



TOEFL® iBT Reading Tips

Preparation and Exam Taking Strategies for the TOEFL® iBT Reading Section

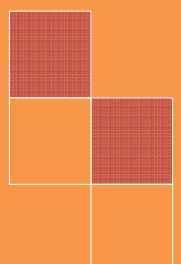
The first component you will have to do when you sit for the TOEFL® iBT exam is the Reading. The Reading Section measures your ability to read and understand academic texts (passages) in English. Reading is a critical skill in academic environment. Students have to read a lot and comprehend the information presented in their textbooks or other reading materials.



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i-Courses.org is a TOEFL® iBT dedicated web page providing wide variety of practice materials including full TOEFL® iBT Tests that feature the academic level of the real tests. All components are scored including Speaking and Writing.



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1. Reading to find information
2. Basic comprehension
3. Reading to learn

The Reading Section in TOEFL® iBT consists of 3-5 texts; each text is about 700 words long. Each Reading text is followed by 12 – 14 questions related to the text. The first two passages share a total time of 40 minutes for reading and answering the questions. The 3rd passage stands alone for a time of 20 minutes. The system will cut you off right after the time ends. Therefore, you must be not only good at reading but also very fast. To the end of this document we will provide some important guidelines on how to prepare for the TOEFL® iBT Reading and how to behave at the reading test in order to improve your final score.

Preparation Strategies

Read, Read, Read. Read in English regularly. Focus on *academic texts* from university textbooks or other materials. Do not stick to one or two topics that you are interested in. Read from variety of subjects – science, social science, business, arts, geography, history, economics, and others. Academic texts, apart from textbooks, could be found in variety of articles and academic publications on the Internet or university libraries.

Find the purpose of the passage. Knowing the purpose of the reading you may easily find what the writer is trying to accomplish. The purpose of the passage in most of the readings is embedded in the introductory paragraph which is one of the most important paragraphs in the text. Most of the passages in TOEFL iBT will try to do the following:

- ✓ **To Explain** - to present the information on a specific topic in explanatory manner. These texts contain mostly factual information.
- ✓ **To Resolve** – it aims at finding solution for some sort of dilemmas or questions that need answers. Usually there would be a debate.
- ✓ **To convince** – to persuade the reader of the validity of certain viewpoint or idea. There would be opinions and support with evidence in those type of passages.

Increase vocabulary. When reading wide variety of texts on different subjects you should make a word list. Organize your list in topics for better results. Example topics could be business, geography, science and others. Make flashcards to help you learn those word lists. Use the words learned in your writings and speaking.



Take notes. During all sections of TOEFL® iBT note taking is allowed. It is a crucial component for success. It is difficult to remember all facts and details from a reading text in order to answer the questions. You also don't have enough time to search for those again in the text. So, the solution is called note taking. When skimming and reading the texts you should write down all important facts and details in order to find them fast and easily when you need them. See also our effective [note taking strategies](#).

Learn how to skim the text. Skimming means reading the text quickly to obtain very first general impression on what the text is about, what its main idea is. Skimming corresponds with Reading to find information objective in TOEFL® iBT. You should develop your ability to skim quickly but at the same time to identify all major points in the passage. Take notes. See also our [skimming strategies](#).

Read after skimming. Only skimming is not enough. Read the passage again. This time read it more carefully, but don't forget that you have limited time. Take notes. Identify the passage type – classification, cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, etc.

Try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passages, the context can help to do that. After that, check those words in the dictionary. Guessing the words from the context brings great advantages – you save time and it doesn't disturb your comprehension of the texts.

Highlight some of the pronouns (he, him, they, them, etc.) in the texts. Identify to which nouns in the particular text the highlighted pronouns refer.

Practice making general inferences and conclusions based on what is implied in the text.

Learn to organize the data presented in the passage in charts and tables. Create charts with categories and place the important data from the passage in the appropriate category. In TOEFL® iBT you are not asked to create charts. Rather, charts are provided and you are asked to categorize the information in pre-defined categories.

At the exam strategies

Relax! You don't have to be familiar with the topic of the TOEFL® iBT Reading passage. All the information needed to provide correct answers is in the text. The definition of some of the subject-specific words is available during the test. Those words are colored and underlined.

Be fast but try to avoid thinking about the clock. Concentrate on what you read and what exactly the questions ask for.

Take a guess. There is no penalty for an incorrect answer in TOEFL® iBT. Do not leave blank answers. In each case they don't bring you points. If you see you are running out of time, just take a guess and mark answers for all remaining questions. There is 25 % chance to guess the right answer.

Stop thinking about Reading. When your section time is over, just stop thinking about the Reading section. Prepare for the Listening section. If you have not done well in the Reading, you may compensate it with the next components. So, stop thinking about the Reading.

Use [i-Courses.org](#) scored reading materials to practice, monitor your progress, and receive creative feedback with guidelines on how to improve your weaknesses and strengthen your strong sides.

