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TOEFL Secrets

Your Key to TOEFL Success

From the desk of Tom Paulson, Director of Test-Taking Strategy at TOEFL Secrets, May 5, 2002-

Dear future TOEFL Success Story:

Congratulations on your purchase of the most advanced test-taking manual for the TOEFL. Notice I did not say study guide- there are plenty of decent study guides on the market, but that was not our objective in writing this manual. Our goal is to seek and exploit specific weaknesses in the TOEFL assessment, and then share those secrets with our customers.

Let's be perfectly honest here- you've worked hard enough in the past, and if you want to spend hours in a study guide to boost your score, that's a great thing to do. In fact, we recommend at least a brief review of some of the better study guides on the market. But that's simply not enough to do well in the high-pressure high-stakes environment of the test day. How well you do on this test will have a significant impact on your future- and we have the research and practical advice to help you execute on test day.

The product you're reading now is much more than a study guide- it is a tactical weapon designed to exploit weaknesses in the test itself, and help you avoid the most common errors students make when taking the TOEFL.

How to use this manual

We don't want to waste your time. This manual is fast-paced and fluff-free. We suggest going through it a number of times, trying out its methods on a number of official practice tests.

First, read through the manual completely to get a feel for the content and organization. Read the general success strategies first, and then proceed to

the individual test sections. Each tip has been carefully selected for its effectiveness.

Second, read through the manual again, and take notes in the margins and highlight those sections where you may have a particular weakness (we strongly suggest printing the manual out on a high-quality printer).

Third, go through at least one official practice test with the manual at your side and apply the strategies. We believe three practice tests to be the maximum benefit, the first time with all strategies except time (take as much time as you need), the second time with all strategies and time constraints, and a third time without the benefit of the open manual to refer to during the test. See the appendix for the exclusive list of practice test sources we believe to be valuable. Quick tip- there is no greater waste of time than studying practice tests written by anyone other than TOEFL.

Finally, bring the manual with you on test day and study it before the exam begins.

Your success is our success

We would be delighted to hear your TOEFL Success Story. Drop us a line at toeflsecrets@toeflsecrets.com and tell us your story. Thanks for your business and we wish you continued success-

Sincerely,

The TOEFL Secrets Team

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Secret Key #1 – Time is your greatest enemy.

To succeed on the TOEFL, you must use your time wisely. Many students do not finish at least one section. The table below shows the time challenge you are faced with:

SECTION	Total amount of time allotted	Number of questions	Time to answer each question
Tutorials	Untimed	7 Tutorials	N/A
Listening	40-60 min	30-50	1.2-1.3 min
Structure	15-20 min	20-25	.75-.8 min
BREAK	10 min	N/A	N/A
Reading	70-90 min	44-60	1.5-1.6 min
Writing	30 min	1	30 min

As you can see, the time constraints are brutal. To succeed, you must ration your time properly. The reason that time is so critical is that every question counts the same toward your final score. If you run out of time on any passage, the questions that you do not answer will hurt your score far more than earlier questions that you spent extra time on and feel certain are correct.

On the Reading section, the test is separated into passages. The reason that time is so critical is that 1) every question counts the same toward your final score, and 2) the passages are not in order of difficulty. If you have to rush during the last passage, then you will miss out on answering easier questions correctly. It is natural to want to pause and figure out the hardest questions, but you must resist the temptation and move quickly.

Success Strategy #1

Pace Yourself

Wear a watch to the TOEFL Test. At the beginning of the test, check the time (or start a chronometer on your watch to count the minutes), and check the time after each passage or every few questions to make sure you are “on schedule.” An onscreen clock display will keep track of your remaining time, but it may be easier for you to monitor your pace based on how many minutes have been used, rather than how many minutes remain.

If you find that you are falling behind time during the test, you must speed up. What makes this difficult is that you cannot return to skipped questions. After making your answer selection, you will be asked to confirm your answer. Once you confirm the answer, that is it. You cannot return to the question. Yet although a rushed answer is more likely to be incorrect, it is better to miss a couple of questions by being rushed, than to completely miss later questions by not having enough time. It is better to end with more time than you need than to run out of time.

If you are forced to speed up, do it efficiently. Usually one or more answer choices can be eliminated without too much difficulty. Above all, don't panic. Don't speed up and just begin guessing at random choices. By pacing yourself, and continually monitoring your progress against the clock or your watch, you will always know exactly how far ahead or behind you are with your available time. If you find that you are one minute behind on one of the sections, don't skip one question without spending any time on it, just to catch back up. Spend a little less time than normal on the next few questions and after a few questions, you will have caught back up more gradually. Once you catch back up, you can continue working each problem at your normal pace.

Furthermore, don't dwell on the problems that you were rushed on. If a problem was taking up too much time and you made a hurried guess, it must be difficult. The difficult questions are the ones you are most likely to miss anyway, so it isn't a big loss.

Most test takers will be taking the computer assisted TOEFL, which means that your questions are selected while taking the test, and are not predetermined beforehand. This allows each student to take a test that is custom tailored to their abilities. The first question in each section is of medium difficulty. If that question is answered correctly, the next question will be of increased difficulty. If it is answered incorrectly, an easier question will be provided next. This means that most of the questions that you are asked will not be too easy or too hard for you, and should help you maintain a good pace throughout the test. Thus, because guessing increases your chances of getting a question incorrect, and if you are behind on your time and are forced to guess and guess wrong, then the questions will become easier, making it easier to speed up your pace and catch back up on your time. However, do not intentionally guess wrong in order to make the questions easier. Easier questions are factored into your final score calculations, so it does not help you.

Lastly, sometimes it is beneficial to slow down if you are constantly getting ahead of time. You are always more likely to catch a careless mistake by working more slowly than quickly, and among very high-scoring students (those who are likely to have lots of time left over), careless errors affect the score more than mastery of material.

Scanning

For Reading passages, don't waste time reading, enjoying, and completely understanding the passage. Simply scan the passage to get a rough idea of what it is about. You will return to the passage for each question, so there is no

need to memorize it. Only spend as much time scanning as is necessary to get a vague impression of its overall subject content.

Secret Key #2 – Guessing is not guesswork.

You probably know that guessing is a good idea on the TOEFL- unlike other standardized tests, there is no penalty for getting a wrong answer. Even if you have no idea about a question, you still have a 20-25% chance of getting it right.

Most students do not understand the impact that proper guessing can have on their score. Unless you score extremely high, guessing will significantly contribute to your final score.

Monkeys Take the TOEFL

What most students don't realize is that to insure that 20-25% chance, you have to guess randomly. If you put 20 monkeys in a room to take the TOEFL, assuming they answered once per question and behaved themselves, on average they would get 20-25% of the questions correct. Put 20 students in the room, and the average will be much lower among guessed questions. Why?

1. TOEFL intentionally writes deceptive answer choices that "look" right. A student has no idea about a question, so picks the "best looking" answer, which is often wrong. The monkey has no idea what looks good and what doesn't, so will consistently be lucky about 20-25% of the time.
2. Students will eliminate answer choices from the guessing pool based on a hunch or intuition. Simple but correct answers often get excluded, leaving a 0% chance of being correct. The monkey has no clue, and often gets lucky with the best choice.

This is why the process of elimination endorsed by most test courses is flawed and detrimental to your performance- students don't guess, they make an ignorant stab in the dark that is usually worse than random.

Success Strategy #2

Let me introduce one of the most valuable ideas of this course- the \$5 challenge:

You only mark your “best guess” if you are willing to bet \$5 on it.

You only eliminate choices from guessing if you are willing to bet \$5 on it.

Why \$5? Five dollars is an amount of money that is small yet not insignificant, and can really add up fast (20 questions could cost you \$100). Likewise, each answer choice on one question of the TOEFL will have a small impact on your overall score, but it can really add up to a lot of points in the end.

The process of elimination IS valuable. The following shows your chance of guessing it right:

If you eliminate this many choices:	0	1	2	3
Chance of getting it correct	25%	33%	50%	100%

However, if you accidentally eliminate the right answer or go on a hunch for an incorrect answer, your chances drop dramatically: to 0%. By guessing among all the answer choices, you are GUARANTEED to have a shot at the right answer.

That’s why the \$5 test is so valuable- if you give up the advantage and safety of a pure guess, it had better be worth the risk.

What we still haven’t covered is how to be sure that whatever guess you make is truly random. Here’s the easiest way:

Always pick the first answer choice among those remaining.

Such a technique means that you have decided, **before you see a single test question**, exactly how you are going to guess- and since the order of choices

tells you nothing about which one is correct, this guessing technique is perfectly random.

Let's try an example-

A student encounters the following problem on the Reading section about the chemical term "amine," a derivative of ammonia:

In paragraph 3, the amine will be?

- A. neutralized
- B. protonated
- C. deprotonated
- D. eliminated

The student has a small idea about this question- he is pretty sure that the amine will be deprotonated, but he wouldn't bet \$5 on it. He knows that the amine is either protonated or deprotonated, so he is willing to bet \$5 on both choices A and D not being correct. Now he is down to B and C. At this point, he guesses B, since B is the first choice remaining.

The student is correct by choosing B, since the amine will be protonated. He only eliminated those choices he was willing to bet money on, AND he did not let his stale memories (often things not known definitely will get mixed up in the exact opposite arrangement in one's head) about protonation and deprotonation influence his guess. He blindly chose the first remaining choice, and was rewarded with the fruits of a random guess.

This section is not meant to scare you away from making educated guesses or eliminating choices- you just need to define when a choice is worth eliminating. The \$5 test, along with a pre-defined random guessing strategy, is the best way to make sure you reap all of the benefits of guessing.

Specific Guessing Techniques

Slang

Scientific sounding answers are better than slang ones. In the answer choices below, choice B is much less scientific and is incorrect, while choice A is a scientific analytical choice and is correct.

Example:

- A.) To compare the outcomes of the two different kinds of treatment.
- B.) Because some subjects insisted on getting one or the other of the treatments.

Extreme Statements

Avoid wild answers that throw out highly controversial ideas that are proclaimed as established fact. Choice A is a radical idea and is incorrect. Choice B is a calm rational statement. Notice that Choice B does not make a definitive, uncompromising stance, using a hedge word “if” to provide wiggle room.

Example:

- A.) Bypass surgery should be discontinued completely.
- B.) Medication should be used instead of surgery for patients who have not had a heart attack if they suffer from mild chest pain and mild coronary artery blockage.

Similar Answer Choices

When you have two answer choices that are direct opposites, one of them is usually the correct answer.

Example:

- A.) Paragraph 1 described the author’s reasoning about the influence of his childhood on his adult life.
- B.) Paragraph 2 described the author’s reasoning about the influence of his childhood on his adult life.

These two answer choices are very similar and fall into the same family of answer choices. A family of answer choices is when two or three answer choices are very similar. Often two will be opposites and one may show an equality.

Example:

- A.) Plan I or Plan II can be conducted at equal cost
- B.) Plan I would be less expensive than Plan II
- C.) Plan II would be less expensive than Plan I
- D.) Neither Plan I nor Plan II would be effective

Note how the first three choices are all related. They all ask about a cost comparison. Beware of immediately recognizing choices B and C as opposites and choosing one of those two. Choice A is in the same family of questions and should be considered as well. However, choice D is not in the same family of questions. It has nothing to do with cost and can be discounted in most cases.

Hedging

When asked for a conclusion that may be drawn, look for critical “hedge” phrases, such as likely, may, can, will often, sometimes, etc, often, almost, mostly, usually, generally, rarely, sometimes. Question writers insert these hedge phrases to cover every possibility. Often an answer will be wrong simply because it leaves no room for exception. Avoid answer choices that have definitive words like “exactly,” and “always”.

Summary of Guessing Techniques

1. Eliminate as many choices as you can by using the \$5 test. Use the common guessing strategies to help in the elimination process, but only eliminate choices that pass the \$5 test.
2. Among the remaining choices, only pick your “best guess” if it passes the \$5 test.
3. Otherwise, guess randomly by picking the first remaining choice.

Secret Key #3 – Practice Smarter, Not Harder

Many students delay the test preparation process because they dread the awful amounts of practice time they think necessary to succeed on the test. We have refined an effective method that will take you only a fraction of the time.

There are a number of “obstacles” in your way on the TOEFL. Among these are answering questions, finishing in time, and mastering test-taking strategies. All must be executed on the day of the test at peak performance, or your score will suffer. The TOEFL is a mental marathon that has a large impact on your future.

Just like a marathon runner, it is important to work your way up to the full challenge. So first you just worry about questions, and then time, and finally strategy:

Success Strategy #3

1. Find a good source for TOEFL practice tests. **These must be OFFICIAL TOEFL tests, or they will be of little use.** The best source for these is official practice tests from TOEFL. A link to a source of official practice tests is included in the appendix.
2. If you are willing to make a larger time investment (or if you want to really “learn” the material, a time consuming but ultimately valuable endeavor), consider buying one of the better study guides on the market. Again, do NOT use their practice tests, just the study guide.
3. Take a practice test with no time constraints, with all study helps “open book.” Take your time with questions and focus on applying the strategies.
4. Take another test, this time with time constraints, with all study helps “open book.”
5. Take a final practice test with no open material and time limits.

If you have time to take more practice tests, just repeat step 5. By gradually exposing yourself to the full rigors of the test environment, you will condition your mind to the stress of test day and maximize your success.

Secret Key #4 – Prepare, Don't Procrastinate

Let me state an obvious fact: if you take the TOEFL three times, you will get three different scores. This is due to the way you feel on test day, the level of preparedness you have, and, despite TOEFL's claims to the contrary, some tests WILL be easier for you than others.

Since your acceptance and qualification for scholarships will largely depend on your score, you should maximize your chances of success. On most standardized tests, that means you can take the test multiple times and only report your best score for an application for admission. The TOEFL works differently.

Immediately after you have completed taking the TOEFL, and while you are still in the testing room, you have the opportunity to cancel sending out your scores. Note: This is before you have even seen your unofficial scores.

If you decide to cancel your scores, you will not be able to view your scores. If you do not decide to cancel your scores, then and there, the opportunity has passed. You will not be able to cancel them after that point. Therefore, prepare for this moment in advance. You know your abilities and can probably base a good guess as to what you might expect based on other standardized tests and percentile rankings that you have scored in the past.

By checking with your university of choice, you can determine what score you will need to be accepted or to receive a scholarship. This will give you an idea of how difficult it will be for you to meet your targeted goal. After you have taken the test, if you feel that you have met that goal, go ahead and accept your scores. You should only cancel your scores if you:

- 1.) expect that you will definitely have the time, money, and desire to take the TOEFL again

2.) are confident that you did not meet the score that you needed to get into your school of choice

3.) would not be satisfied at another school with a lower standard of admission

Note: Once a score is cancelled, it cannot be reinstated.

Even if you do decide to cancel your scores, your record will still bear evidence of your test. In the future when you take another test and submit those scores, that recent score, as well as every TOEFL score that you have taken in the last 2 years will also be submitted. If you had canceled a prior score, it will show that a score was canceled, though the score itself will not be revealed.

When your scores for the last two years are received, each school approaches the scores differently. Most schools will simply take the most recent score. Some schools have a different approach and will average your scores. Others may disregard any score that is significantly lower than another score, so that the low score will not unfairly distort the student's true ability. A few schools will even take your highest score in each section.

Check with your school of choice and determine what is their standard policy on multiple TOEFL scores. If they only use the latest or highest score, you should definitely consider retaking the test if your score is lower than you expected and needed for admission.

Also, remember that you can only take the computer based TOEFL once per calendar month. This applies even if you took the test and canceled the scores earlier that month.

Success Strategy #4

Since repeatedly taking the TOEFL usually offers only marginal improvements and older scores are still reported along with newer scores, make sure that you are adequately prepared the first time. Even though you can cancel your score, that cancellation will still be reported in the future.

Don't take the TOEFL as a "practice" test. Feel free to take sample tests on your own, but when you go to take the TOEFL, be prepared, be focused, and do your best the first time!

Determine in advance whether or not you have the time and resources to take the TOEFL multiple times. Don't make a hasty emotional decision after taking your test. You will feel drained after taking such an intense test and should think through your options ahead of time.

If you plan to repeatedly take the TOEFL, check with your schools of choice and determine their policy on multiple TOEFL scores. That may help in your decision to retake the test.

The Listening Section

The Listening test of the TOEFL consists of a total of 30-50 questions.

There are three types of questions:

1. short conversations
2. long conversations and class discussions
3. lectures

You will have a headset that will allow you to adjust the volume of the recording. Short conversations will begin with a picture to provide orientation. With longer conversations and lectures, you will be provided with several pictures and visual cues.

Use the Pictures

The pictures are provided in order to orient you to the atmosphere and environment that the speakers are conducting their conversation. Use those pictures as much as possible. Try to put yourself in that environment. Become one of the pictured speakers and you will be able to better appreciate the conversation and what it means.

Use Multiple Inputs

The questions will be read to you at the same time they are exposed on the screen in the form of text. Take advantage of this. Use both the visual and auditory information being presented to better understand what is being asked. Some people are better visual and some better auditory receivers of information. Since both methods of presenting questions are given, use them both to your maximum advantage.

Main Ideas

Important words and main ideas in conversation are ones that will come up again and again. Listen carefully for any word or words that come up repeatedly. What

words come up in nearly every statement made? These words with high frequency are likely to be in the main idea of the conversation. For example, in a conversation about class size in the business department of a college, the term “class size” is likely to appear in nearly every statement made by either speaker in the discussion.

Voice Changes

TOEFL expects you to be able to recognize and interpret nuances of speech. Be on the alert for any changes in voice, which might register surprise, excitement, or another emotion. If a speaker is talking in a normal monotone voice and suddenly raises their voice to a high pitch, that is a huge clue that something critical is being stated. Listen for a speaker to change their voice and understand the meaning of what they are saying.

Example:

Man: Let’s go to Wal-mart.

Woman: *There’s a Wal-mart in this small town?*

If the woman’s statement was higher pitched, indicating surprise and shock, then she probably did not expect there to be a Wal-mart in that town.

Specifics

Listen carefully for specific pieces of information. Adjectives are commonly asked about in TOEFL questions. Try to remember any main adjectives that are mentioned. Pick out adjectives such as numbers, colors, or sizes.

Example:

Man: Let’s go to the store and get some apples to make the pie.

Woman: How many do we need?

Man: We’ll need **five** apples to make the pie.

A typical question might be about how many apples were needed.

Interpret

As you are listening to the conversation, put yourself in the person's shoes. Think about why someone would make a statement. You'll need to do more than just regurgitate the spoken words but also interpret them.

Example:

Woman: I think I'm sick with the flu.

Man: Why don't you go see the campus doctor?

Sample Question: Why did the man mention the campus doctor?

Answer: The campus doctor would be able to determine if the woman had the flu.

Find the Hidden Meaning

Look for the meaning behind a statement. When a speaker answers a question with a statement that doesn't immediately seem to answer the question, the response probably contained a hidden meaning that you will need to recognize and explain.

Man: Are you going to be ready for your presentation?

Woman: I've only got half of it finished and it's taken me five hours just to do this much. There's only an hour left before the presentation is due.

At first, the woman did not seem to answer the question the man presented. She responded with a statement that only seemed loosely related. Once you look deeper, then you can find the true meaning of what she said. If it took the woman five hours to do the first half of the presentation, then it would logically take her another five hours to do the second half. Since she only has one hour until her presentation is due, she would probably NOT be able to be ready for the presentation. So, while an answer was not immediately visible to the man's question, when you applied some logic to her response, you could find the hidden meaning beneath.

Longer Conversation Problem Types

Academic Conversations

Academic conversations are conversations on a college campus between professors, students, and other campus members. You will need to be able to summarize main ideas and recall important details.

Class Discussions

Class discussions are conversations in a classroom between professors and students. You will need to be able to summarize main ideas, but usually NOT need to recall important details.

Academic Talks

Academic Talks are conversations in an orientation meeting on academic courses and procedures or where a professor might discuss a variety of college topics. You will need to be able to summarize main ideas, but usually NOT need to recall important details.

Lectures

Lectures are conversations in a classroom about academic topics. You will need to be able to summarize main ideas, and be able to answer questions such as: who, what, when, where, or why?

The Structure Section

The Structure section of the TOEFL consists of a total of 20-25 questions.

There are two different types of problems:

1. incomplete sentences
2. sentences with underlined words and phrases

These questions will test your ability of correct and effective expression. Choose your answer carefully, utilizing the standards of written English, including grammar rules, the proper choice of words and of sentence construction. The correct answer will flow smoothly and be both clear and concise.

Parallelism

If a section of text has an opening dash, parentheses, or comma at the beginning of a phrase, then you can be sure there should be a matching closing dash, parentheses, or comma at the end of the phrase. If items in a series all have commas between them, then any additional items in that series will also gain commas. Do not alternate punctuation. If a dash is at the beginning of a statement, then do not put a parenthesis at the ending of the statement.

Word Confusion

“Which” should be used to refer to things only.

John's dog, which was called Max, is large and fierce.

“That” may be used to refer to either persons or things.

Is this the only book that Louis L'Amour wrote?

Is Louis L'Amour the author that [or who] wrote Western novels?

“Who” should be used to refer to persons only.

Mozart was the composer who [or that] wrote those operas.

Pronoun usage

To determine the correct pronoun form in a compound subject, try each subject separately with the verb, adapting the form as necessary. Your ear will tell you which form is correct.

Example: Bob and (I, me) will be going.

Restate the sentence twice, using each subject individually. Bob will be going. I will be going. "Me will be going" does not make sense.

When a pronoun is used with a noun immediately following (as in "we boys"), say the sentence without the added noun. Your ear will tell you the correct pronoun form.

Example: (We/Us) boys played football last year.

Restate the sentence twice, without the noun. We played football last year. Us played football last year. Clearly "We played football last year" makes more sense.

Commas

Flow

Commas break the flow of text. To test whether they are necessary, while reading the text to yourself, pause for a moment at each comma. If the pauses seem natural, then the commas are correct. If they are not, then the commas are not correct.

Nonessential clauses and phrases

A comma should be used to set off nonessential clauses and nonessential participial phrases from the rest of the sentence. To determine if a clause is essential, remove it from the sentence. If the removal of the clause would alter the meaning of the sentence, then it is essential. Otherwise, it is nonessential.

Example: John Smith, who was a disciple of Andrew Collins, was a noted archeologist.

In the example above, the sentence describes John Smith's fame in archeology. The fact that he was a disciple of Andrew Collins is not necessary to that meaning. Therefore, separating it from the rest of the sentence with commas, is correct.

Do not use a comma if the clause or phrase is essential to the meaning of the sentence.

Example: Anyone who appreciates obscure French poetry will enjoy reading the book.

If the phrase "who appreciates obscure French poetry" is removed, the sentence would indicate that anyone would enjoy reading the book, not just those with an appreciation for obscure French poetry. However, the sentence implies that the book's enjoyment may not be for everyone, so the phrase is essential.

Another perhaps easier way to determine if the clause is essential is to see if it has a comma at its beginning or end. Consistent, parallel punctuation must be used, and so if you can determine a comma exists at one side of the clause, then you can be certain that a comma should exist on the opposite side.

Independent clauses

Use a comma before the words and, but, or, nor, for, yet when they join independent clauses. To determine if two clauses are independent, remove the word that joins them. If the two clauses are capable of being their own sentence by themselves, then they are independent and need a comma between them.

Example: He ran down the street, and then he ran over the bridge.

He ran down the street. Then he ran over the bridge. These are both clauses capable of being their own sentence. Therefore a comma must be used along with the word “and” to join the two clauses together.

If one or more of the clauses would be a fragment if left alone, then it must be joined to another clause and does not need a comma between them.

Example: He ran down the street and over the bridge.

He ran down the street. Over the bridge. “Over the bridge” is a sentence fragment and is not capable of existing on its own. No comma is necessary to join it with “He ran down the street”.

Note that this does not cover the use of “and” when separating items in a series, such as “red, white, and blue”. In these cases a comma is not always necessary between the last two items in the series, but in general it is best to use one.

Parenthetical expressions

Commas should separate parenthetical expressions such as the following: after all, by the way, for example, in fact, on the other hand.

Example: By the way, she is in my biology class.

If the parenthetical expression is in the middle of the sentence, a comma would be both before and after it.

Example: She is, after all, in my biology class.

However, these expressions are not always used parenthetically. In these cases, commas are not used. To determine if an expression is parenthetical, see if it would need a pause if you were reading the text. If it does, then it is parenthetical and needs commas.

Example: You can tell by the way she plays the violin that she enjoys its music.

No pause is necessary in reading that example sentence. Therefore the phrase “by the way” does not need commas around it.

Hyphens

Hyphenate a compound adjective that is directly before the noun it describes.

Example 1: He was the best-known kid in the school.

Example 2: The shot came from that grass-covered hill.

Example 3: The well-drained fields were dry soon after the rain.

Semicolons

Period replacement

A semicolon is often described as either a weak period or strong comma.

Semicolons should separate independent clauses that could stand alone as separate sentences. To test where a semicolon should go, replace it with a period in your mind. If the two independent clauses would seem normal with the period, then the semicolon is in the right place.

Example: The rain had finally stopped; a few rays of sunshine were pushing their way through the clouds.

The rain had finally stopped. A few rays of sunshine were pushing their way through the clouds. These two sentences can exist independently with a period between them. Because they are also closely related in thought, a semicolon is a good choice to combine them.

Transitions

When a semicolon is next to a transition word, such as “however”, it comes before the word.

Example: The man in the red shirt stood next to her; however, he did not know her name.

If these two clauses were separated with a period, the period would go before the word “however” creating the following two sentences: The man in the red shirt stood next to her. However, he did not know her name. The semicolon can function as a weak period and join the two clauses by replacing the period.

Use Your Ear

Read each sentence carefully, inserting the answer choices in the blanks. Don't stop at the first answer choice if you think it is right, but read them all. What may seem like the best choice, at first, may not be after you have had time to read all of the choices. Allow your ear to determine what sounds right. Often one or two answer choices can be immediately ruled out because it doesn't make sound logical or make sense.

Contextual Clues

It bears repeating that contextual clues offer a lot of help in determining the best answer. Key words in the sentence will allow you to determine exactly which answer choice is the best replacement text.

Example:

Archeology has shown that some of the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon are approximately 500 years _____ Mesopotamian predecessors.

- A) as old as any supposed
- B) as old as their supposed
- C) older than their supposed
- D) older than a supposed

In this example, the key word “supposed” is used. Archaeology would either confirm that the predecessors to Babylon were more ancient or disprove that supposition. Since supposed was used, it would imply that archaeology had disproved the accepted belief, making Babylon actually older, not as old as, and either answer choice C or D correct.

Since choice D contains the word “a”. This would be correct if “predecessors” was singular. Since “predecessors” is plural, with a “s” on the end of it, then choice C must be correct.

Furthermore, because “500 years” is used, answer choice A and B can be ruled out. Years are used to show either absolute or relative age. If two objects are as old as each other, no years are necessary to describe that relationship, and it would be sufficient to say, “The ancient city of Babylon is approximately as old as their supposed Mesopotamian predecessors,” without using the term “500 years”.

Simplicity is Bliss

Simplicity cannot be overstated. You should never choose a longer, more complicated, or wordier replacement if a simple one will do. When a point can be made with fewer words, choose that answer. However, never sacrifice the flow of text for simplicity. If an answer is simple, but does not make sense, then it is not correct.

Beware of added phrases that don't add anything of meaning, such as “to be” or “as to them”. Often these added phrases will occur just before a colon, which may come before a list of items. However, the colon does not need a lengthy introduction.

The Reading Section

The Reading section of the TOEFL consists of a total of 44-60 questions.

There are three to six passages, which will each be followed by an average of six to ten questions.

Skimming

Your first task when you begin reading is to answer the question “What is the topic of the selection?” This can best be answered by quickly skimming the passage for the general idea, stopping to read only the first sentence of each paragraph. A paragraph’s first sentence is usually the main topic sentence, and it gives you a summary of the content of the paragraph.

Once you’ve skimmed the passage, stopping to read only the first sentences, you will have a general idea about what it is about, as well as what is the expected topic in each paragraph.

Each question will contain clues as to where to find the answer in the passage. Do not just randomly search through the passage for the correct answer to each question. Search scientifically. Find key word(s) or ideas in the question that are going to either contain or be near the correct answer. These are typically nouns, verbs, numbers, or phrases in the question that will probably be duplicated in the passage. Once you have identified those key word(s) or idea, skim the passage quickly to find where those key word(s) or idea appears. The correct answer choice will be nearby.

Example: What caused Martin to suddenly return to Paris?

The key word is Paris. Skim the passage quickly to find where this word appears. The answer will be close by that word.

However, sometimes key words in the question are not repeated in the passage. In those cases, search for the general idea of the question.

Example: Which of the following was the psychological impact of the author's childhood upon the remainder of his life?

Key words are "childhood" or "psychology". While searching for those words, be alert for other words or phrases that have similar meaning, such as "emotional effect" or "mentally" which could be used in the passage, rather than the exact word "psychology".

Numbers or years can be particularly good key words to skim for, as they stand out from the rest of the text.

Example: Which of the following best describes the influence of Monet's work in the 20th century?

20th contains numbers and will easily stand out from the rest of the text. Use 20th as the key word to skim for in the passage.

Once you've quickly found the correct section of the passage to find the answer, focus upon the answer choices. Sometimes a choice will repeat word for word a portion of the passage near the answer. However, beware of such duplication – it may be a trap! More than likely, the correct choice will paraphrase or summarize the related portion of the passage, rather than being exactly the same wording.

For the answers that you think are correct, read them carefully and make sure that they answer the question. An answer can be factually correct, but it **MUST** answer the question asked. Additionally, two answers can both be seemingly

correct, so be sure to read all of the answer choices, and make sure that you get the one that BEST answers the question.

Some questions will not have a key word.

Example: Which of the following would the author of this passage likely agree with?

In these cases, look for key words in the answer choices. Then skim the passage to find where the answer choice occurs. By skimming to find where to look, you can minimize the time required.

Sometimes it may be difficult to identify a good key word in the question to skim for in the passage. In those cases, look for a key word in one of the answer choices to skim for. Often the answer choices can all be found in the same paragraph, which can quickly narrow your search.

Paragraph Focus

Focus upon the first sentence of each paragraph, which is the most important. The main topic of the paragraph is usually there.

Once you've read the first sentence in the paragraph, you have a general idea about what each paragraph will be about. As you read the questions, try to determine which paragraph will have the answer. Paragraphs have a concise topic. The answer should either obviously be there or obviously not. It will save time if you can jump straight to the paragraph, so try to remember what you learned from the first sentences.

Example: The first paragraph is about poets; the second is about poetry. If a question asks about poetry, where will the answer be? The second paragraph.

The main idea of a passage is typically spread across all or most of its paragraphs. Whereas the main idea of a paragraph may be completely different than the main idea of the very next paragraph, a main idea for a passage affects all of the paragraphs in one form or another.

Example: What is the main idea of the passage?

For each answer choice, try to see how many paragraphs are related. It can help to count how many sentences are affected by each choice, but it is best to see how many paragraphs are affected by the choice. Typically the answer choices will include incorrect choices that are main ideas of individual paragraphs, but not the entire passage. That is why it is crucial to choose ideas that are supported by the most paragraphs possible.

Eliminate Choices

Some choices can quickly be eliminated. “Andy Warhol lived there.” Is Andy Warhol even mentioned in the article? If not, quickly eliminate it.

When trying to answer a question such as “the passage indicates all of the following EXCEPT” quickly skim the paragraph searching for references to each choice. If the reference exists, scratch it off as a choice. Similar choices may be crossed off simultaneously if they are close enough.

In choices that ask you to choose “which answer choice does NOT describe?” or “all of the following answer choices are identifiable characteristics, EXCEPT which?” look for answers that are similarly worded. Since only one answer can be correct, if there are two answers that appear to mean the same thing, they must BOTH be incorrect, and can be eliminated.

Example:

- A.) changing values and attitudes
- B.) a large population of mobile or uprooted people

These answer choices are similar; they both describe a fluid culture. Because of their similarity, they can be linked together. Since the answer can have only one choice, they can also be eliminated together.

Contextual Clues

Look for contextual clues. An answer can be right but not correct. The contextual clues will help you find the answer that is most right and is correct. Understand the context in which a phrase is stated.

When asked for the implied meaning of a statement made in the passage, immediately go find the statement and read the context it was made in. Also, look for an answer choice that has a similar phrase to the statement in question. Example: In the passage, what is implied by the phrase “Churches have become more or less part of the furniture”?

Find an answer choice that is similar or describes the phrase “part of the furniture” as that is the key phrase in the question. “Part of the furniture” is a saying that means something is fixed, immovable, or set in their ways. Those are all similar ways of saying “part of the furniture.” As such, the correct answer choice will probably include a similar rewording of the expression.

Example: Why was John described as “morally desperate”.

The answer will probably have some sort of definition of morals in it. “Morals” refers to a code of right and wrong behavior, so the correct answer choice will likely have words that mean something like that.

Fact/Opinion

When asked about which statement is a fact or opinion, remember that answer choices that are facts will typically have no ambiguous words. For example, how long is a long time? What defines an ordinary person? These ambiguous words

of “long” and “ordinary” should not be in a factual statement. However, if all of the choices have ambiguous words, go to the context of the passage. Often a factual statement may be set out as a research finding.

Example: “The scientist found that the eye reacts quickly to change in light.”

Opinions may be set out in the context of words like thought, believed, understood, or wished.

Example: “He thought the Yankees should win the World Series.”

Opposites

Answer choices that are direct opposites are usually correct. The paragraph will often contain established relationships (when this goes up, that goes down). The question may ask you to draw conclusions for this and will give two similar answer choices that are opposites.

Example:

- A.) if other factors are held constant, then increasing the interest rate will lead to a decrease in housing starts
- B.) if other factors are held constant, then increasing the interest rate will lead to an increase in housing starts

Often these opposites will not be so clearly recognized. Don't be thrown off by different wording, look for the meaning beneath. Notice how these two answer choices are really opposites, with just a slight change in the wording shown above. Once you realize these are opposites, you should examine them closely. One of these two is likely to be the correct answer.

Example:

- A.) if other factors are held constant, then increasing the interest rate will lead to a decrease in housing starts
- B.) when there is an increase in housing starts, and other things remaining equal, it is often the result of an increase in interest rates

Make Predictions

As you read and understand the passage and then the question, try to guess what the answer will be. Remember that four of the five answer choices are wrong, and once you begin reading them, your mind will immediately become cluttered with answer choices designed to throw you off. Your mind is typically the most focused immediately after you have read the passage and question and digested its contents. If you can, try to predict what the correct answer will be. You may be surprised at what you can predict.

Quickly scan the choices and see if your prediction is in the listed answer choices. If it is, then you can be quite confident that you have the right answer. It still won't hurt to check the other answer choices, but most of the time, you've got it!

Answer the Question

It may seem obvious to only pick answer choices that answer the question, but TOEFL can create some excellent answer choices that are wrong. Don't pick an answer just because it sounds right, or you believe it to be true. It **MUST** answer the question. Once you've made your selection, always go back and check it against the question and make sure that you didn't misread the question, and the answer choice does answer the question posed.

Benchmark

One disadvantage of taking a computer based test, as opposed to a traditional paper and pencil test, is that you can't make notes directly on the page. More specifically, you can't cross out answers you believe to be wrong as you read through the list of possible answer choices. The computer offers another solution though. After you read the first answer choice, decide if you think it sounds correct or not. If it doesn't, move on to the next answer choice. If it does, click beside the choice to select it. This doesn't mean that you've definitely selected it as your answer choice, it just means that it's the best you've seen thus far. Go ahead and read the next choice. If the next choice is worse than the one you've

already selected, keep going to the next answer choice. If the next choice is better than the choice you've already selected, change your selection.

As you read through the list, highlight the choice you think is right. That is your new standard. Every other answer choice must be benchmarked against that standard. That choice is correct until proven otherwise by another answer choice beating it out. Once you've decided that no other answer choice seems as good, do one final check to ensure that it answers the question posed.

New Information

Correct answers will usually contain the information listed in the paragraph and question. Rarely will completely new information be inserted into a correct answer choice. Occasionally the new information may be related in a manner than TOEFL is asking for you to interpret, but seldom.

Example:

The argument above is dependent upon which of the following assumptions?
A.) Scientists have used Charles's Law to interpret the relationship.

If Charles's Law is not mentioned at all in the referenced paragraph and argument, then it is unlikely that this choice is correct. All of the information needed to answer the question is provided for you, and so you should not have to make guesses that are unsupported or choose answer choices that have unknown information that cannot be reasoned.

Key Words

Look for answer choices that have the same key words in them as the question.

Example:

Which of the following, if true, would best explain the reluctance of politicians since 1980 to support this funding?

Look for the key words “since 1980” to be referenced in the correct answer choice. Most valid answer choices would probably include a phrase such as “since 1980, politicians have...”

Valid Information

Don't discount any of the information provided in the passage, particularly shorter ones. Every piece of information may be necessary to determine the correct answer. None of the information in the passage is there to throw you off (while the answer choices will certainly have information to throw you off). If two seemingly unrelated topics are discussed, don't ignore either. You can be confident there is a relationship, or it wouldn't be included in the passage, and you are probably going to have to determine what is that relationship for the answer.

Time Management

In technical passages, do not get lost on the technical terms. Skip them and move on. You want a general understanding of what is going on, not a mastery of the passage.

When you encounter material in the selection that seems difficult to understand, it often may not be necessary and can be skipped. Only spend time trying to understand it if it is going to be relevant for a question. Understand difficult phrases only as a last resort.

Identify each question by type. Usually the wording of a question will tell you whether you can find the answer by referring directly to the passage or by using your reasoning powers. You alone know which question types you customarily handle with ease and which give you trouble and will require more time.

Final Warnings

Hedge Phrases Revisited

Once again, watch out for critical “hedge” phrases, such as likely, may, can, will often, sometimes, etc, often, almost, mostly, usually, generally, rarely, sometimes. Question writers insert these hedge phrases, to cover every possibility. Often an answer will be wrong simply because it leaves no room for exception.

Example: Animals live longer in cold places than animals in warm places.

This answer choice is wrong, because there are exceptions in which certain warm climate animals live longer. This answer choice leaves no possibility of exception. It states that every animal species in cold places live longer than animal species in warm places. Correct answer choices will typically have a key hedge word to leave room for exceptions.

Example: In severe cold, a polar bear cub is likely to survive longer than an adult polar bear.

This answer choice is correct, because not only does the passage imply that younger animals survive better in the cold, it also allows for exceptions to exist. The use of the word “likely” leaves room for cases in which a polar bear cub might not survive longer than the adult polar bear.

Word Usage Questions

When asked how a word is used in the passage, don’t use your existing knowledge of the word. The question is being asked precisely because there is some strange or unusual usage of the word in the passage. Go to the passage and use contextual clues to determine the answer. Don’t simply use the popular definition you already know.

Switchback Words

Stay alert for “switchbacks”. These are the words and phrases frequently used to alert you to shifts in thought. The most common switchback word is “but”.

Others include although, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, even though, while, in spite of, despite, regardless of.

Avoid “Fact Traps”

Once you know which paragraph the answer will be in, focus on that paragraph. However, don’t get distracted by a choice that is factually true about the paragraph. Your search is for the answer that answers the question, which may be about a tiny aspect in the paragraph. Stay focused and don’t fall for an answer that describes the larger picture of the paragraph. Always go back to the question and make sure you’re choosing an answer that actually answers the question and is not just a true statement.

The Writing Section

The Structure section of the TOEFL consists of a 30 minute section with one essay topic.

A topic will be presented to you and you must write out approximately 300 word discussion on it within the 30 minutes allowed. There is not a “correct” answer to the topic. You must evaluate the topic, organize your ideas, and develop them into a cohesive and coherent response.

You will be scored on how well you are able to utilize standard written English, organize and explain your thoughts, and support those thoughts with reasons and examples.

Brainstorm

Spend the first three to five minutes brainstorming out ideas. Write down any ideas you might have on the topic. The purpose is to extract from the recesses of your memory any relevant information. In this stage, anything goes down. Write down any idea, regardless of how good it may initially seem. You can use either the scratch paper provided or the word processor to quickly jot down your thoughts and ideas. The word processor is highly recommended though, particularly if you are a fast typist.

Strength through Diversity

The best papers will contain diversity of examples and reasoning. As you brainstorm consider different perspectives. Not only are there two sides to every issue, but there are also countless perspectives that can be considered. On any issue, different groups are impacted, with many reaching the same conclusion or position, but through vastly different paths. Try to “see” the issue through as many different eyes as you can. Look at it from every angle and from every

vantage point. The more diverse the reasoning used, the more balanced the paper will become and the better the score.

Example:

The issue of free trade is not just two sided. It impacts politicians, domestic (US) manufacturers, foreign manufacturers, the US economy, the world economy, strategic alliances, retailers, wholesalers, consumers, unions, workers, and the exchange of more than just goods, but also of ideas, beliefs, and cultures. The more of these angles that you can approach the issue from, the more solid your reasoning and the stronger your position.

Furthermore, don't just use information as to how the issue impacts other people. Draw liberally from your own experience and your own observations. Explain a personal experience that you have had and your own emotions from that moment. Anything that you've seen in your community or observed in society can be expanded upon to further round out your position on the issue.

Pick a Main Idea

Once you have finished with your creative flow, stop and review it. Which idea were you able to come up with the most supporting information? It's extremely important that you pick an angle that will allow you to have a thorough and comprehensive coverage of the topic. This is not about your personal convictions, but about writing a concise rational discussion of an idea.

Weed the Garden

Every garden of ideas gets weeds in it. The ideas that you brainstormed over are going to be random pieces of information of mixed value. Go through it methodically and pick out the ones that are the best. The best ideas are strong points that it will be easy to write a few sentences or a paragraph about.

Create a Logical Flow

Now that you know which ideas you are going to use and focus upon, organize them. Put your writing points in a logical order. You have your main ideas that

you will focus on, and must align them in a sequence that will flow in a smooth, sensible path from point to point, so that the reader will go smoothly from one idea to the next in a logical path. Readers must have a sense of continuity as they read your paper. You don't want to have a paper that rambles back and forth.

Start Your Engines

You have a logical flow of main ideas with which to start writing. Begin expanding on the issues in the sequence that you have set for yourself. Pace yourself. Don't spend too much time on any one of the ideas that you are expanding upon. You want to have time for all of them. Make sure you watch your time. If you have twenty minutes left to write out your ideas and you have ten ideas, then you can only use two minutes per idea. It can be a daunting task to cram a lot of information down in words in a short amount of time, but if you pace yourself, you can get through it all. If you find that you are falling behind, speed up. Move through each idea more quickly, spending less time to expand upon the idea in order to catch back up.

Once you finish expanding on each idea, go back to your brainstorming session up above, where you typed out your ideas. Go ahead and delete the ideas as you write about them. This will let you see what you need to write about next, and also allow you to pace yourself and see what you have left to cover.

First Paragraph

Your first paragraph should have several easily identifiable features.

First, it should have a quick description or paraphrasing of the topic. Use your own words to briefly explain what the topic is about.

Second, you should explain your opinion of the topic and give an explanation of why you feel that way. What is your decision or conclusion on the topic?

Third, you should list your "writing points". What are the main ideas that you came up with earlier? This is your opportunity to outline the rest of your paper.

Have a sentence explaining each idea that you will go intend further depth in

additional paragraphs. If someone was to only read this paragraph, they should be able to get an “executive summary” of the entire paper.

Body Paragraph

Each of your successive paragraphs should expand upon one of the points listed in the main paragraph. Use your personal experience and knowledge to support each of your points. Examples should back up everything.

Conclusion Paragraph

Once you have finished expanding upon each of your main points, wrap it up. Summarize what you have said and covered in a conclusion paragraph. Explain once more your opinion of the topic and quickly review why you feel that way. At this stage, you have already backed up your statements, so there is no need to do that again. All you are doing is refreshing in the mind of the reader the main points that you have made.

Don't Panic

Panicking will not put down any more words on paper for you. Therefore, it isn't helpful. When you first see the topic, if your mind goes as blank as the page on which you have to type out your paper, take a deep breath. Force yourself to mechanically go through the steps listed above.

Secondly, don't get clock fever. It's easy to be overwhelmed when you're looking at a page that doesn't seem to have much text, there is a lot of blank space further down, your mind is full of random thoughts and feeling confused, and the clock is ticking down faster than you would like. You brainstormed first so that you don't have to keep coming up with ideas. If you're running out of time and you have a lot of ideas that you haven't expanded upon, don't be afraid to make some cuts. Start picking the best ideas that you have left and expand on those few. Don't feel like you have to write down and expand all of your ideas.

Check Your Work

It is more important to have a shorter paper that is well written and well organized, than a longer paper that is poorly written and poorly organized. Don't keep writing about a subject just to add words and sentences, and certainly don't start repeating yourself. Expand on the ideas that you identified in the brainstorming session and make sure that you save yourself a few minutes at the end to go back and check your work.

Leave time at the end, at least three minutes, to go back and check over your work. Reread and make sure that everything you've written makes sense and flows. Clean up any spelling or grammar mistakes that you might have made. If you see anything that needs to be moved around, such as a paragraph that would fit in better somewhere else, cut and paste it to that new location. Also, go ahead and delete any brainstorming ideas that you weren't able to expand upon and clean up any other extraneous information that you might have typed that doesn't fit into your paper.

As you proofread, make sure there aren't any fragments or run-ons. Check for sentences that are too short or too long. If the sentence is too short, look to see if you have an identifiable subject and verb. If it is too long, break it up into two separate sentences. Watch out for any "big" words you may have used. It's good to use difficult vocabulary words, but only if you are positive that you are using them correctly. Your paper has to be correct, it doesn't have to be fancy. You're not trying to impress anyone with your vocabulary, just your ability to develop and express ideas.

Shortcut Keys

Spend some time on your keyboard getting familiar with the shortcut keys to cut, copy, and paste. It will help you to quickly move text around on your paper. First highlight the text you wish to move or copy and then type:

Ctrl+C = copy

Ctrl+X = cut

Ctrl+V = paste

You must hold down the ctrl key and then tap the “c”, “x”, or “v” key to perform the desired function.

Final Note

Depending on your test taking preferences and personality, the essay writing will probably be your hardest or your easiest section. You are required to go through the entire process of writing a paper in 30 minutes or less, which can be quite a challenge.

Focus upon each of the steps listed above. Go through the process of creative flow first, generating ideas and thoughts about the topic. Then organize those ideas into a smooth logical flow. Pick out the ones that are best from the list you have created. Decide which main idea or angle of the topic you will discuss.

Create a recognizable structure in your paper, with an introductory paragraph explaining what you have decided upon, and what your main points will be. Use the body paragraphs to expand on those main points and have a conclusion that wraps up the issue or topic.

Save a few moments to go back and review what you have written. Clean up any minor mistakes that you might have had and give it those last few critical touches that can make a huge difference. Finally, be proud and confident of what you have written!

Special Report: How Schools View Your TOEFL Score, and What This Means for You

For your computer based TOEFL score, universities will group you in one of six categories.

Score	Policy
280 or more	admission definite for graduate students
250-279	admission definite for undergraduate students
213-249	admission likely for graduate students
173-212	admission likely for undergraduate students
133-172	individual cases reviewed
132 or less	likely referral to English language program

If you are on the upper edge of one of these categories, it is definitely profitable to work your way into the next one by studying and practicing.

Special Report: Which TOEFL Study Guides and Practice Tests Are Worth Your Time

We believe the following guides present uncommon value to our customers who wish to “really study” for the TOEFL. While our manual teaches some valuable tricks and tips that no one else covers, learning the basic coursework tested on the TOEFL is also helpful, though more time consuming.

Practice Tests

[TOEFL Practice Tests](#)

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0886852056/actsecrets-20>

(Click above to order)

This is the ONLY source for REAL TOEFL tests. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED only for the practice tests- disregard their advice.

Study Guide

[Barron's How to Prepare for the TOEFL](#)

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0764175009/actsecrets-20>

Barron's Guide is THE best comprehensive coursework guide to the TOEFL. If you want to spend a couple months in preparation to squeeze every last drop out of your score, buy this book!

Appendix A: Paper Based TOEFL/Computer Based TOEFL Equivalency Table

If you've taken the paper based TOEFL in the past and wonder what that would equate to on the computer based TOEFL, here is a table showing the equivalent scores.

Computer Based	Paper Based
284 - 300	658 - 677
271 - 283	638 - 657
261 - 270	618 - 637
248 - 260	598 - 617
234 - 247	578 - 597
221 - 233	558 - 577
204 - 220	538 - 557
188 - 203	518 - 537
171 - 187	498 - 517
154 - 170	478 - 497
138 - 153	458 - 477
124 - 137	438 - 457
108 - 123	418 - 437
94 - 107	398 - 417
81 - 93	378 - 397
71 - 80	358 - 377
58 - 70	338 - 357
48 - 57	318 - 337
40 - 47	310 - 317

Appendix B: Common Idioms and Expressions

Here is a list of the most common idioms that you could expect to encounter on the Listening Section.

ace: make an "A" on a test, homework assignment, project, etc.

"Somebody said you aced the test, Dave. That's great!"

all right (1): expression of reluctant agreement.

A: "Come to the party with me. Please!"

B: "Oh, **all right**. I don't want to, but I will."

all right (2): fair; not particularly good.

A: "How's your chemistry class?"

B: "It's **all right**, I guess, but it's not the best class I've ever had."

all right (3): unharmed; in satisfactory condition.

A: "You don't look normal. Are you **all right**?"

B: "Yes, but I have a headache."

and then some: and much more besides.

A: "I'd guess your new computer cost about \$2,000. "

B: "It cost that much **and then some** because I also bought extra RAM and VRAM."

antsy: restless; impatient and tired of waiting.

"I hope Katy calls soon. Just sitting around and waiting is making me **antsy**."

as easy as pie: very easy.

"I thought you said this was a difficult problem. It isn't. In fact, it's **as easy as pie**."

at the eleventh hour: at the last minute; almost too late.

"Yes, I got the work done in time. I finished it **at the eleventh hour**, but I wasn't late.

bad-mouth: say unkind, unflattering, embarrassing (and probably untrue) things about someone.

A: "I don't believe what Bob said. Why is he bad-mouthing me?"

B: "He's probably jealous of your success."

be a piece of cake: be very easy.

A: "Bob said the test was difficult, but I thought it was **a piece of cake**."

be all ears: be eager to hear what someone has to say.

A: "I just got an e-mail message from our old friend Sally."

B: "Tell me what she said. **I'm all ears!**"

be broke: be without money.

"No, I can't lend you ten dollars. **I'm completely broke** until payday."

be fed up with (with someone or something): be out of patience (with someone or something);
be very tired of someone or something.

"Bill, you're too careless with your work. **I'm fed up with** apologizing for your mistakes!"

be in and out: be at and away from a place during a particular time.

"Could we postpone our meeting until tomorrow? I expect to **be in and out** of the office most of the day today."

be on the go: be very busy (going from one thing or project to another).

"I'm really tired. I've **been on the go** all week long."

be on the road: be traveling.

"You won't be able to contact me tomorrow because I'll **be on the road.**"

be over: be finished; end.

"I can't see you until around 4 o'clock. My meetings won't **be over** until then."

be up and running: (for a technological process) be operational; be ready to use .

"Dave's ESL Cafe on the Web has **been up and running** since December 1995."

be used to (+Ving/noun): be accustomed to; not uncomfortable with.

"It won't be hard to get up at 5:00 AM. I'm **used to** getting up early."

beat: exhausted; very tired (adj.).

"This has been a long day. I'm **beat!**"

beat around the bush: evade an issue; avoid giving a direct answer.

"Quit **beating around the bush!** If you don't want to go with me, just tell me!"

beat one's brains out: try very hard to understand or do something.

"Can you help me with this problem? I've been **beating my brains out** with it, but I just can't solve it."

Beats me: I have no idea.

A: "What time's the party?"

B: "**Beats me!**"

before long: soon.

A: "I'm really tired of working."

B: "Just be patient. The weekend will be here **before long.**"

bent out of shape: needlessly worried about something.

"I know you're worried about your job interview, but don't get **bent out of shape**. You'll do just fine."

bite off more than one can chew: take responsibility for more than one can manage.

"I'm really behind with my project. Can you help me? I'm afraid I **bit off more than I could chew!**"

blabbermouth: a very talkative person--especially one who says things that should be kept secret.

"Don't say anything to Bob unless you want the whole office to know. Bob's quite a **blabbermouth**."

blow one's top: become extremely angry.

A: "Was your father upset when you came home at 3 AM?"

B: "He was *more than* upset. He **blew his top!**"

boom box: portable cassette/CD player.

"Don't forget to bring your **boom box** to the picnic!"

the bottom line: the most essential information.

"The discussion lasted many hours. **The bottom line** was that the XYZ Company isn't for sale."

Break a leg!: Good luck!

"I understand you have a job interview tomorrow. **Break a leg!**"

break someone's heart: make someone feel very disappointed/discouraged/sad.

"Joe **broke his mother's heart** when he dropped out of school."

broke: without money.

A: "Can you lend me 10 dollars?"

B: "I'm afraid not. I'm **broke**."

buck(s): dollar(s).

"The cheapest tickets for the concert cost 25 **bucks**. Do you still want to go?"

bug: annoy; bother.

"I'm trying to concentrate! Don't **bug** me!"

bull-headed: stubborn; inflexible.

"Don't be so **bull-headed**. Why can't you admit that others' opinions are just as good as yours?"

a bundle: a lot of money.

A: "Your new car is really nice."

B: "It should be. It cost me **a bundle**!"

burn the midnight oil: study/work all night or until very, very late at night.

"I'm not ready for the test tomorrow. I guess I'll have to **burn the the midnight oil**."

bushed: very tired; exhausted.

"I'm going to lie down for a while. I'm really **bushed**."

by oneself: alone and without help.

"I can't do this **by myself**. Can you help me?"

by the skin of one's teeth: barely succeed in doing something.

"I'll have to start earlier the next time. This time I only finished **by the skin of my teeth.**"

call it a day: stop work for the day.

"It's late and you've accomplished a lot. Why don't you **call it a day?**"

can't make heads or tails of something: can't understand something at all; find something confusing and illogical.

"I **can't make heads or tails of** your e-mail. Were you having problems with your computer?"

catch one's eye: attract one's attention/interest.

"This brochure about Tahiti **caught my eye** when I was at the travel agency."

catch some Zs: sleep for a while; take a nap.

"You look tired, Dave. Why don't you **catch some Zs?**"

change one's mind: decide to do something different from what had been decided earlier.

A: "Why are you working this week? I thought you were going to be on vacation."

B: "I changed my mind. I'm taking my vacation next month."

chicken (adjective or noun): cowardly.

"Fred will never ask Lucy for a date. He's **chicken / a chicken.**"

chow: food.

"How's the **chow** in the university cafeteria?"

chow down: eat.

"It's almost 6:00. Are you ready to **chow down**?"

a cinch: something that's very easy to do.

A: How was the test?

B: It was **a cinch**. I finished it quickly and I know that all my answers were correct."

cool (also *kewl*): neat, special, wonderful.

"The ESL Cafe on the Web is really **cool**!"

Cool it!: calm down.

"There's no need to be so upset. Just **cool it**!"

cost (someone) an arm and a leg: cost a lot; be very expensive.

A: "Your new car is really nice."

B: "It should be. It **cost (me) an arm and a leg**!"

couch potato: someone who spends too much time watching TV.

"You're a real **couch potato**, Jay. You need to get more exercise!"

cram: try to learn as much as possible in a very short time.

"Sidney did well on the test because he crammed for it. However, he probably won't remember any of the information a couple of days from now."

crash course: short course designed to give a lot of knowledge/information in a very short time.

"Tom's company is sending him to a business meeting in Istanbul. Should he take a **crash course** in Turkish?"

Cut it out!: stop doing something (that's annoying).

"You kids are making too much noise. **Cut it out**!"

Don't count your chickens until (before) they hatch (they've hatched).: Don't assume that something will happen until it *has* happened.

A: I'm sure that I'm going to win a lot of money in Las Vegas."

B: "**Don't count your chickens until they hatch!**"

dicey: uncertain; taking too much of a chance.

A: A friend of mine says I can make a lot of money if I buy stock in the XYZ company. Should I do it?

B: I wouldn't if I were you. The chances for success are too **dicey**."

ditch class: skip class/play hookey.

"You shouldn't have **ditched class** yesterday. We had an unannounced test."

do a bang-up job: do a very good job; do very well at something.

"Have you seen Frank's home page? He **did a bang-up job** with it."

down in the dumps: depressed; "blue."

A: "Is something wrong?"

B: "Not really, but I feel kind of **down in the dumps**."

drop someone a line: write to someone.

"I haven't written to my parents for a long time. I'd better **drop them a line** today or tomorrow."

drag one's feet: delay; take longer than necessary to do something.

"Joe should have finished his project a week ago. Why is he **dragging his feet**?"

an eager beaver: a person who is always willing to volunteer or do extra work.

"Jan is certainly **an eager beaver**. Any time there's work to be done, she's the first to say she'll help."

Easy does it!: Be very careful! / Don't do anything too fast or too hard!

A: "I'm going to move the table just a little further from the window."

B: "**Easy does it!** If you move too fast, you might knock over the plant!"

an egghead: a very intelligent person.

"Jake didn't make very good grades in school, but his sister was a real **egghead**."

elbow grease: hard work; effort.

"Yes, the car is pretty dirty, but it'll look nice again with a little **elbow grease**."

every other _____ : alternately; omitting the second one in each group of two.

"In your essays, please write on **every other line**. That will make the essays much easier to read."

far-fetched: difficult to accept; difficult to believe.

"That story's pretty **far-fetched**. Nobody's going to believe it."

feel blue: feel sad and depressed.

"I'm **feeling blue** because I haven't had any mail except bills for a long, long time."

fire someone: dismiss someone from a job because of poor performance.

"If you continue to be late for work, the company will **fire you**."

feel puny: feel unwell, ill.

"Ted was **feeling puny** yesterday, so he decided not to go to work."

fender-bender: automobile accident.

"Traffic was really slow on the freeway this morning because of a **fender-bender** in one of the westbound lanes."

for ages: for a very long time.

"Where's Marie? I haven't seen her **for ages**."

get going: leave.

"Look at the time! I'd better **get going**!"

get it: understand something (often negative).

"I don't **get it**. What do you mean?"

get a kick out of something: find something amusing.

"I really **get a kick out of** listening to children talk. They say some very funny things."

get lost!: go away

"I wish he'd **get lost** and stop bothering me. I don't want to talk to him!"

get on one's nerves: irritate someone; make someone upset.

"I know you like that song, but it's **getting on my nerves**. Can you play something else?"

get a move on: hurry

"If you don't want to be late, you'd better **get a move on**."

get one's wires crossed: be confused or mistaken about something.

A: "Bill said there was a meeting this morning. Don't we have one?"

B: "No. The meeting's tomorrow. I guess Bill **got his wires crossed.**"

get out of hand: become out of control; become badly managed.

"Your absences are **getting out of hand**, Bob. You'd better do something quickly to improve the situation if you want to keep your job."

Get real!: Be realistic! / Don't be naive.

A: "I'm going to Las Vegas. I know I'll win a lot of money!"

B: "Get real! You'll probably *lose* a lot of money!"

get up and go: energy.

"I'm really tired. I don't have any **get up and go.**"

give someone a hand (1): help someone.

"I can't do this alone. Can you **give me a hand?**"

give someone a hand (2): applaud (to show respect or appreciation for someone/something).

"Dave's done a wonderful job with The ESL Café on the Web. Let's **give him a hand!**"

a (real) go-getter: a (very) ambitious, hard-working person.

"I'm not surprised that Jean finished before anyone else. She's **a real go-getter.**"

go with the flow: take things as they come.

"There's no need to worry. Everything will be OK if you just **go with the flow.**"

grab a bite: get something to eat.

"I'm really hungry. Would you like to **grab a bite** with me?"

green: inexperienced.

"I don't think you can depend on Jack to do that job by himself. He's too **green**."

had ('d) better: be obliged to; should (strong).

"You'd **better** leave soon. If you don't, you'll miss your bus."

hassle (noun): a troublesome situation; something troublesome that interrupts one's normal routine.

"I know it's a **hassle** to complete this form now, but Mr. Rogers needs it in his office by the end of the day."

hard feelings: anger; animosity; bitter feelings.

A: "I'm sorry that Jim got the job instead of you."

B: "I have no **hard feelings** toward him; I know that he had stronger qualifications."

hard-headed: stubborn; inflexible; unwilling to change.

"I don't think Julie will change her mind. She's pretty **hard-headed**."

hassle (verb): annoy; bother; interrupt one's normal routine.

"If you'd stop **hassling** me, I might get this finished on time!"

have one's hands full: be extremely busy.

A: "Will you be able to help us this afternoon?"

B: "I'm afraid not. I'll **have my hands full** trying to finish my research paper."

have/has ('ve/'s) got: have/has.

"Dave's **got** a son whose name is Benjamin and a daughter whose name is Shannon."

have something down pat: know/understand something completely and thoroughly.

"I know I did well on the test. I **had** all the material **down pat**."

head honcho: person in charge; top boss.

"Dave's the **head honcho** of the ESL Cafe on the Web."

hit the books: study.

"I wish I could go to the movies, but I've got to **hit the books**."

hit the hay: go to bed; go to sleep.

"It's late, so I guess I'll **hit the hay**."

hit the sack: go to bed.

"I'm really tired. I think I'll **hit the sack**."

How come?: Why? (statement word order).

"**How come** you weren't at the party?"

if I had my druthers: if I could do what I wanted/preferred.

"**If I had my druthers**, I'd stay home from work today."

in over one's head: in a situation that is too much / too difficult for one to manage.

"Do you have time to help me? I thought I could do this myself, but I'm afraid I'm **in over my head**. I just can't handle things alone."

inside out: with the inner part on the outside and the outer part on the inside.

"Why are you wearing your tee shirt **inside out**?"

in stock: in supply and available to buy / sell.

"I'm sorry, but we just sold our last pair of hiking boots. If you come back at the end of the week, however, we should have some more **in stock**."

in the black: profitable; not showing a financial loss.

"What did you do to increase profit and eliminate losses?
We've been **in the black** for two months in a row."

in the red: unprofitable; showing a financial loss.

"We have to do something to increase profit and decrease losses.
We've been **in the red** for two months in a row."

in time: not late.

"I thought I was going to be late for my flight, but it was delayed, so I was still **in time**."

jump all over someone: severely criticize / find fault with someone.

A: "What's wrong with Joe?"

B: "He's feeling bad because his boss **jumped all over him** this morning."

jump the gun: do something before it's time to do it.

A: "How did Marsha know about the party? It was supposed to be a surprise."

B: "Chuck **jumped the gun**. Without thinking, he said, 'I'm bringing the cake at your party;
I hope you like it!'"

jump to conclusions: decide something too quickly and without thinking about it or considering all the facts.

A: "Angela just doesn't like me. She won't even say hello."

B: "You're **jumping to conclusions**. Actually, she's very shy."

junk mail: unsolicited mail (usually advertisements for something you're not interested in).

"I didn't have any letters today--only **junk mail**."

keep an eye on: check something regularly.

"You're busy, so you'll need to **keep an eye on** the time. Remember that we have to leave at 4:30."

keep an eye out for: watch for.

"I'll **keep an eye out for** John. If I see him, I'll tell him you want to talk to him."

keep one's chin up: remain brave and confident in a difficult situation; don't despair or worry too much.

"I know that things have been difficult for you recently, but **keep your chin up**. Everything will be better soon."

keep one's nose to the grindstone: stay diligent; steadily work hard, without breaks or an uneven pace.

"If I **keep my nose to the grindstone**, I should be finished by the end of the day."

keep/stay in touch (with someone): remain informed (about someone) / in contact (with someone) by writing, calling, sending e-mail, etc. on a regular basis.

"I haven't seen Frank for two or three years but we **keep (stay) in touch** by e-mail."

keep one's fingers crossed: hope for the best.

A: "How did you do on the test?"

B: "I think I passed, but I won't know until tomorrow. I'm **keeping my fingers crossed!**"

kid (noun): child.

A: "You have three **kids**, don't you?"

B: "That's right. I have two girls and a boy."

kid (verb): playfully say something that isn't true.

"I was **kidding** when I said my teacher was a monster. She's strict, but she's actually a very nice person."

kind of: rather; more or less; a little.

"I'm feeling **kind of** hungry. I think I'll make myself a sandwich."

a klutz: an awkward, uncoordinated person.

"Don't ask Jeff to dance with you. He's a real **klutz** and will probably step on your feet!"

a know-it-all: someone who acts as if he/she knows everything--as if no one can tell him/her anything that he/she doesn't already know.

"Don't try to make any suggestions to Bob. He's **a know-it-all** and won't pay attention to anything you say."

know something backwards and forwards: know/understand something completely and thoroughly.

"If you have a question about html tags, ask Susan. She knows html **backwards and forwards**."

know something inside out: know/understand something thoroughly.

"If you have a question about grammar, ask Dr. Martin. She **knows** grammar **inside out**."

lend someone a hand: help someone.

"I can't do this alone. Can you **lend me a hand**?"

leave well enough alone: do nothing (because doing something would make things worse).

"Don't tell Jim how to discipline his children. **Leave well enough alone**."

a let-down: a disappointment; something that's very disappointing.

"It must've been quite a **let-down** not to be chosen for that job.
I know you really hoped you would get it."

Let sleeping dogs lie.: Don't cause problems by doing something when it isn't necessary.

"I know that what Julie said made you angry, but **let sleeping dogs lie**.
If you say or do anything, you'll only make things worse."

live from hand to mouth: survive on very little money; have only enough money to pay for basic needs.

"Chuck and Alice are **living from hand to mouth** since Chuck lost his job."

live and let live: don't unnecessarily make things difficult;
do as you wish and let others do as they wish.

"I'm not going to criticize Alice's family just because their habits
are a little strange. My motto is '**Live and let live**.'"

a low blow: a big disappointment.

A: "Fred seems depressed. Is he OK?"

B: "He's OK, but not good. It was a **a low blow** for him to be laid off from his job."

lousy: terrible; very bad.

"Why did you speak so rudely to your grandmother? That was a **lousy** thing to do!"

macho: super masculine / masculine to an extreme (in appearance and behavior).

"Her husband would never agree to help with the housework;
he's too **macho** to do that."

make a mountain out of a molehill: make something seem much more important than

it really is.

"Calm down. There's really nothing to worry about.
You're **making a mountain out of a molehill.**"

make up one's mind: decide what to do.

A: Where are you going on your vacation?
B: Maybe Canada, maybe Mexico. I can't **make up my mind.**"

No way!: Absolutely not! / Definitely not!

A: "You didn't open this letter addressed to me, did you?"
B: "**No way!** I'd *never* read look at else's mail!"

nosh: snack.

"There's plenty in the refrigerator if you want something to **nosh** on."

Not on your life!: Absolutely not! (a strong "no").

A: "Someone said you cheated on the test. Did you?"
B: "**Not on your life!**"

now and then: occasionally; from time to time.

A: "Do you see Jennifer often?"
B: "No, not really. I see her **now and then**, but not regularly."

nuke: heat in a microwave.

"If your coffee's cold, just **nuke** it for about a minute."

nuts: crazy.

A: "Stuart says some really strange things sometimes."
B: "Sometimes? All the time! He's **nuts!**"

OK: (1) yes (to show agreement--often reluctant agreement).

A: "Come on, Al. We really need your help!"

B: "Oh, **OK**; I may be crazy, but I'll help you."

OK: (2) neither good nor bad; so-so.

A: "How was the movie?"

B: "**OK**, I guess, but I've seen better ones."

OK: (3) in satisfactory condition; well.

A: "You look awfully pale. Are you **OK**?"

B: "Actually, I'm not. I have a terrible headache. "

OK: (4) approve (verb).

A: "Did your boss **OK** your vacation plans?"

B: "No, but he said that taking them two weeks later would be all right."

on the dot: exactly at a given time.

"We're leaving at 9:00 **on the dot**. If you're late, we'll go without you."

on time: at the scheduled time.

"It's getting late. You'd better hurry if you want to get to work **on time**."

(on the) cutting edge: using the most recent technology.

"The university's computer lab is **(on the) cutting edge**. It has all the latest hardware and software."

once in a while: occasionally; from time to time.

A: "Would you like coffee or tea?"

B: "Coffee, please. I drink tea **once in a while**, but I generally drink coffee."

over one's head: too difficult or complicated for someone to understand.

"This explanation of cgi scripting is **over my head**.
Can you explain it in a less technical way?"

pay the piper: face the consequences for something you've done.

"I stayed up too late tonight. Tomorrow I'll have to **pay the piper**."

plastic: credit card(s).

"Oh, no! I forgot to get any cash! I hope this restaurant accepts **plastic**!"

pooped: very tired; exhausted.

"I went to bed really early last night. I was **pooped**!"

pop quiz: unannounced short test.

"You shouldn't have missed class yesterday. We had a **pop quiz**."

pretty (adv.): rather; somewhat.

"That car's **pretty** expensive. Are you sure you can afford it?"

pull an all-nighter: study or work all night without getting any sleep.

A: "You look really tired."

B: "I am. I **pulled an all-nighter** to get ready for the meeting this morning."

pull someone's leg: tease someone by trying to make her/him believe something that's exaggerated or untrue.

A: "Wow! Carl has done some really amazing things!"

B: "Don't believe everything he tells you. He was probably **pulling your leg**."

quite a few: several; numerous.

"I don't think I can meet you after work. I have **quite a few** errands that I have to do."

a quick study: someone who learns new things quickly and easily.

A: "Annie seems to be doing well at her new job."

B: "I'm not surprised. She's **a quick study**."

R and R: rest and relaxation (a vacation).

"I think you're working too hard, Dave. You need some **R and R**."

rain or shine: (describing something scheduled) no matter what the weather is.

"We're leaving tomorrow, **rain or shine**."

rain cats and dogs: rain very hard.

"You can't leave just now! It's **raining cats and dogs** and you don't have an umbrella or raincoat!"

read someone's mind: know what someone is thinking.

A: "I'll be you're thinking of what you're going to have for dinner."

B: "Hey, did you **read my mind**?"

A: "No. I just know that you're always hungry and lunch was several hours ago!"

rub someone the wrong way: irritate someone; bother or annoy someone.

"All my little brother says is 'Why?' Usually I'm patient with him, but sometimes all his questions **rub me the wrong way**."

run-down: (1) not well; weak; fatigued.

"Are you eating regularly and getting enough sleep? You look **run-down**."

run-down: (2) in poor condition; needing repair.

"This must be a poor neighborhood. All the buildings look really **run-down**."

___ **-savvy**: knowledgeable about ___ .

"If you're having problems with your hard disk, talk to Jim. He's very **computer-savvy**."

schmooze: make relaxed, casual conversation.

"No, we weren't talking about anything important. We were just **schmoozing**."

shoot the breeze: make relaxed, casual conversation.

"No, we weren't talking about anything important. We were just **shooting the breeze**."

sleep on it: take at least a day to think about something before making a decision.

"The job that you're offering me sounds really good, but I'd like to **sleep on it** before giving you my final decision."

a snap: something that's very easy to do.

A: "Is your job difficult?"

B: "No, actually it's **a snap**. In fact, it's so easy that it's a little bit boring."

Someone's made his/her own bed; now let him/her lie in it.: Someone has caused his/her own problems; he/she will have to solve them himself/herself.

A: Jim upset everyone when he got angry at the meeting. Can we do anything to make the situation better?

B: No. **He's made his own bed; now let him lie in it.**"

sooner or later: eventually.

"You've been working too hard for too long. If you don't relax a little, **sooner or later** you're going to get sick."

sort of: rather; somewhat.

"I think I'll lie down. I feel **sort of** dizzy."

so-so: fair; not particularly good.

A: "How're you doing?"

B: "**So-so**. I've been better, but I've also been worse."

state of the art: using the latest technology.

"The company is very proud of the equipment in its computer room. It's **state of the art**."

Step on it!: Hurry up!

"**Step on it!** The taxi will be here at any time and you're not even dressed!"

take it easy: relax.

"I don't have any special vacation plans. I'm just going to **take it easy**."

tell a white lie: say something that isn't true in order not to hurt or offend someone.

"The cake that Susan made tasted terrible, but I knew that she made it because she wanted to please me, so when she asked if I liked it, I **told a white lie** and said it was good."

toss something: throw something away; put something in the trash.

"These shoes are worn out. I guess I'll have to **toss them**."

tough: difficult.

"Question number three is a **tough** one. Do you know the answer?"

There, there.: expression of comfort.

"**There, there.** Everything's going to be OK."

tight-fisted: very frugal; unwilling to spend money unnecessarily.

A: Do you think Charlie will donate any money to the activities fund?

B: No way! He's too **tight-fisted!**

a tightwad: someone who is very frugal and unwilling to spend money unnecessarily.

A: Will Charlie donate any money to the activities fund?

B: Absolutely not! He's a real **tightwad!**"

tricky: easily confused or misunderstood.

"This problem is **tricky.** I don't really understand it."

two-faced: deceitful; disloyal; someone who pretends to be a friend but isn't.

"I thought he was my friend, but he's **two-faced.** He says nice things to me when we're together, but makes jokes about me when we aren't."

under the weather: ill; sick; unwell.

"Ted was feeling **under the weather** yesterday, so he decided not to go to work."

until hell freezes over: forever.

"Chris can practice the piano **until hell freezes over,** but he'll never play well because he's tone-deaf."

Note: This expression is used to describe something that will not change, no matter how long or how often it's done.

until you're blue in the face: forever.

"You can talk **until you're blue in the face,** but I won't change my mind."

Note: This expression is used in the same way as "until hell freezes over."

update: make current; add information to show what has happened recently.

"I need to **update** my résumé. It doesn't show what I've done during the last year."

upside down: with the bottom part on top and the top part on bottom.

"Put the glasses **upside down** in the dishwasher. If you don't do that, they'll fill with water and you'll have to dry them by hand."

used to (+ V): an action that was true in the past but is not true now.

"Jane **used to** live in Austin, Texas. She lives in San Francisco now."

Was my face red!: I was very embarrassed.

"When I got to the meeting I noticed that I was wearing one black sock and one brown one. **Was my face red!**"

wear out one's welcome: make someone uncomfortable by visiting too long.

A: "Can't you stay two or three more days?"

B: "No. I don't want to **wear out my welcome.**"

wet behind the ears: inexperienced and naive.

"Don't include Fred as part of the bargaining team. He's just started working here and is still too **wet behind the ears.**"

What for?: Why?

A: "Come here for a minute. I need you."

B: "What for?"

Note: "What" and "for" can be separated--with "for" at the end of the question:

B: "What do you need me for?"

What's up?: What's new? What's happening?

"Hi, Dave. **What's up?**"

a white lie: a lie that is told to avoid offending someone or hurting his / her feelings.

"The cake that Susan made tasted terrible, but I knew that she made it because she wanted to please me, so when she asked if I liked it, I told a white lie and said it was good."

wishy-washy: uncommitted; without an opinion of one's own.

"Don't be so **wishy-washy**. Tell us how you really feel."

with bells on: very eagerly; with the feeling that one will have a very good time.

A: "Are you going to Sandra's party?"

B: "I'll be there **with bells on!**"

would ('d) just as soon: would ('d) rather; prefer.

"I know we have a lot of work to do, but I'm tired. I'd **just as soon** leave and finish tomorrow. Is that OK with you?"

a yes-man: someone who tries to get approval by agreeing with everyone.

A: "Why does the boss think Arnold is so intelligent?"

B: "Because Arnold is **a yes-man**. He agrees with everything the boss says!"

You don't say!: Really? / Is that really true?

A: "Have you heard the news? Jessica got married!"

B: "**You don't say!**"

You've got to be kidding!: You can't be serious! (What you said can't be true. What you said is very surprising/hard to believe.) "

A: "Did you know that Bob quit his job?"

B: "You've got to be kidding!"

yucky: terrible; distasteful; very unpleasant.

"Don't eat the soup at the cafeteria. It's **yucky!**"

yummy: delicious.

"Have you tried the cookies that Jonathan baked? They're **yummy!**"

zilch: nothing.

A: "How much money do you have?"

B: "**Zilch.** I'm broke until payday."

Zip your lip!: keep something secret; promise not to tell what has just been said.

"What I told you is really important, so **zip your lip!**"

Special Report: What Your Test Score Will Tell You About Your IQ

Did you know that most standardized tests correlate very strongly with IQ? In fact, your general intelligence is a better predictor of your success than any other factor, and most tests intentionally measure this trait to some degree to ensure that those selected by the test are truly qualified for the test's purposes.

Before we can delve into the relation between your test score and IQ, I will first have to explain what exactly is IQ. Here's the formula:

Your IQ = 100 + (Number of standard deviations below or above the average)*15

Now, let's define standard deviations by using an example. If we have 5 people with 5 different heights, then first we calculate the average. Let's say the average was 65 inches. The standard deviation is the "average distance" away from the average of each of the members. It is a direct measure of variability - if the 5 people included Jackie Chan and Shaquille O'Neal, obviously there's a lot more variability in that group than a group of 5 sisters who are all within 6 inches in height of each other. The standard deviation uses a number to characterize the average range of difference within a group.

A convenient feature of most groups is that they have a "normal" distribution-makes sense that most things would be normal, right? Without getting into a bunch of statistical mumbo-jumbo, you just need to know that if you know the average of the group and the standard deviation, you can successfully predict someone's percentile rank in the group.

Confused? Let me give you an example. If instead of 5 people's heights, we had 100 people, we could figure out their rank in height JUST by knowing the

average, standard deviation, and their height. We wouldn't need to know each person's height and manually rank them, we could just predict their rank based on three numbers.

What this means is that you can take your PERCENTILE rank that is often given with your test and relate this to your RELATIVE IQ of people taking the test - that is, your IQ relative to the people taking the test. Obviously, there's no way to know your actual IQ because the people taking a standardized test are usually not very good samples of the general population- many of those with extremely low IQ's never achieve a level of success or competency necessary to complete a typical standardized test. In fact, professional psychologists who measure IQ actually have to use non-written tests that can fairly measure the IQ of those not able to complete a traditional test.

The bottom line is to not take your test score too seriously, but it is fun to compute your "relative IQ" among the people who took the test with you. I've done the calculations below. Just look up your percentile rank in the left and then you'll see your "relative IQ" for your test in the right hand column-

Percentile Rank	Your Relative IQ		Percentile Rank	Your Relative IQ
99	135		59	103
98	131		58	103
97	128		57	103
96	126		56	102
95	125		55	102
94	123		54	102
93	122		53	101
92	121		52	101
91	120		51	100
90	119		50	100
89	118		49	100
88	118		48	99
87	117		47	99
86	116		46	98
85	116		45	98
84	115		44	98

83	114		43	97
82	114		42	97
81	113		41	97
80	113		40	96
79	112		39	96
78	112		38	95
77	111		37	95
76	111		36	95
75	110		35	94
74	110		34	94
73	109		33	93
72	109		32	93
71	108		31	93
70	108		30	92
69	107		29	92
68	107		28	91
67	107		27	91
66	106		26	90
65	106		25	90
64	105		24	89
63	105		23	89
62	105		22	88
61	104		21	88
60	104		20	87

Special Report: Retaking the Test: What Are Your Chances at Improving Your Score?

After going through the experience of taking a major test, many test takers feel that once is enough. The test usually comes during a period of transition in the test taker's life, and taking the test is only one of a series of important events. With so many distractions and conflicting recommendations, it may be difficult for a test taker to rationally determine whether or not he should retake the test after viewing his scores.

The importance of the test usually only adds to the burden of the retake decision. However, don't be swayed by emotion. There are a few simple questions that you can ask yourself to guide you as you try to determine whether a retake would improve your score:

1. What went wrong? Why wasn't your score what you expected?

Can you point to a single factor or problem that you feel caused the low score? Were you sick on test day? Was there an emotional upheaval in your life that caused a distraction? Were you late for the test or not able to use the full time allotment? If you can point to any of these specific, individual problems, then a retake should definitely be considered.

2. Is there enough time to improve?

Many problems that may show up in your score report may take a lot of time for improvement. A deficiency in a particular math skill may require weeks or months of tutoring and studying to improve. If you have enough time to improve an identified weakness, then a retake should definitely be considered.

3. How will additional scores be used? Will a score average, highest score, or most recent score be used?

Different test scores may be handled completely differently. If you've taken the test multiple times, sometimes your highest score is used, sometimes your average score is computed and used, and sometimes your most recent score is used. Make sure you understand what method will be used to evaluate your scores, and use that to help you determine whether a retake should be considered.

4. Are my practice test scores significantly higher than my actual test score?

If you have taken a lot of practice tests and are consistently scoring at a much higher level than your actual test score, then you should consider a retake. However, if you've taken five practice tests and only one of your scores was higher than your actual test score, or if your practice test scores were only slightly higher than your actual test score, then it is unlikely that you will significantly increase your score.

5. Do I need perfect scores or will I be able to live with this score? Will this score still allow me to follow my dreams?

What kind of score is acceptable to you? Is your current score "good enough?" Do you have to have a certain score in order to pursue the future of your dreams? If you won't be happy with your current score, and there's no way that you could live with it, then you should consider a retake. However, don't get your hopes up. If you are looking for significant improvement, that may or may not be possible. But if you won't be happy otherwise, it is at least worth the effort.

Remember that there are other considerations. To achieve your dream, it is likely that your grades may also be taken into account. A great test score is usually not the only thing necessary to succeed. Make sure that you aren't overemphasizing the importance of a high test score.

Furthermore, a retake does not always result in a higher score. Some test takers will score lower on a retake, rather than higher. One study shows that one-fourth of test takers will achieve a significant improvement in test score, while one-sixth of test takers will actually show a decrease. While this shows that most test takers will improve, the majority will only improve their scores a little and a retake may not be worth the test taker's effort.

Finally, if a test is taken only once and is considered in the added context of good grades on the part of a test taker, the person reviewing the grades and scores may be tempted to assume that the test taker just had a bad day while taking the test, and may discount the low test score in favor of the high grades. But if the test is retaken and the scores are approximately the same, then the validity of the low scores are only confirmed. Therefore, a retake could actually hurt a test taker by definitely bracketing a test taker's score ability to a limited range.

Special Report: What is Test Anxiety and How to Overcome It?

The very nature of tests caters to some level of anxiety, nervousness or tension, just as we feel for any important event that occurs in our lives. A little bit of anxiety or nervousness can be a good thing. It helps us with motivation, and makes achievement just that much sweeter. However, too much anxiety can be a problem; especially if it hinders our ability to function and perform.

“Test anxiety,” is the term that refers to the emotional reactions that some test-takers experience when faced with a test or exam. Having a fear of testing and exams is based upon a rational fear, since the test-taker’s performance can shape the course of an academic career. Nevertheless, experiencing excessive fear of examinations will only interfere with the test-takers ability to perform, and his/her chances to be successful.

There are a large variety of causes that can contribute to the development and sensation of test anxiety. These include, but are not limited to lack of performance and worrying about issues surrounding the test.

Lack of Preparation

Lack of preparation can be identified by the following behaviors or situations:

Not scheduling enough time to study, and therefore cramming the night before the test or exam

Managing time poorly, to create the sensation that there is not enough time to do everything

Failing to organize the text information in advance, so that the study material consists of the entire text and not simply the pertinent information

Poor overall studying habits

Worrying, on the other hand, can be related to both the test taker, or many other factors around him/her that will be affected by the results of the test.

These include worrying about:

Previous performances on similar exams, or exams in general

How friends and other students are achieving

The negative consequences that will result from a poor grade or failure

There are three primary elements to test anxiety. Physical components, which involve the same typical bodily reactions as those to acute anxiety (to be discussed below). Emotional factors have to do with fear or panic. Mental or cognitive issues concerning attention spans and memory abilities.

Physical Signals

There are many different symptoms of test anxiety, and these are not limited to mental and emotional strain. Frequently there are a range of physical signals that will let a test taker know that he/she is suffering from test anxiety.

These bodily changes can include the following:

Perspiring

Sweaty palms

Wet, trembling hands

Nausea

Dry mouth

A knot in the stomach

Headache

Faintness

Muscle tension

Aching shoulders, back and neck

Rapid heart beat

Feeling too hot/cold

To recognize the sensation of test anxiety, a test-taker should monitor him/herself for the following sensations:

The physical distress symptoms as listed above

Emotional sensitivity, expressing emotional feelings such as the need to cry or laugh too much, or a sensation of anger or helplessness

A decreased ability to think, causing the test-taker to blank out or have racing thoughts that are hard to organize or control.

Though most students will feel some level of anxiety when faced with a test or exam, the majority can cope with that anxiety and maintain it at a manageable level. However, those who cannot are faced with a very real and very serious condition, which can and should be controlled for the immeasurable benefit of this sufferer.

Naturally, these sensations lead to negative results for the testing experience. The most common effects of test anxiety have to do with nervousness and mental blocking.

Nervousness

Nervousness can appear in several different levels:

The test-taker's difficulty, or even inability to read and understand the questions on the test

The difficulty or inability to organize thoughts to a coherent form

The difficulty or inability to recall key words and concepts relating to the testing questions (especially essays)

The receipt of poor grades on a test, though the test material was well known by the test taker

Conversely, a person may also experience mental blocking, which involves:

Blanking out on test questions

Only remembering the correct answers to the questions when the test has already finished.

Fortunately for test anxiety sufferers, beating these feelings, to a large degree, has to do with proper preparation. When a test taker has a feeling of preparedness, then anxiety will be dramatically lessened.

The first step to resolving anxiety issues is to distinguish which of the two types of anxiety are being suffered. If the anxiety is a direct result of a lack of preparation, this should be considered a normal reaction, and the anxiety level (as opposed to the test results) shouldn't be anything to worry about. However, if, when adequately prepared, the test-taker still panics, blanks out, or seems to overreact, this is not a fully rational reaction. While this can be considered normal too, there are many ways to combat and overcome these effects.

Remember that anxiety cannot be entirely eliminated, however, there are ways to minimize it, to make the anxiety easier to manage. Preparation is one of the best ways to minimize test anxiety. Therefore the following techniques are wise in order to best fight off any anxiety that may want to build.

To begin with, try to avoid cramming before a test, whenever it is possible. By trying to memorize an entire term's worth of information in one day, you'll be shocking your system, and not giving yourself a very good chance to absorb the information. This is an easy path to anxiety, so for those who suffer from test anxiety, cramming should not even be considered an option.

Instead of cramming, work throughout the semester to combine all of the material which is presented throughout the semester, and work on it gradually as the course goes by, making sure to master the main concepts first, leaving minor details for a week or so before the test.

To study for the upcoming exam, be sure to pose questions that may be on the examination, to gauge the ability to answer them by integrating the ideas from your texts, notes and lectures, as well as any supplementary readings.

If it is truly impossible to cover all of the information that was covered in that particular term, concentrate on the most important portions, that can be covered very well. Learn these concepts as best as possible, so that when the test comes, a goal can be made to use these concepts as presentations of your knowledge.

In addition to study habits, changes in attitude are critical to beating a struggle with test anxiety. In fact, an improvement of the perspective over the entire test-taking experience can actually help a test taker to enjoy studying and therefore improve the overall experience. Be certain not to overemphasize the significance of the grade - know that the result of the test is neither a reflection of self worth, nor is it a measure of intelligence; one grade will not predict a person's future success.

To improve an overall testing outlook, the following steps should be tried:

Keeping in mind that the most reasonable expectation for taking a test is to expect to try to demonstrate as much of what you know as you possibly can. Reminding ourselves that a test is only one test; this is not the only one, and there will be others.

The thought of thinking of oneself in an irrational, all-or-nothing term should be avoided at all costs.

A reward should be designated for after the test, so there's something to look forward to. Whether it be going to a movie, going out to eat, or simply visiting friends, schedule it in advance, and do it no matter what result is expected on the exam.

Test-takers should also keep in mind that the basics are some of the most important things, even beyond anti-anxiety techniques and studying. Never neglect the basic social, emotional and biological needs, in order to try to absorb information. In order to best achieve, these three factors must be held as just as important as the studying itself.

Study Steps

Remember the following important steps for studying:

Maintain healthy nutrition and exercise habits. Continue both your recreational activities and social pass times. These both contribute to your physical and emotional well being.

Be certain to get a good amount of sleep, especially the night before the test, because when you're overtired you are not able to perform to the best of your best ability.

Keep the studying pace to a moderate level by taking breaks when they are needed, and varying the work whenever possible, to keep the mind fresh instead of getting bored.

When enough studying has been done that all the material that can be learned has been learned, and the test taker is prepared for the test, stop studying and do something relaxing such as listening to music, watching a movie, or taking a warm bubble bath.

There are also many other techniques to minimize the uneasiness or apprehension that is experienced along with test anxiety before, during, or even after the examination. In fact, there are a great deal of things that can be done to stop anxiety from interfering with lifestyle and performance. Again, remember that anxiety will not be eliminated entirely, and it shouldn't be. Otherwise that "up" feeling for exams would not exist, and most of us depend on that sensation to perform better than usual. However, this anxiety has to be at a level that is manageable.

Of course, as we have just discussed, being prepared for the exam is half the battle right away. Attending all classes, finding out what knowledge will be expected on the exam, and knowing the exam schedules are easy steps to lowering anxiety. Keeping up with work will remove the need to cram, and efficient study habits will eliminate wasted time. Studying should be done in an ideal location for concentration, so that it is simple to become interested in the material and give it complete attention. A method such as SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) is a wonderful key to follow to make sure that the study habits are as effective as possible, especially in the case of learning from a textbook. Flashcards are great techniques for memorization. Learning to take good notes will mean that notes will be full of useful information, so that less sifting will need to be done to seek out what is pertinent for studying. Reviewing notes after class and then again on occasion will keep the information fresh in the mind. From notes that have been taken summary sheets and outlines can be made for simpler reviewing.

A study group can also be a very motivational and helpful place to study, as there will be a sharing of ideas, all of the minds can work together, to make sure that everyone understands, and the studying will be made more interesting because it will be a social occasion.

Basically, though, as long as the test-taker remains organized and self confident, with efficient study habits, less time will need to be spent studying, and higher grades will be achieved.

To become self confident, there are many useful steps. The first of these is “self talk.” It has been shown through extensive research, that self-talk for students who suffer from test anxiety, should be well monitored, in order to make sure that it contributes to self confidence as opposed to sinking the student. Frequently the self talk of test-anxious students is negative or self-defeating, thinking that everyone else is smarter and faster, that they always mess up, and that if they don’t do well, they’ll fail the entire course. It is important to decreasing anxiety that awareness is made of self talk. Try writing any negative self thoughts and then disputing them with a positive statement instead. Begin self-encouragement as though it was a friend speaking. Repeat positive statements to help reprogram the mind to believing in successes instead of failures.

Helpful Techniques

Other extremely helpful techniques include:

Self-visualization of doing well and reaching goals

While aiming for an “A” level of understanding, don’t try to “overprotect” by setting your expectations lower. This will only convince the mind to stop studying in order to meet the lower expectations.

Don't make comparisons with the results or habits of other students. These are individual factors, and different things work for different people, causing different results.

Strive to become an expert in learning what works well, and what can be done in order to improve. Consider collecting this data in a journal.

Create rewards for after studying instead of doing things before studying that will only turn into avoidance behaviors.

Make a practice of relaxing - by using methods such as progressive relaxation, self-hypnosis, guided imagery, etc - in order to make relaxation an automatic sensation.

Work on creating a state of relaxed concentration so that concentrating will take on the focus of the mind, so that none will be wasted on worrying.

Take good care of the physical self by eating well and getting enough sleep.

Plan in time for exercise and stick to this plan.

Beyond these techniques, there are other methods to be used before, during and after the test that will help the test-taker perform well in addition to overcoming anxiety.

Before the exam comes the academic preparation. This involves establishing a study schedule and beginning at least one week before the actual date of the test. By doing this, the anxiety of not having enough time to study for the test will be automatically eliminated. Moreover, this will make the studying a much more effective experience, ensuring that the learning will be an easier process. This relieves much undue pressure on the test-taker.

Summary sheets, note cards, and flash cards with the main concepts and examples of these main concepts should be prepared in advance of the actual studying time. A topic should never be eliminated from this process. By omitting a topic because it isn't expected to be on the test is only setting up the test-taker for anxiety should it actually appear on the exam. Utilize the

course syllabus for laying out the topics that should be studied. Carefully go over the notes that were made in class, paying special attention to any of the issues that the professor took special care to emphasize while lecturing in class. In the textbooks, use the chapter review, or if possible, the chapter tests, to begin your review.

It may even be possible to ask the instructor what information will be covered on the exam, or what the format of the exam will be (for example, multiple choice, essay, free form, true-false). Additionally, see if it is possible to find out how many questions will be on the test. If a review sheet or sample test has been offered by the professor, make good use of it, above anything else, for the preparation for the test. Another great resource for getting to know the examination is reviewing tests from previous semesters. Use these tests to review, and aim to achieve a 100% score on each of the possible topics. With a few exceptions, the goal that you set for yourself is the highest one that you will reach.

Take all of the questions that were assigned as homework, and rework them to any other possible course material. The more problems reworked, the more skill and confidence will form as a result. When forming the solution to a problem, write out each of the steps. Don't simply do head work. By doing as many steps on paper as possible, much clarification and therefore confidence will be formed. Do this with as many homework problems as possible, before checking the answers. By checking the answer after each problem, a reinforcement will exist, that will not be on the exam. Study situations should be as exam-like as possible, to prime the test-taker's system for the experience. By waiting to check the answers at the end, a psychological advantage will be formed, to decrease the stress factor.

Another fantastic reason for not cramming is the avoidance of confusion in concepts, especially when it comes to mathematics. 8-10 hours of study will

become one hundred percent more effective if it is spread out over a week or at least several days, instead of doing it all in one sitting. Recognize that the human brain requires time in order to assimilate new material, so frequent breaks and a span of study time over several days will be much more beneficial.

Additionally, don't study right up until the point of the exam. Studying should stop a minimum of one hour before the exam begins. This allows the brain to rest and put things in their proper order. This will also provide the time to become as relaxed as possible when going into the examination room. The test-taker will also have time to eat well and eat sensibly. Know that the brain needs food as much as the rest of the body. With enough food and enough sleep, as well as a relaxed attitude, the body and the mind are primed for success.

Avoid any anxious classmates who are talking about the exam. These students only spread anxiety, and are not worth sharing the anxious sentimentalities.

Before the test also involves creating a positive attitude, so mental preparation should also be a point of concentration. There are many keys to creating a positive attitude. Should fears become rushing in, make a visualization of taking the exam, doing well, and seeing an A written on the paper. Write out a list of affirmations that will bring a feeling of confidence, such as "I am doing well in my English class," "I studied well and know my material," "I enjoy this class." Even if the affirmations aren't believed at first, it sends a positive message to the subconscious which will result in an alteration of the overall belief system, which is the system that creates reality.

If a sensation of panic begins, work with the fear and imagine the very worst! Work through the entire scenario of not passing the test, failing the entire

course, and dropping out of school, followed by not getting a job, and pushing a shopping cart through the dark alley where you'll live. This will place things into perspective! Then, practice deep breathing and create a visualization of the opposite situation - achieving an "A" on the exam, passing the entire course, receiving the degree at a graduation ceremony.

On the day of the test, there are many things to be done to ensure the best results, as well as the most calm outlook. The following stages are suggested in order to maximize test-taking potential:

Begin the examination day with a moderate breakfast, and avoid any coffee or beverages with caffeine if the test taker is prone to jitters. Even people who are used to managing caffeine can feel jittery or light-headed when it is taken on a test day.

Attempt to do something that is relaxing before the examination begins. As last minute cramming clouds the mastering of overall concepts, it is better to use this time to create a calming outlook.

Be certain to arrive at the test location well in advance, in order to provide time to select a location that is away from doors, windows and other distractions, as well as giving enough time to relax before the test begins.

Keep away from anxiety generating classmates who will upset the sensation of stability and relaxation that is being attempted before the exam.

Should the waiting period before the exam begins cause anxiety, create a self-distraction by reading a light magazine or something else that is relaxing and simple.

During the exam itself, read the entire exam from beginning to end, and find out how much time should be allotted to each individual problem. Once writing the exam, should more time be taken for a problem, it should be abandoned, in order to begin another problem. If there is time at the end, the unfinished problem can always be returned to and completed.

Read the instructions very carefully - twice - so that unpleasant surprises won't follow during or after the exam has ended.

When writing the exam, pretend that the situation is actually simply the completion of homework within a library, or at home. This will assist in forming a relaxed atmosphere, and will allow the brain extra focus for the complex thinking function.

Begin the exam with all of the questions with which the most confidence is felt. This will build the confidence level regarding the entire exam and will begin a quality momentum. This will also create encouragement for trying the problems where uncertainty resides.

Going with the "gut instinct" is always the way to go when solving a problem. Second guessing should be avoided at all costs. Have confidence in the ability to do well.

For essay questions, create an outline in advance that will keep the mind organized and make certain that all of the points are remembered. For multiple choice, read every answer, even if the correct one has been spotted - a better one may exist.

Continue at a pace that is reasonable and not rushed, in order to be able to work carefully. Provide enough time to go over the answers at the end, to check for small errors that can be corrected.

Should a feeling of panic begin, breathe deeply, and think of the feeling of the body releasing sand through its pores. Visualize a calm, peaceful place, and include all of the sights, sounds and sensations of this image. Continue the

deep breathing, and take a few minutes to continue this with closed eyes. When all is well again, return to the test.

If a “blanking” occurs for a certain question, skip it and move on to the next question. There will be time to return to the other question later. Get everything done that can be done, first, to guarantee all the grades that can be compiled, and to build all of the confidence possible. Then return to the weaker questions to build the marks from there.

Remember, one’s own reality can be created, so as long as the belief is there, success will follow. And remember: anxiety can happen later, right now, there’s an exam to be written!

After the examination is complete, whether there is a feeling for a good grade or a bad grade, don’t dwell on the exam, and be certain to follow through on the reward that was promised...and enjoy it! Don’t dwell on any mistakes that have been made, as there is nothing that can be done at this point anyway.

Additionally, don’t begin to study for the next test right away. Do something relaxing for a while, and let the mind relax and prepare itself to begin absorbing information again.

From the results of the exam - both the grade and the entire experience, be certain to learn from what has gone on. Perfect studying habits and work some more on confidence in order to make the next examination experience even better than the last one.

Learn to avoid places where openings occurred for laziness, procrastination and day dreaming.

Use the time between this exam and the next one to better learn to relax, even learning to relax on cue, so that any anxiety can be controlled during the next exam. Learn how to relax the body. Slouch in your chair if that helps. Tighten and then relax all of the different muscle groups, one group at a time, beginning with the feet and then working all the way up to the neck and face. This will ultimately relax the muscles more than they were to begin with. Learn how to breath deeply and comfortably, and focus on this breathing going in and out as a relaxing thought. With every exhale, repeat the word "relax."

As common as test anxiety is, it is very possible to overcome it. Make yourself one of the test-takers who overcome this frustrating hindrance.

Special Report: Additional Bonus Material

Due to our efforts to try to keep this book to a manageable length, we've created a link that will give you access to all of your additional bonus material.

Please visit <http://www.toefl-secrets.com/bonuses> to access the information.