Act prohibits most private employers from using lie detector tests either for pre-employment screening or during the course of employment.

PROHIBITIONS

Employers are generally prohibited from requiring or requesting any employee or job applicant to take a lie detector test, and from discharging, disciplining, or discriminating against an employee or prospective employee for refusing to take a test or for exercising other rights under the Act.

EXEMPTIONS*

Federal, State and local governments are not affected by the law. Also, the law does not apply to tests given by the Federal Government to certain private individuals engaged in national security-related activities.

The Act permits polygraph (a kind of lie detector) tests to be administered in the private sector, subject to restrictions, to certain prospective employees of security service firms (armored car, alarm, and guard), and of pharmaceutical manufacturers, distributors and dispensers.

The Act also permits polygraph testing, subject to restrictions, of certain employees of private firms who are reasonably suspected of involvement in a workplace incident (theft, embezzlement, etc.) that resulted in economic loss to the employer.

EXAMINEE RIGHTS

Where polygraph tests are permitted, they are subject to numerous strict standards concerning the conduct and length of the test. Examinees have a number of specific rights, including the right to a written notice before testing, the right to refuse or discontinue a test, and the right not to have test results disclosed to unauthorized persons.

*The law does not preempt any provision of any State or local law or any collective bargaining agreement which is more restrictive with respect to lie detector tests.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

159. Under which circumstances can a company ask a job applicant to take a polygraph test?
- (A) If the company's profits are down
 - (B) If the applicant previously worked as a security officer
 - (C) Whenever the company feels it is necessary
 - (D) Whenever the company produces **medical drugs** (pharmaceutical Manufacturers, under Exemptions*)
160. According to the notice, if a company asks someone to take a polygraph, the company should...
- (A) have a lawyer present.
 - (B) let the person know **in writing**. (a written notice before testing, under Examinee Rights)
 - (C) ask the Department of Labor.
 - (D) give the results to the Federal Government.
161. In the last line of paragraph 6, the word "disclosed" is closest in meaning to...
- (A) furthered
 - (B) informed
 - (C) revealed
 - (D) transferred
162. What is true according to the notice?
- (A) A polygraph test can take as long as the company wants it to.
 - (B) Employees must take a polygraph test when asked.
 - (C) Employees can **refuse** to take a **polygraph test**. (the right to refuse or discontinue a test, under Examinee Rights)
 - (D) If employees do not want to take a polygraph, they can be fired.

Rationale: By answering the questions using the appropriate reading skills or subskills students reduce the reading burden and gain valuable time.

NOTE: It is important that you familiarize students with all the different types of texts that they may encounter in the Reading Section. Students must be aware that different genres have their own characteristics and organization. For example, you would find the purpose of an email or fax in the subject or reference line while the purpose of a letter may be in the first or second paragraph depending on the type of letter. In a letter of complaint, the first paragraph usually contains all the necessary background conditions referring to the specific transaction while the second paragraph contains the complaint itself. Students should also pay attention to titles and subtitles as the former contain important information concerning the purpose of the text and the latter guide students to the section that they should be skimming and scanning.

Types of Reading Texts

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Advertisements</i> | <i>Business evaluations</i> | <i>Charts</i> | <i>Graphs</i> |
| <i>Announcements</i> | <i>E-mail messages</i> | <i>Faxes</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| <i>Instructions</i> | <i>Itineraries</i> | <i>Memorandums</i> | <i>Notices</i> |
| <i>Informal letters</i> | <i>Formal letters</i> | <i>Tables</i> | <i>Telephone messages</i> |
| <i>Tickets</i> | <i>Vouchers</i> | <i>Invitations</i> | <i>Calendars</i> |
| <i>Business profiles</i> | <i>CVs</i> | <i>Articles</i> | <i>Invoices</i> |
| <i>Order sheets</i> | <i>Schedules</i> | <i>etc.</i> | |

Exam strategies:

Students should:

1. Spend more than half of the time allocated to the Reading Tasks in Part 7.
2. Read the sentence that introduces the text.
3. Read the question stem first and then use the appropriate skills and subskills to answer the questions.
4. Use key words to locate the relevant parts of the text.
5. Try to guess unknown words from context.
6. In the double texts, decide which questions can be answered using the strategies mentioned above per text and which questions require them to discern what one text is about before reading the other text.

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