

Assignment: Choose and describe your example assessment.

Choice: The CBT Version of the TOEFL Listening Comprehension Test

I will address the TOEFL Listening Comprehension Test -- CBT Version. The material below draws heavily upon the TOEFL Web site and is supplemented by material from a test preparation organization.

Purpose of the TOEFL Test:

"The purpose of the TOEFL® test is to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English."

(<http://www.toefl.org/cbattfl.html#Purpose>) (Full quote: "The purpose of the TOEFL® test is to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English. In 1998-99, more than 300,000 people registered to take the computer-based TOEFL test. The scores are required for purposes of admission by more than 2,400 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. TOEFL is also used by institutions in other countries where English is the language of instruction. In addition, government agencies, scholarship programs, and licensing/certification agencies use TOEFL scores to evaluate English proficiency.")

(<http://www.toefl.org/cbattfl.html#Purpose>)

Parts of the Test

The TOEFL Test has four parts. Two parts, -- Listening Comprehension and Structure -- are computer adaptive. The other two are linear.

"The Four Sections of the Test"

"The computer-based TOEFL test has four sections. The first two sections of the test -- Listening and Structure -- are computer-adaptive, meaning that you will receive test questions targeted to your performance level. In these two sections, your first question will be of average difficulty. The question you receive next will be one that best fits your performance and the design of the test. In the Listening and Structure sections, you will be able to change your answer as often as you like until you have made your final choice, confirmed your answer, and moved on to the next one. Once you move on to the next question, you will NOT be allowed to go back to a

previous question. Your answer to each question presented on the screen helps determine the difficulty level of the next question you will be given. You must answer at least one question in each section and compose an essay to receive an official score report."

(<http://www.toefl.org/cbabtfl.html#Sections>)

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Brief Statement of Construct

"Listening -- Measures ability to understand English as it is spoken in North America." (<http://www.toefl.org/cbabtfl.html#Sections>)

"Listening measures the ability to understand English as it is spoken in North America. This section tests comprehension of main ideas, supporting ideas, and inferences. You will both see and hear questions before the answer choices appear." (TOEFL 2000-2001 Information Bulletin for Computer-based Testing, p. 3)

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No Review is Possible After Advancing to the Next Item

"In the Listening and Structure sections, you will be able to change your answer as often as you like until you have made your final choice, confirmed your answer, and moved on to the next one. Once you move on to the next question, you will NOT be allowed to go back to a previous question."

(<http://www.toefl.org/cbabtfl.html#Sections>)

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Headphones, Timing,

"You will use headphones to listen to the conversations and talks."

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Pictures Are An Integral Part of the Assessment

"While you are listening, pictures of the speakers or other information will be presented on your computer screen. There are two parts to the Listening section, with special directions for each part."

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Must Answer All Questions; No Notes; Sight and Hearing Required; No Review;
Adjustment of Sound

"On the day of the test, the amount of time you will have to answer all the questions will appear on the computer screen. The time you spend listening to the test material will not be counted. The listening material and questions about it will be presented only one time. You will not be allowed to take notes or have any paper at your computer. You will both see and hear the questions before the answer choices appear. You can take as much time as you need to select an answer; however, it will be to your advantage to answer the questions as quickly as possible. You may change your answer as many times as you want before you confirm it. After you have confirmed an answer, you will not be able to return to the questions."

"Before you begin working on the Listening section, you will have an opportunity to adjust the sound. You will be able to change the volume on your headset."

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Students Are Strong Encouraged to Familiarize Themselves With Format, Pace,
etc.

"Test-Taking Suggestions"

"To be comfortable with all sections of the test, spend as much time as you need with the tutorial for each timed section.

"To use the allotted time for each section wisely, familiarize yourself with

how to use the computer and the types of materials, questions, and directions that are in the test. Become familiar with the formats and requirements of each section of the test as described in the tutorials.

"The directions at the beginning of each section will tell you the total number of questions in the section and time allowed for the section. Read the directions carefully. They explain exactly what is required to answer each question type and can be reviewed as needed.

"Read each question carefully and thoroughly. Before answering a question, determine exactly what is being asked. Always read and understand all possible answers. If you do not, you may miss important information.

"Pace yourself so that you have enough time to answer every question. Pay attention to the number of questions and the amount of time remaining during your testing session. Do not spend too much time on a single question.

"Answer every question in each section. This will allow you to get your best possible score.

"You must answer each question in the Listening and Structure sections (the computer-adaptive sections) before you can go on to the next one. If you do not know the answer to a question, eliminate any answer choices that are obviously incorrect.

"In Listening and Structure, confirm your answer only when you are certain you are ready to move on to the next question. You cannot omit questions or go back and change answers. In Reading, you will be allowed to go back and change your answers.

"To prepare for the Writing section of the test, practice by using the Writing topics found in the TOEFL Information Bulletin. You will have 30 minutes to compose your assigned essay. You may either handwrite your essay or type it on the computer. To help you decide if you want to type your essay, see the Writing tutorial."

(<http://www.toefl.org/cbabtfl.html#Suggestions>)

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Two Parts of Listening Comprehension

Part A - Twelve short conversations between two people.

"Part A is the first part of Listening Comprehension. It contains 12 short conversations between two speakers. Following each conversation, a question appears on your screen. Most of the conversations take place in an academic (U.S. college) environment, and feature situations from everyday U.S. student life. Students will talk about everything from buying books at the university bookstore to signing up for a new biology class for the next term. The conversations are always brief, between 20 and 40 words long." (http://www.mba-center.net/listening_comprehension.htm; Not an authorized TOEF source)

Listening Comprehension Part B

"Part B, the second section of Listening Comprehension contains between five and six longer conversations, lectures, or class discussions. Each is followed by a set of three to five questions. In all, Part B contains 18 questions. As previously stated, Part B is more difficult than Part A. Most questions follow long, academic lectures. Some questions are very broad and can be answered with a basic understanding of the passage, whereas others ask you to remember very specific information. Since you cannot take notes or pre-read the questions, the most challenging aspect in this part is memorization." (http://www.mba-center.net/listening_comprehension.htm; Not an authorized TOEF source)

A Non-authorized Explanation of What TOEFL Listening Comprehension Measures

"What the Listening Comprehension Section Really Tests"

"Officially, the TOEFL is used by two major groups, universities and corporations. Admissions officers use it to evaluate your ability to follow courses taught in English, and corporate recruiters use it to assess the English language level of their applicants. It may surprise you to learn

that the TOEFL includes a certain number of exercises that do not evaluate your mastery of the English language. For example, Listening Comprehension questions test vocabulary and idiomatic expressions-certainly valid testing points. This section also includes questions involving homophones (words with similar sounds), variations in tone, computations, and questions that require you to determine a sequence. These testing points do not accurately evaluate your language skills. Listening Comprehension also tests your ability to read quickly, stay calm under pressure, and use a computer. Whether these are all valid testing points or not, they are the same on every test. Even test takers who have mastered conversational English might do poorly if they do not prepare for all the testing points. In reality, one of the easiest ways to improve your score on the Listening Comprehension section is to become a better test taker. The lesson that follows introduces the most common question types and shows you how to recognize them."

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Accommodations for People With Disabilities

All persons must request through ETS. The form is at:

<ftp://etsis1.ets.org/pub/toefl/275152adaform.pdf>

Possible accommodations:

"Some accommodations that can be provided are:

"Extended testing time (All tests are timed.)

"Additional or extended breaks

"Test reader

"Recorder of answers

"Sign language interpreter (for spoken directions only)

"The following can be made available to those who are familiar with their use:

"Kensington Trackball Mouse

"HeadMaster Plus Mouse

"Intellikeys Keyboard

"ZOOMTEXT

"Before requesting nonstandard testing accommodations, you may want to contact the schools or fellowship sponsors to which you are applying to ask if they are willing to waive the TOEFL requirement and consider your application based on other information.