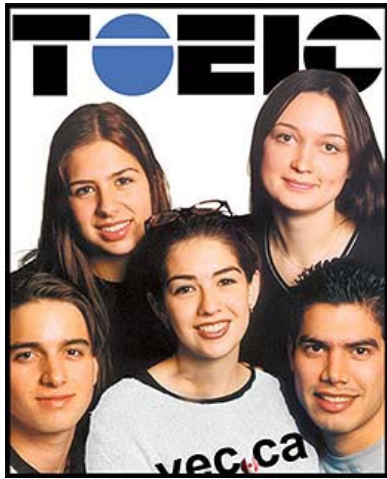


Quick Guide to TOEIC and Helpful Tips to Scoring Higher

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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

People sometimes get confused because ETS also offers a different test with a similar name. The other test is called the TOEFL iBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language iBT). The TOEFL iBT is four-hour long computer based test that is designed to measure the English proficiency of students applying to North American universities. (If you need to take the TOEFL iBT test please look for the handy guide that I prepared for that test.)

Helpful Tips to Scoring Higher on TOEIC

These helpful tips are based on my research with students who have scored above 800 on the TOEIC.

1. Increase your knowledge of the key vocabulary words that will occur in the course of a typical TOEIC. Many students are surprised to discover that they have gaps in their

knowledge of the 3,461 high frequency TOEIC vocabulary words – the specific words that occur most often during a TOEIC. Research shows that 95 percent lexical coverage, knowing 19 out of every 20 words on average, is the minimum requirement to comprehend meaning without using a dictionary. The Word Engine offers a TOEIC Program that will identify your current percentage of lexical comprehension. The Word Engine will quickly teach all the missing words required to increase your TOEIC comprehension to as high as 99 percent – more than enough to master TOEIC! The Word Engine’s TOEIC Package was created following an extensive corpus frequency analysis on one of the world’s largest collections of TOEIC practice exams, vocabulary lists, and other TOEIC preparation materials.

2. Read as much as you can, and not just TOEIC exam practice materials. Read extensively and read for your own enjoyment. Reading is by far the best way to prepare for the overall challenge 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 benefits of reading come not so much from new vocabulary acquisition as from experiencing how vocabulary is actually used. The most important thing above all is to enjoy your reading. Be sure to select titles that interest you and that are within your current level of ability. The TOEIC places equal emphasis on Listening skills, so you should also make every effort to listen to English language news programs and talk shows on the radio. It also helps to attend lectures and watch DVD movies in English with the subtitles turned off. Even if you feel weak at listening, do not despair, keep going! There is simply no better way to improve your English listening skills than by listening carefully to native speakers.
3. Become familiar with the TOEIC format and the directions for each section. If you have a clear idea of what the test directions are going to be, you won’t encounter any unpleasant surprises on the big day. Completing two or more practice tests is a great way to help you develop confidence. There are many different TOEIC practice books on sale at bookshops. Choose one that includes at least two practice tests and get to work on them. If you are able, I highly recommend that you join a small study group with some friends who are planning to take the test at the same time. Studying together will make the task more enjoyable and help reduce your stress.
4. Answer **all** of the questions – you’ve got nothing to lose! Unlike other tests, there is no penalty for guessing. If you have absolutely no idea about the correct answer then you should guess using the same ‘lucky letter’ each time, for example either “A” or “D”. (Those are my personal favorites.) As exciting as it might be to guess randomly, your chances are better when you always guess with the same letter. In fact, if you use the same letter, your chances are 25% in section one, and 33% in section two.

Now that you have a basic strategy, let’s review an advanced strategy to further improve your odds. All TOEIC multiple choice questions have just one correct answer

and either two or three distractors. Study the distractors carefully when you take your practice tests and you will notice that they come in a range from totally incorrect to almost correct. You increase your odds greatly if you can eliminate even one obvious wrong answer before you guess. TOEIC tends to include one 'main distractor' and one or two lesser distractors. The main distractor is always one that is *almost* correct. Whenever you notice that two answers seem very similar, you have probably found the correct answer and the main distractor. If you have a feeling which one is right, go with it. If you have no feeling, then choose your lucky letter. If your lucky letter is gone, close your eyes, look up to the universe, and choose the answer that pops into your head.

Let's review the guessing strategy.

If you have no ideas, guess by using the same lucky letter.

If you find any obviously wrong answers, eliminate them and pick the best answer remaining.

If two of the remaining possibilities seem very similar, choose the best among them.

If you have no feeling and you find no similarities, then simply choose your lucky letter.

If your lucky letter is gone, choose the answer that feels the best after asking the universe to help you.

Best of luck!