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Patricia Noble Sullivan  
Gail Abel Brenner  
Grace Yi Qiu Zhong

# MASTER THE TOEFL® CBT

2004

Patricia Noble Sullivan  
Gail Abel Brenner  
Grace Yi Qui Zhong

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ISBN (book only): 0-7689-1214-8

ISBN (book with CD-ROM): 0-7689-1213-X

ISBN (Prep Kit with Tapes): 0-7689-1215-6

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 05 04 03

# Acknowledgments

**To Mick, Rebecca, Adam, Josh, John, and Jesse for their love and support.**

Several people helped in the writing of this book. Some helped by prewriting questions and proofing new material; others helped by evaluating test questions. Thanks to Lori Buehring for her excellent work in writing new questions for this edition. Thanks also to Le'a Lieux who helped field test the questions. In addition, we thank the students at English Language International, University of California Extension, Santa Cruz, California, who took practice tests and gave valuable feedback to us.

# About This Book

This book is designed to help you attain high scores on either the computer-based or the paper-based TOEFL test by helping you increase your language skills, improve your testing speed, and learn test-taking strategies. Part 1, “The Test of English as a Foreign Language,” gives up-to-date information about both the computer-based and the paper-based formats, and Part 2, “Sample Questions and Test-Taking Strategies,” includes sample questions and test-taking strategies for both test formats and illustrations of how test questions appear on a computer screen. Part 3, “Four Practice TOEFL Tests,” consists of full-length practice tests, and Part 4, “Transcripts for Practice Tests,” gives the transcripts for the listening sections of the practice tests. This book will help you prepare by familiarizing you with the format and test questions for both the computer-based and the paper-based versions, while helping you to increase the language skills needed for a high score. If you have purchased the CD version of this book or the Preparation Kit, you can listen to the audio components of the practice examinations to simulate better the test-taking experience. In addition, if you have the CD version, you have access to additional TOEFL practice.

You will find the following throughout the book:

## NOTE

A note highlights critical information about the TOEFL test.

## TIP

A tip draws your attention to valuable concepts and advice about the English language.

## ALERT!

Whenever you need to be wary of a common pitfall or test-taker trap, you'll find an alert.

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# PART I

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## THE TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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CHAPTER 1 An Overview of the TOEFL Test

CHAPTER 2 General Preparation for the  
TOEFL CBT

CHAPTER 3 General Preparation for the  
TOEFL PBT



# An Overview of the TOEFL Test

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## WHAT IS THE TOEFL TEST?

The letters “TOEFL” stand for “Test of English as a Foreign Language.” The purpose of the test is to evaluate the English proficiency of nonnative speakers of English who wish to study in colleges and universities where English is the language of instruction. TOEFL scores are used by more than 2,400 institutions in the United States and Canada. For many of these institutions, you must send in your TOEFL score with your application. TOEFL scores also might be requested for employment in some companies where advanced English-language skills are needed.

There are two versions of the TOEFL test: one version is taken on a computer, and the other is a paper-and-pencil (or paper-based) test. Each version has a separate Information Bulletin. For the computer test, the bulletin is called *TOEFL Information Bulletin for Computer-Based Testing*. For the paper-based test, the bulletin is called *TOEFL Information Bulletin for Supplemental TOEFL Administrations*. You must take the version that is available in the area in which you live. In most parts of the world, the TOEFL is given via computer. The supplemental administrations are all paper-based tests and are offered in places where computer-based testing is limited. In this book, we refer to the computer-based test as the CBT and the supplemental administrations (the paper-based test) as the PBT.

The CBT has four sections: (1) Listening, (2) Structure, (3) Reading, and (4) Writing. The PBT also has four sections: (1) Listening Comprehension, (2) Structure and Written Expression, (3) Reading Comprehension, and (4) Test of Written English (TWE).

## ALERT!

Check to see which version of the TOEFL is given in your area. The CBT is given in most countries in the world. However, some countries offer a supplemental TOEFL administration in the paper-based format. You must check the TOEFL Information Bulletin (available in libraries, U.S. commissions and foundations, and binational centers) to see which version is given in your area. If you have access to a computer, visit the TOEFL Web site at [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org) for the latest information.

On both versions of the TOEFL, the listening sections test your ability to understand English as it is spoken in the United States and Canada. The structure sections test your ability to recognize standard written English. The reading sections test your ability to understand reading passages on nontechnical subjects. The writing section and the TWE test your ability to write standard academic English.

No single “passing score” is given for the TOEFL. Some schools, especially those with special English-language classes, might accept a score below 175 (CBT score) or 500 (PBT score). On the other hand, many universities require a score of above 210 (CBT score) or 550 (PBT score). For graduate school programs, you might need a score above 250 (CBT score) or 600 (PBT score). Check with your institution to see what score is admissible.

### WHAT IS THE TOEFL CBT?

The letters “CBT” stand for “computer-based test.” The CBT is not simply a pencil-and-paper test reformatted for the computer; it is different in the way that some of the questions are written, answered, and rated. The CBT uses two different types of question formats: computer adaptive and linear.

In the computer-adaptive sections (listening and structure), the computer selects a specific range of questions that is matched to the test-taker’s level. The test-taker’s answer to any one question determines the difficulty level of the next question. In this section, you can view only one question at a time. You must answer each question as it appears on the screen, and you cannot skip a question or change answers to previous questions.

In the linear section (reading), questions are selected randomly without consideration of the test-taker’s ability level. Within this section, you are allowed to review or change your previous answers.

### WHAT IS THE TOEFL PBT?

The Supplemental Administration of the TOEFL is the paper-based version of the TOEFL test that is given in places that have limited computer access. The letters “PBT” stand for “paper-based test.” The paper-based version is also the version used for the institutional TOEFL test; that is, the TOEFL test that is given by particular institutions for which you receive only an unofficial score. On the PBT, all questions are selected randomly without consideration of the test-taker’s level of ability.

## HOW IS WRITING TESTED?

Both the CBT and the PBT include a 30-minute essay. The essay questions reflect the type of writing that is required in colleges and universities. You can see example essay questions in the TOEFL Information Bulletins. For the CBT, the essay can be written either by hand or on the computer. The essay is scored separately, and then the score is combined with the Structure score for a total Structure/Writing score. For the PBT, the Test of Written English (TWE) can only be written by hand. The TWE score is not combined with the TOEFL score but is given as a separate score.

## HOW DO THE CBT AND PBT COMPARE?

The following table illustrates the main differences in the format of the two versions of the TOEFL test.

### COMPUTER-BASED TOEFL TEST

#### Listening Section

1. 30–50 questions
2. Overall time: 40–60 minutes (15–20 minutes for answering questions, self-paced)
3. Part A = short conversations  
Part B = long conversations and talks
4. Test includes charts, diagrams, and pictures of the speakers.
5. Test-taker hears and sees the questions.
6. Each question must be answered before going on to the next; test-taker cannot go back.

#### Structure Section

1. 20–25 questions
2. Time limit: 15–20 minutes
3. Sentence Completion and Error Identification questions are mixed.

#### Reading Section

1. 44–55 questions
2. Time limit: 70–90 minutes
3. Some questions have two or more answers.

#### Writing Section

1. 1 question
2. Time limit: 30 minutes
3. Essay can be written on the computer or by hand.

### PAPER-BASED TOEFL TEST

#### Listening Comprehension

1. 50 questions
2. Overall time approximately 30 minutes (10–12 seconds to answer each question)
3. Part A = short conversations  
Part B = long conversations  
Part C = talks
4. There are no pictures, charts, or diagrams.
5. Test-taker hears but cannot see the questions.
6. Test-taker can go back to previous answers.

#### Structure and Written Expression

1. 40 questions
2. Time limit: 25 minutes
3. The first part has 15 Sentence Completion questions; the second part has 25 Error Identification questions.

#### Reading Comprehension

1. 60 questions
2. Time limit: 55 minutes
3. All questions have one answer.

#### TWE

1. 1 question
2. Time limit: 30 minutes
3. Essay must be written by hand.

## HOW DO I REGISTER?

To register for both the CBT and the PBT, you first must obtain the current TOEFL Information Bulletin. Different bulletins are available for the CBT and the PBT; check the TOEFL Information Bulletin or the TOEFL Web site to see which test format is used in your area. Copies of the bulletins are generally available in libraries, language schools, U.S. commissions and foundations, and binational centers. If you cannot find the bulletins in your area, you may request one from:

TOEFL/TSE Publications  
P.O. Box 6151  
Princeton, NJ 08541  
USA  
Telephone: 609-771-7100  
TTY: 609-771-7714  
Fax: 609-771-7500

You can register for the CBT by mail, by telephone, or by fax. For the PBT you can only register by mail. The TOEFL Information Bulletins contain all the information and forms you need. You can also find current information about registration by checking the TOEFL Web site at [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org).

- ① **By mail**—If you are taking the test in the United States, Canada, or U.S. Territories, mail in a CBT voucher request form along with your payment. You will be mailed a confirmation of your appointment. If you are taking the TOEFL outside the United States, mail in the scheduling form that is in the bulletin, along with your payment, and your confirmation will be mailed or faxed to you.
- ② **By phone**—You can register by phone for the CBT. Complete the appropriate registration form in the TOEFL Information Bulletin for Computer-Based Testing. You will receive your test date by phone.
- ③ **By fax**—For CBT testing outside the U.S., Canada, and U.S. Territories, you can register by fax. Fill out and fax the appropriate information from the bulletin, and include your credit card number for payment. Your test date confirmation will be sent to you.

## CAN I CANCEL OR RESCHEDULE MY TEST DATE AFTER I REGISTER?

The policies for canceling or rescheduling the test vary depending on whether you are taking the CBT or PBT; however, you can usually receive a partial refund if you cannot

go to the test center. If you are taking the CBT, you can reschedule the test, but you must pay an additional fee. If you have registered for the PBT, you cannot change your test date, but you can get a partial refund and register again for a new date. For details, read the Information Bulletin carefully.

## WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE TESTS GIVEN?

The CBT is individually scheduled on any date that is available in your area. Tests are administered at locations such as testing centers, ETS field offices, binational centers, and specified universities. The PBT dates and locations are listed in the *TOEFL Information Bulletin for Supplemental TOEFL Administrations*. You can also get information from the TOEFL Web site at [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org). Consult the current Information Bulletin or the Web site for current information.

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO TAKE THE TOEFL?

Both the TOEFL CBT and the TOEFL PBT cost U.S. \$110. You can send your payment in U.S. dollars or in the equivalent currencies of certain countries. See the *TOEFL Information Bulletin for Computer-Based Testing* or the *TOEFL Information Bulletin for Supplemental Administrations* for a list of accepted currencies. Forms of payment may include:

- Visa, MasterCard, American Express
- Check
- Money order
- U.S. postal money order
- Bank draft
- UNESCO coupons
- Eurochecks

## HOW LONG ARE THE TESTS?

The CBT and PBT are somewhat different in length. On the CBT, the total number of questions can range from approximately 94 to 130. The number of questions and the types of questions vary according to your skill level. The CBT takes approximately 4

## NOTE

Some tests centers might charge you more to take the TOEFL. Check with your local test center for exact fees. In some cases, the fee can vary due to local conditions.



hours, which includes a self-paced computer tutorial. The PBT has approximately 150 questions, and it takes approximately 3 hours to complete.

## WHAT ABOUT SCORING?

The CBT and PBT use different scoring systems. The CBT gives you four scaled scores: Listening (0–30), Structure/Writing (0–30), Reading (0–30), and a total converted score of 0–300. The essay first is rated separately on a scale of 0–6 and then is later figured into the total Structure/Writing score. When you take the CBT, you can view your unofficial score for Listening and Reading immediately after you finish the test. You will see a range for your Structure/Writing score because your essay will not have been scored yet. An official score report—including your scores on the individual sections, your essay rating, and your total score—will be mailed to you approximately fourteen days after the test.

The PBT gives you three scaled scores: Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. The total score range is 310–677. The TWE score range is 0–6, and this is given as a separate score. You will receive an official score report in the mail approximately five weeks after taking the test.

Although the scoring systems for the CBT and the PBT differ, they are similar in what they measure. The Information Bulletin includes a concordance table that provides a comparison of scores for each type of test.

## SUMMARY OF TEST TIMES AND QUESTIONS FOR THE CBT

Section	Test Times (minutes)	Approximate Number of Test Questions
Tutorial	40 (self-paced)	Variable
Listening	15–25*	30–50
Structure	15–20	20–25
Reading	70–90	44–55
Essay	30	1

Total time at the computer: Approximately 3½ to 4 hours

\* The clock does not run while you are listening to the conversations and talks, so the 15–25 minutes is the time given for answering the questions. The total time given for the Listening section is 40–60 minutes.