

Fall Quarter 2009
iBT TOEFL Preparation: Reading and Independent Writing Emphasis
Class Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday

Instructor: [Michael Buckhoff](#)

Office Phone: 537-5978 (Leave message)

E-mail: michael@csusb.edu

Office: [UH 301.27](#)

Classroom: EE10:00-10:50

Office Hours: MW 12:00-1:10
and by appointment

Course Materials

[Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test iBT](#) by Deborah Phillips. 2006 by Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN: 978-0-13-205690-8

[500 College Words: A-E](#) (PDF File)

[500 College Words: E – P](#) (PDF File)

[500 College Words: P-Z](#) (PDF File)

[Sample Essays + Video Bundle](#) (Password = writing123211)

Course Description

This iBT TOEFL elective, through pre-tests, practice exercises, mini-tests, and post-tests, prepares you to decode, plan, write, and get feedback on independent writing tasks and to increase reading proficiency of 150-750 word academic passages for three purposes: to find information, for basic comprehension, and to learn. By the end of the quarter, you will be able to perform the following writing and reading competencies:

Writing Competencies

1. I can write an essay on an assigned topic.
2. I can use correct grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation when I write in English.
3. When writing English, I can support ideas with examples.
4. When writing in English, I can organize my ideas so that the reader understands my main and supporting ideas.
5. When writing in English, I can write more or less formally depending on the purpose and the reader.

Reading Competencies

1. I can understand English vocabulary and grammar when reading.
2. When reading academic texts in English, I can understand the most important points.
3. I can understand the relative importance of ideas when reading an academic text.
4. I can organize or outline the important ideas and concepts in academic texts.
5. When reading academic texts in English, I can remember major ideas.
6. I can understand how the ideas in an English text relate to each other.
7. When reading English, I can understand charts and graphs in academic texts.
8. I can quickly find information that I am looking for in academic texts in English.
9. When reading academic texts in English, I can understand them well enough to answer questions about them later.
10. When reading a text in English, I am able to figure out the meaning of words I do not know by using the context and my background knowledge.

Course Objectives

1. Learn effective study habits to prepare for the reading section of the iBT so that you can improve your ability to understand university-level texts and reading passages for three main purposes: to find information, for basic comprehension, and to learn.
2. Learn how to prepare for the Writing section of the iBT and complete some independent 300 + word writing tasks with an emphasis on writing the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.
3. Learn how to write coherent paragraphs, including consistency with point of view (pronoun case and number), sentence parallelism, and verb tenses.
4. Apply English proficiency developed through the aforementioned skills/study habits to iBT reading and writing tests, to the successful completion of undergraduate and graduate college classes, and to the workplace setting.

Assessment Criteria

Your writing assignments in this iBT preparation class will be evaluated according to the rubrics that ETS has developed for the iBT. Being evaluated by these writing rubrics (Phillips 538-539) will get you used to the standards that ETS uses in evaluating your writing proficiency.

Grading Criteria

The number letter grading scale is set as follows:

A	Excellent - Mastery of skills with a superior level of performance
B	Good - Mastery of skills with a high level of performance
IP	In Progress - Acceptable performance. Not mastered skills for level/course
UP	Unsatisfactory Progress - Inadequate performance. Failed level/course due to excessive absences, poor participation, failure to complete homework assignments, or low test scores

Calculation of Final Grade

Attendance/Participation =	50%
Reading Midterm Exam =	10%
Reading Final Exam =	20%
Writing Final Exam =	20%

100%

Attendance Policy

So that you do not jeopardize your F-1 visa status, your attendance is required at all class meetings. You should note that your absences are recorded on a government web site closely monitored by INS. Only written documented excuses for an absence may result in your making up an assignment or graded daily work. Five absences will result in an overall reduction of one full letter grade, and seven absences will result in a failing grade for this class. Come to class on time. Three tardies will be counted as an absence. If you arrive fifteen minutes late or more, you will be counted absent for that class period. If you do come late to class, please enter quietly so as not to distract the other students.

Improving your Reading Skills

To score high on the TOEFL iBT Reading section, you need to improve your ability to understand university-level texts and reading passages for three main purposes: to find information, for basic comprehension, and to learn.

First, frequently reading academic texts in natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and business provides excellent preparation for TOEFL iBT Reading. The Internet is a great resource for these materials; also, in libraries, you can check out books, magazines, and journals that are academic in style. Therefore, ETS suggests that the more academic the reading material is, the more it will prepare you.

Second, to improve your reading-for-basic comprehension TOEFL iBT Reading skills, ETS suggests the following:

1. Through an extensive system of using flash-cards, increase your vocabulary abilities.
2. Rather than carefully reading each word and sentence, practice skimming-the process of looking over a passage quickly to get a general feeling of the main ideas.
3. Increase your ability to skim quickly and to identify the major points of a passage.
4. Once you have skimmed a passage, read it more slowly and write down the main ideas, major points, and important facts.
5. Choose some unfamiliar words in the passage and try to identify the meanings by using the context.
6. Underline the pronouns used (he, him, they, them, it, etc.) and identify which nouns they refer to.
7. Practice making inferences or drawing conclusions based on what is implied in the passage.

Third, to improve your reading-to-find information TOEFL iBT Reading skills, ETS suggests the following:

1. Scan the passage to find and highlight important facts (dates, numbers, terms) and information.
2. Practice scanning frequently so that you can increase your reading rate and fluency.

Fourth, to improve your reading-to-learn TOEFL iBT Reading skills, ETS suggests the following:

1. Identify the passage as fitting into a writing genre: classification, cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, description, narration, etc.
2. Practice organizing a reading passage by doing the following-

Distinguish between the major and minor points by creating an outline of a passage.

If the passage describes the order of a process or is a narration, create an outline of the steps in the process or narration.

If the passage categorizes information, create a chart and place the information into the correct category. On the TOEFL iBT, you will be provided with a chart with possible answer choices, and you will be required to fill in the chart with the correct choices.

Improving your Independent Writing Skills

1. Create a list of familiar topics and practice writing about them: “Describe your favorite vacation destination,” and “Describe an important person who has influenced you” are representative of familiar Independent Writing topics for the iBT
2. You could also practice by stating an opinion or a preference and then by presenting reasons clearly and in detail. “Which do you think is better: living on campus in dorms or off campus in apartments?” is representative of an opinion-preference Independent Writing topic for the iBT.
3. Practice planning and writing an essay for each topic. Practice planning, writing, and revising each essay within the 30 minute time limit.
4. Practice prewriting techniques in which you think about and list ideas related to a topic. Practice this BEFORE you begin writing your essay.

Identify one main idea and some main supporting points to support that main idea.

Create a sharply focused thesis statement and use it as a blueprint for the ideas presented in each developmental paragraph of the essay.

Use sufficient explanation and detail to develop the main supporting points of the essay.⁹

5. Aim to write a minimum of 300 words for the Independent Writing section.

Course Outline for Fall Quarter 2009			
Date	iBT Focus	Video/Article	Practice Test
Sept 29	Introduce Class-Explain Syllabus	How to Actively Read an Academic Passage	
Oct 1	Reading Skill 1, 2	Vocabulary in Context Strategies	
6	Writing Skill 8	Prewriting Strategies	
8	Reading Skill 3, 4	Become an Effective TOEFL iBT Reader in Five Simple Steps	
13	Writing Skill 9	One Tool to Help You Write and Speak Well on the TOEFL iBT	
15	Reading Skill 4 cont.	How You Can Get a high TOEFL iBT Score: One of the Tips May Surprise You! TOEFL Reading Practice Test: Vampire Bats!!	Reading Mini-Test 1
20	Writing Skill 10	TOEFL iBT Independent Writing: Analyses of Four Thesis Statements	Writing Mini-Test 1
22	Reading Skill 5,6	How to Avoid a Common TOEFL iBT Reading Trap Reading Tips for a Maximum TOEFL iBT Score!	
27	Writing Skill 11	TOEFL iBT Speaking and Writing: Several Tips on How to Be More Concise	
29	Reading Skill 6 cont.	TOEFL iBT Example 800 Word Reading Passage: Learn How to Read It Three Ways to Increase your TOEFL iBT Reading Score above 21/30 points	

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Nov 3	Writing Skill 11 cont., 12	<u>TOEFL iBT Writing: Three Students' Approaches to an Independent Writing Task</u>	
5	Reading Skill 7	<u>TOEFL iBT Reading: How to Infer Rhetorical Purpose</u> <u>TOEFL iBT Reading: Stop Daydreaming and Start Reading!</u>	
10	Writing Skill 13	<u>TOEFL iBT Writing: The First Step toward Writing a Perfect Independent Essay</u>	
12	Reading Skill 8, 9	<u>TOEFL iBT Vocabulary: Do not Be Suprised When You Take the Test</u> <u>TOEFL iBT Reading: Using the Novel "The Red Badge of Courage" by Stephen Crane to Build Reading and Vocabulary Fluency</u>	Reading Mini-Test 2
17	Reading Skill 10	<u>TOEFL iBT Reading: How to Improve your Concentration</u> <u>TOEFL iBT Reading: Understanding Organizational Patterns</u>	
19	Writing Skill 14	<u>TOEFL iBT Writing: How Natural Sounding Are Your Independent and Integrated Writing Tasks?</u>	Writing Mini-Test 2
24	Reading Skill 10 cont.	<u>Become an Effective TOEFL iBT Reader in Five Steps</u> <u>TOEFL iBT Reading, Barnes and Noble, and Bibliomania (Two Must-know Web Sites for TOEFL iBT Readers)</u>	

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Dec 1	Writing Skill 14 cont.	<u>TOEFL iBT Speaking and Writing: A Case Study of a Student Who Took the TOEFL iBT Nine Times!</u>	
1-4	Final Exams		