

# TOEFL® Practice Test

English with Confidence



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# TOEFL® Preparation Test

## Writing Practice

### Section A – Integrated Writing

**Directions:** Read each passage excerpt and its lecture summary. Then write a 150–225-word response explaining how the lecture supports or challenges the reading.

#### Task 1

**Reading Excerpt (≈200 words):**

Many cities emphasise large ground-level parks to improve urban life. Planners claim these spaces reduce heat, filter air, manage stormwater, foster social interaction, and support biodiversity. By providing shade and evapotranspiration, parks can lower neighbourhood temperatures by up to 5 °C. Vegetation also captures pollutants and converts CO<sub>2</sub> into oxygen. Open lawns and playgrounds encourage exercise, reducing obesity. Socially, parks bring people together—families picnic, seniors stroll, and communities host festivals—strengthening neighbourhood ties. Finally, native plantings and wetland areas within parks create habitats for birds and insects, promoting ecological balance.

**Lecture Summary:**

- **Water & Maintenance Costs:** Large parks require extensive irrigation and staffing, straining city budgets, especially in dry climates.
- **Safety Concerns:** Poor lighting and underused corners can attract vandalism or crime, undermining social benefits.
- **Vertical Alternatives:** Green roofs and living walls deliver cooling, air filtration, and habitat within limited urban footprints.

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#### Task 2

**Reading Excerpt (≈180 words):**

Universities have shifted resources from humanities to STEM fields. Proponents argue arts degrees distract from practical skills, overburden budgets, and attract too few students to justify their cost. They maintain that engineering, computer science, and business programmes offer

clearer career pathways and higher graduate earnings, making them a better institutional investment.

### **Lecture Summary:**

- Creative Value: Arts training cultivates creativity and critical thinking, which bolster innovation in STEM disciplines.
  - Shared Resources: Humanities departments often share lecture theatres and staffing with other faculties, so do not significantly inflate budgets.
  - Enrollment Trends: Recent surveys show arts enrolments are stable or rising, reflecting strong student interest.
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### **Task 3**

#### **Reading Excerpt (≈190 words):**

Remote work cuts office expenses but critics warn it harms collaboration and creativity. They claim spontaneous hallway chats vanish, project coordination suffers, and managers lose visibility into daily effort, making it harder to ensure productivity.

### **Lecture Summary:**

- Enhanced Collaboration: Tools like virtual whiteboards and real-time co-editing boost, rather than impede, idea sharing.
  - Employee Well-being: A remote-first startup reported a 25 % increase in satisfaction and innovation after closing its office.
  - Data Transparency: Productivity dashboards give managers precise metrics on deliverables and workflows, improving oversight.
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### **Task 4**

#### **Reading Excerpt (≈180 words):**

Urban sprawl is praised for affordable housing, suburban job growth, and eased inner-city congestion. Expanding city boundaries spreads demand, lowers land prices, and disperses traffic across new roads.

### **Lecture Summary:**

- Hidden Costs: Extended commutes impose fuel, time and emissions penalties that offset lower housing prices.
  - Economic Leakage: Suburban retail profits often flow to distant corporate headquarters, offering little local reinvestment.
  - Induced Traffic: Building new roads stimulates more traffic over time, ultimately worsening central-city congestion.
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### Task 5

#### Reading Excerpt (≈180 words):

Online product reviews face criticism: fake posts mislead buyers, biased reviewers distort ratings, and fear of backlash discourages honest feedback.

#### Lecture Summary:

- Fraud Detection: Platforms employ AI to detect and remove inauthentic or automated reviews.
  - Verification Measures: “Verified purchase” labels and reviewer provenance histories help users assess reliability.
  - User Confidence: 87 % of customers now report feeling encouraged to post genuine reviews, thanks to these safeguards.
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## Section B – Independent Writing (Tasks 6–10)

**Directions:** Write an essay (300–350 words) expressing your view with supporting examples.

### Task 6

Prompt: Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “It is better to work in a team than alone”?

### Task 7

Prompt: Some believe that governments should invest in public transport rather than build new roads. Do you agree or disagree?

**Task 8**

Prompt: Do you prefer living in one place all your life or moving to different cities? Explain your choice.

**Task 9**

Prompt: Do you agree or disagree that social media does more harm than good?

**Task 10**

Prompt: Some argue that university tuition fees should be free for all students. Do you agree or disagree?

**Page 2 – Sample Answers****Task 1**

The reading praises large parks for cooling, air filtration, stormwater management, social interaction, and biodiversity support. The lecture challenges these advantages in three respects. First, it notes that in arid climates, parks demand heavy irrigation and staffing, straining municipal resources and questioning their cost-effectiveness. Second, the lecturer warns that poorly lit or neglected areas can attract crime, undermining claimed social benefits. Finally, the speaker proposes green roofs and living walls as compact alternatives that achieve similar cooling, pollutant removal, and habitat provision without extensive ground-level space. In sum, each of the reading's points is either undermined by practical drawbacks or met with a viable alternative.

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**Task 2**

The passage argues that arts programmes divert resources from STEM, citing distraction from practical skills, budgetary drain, and low enrolment. The lecture refutes each claim. It first explains how arts training fosters creativity and critical thinking vital for innovation even in technical fields, demonstrating real-world relevance. Second, the speaker clarifies that humanities departments often share facilities and faculty with other schools, so their costs are marginal. Third, enrolment data show stability or growth in arts majors, disproving assertions of dwindling interest. Thus, the lecture systematically overturns each of the reading's criticisms.

### Task 3

The reading contends remote work erodes collaboration, creativity, and managerial oversight. The lecture disputes these points. Virtual collaboration tools, whiteboards, co-editing platforms, actually enhance idea exchange, boosting creativity. A case study of a remote-first start-up revealed a 25 % uptick in employee satisfaction and innovation after shutting its office. Finally, real-time productivity dashboards offer precise metrics on tasks and workflows, simplifying management compared to informal in-person observation. Therefore, each reading concern is directly challenged by the lecturer's evidence.

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### Task 4

The passage claims urban sprawl delivers affordable housing, suburban economic growth, and reduced congestion. The lecture challenges these benefits. Longer commutes impose hidden time and fuel costs and raise emissions, offsetting housing savings. Retail profits in suburbs often return to corporate headquarters, providing scant local reinvestment. Moreover, expanded road networks induce more traffic, known as induced demand, worsening central-city congestion. Thus, all three purported advantages are undermined by significant unintended consequences.

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### Task 5

The reading criticises online reviews as prone to fakery, bias, and discouraging honesty. The lecture counters these points. AI algorithms now detect and remove fraudulent reviews, tackling fakery. "Verified purchase" badges and reviewer histories empower users to gauge bias and authenticity. Moreover, a survey reveals 87 % of customers feel more confident posting genuine reviews under these safeguards. Each reading criticism is therefore rebutted by modern platform measures.

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### Task 6

I agree that teamwork generally outperforms solitary work. Collaboration combines diverse expertise, research, analysis, design, into richer solutions. In a group project, my peers' complementary skills transformed our report into an innovative presentation that no individual could have produced alone. Teams also foster accountability and mutual support; when

deadlines loom, members motivate each other and share tasks, reducing burnout. While solo work allows deep focus, it lacks the dynamic exchange of ideas and shared problem-solving that spurs breakthroughs. Overall, teamwork enhances both productivity and job satisfaction.

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## Task 7

I strongly believe governments should prioritise public transport over road expansion. High-capacity metros and buses move far more commuters per hour than additional lanes, reducing both congestion and carbon emissions. Cities with extensive rail systems, such as Seoul, maintain smoother traffic flows despite large populations. Public transport also promotes equity by providing affordable travel to all citizens, whereas road widening primarily benefits private car owners. Furthermore, new roads induce additional traffic, a phenomenon known as “induced demand”, nullifying short-term relief. Thus, investing in mass transit delivers enduring environmental and social benefits.

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## Task 8

I prefer relocating periodically to new cities rather than remaining in one place for life. Each move exposes me to varied cultures, climates, and communities, broadening my perspective and adaptability. Living in Jakarta, then London, taught me fresh social norms and professional practices, enriching my resilience and empathy. Relocation also expands professional networks and opens unexpected career opportunities. Although deep local roots offer comfort, periodic moves prevent complacency and foster continuous personal growth. In my view, mobility enriches life with fresh experiences that a single, permanent residence cannot provide.

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## Task 9

I disagree that social media does more harm than good. Despite concerns about misinformation, privacy breaches, and screen addiction, social platforms facilitate real-time communication, global collaboration, and civic mobilisation. In emergencies, such as natural disasters, social networks coordinate relief efforts swiftly. Niche online communities offer peer support for mental health and professional networking inaccessible offline. With responsible usage and improved digital literacy, social media’s benefits, enhanced connectivity, information sharing, and community building, clearly outweigh its drawbacks.

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## Task 10

I agree that university tuition fees should be free, as higher education is a public good that fosters social mobility and innovation. Removing financial barriers allows talented individuals, regardless of background, to pursue advanced learning and contribute to society. Countries with tuition-free systems, such as Finland, report higher enrolment and a more diversified workforce. Although critics cite fiscal strain, the long-term returns, increased tax revenues, reduced inequality, and research breakthroughs, justify the investment. Public funding of tertiary education thus represents a strategic commitment to both individual opportunity and national prosperity.