

Intelligibility Final Exam for TOEFL Listening and Speaking

Part A: Paragraph readings

On this part of the test, you will read three paragraphs. It is suggested that you read the paragraphs silently for meaning. Then you will make a digital recording as you should read the paragraphs out loud. Make sure that you speak directly into your microphone so that the evaluator will be able to accurately make your pronunciation profile.

Reading Passage One—Read the following passage aloud:

The following represents some pronunciation tips for ESL students:

1. Enhance the overall intelligibility of a discussion or presentation by correcting the pronunciation of one or two key words in the discussion or presentation.
2. Practice with your eyes closed, while keeping focused on the sound of the new word.
 - ¢ Practice by extending the word, saying it in slow motion.
 - ¢ Practice in front of a mirror by imitating the facial positions and mouth movements of American English speakers.
 - ¢ Practice words and phrases you would use in social conversation and in real situations.
 - ¢ Shorten difficult words when possible, e.g. laboratory to lab.
 - ¢ Use a synonym if possible of a word containing a difficult sound, e.g. usual to often.
 - ¢ When communicating important information, improve intelligibility by saying it slowly, softly, and repetitively, as well as paraphrasing and emphasizing it with arm or hand gestures, and using introductory transition phrases (e.g. the crucial point is. . .).

The Center for Math, Writing, and Study Skills at Lehigh University. “Pronunciation Tips (ESL).”
<http://www.lehigh.edu/~incent/old%20site/esl/pronounce.htm>
(October 13, 2003)

Reading Passage Two—Read the following passage aloud:

Observations that limited pronunciation skills can undermine learners' self-confidence, restrict social interactions, and negatively influence estimations of a speaker's credibility and abilities are not new. However, the current focus on communicative approaches to English as a second language (ESL) instruction and the concern for building teamwork and communication skills in an increasingly diverse workplace are renewing interest in the role that pronunciation plays in adults' overall communicative competence. As a result, pronunciation is emerging from its often marginalized place in adult ESL instruction. This digest reviews the current status of pronunciation instruction in adult ESL classes. It provides an overview of the factors that influence pronunciation mastery and suggests ways to plan and implement pronunciation instruction.

MaryAnn Cunningham Florez at the National Center for ESL Literacy Education.
“Improving Adult ESL Learners' Pronunciation Skills.” December 1998.
<http://www.cal.org/ncl/digests/Pronun.htm> (October 13, 2003)

Reading Passage Three—Read the following passage aloud:

The debate over the impact of age on language acquisition and specifically pronunciation is varied. Some researchers argue that, after puberty, lateralization (the assigning of linguistic functions to the different brain hemispheres) is completed, and adults' ability to distinguish and produce native-like sounds is more limited. Others refer to the existence of sensitive periods when various aspects of language acquisition occur, or to adults' need to re-adjust existing neural networks to accommodate new sounds. Most researchers, however, agree that adults find pronunciation more difficult than children do and that they probably will not achieve native-like pronunciation. Yet experiences with language learning and the ability to self-monitor, which come with age, can offset these limitations to some degree.

MaryAnn Cunningham Florez at the National Center for ESL Literacy Education.

“Factors Influencing Pronunciation Mastery.” December 1998.

<http://www.cal.org/nclle/digests/Pronun.htm> (October 13, 2003)

Part B: Short responses to interview questions

Digitally record brief responses to the following questions. Do not write an outline or practice your answers. Speak as naturally as possible for about two minutes.

1. What is your educational background and your work history?
2. Why is learning to speak English important to you?
3. What do you hope to achieve in this course?

The numerical score that you will get for the pronunciation final exam corresponds with the following percentages:

1.1-2.0 = 50-53%	1.3-1.7 = 54-57%	1.8-2.0 = 60-63%
2.1-2.3 = 64-67%	2.3-2.7 = 70-73%	2.8-3.0 = 74-77%
3.1-3.3 = 80-83%	3.4-3.7 = 86-89%	3.8-4.0 = 92%
4.1-4.3 = 93%	4.4-4.7 = 94%	4.8-5.0 = 95%
5.1-5.3 = 96%	5.4-5.7 = 97%	5.8-6.0 = 98%
6.1-6.3 = 99%	6.4-6.7 = 100%	6.8-7.0 = 100%