

Skills for Independent Speaking Tasks

In this section, you will learn and practice General Skills for speaking that can be applied to both the TOEFL iBT Independent Speaking Tasks and general English speaking.

PART

A

Part A +



Appropriate Vocabulary

Grammar for Speaking

Articulation

Part B

Personal Preference

Paired Choice

Part C

Paraphrasing

Summarizing

Note-taking

Part D

Fit and Explain

General / Specific

Problem / Solution

Summary





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Confusing Words A: Words with similar spellings

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It is essential to have the appropriate vocabulary when speaking. One incorrect word can change the meaning of a sentence and confuse the listener. The following are words commonly confused because of their similar spellings.



Circle the correct words to complete the following sentences.

- 1 Mary is so (economical / economic) that she never treats others to dinner.
- 2 He rarely uses (respective / respectful) language when speaking to the elderly.
- 3 There were only a (handful / handy) of people there.
- 4 The English translation of this poem is barely (intelligent / intelligible).
- 5 We've saved a (considerable / considerate) amount of money for the wedding ceremony.
- 6 For three (successful / successive) years, the crops had failed.
- 7 I have an (objection / objective) to working overtime.
- 8 They accept only US (current / currency), so we have to exchange some of our won for dollars.

B

Circle the correct words to complete the following sentences.

- 1 The (historic / historian) monument dedicated to the national hero was the subject of the (historic's / historian's) speech.
- 2 Several people went to the lobby of the (hostile / hostel), feeling (hostile / hostel) about the bad service that they had been getting.
- 3 After working for eight solid months, the young movie (idle / idol) spent several weeks in (idle / idol) relaxation as he rested up for his next part.
- 4 The British government (at last / at least) handed over Hong Kong to China in 1997 after 156 years of British colonial rule.
- 5 Since I sometimes (overdo / overdue) my exercise, my doctor reminded me that I should come to see him because I am (overdo / overdue) for a checkup.
- 6 The (realty / reality) is that we can't afford to invest in (realty / reality) until we've saved up properly.
- 7 To (register / registrar) this school year, you have to settle your account with the (register / registrar).
- 8 The (route / root) of the traffic congestion problem is the lack of sufficient (routes / roots) that vehicles can take.
- 9 The eagle was still able to (soar / sore) despites its (soar / sore) wings.
- 10 The prices of goods at the (stationary / stationery) shop have remained (stationary / stationery) for a long time.



- 1 They (admire / admit) her gracious manners more than they (admire / admit).
- 2 Everyone (assumes / consumes) that we will (assume / consume) a lot of food at dinner.
- 3 Nick did some shopping at the (bazaar / bizarre) during the weekend. He thought it was (bazaar / bizarre) that there weren't a lot of people around.
- 4 The state was running out of (capital / capitol) to fund the renovation of the (capital / capitol) building.
- 5 A motion (censor / sensor) operated the hall light outside the (censor's / sensor's) office.
- 6 It would be (convenient / convention) to hold our (convenient / convention) in Tokyo next year.
- 7 The men had a (dual / duel) to settle their (dual / duel) claims to a piece of land.
- 8 Teachers of (environment / ecology) are promoting the proper way of taking care of the (environment / ecology).
- 9 People who leave their country (emigrate / immigrate) to a new place, and people who come into a new country (emigrate / immigrate) there to change residency.
- 10 We were (formally / formerly) introduced at the meeting, but had (formally / formerly) talked to each other in the elevator.



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Confusing Words B: Words with similar meanings

+



The following are words commonly confused because of their similar meanings.

Part A

1



Circle the correct words to complete the following sentences.

- 1 In small (neighbors / neighborhoods), there is a greater chance of (neighbors / neighborhoods) being closer to each other.
- 2 Invest your money in large companies because they (earn / pay) higher profits than smaller businesses.
- 3 People should always have a carefully planned (goal / destination) in life in order to be successful.
- 4 Asian farmers commonly (grow / bring up) rice, wheat, and root crops to support the continuous demand for these items in the region.
- 5 Nowadays, it is better to (hire / rent) a house than to buy one because it is sometimes much cheaper.
- 6 Andrew Carnegie, a famous 19th century industrialist, used his vast (industrious / industrial) wealth to establish libraries and schools.
- 7 You should stay in your (lane / line) while driving.
- 8 It is nice to rest in the (shade / shadow) of a tree on a hot, sunny day.
- 9 Factories follow strict guidelines for (wrapping / packaging) their goods to meet quality standards.
- 10 Though he lived all his life isolated from other people, he never felt (lonely / alone).



14 M TOEFL SPEAKING

Review



Put an “O” if the underlined word is correct. Replace it with the appropriate word if it is incorrect.

- 1 My favorite region in the world is my home.
→ _____
- 2 Due to his popularity, the president was re-elected for three successive terms.
→ _____
- 3 I damaged myself yesterday when I fell off my bike, but I’m all better now thanks to you.
→ _____
- 4 My goal in life is to make a difference in the world and make it a better place to live for future generations.
→ _____
- 5 After getting a job, I’ve realized that there is no easy way to earn money.
→ _____
- 6 Our company is currently suffering from economical setbacks because of the recession.
→ _____
- 7 The climate was very beautiful on the day of my wedding — there wasn’t a single cloud in the sky.
→ _____
- 8 The professor is very intelligible in Chinese literature, as he spent most of his life studying it.
→ _____
- 9 Everyone consumes that she is not very smart, but she actually has a PhD in physics.
→ _____
- 10 After three months of protesting, the government at last apologized to the protestors.
→ _____

Memo

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Grammar for Speaking: Correct verb usage

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A. Basic Patterns

1. Transitive vs. Intransitive Verbs: Transitive verbs need an object, while intransitive verbs do not.

e.g. If you have any questions, please **contact us** at your convenience. (transitive verb + object)

Do you remember what **happened** to me that night? (intransitive verb)

*Commonly confused intransitive verbs: look (at), happen (to), arrive (at), wait (for), talk (to), complain (about), apologize (for), participate (in)

2. Sentence structures for transitive verbs

① subject + verb + object

e.g. I **explained** the reason I broke up with him to them.

② subject + verb + indirect object + direct object

*Verbs in these sentences are usually dative verbs. (e.g. give, hand, lend, buy, send)

e.g. He **lent** me the car which he inherited from his grandfather.

He **showed** me the way to operate the machine properly.

③ subject + verb + object + object complement

*Verbs in these sentences are causative verbs. (e.g. let, make, have, get)

e.g. My mother doesn't **let** me **live** in the city alone.



Put an "O" if the sentence is correct. Put an "X" and correct the errors if it is incorrect.

- 1 _____ She arrived London yesterday and visited lots of tourists attractions.
- 2 _____ The airport announced the delay in departure the passengers.
- 3 _____ As I entered the room, I saw people standing around in groups.
- 4 _____ The customers often complain the meal provided during the flight.
- 5 _____ He was supposed to marry with her, but he is dating another girl now.
- 6 _____ My teacher caught me looking another student's answers.
- 7 _____ He sent to me a letter of apology for his wrongdoings.
- 8 _____ Dr. Parker suggested an hour of daily exercises and a healthy diet to me.

B. Verbals: to + infinitive vs. gerund

When you want to express a specific situation or action of “doing ~” as the subject/object of a sentence, use **verbals** (to + infinitive/gerund).

1. to + infinitive

e.g. **To be an adult** means that you are responsible for your behavior.

They tried **to revive the economy**, but the inflation rate was still high.

*Verbs that take **to + infinitive** as the object: decide, want, expect, ask, hope, prepare, promise, refuse, etc.

2. gerund: infinitive + ing

e.g. **Answering the questions** is not an easy or simple job. (subject)

Not making a mistake is a big effort. (gerund negation)

Frank didn't give up **trying to persuade her**, and finally she changed her mind. (object)

*Verbs that take gerunds as the **object**: enjoy, finish, give up, keep, dislike, mind, quit, avoid, appreciate, etc.

***possessive pronoun + gerund (when expressing the subject of the gerund)**

e.g. The plan involves **her traveling to Europe** during the upcoming summer holidays.



Correct the grammatical errors in the following sentences.

- 1 She promised not breaking the law again and to become a good person.
- 2 I don't mind for you walking around the office when you have nothing to do.
- 3 It's very nice of you offering such a favor to me.
- 4 Him complaining about the food is an example of his selfish attitude.
- 5 I want you to quit to bother other people about that matter.
- 6 Drinking not coffee is much better for some people with diabetes.
- 7 After I finished to report to the police, I hung up the phone.
- 8 To being honest is to never tell a lie to others.

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C. Subject-Verb Agreement

1. Singular

① Every/Each/Either/Neither + singular noun

e.g. Either subject **was** considered appropriate for the conference.

② One/Each/Either/Neither + of + plural noun

e.g. Each of the ways **has** its own strong and weak points.

2. Plural

① Both (A and B), + plural noun / none

e.g. Both **are** favorable ways of reducing cultural differences among various races.

I tried several methods to learn languages, but none **were** effective.

② A number of + plural noun

e.g. A number of accidents **have** occurred on the road at nighttime.

3. Noun agreement

① All/Some/Any/None of: verb agreement with the following noun.

e.g. Some of the food **is** organic and fresh, so no one is worried about its safety.

② Either **A** or **B**/ Neither **A** nor **B**/ Not only **A**, but also **B**: verb agreement with **B**

e.g. Neither he nor they **are** in favor of an arranged marriage.



Complete the following sentences with the appropriate verb forms.

- 1 Every student (be) _____ required to take the exam again by next month.
- 2 None of the students (have) _____ turned in their final paper yet.
- 3 Either of the activities (interfere) _____ with time required for research.
- 4 Both of the parents (have) _____ equal responsibility for caring for and educating the child.
- 5 Neither of them (know) _____ that their feelings might affect other people.
- 6 Each of the people (live) _____ in a rented house or apartment in the city.
- 7 All of the money found at the crime scene (be) _____ taken away as evidence.
- 8 A number of people (think) _____ that it's time for change.



Grammar for Speaking: Improving fluency

A. Comparatives

1. **as ~ as:** to compare people, places, events or things when there is *no* difference
e.g. The new restaurant provides **as many** choices **as** the old one did.
2. **Emphasizing a comparative:** Adding “**much, far, even, still** etc.” in front of a comparative emphasizes the comparative.
e.g. Lucy looks **much prettier** than her sister does.
Mark works **much more diligently** than the others in the office.
cf.) Both the applicants are **very** smart and suitable.
3. **Superlative:** comparative + **than** + **any other** + singular noun, **all the other** + plural noun, a negative + comparative + **than**
e.g. He is **more intelligent than any other student** in his class.
Mr. Smith is **richer than all the other people** in the village.
Nothing is **more important than** family and love.
4. **the + comparative 1 ~, the + comparative 2 ~:** the more comparative 1, the more comparative 2
e.g. **The harder** you work, **the more** you earn.
The more seriously you take it, **the more** worries you will have.



Choose the best answer to complete each sentence.

- 1 Tim's idea on the matter is _____ than the others'.
① very critical ② most critical ③ much more critical
- 2 We think that living together is far _____ living alone.
① more economical than ② as economical as ③ much economical than
- 3 He was more competent than _____ in the hospital, so he was elected to be chief.
① all the surgeon ② all other surgeons ③ all the other surgeons
- 4 Taking online courses is _____ taking traditional courses.
① far better than ② far good as ③ very good than
- 5 _____ is more effective than looking in the dictionary to learn new words.
① No one ② Nothing ③ Anything
- 6 I agree with the idea that living in an apartment is _____ convenient than living in a house.
① much more ② even much ③ very much

B. Relative Clauses

Rather than continuously speaking in short sentences, combine them together using **relative clauses**. It will make the flow of your speech more natural and logical.

1. Antecedent and relative clause

An **antecedent** (the preceding word) is a noun that is referred to by the relative clause. A **relative clause** is the clause that modifies the noun.

e.g. I couldn't see **the notice** **which** was attached to the board.

(antecedent) (relative pronoun)

→ (relative clause – adjective clause)

(= I couldn't see the notice. + The notice was attached to the board.)

2. The different cases of relative pronouns

Antecedent	subjective case	objective case	possessive case
Person Object (animal)	who, that which, that	who(m) that , (optional) which, that , (optional)	whose whose, of which

*The relative pronoun in the objective case is optional.

e.g. The students **who** use the lounge are responsible for cleaning it periodically. (subjective case)

You can enjoy a variety of different foods (**that**) the hotel provides. (objective case)

There live a number of reptiles on this island **whose** tails are short and round. (possessive case)



Fill in the blanks with the correct relative clauses.

- 1 Attending the seminar is a good idea for anyone _____ is unsure of where to begin with his paper.
- 2 Apex predators are animals _____ are at the top of the food chain.
- 3 Some drivers prefer SUVs _____ four wheels can be driven on rough ground.
- 4 The instructor gave an example _____ shows how the butterfly effect works in reality.
- 5 She is upset because she couldn't take the course _____ she needs to graduate.
- 6 David is looking for another job _____ is near his home to save time commuting.
- 7 I have a sister _____ name is Mia who has gone to Canada.
- 8 People have enjoyed the advantages _____ fire provides us for a long time.

Review



Put an “O” if the sentence is correct. Put an “X” and correct the errors if it is incorrect.

- 1 _____ Rachel attends high school and participates various extracurricular activities.
- 2 _____ Can you describe the pets you have or that you want to have?
- 3 _____ Mr. Parker had the agent to make a flight reservation for his business trip.
- 4 _____ I don't think I could bear smoking in a closed room or an office.
- 5 _____ Think once more before you make a purchase to avoid buy unnecessary things.
- 6 _____ Professors expect their students not cheating on the exam.
- 7 _____ We learned that a predator are an animal that kills and eats other animals.
- 8 _____ All the money made from this bake sale are going to be donated to charity.
- 9 _____ Neither they nor I are very happy with the way things have turned out.
- 10 _____ Julia is most beautiful than any other girl at our school.
- 11 _____ There is nothing more delicious than a home-cooked meal.
- 12 _____ Some people can't eat any foods of which contain peanuts.
- 13 _____ The only money available for their vacation is the money which they have saved for their children's education.
- 14 _____ The ingredients who are used in Japanese food are mostly fresh and natural.

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+

Pronunciation

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Pronunciation is a crucial part of speaking, but trying to pronounce words like a native speaker of English is impractical. Instead, focus on **practicing difficult pronunciations** and **enunciating** as much as you can. The following are commonly mispronounced sounds.

MP3 01



Commonly mispronounced sounds

① 'th'

In English, 'th' is pronounced as either /ð/ (voiced) or /θ/ (voiceless). This sound is made by slightly sticking your tongue out between your upper and lower teeth. Be careful not to pronounce /ð/ as /z/ or /d/, and /θ/ as /s/ or /t/, as this will greatly confuse the listener.
e.g. this[ð], bother[ð], breathe[ð] / think[θ], path[θ]

② /r/ and /l/

/r/ and /l/ are also commonly mispronounced by non-native English speakers. /l/ is pronounced by pressing the tip of your tongue against the alveolar ridge (the front roof of your mouth that is behind your upper teeth), while /r/ is pronounced by almost pressing the tip of your tongue against the middle roof of your mouth.
e.g. live[l], collect[l], meal[l] / rise[r], Korean[r], car[r]

③ /v/, /b/, /f/, and /p/

/v/ (voiced) and /f/ (voiceless) are pronounced by touching your top teeth to your lower lip to partially stop the flow of air. /b/ (voiced) and /p/ (voiceless) are both pronounced by closing your upper and lower lips to stop the flow of air.
e.g. ball[b], cab[b] / vague[v], wave[v] / pocket[p], cop[p] / phone[f], laugh[f]

④ /dʒ/, /ʒ/, and /z/

/dʒ/ is pronounced by raising your tongue to the roof of your mouth and then quickly lowering it. /ʒ/ is pronounced by keeping your tongue flat and creating friction against the roof of your mouth (they should not touch). Finally, /z/ is pronounced by placing your tongue beneath the alveolar ridge.
e.g. jaw[dʒ], page[dʒ] / vision[ʒ], leisure[ʒ] / zoo[z], pase[z]



A Listen, write, and repeat after the track.



1	_____	2	_____
3	_____	4	_____
5	_____	6	_____
7	_____	8	_____
9	_____	10	_____
11	_____	12	_____
13	_____	14	_____
15	_____	16	_____
17	_____	18	_____
19	_____	20	_____

B Listen, circle the correct word, and repeat after the track.



- 1 Grace is (playing / praying) in the dark.
- 2 Harrison (walked / worked) all day.
- 3 She likes to (correct / collect) letters.
- 4 Mr. Baker has a (ball / bowl).
- 5 It's the (best / vest).
- 6 Time went (past / fast) without any news.
- 7 There's a (breeze / bridge).
- 8 Laura (cut / caught) the cake.
- 9 I was (thinking / sinking) for a while.
- 10 She used to (paint / faint) often.



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Word Stress

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In order to make your speech sound natural, knowing where to stress words is important. Rules for intonation vary depending on the language. The following are a few rules for intonation in English.



Rules for word stress

1 In general, word stress is on the first syllable of nouns and adjectives with two syllables.

e.g. NAture, CERtain, NAtive, SPEcial, PROblem, LANguage

*Exceptions: maCHINE, eLITE, doMAIN

2 In general, word stress is on the second syllable of verbs with two syllables.

e.g. deMAND, imPROVE, reLAX, enJOY, purSUE

*Exceptions: FOLlow, ANswer, LIsen

3 There are words that have word stress on the first syllable in noun form, and on the second syllable in verb form.

e.g. REcord(noun)-reCORD(verb), CONflict(noun)-conFLICT(verb), Export(noun)-exPORT(verb)

*Exceptions: diSPLAY, rePLY, VIsit, ANswer

4 For compound words, the word stress comes at the beginning word.

e.g. BEDroom, SUPermarket, HANDmade, OLD-FASHioned, SECondHAND

5 In general, word stress does not change if a prefix or suffix is added to a word.

e.g. imPOssible, SCHOLarship, underESTimate, ARGument, NEIGHborhood

*Exceptions: 1) The addition of '-ion', '-ian', '-ic' will change word stress to right before this suffix.

(CALculate → calculAtion, MUsic → muSIcian, eCONomy → ecoNOMIC)

2) Words ending with '-y'

6 In a sentence, verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and negatives are stressed more.

Pronouns, be + verb, auxiliary verbs, articles, conjunctions, and prepositions should not be stressed.

e.g. **NO** one **LIVES** in the **HOUSE** because it is **TOO OLD**.

*Please note that word stress can differ depending on the person, and that this is just a general rule of thumb.

A

Mark the word stresses of the following words. Then listen and repeat.

 04

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1 reflect | 2 contemporary |
| 3 homework | 4 discourage |
| 5 graduation | 6 absurd |
| 7 admirable | 8 academic |
| 9 anniversary | 10 baggage |
| 11 circuit | 12 colleague |
| 13 expert | 14 produce |
| 15 rebuild | 16 survival |
| 17 natural | 18 employment |
| 19 commit | 20 physician |

B

Mark the word stress of the underlined words, and repeat after the track.

 05

- 1 If you have any questions or comments, please let me know.
- 2 Push the record button on top to record messages.
- 3 Early 19th-century paintings are displayed on the fourth floor.
- 4 I need to have my wisdom teeth extracted.
- 5 The object of this game is to hit as many balls as you can in the given time.

C

Read the sentence, and underline the words with sentence stress. Then listen and repeat after the track.

 06

- 1 If I wear a uniform, I won't have to think about what to wear every morning.
- 2 Experts say that one-seventh of the world's population suffers from extreme hunger.
- 3 The Amazon rainforest is being destroyed even at this moment.
- 4 Humans are the only creatures that can feel others' pain as their own.
- 5 Jennifer does not like the food in the cafeteria, so she packs her own lunch.



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Fluid Delivery

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For non-native speakers, learning how to fluidly deliver a speech can seem difficult. The following are some tips to help you sound more fluid and natural.

1 Open your mouth

This may sound obvious, but many people tend to mumble when they are nervous or unsure. Stretching your mouth muscles before speaking can be helpful too.

2 Speak in sentences

When speaking, **think sentence-to-sentence**, and not word-to-word. Pausing between every word makes you sound unprepared, unconfident, and disorganized.

3 Vary your intonation

Intonation is key to achieving fluid delivery, so do not speak in the same tone from the beginning to the end of your speech. Familiarize yourself with English intonation.

4 Pay special attention to the pronunciation of key words

Pay special attention to the pronunciation of **content words** and **important terms**. Mispronouncing these words can greatly confuse the listener.

5 Speak at the appropriate speed

Speak at the appropriate speed — not too fast, but not too slow, either. Being nervous can make you speak too fast, so take a few deep breaths before beginning your speech.

6 Record yourself speaking

Record yourself speaking, and check to see if there is anything you can do to improve your speech (e.g. speed, intonation, etc.).



Listen to the track and practice reading the following passages, paying special attention to word pronunciation, stress, and fluid delivery.

1

MP3 07

Mr. Gibson is one of my favorite friends. He is a considerate person. Whenever I have difficulty studying or in my relationship with my girlfriend, I visit him to get some advice. He always welcomes me and advises me on my problems. He is also very intelligent. He enjoys spending time by himself and reading political books. He is very knowledgeable in politics and helps me with my assignments. However, he only has a few friends, and I am one of them. Now he is over 60, and he reminds me of my grandfather, who passed away when I was ten years of age.

2

MP3 08

There was a big traffic accident yesterday. The weather was rainy and cloudy, so the bus driver could hardly see through the windshield. Although the weather forecast had warned drivers that morning, he didn't take it seriously. Moreover, Brittle Road was a danger to the drivers who drove big vehicles such as buses and trucks. The bus driver hit a car coming in the opposite direction. There were a number of casualties because of the accident. A sensible driver passing through immediately called 911, and the police and ambulances came to the scene at once. The bus was severely damaged, but the driver survived and was taken to a nearby hospital.

Review



Write out an answer for the following question. Then record yourself reading it and give an overall score for your performance.

(1=very poor, 2= poor, 3=OK, 4=good, 5=very good)

Question: Choose your favorite movie and explain why you like it. Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

Is your pronunciation generally correct?	1	2	3	4	5
Did you use appropriate stress throughout your speech?	1	2	3	4	5
Does your speech sound fluid and natural?	1	2	3	4	5
Overall score	1	2	3	4	5

Memo