

# Quick Guide to TOEIC and Helpful Tips for Scoring Higher

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TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) is a two-hour long paper and pencil test designed to measure a person's ability to understand English as it is used in international business organizations. Typical TOEIC questions refer to business situations (meetings, marketing, sales, negotiations), travel (hotels, taxis, airlines), entertainment (restaurants, movies, museums), and health and fitness (doctors, dentists, exercise).

The purpose of the TOEIC test is to provide a standard reference score for the English proficiency of employees and job applicants. Many individuals take the test on their own accord because quite a few international organizations request that a TOEIC score be included on the resumes of job applicants.

There are two main sections in the TOEIC test: Listening Comprehension and Reading. Each section has 100 multiple choice questions. Separate scores are given for each section on a scale that runs from 5 to 495. The two scores are added together to make one overall comprehensive score. The range of possible comprehensive scores runs from 10 to 990. Here is a quick guide to the TOEIC overall comprehensive scores:

805-890 High advanced  
655-800 Advanced  
555-650 High intermediate  
405-550 Intermediate  
305-400 High beginner  
205-300 Beginner  
10-200 Low beginner

## **Helpful Tips to Scoring Higher on TOEIC**

These tips are based on research with students who scored much higher on their next TOEIC.

1. Increase your knowledge of the key vocabulary words that occur most frequently on the TOEIC test. Many students are surprised to discover that they have gaps in their knowledge of the 6,480 high frequency TOEIC vocabulary words – the specific words that constitute 99 percent of all words ever occurring on TOEIC tests. Research shows that 97 percent lexical coverage, which means knowing 97 out of every 100 words on average, is the minimum needed to ensure a significant score increase on TOEIC. The WordEngine TOEIC course will start by identifying your current percentage of lexical comprehension for TOEIC. After that, WordEngine will quickly teach you all of your missing TOEIC words until you reach as high as 99 percent coverage for TOEIC – more than enough to master it! The Word Engine's TOEIC course was created through word frequency analysis using a 1,250,000 word TOEIC corpus consisting of 60 percent high-grade TOEIC practice exam content, and 40 percent actual TOEIC test content.

2. Read as much as you can, and not just TOEIC practice materials. Read extensively and read for your own enjoyment, too. Reading is one of the best ways to prepare for the overall challenges of the TOEIC. Reading helps you to grasp the structure and style of English as well as gain an understanding of how similar words can be used in many different ways. If you are a beginner or intermediate level student, seek out graded reading materials that you can enjoy reading without a struggle. The benefit of reading is not from gaining new vocabulary but rather from experiencing how vocabulary is actually used. Another important thing is to learn to read quickly. TOEIC places equal emphasis on listening, so you should make every effort to listen to English news programs and talk shows on the internet. Even if you feel weak at listening, don't despair, keep going! It is essential that you improve your English listening skills by carefully listening to native speakers.
3. Become familiar with the TOEIC format and the directions for each section before you take the test. When you already have a clear idea of what the test directions are then you won't waste time reading them on the big day. Doing two or more practice tests is also a great way to help you develop confidence. There are many TOEIC practice books on sale at bookshops. Choose one that includes at least two practice tests and complete them using a timer.
4. During the TOEIC, be sure to answer **all** of the questions – you've got nothing to lose! Unlike other tests, there is no penalty for guessing on TOEIC. If you have absolutely no idea about the correct answer then you should guess using the same 'lucky letter' each time, for example "A" or "B." As exciting as it might seem to guess randomly, when you always guess the same letter your chances of being correct are 25% in section one and 33% in section two.

TOEIC multiple choice questions have either two or three distracters. When you take your practice tests, look closely at the distracters and you will notice that they are either totally incorrect or close to being correct. You increase your odds of getting the correct answer if you can eliminate even just one obviously wrong distracter before you select your answer. TOEIC questions almost always have one 'close distracter' and one or two 'obvious distracters.' The close distracter is *almost* correct. If you notice that two answers seem very similar, then you have likely found the correct answer and the close distracter. If you have a feeling which is correct, then choose that one. If you don't have a feeling, then choose either one and move on.

Summary: Study vocabulary, study the test directions, practice your reading and listening, and remember... if you don't know the answer, there's no penalty for guessing.

Best of luck!  
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