TOEFL Overview

The TOEFL ("Test of English as a Foreign Language") is **a standardized test that measures a test-taker's mastery of the English language**. TOEFL scores are primarily used by universities as part of the admissions process.

Typically, those who take the TOEFL **want to attend university or graduate school abroad**. But anyone who needs to demonstrate a mastery of English for an academic purpose can take the TOEFL. This includes anyone applying to a foreign high school, exchange program, community college, or for a student visa.

The TOEFL focuses on how English is used in an academic setting, which is why schools and universities use TOEFL scores for admissions purposes. The reading passages in the TOEFL use formal, academic language and high-level vocabulary rather than casual or conversational English.

Students who wish to demonstrate their English skills to an employer, may be better encouraged to take a TOEIC test, as the topics are often related to everyday life and business situations.

The test has **four sections and will typically take a total of 3 hours** to complete. These four sections are: reading, listening, speaking, writing. **Each section is scored out of 30**. These section scores are then added together for a final, **total score of 120 points**.

Reading (54-72 minutes) - three or four passages

The TOEFL reading section is completely multiple choice. Each reading section will have three or four written passages with *10 questions* for each passage. (In a test with 4 passages, only 3 will be graded - one will be experimental.) Reading passages can be on any academic topic, including science, history, or literature. A student will have an average of 105 seconds to spend on each answer.

Listening (41-57 minutes) - There are six listening tests, which are usually split between the two types:

1. *Conversations* - These conversations can either regard a) office hours or b) service encounters. Both take place in campus and may regard an academic topic (i.e., the content of a lesson) or non-academic content (i.e. an assignment due date). (*5 questions per conversation*)
2. *Lectures* - Lectures aren't always 100% speaking time for the professor. Sometimes, there's interaction with the students who may or may not contribute to the ideas in the lecture. (*6 questions per lecture*)

Speaking (17 minutes) - 4 questions only now (6 previously). Q's 1 & 5 have been removed!!
1 Independent task and 3 Integrated tasks.

1. **Paired Choice** - Students will be given 2 options and must state their preference and why. (*45 secs*)
2. **Campus Matters** - Students will read and listen to a conversation about a campus related announcement. They must identify and integrate all of the information into a clear summary. (*60 secs*)
3. **Academic Reading & Lecture** - Students will read some info and listen to a lecture. They must then answer a question on this topic by integrating the information they received. (*60 secs*)
4. **Academic Summary** - Students will listen to a lecture and be given a question at the end. (*60 secs*)

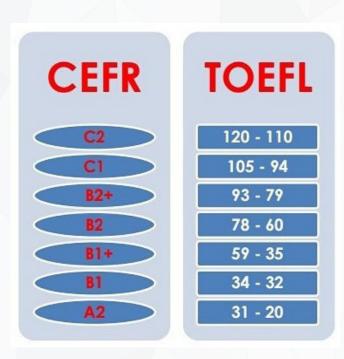*Writing (approximately 60 minutes) -* Two parts

1. **Integrated Writing** - Students must compare an academic article (*3 mins of reading*) to a lecture (*3 mins of listening*) on the same topic. They will have *20 minutes* to write an answer. *(150-225 words)*
2. **Independent Writing** - Students have *30 minutes* to give a personal response to a specific question. It may ask students to state a preference or to agree/disagree on something. *(300+ words)*

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It can often be difficult to understand what a TOEFL target score of 90, for example, may look like in terms of English ability, and how realistically a new student will be able to achieve it. To make this easier, we can compare TOEFL bands to measures of general English level.

Below is a diagram illustrating how TOEFL band scores roughly equate to CEFR (Common European Framwork of Reference for Languages) levels. The CEFR is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries including Thailand! It is a great way of assessing what a student **can** and **cannot do** while using English, or any other language.

CEFR	TOEFL
C2	120 - 110
C1	105 - 94
B2+	93 - 79
B2	78 - 60
B1+	59 - 35
B1	34 - 32
A2	31 - 20

For stronger users of the English language, an TOEFL band score above 90 is certainly attainable, given the right guidance and understanding of the testing structure. Top Ivy League universities, including Harvard and Yale, **usually require a TOEFL band score of at least 100, but could be higher**. However, the average target score for other US universsties is 78.

The most common target score for Thai students is between 70-90.
A strong independent user, who has a good understanding of how the TOEFL exam works and what specific things the examiners are looking for, can achieve this score.
Typically at Modulo, we wouldn't recommend TOEFL to any student below B2 level, as the content is far too challenging for anybody lower.

TOEFL is far from easy and will challenge even the best English speakers, but it is not impossible to reach your desired target. Many students panic after only a few lessons of study, wondering how they will ever reach the level necessary to get their target score. The answer? **Patience** and **perseverance**.

No one can achieve their target score overnight, unless they weren't aiming high enough! Work on objectives one at a time. **Lots of small improvements can eventually add up to vast increases in final scores!** The good news is that you have come to the right place.

Our teachers will **work with you**, and focus on developing the skills that you need to improve the most. You can either follow our teachers' plans, or if you prefer we can target the areas that you believe to be your weakness. Feel free to make any specific requests you may have to our staff or teachers at any time.