Format of the TOEFL iBT Test

The TOEFL iBT test consists of 4 sections: Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. Instructions for answering questions are given within each section. There is no computer tutorial.

The chart below shows the range of questions and the timing for each section. The time limit for each section varies according to the number of questions.

The Test Format

Test Section	Number of Questions	Timing
Reading	3 - 4 passages, 10 questions each	54-72 minutes
Listening	3 - 4 lectures, 6 questions each 2 - 3 conversations, 5 questions each	41-57 minutes
BREAK – 10 minutes		
Speaking	4 tasks: 1 independent and 3 integrated	17 minutes
Writing	1 integrated task 1 independent task	20 minutes 30 minutes

Learning Strategies

Instructors who capitalize on communicative language teaching can help students become responsible for their own learning by showing them such learning strategies as:

- Predicting the subject of a text based on its title, or information learned from associated captions or pictures

- Discussing or thinking about a subject before reading or hearing about it

- Guessing the meaning of vocabulary from context

- Breaking a sentence or word into parts to understand its meaning

- Focusing on essential information when listening to or reading a text, such as listening for when an assignment is due or looking for a particular resource in the library

- Using stress, intonation, redundancy, and organizational clues to identify the main idea of a text

- Organizing notes in an outline into main and subordinate categories

- Using only key words (i.e., omitting articles and other unnecessary words) when taking notes

- Analyzing and synthesizing information (integrating or combining)

- Using notes and outlines to plan what to say or write before beginning a task

Effective language instructors incorporate these types of strategies into their regular classroom activities and encourage students to practice them on their own. They also urge their students to find strategies for communicating in English, either in speech or in writing, outside the classroom and to do so every day. For example, students can find conversation partners who are native speakers of English, or they can correspond with English-speaking online friends.

References
Oxford, R. (September 2001). Integrated skills in the ESL/EFL classroom. *CAL Digest*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, pages 1-3.
Savignon, S. (January 2002). Communicative curriculum design for the 21st century. *English Teaching Forum*, pages 4 and 7.

Reading

How the *TOEFL iBT®* Test Measures Academic Reading Skills

The Reading section of the test has 3 or 4 reading passages, each approximately 700 words long. There are 10 questions per passage. Test takers will have either 54 minutes to complete 3 reading passages and questions, or 72 minutes to complete 4 reading passages and questions.

Passages are taken from college-level textbooks and books or journals of general academic interest. Subject matter of the passages covers a variety of academic subjects at an introductory level of academic study. Test takers do not need to be familiar with the subject material. All the information they need to answer the questions will be included in the passages.

All Reading passages represent these 3 basic categories:

> 1. Narration (description of an event or a historical or biographical topic)
>
> 2. Exposition (explanation of ideas)
>
> 3. Argumentation (providing reasons leading to a conclusion)

Some passages have one major focus of development (single-focus passages). These present separate ideas related to a specific topic, then develop and connect these ideas with some depth and complexity. Single-focus passages generally fall into one of these categories:

> 1. Description
>
> 2. Narration
>
> 3. Analysis

Some passages have a multiple focus. They present information from more than one point of view or provide information that can be classified into different components. They generally fall into one of these categories:

> 1. Classification
>
> 2. Compare and contrast
>
> 3. Cause and effect
>
> 4. Problem and solution

The Scoring

Some questions are worth more than 1 point. The raw score on the Reading section is converted to a scaled score of 0 to 30.