

MASTERING THE READING

SECTION FOR THE TOEFL® iBT



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Introduction

Welcome to House of TOEFL's book on the Reading section. I'm glad you're here. It means you're serious about getting a good score on the TOEFL and you're ready to work.

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Kathy and I am a TOEFL teacher who has been teaching TOEFL since 2010. I've written tests for TOEFL books and helped hundreds of students reach their goals.

A lot of TOEFL books offer tips and suggestions and different ways of approaching questions. What makes this book different? Well, I've combined my knowledge from many sources and years of experience and have put it all into one easy-to-read book! Not only that, but I'm going to tell you about the traps used on the TOEFL—traps that are not mentioned in most TOEFL preparation books. You will get LOTS of practice as you read. This will leave you much better prepared to tackle the Reading section.

This book assumes you already have basic knowledge of the TOEFL, such as how to register, what I.D. to bring to the test site, and so on. I won't bore you with all that information. You can find the most up-to-date information on those topics at www.ets.org/toefl. The purpose of this book is to teach you strategies on how to answer each question type that are straightforward, direct, and simple. With these strategies, you will be prepared and confident to take the Reading section. The TOEFL is a costly, stressful test. I want to help you get your goal score so you can move on with your life. So let's talk TOEFL.

The Reading section comes first on the TOEFL test. As I've said, I'm not going to bore you with excessive details about how the TOEFL is formatted, but a quick review is probably a good idea.

The TOEFL Reading section has 3 or 4 reading passages. If you have three reading passages, you have an hour to complete the reading section. If you have four, you have eighty minutes. You're given this time limit in TOTAL—which means if you're done one passage quickly, you have more time for the next passage. As you can see, this divides up to twenty minutes per passage. You must be *very careful* not to go over the 20 minutes. The most common mistake students make is when they take too much time on the first and second reading passages and do not have enough time to finish the third. Obviously, this impacts their score in a big way! Now, if you're given four reading passages, there is good news and bad news. The bad news is that they are *not* going to score one of those passages. They're putting it on the test to try out new testing material. The good news is that if you have a longer reading section, you will have a shorter listening section.

One more word of caution: if you get four reading passages, do *not* try to guess which reading passage will not be scored. Do your best on all four.

Each reading passage has 12-14 questions. Most questions are worth one point. The summary question at the end is worth 2 points, and chart questions are worth 3-4 points. If any question is worth more than one point, it will be indicated in the directions. **READ ALL DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY.** The best score you can get on the reading section is 30.

One thing that is very important for you to understand before you take the TOEFL: a lot of students worry that they aren't experts or don't have degrees in the subjects on the test. These subjects can range from psychology, history,

art, archaeology, astronomy, biology, biographies, and so on. But this is a language test, and only a language test. **As such, all the information you need to answer the questions will be given to you in the passage.**

There is another thing to keep in mind about the subjects of the reading passages. Some students say that they are not interested in certain topics, or that they are better at topics closely related to their field of study. Please note that the topics of the passages **should not** matter to you. Do your best, no matter what. Focus on attacking the questions, **not** the subject matter of the passage. Even if you have no interest in the subject, treat it like a puzzle you need to solve.

In the Reading section, you *can* go back to previous questions. You can't do that in the other sections of the TOEFL. However, I believe that you should not go back unless you see new information that makes you realize you got a previous question wrong. Students who second guess themselves often choose the correct answer first and then change their answer to an incorrect answer. Only change a previous answer if you are sure you got it wrong the first time. If you're *sure* you made a mistake, click on the REVIEW button at the top of the screen. This will allow you to see the questions you have answered and go back to any question by clicking on it.

Managing Your Time

You have probably already done the math in your head and realized twenty minutes per reading passage is not a long time. You're correct about that! I'll tell you something that might surprise you: I do not want you to read the passage before you start the questions.

You will end up realizing you did read the entire passage by the time you finish. But what I do *not* want you to do is waste time reading the passage carefully while the clock is ticking *before* you start answering questions. You do not have time to do this! Go straight to the questions. You have to scroll to the end of the passage and back up before you can see the first question—that's fine—do it. The TOEFL is not designed to see if you have digested all the information and have learned the information for the future—it is designed to see if you can answer questions quickly and accurately.

Chapter 1

Vocabulary Questions

We are going to start with vocabulary questions. **This is the longest chapter in the book because I believe that building vocabulary is the #1 thing you can do to improve your reading score.**

Vocabulary is *very, very* important on the TOEFL, and is tested in many ways. In fact, every question in the reading passage requires you to use vocabulary. The best strategy is to have a large English vocabulary before you take the TOEFL. In this book, I am going to use academic vocabulary just like the TOEFL. If you do not know a word, look it up in your dictionary. Practice new words often. Studies show you need to use a new word seven times before you remember it! Flashcards are also a great idea, as is a word journal. Every time you learn a new word, write it down with its definition. At the end of the week, review the words you learned that week. Do this every week, always starting from the beginning of the journal. You will be amazed how quickly your vocabulary expands. If you think vocabulary isn't crucial, remember this expression: Without good grammar, communication is difficult. Without vocabulary, it's impossible.

During the test, there are certain question types you should not spend a lot of time on, and vocabulary questions are one of them. There are much more complex questions on the TOEFL reading section which will require time and careful consideration.

Vocabulary questions are easy to identify. The question will look like this, with a word highlighted in gray:

Climbing a mountain is an arduous task.

The word arduous is closest in meaning to

- difficult
- amusing
- distracting
- exciting

On the TOEFL, choose the word you think is the closest synonym to the highlighted word AND makes sense in the context. In this example, the first answer, “difficult,” is correct.

Here is another example. When you have made your decision during the real TOEFL test, click on the oval next to your answer choice. It will darken. Then click on the “Next” button to move to the next question. If you are familiar with the highlighted word and recognize the answer right away, choose it and move on quickly.

The computer has had a huge impact on society. It has changed the way that we communicate with each other.

The word impact is closest in meaning to:

- influence
- collision
- reaction
- immersion

I hope you picked the first word—"influence." I want to show you something else here. The word "impact" can mean "collision" in certain contexts. So, make sure that your word is not only a synonym. Make sure it has the correct meaning for the context. **ALWAYS** look back at the sentence that has the vocabulary word and read the sentence **CAREFULLY**. The TOEFL sometimes uses words that are synonyms but do not make sense in the original context. Do not fall for this trap.

Many words you won't know, but sometimes you get lucky with an easier one. Here is a simple example:

It is crucial that managers ensure that their goals are **obtainable** before they embark on costly projects.

The word **obtainable** is closest in meaning to

- challenging
- manageable
- ostensible
- acceptable

I hope you picked the second word: "manageable." It is the closest synonym to obtainable *and* makes sense in the context. I want to point out another trap here. The word "ostensible" *looks* like the word "obtainable." However, ostensible is a very different word. If you don't know what it means, look it up before you continue. (Get in the habit of looking up words you don't know!) This is another common TOEFL trap. The TOEFL will use answer choices that appear similar to the vocabulary word but are not related. Don't be fooled!

Now let's move on to more challenging material. Of course, if you are familiar with the highlighted word, simply pick the closest synonym, double check that it makes sense in the context, and move on. You need to have strategies for what you will do if you have never seen the word before. I am going to teach you how to use clues around the word choose the correct answer. Note that these strategies will not only help you in the TOEFL, but will help you when you read other materials as well. They can be used throughout your life.

Strategy #1: Use examples given to deduce the meaning of the word

Sometimes the TOEFL will give you examples near a vocabulary word. You can use these examples to get the correct answer.

Let's look at this example:

Some instances of **metamorphoses** in the animal kingdom have fascinated biologists because they are so astonishing. A caterpillar that emerges from its cocoon as a butterfly or a tadpole swimming in shallow water that slowly makes its way onto land as a frog illustrate this remarkable feat.

The word **metamorphoses** is closest in meaning to

- adaptations
- arrangements
- transformations

- selections

The third answer is correct. We are given two examples here—caterpillars that become butterflies and tadpoles that become frogs. Even if you aren’t familiar with the definition of “metamorphoses,” you can imagine from the context that a caterpillar becoming a butterfly and a tadpole becoming a frog are *changes*. Now you can look for a synonym for the word you know. Another word for “changes” is “transformations.”

Here is another example:

A number of **deities** were worshiped by the ancient Greeks. Zeus was the most powerful and ruled the sky, Poseidon was the ruler of the sea, and Aphrodite was the ruler of love and procreation.

The word **deities** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- relatives
- ancestors
- gods
- creatures

The correct answer is the third answer—“gods.” You were given three examples: Zeus, Poseidon, and Aphrodite. If you know a little about Greek mythology, you know that these three figures were gods in Ancient Greece. You can use that knowledge to get you to the correct answer.

Try this one:

Geological and biological occurrences which are **momentous** are noted on the geological timescale. These events include the origin of the Earth around 4.5 billion years ago, the origin of life approximately 3.5 billion years ago, and the appearance of animals about 0.6 billion years ago.

The word **momentous** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- unpredictable
- immediate
- important
- plentiful

The third answer is correct. How do we know? Well, let's look at the information—the examples—that follow the sentence with the vocabulary word. The sentence that follows the vocabulary word talks about the origin of the Earth, the origin of life, and the appearance of animals. These are important events, aren't they? That leads us to the correct answer—"important."

Moving on:

Many laws are still technically on the books in the United States, but are not enforced by any authority and seem **preposterous** in modern society. In Oklahoma, it is technically illegal to spit on the sidewalk or for men to wear their boots to bed.

The word **preposterous** is closest in meaning to:

- strict

- ridiculous
- intense
- appropriate

The second answer is correct. The examples are the laws. Doesn't it seem ridiculous that it's illegal to spit on the sidewalk, or for men to wear boots to bed? That seems "ridiculous" to me, the correct answer.

Strategy #2: Use transition words which show contrast to deduce meaning

In this strategy, you will look for words like **although, however, on the other hand, but, in contrast, yet, despite, in spite of, while, nevertheless, nonetheless**, and so on. These transition words show that unexpected or opposing information will be included in the sentence, and we can use these words to deduce the meaning of our vocabulary word.

Let's look at some examples to clarify this point:

Harry Houdini made his living stunning his audiences with magic tricks, yet was **dubious** about the actual existence of the supernatural world.

The word **dubious** is closest in meaning to

- hopeful
- doubtful
- confident

- disinterested

The answer is the second choice, “doubtful.” The word *yet* shows us there is a contrast. The fact that Houdini made his living with magic is in contrast with his doubt about the supernatural world.

Here is another example:

In the city of Rome, **contemporary** buildings stand in contrast with ancient feats of architecture.

The word **contemporary** is closest in meaning to

- remodeled
- attractive
- temporary
- modern

The fourth answer is correct. The reading says that contemporary buildings stand *in contrast* with ancient architecture. We can deduce that “contemporary” must mean the opposite of “ancient.” Therefore, the correct answer is “modern,” the opposite of ancient.

Here is another example:

Although there is a universal fear of snakes, the majority of snakes are **benign**.

The word **benign** is closest in meaning to

- agile
- aggressive
- harmless
- venomous

The third answer is correct. This example starts with the word *although*, so we know that there will be information which goes against our expectations. It mentions “a universal fear of snakes.” Therefore, we would expect snakes to be venomous (poisonous) or aggressive. However, because of the word *although*, we know our expectations will be contradicted. Therefore, “benign” must mean the opposite of venomous and aggressive. Thus, the answer is “harmless.”

Try this next:

Many studios thought the movie *Star Wars* would be a failure, but it turned out to be one of the most **lucrative** films ever made.

The word **lucrative** is closest in meaning to:

- productive
- sufficient
- profitable
- fascinating

The third answer is correct. Here, our clue is the word *but*. We know the word *but* comes before opposing information. The passage says “Many studios thought the movie *Star*

Wars would be a failure.” The success of movies is based on their profits, so the opposing information is that *Star Wars* was successful, or “profitable.”

Moving on:

Appendicitis is characterized by **acute** pain in the abdominal region. Nonetheless, many patients wait for hours or even days before they seek medical help.

The word **acute** is closest in meaning to

- dull
- sharp
- mild
- occasional

The second answer is correct. Our clue is the word *Nonetheless*. We know it must be unexpected for patients to wait hours or days to seek help. Therefore, we know the pain isn’t likely to be “dull,” “mild,” or “occasional.” All that’s left is “sharp,” the correct answer.

Here is another example:

Despite the fact that a lot of research shows that eyewitness testimony tends to be full of errors, most members of a jury in a court of law believe it is one of the most **legitimate** types of evidence.

The word **legitimate** is closest in meaning to:

- interesting
- shocking
- descriptive
- authentic

The fourth answer is correct. The word *despite* tells us to expect a contrast. The reading says “eyewitness testimony tends to be full of errors.” Something can be full of errors and still be “interesting,” “shocking,” or “descriptive.” However, it cannot be “authentic.”

Let’s try one more before we move on:

Fluids resist the motion of objects that move through them. Water has a low resistance to motion and flows easily, while molasses is **viscous**.

The word **viscous** is closest in meaning to

- tasty
- thick
- solvent
- acidic

The second answer is correct. The clue here is the word *while*, which, in this context, shows contrast. Water has a low resistance to motion and flows easily. Molasses is viscous. Molasses must be the opposite of something that flows easily. That leads us to the answer: “thick.”

Strategy #3: Use your common sense and knowledge of the world.

Okay, you're doing great so far. Let's move on to another strategy for answering questions. This strategy involves using your logic, common sense, and knowledge of the world. Let's look at some simple examples:

The burning of fossil fuels causes **toxic** gasses to enter the atmosphere.

The word **toxic** is closest in meaning to

- aromatic
- poisonous
- stale
- pungent

The correct answer is the second answer. You've probably heard of fossil fuels. You know that burning them releases gases that are "poisonous." Your knowledge of the world has provided you with the answer.

Here is another example:

Teenagers often go through a stage where they **defy** their parents and other authority figures.

The word **defy** is closest in meaning to

- honor

- reprimand
- disobey
- ridicule

The third answer is correct. We know teenagers often “disobey” their parents. This is common knowledge.

Let’s try another:

Swimming as a form of exercise is **endorsed** by medical authorities because it provides both cardiovascular exercise and resistance training.

The word **endorsed** is closest in meaning to

- examined
- supported
- discussed
- enjoyed

The correct answer is the second answer. Our common sense tells us medical authorities would “support” swimming as a form of exercise.

Here is another example:

Experts believe that family dynamics have an **indelible** impact on a child’s personality development. Events that occur when a child is very young can result in anxiety, depression, and even addiction when the child reaches

adulthood.

The word **indelible** is closest in meaning to

- indescribable
- incidental
- unfortunate
- permanent

The fourth answer is correct. As we know, a child's family has a "permanent" impact on a child's personality development.

Try another example:

One aspect of the stock market that causes many potential investors to shy away from investing is the fact that stocks **fluctuate** so much from one year to the next and even from one day to the next.

The word **fluctuate** is closest in meaning to

- remain stable
- continue to decline
- rise and fall
- steadily appreciate

The correct answer is the third answer, "rise and fall." If we use our common sense, we will realize that aspect would make investors shy away from investing! We can also use

our knowledge about the world to note that stocks tend to rise and fall.

Consider this example:

Neanderthals were capable of **sophisticated** tasks that we typically associate with modern humans. Fossilized pollen at Neanderthal burial sites suggests that they even buried their dead with flowers, and other fossil remains indicate that they tended to the wounds of the injured.

The word **sophisticated** is closest in meaning to

- impressive
- creative
- sensible
- complex

The fourth answer is correct. Here, we look at the context and use our knowledge about the world and our common sense. We know that modern humans are capable of very “complex” tasks, the correct answer.

Let’s try another:

Galileo was not the first to **postulate** that the Earth revolved around the sun, and not the other way around. Nicolaus Copernicus was the first to publish the theory, but he died before he was able to prove it.

The word **postulate** is closest in meaning to

- hypothesize

- dream
- decide
- promote

The first answer is correct. How do we know? We have to use what we know about the world. We know that Galileo had the idea—the hypothesis—that the Earth revolved around the sun. If we know the word hypothesis, we can use it to guess the correct answer—“hypothesize” which is the verb form of hypothesis.

Try another example:

The relentless pounding of waves **erodes** the shoreline over time, causing interesting coastal features such as cliffs, platforms, and sea arches. The impact of waves along the shorelines during storms is stronger, when waves crash onto shore with a lot of energy.

The word **erodes** is closest in meaning to

- destroys
- builds up
- wears down
- covers up

The correct answer is the third answer, “wears down.” Our knowledge and our common sense about what happens over time when waves impact the shoreline leads us to the correct answer.

Here is another one:

Approximately 108 million years ago, an asteroid hit the moon, **excavating** a crater that is now 85 kilometers wide and almost five kilometers deep. This crater is called Tycho, after the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe. The crater is so prominent it can be seen from Earth with binoculars.

The word **excavating** is closest in meaning to

- destroying
- adding to
- expanding
- digging

The fourth answer is correct. Hopefully, you know what an asteroid is, and you can use logic to imagine what happens when one hits the moon. Another clue is the word *crater*, which you might know is a depression on the surface of a planet. We also know from the passage that the crater is very deep. So it makes the most sense that the correct answer is “digging.”

I want you to be aware that sometimes the TOEFL will ask you the meaning of a phrase, not of just one individual word. Use the same strategies. For example:

The rubber tree is considered very important economically because of the milky latex that is **extracted from** the tree in a process called rubber tapping. An incision is made in the bark of the tree through the tree’s latex vessels from which the product then flows out.

The phrase **extracted from** is closest in meaning to

- taken out of
- produced by
- discovered within
- consumed from

The first answer is correct. In this question, think about how a resource is obtained from a tree. It is “taken out of,” the correct answer.

Here is another example:

All birds have feathers. These complex appendages are **peculiar to** birds. Among the most remarkable feathers are those of the peacock. Peacocks have beautiful iridescent blue and green feathers, which they fan out when potential mates are nearby as part of a courtship ritual.

The phrase **peculiar to** is closest in meaning to

- related to
- unique to
- applied to
- associated with

The second answer is correct. As we know, feathers are “unique to” birds. No other animals have feathers.

Strategy #4: Use the broader context

Sometimes, none of these strategies will work. You won't have any knowledge about the subject, and they won't give you examples or transition word clues. However, you can still use the broader context to deduce meaning. You can act like a detective looking for clues. Let's analyze some examples:

Plants have developed remarkable adaptations for surviving in **arid** climates. In some plants, the leaves and stems are covered in a protective thick, waxy covering. This waxy substance keeps the plant cool and reduces water loss that can occur through evaporation.

The word **arid** is closest in meaning to

- tropical
- contaminated
- dry
- damp

The third answer is correct. The passage mentions that "plants use a waxy substance to prevent water loss." If a plant is trying to prevent water loss, the climate must be dry, and the answer must be "dry," as well.

Here's another:

Black ice is a thin coating of glaze ice on a surface, especially on the surface of roads. The ice itself is not black, but transparent, so it is invisible to

drivers. Because black ice cannot be seen, it creates **adverse** driving conditions and drivers should take extra care to avoid it.

The word **adverse** is closest in meaning to

- advantageous
- unfavorable
- reversible
- unclear

The second answer is correct. Based on the passage, driving on black ice would create “unfavorable” driving conditions.

Next example:

Along a mountainous slope, the abrupt transition from a forested area to treeless tundra is often **striking**. In just a few dozen meters, the trees disappear entirely and are replaced by grasses, shrubbery, and different types of herbs.

The word **striking** is closest in meaning to

- dramatic
- alarming
- gradual
- scattered

The first answer is correct. The passage says, “In just a few dozen meters, the trees disappear entirely.” If trees in a forested area were to quickly disappear and be replaced by grass, shrubs, and herbs, that would be a major change, right? That leads us to the correct answer, “dramatic” which we use to express that something is a major change.

Here is another:

Carnivorous plants grow in places where the soil lacks nutrients, such as bogs or rocky areas. They must get their nutrients by capturing and digesting animals, mostly insects that are unlucky enough to land on one and become trapped. One example is the pitcher plant, which **entices** insects into its rolled leaf cavities with the lure of bright pigments and nectar at the bottom of a deep, inescapable pit.

The word **entices** is closest in meaning to

- eludes
- inhales
- attracts
- propels

The third answer is correct. From the context, you can infer that this is a type of plant that “attracts” insects to it. We also see the word “lure” which is a synonym of “attract,” as well.

Let’s try this one:

Western European Salt Grass is an invasive species that grows along river

banks. Its root system grows deeply and quickly when it is near water. This **encroachment** causes death to other species, which have to withstand drought-like conditions as the salt grass absorbs a great deal of the water which they also need to survive.

The word **encroachment** is closest in meaning to

- destruction
- interruption
- encounter
- invasion

The fourth answer is correct. Look at the broader context. We see this is an “invasive species.” We also see that this grass absorbs water other plants need to survive. Therefore, this is an “invasion,” the correct answer.

Another example:

On April 1, 1946, a tsunami hit the coast of Hilo, Hawaii, without warning. The waves were as high as 35 feet in some places. 96 people were killed by the massive waves. This sudden, unexpected event caused a public outcry on the island and a demand for more safety measures to protect the local population. A warning system that includes tsunami sirens which are tested monthly was put in place in 1948 to help **avert** a similar disaster.

The word **avert** is closest in meaning to

- avoid

- confirm
- predict
- reverse

The first answer is correct. The context tells us that something that is to “protect the local population” would be in order to “avoid” a similar disaster.

Try this one:

The hippopotamus has a fearsome reputation in Africa. This enormous herbivore is found throughout sub-Saharan Africa in lakes, rivers, and swamps. It is exceedingly aggressive, especially when defending its territory. Males have been known to overturn boats full of humans and impale people on their incisor teeth. In fact, the hippo is responsible for more human fatalities in Africa than any other mammal.

The word exceedingly in the passage is closest in meaning to

- occasionally
- constantly
- surprisingly
- highly

The fourth answer is correct. This example has several hints. It talks about the behavior of the hippopotamus—that it capsizes boats and kills people. So whatever word comes before “aggressive” must intensify it (make it stronger). Therefore, the answer is “highly.”

Try another:

The Kailasanatha Temple is a Hindu temple carved out of natural outcropping rock located in Ellora, India. It dates back to the 8th Century. This majestic temple stands in a court 276 feet long and 154 feet wide, with a tower 96 feet high. It was carved out of a mountain and has the appearance of an enormous sculpture, with depictions of lions and elephants, as well as reliefs of Shiva, one of the principle gods of Hinduism. Due to its size and the variety of distinct sculptural and architectural styles, its construction may have spanned the reigns of several kings.

The word majestic in the passage is closest in meaning to

- grand
- charming
- memorable
- magical

The first answer is correct. Based on the description of the temple, especially its size, this must be a “grand” temple.

Try this example:

Rice writing is an art in which a technical pen and waterproof ink are used to write letters on a grain of rice. Rice writing began in Turkey when artisans who were adept at creating miniature paintings decided to turn this skill into an art and write on grains of rice, as rice was a symbol of prosperity and good fortune. Artisans would inscribe messages or names of people on the flat

surface of a single grain of rice. Rice writers must write **meticulously** as this art form is done on such a small surface, and permanent errors can occur with a tiny slip of the pen.

The word **meticulously** in the paragraph is closest in meaning to

- swiftly
- noticeably
- properly
- carefully

The fourth answer is correct. If you look at the broad context, you can infer that this is an art form that must be done “carefully.” One hint is that the context says that “errors can occur with a tiny slip of the pen.”

Here is another example:

The Orteig Prize was a reward of \$25,000 offered by hotel owner Raymond Orteig to the first aviator to fly non-stop from New York to Paris. Six men died in three separate crashes, and another three were injured in a fourth crash while attempting to make the crossing. In 1927, Charles Lindberg successfully completed the **perilous** journey in his aircraft *Spirit of St. Louis*.

The word **perilous** is closest in meaning to

- prosperous
- promising
- dangerous

- wondrous

The third answer is correct. By looking at the context, we know that six men died and three were injured. Therefore, this must have been a “dangerous” journey.

Here is another example:

Chess is such a challenging board game that only one in a hundred people become master players. One reason for this is because there is an almost infinite number of possible moves and positions on the board. Careful focus during a game is **of the essence** in order to beat a skilled opponent.

The phrase **of the essence** is closest in meaning to

- appropriate
- paramount
- difficult
- possible

The second answer is correct. Since the context tells us chess is a challenging board game, careful focus must be “paramount.”

Try this example:

Chimpanzees have evolved different cultural practices depending on their environment, and pass on their culture as learned behavior. Chimpanzees have exhibited as many as 32 learned behaviors, such as feeding, grooming, rearing offspring, and making tools. The study of chimpanzee behavior has

offered **insights into** not only chimpanzee culture, but into human culture as well.

The phrase **insights into** is closest in meaning to

- evidence of
- a viewpoint of
- an understanding of
- opportunities for

The third answer is correct. In this context, we see examples of behaviors that are also common to humans. Therefore, the study of chimpanzees must offer us “an understanding of” human culture.

Let’s try another, this one with two questions:

Pacific Islanders were skilled navigators who were able to sail against strong winds and currents using the stars to guide them. These **intrepid** explorers set out on double-hulled canoes with no guarantee that they would eventually find land. The ones who ultimately arrived on the islands almost certainly came from Southeast Asia, according to the most respected hypothesis. The **overwhelming** evidence for this hypothesis comes not only from anthropology but also from linguistics and archaeology.

The word **intrepid** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- inspiring
- brave

- reckless
- intelligent

The second answer is correct. If we look at the entire context, we can see they sailed against strong winds and currents, used the stars to guide them, and sailed with no guarantee of their own safety. All these clues lead us to the correct answer, “brave.”

Next question, from the same passage:

The word **overwhelming** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- specific
- fascinating
- surprising
- powerful

The fourth answer is correct. The paragraph says that there is overwhelming evidence for this hypothesis from anthropology, linguistics, and archaeology. Even if we have no experience in those fields of study, we know they are very different. Therefore, we can conclude this must be a lot of evidence from disparate (very different) fields. This must be “powerful” evidence, the correct answer.

Try one that asks you the meaning of an idiom, another possibility in the TOEFL:

A confirmation bias is a type of cognitive bias that involves favoring information that confirms previously held beliefs. This bias leads to statistical

errors, errors in judgment, and errors in decision making. It can even affect a diagnosis in a doctor's office. A doctor who has already jumped to a particular hypothesis as to which illness a patient has may then ask questions and look for evidence that confirms the diagnosis, while overlooking evidence that would **fly in the face of** this diagnosis.

The phrase **fly in the face of** is closest in meaning to

- clarify
- support
- contradict
- inform

The correct answer is the third answer. We can use the context to infer that “fly in the face of” means “contradict.”

Here is another example that uses an idiom:

Ray Kroc, an American businessman, joined McDonald's in 1954 and turned it into the most popular fast food chain in the world. By standardizing franchise development in each McDonald's location to ensure every restaurant was uniform, particularly with a speedy assembly line for hamburger production at each location, Kroc was able to ensure each new restaurant would **hit the ground running**.

The phrase **hit the ground running** is closest in meaning to

- begin operating quickly

- succeed immediately
- be easy to manage
- become profitable

The first answer is correct. “Hit the ground running” means “begin operating quickly.” We can infer this because since each restaurant is uniform with a speedy assembly line, it makes sense that they can begin operating quickly.

Of course, there is another possibility:

There may be NO clues, and you may have no idea which answer is correct.

That can happen. **As I mentioned in the beginning, the best way to prevent this is to go into the TOEFL with a large vocabulary. That’s why this chapter is so long—to teach you a lot of TOEFL words.** But if you have no idea, you will have to take your best guess. Go back to the original sentence and read it with each of the four answer choices one at a time. Sometimes, an answer will just sound right. If all else fails, eliminate the answers that are *definitely* wrong to increase your chance of getting the right answer. But *do not leave any answers blank*. You do not lose a point if you’re wrong, you just do not get the point. So at least try every question, whether you’re certain or not. Remember, also, that you do not want to spend very much time on vocabulary questions. There are other types of questions which will require more time, such as the summary question. So you must choose an option quickly and move on.

Final Quiz!

Part One

Established in Ottawa in 1920, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or “The Mounties” as they are colloquially called, are a Canadian police force tasked with enforcing federal laws in Canada. The RCMP is instantly recognizable even outside of Canada for their distinctive dress uniform of a scarlet tunic, wide-brimmed brown hat, and dark blue pants with a yellow stripe down the side. In their early years, the RCMP was assembled to prevent illicit trade in whiskey from the United States, but now have a breadth of duties such as investigating organized crime, providing counter-terrorism intelligence, controlling the drug trade, and providing protection for the Prime Minister and visiting dignitaries. Currently, they are the only police force in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, although the most populous provinces also have provincial police.

The word colloquially in the passage is closest in meaning to

- informally
- normally
- intentionally
- sarcastically

The word distinctive is closest in meaning to

- formal
- glamorous
- comfortable

- characteristic

The word **illicit** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- private
- commercial
- prohibited
- approved

The phrase **a breadth of duties** is closest in meaning to

- a manageable number of duties
- a variety of duties
- very specific duties
- a limited number of duties

Answers: “informally,” “characteristic,” “prohibited,” “a variety of duties.”

Part Two

Stephen King is a **prolific** writer. In fact, he is the author of 54 novels and 6 non-fiction books. King’s first published novel was *Carrie*. King became so frustrated while writing this novel that he threw his original draft in the garbage. His wife retrieved it and encouraged him to keep writing. The book was a phenomenal success, and King earned over \$400,000 from paperback sales. However, this book was not to be King’s most well-regarded title: that **distinction** belongs to his novel, “It,” which despite being one of his most

dense books, is so engrossing that readers usually finish it in a matter of days.

The word prolific in the passage is closest in meaning to

- respected
- productive
- popular
- terrific

The word distinction in the passage is closest in meaning to

- honor
- advantage
- capability
- discretion

The word dense in the passage is closest in meaning to

- compact
- delightful
- organized
- heavy

The word engrossing in the passage is closest in meaning to

- shocking

- fascinating
- upsetting
- progressing

Answers: “productive,” “honor,” “heavy,” “fascinating.”

Part Three

The American aviator Charles A. Lindberg rose to fame when he piloted his custom built, single-engine plane *Spirit of St. Louis* on the first nonstop flight across the Atlantic from New York to Paris in 1927. In 1929, Lindberg, who was wondering what was next in aviation, came across a newspaper article about the rocket scientist Robert Goddard. As an **advocate** of early air travel, Lindberg set out to meet Goddard and the two began a lifelong friendship. This relationship was to help **sow the seeds** of the space program. Goddard conducted experiments with liquid-fueled rockets, and Lindbergh was convinced that Goddard’s work might one day help **facilitate** a trip to the moon. Lindberg was Goddard’s biggest champion and even convinced the philanthropist David Guggenheim to grant him a hundred thousand dollars, a huge sum at the time, to continue his work on missiles. Eventually, Goddard’s contributions to the military would prove invaluable. He **anticipated** the technical details of German’s V-2 missiles including gyroscopic control and power-driven fuel pumps. During World War II, Goddard was assigned by the U.S. Navy to develop jet-assisted takeoffs and liquid-propelled rocket motors. The achievements of Goddard were largely unrecognized until the dawn of the Space Age, but he has been belatedly and richly honored by NASA, which named the Goddard Space Flight Center in

Maryland after him.

The word **advocate** is closest in meaning to

- detractor
- observer
- laborer
- supporter

By stating their relationship helped **sow the seeds** of the space program, the author means they

- sped up the development of the space program
- encouraged people to join the space program
- donated money to the space program
- invented a new space program

The word **facilitate** is closest in meaning to

- simplify
- expedite
- fabricate
- obstruct

The word **anticipated** is closest in meaning to

- participated

- observed
- suppressed
- predicted

Answers: “supporter,” “sped up the development of the space program,” “expedite,” “predicted”

Part Four

Edgar Allan Poe, known as “The Father of the Detective Story” was an American writer, poet, and literary critic. Born in 1809 in Boston, Poe’s first years were **bleak**. At two, his mother passed away, and his father abandoned the family. Poe was taken in by John Allan, a wealthy tobacco merchant who gave Poe his middle name. In 1826, Poe enrolled at the University of Virginia, but his gambling losses led to such terrible arguments with John Allan over money that he **ultimately** dropped out. After a failed attempt at a military career, Poe moved in with his aunt and married her daughter, his first cousin. Poe then accepted a job as a literary critic for the newspaper *The Southern Literary Messenger*. At that post, Poe both wrote stories and penned **scathing** book reviews. The severity of his reviews earned him the nickname “the tomahawk man.” After leaving due to a salary dispute, Poe and his family moved to Richmond, Virginia where Poe **took the reins** at the newspaper *The Messenger*, becoming the chief editor. This position offered Poe a decent salary, and he began to pursue his goal of publishing his own work with more **vigor**. It was during this time that he wrote several short stories and his only novel, “The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket.”

Poe always wanted to be remembered as a writer and a poet, not an editor, and he worked hard to that end. He met with some success in 1840 when he released his book of stories “Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.” This book cemented his reputation as an eccentric person, with grotesque imagery and descriptive leaps into the world of the bizarre. In 1845 Poe achieved instant success and recognition with his poem “The Raven.” However, after the death of his wife two years later, Poe struggled with both his health and finances. Poe’s death was the most mysterious part of his life. On his way to Philadelphia from Virginia, Poe disappeared. He was found in Baltimore several days later. His condition was alarming. He was intoxicated and disheveled, dressed in dirty clothes that were much too big for him. Poe was never coherent long enough to explain how he had ended up in this dire condition. He collapsed and was carried to the hospital where he died soon after. All medical records of his stay in the hospital were lost, and the cause of death was never determined. Poe’s legacy continues to this day, detectable in the television programs, movies, and books that have elements of the horror and mystery that he used in his writing.

The word bleak is closest in meaning to

- peaceful
- dreary
- eventful
- conventional

The word ultimately is closest in meaning to

- unfortunately

- consequently
- permanently
- finally

The word **scathing** is closest in meaning to

- harsh
- entertaining
- sarcastic
- disappointing

The phrase **took the reins** is closest in meaning to

- improved
- managed
- changed
- opened

The word **vigor** is closest in meaning to

- courage
- certainty
- apathy
- energy

The word **cemented** is closest in meaning to

- promised
- named
- solidified
- spread

The word **eccentric** is closest in meaning to

- peculiar
- eclectic
- inventive
- fearful

The word **disheveled** is closest in meaning to

- uncleanly
- abnormal
- disconnected
- disturbed

The word **dire** is closest in meaning to

- disturbing
- unpleasant
- offensive

- critical

The word **detectable** is closest in meaning to

- constant
- repetitive
- relatable
- noticeable

Answers: “dreary,” “finally,” “harsh,” “managed,” “energy,” “solidified,” “peculiar,” “uncleanly,” “critical,” “noticeable.”

A recap of the key points you need to know:

- Work on expanding your vocabulary as much as possible before the TOEFL test.
- If you know the correct answer, choose it and move on quickly. There are other questions that are more time-consuming than vocabulary questions.
- Always read the sentence that has the highlighted vocabulary word in it *carefully* before choosing your answer.
- Use the strategies I have given you to find the correct answer.
- If these strategies do not work, try each word one at a time and eliminate the words that are definitely wrong and take your best guess.

- Do not spend very much of your total reading time on vocabulary questions.
- Never leave any questions unanswered. If all else fails, guess.

Chapter 2

Detail Questions and Negative Detail Questions

Detail questions in the TOEFL are questions that ask you to find one idea in the passage. Although they may be presented in different words, they will ask you for a person, place, thing, date, method, reason, and so on. They are multiple choice. You must choose one of four possible answers. They usually give you the paragraph number, but some ask you about the entire passage. **These questions are very common in the TOEFL!** They look like this:

According to paragraph 1, who...

According to paragraph 1, why...

According to paragraph 2, what...

According to paragraph 2, which...

According to paragraph 2, which of the following is true about (x)?

According to paragraph 2, what is given as a reason for (x)?

According to paragraph 3, what point does the author make about (x)?

Paragraph 4 supports which of the following statements about (x)?

According to paragraph 5, what is the relationship between (x) and (y)?

According to paragraph 5, (x) does (y) by

According to paragraph 5, (x) did (y) because

... and so on!

As you can see, detail questions can vary a lot in how they appear on the test. You will know it is a detail question if it is not asking for overall comprehension or an inference, but asking you to find a detail from the passage or a specific paragraph. For example, if you think about it, the question “According to paragraph 2, (x) did (y) because... is *really* asking, “Why did (x) do (y)?” **Sometimes it helps to restate the question in your mind in a simpler form!**

It helps to use a strategy to answer detail questions. I suggest the following steps:

1. **Read the question carefully and understand what it is asking you to do.** I know this seems obvious, but a lot of students only skim the question quickly. You should skim the paragraph for keywords, but do NOT skim the question.
2. **Find the keywords in the question.** Then skim the reading passage to find the same keywords **or their synonyms**. The keywords are the words that are unique in the question. Many questions will start with “According to paragraph 3...” so those words are not unique. Pick out the unique words.

In the examples below, I have underlined the keywords and put the most important keywords in **bold**. I have also included examples of the thought process you should follow:

According to paragraph 3, when did **Prohibition** begin?

*(I am looking for a date. I should skim the paragraph and look for the word **Prohibition**, then find the date when it began.)*

According to paragraph 4, who was asked to monitor the sky for possible **meteorites**?

*(I am being asked to find either a person or an organization. I should look for the keyword **meteorite** first, and then read to understand who was asked to monitor the sky for them.)*

According to paragraph 4, plants perform **photosynthesis** by

*(I am looking for a method of how something is done. I should find the keyword **photosynthesis** first, and then skim for how plants perform this.)*

According to paragraph 4, what is the relationship between yawning and brain activity?

*(I am looking for a relationship between two things. I should find the words **yawning** and **brain activity** and then look for information about this relationship.)*

3. Once you have found the keywords in the paragraph, read the sentence that has the keyword or words carefully. Most of the time, the answer to detail questions will be found close to the keyword or words. Sometimes, though, you **do** have to read a little further. Try to guess the answer before you look at the answer choices.

4. Read the answer choices. Remember; don't do this BEFORE you locate the keyword, as you may become confused by so much information. Find the keyword and try to determine the answer in your own mind before you look

at the answer choices. You may have to look back and forth from the passage to the possible answers. If the answer is not clear, go to the next step:

5. **Use the process of elimination aggressively and quickly.** Eliminate any trap answers (I will list the TOEFL traps below), then choose the correct answer.

TRAPS

Trying to guess using logic: Sometimes, students will try to pick the answer using logic. In other words, they try to infer the answer. However, detail questions are different than inference questions. The answer will be stated in the passage. You should not need to make inferences for this question type.

Answers that have some of the same words as the paragraph but change the meaning or order: This is the biggest trap on the TOEFL. The TOEFL will use some of the same words near your keyword, but in a misleading way. They are trying to catch students who only have a superficial, limited knowledge of English. Make sure your answer is correct, not just a repetition of words found in the passage.

Answers that add information that is not in the original passage: Some answers will look tempting because they repeat words from the passage, but they *add* one or two words that make them incorrect.

Extreme answers: These are answers that use extreme words or language such as “only,” “ever,” “forever,” “all,” “always,” “never,” “has a sharp divide,” “ended abruptly,” etc. Extreme answers are usually not correct. If you think an extreme answer is correct, go back and **make sure** the passage supports the extreme language.

Answers that are not true or are contrary to the passage's main idea:

Some answers will not be true, but they may look believable. Read carefully. Also, make sure that answers are not contrary to the *main idea*.

Mixed answers and far away answers: Eliminate any answers that mix up two ideas that do not belong together. Also, be careful of any answer choice that is not located near the key words in the passage. These are “far away” answers and are usually traps.

Let's start with a simple example which shows you how easy this can be if you focus on finding the keywords from the question in the passage.

Blue morpho butterflies are beautiful butterflies that live in the South American rainforest. They are one of the largest and most famous butterflies in the world. The top of the blue morpho's wings are bright blue with black around the edges. Microscopic scales on the wings reflect light and create the dazzling blue color. The undersides of the morpho's wings are brown with spots. When the blue morpho flies, its wings flash from a brilliant blue to a dull brown. This makes the butterfly seem to continuously appear and disappear and is known as “flashing.” Flashing makes it very difficult for a predator to follow the morpho. The male's wings are broader than the female's wings and are slightly brighter. Like other butterflies, morphos have two antennae, two fore wings and two hind wings. Blue morphos are very active, constantly flying around the forest looking for nectar. Males are playful and often fly together, but will chase off a rival when a potential mate is present. When it is time to mate, male morphos release chemicals called pheromones to attract as many females as possible. When the female's eggs are fertilized, they lay them in a safe place and fly away; the eggs hatch within nine days. The entire life cycle of the morpho is a mere 120 days.

According to the passage, which of the following is true about the wings of the male morpho butterfly?

- They are brightly colored to attract females
- They are used to intimidate rivals
- They have flashy colors that scare away predators
- They are wider than the female's wings

The fourth answer is correct. Notice if we really focus on the keywords in the question, “wings of the male morpho” and find the sentence where those words are mentioned, it becomes *much* easier to find the correct answer. Use this strategy in the TOEFL. ***Note:** the third answer is tempting, but the passage doesn't say the colors *scare away* predators, only that the colors make the morpho *difficult to follow*.

Here is another example. Remember: find the keyword or words in the question first, and then look for them in the passage!

Antarctica is the coldest, windiest, and driest continent on Earth. About 98 percent of Antarctica is covered by the Antarctic ice sheet, a sheet of ice averaging at least 1.6 kilometers thick. This sheet of ice holds 90 percent of all the ice on the planet. The size of Antarctica varies from season to season, as the ice sheet expands during the cold winters, almost doubling in size. Despite the thick ice, Antarctica is considered a desert as so little moisture falls from the sky. The inner regions of Antarctica receive a mere fifty millimeters of rainfall a year. This moisture doesn't soak into the ground, but rather freezes and piles on top of other ice. Antarctica is subject to colossal blizzards in which snow and ice whip across the surface of the continent,

similar to a sandstorm. Antarctica has no trees or bushes, only some sparse vegetation of mosses and algae. A combination of freezing temperatures, poor soil quality, and a lack of sunlight inhibit plant growth. As a result, the diversity of plant life is very low and limited in distribution. The only human presence on Antarctica is the scientists who work at a variety of science research stations. Scientists drill into ice cores, which can provide a climate history of the region over thousands of years.

According to the passage, Antarctica is considered a desert because

- moisture does not soak into the ground
- blizzards move snow and ice away from the surface
- there is very little precipitation
- it is inhospitable to vegetation and plant life

The third answer is correct. If you focus on the keyword, “desert” you will find the answer easily, in the same sentence as the keyword. If “little moisture falls from the sky” then there is very little precipitation.

Try another example:

During the 11th century, philosophy developed rapidly. A debate emerged over the concept of a universal truth. The ideas of Aristotle and his push for empiricism and rationalism were gaining ground, but society’s values were still deeply attached to church teachings. Peter Abelard, a monk who read about theology extensively, arranged his work into a compilation entitled *Sic et Non* (Yes and No) which outlined the rules which students should follow to reconcile contradictions in quotations from church authorities. He also

authored *Theologia*, a book which analyzed the mysteries of The Trinity, but it was condemned and burned by the Church. Gradually, universities replaced cathedral schools in major European cities. With this change came a shift to a more empirical approach towards understanding the fundamental nature of reality. In his masterpiece *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas attempted to use a systematic approach to truth and reason. This work, although unfinished, provides logical arguments for the theology that is practiced in the West. The philosopher Bertrand Russel commented on *Summa Theologica*, stating that “The finding of arguments for a conclusion given in advance is not philosophy, but special pleading. I cannot, therefore, feel that it deserves to be put on a level with the best philosophies either of Greece or of modern times.”

According to the passage, who wrote *Summa Theologica*?

- Aristotle
- Peter Abelard
- Bertrand Russel
- Thomas Aquinas

The fourth answer is correct. This question would be tricky to a student who reads the passage and doesn't use the strategy I gave you. If we find the keywords, *Summa Theologica*, we see this work was written by Thomas Aquinas. The answer “Peter Abelard” is tempting, but if we read carefully, we see he wrote *Theologia*, not *Summa Theologica*. The answer Bertrand Russel is tempting also—but if we read carefully we see he only commented on *Summa Theologica*, he did not write it.

SPECIAL THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

These are not traps, but they are things you should know before you take the TOEFL.

1. **Be aware of the use of synonyms in the correct answer. The TOEFL will often NOT use the same words in the correct response that were used in the reading.**

For example:

The Cretaceous Period was the last segment of the Mesozoic Era. It lasted approximately 79 million years, from the small extinction event that closed the Jurassic Period about 145.5 million years ago to the major Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event 65 million years ago. One of the most fascinating aspects of the Cretaceous Period is its abrupt end. Over 50% of species went extinct relatively quickly, permanently disappearing from the Earth. The geology of the Earth changed during this time as well. Over a period of 100,000 years, volcanic activity increased and seafloor spreading expelled more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The net effects of these changes were warmer summers and cooler winters. The polar ice caps melted, and global forest fires raged. A worldwide layer of sediment indicates that during this time, sediment was cast into the atmosphere, blocking the sun. With a lack of sunlight to warm the planet, parts of the Earth were plunged into extreme cold. Plants that depended on sunlight died off quickly, as did animals that consumed the flora as a food source. Dinosaurs, which for millions of years had enjoyed a temperate climate, disappeared from the Earth. It is hypothesized that dinosaurs could not tolerate the extreme swings in temperature. This may have caused their extinction, but is not the only

hypothesis.

According to the passage, which of the following is a possible reason for the extinction of the dinosaurs?

- An increase in volcanic activity which expelled excessive carbon dioxide
- A layer of sediment that killed off plant life quickly
- Changes in the lengths of the summers and winters
- The change from a mild to a more severe climate

The fourth answer is correct. The first answer is a “far away” answer. The second choice is a “mixed answer.” It takes two things mentioned: *a layer of sediment* and *plants killed off quickly*, but combines them incorrectly. The third is the trap of “added information,” because although summers and winters are mentioned, the *lengths* are not. The fourth answer is correct because the passage says “It is hypothesized that dinosaurs could not tolerate these extreme swings in temperature.” But notice the words are not the same in the answer as in the original passage. **Please remember the importance of vocabulary. You need a good vocabulary to identify synonyms!**

Try this exercise:

Rivers that cut through arid lands supply the lifeblood for crops and harvests in these otherwise unproductive areas. The longest river in the world is the Nile, rising south of the Equator and flowing northward through Africa to drain into the Mediterranean Sea. The Nile flows through deserts but promotes fertile green plant life along its banks. The availability of water

from the Nile throughout the year in combination with the area's high temperatures make sustained cultivation possible. The Nile's river system is considered exogenous because its main source of water is from tributaries, smaller rivers that flow into it. The Nile flows through eleven countries and is the main water source for Egypt and Sudan. Another river that supplies water to dry lands is the Euphrates River, which begins in Turkey and cuts across Syria and Iraq to join the Tigris in Shatt al-Arab, ultimately emptying into the Persian Gulf. The Ataturk dam controls the flow of the Euphrates. When this dam interferes with water flow, it causes drought-like conditions in Iraq and Syria. Because millions of people depend on the water flow of Euphrates, it is crucial that there be international agreements about the damming of this river to avoid potentially deadly conflicts.

According to the paragraph, which of the following is true about The Nile's river system?

- Its flow hinders harvesting along its banks
- Its main water comes from outside sources
- It passes through the hottest part of the desert
- The dam that controls it may lead to conflicts in the future

The second answer is correct. The passage says, "...its main source of water is from tributaries, smaller rivers that flow into it." The first answer contradicts the passage's main idea, so it can't be true. The third answer is too extreme—we can't conclude that the Nile passes through the *hottest* part of the desert. The fourth answer refers to the Euphrates, not the Nile. It is a good example of a "far away" answer. It is found far from the keywords.

Here is another example to try:

Forest fires can become massive quickly and have the ability to spread across vast distances, jumping over rivers and roads in the process. Dry, dead trees killed by disease act as fuel to spread the fire further. Fires can damage the soil, especially as they burn through the layer of leaf litter and other organic material on top of the soil. This organic material, which had been protecting the soil from erosion, can be removed by an especially intense fire. The heat from the fire can also cause the soil to become hydrophobic- that is, the soil starts to repel water that would otherwise seep into it. Despite all of these facts, fires in North America are not considered as destructive as they were a century ago. In fact, there are benefits to forest fires. Fires remove dying trees infested with insects and promote the growth of new, healthier trees. An additional impact is that alien plants can become established in new areas where they had previously been excluded by the dominance of native plants. In some areas in North America, controlled fires are used to meet specific land management objectives. Controlled fires can reduce dry litter on the forest floor and thereby decrease the likelihood of an uncontrollable wildfire.

The passage supports which of the following statements regarding the impact of fires in a forest?

- They stop the spread of disease through the forest
- They reduce the diversity of the forest ecosystem
- They increase the soil's ability to retain water
- They allow migrant plants to take hold in new places

The correct answer is the fourth answer. It paraphrases, "An additional impact is that alien plants can become established in new areas where they had previously been excluded

because of the dominance of native plants.” ***Note** that “migrant” is a synonym for “alien.” None of the others answers are true according to the passage.

2. In some TOEFL passages, it is harder to use the keywords to locate the answer because the keywords are repeated many times in the passage. In this situation, you will have to read more carefully and use the process of elimination aggressively. Review the TOEFL traps at the beginning of this chapter before you proceed.

Here is an example:

Bull sharks are famously known as the most aggressive sharks in the world. They are one of the few shark species that can swim in both fresh and salt water. Bull sharks are capable of this because of their unusual kidneys. The kidneys of bull sharks can adjust to the saline concentration of the water. When moving gradually into freshwater for migratory purposes or in search of food, the kidneys of bull sharks remove less salt and more urea from the bloodstream through urination. This is a reversal of the regular marine shark method of osmoregulation. Bull sharks can live in estuaries or freshwater. In fact, bull sharks have been seen in the Mississippi River as far north as the state of Illinois. They have been spotted in the Amazon River. Lake Nicaragua, the largest lake in South America, is home to a number of bull sharks. There are so many that locals dubbed them Nicaragua sharks. On the other hand, in Africa they are called Zambezi sharks because of their presence in the Zambezi River. After Hurricane Katrina, bull sharks were even seen in Lake Pontchartrain. The fact that they are found in such disparate locations accounts at least in part for their fearsome reputation, as their ability to adapt to both salt and fresh water puts them into more frequent contact with people who tend to swim and fish along shorelines.

The passage supports which of the following statements about bull sharks?

- They are sometimes forced into rivers from the ocean
- They are called by a different name depending on the region
- Their tendency to swim north puts them in unexpected locations
- They are the only sharks that can survive in both fresh and salt water

The correct answer is the second answer because the passage says, “There are so many that locals dubbed them Nicaragua sharks. On the other hand, in Africa they are called Zambezi sharks because of their presence in the Zambezi River.” Why are the other answers incorrect? The first answer is incorrect because it adds the word “forced,” which is not found in the original passage. The third is incorrect because while the passage mentions that they have been spotted in northern areas, it does not say they “tend” to move north. The fourth answer is “extreme” because it says bull sharks are the *only* sharks that can survive in both fresh and salt water. The original passage does not support this extreme language.

Try another example:

Pastoralism is an economic activity involving the care of herds of domesticated livestock. The archaeological record indicates the presence of pastoralists in the Middle East as early as 8,000 BC. Pastoralism is more productive than hunting and gathering. Hunters kill and consume the animal immediately, whereas in the practice of pastoralism the goal is to increase the number of animals in the herd. Pastoralists are mainly concerned with raising animals for milk, wool, hair, or for traction to help pull heavy farm implements. There is a greater net return in pastoralism than hunting since the

animals need not be killed to continue to be useful, and their offspring can be added to the herd. There are, however, disadvantages to pastoralism. It is precarious in nature because the population of the herd can be suddenly reduced by drought or disease. In addition, it may not be the most efficient use of land. When land is instead cultivated for grain, the same amount of land can produce ten times as many calories. Therefore, the number of people depending on pastoralism to survive must necessarily be low. However, in areas where land cultivation is impossible and crops that are consumed by humans do not grow, pastoralism is an effective way to store calories. When food becomes scarce, the milk or flesh of the animal can be consumed. Pastoral production is practiced in some of the world's driest climates and supports the livelihood of those living in rural areas on approximately a quarter of the world's land.

According to the passage, which of the following is true about pastoralism?

- Pastoralism replaced hunting and gathering in the Middle East
- Pastoralism is most efficient when it is combined with the cultivation of grain
- Pastoralism is only able to support a small population
- Pastoralists only consume their animals for meat during times of drought

The third answer is correct. The passage states that “the number of people depending on pastoralism to survive must necessarily be low.” The first answer has the word “replaced,” which is not supported by the passage. The second answer is a “mixed answer,” and the fourth answer is an “extreme” answer because it says pastoralists *only* consume their animals for meat during times of drought.

3. It is VERY IMPORTANT to be aware that sometimes a very simple answer is correct, even if complex answers look better. The TOEFL will use complex answers that look really good- they have a lot of information, and they contain words you read in the passage, so they appear correct. But they mislead you, and the simpler answer is correct! Check out the example below:

The white-tailed jackrabbit is one of the least social of hares. It prefers to remain solitary and is usually only seen in pairs during the mating season. The males are aggressive towards other males and may attack if competing for a female. These attacks do not usually lead to death or even injury but are solely to establish dominance. The jackrabbit multiplies quickly as females can have several litters a year, and the young require little maternal care. Overall, it is considered to be a rather large hare, although there are two species that are larger: the Alaskan hare and the Arctic hare. It has distinctive long, black-tipped ears, powerful back legs, and a white tail. It is the most widespread of any jackrabbit, found in such far-flung places as California, Montana, Wyoming, and in the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. These rabbits are commonly spotted on plains, prairies, or in coniferous forests, but are also attracted to aspen and fir groves. After a heavy rainfall, they gather on the side of highways to eat the green, succulent vegetation that thrives from the water runoff. They can be found at elevations of up to ten thousand feet, and in fact they prefer higher, rainier altitudes over more arid lowlands.

The paragraph supports which of the following statements about white-tailed jackrabbits?

- They are not the biggest type of hare

- They are native to low, arid lands but move up to the highlands
- They prefer coniferous forests at high altitudes
- They are more commonly found in Canada than the United States

The first answer is correct, and it's a perfect example of a correct answer that doesn't look appealing. The passage says, "Overall, it is considered to be a rather large hare, although there are two species that are larger." This answer does not look attractive because the other answers are more complex; however, it is the only answer that is supported by the passage. The second answer is not correct because the passage does not give this information. The third answer is a "mixed answer." It takes two things that are given in the passage: *coniferous forests* and *high altitudes*. However, these two things are NOT together in the reading. The fourth answer is not mentioned as true.

Here is another example:

A tsunami is a series of ocean waves that send surges of water up to 100 feet tall crashing onto coastlines. These enormous walls of water are incredibly destructive. Tsunamis are caused by undersea earthquakes occurring at tectonic boundaries. As the plate boundaries rise and fall, water is displaced and large rolling waves begin to move across the ocean floor, growing into tsunamis. Tsunamis can reach a speed of 800 kilometers per hour—the same speed as a jet airplane. They lose very little energy as they travel because of their long wavelength. Sailors on ships at sea may not even notice a tsunami wave. On the surface of the open ocean, a tsunami may only be 30 centimeters tall. However, as they reach the shoreline, the shallow bottom slows them down, and they grow in energy and height. The energy becomes compressed, and since the top of each wave moves faster than the bottom, they rise dangerously. Tsunamis may crash onto the shore like a wall of water

or flood an area quickly, but in either case, they carry tremendous power and energy and cause millions of dollars of destruction. If the tsunami occurs at high tide or at the same time as storm waves in an area, the potential for destruction is even greater. Locally generated tsunamis increase the risk of loss of life as there may not be enough time for emergency services to evacuate the area.

According to the passage, tsunamis are more dangerous to people on shore than on ships because

- The waves hit the shoreline too quickly for a proper evacuation of the area
- They travel slowly in the deep ocean but speed up to over 800 kilometers per hour near the shoreline
- The people on ships are warned of the dangers of an approaching tsunami before the people on shore
- They become higher and more forceful near the shore

The correct answer is the fourth answer. It sounds very simple, but it is the only answer supported by the passage, which says, “Sailors on ships at sea may not even notice a tsunami wave. On the surface of the open ocean, a tsunami may only be 30 centimeters tall. However, as they reach the shoreline, the shallow bottom slows them down, and they grow in energy and height.”

Here is another one to try:

Obsessive-compulsive disorder, or OCD, is a psychiatric disorder that affects approximately 2.3% of the population. People suffering from OCD have both

obsessions and compulsions. Obsessions are unwanted thoughts that intrude on a person's peace of mind and cause anxiety. As a result, people with OCD engage in ritualistic, compulsive behaviors in order to keep this anxiety at bay. Some examples of rituals are hand-washing, counting, arranging items, or turning lights on and off. Ironically, these rituals may actually exacerbate OCD as they cause a brief period of relief, but are soon followed by more and more intrusive thoughts and compulsions. This becomes a vicious cycle that is difficult to escape. Currently, cognitive behavioral therapy is recommended as the best course of treatment for a person suffering from OCD. The patient is subjected to situations in which he or she would normally engage in a compulsive behavior, but is prevented from doing so. Eventually, the sufferer will become accustomed to the anxiety-provoking situation and begin to tolerate it. Over time, cognitive behavioral therapy can significantly reduce both obsessions and compulsions in a patient.

According to the reading, why do people with OCD perform rituals?

- To maintain order and cleanliness in their environment
- To prevent intrusive thoughts from disrupting them in the future
- To reduce anxiety
- To get rid of a physical manifestation of pain in the sufferer

The third answer is correct. It looks simple, but it is supported by the passage. The passage says "people with OCD engage in ritualistic, compulsive behaviors in order to keep this anxiety at bay."

4. Be aware that the TOEFL will include answer choices that were mentioned in the passage, but do not answer the exact question posed. In

other words, they are facts from the reading, but they do not actually answer the question. Read all questions very carefully. Consider the following example:

The greatest beneficiaries of the Industrial Revolution were the middle class, who were suddenly able to afford household items that made their lives far more comfortable. There was also a more general improvement in their standard of living, with access to healthy diets and better health care. In a very short time, private businesses were able to influence government policy. The use of steam power led to a dramatic growth in newspaper publishing. Before the use of steam power, a crew of three men on a hand press could print 250 pages an hour, whereas with the use of the steam press, 1,100 pages could be printed in the same amount of time. Advertisers began to see opportunity in the widened circulation of newspapers and bought space to market their wares. By 1835, newspapers had freed themselves from government control, and the United States had the highest readership of newspapers in the world. Each state began to provide mandatory, free education to the masses. Literacy rates soared as a result. Thriving new industries required specific jobs. There was an uptick in the demand for engineers, clerical workers, and teachers. Yet, the working poor relegated to factory jobs found it difficult to take advantage of the rise in opportunities, education, and comforts offered to the middle class.

The sudden increase in newspaper publishing during the Industrial Revolution was caused by

- A push from advertisers to increase the circulation of newspapers to market their products
- The desire of the middle class to use the newspaper industry to influence

political decisions

- The efficiency of steam power over the traditional methods of newspaper printing
- A jump in literacy rates which increased the public demand for reading materials

The third answer is correct. We know this because the passage says, “The use of steam power led to a dramatic growth in newspaper publishing.” The other choices do not answer the question.

Let’s try another:

On any day in the Italian city of Pisa, dozens of tourists gather to take pictures of one of the world’s most famous architectural feats: The Leaning Tower of Pisa. This freestanding bell tower has become famous all over the world for its conspicuous tilt to the south. Construction on the tower began in 1173. By the time the third story was built, the building’s structure had already begun to settle unevenly on the clay and sand beneath it. When war broke out between the Italian cities of Pisa and Genoa, construction was suspended for almost a hundred years. During this time, the foundation settled even more into the ground. When construction resumed in 1272, famed engineer Giovanni di Simone tried to correct the lean by making the shorter side taller by adding masonry. This made the problem worse as the extra weight from the masonry materials sunk the tower even further. Recently, in an attempt to keep the tower from collapse, engineers have siphoned earth from underneath it. In addition, extra weight was added to the north side. Due in large part to these efforts, The Leaning Tower of Pisa should be standing for another 200 years before it finally collapses for good.

According to the reading, what initially caused the Leaning Tower of Pisa to lean south?

- The addition of masonry to the short side
- Earth that was siphoned from underneath the tower
- The clay underneath the tower causing slippage
- A foundation that rested unevenly on the ground

The correct answer is the fourth answer. The passage says, “By the time the third story was built, the building’s structure had already begun to settle unevenly on the clay and sand beneath it.” **Notice again how important it is to read the question carefully-** if you miss the word “initially” in the question, it is very easy to get this question wrong.

5. Be aware that the correct answer is often a paraphrase of a sentence or sentences you saw in the reading. Consider the following examples:

Feudalism refers to the dominant social system of medieval Europe from the 9th to the 15th century. Under this system, members of noble families held land for the Crown, and in exchange provided military service to the Crown. Those of the peasant class were obligated to live on this land and cultivate it without being paid, and were required to pay homage to their lords with labor and the production of goods from the land. The peasants were essentially performing forced labor and lived under bondage. Everything changed when the plague swept Europe, killing one-third of the population. The plague, which many called “The Black Death,” was caused by bacteria that could pass easily from one person to another. It was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 75 to 200 million people. Peasants who survived the plague were in a position of

greater economic power. They were able to bargain for wages because labor had become scarce. Peasants were not granted outright freedom but could negotiate freedom from their lords after they had worked for them for one year. The nobility reacted to the increased power of peasants by setting a fixed wage and violently suppressing any uprisings. Despite these efforts, records indicate that peasants who survived were able to accumulate wealth by taking over the land of noble families that had succumbed to the plague. Feudalism was slowly phased out by these changes, and by 1485 only one percent of the population of Europe still lived under bondage.

According to the passage, the plague affected the lives of peasants by

- increasing the amount of violence between peasants
- putting them in a better negotiating position
- releasing them from bondage within a one year period
- allowing them to purchase land at a reasonable price

The second answer is correct. It paraphrases, “Peasants who survived the plague were in a position of greater economic power. They were able to bargain for wages...” The other answers look appealing because they contain words from the passage, but they do not answer the question correctly.

Here is one more:

The spices that are now familiar and plentiful at the grocery store do not reveal their fascinating history. The spice trade was once the largest industry in the world and spices were considered extremely valuable. Nutmeg used to be more valuable than its weight in gold, and cloves were used to pay the

bonuses of dockworkers in London. When the Visigoths took over Rome in 410 AD, they demanded 3,000 pounds of peppercorns to return the city. Used in food preservation, cooking, and even medicine, spices were carefully guarded as they were generators of immense wealth for those who possessed them. The spice trade began over 4,000 years ago in the Middle East. Arabic spice merchants traveled long distances on camels and drove up the value of their products by telling fantastical stories of fighting dragons and climbing mountains to retrieve their spices. From the 8th to the early 15th century, the Republic of Venice acted as a middleman between Europe and the Middle East, dominating trade and becoming exorbitantly wealthy by charging hefty tariffs on imported spices. Without any direct access to the Middle East, Europeans had no choice but to pay the high fees to the Venetians. The spice trade changed dramatically during the European Age of Discovery in the 15th century. Navigational equipment had improved, and ships could make long-haul journeys. The wealthy elite sponsored expeditions to find ways to bypass Venice and discover new routes that could be opened up for trade.

According to the passage, the spice trade made the Republic of Venice wealthy and powerful because

- it was in a unique geographical position to charge high taxes on spices
- people had been convinced that the spices from the Middle East had mysterious origins
- spices were a necessary ingredient in both meals and medicines in Europe
- the city of London required spices to pay the salaries of their workers

The first answer is correct. The passage says, "...the Republic of Venice acted as a middleman between Europe and the Middle East, dominating trade and becoming exorbitantly wealthy by charging hefty tariffs..." and the correct answer is a paraphrase of this information.

NEGATIVE DETAIL QUESTIONS

These questions in the TOEFL take a little bit longer than some other types of questions because they ask you what is NOT found in the passage or what is NOT true according to the passage. Instead of looking for one correct answer, you have to eliminate the three that **are** true. This takes more skimming.

Remember: The answer choices will not look the same as they do in the original passage. The answers may use synonyms or change word order.

Negative detail questions look like this:

According to paragraph 1, it is NOT true that...

What is NOT indicated in paragraph 2 about...

All of the following are true EXCEPT...

It is indicated in paragraph 4 that (x) is NOT...

The passage supports all of the following statements about (x) EXCEPT...

...and so on.

For this type of question, follow these steps:

1. **Read the question carefully and identify it as a negative detail question.** Understand what the question is asking you to do.
2. Read the first answer choice. Skim the paragraph and look for the keywords **OR** synonyms of the keywords. If they are present, go to the next answer choice.
3. **Using the process of elimination,** find the answer choice that is **not mentioned** or is **not true** according to the information in the passage.

Sometimes, the answer is given in a straightforward way.

Consider the following example:

Vitamin C, also known as L-ascorbic acid, is an essential nutrient for humans and other animal species. Vitamin C is important for at least eight enzyme reactions in humans. A lack of Vitamin C can cause scurvy, a disease that causes pain, fatigue, and eventually death. It is used in a wide range of metabolic reactions in animals and plants. With the exception of guinea pigs, almost all animals can make Vitamin C internally. Goats, for example, make more than 13,000 mg of Vitamin C when they are healthy. Vitamin C is present in the liver and muscle of most animals. It is also found in the milk of cows, camels, and humans. It is highly concentrated in the livers of cows and pigs. However, since most western diets consist of the muscles rather than the livers of animals, people in the west get most of their Vitamin C from fruits and vegetables such as oranges, berries, bananas, broccoli, and tomatoes. Vitamin C can also be taken in tablet form when fresh produce is not available.

All of the following animals make Vitamin C internally EXCEPT

- goats
- guinea pigs
- cows
- camels

The second answer is correct. This is a straightforward example. Although many animals are mentioned, the passage says, “With the exception of guinea pigs, almost all animals can make Vitamin C internally.”

Here is another example:

Echinacea is an herb which is becoming popular in the treatment of ailments as more people are losing faith in traditional medicine. Its stem, root, and leaves are used to make tablets, juices, and teas which are then commercially sold in alternative health food stores. It was first used by North American Plains Indians for the medicinal qualities they believed it contained. Modern use of Echinacea began when an herbal vitamin manufacturer in Switzerland was given the misinformation that Echinacea was used to prevent colds by Native Americans in South Dakota. In reality, certain tribes used it to treat different complaints that are often associated with colds. For example, the Kiowa tribe consumed Echinacea to treat a cough, the Cheyenne used it for sore throats, and the Pawnee tribe believed it soothed headaches. This led to the myth that Native American tribes used it for the treatment and prevention of colds. As a result, there was a mass marketing campaign to sell Echinacea for this purpose. Although there have been multiple scientific experiments on Echinacea, the results vary to such a great extent that a consensus cannot be reached. Therefore, Echinacea is not currently approved for the prevention or

treatment of any disease or illness by the Food and Drug Administration.

According to the passage, Echinacea was NOT used by Native Americans

- to alleviate headaches
- to relieve an irritated throat
- to prevent colds
- to reduce coughing

The third answer is correct. The passage states, “This led to the myth that Native American tribes used it for the treatment and prevention of colds.” If it is a myth, it is not true.

These questions take practice! Here is another one:

The term “evergreen” refers to a tree or plant that keeps at least some of its leaves year-round. Unlike deciduous plants, evergreens lose their leaves very slowly. Their leaves fall off throughout the four seasons, but they always retain at least some of their leaves. This offers them an advantage: they are not as dependent on the soil for nitrogen, an essential nutrient for tree growth, as deciduous plants are. Evergreens can absorb nitrogen from their leaves all year. This is particularly important in biomes such as the boreal forest and the taiga, where temperatures can drop to well below freezing. At freezing temperatures, organic matter decays very slowly and the nitrogen levels in the soil are poor. Evergreens thrive in these areas. In the tropical rainforest, the bulk of plants are evergreen. In Arctic areas, evergreens are cone-bearing shrubs or trees. In temperate climates, evergreens aid in their own survival. The litter of their needles has a high carbon-nitrogen ratio. When their leaves fall, the soil becomes acidic, so deciduous plants struggle or are completely

unable to grow. The resulting lack of competition from deciduous plants helps evergreens flourish and multiply. Furthermore, adult evergreens provide shelter to juvenile evergreens, establishing their dominance in these areas.

All of the following are true about evergreens EXCEPT

- they hold on to their leaves longer than deciduous plants
- they grow well in soil that lacks nutrients
- they lose leaves in the summer
- they are uncommon in the tropical rainforest

The fourth answer choice is correct. The passage states, “In the tropical rainforest, the bulk of plants are evergreen.” Since “the bulk of” means “most of,” then it’s not true that they are uncommon. Remember to use the process of elimination for the other answers.

Try this example:

Neanderthals were a species of early human named after the Neandertal area in Germany. At different times, Neanderthals have been placed in the human family tree, and at other times they have been classified as a different species. This issue is still under debate. They had a cranial capacity of 1600 cm³, notably larger than the 1400 cm³ average for modern humans, indicating that their brain size was larger. Neanderthals used bone and stone tools, the remains of which have been found in areas as far apart as Western Europe, the Middle East, and Siberia. They went extinct approximately 40,000 years ago. The date of their extinction was moved to much earlier than previous estimates due to improved radiocarbon dating methods. Researchers have put

forth several hypotheses regarding the fate of the Neanderthals. It is possible they were unable to adapt to changes in the climate. Another possibility is that they were killed by encroaching early modern human species. Perhaps Neanderthals simply interbred with humans and ultimately disappeared. In 2013, scientists were able to extract the toe bone of a 50,000-year-old Neanderthal and map the genome. They found similarities from the genome of this Neanderthal and the genomes of modern humans, leading them to infer that Neanderthals have contributed to the DNA of modern humans.

Which of the following is NOT true about Neanderthals?

- Their classification lacks a consensus
- They had larger brains than modern humans
- They went extinct later than previously believed
- They lived in diverse locations

The correct answer is the third answer. Why? According to the passage, “The date of their extinction was moved to much earlier than previous estimates.”

Note: Make sure to use the process of elimination, because a lot of the time the correct answer is one that is simply not mentioned.

Consider the following example:

Toward the end of the fourth century, the Roman Empire crumbled after ruling as the world’s greatest superpower for close to 500 years. Exactly how and when the Roman Empire fell is still being debated by historians, with several theories being put forth as the most probable. The simplest

explanation is that Rome was invaded by Barbarians. Rome had suffered from a string of military losses with tribes it had been fighting with for decades, and in 410, a Visigoth king sacked the city with his Barbarian tribe. Shortly after, in 476, a Germanic revolt overthrew Emperor Romulus Augustulus. For this reason, many people point to 476 as the final year that the Roman Empire held its lofty position. Another theory is that economic troubles which plagued the city caused its downfall. As it was under attack, it was also crumbling due to an oppressive amount of taxation on its citizens and a widening gap between the rich and the poor. The most affluent Romans began to flee the Empire and set up their own fiefdoms to evade taxes, while the Empire relied heavily on labor from slaves and conquered invaders to keep its economy intact. Rome may have suffered from such a devastating labor shortage and economic deficits that it eventually collapsed from financial turmoil. Another theory is that Rome was vulnerable to outside attack due to the rise of the Eastern Empire. The East and West failed to work together and were unable or unwilling to divide resources adequately. The gulf widened as the East became wealthier and the West descended into economic crisis. As the West crumbled before the year 500, the East survived for a thousand more years until the Ottoman Empire overtook it.

All of the following are mentioned as possible reasons for the fall of the Rome Empire EXCEPT

- the toppling of a Roman Emperor
- a shortage of arable land for cultivation
- excessive taxation on citizens
- an unstable division between the East and West

The second choice is correct. All the others are mentioned in the passage, but there is no mention of arable land.

Try another example:

The Mary Celeste was an American cargo ship that left the harbor in New York bound for Genoa, Italy in 1872. On board were the Captain Benjamin Briggs, his wife Sarah, and their daughter Sophia. They had taken eight crew members with them as well. One month later, a British ship spotted the Mary Celeste adrift at sea. Upon boarding, they immediately observed that the captain and the entire crew had vanished. The ship was in seaworthy condition and had a six month supply of food and water on board. This has led to one of the biggest maritime mysteries of all time: what happened to the crew of the Mary Celeste? Wild theories have been considered, from pirates to mutiny. However, it's unlikely that such a small group of passengers would try to overthrow an experienced captain like Briggs. More plausible explanations have been put forth. It could have been an earthquake on the sea floor or rough seas that knocked the voyagers from the ship. Perhaps a broken chronometer or pump prompted Captain Briggs to recommend that the crew abandon ship once he spotted dry land, believing they could easily swim the short distance. As there was alcohol on board, the fumes may have expanded in the heat and caused the hatch to blow, and fearing a possible explosion, the people on board attempted to swim away. The last written entry made in the log book reported land within sight of the ship. It's reasonable to assume they abandoned the ship voluntarily but never made it to shore. For now, this mystery remains unsolved.

All of the following are mentioned as possible reasons for the loss of the crew of the Mary Celeste EXCEPT

- broken maritime instruments
- a leak in the bottom of the ship
- concerns about a potential explosion
- choppy waters

The correct answer is the second answer. It is not mentioned in the passage. The other three answers are mentioned in the passage.

Try a slightly longer example with one question per paragraph:

Porpoises

Porpoises are aquatic marine mammals, members of the toothed whale family. Scientists believe porpoises emerged about 15 million years ago, at which time they were confined to the north of the Pacific Basin. From these beginnings, they slowly evolved into the total of six species of porpoise that exist today. Porpoises are closely related to dolphins but have shorter and more flattened beaks. Their bodies are streamlined, with two limbs that have been modified by evolution into flippers. Dall's porpoise is the fastest swimmer, able to swim over 40 knots. Porpoises can dive to great depths. They have a layer of fat called blubber, which keeps their vital organs protected from the frigid water of their habitat. Porpoises are not very widespread; in fact, most porpoises are found in Polar Regions near the coast. Their diet consists mainly of fish and squid. Males typically mate with multiple females, but females only mate every two or three years. Calves are born in spring or early summer, and females are entirely responsible for rearing the young. Calves usually stay with their mothers for three to six

years, learning how to catch prey, avoid danger, and navigate in the ocean. Porpoises click and whistle for social purposes within their pods of approximately a dozen porpoises.

Porpoise numbers have dipped dramatically in the last few decades. Unfortunately, porpoises are still hunted in some countries for consumption, particularly in the Solomon and Faroe Islands, Japan, and Peru. The vaquita, a very rare species of porpoise, is critically endangered. Its numbers have dropped due to drive hunting, marine pollution, and bycatch. Drive hunting is so named because fishermen “drive” the pods toward a beach or bay with boats, where they are trapped and killed for their meat. Bycatch refers to the unintentional capture of marine animals, and many porpoises are killed in this way. They become entangled in the nets of fishermen and can drown. Porpoises are sometimes kept in captivity and can learn simple tricks. However, they breed more successfully in the wild. A recent study suggests that if measures are not taken to protect these endangered marine mammals, they could be extinct in as little as four years.

Which of the following is NOT indicated about porpoises in paragraph 1?

- They occupy a larger habitat than dolphins
- The males do not participate in rearing the young
- They once had limbs rather than flippers
- They communicate with each other through sound

According to paragraph 2, which of the following has NOT caused porpoise numbers to decline?

- Pollution in the ocean

- Failed attempts to breed in captivity
- Accidental entanglement in fishing nets
- Consumption by humans

For the first question, the first answer is correct. It is not mentioned. For the second question, the second answer is correct. The passage states, “they breed more successfully in the wild,” but a failure to breed in captivity is not given as a *reason* for their decline in numbers.

Final quiz!

The Music of Latin America

Samba is a Brazilian musical genre and dance style, with its roots in Africa via the West African slave trade. It is related to African religious traditions, particularly those of the Congo. The word “samba” is derived from the African word “semba,” which literally translates to “an invitation to dance,” as well as a common appellation for the dance parties held by former slaves in the rural areas of Rio de Janeiro. Today, Samba is an expression of the urban lifestyle of Rio de Janeiro and is inextricably attached to the culture of the Brazilian people. Narrative Samba is meant to be performed by a crowd to the drum beats of hundreds of people who are part of a Samba school performing in Carnival, an annual Brazilian festival. This type of Samba tells a story of religion, history, love, or passion. Its energy and jubilation capture the spirit of Carnival. Numerous instruments are used in Samba, such as the guitar, banjo, keyboard, drums, and maracas, to name a few. Salsa dancing is flamboyant with lots of spins, dips, and turns.

The traditional music of Venezuela, on the other hand, is called Llanera music. It's similar to American country and western music, complete with the romances and adventures of cowboys and laments on the hardships of outdoor labor. In fact, the word Llanera comes from a Spanish word meaning "the plains." Llanera is played on mandolins, violins, harps, and a small guitar called a cuatro. Unlike Samba, Llanera music is relatively unknown outside of Venezuela and Colombia. The sound of Llanera music has been updated to include electrical instruments from its more traditional sound. The dance that accompanies Llanera music is the joropo. The joropo is expressed through hand turns and feet movement. Women make grand sweeping motions with their feet, while men stomp to the rhythm of the music.

Mariachi music has a special place in Mexican history. The songs played by mariachi bands range from poignant songs of romantic longing to up-tempo patriotic songs, and even folksy songs about rural Mexican life. The mariachi style of string instruments can be traced back to colonial times when people from Spain and slaves of African origin mingled with Native Americans to create a unique Mexican culture marked by influences from all these regions. Each had its own signature musical tradition, combined to become today's mariachi. The word "mariachi" was long believed to be derived from the French word for "marriage," as the French had intervened in Mexico in 1860. However, documents have been uncovered that show the term predates the French invasion. As time passed, mariachi music was spread all across Mexico over radio broadcasts. The Mexican government used it to create a unified Mexican identity after the Mexican revolution. By the 1950's, six to eight violins, two trumpets, a small guitar called a vihuela, and a big bass guitar became the permanent fixtures of the mariachi band. The group's instruments and styles have changed very little since that time. In 2011 UNESCO recognized mariachi as an Intangible Cultural Heritage because it

is a performing art that is indelibly woven into the fabric of Mexican culture.

According to paragraph 1, which of the following is true about samba music?

- It has been compared to country music
- It requires very few instruments
- It is played solely during Carnival
- Its genesis is from outside of Brazil

The author's description of Llanera music includes all of the following EXCEPT

- the instruments used
- the themes of the music
- the lyrics of songs
- recent changes in its musical style

Which of the following is NOT true of mariachi music?

- It is a blend of music from different regions
- Its name is derived from a French word
- It was popularized through radio play
- It has not changed dramatically in the last sixty years

For the first question, the fourth answer is correct. The passage says samba has “roots in Africa,” therefore its genesis is from outside of Brazil.

For the second question, the third answer is correct. The lyrics (the words of) the songs are not given. All the other answers are mentioned.

For the third question, the second answer is correct. It isn't true according to the paragraph. The paragraph says, "The word "mariachi" was long believed to be derived from the French word for "marriage," as the French had intervened in Mexico in 1860. However, documents have been uncovered that show the term predates the French invasion."

A recap of the key points you need to know:

- Sometimes it helps to restate the question in a more straightforward way in your mind.
- Always read the questions carefully and find keywords in the question.
- Scan the passage for the keywords and try to guess the answer before you look at the answer choices.
- Eliminate answers that change the meaning, mixed answers (answers that combine information that does not belong together), and answers that only repeat information from the passage but do not answer the question.
- Be aware that the correct answer may use synonyms.
- Remember that often correct answers are very simple answers.
- Be aware that negative detail questions will take longer, and you must use the process of elimination.

Chapter 3

Inference Questions and Reference Questions

On each reading passage, you can expect at least one inference question per passage. Sometimes there is more than one. This chapter is important to help you answer them.

First of all, what is an inference?

An inference is a conclusion you draw based on evidence. It's not a blind guess; it is using the information you read to draw a logical conclusion.

If you read:

The woman rushed around looking frantically for her passport.

You can infer that she is taking a trip outside of the country.

If you read:

The boy used sign language to communicate with his teachers.

You can infer that the boy is deaf.

Inference questions in the TOEFL look like this:

Which of the following can be inferred about (x)?

What can be inferred about (x)?

The author implies that (x)...

Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 1 about (x)?

It can be inferred that (x) affects (y) by...

What does the author suggest about (x)?

Inference questions can be identified by the fact they use the word “infer,” “imply,” or “suggest.” The author *implies*, you, as the reader, *infer*. This means you must look beyond the words that are given in the passage and make a conclusion about what is true based on the information you read.

Your strategy will look like this:

1. **Read the question carefully.** Understand what it is asking you to do. You will know it is an inference question because it will contain a word like “imply” or “infer,” “suggest,” or “inference.” Identify the key words in the question.
2. **Look back at the paragraph indicated by the question.** Starting at the beginning of the paragraph, skim and look for keywords from the question or synonyms to the keywords. Slow down and read those sentences carefully as well as several sentences after the keywords. **It’s important to note that you must read further than you do for detail questions.**
3. **Look at your answer choices and read them carefully.** Choose the one that can be inferred from the paragraph while aggressively eliminating TOEFL traps which I will list below.

TRAPS

The answer contains information beyond what is given in the passage.

Do not pick an answer that contains information beyond what appears in the passage. Answers that require you to take a guess at what is possible if you assume a few other things to be true are not correct.

The answer “could be true.” You may be tempted to use your common sense on these questions, but you should pick an answer that is based on evidence in the passage. A good habit is to ask yourself, “Can I show someone else where I got the information I used to answer this question?”

The answer looks very appealing but is not correct. This is a common TOEFL trap. These trap answers repeat words you saw in the passage. But remember, the correct answer *must* reflect an inference, not just repeat words. These incorrect answers may *contradict* information in the passage. They also may *combine* information that does not belong together.

The answer contains extreme language. Words like *never*, *forever*, *always*, *all*, *impossible*, *completely*, *totally*, *none*, *the best*, *the worst*, *entirely*, and so on, are extreme. There is also extreme wording, such as “it has reached its limit,” “it is certain,” and so on. If you see choices like these, be cautious. The answer may be correct, but it’s less likely to be correct unless it is clear from the reading.

The answer has the wrong tone. When an answer choice has a different tone or attitude than the passage, it is incorrect. For instance, the passage may be describing the negative impact of something, but an answer may include positive information, or vice versa.

The answer is not true OR not mentioned. Some answers will be untrue according to the passage. Some answer choices will add an idea, or information, that is not mentioned. Be careful, because these answers will use vocabulary from the passage.

Take a look at this simple example:

Temperatures in the desert can soar to over 40 degrees Celsius, making survival a challenge for the animals that live there. Many animals migrate, but those that remain in the desert during the hottest part of the summer must take refuge when the sun is at its peak. A cactus wren may rest quietly in the shade of a mesquite tree; a prairie falcon will nest on a ledge of a cool north-facing cliff and avoid the hot south face. The pack rat builds its own microclimate by digging a burrow and covering it in sticks and dried leaves. When temperatures are particularly high, the kangaroo rat will dig a tunnel and plug its entrance with soil, leaving only at night to seek out food.

It can be inferred from the paragraph that all of the places desert animals take refuge in

- are not used after sunset
- are out of direct sunlight
- provide a hiding place from predators
- give the animals a place to store food

In this example, the second answer is correct. The other answers “could be true,” in other words, they are believable. However, we cannot be sure if they are true because they are not mentioned in the passage. Notice that you have to read a little further than you do in

detail questions. **Simply focusing on the sentence with the keywords may not be enough to get the correct answer with inference questions.**

Try this example:

Coastal waters are the most biologically productive parts of the ocean. This is not necessarily surprising since sunlight can penetrate such shallow waters. Sunlight allows phytoplankton, small marine plants, to perform photosynthesis and thrive. Zooplankton, tiny marine organisms which consume phytoplankton, are abundant in these areas as a result. With the tremendous amount of zooplankton available along the coasts, energy conservation in predatory fish is not an issue. Bass, perch, sunfish and sardines are attracted to the coasts to consume this zooplankton and are in turn eaten by larger predatory fish such as sharks and whales. In the deep sea, where light cannot penetrate and meals may be few and far between, energy conservation is a top priority. Deep sea fish have adaptations to help them expend as little energy as possible. The viperfish, for instance, has a modified dorsal fin on its head with a bioluminescent tip so that prey will be attracted to this light and the viperfish does not have to go in search of prey. Swimming around to look for prey would use too much of the valuable energy that it needs to survive and make it more vulnerable to predators. Instead, it simply waits and ambushes prey that swims toward the light it emits.

What can be inferred about why energy conservation is more important in the deep sea than it is on the coasts?

- Deep sea fish have to preserve their energy in order to evade predators
- The lack of light in the deep sea makes it difficult to find prey

- There is less food available in the deep sea than on the coasts
- Fish near the coasts can conserve their energy for times when food is scarce

The third answer is correct. The passage says, “With the tremendous amount of zooplankton available along the coasts, energy conservation in predatory fish is not an issue.” It also says, “In the deep sea, where light cannot penetrate and meals may be few and far between, energy conservation is a top priority.” The other answers are not correct because they go beyond information given in the paragraph.

Here is another example:

Travel in the 19th century in the United States was an uncomfortable experience. Most people in the middle class traveled by rail or by coach. Coaches didn’t have springs for shock absorption, making travel an incredibly bumpy and unpleasant endeavor. All that changed in 1914, when Henry Ford introduced the assembly line for automobile production. Suddenly, owning a car went from being a luxury of the rich to an affordable means of transportation for the average family. An assembly line is a manufacturing process in which parts are added as the semi-finished product moves from work station to work station. Such parts are added in sequence until the project is complete. The assembly line had a revolutionary impact on society. It allowed for a fast and continuous flow of work that cut production time for an entire automobile from twelve hours to 93 minutes. This change allowed Ford to increase his profit margin and lower the cost of the vehicle to consumers. The cost of the Model T, Ford’s innovative automobile, would eventually drop to \$260, the equivalent of approximately \$3,500 today.

It can be inferred from the passage that before 1914

- nobody owned an automobile
- Henry Ford had not yet thought of the assembly line
- automobiles were mostly owned by the wealthy
- the assembly line made innovative automobiles more affordable

The third answer is correct. We can infer this because the passage says, “Suddenly, owning a car went from being a luxury of the rich to an affordable means of transportation for the average family.” The first answer is “too extreme” because of the word *nobody* which is not supported by the reading. The second answer “could be true,” but we can’t say for certain that Henry Ford had not thought of the assembly line. It’s possible he had the idea before 1914. The last answer looks appealing. It repeats information from the passage. However, it’s not correct because this happened *after* 1914. ***Note** how important it is to read the question carefully. If you miss the word “before” you will not get the correct answer.

Let’s try an example about comics:

The origin of comics can be traced to 11th century Japan. These works of art were done on scrolls by the artist and monk Toba Sojo. Sojo satirized life in the Buddhist priesthood by drawing priests as rabbits or monkeys engaging in mischievous behavior. It wasn’t until much later that comics gained a following in the United States. What collectors now refer to as “The Golden Age of Comics” occurred between 1930 and 1959. The original intention of comic publishers was to circulate the comics as widely as possible to advertise various household wares, similar to flyers that promote items in a

modern grocery store. However, comic books grew so popular among children and adults alike that many distributors decided to start charging a dime for them. The superhero comic book dates back to 1938 with the introduction of Superman. Superman was the first character with super-human powers: on the cover, he is lifting a car over his head. Batman, a superhero vigilante, followed a year later. By 1945, over 160 different comic books were released each month in the United States. The characters of Superman and Batman are currently enjoying a revival in Hollywood films.

What can be inferred about the earliest comic books in the United States?

- They were given out free of charge
- They had a superhero as the main character
- The stories told in these comics were later made into films
- Adults were more interested in them than children

The correct answer is the first answer. We can infer they were given out free of charge because the passage says, “....comic books grew so popular among children and adults alike that many distributors *decided to start charging* a dime for them.” Thus, we can infer that at first they were given out for free. The second cannot be inferred because Superman wasn’t introduced until 1938. The third is not correct because although the characters were in movies, we can’t be sure that the stories are the same (this is a “could be true” answer). The last answer is not correct because the passage says, “...comic books grew so popular among children and adults alike...”

Here is another example:

Charles Darwin developed the theory of evolution by natural selection.

According to this theory, the ability to pass on genetic material despite inconstant environmental circumstances makes a species successful. The environment is gradually changing all the time. For instance, rainfall might be slightly higher from one year to the next. The availability and quality of food may differ over time. The climate may become colder or warmer. Humans have certainly interfered with the environment, in particular with the development of agriculture. There is no question that human activity has put tremendous pressure on species to adapt to altered circumstances. The ability to pass on genes, despite these shifts in the environment, makes a species successful under Darwin's theory. However, a species must be able to adapt not only to slow changes but also to catastrophic events. The Earth has been subject to sudden dramatic changes during the course of its 4.5 billion year history, such as abrupt climate changes and even meteor impacts.

What can be inferred about the factors that make a species successful?

- The ability to adapt to human interference is the most important ability for a species to be successful
- The factors which make a species successful do not change very much over time
- The ability to survive gradual change is not the only factor that makes a species successful
- The ability to survive catastrophic events, such as meteor impacts and sudden climate changes, is more important than any other ability

The third answer is correct. The first answer is "too extreme." We can't tell from the text if this is *the most important ability*. The second answer is not mentioned. The fourth answer

is also “too extreme” because it says *more important than any other ability*, which is not reflected in the passage. The third answer is correct because it is supported by the words “However, a species must be able to adapt not only to slow changes, but also...”

Quick Tip: Sometimes the correct answer to an inference question is a clever paraphrase of a sentence you saw in the reading.

Try this example:

At the turn of the 19th Century, most of the United States west of the Appalachian Mountains remained a mystery to all but a few tribes of Native Americans. When President Thomas Jefferson signed the Louisiana Purchase, a land deal between the United States and France in which the U.S. bought over two million square kilometers of land west of the Mississippi River for \$15 million, he was not quite sure exactly what he had bought. In fact, this land purchase nearly doubled the size of the United States, but no reliable maps existed at the time. Jefferson hoped that there was a water route from the mainland of the United States into Asia which could open a trade route between the two continents. Jefferson hired Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, along with 31 others, to explore this new land and report their findings. Lewis, Clark, and the rest of the expedition began their journey near St. Louis, Missouri, in May 1804. In the spring of the following year, they reached the Rocky Mountains. By November, they reached the Pacific Ocean. The Lewis and Clark expedition returned with its findings two years after it had left. Though in the end, they did not find the expected passage,

the information from their journey paved the way for westward expansion. They had not only collected over 300 species of plants and animals for examination but had also provided the President with the first reliable maps of the area.

What can be inferred about the results of the Lewis and Clark expedition?

- It failed to provide Jefferson with useful information
- It opened up trade routes across the country
- It helped boost the agricultural output of the eastern United States
- It increased migration to the west

The correct answer is the fourth answer. The passage says, "...the information from their journey paved the way for westward expansion." The fourth answer is a simple paraphrase of this information. The first answer is not true. The second answer goes beyond the information in the passage. The third answer is not mentioned.

Sometimes these questions will ask you to infer what the author believes. Here is an example:

Organic food is agricultural produce which is grown without the use of synthetic pesticides or chemicals and sold to the consumer without adding preservatives. Organic food is a \$30 billion dollar a year industry in the United States, despite the fact that purchasing organically grown produce costs approximately 20% more than traditionally grown produce. Is the extra cost worth it? There is a common belief spread widely online and in health food magazines that organic food is safer to consume and puts fewer chemicals into the groundwater; the water found underground in the cracks

and spaces in soil, sand, and rock. There are certainly restrictions on the types of pesticides that can be used on foods labeled “Organic.” However, organic farmers are still permitted to use natural chemicals, and some have dangerous side effects. For instance, a natural chemical called Rotenone is an odorless, colorless, chemical compound used as a broad-spectrum insecticide and pesticide. It occurs naturally in the seeds and stems of several plants and is therefore approved for organic farming. Recent studies have linked Rotenone to Parkinson’s disease. Although the evidence is not yet robust enough to prove a definitive link, it is enough to question the merits of the “organic food is safer” argument.

It can be inferred that the author believes

- Organic food is too expensive for most families
- Organic food should be labeled more clearly
- Organic food may help reduce pollution in groundwater
- Organic food may not be worth the extra cost

The fourth answer is correct. The first answer is not correct because although the author points out that there are extra costs associated with organic food, it isn’t stated that it is *too expensive* for most families. This is “too extreme.” The second is a “could be true” answer—the author mentions labeling but nothing more can be inferred. The third answer isn’t true because it has the “wrong tone.” The passage is critical of organic food, and this answer has a positive tone.

These questions simply take practice. Let’s try another example.

The anatomy of cats makes them remarkable predators. Cats have sharp,

retractable claws; when they are relaxing, the claws are sheathed in a layer of skin that protects them from the wear and tear of contact with the ground. They also keep these claws retracted to sneak up on prey silently. Cats have mobile ears which can collect and deflect sound rays inwards towards the eardrum and the organs of hearing. The ears of cats are receptive to ultrasonic frequencies up to 85,000 vibrations per second, greatly exceeding the hearing capabilities of dogs, which register 35,000 vibrations per second. They have sophisticated visual perception. Cats only need one-sixth the illumination that humans require to see well. Muscles surround the pupil of the eye which narrows in bright light and opens fully in dim light, allowing the most light possible to enter the eye. Cats have a reflective layer called a tapetum lucidum behind their retinas, which reflects incoming light back into the eye. This gives cats a second chance to use any available light. However, despite all these advantages, a cat requires at least a small amount of light to be able to discern its surroundings. In complete darkness, cats rely on the dozens of whiskers they have all over their bodies. These whiskers are very sensitive and provide information about the location of objects in the dark through either direct touch or by sensing the movement of air.

What can be inferred about the vision of cats?

- It is superior to the vision of humans
- It is not effective in total darkness
- It lacks an adaptation for the perception of color
- It is unique because no other animal has a tapetum lucidum

The second answer is correct because the passage says, "...a cat requires at least a small

amount of light to be able to discern its surroundings.” Here we can see the TOEFL traps. The first answer contains information beyond what is found in the passage. While the passage states cats can see better with less illumination than humans, that doesn’t mean their vision is *superior* to humans. The third answer is not mentioned in the passage. The fourth answer looks good because these words are mentioned in the passage, but it is not correct. It “could be true,” but that is not good enough.

Let’s try another example!

The ostrich is a species of bird native to Africa. It weighs between 63 and 145 kilograms. The feathers of an ostrich lack the small hooks that lock together the smooth external feathers of flying birds. Their feathers are soft and fluffy, and insulate them when the temperature drops. Their wings are used as stabilizers to give them better maneuverability when running. Scientists have observed that an ostrich uses them in braking, turning and zigzag maneuvers. Essentially, they use their wings like the rudders on a boat. The ostrich has powerful legs to run away from predators and can run up to 50 kilometers per hour. Their legs serve as formidable weapons. A single kick can kill a human or other predator such as a lion. They have long, sharp claws on their two-toed feet. Ostriches typically eat plants, in addition to roots and seeds, but will also consume insects and lizards if they are available.

What can be inferred about ostriches?

- They are unable to fly
- They are not found outside of Africa
- They use their claws to capture prey

- They are herbivores

The correct answer is the first answer. The passage states that “The feathers of an ostrich lack the small hooks that lock together the smooth external feathers of flying birds.” We can therefore infer that ostriches are unable to fly. The second answer is “too extreme.” The third answer is not mentioned. The last answer is not true (they eat insects and lizards, so they are not herbivores.)

Here is another example:

Motorola’s prototype cellular phone was nicknamed “The Brick.” It was used to make the first cellular phone call in 1973. This prototype gave the user only thirty minutes of talk time before it ran out of power and had to be charged for ten hours. It took another decade for Motorola to launch the phone publicly in the 1980’s, but it had not lost its size or antennae and was so difficult to use that Motorola put a sticker with instructions on the back explaining how to make a phone call. These cell phones cost \$3995, and could only store thirty phone numbers. It cost a whopping \$49 to make a thirty-minute phone call. Thus, the user had to be prudent when making calls from the device to avoid incurring astronomical fees. In the mid-1980’s, a Finnish company called Nokia launched GSM handsets that could send data along with voice. The antennae shrunk along with the battery, and the ability to choose a personal ringtone and send text messages were thought to be the cutting edge of technology. When Apple entered the market, the iPhone changed everything. Cell phones are now sleek, and can not only text and make phone calls, but have internet access, cameras, and diverse memory capabilities. In terms of functionality and features, they rival modern computers and in some ways exceed them.

It can be inferred that early cell phones

- were only used in case of emergency
- could not be used to make international calls
- were bulky and cumbersome
- did not have memory storage capabilities

The third answer is correct. We can infer this because these phones were nicknamed “The Brick.” Bricks are bulky and cumbersome. The first answer goes beyond the information in the paragraph. The second answer “could be true” but we can’t be sure. The fourth answer is not true.

Here is another example:

While digging a well near Xi’an, China in 1974, workers unearthed a clay figure of a soldier poised for battle. The workers alerted Chinese authorities, who sent archaeologists to investigate. What was uncovered was one of the most astonishing archaeological finds in the world: the Terracotta Army. This enormous collection of underground pottery from the Qin dynasty includes 8,000 warriors, 130 chariots, and 150 horses. It even includes figures of entertainment such as acrobats and musicians. Incredibly, many of the warriors stand at a life-like six feet tall. While most of it remains to be excavated, a great deal has already been learned about this ancient pottery. The army was commissioned by the Emperor Qin Shi Huang for his mausoleum in approximately 210 BCE. It took 700,000 workers over 38 years to create the figures that were ultimately buried with the Emperor. Unfortunately, after spending so much time underground, the statues that

have been excavated have lost most of their paint, a beautiful shade called Chinese Purple. The purpose of this Army was to protect and entertain the Emperor in the afterlife. The soldiers face east, the direction of China's enemies at the time.

What can be inferred about the Terracotta Army?

- It brought great wealth to the workers who discovered it
- It lost most of its paint due to exposure to moisture
- It was built to be the same size as China's Army
- Most of it is still underground

The correct answer is the fourth answer. The passage states that "...most of it remains to be excavated." No other answer can be inferred *based only* on the passage. The first answer "could be true" but we can't prove it from the passage. The second answer also "could be true." The third answer does not reflect any information in the passage- it is "not mentioned."

Here is another example to try:

The Earth's core is the extremely hot, dense center of the planet. Shaped like a ball, it is about 2,900 kilometers below the Earth's surface, with a radius of about 1,220 kilometers. This inner core is made of a nickel-iron alloy and some light elements. The core also contains the key element sulfur; in fact, 90% of the Earth's sulfur is found in its core. In 1936, the scientist Inge Lehmann determined that this inner core was solid, unlike its liquid outer core, by studying earthquake activity in New Zealand. She noted that earthquake waves called P-waves which traveled toward the inner earth could

later be felt on the other side of the planet. This theory was confirmed in 1970 when more sensitive instruments were used to ascertain that waves from earthquakes deflected off the core at unexpected angles. Although the core is the hottest part of the Earth, its temperature is difficult to determine precisely. The fluctuating temperature depends on pressure, the rotation of the Earth, and the composition of the elements within. The fact that it is solid metal makes the Earth magnetic, and this magnetic field offers protection from charged particles in the solar system.

What can be inferred about the temperature of the Earth's core?

- When the temperature is lower more particles are deflected from the Earth
- The high amount of sulfur causes the temperature to remain relatively stable
- It becomes much hotter when the Earth's orbit brings it closer to the Sun
- There are several variables which cause the temperature of the core to vary

The correct answer is the fourth answer. The passage says, "The fluctuating temperature depends on pressure, the rotation of the Earth, and the composition of the elements within." None of the other answers were mentioned, although they contain vocabulary that was used in the passage.

Here is another example:

Gold ranks high in the physical properties that make it ideal for jewelry. It does not tarnish or rust, and it is a corrosion-proof and oxidation-resistant

metal. Some of our most significant cultural items are made from gold, from Olympic medals to wedding bands. Pure gold, also known as 24 karat gold, is an attractive golden yellow. Because of the softness of pure gold, it must be alloyed-- in other words, mixed-- with base metals for use in jewelry, altering its durability, melting point, color, and other properties. Another benefit of alloying gold with certain metals is that gold can be given a range of hues depending on the metal with which it is alloyed. Alloyed gold can be red, blue, green, or purple. Blue gold can be made by alloying pure gold with iron, and purple gold can be made by alloying it with aluminum. Such hued forms of gold are rare in jewelry. White gold, on the other hand, has become very popular in recent years, especially for wedding and engagement rings. White gold is made by alloying gold with silver, palladium, or other white metals.

What can be inferred about 24 karat gold?

- It is the most valuable type of gold
- It has more practical uses than alloyed gold
- It is too soft to be made into lasting pieces of jewelry
- It has a high melting point

The third answer is correct. The passage says, “Because of the softness of pure gold, it must be alloyed—in other words, mixed—with base metals for use in jewelry, altering its durability...” Therefore, we can infer that 24 karat gold is too soft to be used in jewelry. None of the other choices are mentioned as true.

Try this example next:

Northern leopard frogs are green, medium-sized frogs approximately three to five inches long. They are identified by the dark spots that adorn their backs and legs. The range of the leopard frog spans most of North America and Mexico. The preferred habitat of the leopard frog is ponds and marshes, but they will occasionally venture out into grasslands in search of food or mates. The leopard frog has powerful back legs which it uses to leap into the air and capture its prey. It eats flies, ants, beetles, and even smaller leopard frogs. Leopard frogs hibernate during the winter, as they cannot tolerate freezing temperatures as some frogs can. They spend the winter buried in mud in well-oxygenated spaces.

It can be inferred that the leopard frog got its name from

- its color
- its behavior
- its habitat
- its spots

The correct answer is the fourth answer. The reading says, “They are identified by the dark spots that adorn their backs and legs.” Since leopards are famous for their spots, this is the logical inference.

Reference Questions

These questions are not as common on the TOEFL anymore. You will probably only answer one or two. However, it’s still useful to know how to answer them.

Reference questions ask you to identify the relationship between a referent (usually a pronoun or demonstrative such as *it*, *he*, *she*, *they*, *them*, *this*, *these*, *that*, etc.) or a phrase such as “these insects,” and the antecedent that it is referring to. In the TOEFL, the referents will be highlighted in gray, and you will choose the antecedent that it refers to.

Here’s a simple example to show you what I mean:

John has a cat. He brushes **its** fur every night.

Its is a referent which refers to the antecedent, “a cat.”

Here is another simple example:

Tom and Mary like to swim, but they are not confident in the water. They always wear lifejackets. They put **them** on every time they swim in the lake near their house.

Them is a referent which refers to the antecedent “lifejackets.”

Steps for answering referent questions:

1. **Make sure your answer is the same in *number* (singular or plural) and *case* (first person, second person, third person) as the highlighted antecedent.**
2. **In your mind, substitute your choice with the highlighted word or words.** Make sure it makes sense, and that it does not break any grammar rules.

Note that the answer to reference questions is *almost always before* the

pronoun in the question. There can be exceptions, and below we will start with a simple example that shows the correct answer can sometimes come *after* the word in question.

Try this example:

As much as highways make life convenient for **those** living in urban areas, people sometimes find it easy to overlook the negative impact they can have on plant life. One unfortunate effect of highways is that the seeds of plants can get caught in the treads of the tires of passing cars, which can then carry these seeds to new environments. Once moved to these new locations, they can fall out of the tires and take root, becoming what is called an invasive species. If this invasive species reproduces quickly and competes with native plants for resources, it can cause death to native species.

The word **those** refers to

- plants
- highways
- areas
- people

The fourth answer is correct.

Usually, the correct answer comes before the highlighted word in question. Try this example:

Levi Strauss left Bavaria to escape persecution and began a new life in the

United States in 1853. He started a business selling canvas, a durable fabric, to the miners to build their tents. When he observed that the miners did not have pants strong enough to last for months in the mines, he was inspired to make pants from the canvas he had been selling. Almost immediately, the demand for these pants, which he dubbed “Levi’s,” was so enormous he could hardly keep up with it. When he sold out of the brown canvas, he switched to a sturdy fabric from France, an indigo-blue cloth. This is how the first pair of jeans was invented.

The word **it** refers to

- the demand
- the cloth
- the canvas
- the pants

The first answer is correct.

Let’s do some practice using the same passages as we used for inference questions:

Organic food is a category of food which is grown without the use of synthetic pesticides or chemicals and sold to the consumer without adding preservatives. Organic food is a \$30 billion dollar a year industry in the United States, despite the fact that purchasing organically grown produce costs approximately 20% more than traditionally grown produce. Is the extra cost worth it? There is a common belief spread widely online and in health food magazines that organic food is safer to consume and puts fewer

chemicals into the groundwater; the water found underground in the cracks and spaces in soil, sand and rock. There are certainly restrictions on the types of pesticides that can be used on foods labeled “Organic.” However, organic farmers are still permitted to use natural chemicals, and some have dangerous side effects. For instance, a natural chemical called Rotenone is an odorless, colorless, chemical compound used as a broad-spectrum insecticide and pesticide. It occurs naturally in the seeds and stems of several plants and is therefore approved for organic farming. Recent studies have linked Rotenone to Parkinson’s disease. Although the evidence is not yet robust enough to prove a definitive link, **it** is enough to question the merits of the “organic food is safer” argument.

The word **it** in the passage refers to

- a chemical compound
- the evidence
- a definitive link
- Parkinson’s disease

The second answer is correct.

Here is another example:

Motorola’s prototype cellular phone was nicknamed “The Brick.” It was used to make the first cellular phone call in 1973. This prototype gave the user only thirty minutes of talk time before it ran out of power and had to be charged for ten hours. It took another ten years for Motorola to launch the phone publicly in the 1980’s, but it had not lost its size or antennae and was

so difficult to use that Motorola put a sticker with instructions on the back explaining how to make a phone call. These cell phones cost \$3995, and could only store thirty phone numbers. It cost a whopping \$49 to make a thirty-minute phone call. Thus, the user had to be prudent when making calls from the device to avoid incurring astronomical fees. In the mid- 1980's, a Finnish company called Nokia launched GSM handsets that could send data along with voice. The antennae shrunk along with the battery, and choices of ringtones and the ability to text were thought to be the cutting edge of technology. When Apple entered the market, the iPhone changed everything. Cell phones are now sleek, and can not only text and make phone calls, but have internet access, cameras, and diverse memory capabilities. In terms of functionality and features, **they** rival modern computers and in some ways exceed them.

The word **they** in the passage refers to

- computers
- functionality and features
- cell phones
- memory capabilities

The third answer is correct.

Here is a final example with two questions:

The ostrich is a species of bird native to Africa. It weighs between 63 to 145 kilograms. The feathers of an ostrich lack the small hooks that lock together the smooth external feathers of flying birds. Their feathers are soft and fluffy,

and insulate them when the temperature drops. Their wings are used as stabilizers to give better maneuverability when running. Scientists have observed that an ostrich uses **them** in braking, turning and zigzag maneuvers. Essentially, they use their wings like the rudders on a boat. The ostrich has powerful legs to run away from predators and can run up to 50 kilometers per hour. Their legs serve as formidable weapons. A single kick can kill a human or other predator such as a lion. They have long, sharp claws on their two-toed feet. Ostriches typically eat plants, in addition to roots and seeds, but will also dine on insects and lizards if **they** are available.

The word **them** in the passage refers to

- wings
- feathers
- legs
- claws

The word **they** in the passage refers to

- ostriches
- plants
- insects and lizards
- roots and seeds

For the first question, the first answer is correct. For the second question, the third answer is correct.

A recap of the key points you need to know:

- Inference questions take a little longer and may require more reading than detail questions.
- Inference questions are sometimes a clever paraphrase of a sentence you saw in the reading.
- Beware of common traps: Answers that contain information beyond what is presented in the passage, answers that could be true, answers that look appealing but are not correct, and answers that use extreme language. Do not choose an answer that is untrue or not mentioned.
- Referent questions are rare, but if you get one make sure you choose the referent that agrees in number and case with your choice. Make sure your answer does not break any grammatical rules.

Chapter 4

Purpose Questions

Purpose questions in the Reading section of the TOEFL ask you *why* the author included certain information. These questions are common on TOEFL, and you can expect one or two per passage. Purpose questions on the TOEFL look like this:

Why does the author mention (x)?

The author mentions (x) in order to...

The author includes the information that (x) in order to...

The author uses (x) as an example of...

The author mentions (x) for which of the following reasons?

The author mentions (x) because...

What is the author's purpose in mentioning...

There are many possible reasons for an author to include certain information. The following examples will demonstrate the most common purposes that information serves in the TOEFL reading and beyond.

To Compare: The author wants to show similarities or differences between ideas. The author may use information to compare two ideas in a text. For example, read the following comparison of violins and cellos:

The violin is a string instrument which is played while propped between the

shoulder and the chin of the musician. The cello is also a string instrument, but it is played while the musician is sitting down and held between the knees of the player, with a pin stuck into the floor to keep it balanced.

To Contrast: The author wants to show differences between two things. An author may wish to point out the differences between two things. Consider this example which contrasts amphibians and mammals:

Amphibians are cold-blooded, and are usually quite small. They have bare, moist skin. Mammals, on the other hand, are warm-blooded. Their skin is dry and covered in fur or hair. Unlike amphibians, mammals can grow to be enormous.

To Give Examples: The author wants to give specific examples of an idea or thing. Read this example, in which Queen Elizabeth is given as an example:

Although in the Middle Ages most European monarchs married to form alliances with neighboring countries, some monarchs chose to marry for love or even not to marry at all. Queen Elizabeth I, for instance, never married and yet ruled England for 44 years.

To Indicate/To Point Out: The author wants to draw the reader's attention to something. In this example, the writer indicates one way the Romans expanded their empire:

The Roman Empire was the largest empire of the ancient world. While its capital city was Rome, it expanded across Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. The Romans invented unique ways to expand their empire across such vast lands. One was the invention and development of a complex

system of aqueducts. An aqueduct is a water supply or navigable channel constructed to convey water. By building aqueducts, the Romans were no longer limited to life near rivers and streams but could move further and further outward, relying on aqueducts to provide the population with the water necessary for survival.

To Describe/Illustrate: The author wants to further describe or illustrate an idea. Consider the following example, in which the author uses the phrase “a ray of sunshine” to describe the personality of Anne Shirley:

Anne Shirley, the central character of the book “Anne of Green Gables,” is one of the most beloved figures in all of fiction. Anne is a ray of sunshine to everyone she meets, and her optimism and goodwill have won the hearts of millions.

To Correct: The author wants to correct an earlier claim or misunderstanding. Sometimes, the author wants to correct a claim or a common misunderstanding. Read the following example, which corrects a claim about The Great Wall of China:

It’s a widely circulated story that the Great Wall of China is the only structure built by humans that can be seen from space. In fact, the Great Wall cannot be seen from even a low Earth orbit and can certainly not be seen from the moon.

To Introduce: The author wants to introduce a new idea. In order to introduce a topic, the author may use an introductory statement, a topic sentence, or ask a rhetorical question. Consider this example in which the author introduces a theory:

Humans have notoriously poor memories of past experiences. But why do we forget so much of our lives? One theory to explain this phenomenon is decay theory. Decay theory suggests that the greater amount of time that passes, the more likely we are to forget the events that occurred. Therefore, memories are not permanent and tend to fade over time.

To Cast Doubt: The author wants to cast doubt on a theory or claim.

Consider this example in which the author casts doubt on the authenticity of alien abduction stories by pointing out an alternative theory:

Many people worldwide claim to have been abducted by aliens and taken onto spacecrafts for questioning or examination. Some of these individuals report their experiences in such vivid, realistic detail that the story seems utterly compelling. However, the people who are most likely to report alien abductions are those who are prone to sleep paralysis, the state of being conscious but unable to move. As this experience is terrifying, this terror can give way to hallucinations of lights, buzzing sounds, and even visions of aliens.

To Support/ Provide Evidence: The author wants to give evidence to support or prove a claim. This is very common in the TOEFL. The author may use data, a quote, a study, or supporting details to support or prove a piece of information. In this example, the author uses data (in this case, numbers) to support a point that is made about Hawaii:

If you have ever flown to Hawaii, you have probably noticed how long you must fly over a large expanse of ocean to get there. The Hawaiian island chain is, in fact, the most remote island chain in the world with a large human population. It is 2,390 from California; 3,850 miles from Japan; and 4,900 miles from China.

To Suggest: The author wants to suggest an idea, suggest a solution to a problem, suggest an alternative, and so on. In this example, the author suggests that Shakespeare did not write all of his works:

Shakespeare is regarded as the greatest English writer of all time. But is it possible that one individual was such a prolific writer? The canon of Shakespeare's works shows an intimate knowledge of the Elizabethan courts, but Shakespeare did not live among nobility. In addition, his plays used three times the number of words the average person knows, yet there is no record that Shakespeare received a formal education.

To Emphasize: The author may wish to emphasize a point. The author may do this by using supporting details, data, a quote, or words that indicate emphasis such as "in fact," or "as a matter of fact," "even," and so on. Here is an example in which the author uses the word "even" to emphasize a point about tardigrades:

Tardigrades are eight-legged, microscopic animals that are found all over the Earth. They are known for being one of the hardiest, most resilient animals in the world. They can survive the pressure of the deep ocean, ionizing radiation, and even the vacuum of outer space.

To Explain: The author may want to explain something to the reader. Here is an example in which the author explains how digestion works:

Digestion is the process of food moving through the gastrointestinal tract. Digestion begins in the mouth. There, food is chewed and swallowed, then passes down the esophagus into the stomach. Food then mixes with acid, which breaks it down. It then moves into the small intestine where much of it is absorbed into the bloodstream. Next, the food proceeds into the large

intestine which removes any excess water. Whatever remains is expelled from the body as a waste product.

Note that other purposes exist on the TOEFL. These include: To show, to make a point, to disprove, to note, to criticize, to admit, to refute, to argue, to identify, and so on.

These questions require more than skill with the English language, they require you to consider the purpose the information serves carefully. Your job is to determine *why* the author included the information. To get your answer, there are important steps to follow.

1. **Read the question carefully and understand what it is asking you to do. Identify the keywords.**
2. **Go to the beginning of the paragraph.** Read from the beginning of the paragraph to determine its main idea or purpose. **Pay special attention to the first sentence of the paragraph,** as there is often a clue found there. After you do this, it will be easier to determine the purpose of the highlighted words or keywords, because they are often related to the author's purpose for the paragraph.
3. **Look for transition words as you read.** These can be an important clue about why the author included certain information.
4. **When you get to the highlighted words or keywords, slow down and read the sentence carefully.**
5. **Use the process of elimination aggressively.** Eliminate the following traps.

TRAPS

The answer choice has the correct purpose but uses an unmentioned idea. Some answer choices that are traps will have the correct purpose, but mention an idea that was not in the paragraph.

The answer choice distorts information from the passage. This is a common TOEFL trap. An answer choice that uses a lot of vocabulary from the passage, but changes the meaning from the passage in a significant way, is a trap.

The answer choice contains extreme language. Remember; answer choices with words such as “never,” “forever,” “always,” or extreme wording such as “will be impossible,” may be traps. If the extreme language in the answer choice is not supported by the text, it is incorrect.

The answer does not reflect the author’s purpose. Of course, this is the most common trap for purpose questions. You have to become familiar with why authors include certain information. Are they supporting an idea? Casting doubt on an idea? Indicating new information to the reader? Giving a specific example? Supporting or emphasizing an idea? Reading a lot and becoming familiar with how authors use information is an excellent way to prepare for this question type. We will go through many examples in this chapter.

The answer does not relate to the big picture or is off-topic. Some answer choices may not be related to the main point the author is trying to make. These should be eliminated.

The answer choice is incorrect. Some answer choices will contain

information that is not correct but will repeat words from the passage. Make sure you read each choice carefully.

Sometimes, *transitions* can help you understand the author's purpose. Consider this example:

Many people think of Stephen King as the master of the horror genre, and this is not surprising considering that some of his most acclaimed books were made into classic horror movies. Even his longtime fans are quite surprised to learn that King has written moving drama as well. For example, he wrote *The Body*, a coming of age story about young boys and their close friendship; and *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*, the story of an innocent man imprisoned for a crime he did not commit.

Why does the author mention *The Body* and *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*? Start at the beginning of the paragraph. It mentions that King is the master of horror, and that his fans are surprised he has written drama. We have a clue in the transition, “For example.” *The Body* and *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption* are mentioned as *examples of the dramas that King wrote*.

Try this example:

The Office is a hugely successful television show that began in the United Kingdom, with a later version developed in the United States. It is considered a “mockumentary,” that is, it is filmed like a documentary but is in fact scripted satire. The television program follows the daily lives of office workers in a fictitious paper company. The office in the program is managed by a character named David Brent. Much of the humor comes from Brent’s

mistaken belief that he is a talented musician, comedian, and dancer and that his co-workers admire his foolish behavior. Brent sees himself as patient, funny, and popular, but in fact his conduct at work is annoying, rude and selfish. The comedy was so successful in Britain that an American version was developed with the character of Brent renamed Michael Scott. Scott has many of the same characteristics as Brent. His behavior can be off-putting, annoying and inappropriate. However, Michael Scott is also generous and caring towards his employees.

Why does the author mention that Michael Scott is generous and caring?

- To emphasize how different Michael Scott is from the rest of the characters in The Office
- To give examples of Michael Scott's behavior
- To contrast the character of Michael Scott with David Brent
- To suggest that Michael Scott is a very unique character

The correct answer is the third answer. The author is contrasting Michael Scott with David Brent by mentioning some positive qualities that Michael Scott has. The word "However" gives us a clue. Why are the others incorrect? The first and second do not reflect the author's purpose. The fourth contains extreme language- the author does not use strong words like "very unique."

Here is another example:

Eating is a much more intense experience in babies than adults. Babies have over thirty thousand taste buds in their mouths. They are replaced with healthy new taste buds every two weeks. Over time, however, the body no

longer replaces them and the sense of taste becomes much less discerning. An adult has 1/3 the number of healthy taste buds as a six-month-old baby. Babies are wired for a preference for fat and sugar-packed milk. Infants also need more calories in relation to their body size, and do not tend to enjoy salty or sour flavors. The reason children often reject vegetables could be that the bitter notes in them are magnified by the high number of functioning taste buds. In addition, parental nagging to “eat your vegetables” may cause a negative association with vegetables and a desire to rebel against the parent’s demands. As a person matures, they express entirely different preferences. Adults may develop a liking for sharp, pungent, or bitter tastes such as blue cheese, garlic, and brussels sprouts.

The author mentions blue cheese, garlic, and brussels sprouts in order to

- give examples of foods that children refuse to eat
- indicate foods that offer health benefits
- provide examples of foods that adults enjoy more than children
- compare the tastes of three different types of foods

In this example, the third answer is correct. “Develop a liking” means “begin to enjoy.” The author is giving examples of foods that adults enjoy more than children. The clue is the words “such as.” Why are the others incorrect? The first answer has the correct purpose, but uses extreme language (“refuse to eat.”) The second is off-topic. The fourth does not reflect the author’s purpose.

Here is another example:

Spiders are often referred to as insects, but they are certainly not insects.

Unlike insects, spiders do not have antennae or wings. They also have eight simple eyes while insects have two compound eyes. Spiders have eight legs, whereas insects have six. A few spider species build webs and live in large colonies. This is a social behavior, although not nearly as complex as the social relationships found among insects. The species *Anelosimus Eximius* forms colonies of up to 50,000 individual spiders. The *Theridion Nigroannulatum* spider co-operates to capture prey and share food with each other. Predatory spiders such as these are in a better position to defend their meals from parasites that would otherwise steal it. Social behavior allows spiders to team up and capture larger prey. Spiders that co-operate can also do well in inclement weather. Spiders that share the task of maintaining and repairing their webs in the rain fare much better than lone spiders.

Why does the professor mention **insects**?

- To introduce the idea that spiders only take the form of insects at certain life stages
- To argue that all spiders are social
- To point out the similarities between spiders and insects
- To correct a common misunderstanding about spiders

The correct answer is the fourth answer. The writer is correcting a common misunderstanding: that spiders are insects. The clue is in the next sentence, “Unlike insects, spiders...” The first answer and second answers both contain incorrect information. The third does not reflect the author’s purpose.

Some questions ask you what the purpose is of an entire paragraph. Of course, in this case, you must read the entire paragraph. Take a look at

this example:

Photosynthesis is a process by which plants use sunlight to make their own food. Plants convert light energy from the sun into chemical energy that can be later released to fuel the organisms' activities. This chemical energy is stored in carbohydrate molecules, such as sugars, which are synthesized from carbon dioxide and water. Oxygen is released as a waste product. Cellular respiration, on the other hand, converts the food created by photosynthesis into energy which can then be utilized by the living organisms or plants. This process occurs within the mitochondria, organelles which break down glucose. All living organisms and plants perform cellular respiration. In contrast, photosynthesis can only be performed by organisms that contain chlorophyll, green pigments found in algae and plants.

What is the purpose of this paragraph?

- To give examples of organisms that perform photosynthesis
- To explain how organisms perform cellular respiration
- To define and explain the process of photosynthesis
- To compare photosynthesis and cellular respiration

The fourth answer is correct. The purpose of the paragraph is to compare photosynthesis and cellular respiration. Take note of the transitional phrases, “on the other hand” and “in contrast.”

Here is another example that asks about the purpose of a paragraph:

For a fossil to be discovered, a series of steps must occur. The animal or plant

must be buried quickly. If it dies on the plains or in a rocky area, it is usually found by scavengers, eaten and reduced to bone chips. Animals that do get fossilized are those which get caught in floods, die in or near a river, or get trapped in a sandstorm. The dead animal then must be buried in a depositional area and covered in layers of mud and sediment. Dissolved minerals, transported by groundwater in the sediment, fill tiny spaces in the bones. The combination of pressure and chemical reactions eventually turn the sediments into rock and the bones into mineralized fossils. Next, the depositional area must become an erosional area so that wind and water wear it down to uncover the fossil remains. Finally, someone knowledgeable must spot the fossil and recover it. It must be a short time from the fossil becoming exposed to recovery by an expert. If it isn't recovered quickly, erosion will eventually wear away the fossil itself.

What is the purpose of this paragraph?

- To give information about the methods scientists use to recover fossils
- To explain the steps in a process
- To demonstrate the difficulties in recovering fossils
- To argue that most fossils disappear before they are discovered

The correct answer is the second answer. Are you surprised? The second answer seems a lot less appealing than the other answers. Remember from earlier in this book: Sometimes a simple answer is correct. Look at the big picture, especially the first sentence. It says "...a series of steps must occur." The paragraph also has words that indicate steps, such as *next* and *finally*. None of the other answers are related to the big picture.

Many passages do not have transitions. Let's continue, relying instead on

the process of elimination:

Mammoths were elephant-like animals that mysteriously went extinct 4,000 years ago. These herbivores were about the size of modern Asian elephants. Like elephants, they had large ears, tusks, and a long trunk, but were covered in thick brown hair and underfur. The question as to why these enormous mammals went extinct has puzzled scientists for decades. One theory is that they were overhunted by the Clovis people, a sophisticated Ice Age culture in North America. The Clovis people used stone spears which could have pierced the skin of the giant mammoths. This theory is debatable. A group of Clovis people could only have consumed about 25% of the mammoth's meat. There were other game animals such as buffalo and bears which would have made more sensible prey for the Clovis people. Climate change has also been put forth as a possible reason for their extinction. As herbivores, these animals were completely dependent on vegetation to provide them with vital nutrients. If climate change killed off the flora, mammoths would have suffered from consequences that may have been deadly.

Why does the author mention that A group of Clovis people could only have consumed about 25% of the mammoth's meat?

- To introduce a discussion about the diet of the Clovis people
- To give facts about the amount of food the Clovis people consumed
- To provide evidence that the Clovis people preferred to hunt for buffalo and bears
- To cast doubt on the theory that the Clovis people caused the extinction of mammoths

The fourth answer is correct because the purpose of the paragraph is to discuss theories about why mammoths went extinct, and this data casts doubt on that theory.

Try another example:

Jupiter's distance from the Earth and its hazardous magnetic field make it a challenge to study. Despite these obstacles, scientists remain fascinated with Jupiter and its moons. Io is Jupiter's innermost moon and is roughly the same size as our own moon. Planetary scientists have little doubt that this moon is extremely volcanically active; in fact, it is the most volcanically active body in the solar system. Images taken by NASA'S Galileo spacecraft show that there are over 100 volcanic centers, each comprised of several volcanic depressions in the ground called calderas. Geologists have studied the gasses that are discharged from modern-day active calderas, such as **The Yellowstone Caldera** in Wyoming, and found they are a mixture of water vapor, carbon dioxide, and sulfur. These gasses were most likely present in the early atmosphere of both the Earth and Io. The volcanoes on Io account for its unique geological features. It is pockmarked with vibrant colors from the sulfur and various sulfuric compounds, giving it a mottled look much like the surface of a pizza. Due to the enormous pressure on Io, volcanoes are constantly pumping out a new liquid surface, filling in any impact craters with molten lava lakes and spreading smooth new floodplains of liquid rock.

The author mentions **The Yellowstone Caldera** in order to

- compare the surface of Io and the surface of the Earth
- indicate one source of information about the early atmosphere on Io
- explain why Io has a colorful surface

- account for differences between the early atmosphere on Earth and modern day Io

The correct answer is the second answer. The author gives The Yellowstone Caldera as a source of information about the early atmosphere on Io. The other answers do not reflect the author's purpose.

Try another:

Soil contamination occurs when human activity introduces chemicals into the soil that damage living organisms. Plants called hyperaccumulators are incredibly useful because they can absorb pollutants from the ground without being poisoned themselves. The evolutionary advantage of the hyperaccumulation of metals by plants may be that the toxic levels of heavy metals deter herbivores from consuming them. These useful plants can provide a natural and inexpensive way to clean up after an accident and help to regain soil stability. Hyperaccumulators can absorb contaminants in either soil or groundwater; whether it is heavy metals, chemicals, radioactive contamination or petroleum. For example, sunflowers were used to absorb radioactive contamination after the Chernobyl disaster in the Ukraine. Wildflowers were used in Kuwait to clean up sites where petroleum had spilled. Even showy, beautiful flowers can be hyperaccumulators. **Gerbera Daisies** are flowers with large pink petals that can absorb formaldehyde from the soil.

Why does the professor mention **Gerbera Daisies**?

- To give an example of a showy, beautiful flower
- To show that hyperaccumulators can absorb radioactive waste

- To warn about the risks of growing these daisies
- To point out one way soil contamination can be reduced

In this example, the fourth answer is correct. The first is off topic. The passage is about hyperaccumulators, not showy flowers. The second answer is a trap: it uses some of the same language, but sunflowers were used to absorb radioactive waste, not Gerbera Daisies. The third answer has the wrong tone. It uses the word “risks,” a negative word. The author has a positive tone, praising the uses of hyperaccumulators.

Try another passage:

There is an almost universal belief in the manifestations of the spirit of the dead. These manifestations are commonly referred to as “ghosts.” Ghosts are believed to be the soul or spirit of a person who has died. The idea of ghosts as hopeful evidence of life after death goes all the way back to ancient Egypt, where death was said to be merely a transition to another state. Although objective evidence is murky at best, recent polls show that 45% of Americans believe in ghosts. Furthermore, nearly 18% of Americans have said they have felt or seen the presence of a ghost which they report as a feeling of uneasiness, a sudden chill, or sounds that cannot be accounted for. However, some researchers, such as **Michael Persinger** of Laurentian University, have speculated that changes in tectonic stresses in the Earth's crust or solar activity could stimulate the brain's temporal lobes and produce many of the experiences associated with the feeling of a ghost's presence.

Why does the author mention the views of **Michael Persinger**?

- To point out one method of studying the presence of ghosts

- To present evidence in favor of the existence of tectonic stresses and solar activity
- To indicate that there is an alternative theory to sensing a ghost's presence
- To emphasize that researchers are interested in investigating ghosts further

The third answer is correct. The first answer has the wrong tone. The author's attitude about ghosts is one of doubt. The second is off topic. The main topic is ghosts, not tectonic stress or solar activity. The third answer is correct because author is indicating an alternative theory. The fourth isn't correct because there is no mention of researchers' further interest.

Here is another example:

You may have heard the expression, "as blind as a bat." But are bats really blind? Because bats use echolocation, sonar-like systems to detect and locate objects by emitting high-pitched sounds, many people assume bats are blind. In fact, all 1,100 species of bats are able to see, although their vision is not as acute as other nocturnal animals. Two main groups of bats have evolved independently of one another. One group, the Megachiroptera, are medium-sized bats with complex visual centers in their brains and large eyes to spot prey. The Flying Fox bat, for instance, is able to see very well and in a full range of colors. The second group, Microchiroptera, is smaller with tiny eyes. Although the visual center in their brains is not as complex as the Megachiroptera, they have photoreceptor cells in the retinas of their eyes; cones for use in the daylight and to detect color, and rods which they use for low light conditions in the evening and during the night. They use their vision

to see over long distances, beyond the range in which echolocation would function. The False Vampire Bat, for instance, has been observed catching prey in the dark without using echolocation.

The author asks the question “But are bats really blind?” for which of the following reasons?

- To introduce a discussion of bat vision
- To ask why bats are unable to see very well
- To cast doubt on a bat’s ability to use echolocation
- To compare the vision of two groups of bats

Don’t forget to look at the big picture of the paragraph, which is a discussion of bat vision. Therefore, the first answer is correct. The question is used to introduce the topic of bat vision.

Here is another example:

The wheels of justice turn excruciatingly slowly. The release from prison of people who have been convicted of a crime, but are in fact innocent, can take years or even decades. So it was for the so-called “West Memphis Three,” a group of three adolescent boys in West Memphis, Arkansas, who were convicted of a triple homicide that they did not commit. The teenagers came from troubled, broken homes and became targets during the investigation of the murder of several children who had been playing in a wooded area near their homes. The eldest of the three convicts, Damien Echols, was sentenced to death by the jury and was incarcerated on Death Row, the section of the prison for those awaiting execution. It took 18 years for Echols to be released

on an unusual plea deal called the Alford plea, in which defendants can verbally proclaim their innocence, but are forbidden from taking future legal action against the state such as filing a lawsuit for false imprisonment.

The author mentions that it took 18 years for Echols to be released in order to

- support the claim that justice can be a slow process
- illustrate the amount of time prisoners spend on Death Row
- provide information regarding typical sentences for a serious crime
- introduce a discussion of the Alford plea

The first answer is correct. The author begins with the claim that justice is a slow process. By giving the information that Echols was in prison for 18 years, the author is supporting this claim. The other answers do not reflect the author's purpose.

Let's try another:

Dinosaurs ruled the planet from 230 million to 65 million years ago, at which time they suddenly went extinct. This marked the end of the Mesozoic era. But why did these formidable creatures disappear? Many hypotheses have been examined, including climate change. Evidence does show that the planet had become much cooler. There was ice at the poles, and the temperatures of the ocean dropped. If that theory is correct, however, how can the survival of alligators and turtles be explained? Like the dinosaurs, these animals are ectotherms that rely on external temperatures to maintain a survivable internal body temperature. If these ectotherms were able to survive the same climate change, it stands to reason dinosaurs would have been able to as well. In addition, climate change takes tens of thousands of years to occur, which

would have given dinosaurs time to adapt. While the climate change hypothesis is tempting, evidence shows that it is insufficient in explaining this extinction event.

Why does the author mention alligators and turtles?

- To point out that ectotherms can survive changes in temperature
- To cast doubt on the theory that dinosaurs died due to climate changes
- To argue that dinosaurs went extinct because they were not ectotherms
- To give examples of animals that survived the end of the Mesozoic era

The second answer is correct. The other answers do not reflect the author's purpose.

Here is another example:

In the workplace, people may engage in activities that serve no useful purpose but are done in order to create the appearance that the worker is both busy and productive. Called “busy work,” people do this in order to avoid reprimand or termination. Many workers believe it is important to keep up the appearance that they are constantly working on important business so that others, especially managers, believe that they are a crucial part of the organization. However, busy work is counterproductive. Since the work does not accomplish any actual goal, it may be used to postpone doing more difficult or unpleasant tasks. An employee making unnecessary photocopies or rearranging an already organized workspace may distract him from completing a task that is more important for the success of the company. The assumption that busyness in the workplace is more important than productivity can lead to the mistaken belief that quantity of work is more

important than quality.

The author mentions an employee making unnecessary photocopies or rearranging an already organized workspace in order to

- give examples of tasks that workers are given as punishment for not completing important work
- provide evidence that some tasks in the workplace interfere with the jobs of other workers
- illustrate some of the tasks an employee may do in order to appear occupied
- argue that some managers assign work that is unnecessary and counterproductive

The third answer is correct. The author is illustrating tasks an employee may do in order to appear occupied. ***Note** how the first sentence of the paragraph gives the reader a clue.

Here is another example:

Evolution by natural selection is often erroneously believed to be a random process. In fact, natural selection is a function of the pressures in a given environment. Individual organisms that have attributes that provide a survival advantage in their environment will produce more offspring than those that do not possess these same attributes. Thus, some individuals contribute more of their genetic material to the next generation relative to others. Because certain characteristics outperform other characteristics in the context of a particular environment, then in fact the process of natural selection is not random but dependent on the environment. As famed evolutionary biologist

Dr. Richard Dawkins once said, “Natural selection is anything but random.”

The author quotes Richard Dawkins in order to

- explain how natural selection works
- point out that natural selection is unpredictable
- compare two beliefs about natural selection
- emphasize that natural selection is an orderly process

The fourth answer is correct. The topic of the paragraph is that natural selection is not random. The author is emphasizing that natural selection is orderly, the opposite of random. (“Anything but” means it is the opposite.)

Here is another example:

Without widespread literacy, the Greeks passed on their myths orally, most likely through Minoan and Mycenaean storytellers from the 18th century BC onwards. Their plots and themes unfolded over time in the written literature of the archaic and classical periods. Myths were used to explain the origins of life and give lessons on the best ways to lead a happy life. Myths helped the ancient Greeks to connect with their ancestors in a meaningful way. As in other ancient cultures, these stories explained phenomena that were not scientifically understood at the time. For instance, Apollo was the god of disease and medicine; through his golden arrows he could bring forth illnesses and plagues, but he also had the power to prevent them. With the germ theory of disease still a thousand years away, Apollo was blamed for any malady that befell the ancient Greeks.

The author mentions **Minoan and Mycenaean storytellers** in order to

- emphasize the importance of oral storytelling in ancient cultures
- point out how far back Greek myths can be traced in history
- give an example of an occupation that served an important role in Greek culture
- explain how myths spread in Ancient Greece

The fourth answer is correct. The author is explaining how myths spread in Greece. The other answers do not reflect the author's purpose.

Remember, not all paragraphs will have highlighted words. For example:

Although they may appear as tough as rock at first glance, coral reefs are very delicate ecosystems which are easily damaged or destroyed. Careless fishing methods, oil spills, land runoffs, and even the sunscreen worn by swimmers can cause death to this ecosystem. The destruction of coral reefs is a serious issue because these reefs provide a vital food source for 500 million people who live near the coasts. They generate billions of dollars in revenue for communities; in fact, it is estimated that their value in tourist dollars is \$30 billion a year. In addition, coral acts as a natural barrier from weather events such as hurricanes and typhoons. Coral reefs, much like the rainforest, may contain compounds which could be used to treat disease. Even much of the air that we breathe comes from coral reefs. The decline of this valuable and fragile ecosystem could be disastrous for humanity.

What is the author's purpose in providing examples of how coral reefs can be

killed?

- To emphasize how fragile this ecosystem is
- To give examples of how to protect the coral reefs
- To explain why coral reefs should be protected
- To point out that coral reefs are more delicate than the rainforest

The first answer is correct. The author is emphasizing the main point: that this is a very fragile (delicate) ecosystem. The second answer is off topic. The third answer has the wrong purpose. The fourth answer is a trap: it uses some of the words from the passage in a misleading way.

Here is another:

In 1910, the German Scientist Alfred Wegener hypothesized that the Earth's continents had once been one giant supercontinent. Over the course of 100 million years the continents broke apart and moved into the locations that are familiar today. This theory became known as continental drift. According to Wegener's theory, the Earth had once been a single landmass called Pangea. He speculated that around 300 million years ago the continents began slowly drifting apart. At the time, tropical rainforests, which later turned into coal deposits, covered large parts of the Earth's surface. Most of this supercontinent was in the Southern Hemisphere, surrounded by a single ocean called Panthalassa. Fossils of ancient organisms such as Glossopteris, a fernlike plant, have been found on the now widely separated landmasses of Africa, Antarctica, South America, Australia, and India. These fossils are surprisingly homogenous despite being found on five different continents.

Twenty species of *Glossopteris* leaves in Antarctica were also discovered in India, now half a world away from each other.

Why does the author discuss *Glossopteris*?

- To provide information about the plants that lived on the continent of Pangea
- To give an example of a plant that can survive in different parts of the world
- To provide evidence for continental drift theory
- To give an example of a homogenous fossil

The correct answer is the third answer. The author is giving evidence for continental drift theory. You can infer this because the fossils of *Glossopteris* are found on continents that are now separated.

Try this example:

James Cook was a cartographer, navigator, and Captain in the British Royal Navy. Cook was the first European to make contact with the Hawaiian Islands. He had not expected to find land, and was sailing to Alaska in search of a water route that would link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In 1779, Cook spotted land at Kealahou Bay on the island of Hawaii, the largest of the Hawaiian Islands. By coincidence, Cook's arrival coincided with the celebration of the Hawaiian god Lono, the fertility god. Furthermore, Cook's clockwise route around the island of Hawaii resembled the processions that took place in a clockwise direction during the festival dedicated to Lono. Cook was thus deified by the Hawaiians and welcomed as a god. The

Hawaiians welcomed this “god” and made all their supplies available to him and his men, hoping that in return, he would guarantee the fertility of their land. However, relations soured when one of Cook’s crew members died, exposing the sailors as mortal humans and not gods at all. In the end, with tensions running high on both sides, the Hawaiians descended upon Cook, killing him.

Why does the author mention Cook’s clockwise route around the island of Hawaii?

- To explain the method Europeans used to record the size of islands
- To provide a reason for the Hawaiian’s belief that Cook was a god
- To give an example of an ancient Hawaiian belief
- To emphasize the accidental nature of Cook’s discovery of Hawaii

The second answer is correct. The author is providing a reason for the Hawaiian’s belief that Cook was a god. The clue is that the passage says, “Cook was thus deified by the Hawaiians...” Deified means “made into a god.”

Here is another one:

Opponents of evolution tend to point to gaps in the fossil record to support the contention that evolution did not occur. These opponents claim that since the fossil record does not contain an endless number of transitional fossils (fossils that show the intermediate stages between the ancestral form of animals and their descendants) then the theory of evolution is completely baseless and should be regarded as false. While the fossil record does have significant gaps, this is actually not surprising. Very few organisms become

fossilized. Most are destroyed before they are even seen. Scavengers may consume them, or they may be ravaged by bacteria or by chemical processes. Fossils in mountainous areas may be wiped out by erosion, and in humid areas, they decay too rapidly to be preserved. Small, delicate bones may be crushed or carried away from the rest of the skeleton by water movement. Considering these facts, the fossil record that is available to us is impressive in its scope. In fact, transitional fossils have been discovered that show a link between land mammals and marine mammals, and even dinosaurs and modern birds. New fossils continue to be discovered through the dedication of paleontologists, shedding more light on the ancestry of today's animal kingdom.

What is the author's purpose in mentioning how fossils can be destroyed?

- To emphasize how surprising it is that a large fossil record exists
- To explain why the fossil record does not contain transitional forms
- To illustrate the reasons why some people do not believe evolution occurred
- To show the conditions necessary in order for an organism to become fossilized

The first answer is correct. The author is emphasizing the main point of the paragraph: that because fossils can be destroyed in many ways, it is surprising that a large fossil record exists. The other answers do not reflect the author's purpose.

Try this final example with two questions:

One major problem for anyone attempting to start a business in a poor,

undeveloped country is acquiring the capital necessary to start and continue to run the business. A woman in Haiti who wants to open a small grocery store or a family in Uganda that needs to purchase livestock to start a small farm cannot begin their enterprise without capital. Traditionally, this money was borrowed from local moneylenders who charged exorbitant interest rates which trapped the entrepreneur in a cycle of debt. One innovative solution that was introduced by a bank in Bangladesh was the provision of “microloans” to clients with little or no collateral. A microloan is a small, short-term loan offered to a start-up business. This idea has spread throughout the world and has carved out opportunities for the poor to gain access to funds that would otherwise be beyond their reach, and prevent them from getting into insurmountable debt. If interest rates are reasonable and the principle small, banks have discovered that most borrowers will return the initial loan. Now, not only banks but even private individuals can offer microloans to business owners in the developing world.

Why does the author mention a woman in Haiti and a family in Uganda?

- To give examples of businesses in two different countries
- To point out two people who have started a business with the use of microloans
- To exemplify the kinds of situations that require capital
- To prove how difficult it can be to start a business in the developing world

The professor mentions that private individuals can offer microloans in order to

- suggest that the reader offer a microloan to a family in a poor country
- compare the practice of borrowing from an individual with borrowing from a bank
- provide the information that individual lenders are responsible for most microloans
- show how popular the practice of microloans has become

For the first question, the third answer is correct. For the second question, the fourth answer is correct.

A recap of the key points you need to know:

- Read the question carefully and understand what it is asking you to do.
- Go to the beginning of the paragraph. Read the first sentence carefully.
- Skim the rest of the paragraph and look for clues. Slow down when you get to the keywords.
- Read the sentences with the highlighted words or the keywords carefully.
- Look for any clues, like transition words.
- Familiarize yourself with common TOEFL traps for purpose questions.
- Use the process of elimination aggressively.

Chapter 5

Sentence Insertion Questions

There is usually one sentence insertion question per reading passage. Occasionally, passages will not have this type of question, but most do. There will not be more than one per passage.

For this question, the test will direct you to part of the passage that has four squares between sentences. **Here is an example of what the question will look like:**

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Today, schools, hospitals, and corporations rely on computers to store data, process information, and keep records.

In the 1940's, computers weighed almost fifty tons and cost as much as a jet airplane. It wasn't until the late 1970's that the personal computer was developed and the average person could afford one. In 1976, Steve Jobs and Stephen Wozniak designed and built the Apple I, a limited-production bare circuit board computer that was mostly purchased by electronics hobbyists. This marked the beginning of Apple Computer, Incorporated. ■ The Apple II was developed in 1977; it was the first personal computer that had color graphics and a keyboard. ■ At \$1,298 each, the Apple II was an enormous success because it was multi-purpose, affordable, and easy to use. ■ Over the next ten years, millions of people became computer literate and used computers both at work and at home. ■

For the purposes of this book, the sentence in bold that you must insert into the paragraph is called the **target sentence**. Your job is to click on the square in the passage where you think the target sentence best fits. In this example, the correct answer is the fourth square.

When you have made your decision, click on the square of your choice. The target sentence will automatically move to the square you clicked on. If you change your mind, simply click on a different square and the target sentence will move to that location. After you click on the square and the sentence moves, read the sentence in context—the sentence before, the target sentence, and the sentence after. Do this to make sure you have logical flow before you move on. I will explain logical flow a little further on in this chapter.

There are hints the TOEFL gives you to indicate where the target sentence best fits. The trick is familiarizing yourself with these hints before you go into the test. That’s why you’re reading this book, right? First, let’s look at the strategy.

Your strategy will look like this:

1. **Read the question carefully and understand what it is asking you to do.**
2. **Read the target sentence very carefully.**
3. **Determine what clues are in the target sentence.** The most common clues will be discussed in this chapter.
4. **Consider which square would be the best place for the target sentence, and click on it.** The target sentence will move there.
5. **Read the context again to make sure the target sentence does not**

interrupt the flow of the paragraph. If you change your mind, click on a different square and the target sentence will move.

Clue #1: The target sentence has a pronoun referent in it

Pronoun referents are words such as *his, her, its, their, these, those, this, they, them, themselves, himself, herself, itself*, etc. Note that these refer to a word in the previous sentence, called an antecedent. For example, “John is watching a movie. It is really boring.” The antecedent is the word “movie” and the pronoun referent is the word “it.”

I will give you some examples where I have already put the sentence where it belongs in the paragraph, so you can see how referents connect to previous sentences. I have underlined the referents.

Machiavelli’s most famous written work is *The Prince*. He dedicated this book to the new ruler of Florence to curry favor with the newly established powerful elite. Unfortunately, during his life, Machiavelli’s work was ignored. He remained at his country estate where he would spend his last days. *The Prince* was not published until several years after his death, but has since become infamous. In fact, the word “Machiavellian,” meaning the amoral pursuit of power, was coined after his work. Machiavelli’s ideas on how to maintain one’s public honor while prevailing over enemies had a profound impact on western politics, particularly during the medieval period.

In this example, the words “this book” refer to the written work, *The Prince*. Therefore, if we had to insert that sentence into the paragraph, it would make the most sense to put it right after its antecedent (the word or phrase it refers

to.)

Let me show you one more example before I give you some exercises:

Marsupials are mammals which are named after their marsupiums, or pouches, in which they carry their offspring. When the young are born, they crawl into this pouch and attach to their mother's nipple. They stay there, protected and nurtured by their mothers, until they grow large enough to fend for themselves. Even after they emerge and begin to explore their habitat, they may return to the pouch for warmth or protection from large predators. Most large marsupials, such as the kangaroo, give birth to one offspring at a time. Smaller marsupials, however, can have a litter of several young at once.

In the above example, the referents are “they” and “themselves.” The antecedent is “the young.” Therefore, this sentence belongs immediately after “When the young are born, they crawl into this pouch and attach to their mother's nipple.”

Your turn! Remember the list of referents I gave you. Use them to find the answers.

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

On average, they found that two days was the maximum amount of time that strawberries can be stored without losing nutrients.

Research shows that strawberries are a fragile and perishable fruit. ■ Food scientists examined storage time, temperature, and humidity to test just how delicate this fruit really is. ■ It's not that strawberries become inedible if they

are not kept in optimal conditions. However, the longer the storage time, the greater the loss of Vitamin C. ■ In addition, both being too ripe or not ripe enough has a negative impact on the availability of the antioxidant polyphenol. ■ The presence of polyphenols is important because evidence of their role in the prevention of degenerative diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases is emerging. Therefore, strawberries are best consumed when they are at their optimal level of ripeness: a vibrant, rich red color.

The sentence best fits in the second square. The word “they” refers to food scientists.

Let’s try another:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

This variety of media all shares certain qualities that make them distinctly Chinese in their method of artistic expression.

Art produced in the vast geographical area of China goes back to antiquity. Chinese art is one of the oldest continual art traditions in the world, spanning from the Tang to the Ming dynasty across hundreds of centuries. ■ This early art was meant to express the relationship of humans with the natural world. ■ Many types of different media have been discovered from this era, from lacquered boxes to paintings of landscapes, sculptures of a standing or sitting Buddha, and vases made from porcelain. ■ Art was used to express the relationship the people of China shared with a sometimes inhospitable land. ■ Inanimate matter was never painted only for aesthetic purposes. Rocks, streams, mountains, and stars represented visible forms of the invisible forces

at work in the universe.

This sentence best fits in the third square. “This variety of media,” is a referent to the antecedent “different media.”

Try this example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

He designed its uniform himself, a tunic accompanied by close-fitting trousers and a high peaked cap.

Yukio Mishima was a writer from Tokyo and the founder of the Shield Society, which pursued the goal of restoring traditional samurai codes of honor in Japan. ■ Mishima was born in 1925, a frail child who was rejected from joining the military in World War II. ■ He decided to mold himself into the man he aspired to be, devoting his time to mental and physical exercise. ■ He became a martial arts expert and assembled an army of his own. ■ This army was a private militia of young students who had sworn to protect the Emperor of Japan. In addition to commanding the Shield Society, Mishima wrote a tremendous amount about samurai ideals, the belief in heroic destiny, the value of aesthetic beauty, and living a life of honor. His written work expressed a desire to return to traditional Japanese values and promoted the revival of Japanese imperialism.

The fourth square is correct. What referents are we given in the target sentence? We are given “he,” but that’s not enough, because this entire paragraph is about a male. What about “its?” After the word “its” we have the word “uniform.” Who wears a uniform? An

army. Therefore this sentence belongs in the fourth square, as “its uniform” connects to “an army.”

Let’s try another:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

This event leads to Holden spending several days on his own.

The Catcher in the Rye is both one of the most beloved, yet controversial, books ever written. Penned by the reclusive writer J.D. Salinger, the story follows the misadventures of a young protagonist named Holden Caulfield. ■ He is not very interested in his studies, and he eventually gets kicked out of a prestigious private school. ■ During this time, Holden explores New York; sleeping in hotels, wandering around Central Park, and getting into various scrapes. ■ Holden’s general cynicism and contempt for those around him is shocking to many readers. ■ However, the primary reason *The Catcher in the Rye* is controversial is due to the use of language that many find offensive. The novel has been banned from a number of public school curriculums.

The second square is correct. Our clue is the referent, “This event.” Which event? The event is, “he eventually gets kicked out of a prestigious private school.”

Let’s try another:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

As time passed, these instruments were replaced by bands that mostly

played on guitars.

“Highlife” is a type of nineteenth century African music, so named because people who attended dances featuring this musical genre dressed up in cosmopolitan, sophisticated clothing. Highlife originated in Ghana but spread throughout Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Liberia through Ghanaian workers. ■ Highlife is customarily played with brass instruments, although at times Highlife used an entire orchestra with strings and even woodwinds. ■ Highlife can be described as a tapping melody that is repeated with breaks for instrumental solos. ■ It is still played in an offshoot form, incorporated into reggae and rock. ■ A Yoruba-based outgrowth of highlife called “juju” gained widespread international acclaim in the 1980’s and remains popular in African nightclubs into the 21st century.

This sentence belongs in the second square. “These instruments” is a referent to the antecedents “brass instruments/ strings/ woodwinds,” which are all instruments.

Here is another example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

If it releases white smoke, a new Pope has been chosen.

The Sistine Chapel is one of Rome’s most famous tourist destinations. However, it serves as more than just a hub for tourists: it also has a critical religious function. ■ Inside its walls, secret meetings take place among Cardinals to vote on who will serve as Pope in the event that the current Pope passes away or resigns. This meeting is called a papal conclave. ■ The

Cardinals do not have to choose one of their own fellows. Technically, any baptized male Catholic can be elected pope, but historically the job has always been given to a Cardinal. A unique chimney in the roof of the chapel broadcasts the results to the city. ■ Then, the newly elected pope goes into a small red room next to the Sistine Chapel called the “Room of Tears,” so named because of the strong emotions experienced by the new Pope. ■ He dresses in pontifical choir robes, a gold cross, and a white papal skullcap called a zucchetto.

The target sentence belongs in the third square. “It” is a referent that refers to “a unique chimney.” A chimney releases smoke.

Next example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

The answer to this question lies in a bee’s mathematical abilities.

Peer into any beehive and you will see beautifully constructed hexagonal cells, shapes with six sides, built tightly together. Like humans, bees need food and shelter to survive, and their home doubles as a storage unit. Bees need a secure place where their nectar can be deposited until it ripens into honey. Bees build their honeycombs out of wax. This is hard work as bees have to consume eight ounces of honey to produce one ounce of wax. Common sense might dictate that bees should build their honeycomb cells in circles, but this would be problematic: there would be gaps of wasted space between the cells. ■ Of all possible shapes, hexagons use the least amount of wax and can store the greatest amount of honey. ■ How do bees know this?

■ The industrious bees calculated the area of the triangle, square, and hexagon and figured out that the hexagon was the shape that gave them the most storage space with the least wax. ■ This occurred over the trial and error of the bee’s evolutionary history, and it has paid off. The honeycombs that bees build are so efficient that any professional human architect would be proud to call the design their own.

The target sentence belongs in the third square. The words “this question” in the target sentence refer to the question, “How do bees know this?”

Clue #2: The target sentence has transition words in it

A transition word in the target sentence is an important clue! Transitions words are words like *but*, *however*, *on the other hand*, *in addition*, *in contrast*, *yet*, *moreover*, *furthermore*, *therefore*, *as a consequence*, *other*, *another*, *for example*, and so on.

These words show that the sentence is either *adding* information or showing a *contrast* with previous information. **You can use these relationships to determine where the sentence best fits.**

Let me show you a simple example before you do your own work. I will underline the transition word that gives you the clue.

Papillons are a breed of dog in the Spaniel family. The name “papillon” comes from the appearance of their ears, which are shaped like butterfly wings, as “papillon” is the French word for “butterfly.” Papillons are sociable dogs, but can be wary around strangers or new animals. Papillons are friendly

and gregarious animals, but at the same time will alert their owners of any intrusion onto the property by barking, which makes them useful as watchdogs. Papillons can withstand heat very well and are suited to tropical or temperate climates. However, due to their single-coated fur, Papillons are very sensitive to the cold, and should not be left outside in chilly weather.

Our transition word here is “However.” This shows there is contrasting information: temperate climates are in contrast with cold climates. If you had to insert this sentence, you would put it after the sentence “Papillons can withstand heat very well and are suited to tropical or temperate climates.”

One more example:

Industrial expansion in the United States progressed rapidly between 1800 and 1914. It was during this period that Henry Ford launched the Model T automobile, the first automobile that was affordable for the average American family. He accomplished this by the innovation of the assembly line, in which parts are moved from one work station to another quickly, lowering manufacturing costs and significantly speeding up the process of building a vehicle. In addition, he established the Ford Foundation in 1936, the goal of which was to administer funds for scientific, educational and charitable purposes. Henry Ford offered his employees a living wage and profit-sharing to those who worked for his company for more than six months. At the end of his life, he left his fortune to the Ford Foundation.

Note the underlined transition, “In addition.” The previous sentence talks about an accomplishment of Henry Ford. The sentence that begins with “In addition” adds more information about Ford’s accomplishments.

Your turn!

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

However, the overwhelming majority now support Darwin’s theory.

Charles Darwin’s book *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859. In this groundbreaking book, Darwin attempted to demonstrate that all plant and animal life evolves as time passes. Darwin put forth the argument that this process occurs due to a phenomenon called natural selection. According to the theory of natural selection, living organisms that are best suited to the environment are the ones that successfully procreate and pass on their genes, and therefore their particular characteristics, to the next generation. This was a revolutionary and radical idea at the time that shocked the public. ■ Darwin’s theory provoked fierce reactions from church officials, in particular his hypothesis that man evolved from an ape-like ancestor. ■ Even his fellow biologists were resistant to his ideas at first. ■ A 2001 Gallup poll showed that over 95% now accept evolution by natural selection, although many non-scientists still do not. ■

The target sentence belongs in the third square. It introduces a contrast with the word “However.” Who is the target sentence referring to with the words “the overwhelming majority?” Biologists. Therefore, choose the third square.

Here we go again!

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Other early events that are likely to be recalled later in life are weddings,

funerals, or birthday parties.

“Infantile amnesia” refers to the fact that almost everyone has difficulty recalling what happened in their lives before the age of three or four. There are some exceptions to this phenomenon. ■ For example, there is a tendency to remember significant events such as a major injury requiring hospitalization or the birth of a younger sibling. ■ However, most daily, routine events are irretrievable; forever forgotten by the individual who experienced them. ■ While there appear to be gender differences, with girls better able to recall early memories than boys, the precise rate at which these memories are forgotten remains a mystery. ■ What is known is that the age at which infantile amnesia ends varies from person to person, and is influenced by both individual and cultural factors.

The target sentence belongs in the second square. Our clue is the word “Other.” This means the author is adding another idea similar to one found in a previous sentence. The sentence we need to insert refers to “other events” which adds to “significant events.”

Here is another example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Yet, most people have never even heard the name Maurice Hilleman.

When most people think of vaccine development, the names Edward Jenner or Louis Pasteur come to mind. ■ Accordingly, Maurice Hilleman is often referred to as the “unsung hero” of vaccinology. ■ His contributions to vaccinology are unparalleled in the field of medicine. ■ In fact, he developed

over 40 vaccines in his career, including the MMR vaccine, which is now administered to approximately 90% of children in the United States. He is believed to have saved more lives than any other medical scientist of the 20th century. ■ According to one estimate, his vaccines save eight million lives a year to this day. His work has made possible the virtual elimination of many infectious childhood diseases in developing nations and has served as the basis for public health measures against other deadly diseases.

The sentence belongs in the first square because it contrasts with the names most commonly associated with vaccines, and a name which most people have not heard. The clue is the word “Yet.”

Try this one:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

In addition, he painted “Irises,” sold to an Australian industrialist in 1987 for a record \$53 million, now on display at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

In the spring of 1889, famed Dutch artist Vincent Van Gogh voluntarily checked himself into a psychiatric hospital in the south of France. This was following such severe bouts of epilepsy that he felt he could not continue to care for himself. As long as he remained stable, doctors gave him permission to paint. He was given two small rooms, one of which he converted into an art studio. During his stay, Van Gogh painted with intense energy. ■ Over the course of a year, he completed over 100 paintings. ■ This art included scenes of gardens, hospital grounds, and the surrounding countryside, which he was

permitted to visit only in the company of an attendant. ■ His most famous painting, “The Starry Night,” was completed during this time, and has since been acquired by the New York Museum of Modern Art. ■ Van Gogh’s short and tragic life, which ended in suicide, left an enormous mark on the art world by introducing methods and practices that came to define later modern art movements from Fauvism to Abstract Expressionism.

The target sentence belongs in the fourth square. It starts with the transition “In addition,” which builds on the idea introduced in the sentence before: the paintings he completed and where they are currently located.

Here is another example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

But what served us well in the past can be counterproductive or even crippling to people in today’s world.

Fear and anxiety are unpleasant emotions, but they played a crucial role in higher order mammals living in a prehistoric society. At that time, the world was full of real danger, and a fearful response to any possible threat was not necessarily a bad thing—after all, it was better to run away from all snakes than to risk getting bitten by one that might be venomous. ■ Nowadays, a 24-hour news cycle that constantly runs sensational stories can heighten a person’s sense of danger from what are, in reality, nonexistent threats. ■ Psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky coined the term “the availability heuristic” in 1973 to refer to the fact that people largely overestimate danger if it is easy to recall or envision. ■ The availability

heuristic explains why people are afraid of situations which are extremely unlikely to affect them, such as a shark attack or a plane crash. ■ These events get a lot of news coverage, and over time, we believe that they are a real threat to our lives when in fact they are very rare occurrences.

The sentence belongs in the first square. It has the transition word “But” which shows a contrast with the sentence before it.

Clue #3: The information is general, or it is specific

As a general rule, information that appears to introduce a topic or begin a new topic should be placed near the beginning of the paragraph. Information that is more specific—that adds detail or gives examples—goes further along in the paragraph.

Look carefully at this paragraph and note the order of ideas:

Phrenology is a pseudoscience that was first developed in the 1700’s by Franz Gall. Gall was a German physician who became convinced that the shape of a person’s skull held the key to their personalities. This hypothesis was based on examinations he had performed on the skulls of thieves when he noted that many of these criminals had bumps above their ears. He concluded that such a bump indicated a likeliness to lie, cheat or steal. Later in his career, Gall went on to measure the skulls of people in prisons and mental institutions and came up with a list of 27 different personality characteristics he believed

were associated with the shape of one's skull. Some of the characteristics Gall believed were related to skull shape were courage, language ability, pride, vanity, recollection, and a sense for colors.

Note the order of sentences in the above paragraph. Note, also, that it would not make sense to remove one sentence and place it somewhere else in the paragraph. It starts with broad ideas and continues to more specific information. You can use this knowledge of paragraph structure to help you determine where sentences go. Sentences with broad ideas, especially topic sentences, go at the beginning of a paragraph. A sentence with specific details should be placed closer to the end.

Time to practice this!

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

In Indonesia, coffee is consumed from glasses; in the Middle East, it is served in tiny brass cups; while the French add milk to their coffee and drink it from bowls.

Originally grown on the plateaus of Ethiopia in AD 1000, coffee spread throughout Arabia with the traders who traveled over mountains with the beans. Coffee is a beverage which is made by grinding roasted coffee beans and pouring very hot water through them. ■ It is a dark, somewhat bitter tasting beverage which is usually served hot, although it can be enjoyed over ice. ■ Coffee is a truly cosmopolitan drink; in fact, over one-third of the world's population consumes coffee every morning. ■ Both the preparation

and serving of coffee vary widely depending on the country and culture. ■
Canned coffee is popular in Asia, particularly in China, Taiwan, and Korea.
In Japan, convenience stores sell lightly sweetened coffee in cans or bottles.

This sentence belongs in the fourth square. It's very specific information. It gives examples of how coffee is consumed in several different parts of the world. Moreover, it ties to the sentence before it, which introduces the information that coffee is prepared and served differently depending on the culture and country.

Here is another example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

The eldest daughter of the Duke and Duchess of York, Elizabeth Alexandra Mary was crowned Queen of the United Kingdom in 1953.

■ Elizabeth Mary aspired to be a truly cosmopolitan Queen, and visited many newly independent British colonies over which she remained a constitutional monarch. ■ Through these visits, she increased the respect of the English Crown, until financial scandals tarnished the reputation of the royal family. ■ Many people under British rule resented the tax-free status of the royal family and the large monetary allowances given to them. In response, the Queen has given up some of her financial perks, even the tax advantages she previously enjoyed. ■ The monarchy still receives government funds, but Elizabeth backed the elimination of complete reliance on public support that had been enjoyed by all monarchs of Britain for 250 years prior.

The target sentence is a topic sentence. Therefore, it belongs in the first square.

Clue #4: Consider logical flow

The target sentence should NOT interrupt the logical flow of the paragraph. Paragraphs in the TOEFL are orderly. They present ideas in a logical sequence. Your target sentence should NOT disrupt the logical order of ideas. Recall the paragraph about Phrenology we read earlier in this chapter. It had logical flow. No sentence could be moved to another position in the paragraph without disrupting the flow. Consider logical flow when you choose the square for your target sentence.

Let's try this example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Red clothing is a signal of the character's bravery, while gold is worn to show divinity.

Individual expression is not valued or encouraged in performances at the Beijing Opera. In fact, these operas follow rigid structures. ■ Ornate costumes give the audience clues about the character traits of the singers. ■ Even gestures, such as touching one's beard or smiling, follow strict guidelines meant to convey a specific message to the audience. ■ The main reason for the importance placed on the specificity of clothing and movement is that the Beijing Opera has very few props on stage. ■ The actors become the main focal point, and their singing, body language, and movement are symbolic rather than realistic. The audience must use these cues to draw conclusions and understand the storylines.

The target sentence belongs in the second square. The target sentence gives examples of how color is used in costume, which logically connects it to the previous sentence, a more general statement about costumes. It builds on this idea. Notice if you put it anywhere else, it would disrupt the flow.

Try another one:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

In a moment of grief and regret over his life’s work, he throws himself from a bridge.

Les Misérables is a musical based on the novel by the French writer Victor Hugo. It is the second-longest running musical in the world. Les Misérables follows the story of Jean Valjean, an ex-convict who is living his life under a false identity in order to leave his tarnished reputation behind him. ■ Valjean climbs the social ladder to become the mayor of the town Montreuil-sur-Mer and the owner of a factory. ■ However, Valjean is relentlessly pursued by the unwavering policeman Javert, who becomes obsessed with the idea that Valjean is a dangerous man who belongs in prison. ■ Ultimately, Javert realizes that he has spent his life following the rule of law without considering the human consequences of his actions. ■

The fourth square is correct. The target sentence is a conclusion to the life of Javert, and therefore belongs at the end. Furthermore, the mention of “regret over his life’s work” connects to the idea in the previous sentence.

Try another one:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

The wings are damp and wrinkled at first.

A butterfly goes through unique life cycles. It begins its life attached to a leaf, encased in a small round or cylindrical egg. When it emerges, it is not as a butterfly, but as a caterpillar. This is called the larval stage. Caterpillars are six-legged insects. They are voracious eaters and can consume up to three times their body weight in a day. As they eat, they shed their skin several times. When the caterpillar reaches its full weight and length, the skin is no longer shed but forms a protective pupal skin called a cocoon. Within this cocoon an incredible transformation takes place. ■ Tissues, limbs, and organs begin to arrange into the form of a butterfly, while the buds underneath the caterpillar's skin break out as wings. ■ As the butterfly emerges from the cocoon, the wings dry out and warm blood pumps through them. ■ It takes a mere three to four hours for the butterfly to become a master flyer. ■ It immediately goes in search of food and a mate, and the process begins all over again.

Have you chosen your answer? It belongs in the second square due to logical flow. It is logical that "The wings are damp and wrinkled at first" should be put before "the wings dry out."

Here is another example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Deep sea fish have accordingly been forced to develop unique adaptations.

■ Deep sea creatures must be able to withstand extreme pressure and darkness, as well as a lack of opportunity to mate due to the scarcity of available partners. ■ One survival strategy that evolved in response to living under these conditions is parasitism; in which one species, the parasite, benefits at the expense of the other, the host. ■ The male anglerfish uses parasitism to overcome the challenges of the deep sea habitat. ■ When the parasitic male anglerfish encounters a female, he attaches himself to her circulatory system by biting her. This bite does not kill the female host. The purpose of this attachment is to fertilize the female's eggs and rob her of nutrients. He will remain attached to her for the rest of her life. In this way, the male does not have to continue on his quest for a mate, nor find his own source of food.

The correct answer is the second square. The word “accordingly” means “therefore,” or “as a consequence.” It logically flows that deep sea fish have been forced to develop unique adaptations as a consequence of the extreme pressure, darkness, and scarcity of available partners mentioned in the previous sentence.

**Clue #5: There is repetition of a word
which links the target sentence to the
sentence *before* or *after* it**

Sometimes, there are words in the target sentence that are also in the passage. You can use this repetition to figure out where the target sentence belongs.

Note that these words may be synonyms!

Here is an example in which I have underlined the repeated words, which in this case are synonyms:

Physiologists have noticed that the performance of many organs such as the heart, kidneys, brain, and lungs decline as a person ages. Part of the reason that the function of the body's organs deteriorates is due to a loss of the cells from these organs. Moreover, the cells that are remaining in an elderly individual may not perform as well as those in a young person. Certain cellular enzymes are less active in older people. Thus, more time is necessary in order to carry out cellular function. Over a long enough time period, cell death occurs.

Note the synonyms that connect the first and second sentences. The word “decline” is a synonym of the word “deteriorates.”

Consider the following example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Among works of art found in tombs are wall paintings, sculptures of the deceased individual and small figurines of servants.

From 3,000 to 500 B.C. Egyptian art was subject to some changes and adaptations, but many of the same fundamental themes are seen throughout this period. One key theme common to art made during this time is a connection with death. ■ Paintings and sculptures were placed in cemeteries and tombs. ■ These works of art served several purposes. Some were meant

to ensure protection and guidance in the underworld. ■ Others were created to communicate with the gods, to assist the deceased, or become a host for the “ka,” which the Egyptians believed was the vital essence of life that left the body at the moment of death. ■ Egyptian art of this nature was meant to last not a lifetime, but an eternity.

The correct answer is the second square. Note the repetition of the word “tombs.”

Here is another example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

If polar ice continues to melt, sea levels could rise and cause floods along the coasts of both the mainland and islands.

After the Industrial Revolution, humans began to burn massive amounts of fossil fuels, expelling carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Unfortunately, carbon dioxide traps heat from the sun’s rays. This causes the Earth’s temperature to rise and is known as the greenhouse effect. ■ The name is an analogy to greenhouses, which get warmer in the sunlight. ■ The greenhouse effect has already caused a forty percent reduction in the thickness of ice in the Arctic. ■ According to Australian researchers, five small Pacific islands have already disappeared due to rising sea levels as this ice melts. Unless current trends are curbed, the temperature on Earth could rise to catastrophic levels. ■

The target sentence belongs in the third square. Why? It repeats the keyword “ice” which links it to the sentence before. In addition, the sentence after the third square mentions

“islands,” which also connects to the target sentence.

Here is another example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

They invented a unique form of concrete.

The Romans did not invent the arch. ■ In fact, arches were known in a number of civilizations in the Ancient East and the Levant. ■ In those cultures, however, the use of the arch was limited and mostly used in drains or to hold up small structures with columns to help support the roof. This design limited the size and scope of the room that it could hold up. ■ The Romans, on the other hand, built huge arches that are so durable that many still stand today. How did they do this? ■ The concrete they used was a mixture of lime, volcanic ash, and rock to form a mortar. Seawater was added to the mix to cement the bond, triggering a chemical reaction through which the water hydrated the lime and bonded everything together in a calcium-aluminum-silicate-hydrate that was incredibly durable and lasting. This mixture was so strong it could span great distances when shaped into arches. The Romans built cathedrals, government buildings, aqueducts, and fountains with this unique innovation.

The sentence goes in the fourth square. It is connected to the next sentence by the word “concrete.” It also answers the question, “How did they do this?” in the previous sentence.

Here is another example:

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Scientists are skeptical that the sounds are anything more than the imagination of the observer.

Few sights are as bewitching as the northern lights. These lights are caused by streams of charged particles from the sun that have been diverted by the Earth's magnetic field toward the Polar Regions. The interaction of these particles with atoms in the upper atmosphere creates an intense energy, particularly when they encounter oxygen and nitrogen. ■ The charged particles transfer energy to these atoms and excite them, and the energy is released in tiny packets of light called photons. ■ Depending on where in the atmosphere this interaction occurs, different colors will be produced. Oxygen at 150 miles above the Earth's surface will radiate yellow and green, and nitrogen at 60 miles up emits a beautiful blue. The northern lights are most vibrant during solar storms but are invisible during the day when the sun outshines them. ■ Some people who have spotted the northern lights have reported that they are not only a spectacular sight, but make audible noises like crackles and pops. ■

Where does our target sentence fit? It belongs in the fourth square. This is because the word "sounds," is a synonym of the word "noises" in the previous sentence.

Final Quiz!

Question One

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Needless to say, these characteristics annoy some critics and audience members.

Jean-Luc Godard is a French film director who was a leader in what is called French New Wave Cinema. His work polarizes audiences into those who either love it or hate it. ■ Godard earned his controversial status because of his revolutionary ideas about politics and his unique film-making techniques. ■ His films contain experimental elements, with actors speaking directly to the camera, jump cuts, a lack of continuity, and music that stops abruptly during a scene. ■ Yet, Godard has legitimately changed filmmaking and has influenced renowned directors such as Roman Polanski and Gus Van Sant. In 2010, Goddard was awarded an Academy Award but declined the invitation to the ceremony. ■

The target sentence goes in the third square. This is a logical connection to both the sentence before it and the one after. The sentence before gives examples of moviemaking techniques that could be annoying.

Question Two

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Thus, Confucianism is considered to be a strict religion with intrinsic ties to culture.

Confucianism has been instrumental in shaping social relationships and moral guidelines in China. The heart of Confucianism is that man's conduct should be concerned with daily life, with less of an emphasis on the future than other belief systems. ■ The core elements of Confucianism are conducting oneself with virtue while being respectful and truthful to others. ■ But Confucianism does not leave its followers alone to figure out the best path in life; instead, it is a religion full of advice on how to behave. ■ Confucianism even provides rigid guidelines on how to treat ancestors, children, parents, and rulers. ■ Confucianism and its ideals continue to play a central role in China to this day.

The target sentence belongs in the fourth square. "Thus...a strict religion" provides a connection to "rigid guidelines." "Rigid" and "strict" are synonyms.

Question Three

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Yet, there are a few examples where it does appear to genuinely exist.

Symbiosis is a term in biology that means a close, long-term relationship between organisms of two different species. One type of symbiotic relationship is known as commensalism. ■ Commensalism refers to a relationship where one organism benefits and the other is not significantly affected. ■ Commensalism can be difficult to prove because it is unlikely that two organisms can live very closely without one having some sort of effect, however small, on the other. ■ One such relationship is between the egret, a

bird that is a member of the heron family, and grazing mammals such as cattle and water buffalo. ■ These herbivores disturb insects as they graze, flushing them out for the egrets to catch and eat. In this relationship the egret benefits, but there is no apparent effect on the herbivores.

The target sentence belongs in the third square. “Yet... examples where it does appear to genuinely exist,” provides a contrast to the idea that “Commensalism can be difficult to prove.”

Question Four

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

This conflict results in a feeling of anxiety and discomfort.

Cognitive dissonance is a term in psychology used to describe the mental stress experienced by a person who holds beliefs which contradict their behavior. ■ For example, a teacher may scold her students for smoking, yet smoke when not on school grounds and feel guilty about it. Since cognitive dissonance is unpleasant, the individual is motivated to return to a state of consonance, in which their beliefs and behavior are no longer at odds. ■ However, since the individual does not usually want to stop indulging in a behavior that they know is wrong, they often adjust their attitude or perspective rather than quit the behavior. ■ In the example of the teacher, she may resolve the cognitive dissonance by rationalizing that she is old enough to smoke, while her students are not. ■ In this way, she is able to reduce her feelings of anxiety.

The target sentence belongs in the first square. “This conflict” refers to “beliefs which contradict their behavior.” The word “conflict” is very close in meaning to “contradict.”

Question Five

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

Autism is a complex developmental disability that is usually diagnosed before a child reaches the age of three.

■ Autism is believed to be the result of a neurological disorder that affects the function of the brain. ■ Autism affects an individual’s ability to communicate and interact socially. ■ In milder cases of autism, the individual may seem introverted and slightly awkward in social situations. ■ He or she may wish to participate in group interaction, but lack the ability to communicate with others effectively. In more severe cases, the autistic person may exhibit a complete lack of interest in social interaction, including failure to make eye contact with others or use spoken language. Although there is no known cure, there have been cases in which children have recovered from early symptoms. Early intervention techniques such as speech and behavioral therapy can improve a child’s prognosis.

The target sentence belongs in the first square. It is a general topic sentence that introduces autism.

Question Six

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

More recently, a new theory has been developed.

For centuries, the colossal stone statues of Easter Island, called “moais” have led to a question that has baffled researchers: how were these enormous statues moved 11 miles from the quarry where they were first carved? ■ Many theories have been tested in the past, such as the use of log rollers, ropes, and wooden sleds. ■ In 1986, Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl gathered a team of 17 people to attempt to propel a 13-foot moai that weighed 9 tons forward using twisting motions. ■ However, they had to abandon the experiment when the moai became damaged. ■ In 2003, researchers Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo observed that the fat bellies of the statues allowed them to be tilted easily, and hypothesized that they could have been rocked back and forth over the terrain. They tested their hypothesis and found that with the help of only 18 people, they were able to move the statues a few hundred yards.

This sentence belongs in the fourth square due to logical flow. The target sentence mentions a “new theory” and then the next sentences discuss the new theory.

A recap of the key points you need to know:

- There is usually *one* sentence insertion question per passage.
- The first step is to read the sentence you must insert **CAREFULLY**.

- Determine if there are any clues in the sentence such as referents, transitions, or key words that are repeated in the paragraph.
- Read all sentences *before* and *after* each square.
- If there are no clues, you must look for logical flow.
- After you insert the target sentence, read the context again to make sure there is logical flow before moving to the next question.

Chapter 6

Paraphrase Questions

In each reading passage, there will be one paraphrase question. Some books called this the “sentence simplification” question. One sentence will be highlighted in gray in the reading. It will be a complex sentence, often quite long. You will be given four choices, and you must choose the sentence that has the closest meaning to the highlighted sentence. The correct answer will be a shorter, simpler paraphrase of the highlighted sentence.

Some students find the paraphrase question to be the most difficult in the TOEFL reading. Some students choose to skip it and come back to it if they have time. While I do not recommend skipping questions, if this strategy works for you, go for it! It is only worth one point, so if it causes you too much stress and takes time away from other questions, it may be okay to skip (but at least guess- do not leave any questions unanswered.)

For the purposes of this chapter, I will assume you are going to try this question and give it your best effort, *which is what I recommend!*

Paraphrase questions look like this:

Michelangelo was very picky about the marble that he used for his work, yet for his most renowned sculpture, the “David” statue, he used of a slab of marble that other artists regarded as unworkable. Nicknamed “The Giant,” the enormous stone had been excavated nearly 40 years earlier, intended to be used for multiple sculptures. It had weathered and become rough from exposure to the elements over the years, and by the time Michelangelo began working with it in 1501, it had already been damaged by the chisel marks of

various sculptors who had abandoned it in frustration. Eventually, Michelangelo was able to carve this block into his revered work, but analysis has shown that “David” is currently degrading more rapidly than sculptures carved from better quality marble.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- Michelangelo’s “David” degraded so quickly that other artists abandoned it for better quality marble.
- Michelangelo used an abandoned slab of marble to carve “David,” but it is degrading faster than higher quality marble.
- The marble Michelangelo used to carve “David” has deteriorated along with many other sculptures that were carved during the same time period.
- The analysis on Michelangelo’s David has proven that the marble used for this sculpture had been carved too rapidly.

The second answer is correct.

Now that we know what these questions look like, let’s analyze how to answer them. Let’s start with an example of a paraphrase:

Michael Jackson was an American singer, songwriter, and record producer whose contributions to music and dance, along with his publicized personal life, made him a global figure in popular culture for over four decades.

A paraphrase would look like this:

For over forty years, the musician Michael Jackson was famous worldwide not only for his musical talent but also for his private life.

Note how much simpler and easier to understand the paraphrase is. However, even though it is much simpler, it still contains all the relevant information. Although the words “singer, songwriter, and record producer” are changed to “musician,” the word “musician” can include all of those professions. This is often what paraphrases in the TOEFL do: take several similar words and combine them into one broad term. Paraphrases must keep all the important information to be the correct choice. Here, “over four decades” is changed to “over forty years” and “global figure in popular culture” is simplified to “famous worldwide.”

How to tackle paraphrase questions:

Remember, the highlighted sentences are very complex, and the correct answer choice is often much simpler. Therefore, it may be helpful to break the sentence into meaningful chunks and try to simplify it in your mind or on paper. Do this before you look at your answer choices to avoid confusion.

Let’s try the strategy of breaking a sentence into chunks. Here is an example of a very long sentence:

To obtain water for drinking and bathing, Romans, like their contemporaries in the ancient world, had to rely on local sources of water such as rivers and streams, in addition to groundwater from private or publicly owned wells and seasonal rains which were collected from drains in the rooftops and stored in jars.

Breaking down the sentence:

To obtain water for drinking and bathing, Romans, like their contemporaries in the ancient world = simpler: For water, Romans, like others in ancient times,

had to rely on local sources of waters such as rivers and streams, in addition to groundwater from private or publicly owned wells= simpler: relied on water from the local sources and wells

and seasonal rains which were collected from drains in the rooftops and stored in jars. = simpler: in addition to stored rainwater.

The simpler sentence: For water, Romans, like others in ancient times, relied on water from local sources and wells in addition to stored rainwater.

By simplifying information *before* you look at your answer choices, you will find this task much easier. Therefore, breaking the sentence into chunks may help you. Practice this before you go into the TOEFL.

The correct paraphrase **MUST** keep all the important information. It may contain synonyms, change the voice from active to passive, vary the word form or sentence structure, or omit unimportant clauses or information. Sometimes, the original sentence uses a metaphor, but the correct paraphrase uses literal language. Let's go through examples of these one at a time. Please note that real TOEFL test may use more than one of these in each question.

The use of synonyms:

Phocas, an unpopular ruler invariably described as a tyrant, was the target of a number of plots.

Paraphrase using synonyms: (the synonyms are in *italics*)

Phocas was a ruler who was *disliked* and *often called* a tyrant, and was the *object* of many *schemes*.

The change in voice:

The active voice may be changed to the passive, or the passive to the active. (The passive voice is in *italics*) For example:

Angry onlookers attacked Princip until the police pulled him away.

Paraphrase:

Princip *was attacked* by a mob of angry onlookers until he *was pulled* away by police.

A change in word forms:

Genetically modified foods do not currently have to be labeled in the state of California.

Paraphrase:

Currently, foods with *modified genes* do not require *labeling* in California.

A change in word order:

“Romeo and Juliet” is considered a tragedy because it includes characters who are imperfect, who meet with bad fortune, and ultimately die from forces beyond their control.

Paraphrase:

Because the characters are imperfect, have bad luck, and die in the end, “Romeo and Juliet” is classified as a tragedy.

The omission of unimportant clauses or information:

Batman has become an American cultural icon and appears on merchandise all over the world, even on toys and video games.

Paraphrase:

Batman is very popular in American culture, and his image is seen on many commercial products worldwide.

The use of metaphors:

Language is a roadmap to culture.

Paraphrase:

Language tells us a lot about culture.

TRAPS

The answer choice uses words from the original sentence but changes the meaning. This is a very common trap on the TOEFL. An incorrect answer choice may change a cause and effect relationship, switch a subject with an object, change the order in which events occur, or change the meaning in any other significant way.

For example, “Most of life’s important decisions are made before the age of forty” is not the same as “Most of life’s important decisions are made *at* the

age of forty.” That’s a simple example, but you can see that although those sentences are almost identical, the meaning is not. Be careful of these traps on TOEFL.

In the same way, “Psychologists have recently observed that the peer group is more important in shaping the behavior of adolescents than parents” is not the same as “The peer group has *recently* become more important in shaping the behavior of adolescents than parents, psychologists observed.”

The answer does not have the same main topic. Remember that the main focus of the original sentence must be the same main focus as your answer choice. For example, if the original sentence says, “Johnny Depp’s entertaining depiction of the pirate Captain Jack Sparrow no doubt contributed to the success of the Pirates of the Caribbean movies and was a boon for Disney studios,” then the correct answer **CANNOT** be “Disney studios found success with their Pirates of the Caribbean movies which starred Johnny Depp as Captain Jack Sparrow.” Why? The focus in the original sentence is Johnny Depp- -the focus in the second sentence is Disney studios.

The answer choice adds information that is not in the original or distorts the information in some way. For example, “Although it’s possible to do the trek alone, many travelers choose to follow the expertise and guidance of a Sherpa” is not the same as, “One can do this trek independently, but the most efficient way is to hire a Sherpa because they are experts” because the second sentence adds the information that hiring a Sherpa is the *most efficient* way—not in the original.

The answer choice omits important information. The answer you choose must contain all the IMPORTANT information from the original. A correct

paraphrase may omit details, but the key information must be there. Make sure the subject and object from the original are included in the paraphrase. For example, “The mangrove trees occupied by this finch are on a coastal area, with the ocean on one side and lava on the other” is not the same as “The mangrove trees are on the coast, with one side facing the sea and the other facing lava” because the second sentence omits *this finch*.

It can be difficult to tell what is important and what is not because often the correct answer **does** omit **unnecessary** information. The biggest clue is that the correct paraphrase will always contain the most important **SUBJECT AND OBJECT** from the original sentence, although synonyms might be used.

For example:

A group of businessmen and sugar planters overthrew Queen Liliuokalani in 1893, making her the last monarch of Hawaii.

Correct paraphrase: Businessmen and sugar planters deposed Queen Liliuokalani in 1893.

Why is this correct? Even though it doesn’t include the information that she was the last monarch, the most important information is still kept: The main subject and object.

QUICK TIP #1: Omit dependent clauses before you look at the answer choices

One trick that will help you is to omit dependent clauses in your mind and see

if you can find the correct answer without the dependent clause or clauses. A dependent clause is a clause that provides an independent clause with additional information, but cannot stand alone as a sentence.

For example:

Romeo, who was born into the Montague family, and Juliet, who was born into the Capulet family, were caught in the crossfire of an ancient feud between their families.

Now, look at the same sentence without the dependent clauses:

Romeo and Juliet were caught in the crossfire of an ancient feud between their families.

Once you remove the dependent clauses, it's much easier to find the paraphrase! In this example, a paraphrase could be "*Romeo and Juliet were in the middle of an old family rivalry.*"

One more example:

The cuckoo bird is often identified by its repertoire of calls, which are relatively simple whistles, used to demonstrate ownership of a territory or to attract a mate.

Now, look at the same sentence without the dependent clause:

The cuckoo bird is often identified by its repertoire of calls, used to demonstrate ownership of a territory or to attract a mate.

It's much simpler, right?

In this example, a paraphrase could be *“A cuckoo can be distinguished from other birds by the calls it uses to establish territory or entice a mate.”*

QUICK TIP #2: Quickly eliminate answer choices that add information that is not in the original

You can quickly eliminate sentences that add words that you didn't see in the original. For example, if the original says:

The Romans, much like the cement they used to build bridges, were bound together through common religion, psychology, and social pressure.

You can quickly eliminate: The Romans were bound together like cement because they had a lot in common, including the region's beliefs and strict laws.

Note that the original does not contain the words “strict laws” or any synonyms! Quickly eliminate it. You must eliminate incorrect answer choices quickly and aggressively.

Time to practice what you learned!

The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses used by 19th-century enslaved people of African descent to escape to the free states and Canada with the aid of abolitionists and allies who were sympathetic to their cause. Although the exact number is not known, as many

as 100,000 slaves may have used this means of escape. The Underground Railroad was actually neither underground, nor a railroad. It was so named because of its secretive nature. Railway terms were used as secret codes; the routes were called “lines” and the stopping places were called “stations.” Harriet Tubman, a former slave and “conductor” of the railroad, was instrumental in helping with the transport of approximately 300 slaves to freedom. Tubman’s actions angered slave owners who offered an enormous reward for her capture.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- Harriet Tubman helped build the Underground Railroad which was important in helping slaves escape to freedom.
- Harriet Tubman acted as a conductor of a railroad that was under the ground in order to help escaped slaves become free.
- Harriet Tubman was an essential part of the operation of the Underground Railroad, helping roughly 300 slaves escape.
- The Underground Railroad was used by approximately 300 slaves, and was extremely important in their escape to freedom.

The third answer is correct.

Try this example:

In 1994, figure skating was at the peak of its popularity. At the time, Tonya Harding was one of the strongest female skaters in the U.S. and appeared to

be on her way to winning an Olympic gold medal. But she had one fierce competitor: Nancy Kerrigan, a graceful, determined skater who had already won a bronze Olympic medal in 1992. The world of figure skating was shaken when Kerrigan was hit in the knee with a baton as she was leaving the ice after practice in Detroit, Michigan. The goal of the attack appeared to be to injure Kerrigan's leg to prevent her from competing in the 1994 Olympics. A male suspect fled the scene before he could be apprehended or arrested. Because of the intense rivalry between the two world famous athletes, most of the suspicion from both the police and the public immediately fell on Harding, and there was a widespread belief that she had somehow orchestrated the attack from behind the scenes. Ultimately, Harding's ex-husband and her bodyguard admitted to planning the attack by hiring a third man to carry it out after obtaining information about where Kerrigan was practicing. Harding was only charged with obstruction of justice. Nancy Kerrigan went on to recover quickly from the incident and won the silver medal in the 1994 Olympics a mere month after the attack.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- Harding became a suspect after she admitted that she suspected Kerrigan was her strongest rival.
- Harding gained widespread fame because of the suspicion people felt after the attack on her competitor.
- Immediately, everyone suspected Harding had planned and carried out the attack herself because of the intense rivalry with Kerrigan.
- Many people believed that Harding was responsible for the attack

because the two were competing with each other.

The fourth answer is correct. (***Note:** Although the third looks tempting, it states that Harding herself attacked Kerrigan; untrue because the highlighted sentence says she orchestrated the attack from “behind the scenes.”)

Next example:

The history of what we now call Halloween goes back 2,000 years to the ancient Celtic festival called Samhain, which was celebrated on November 1st. Samhain was a time to take stock of crops and livestock, light bonfires, and enjoy enormous feasts. It marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the “darker” part of the year. The Celts believed that the night before Samhain, the boundary between the living and the dead was blurred, and spirits could rise from the grave; these spirits needed to be appeased with offerings of food or drink that were placed outside. The offer was given in the hopes that the spirits would protect the family’s livestock during the harsh winters. Places were also set at the dinner table and fires were lit to welcome the spirits. This ritual has evolved into the festival of Halloween, in which children wearing costumes knock on doors in their neighborhood and ask for an “offering” of candy or fruit.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- The Celtic people believed that on October 31st, the barrier between the living and the dead was not clear so offerings were left for the spirits to keep them content.

- Since the boundary between the living and the dead was not clear to the Celts, they offered them food and drink to keep them happy.
- The Celts believed that on the day of Samhain, an offering of food and drink would appease the spirits of the dead.
- The Celts routinely offered food and drink to the spirits of the dead, which were left outside, to keep family members from any harm.

The first answer is correct. (***Note:** the third answer is very tempting—but the spirits were given offerings the night **BEFORE** Samhain.)

Let's try another!

Faults are fractures or breaks in the Earth's crust. Earthquakes occur when there is a sudden release of stress along a fault line. The San Andreas Fault is a sliding boundary fault between the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate of the Earth that extends 1,300 kilometers through the state of California. Seismologists, who study earthquakes, believe a major quake is very likely to occur within the next decade along this fault. Such an event would cause billions of dollars of damage, particularly to older buildings, buildings on unconsolidated gravel, or those along the coastline where the water tables are high. The area likely to incur the most damage is Southern California, especially Los Angeles County. Unfortunately, the prediction of earthquakes remains elusive. **Despite this uncertain appointment with a restless Earth, Los Angeles is home to over 18 million people and counting.**

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- The 18 million people in Los Angeles must prepare for an uncertain event in the future.
- The Earth in Los Angeles County is restless due to the more than 18 million people who reside there.
- An earthquake in Los Angeles will be especially dangerous because more than 18 million people live near the coast.
- Los Angeles has a large, growing population even though an earthquake could cause a catastrophe at any moment.

The fourth answer is correct.

Next example:

Evidence of the earliest forms of artistic expression by humans can be found in Africa's rock paintings. These early paintings are approximately 12,000 years old. Although found across Africa, the richest site for these paintings is in the Sahara, in locations so remote that they have been kept safe from the destruction of graffiti and the bullets of warring tribes. These paintings trace the elaborate history of the area and its environmental changes. For instance, various animals such as elephants, hippos, and giraffes that were once found in the Sahara but disappeared when desertification turned a once rich ecosystem into a vast desert are included. Across Africa, the subjects of these paintings tend to be the animals that were highly valued and contributed to local culture and lifestyle; for example, many included scenes of the seasonal hunts. Abstract paintings have also been found, but their meaning and relevance have proven more difficult to interpret.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the

highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- Paintings found in Africa usually depicted important animals that were significant to the culture.
- Africans worshipped certain animals, and these became the subject of their paintings.
- The animals that were painted on the walls of Africa depended on which were plentiful during the seasonal hunt.
- In Africa, cave paintings were a valuable part of the local culture and lifestyle.

The first answer is correct.

Next example:

Europa is one of the moons of Jupiter. It was discovered by Galileo Galilei in 1610. Despite the fact that Europa is the smallest of Jupiter's four moons, it is by far the most fascinating. Photographs of Europa from the Galileo spacecraft have led scientists to conclude that Europa is mostly silicate rock with an iron core and a rocky mantle, similar to the Earth. However, unlike the Earth, Europa is covered in an icy layer that is at least 62 miles thick. Intriguingly, if there are active volcanoes beneath this icy surface, the necessary ingredients for extraterrestrial life would be present, as bacteria accumulate at the vents of volcanoes. This possibility has made Europa the object of fascination to many. The theory that Europa may support life could be confirmed by further study. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory speculates that a probe may one day be able to penetrate Europa's icy surface. For the

moment, much remains to be learned about Europa.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- The bacteria on Europa are interesting because they provide evidence of extraterrestrial life.
- The presence of underwater volcanoes on Europa would provide the conditions necessary for extraterrestrial life.
- Due to the volcanic vents beneath the surface of the ice on Europa, bacteria are likely to accumulate there.
- Since most volcanoes on Europa are found underwater, they are intriguing places to study bacteria.

The second answer is correct.

Here is the next example:

Taro is a tropical Asian root vegetable that has edible starchy tubers and fleshy, heart-shaped leaves. The tubers are the enlarged bulbs at the base of the stem that are rich in iron, potassium, and Vitamin C, and are therefore incredibly valuable as a food crop. Taro is a staple of the Native Hawaiian diet, and is fundamental to its culture. It is one of the most significant and reliable plants grown in Hawaii. Taro came to Hawaii with the early Polynesian settlers and has been cultivated on the islands ever since. Ancient Hawaiian farmers cultivated approximately 300 varieties of taro plants which they were able to distinguish by the colors in different parts of the leaves and

the adaptations they had to specific growing conditions and locales. Hawaiians grew both wet and dryland varieties, depending on a district's conditions and climate. Nowadays in Hawaii, taro is made into burgers, chips, and most commonly, "poi," mashed taro that is spread on pork or fish for extra flavor and nutrition.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- Ancient Hawaiian farmers cultivated the taro because its specific characteristics make it ideal for the growing conditions in Hawaii.
- Many varieties of taro grow in Hawaii, with over 300 different colors in parts of the leaves.
- The farmers of ancient Hawaii grew hundreds of varieties of taro which they could tell apart by their colors and adaptations.
- Farmers of ancient Hawaii grew taro in 300 different growing conditions and locations, and it includes many different colors and adaptations.

The third answer is correct.

Next example:

Born in Maine in 1806, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is best remembered for his poem "Paul Revere's Ride." The poem was written in 1860 when the United States was on the brink of the Civil War. It recounted the tale of Paul Revere, a folk hero of the United States. The story is fictional, intended as a reminder to the North that history favors the brave. In the poem, Revere asks

a friend to light lanterns in the Old North Church to alert him of any approach by the British. Revere plans to await the signal from across the river and be ready to spread the word throughout the county of any sign of the British. The friend, who is not identified in the poem, climbs up the steeple and quickly lights two signal lanterns, alerting Revere that the British were coming by sea. Revere rides off heroically on his horse to warn the Patriots. “Paul Revere’s Ride” is less a poem about the Revolutionary War than about the impending Civil War and the conflicts over slavery that caused it.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- “Paul Revere’s Ride” was a poem inspired by the events that led to both the Revolutionary and Civil War.
- The Revolutionary War and the Civil War were at the heart of the poems of Longfellow because he believed that slavery caused these conflicts.
- The essential theme of “Paul Revere’s Ride” was the foreboding Civil War and its underlying causes.
- The less important topic of “Paul Revere’s Ride” was the Revolutionary War and the issues that society was facing at the time.

The third answer is correct.

Next example:

An ice age is an extended period of cool global temperatures and glacial expansion that can last for thousands, or even millions, of years. Scientists

have determined that variations in the Earth's orbit and the shifting of the Earth's plates have caused global temperatures to rise and fall over long periods of time. In the Earth's history, there have been at least five known ice ages. Humans developed rapidly during the most recent ice age and emerged as the dominant land mammal, after the extinction of the megafauna. The megafauna were groups of animals that weighed over 100 pounds (45 kilograms) each, such as the woolly mammoth, saber-toothed cats, and giant sloths. Their extinction was most likely caused by a combination of continual human hunting and environmental disturbances. What gave humans a unique advantage to survive beyond the ice age was an unprecedented level of adaptability, the ability to solve problems, and the drive to work together in co-operative groups.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- Humans quickly evolved during the last ice age and prevailed.
- Humans caused the extinction of the megafauna and rose to dominance.
- Humans developed a unique ability to adapt to the cool conditions of the ice age.
- Humans were the only land mammal to survive the most recent ice age.

The first answer is correct.

Next example:

China is the world's largest consumer and producer of agricultural products.

Over 300 million people in China work in the agricultural industry. Almost all arable land in China is cultivated. China is the world's largest producer of rice and is also at the forefront of wheat and corn production. Major non-food crops such as cotton and oilseed also supplement China's foreign trade revenue. One reason yields are so high is because of the intense energy that is devoted to agriculture. To put it into perspective, China has only 2/3 the amount of arable land as the United States but produces 30% more crops—notwithstanding California, which outproduces even the most productive Chinese farms by a 3:1 ratio. In the future, China has its eye on further increasing production through the use of improved fertilization methods and development of agricultural technology. These improved farming policies and technologies will give China a high level of self-sufficiency and growth.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- China is able to outproduce the United States because their arable land is used much more productively.
- With the exception of California, China produces significantly more crops than the United States on less land.
- Compared to China, the United States has 2/3 the amount of arable land on which it can grow crops, most of which is in California.
- China has less arable land than the United States, but its crop output increases every year by 3:1 because of the energy devoted to land cultivation.

The second answer is correct.

One more example:

If an animal gets too hot or too cold, its body cannot function properly. Animals regulate their bodies in two different ways. Ectotherms are animals that depend on external sources of heat, while endotherms are capable of generating heat inside their bodies. Researchers believe that some dinosaurs were ectotherms and others were endotherms. The dinosaur “Spinosaurus” had a very unusual way of maintaining its internal body temperature. This dinosaur had a particular appendage on its back that looked like a sail and acted as a built-in radiator. When the Spinosaurus got too hot, it stood in shady, cooler areas and pumped warm blood into this appendage, where it cooled down before returning to the body.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- Some dinosaurs needed sail-like radiators to keep their bodies cool in the heat.
- Appendages on the backs of the Spinosaurus had the appearance of sails.
- The Spinosaurus had a unique structure protruding from its back that kept it cool.
- The dinosaurs that had sails to act as radiators on their backs were a particular type of ectotherm.

The third answer is correct.

A recap of the key points you need to know:

- Sometimes it is easier to break the sentence into chunks and simplify them in your mind or on paper before you look at the answer choices.
- Incorrect answer choices may change the original information, add information that is not in the original, or leave out important information.
- Correct answer choices may use synonyms, a change in voice, a change in word order or word forms, leave out unimportant information, or use literal language.
- You should look for the most important subject and object.
- One useful trick is to omit dependent clauses before you look at the answer choices.
- Use the process of elimination quickly and aggressively.

Chapter 7

Summary and Chart Questions

The summary question is worth two points. You can get partial credit (one point.) You will either have a summary question OR a chart question at the end of each reading passage. The summary question is far more common than the chart question, so we will look at it first.

In the summary question type, you are given a “topic” sentence. You are given six sentences to choose from and three boxes. You must drag and drop the three most important sentences into the boxes. Your goal is to choose the three sentences that will build an accurate summary of the text. If you get one wrong, you only get 1 point. If you get two wrong, you will not be awarded any points. Therefore this question is important, and it takes longer than other question types. The correct answers will be paraphrases of information from the text. **Note: You can put these sentences in any order you want.**

Remember, since summary questions are so common, pay attention to or note down the main ideas of the reading passage. They can usually be found in the topic sentence (*the first sentence*) of each paragraph.

Summary questions look like this, although in the real TOEFL, obviously you will use the passage to find the correct answers. This is only an example.

An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas according to the passage. **This question is**

worth 2 points.

Chocolate has been prepared as a drink for nearly all of its history.

- A Mayan tomb from the early Classic period of 460-480 AD was discovered in Rio Azul, which contained a glyph of cocoa and the residue of a chocolate drink.
- A vessel was found at an archaeological site in Veracruz, Mexico, which dated the preparation of chocolate into a beverage back to 1750 BC.
- Chocolate drinks were often traded for fruit or vegetables.
- One archaeological site on the Pacific coast of Mexico provides some evidence that cocoa beverages were drunk even earlier; as early as 1900 BC.
- If chocolate is not stored properly, it may develop white spots, called chocolate bloom; but these spots are not toxic.
- Hot chocolate is best enjoyed after participating in cold outdoor activities.

In this question, the correct answers are the first, second, and fourth. This example is pretty straightforward for a reason: I wanted to use an easy example to point out how to build a good summary of the Reading. I will show you how this can be done with the strategy below.

Your strategy will look like this:

1. **Read the topic sentence you are given CAREFULLY.** Determine the

topic of the sentence. Do not underestimate this step! It is important.

2. **Read the answer choices you are given.** One will immediately pop out as a detail. It will only have one idea in it, and that will not be a very important idea. **Eliminate it.**
3. **Eliminate any answer choices that are not related to the topic sentence you are given.** The topic sentence may not cover the entire reading passage: it may focus on one aspect of the passage. Therefore you can safely eliminate choices that don't relate to the topic sentence you are given.
4. **Eliminate any answer choices that are traps,** which I will discuss below.
5. **After you have chosen three, go back to the passage** and check to make sure your three answer choices were mentioned in the passage AND are true according to the passage.

TRAPS

The answer choice is a detail. These are sometimes obvious but can be tricky. Eliminate answers that use specific vocabulary or details from the passage but DO NOT combine ideas to make the answer choice more important. To clarify, some correct answer choices do contain *several* details but they are *combined*. If you see an answer choice with only one detail (such as a date, a name, or a place) eliminate it. In the example summary question, the choice "Chocolate drinks were often traded for fruit or vegetables" is a detail.

The answer choice does not relate to the main idea of the topic sentence

you are given. In the example, the main idea of the topic sentence is the historical preparation of chocolate as a drink. The fifth answer choice discusses improper storage of chocolate, which is not related to the topic sentence. The last answer choice mentions when hot chocolate is best enjoyed, also not related to the topic sentence.

The answer choice distorts information from the passage. These choices will also repeat specific vocabulary words from the passage but distort the information in a way that makes these sentences untrue. Make sure that you pick choices that do not change the meaning of the original text.

The answer choice is not mentioned in the passage. I know what you're thinking: Of course I won't pick an answer choice that isn't mentioned in the passage! However, these are actually very tricky. The TOEFL will use answer choices that look plausible or use a lot of the vocabulary from the passage in order to trick you. That is why I recommend, as the last step, that you go back and skim the passage to make sure your answer choices are actually mentioned in the passage. **DO NOT choose based on vocabulary from the passage alone.**

BIG TIP #1!

Sometimes, two answer choices will look VERY SIMILAR to each other.

**If that is the case ONE will be correct, and the other will be
INCORRECT.**

BIG TIP #2!

The correct answers are often the main topics of each paragraph. The

main topics are usually in the first sentence of each paragraph. Make note of these topics on paper or in your head. Look for these in the answer choices.

Let's go through some examples to practice this rather difficult part of the Reading section:

The Titanic

The RMS *Titanic* was a large passenger ship that sank in the Atlantic Ocean on April 15, 1912, while en route to New York from the south coast of England. The ship was under the command of Captain Edward Smith and had some of the most affluent people in the world on board, as well as hopeful emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland who were seeking new opportunities in the United States. The *Titanic* had been dubbed the “unsinkable ship” because it was famously thought to be indestructible.

The ship was equipped with such safety features as a double-plated bottom and sixteen watertight compartments in the hull of the ship with doors that would close if water entered them, but there were not enough lifeboats on board for all its passengers in case of emergency. The lax maritime laws at the time did not require a ship to carry an adequate number of lifeboats for a vessel the size of the *Titanic*. The *Titanic* set sail with only enough lifeboats to harbor fewer than half the passengers. Four days after leaving its port in England, the *Titanic* struck an iceberg. The impact caused a series of holes below the waterline of the *Titanic*, and water began filling five of its watertight compartments, while the ship could only stay afloat with four compartments breached. The hull began to buckle and fill with water. As the ship foundered, panicked passengers and crew evacuated in lifeboats without

filling them completely. Several hours later, the ship broke apart and began to sink. A thousand people were still on board, and hundreds died in the extremely cold water of the Atlantic. Two hours later, the ship RMS *Carpathia* arrived and brought aboard the 705 survivors. The accident resulted in the death of over 1,500 passengers and crew.

The news of the disaster made international headlines and caused outrage over the enormous loss of life. A public outcry demanded changes to maritime law and increased safety regulations for passengers. An inquiry was made in Britain as to the causes of the disaster. The inquiry found that the lookout had been both unequipped with binoculars and complacent, only spotting the iceberg less than a minute before the ship collided with it. The *Titanic* had been navigating at a speed that was excessive, considering the environmental hazards in the Atlantic Ocean. The *Titanic's* crew failed to fire proper distress signals after striking the iceberg. The crew fired rockets randomly, but the message of the rocket patterns did not signal “distress,” but rather, “I'm having navigation problems. Please stand clear.”

In one of the most controversial parts of the inquiry, it was also found that the SS *Californian*, a nearby ship, had been the last vessel to communicate with the *Titanic* but had failed to come to its assistance. The report concluded that it would have been possible for the SS *Californian* to have cut through the loose ice and come to the aid of the flailing ship, which could have prevented such a great loss of life. The inquiry duly noted that there had been an insufficient number of lifeboats for all passengers and that the crew had not been properly trained in emergency procedures. Because of this lack of training, lifeboats were launched before they were filled to capacity. The captain of the ship, who perished in the accident, was cleared of any wrongdoing as it was found that he followed all the steps that any reasonable

person would have in the same situation.

Maritime law underwent a number of changes after the inquiry. Ships would be required to carry enough lifeboats for every passenger. Lifeboat drills and safety inspections would be conducted. Furthermore, the US government passed an act which stated that radio communications on passenger ships would operate for 24 hours a day and have a secondary power supply in case the first was lost. This act also required ships to interpret any red rockets fired from ships as a sign of distress, due to the confusion when the *Titanic* fired the wrong signals. Since these changes, there has never been a maritime disaster as deadly as the *Titanic*.

An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas according to the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

After the *Titanic* sank, an inquiry was launched in Britain to determine the causes of the massive loss of life.

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- It was determined that the ship had been traveling at speeds that were excessive given the dangers of the Atlantic and that the lookouts had been complacent and ill-equipped.

- Lax maritime laws did not require there to be sufficient lifeboats on board for all passengers.
- The Captain, Edward Smith, was held accountable for his failure to train his crew members properly in emergency procedures.
- In a controversial finding, the SS *Californian* was criticized for failing to come to the assistance of the sinking ship, since it was nearby and could have traveled through the ice to aid the *Titanic*.
- After the inquiry concluded, a number of maritime laws were changed and ships now carry enough lifeboats for all passengers and are required to meet rigorous standards of safety.
- Today, all red rockets which are fired from a ship must be interpreted as a signal of distress.

Answers: You should choose the first, fourth, and fifth answers. The second choice is a detail. The third choice is not true. The sixth choice is a detail.

Try another example:

The Victorian Style of Design

Victorian style is a broad term that refers to the characteristics of design from the latter period of Queen Victoria's rule, from 1837 until her death in 1901. At the time, the style was used as a signal of affluence among the upper class of British society due to its ornate, showy interiors. Today, it is still popular across the globe; particularly in Asia, where it is used to create opulent spaces that convey a high position in society.

One of the principles of Victorian design is that unused space in a room is a sign of poor taste and lower economic status. With that in mind, Europeans designers sought to fill every space. Victorian design has sometimes been viewed as indulging in a grand excess of ornament. Every room was decorated with objects that reflected the owner's influences and preferences. Extravagant decorations, lace tablecloths, stained glass, vases, busts, framed paintings or prints, multi-layered window treatments, richly patterned fabrics, and accessories were used throughout the house. The Victorian Hotel in Vancouver, British Columbia, exemplifies the classic Victorian Style. Chandeliers hang from the ceiling, vases with fresh flowers dot every table, and the dining room features elaborately carved furniture and decorative teapots made of china. It is elegantly appointed, true to the Victorian style. This hotel often hosts the royal family when they visit Canada.

The use of vibrant, brightly colored fabrics is another convention of Victorian design. Complex patterns covered every surface of the Victorian home. Oriental rugs and heavy draperies were thought of as the height of good taste. Windows were rarely left uncovered; rather, on them hung thick, decorative drapes. The lack of light that could enter rooms through these heavy draperies was compensated for with eye-catching appointments of velvet, silk, and satin. Linen patterns ranged from flowers and animals to geometric shapes, stripes, and woven Arabic symbols: squares and circles, typically repeated, overlapped and interlaced to form intricate patterns. Victorians loved these patterns and used them liberally.

The decoration of walls and ceilings was yet another element of Victorian design. Ceilings were covered in embossed paper or painted a light color so as not to detract from the wall decorations. Wallpaper became enormously popular and is an enduring feature of Victorian design. At first, this was

because of the development of mass production as well as the repeal of the 1712 Wallpaper Tax. Wallpaper was decorated with beautiful flowers in primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, printed on beige paper. This was followed by the latter half of the Victorian era when wallpaper was inspired by Gothic art of earth tones and stylized leaf and floral patterns. William Morris was one of the most renowned designers of wallpaper and fabrics during this period. He was influenced by medieval art, which he saw as the noblest art form, and used Gothic tapestries from that era in his work.

An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas according to the passage. This question is worth 2 points.

One of the most enduring styles of design is the Victorian style.

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- Because unused space was considered a signal of poor taste and poverty, the Victorian style sought to limit open space with abundant ornamentation.
- The Victorian Hotel in Vancouver has an elegantly appointed dining room featuring chandeliers, carved furniture, and decorative teapots.

- Fabrics with bright colors and complex patterns were very popular and used to decorate the surfaces of the Victorian home.
- Arabic symbols such as overlapping squares and circles were woven into the fabric of linens.
- Ceilings and walls were decorated with embossed paper and wallpaper, at first with flowers and primary colors, and later with Gothic designs.
- The use of Gothic art became popular in the last half of the Victorian era, popularized by the designer William Morris.

Answers: You should choose the first, third, and fifth choices. The second choice is true, but it is not related to the main topic – the Victorian Style of design. The fourth and sixth answers are true, but they are details in the passage. **Also, notice *where* the correct answers are found in the passage – near the beginning of each paragraph.** They are the main topics of the paragraphs.

The Irish Potato Famine

The Irish Potato Famine, also called The Great Famine, took place in Ireland between 1845 and 1849 when potato crops failed across the country. This failure was caused by a disease known as blight, which destroys the edible roots and tubers of the potato plant. Potato blight is relentless in wet weather and spread unchecked throughout Ireland, rotting the potatoes on which entire villages relied. The Irish Potato Famine was the worst agricultural disaster in Europe in the 19th Century.

The potato had been the staple crop of Ireland for most of the century, appealing because it is densely packed with nutrients and calories and relatively easy to grow in conditions in which some crops fail, such as inclement weather. However, by relying on one crop, the Irish were extremely vulnerable to any disease that might affect their harvests. To compound the problem, these potatoes were genetically uniform. If crops are diverse, genetic variability allows some individual plants to survive should a disturbance occur. Because the crops in Ireland lacked diversity, any disease could wipe out an entire farm's yield. In the beginning of the 1800's, Irish farmers struggled to provide both for themselves and for the growing demand for cereal crops from the British market. Although struggling to exist at a mere sustenance level, they were not starving.

In 1845, blight was brought over accidentally from North America. That same year, Ireland experienced an unusually cold and wet winter, conditions in which blight thrived. The disease took hold of potato crops and spread rapidly. Over the next few years, each attempt at growing new potatoes failed as blight swept across the country. People began to die of starvation, typhus, and other diseases related to malnutrition. Rural populations suffered the biggest losses. At the time, Britain owned most of the land in Ireland, but when disaster struck, the Irish farmers were mostly left to their own devices; attempts from Britain to send aid were insufficient and ineffective. The British sent cornmeal which the Irish disliked, and expected any able-bodied Irish to work on the railroads and eat from soup kitchens. Unfortunately, the congregation of the hungry at soup kitchens, food depots, and overcrowded workhouses created conditions that caused the spread of infectious diseases such as typhoid and relapsing fever. Meanwhile, the British government sent a mere £8 million in relief and little more in private donations from sympathetic individuals. The impoverished Irish, unable to purchase food and

nearly destitute and in danger of eviction from British landowners, were forced to continue sending cereals and meats to Britain. Britain's reluctance to send aid due to the prevailing attitude in Britain that the famine was merely a corrective measure to control overpopulation added to the resentment that the Irish felt towards their British rulers. Meanwhile, taxes, rent, and food exports were collected by British landlords in an amount surpassing £6 million.

By the time the blight receded and the famine began to lose its hold, the demographics of Ireland had undergone a dramatic change. The population, which had been over 8 million, had dropped to 6 million by 1851. The number of agricultural laborers had declined, as many of the surviving farmers had been evicted or emigrated to the Americas or Australia. The concentration of land that had been distributed among many was now in the hands of a fortunate few. Land began to be used for grazing sheep and cattle rather than agricultural purposes. Since many of those who perished in the famine spoke Irish, English began to take over as the national language of Ireland. By 1921, the Irish had overthrown British rule, but its population was half of what it had been at its peak.

An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas according to the passage. This question is worth 2 points.

The Irish Potato Famine was the worst agricultural disaster of the 19th Century.

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- The British demanded cereal crops from the Irish, putting them at a mere sustenance level.
- The over-reliance on one crop made the Irish vulnerable to disaster.
- In 1845, a disease called blight was accidentally brought to Ireland from North America, taking hold of potato crops and causing them to fail.
- Attempts at relief by the British were insufficient as the government expected the Irish to support themselves by working on the railroad and eating from soup kitchens.
- British citizens were alarmed by the famine because they heavily relied on the Irish to supply them with cereal crops, so they sent £8 million in relief and set up soup kitchens.
- When the disaster finally abated, the demographics of Ireland were changed permanently with more concentrated land ownership and a shift to spoken English.

Answers: The correct answers are the third, fourth, and sixth answers. The first answer is true, but it is not related to the topic sentence. The second answer is a detail. The fifth answer is not true; nowhere in the passage does it state that the British were alarmed by the

famine. **However, NOTE THAT THE FOURTH AND FIFTH ANSWERS USE SIMILAR VOCABULARY. Remember my tip earlier in this chapter- if that happens, one is correct and the other is not.**

A recap of the key points you need to know:

- Always read the topic sentence carefully.
- Eliminate answers that are details immediately.
- Eliminate sentences that are not related to the topic sentence.
- Correct answers are often the main topics of the paragraphs.
- Before you move on to the next passage, double check that your answers are mentioned in the passage and **accurately** reflect the information in the passage.
- If two answers have similar vocabulary and ideas, one is correct and the other is not.
- Beware of traps: Answers that are details, answers that aren't related to the topic sentence, answers that are not mentioned in the passage, and answers that distort information from the passage.

Chart Questions

Chart questions are much less frequent than summary questions in the TOEFL. However, they are possible, so I will go over them briefly.

In this question type, you must organize information into a chart in the category where it belongs. You will drag and drop your answers into the boxes in the TOEFL. They do not have to be in any particular order. These questions are worth 3 or 4 points depending on how many answer choices you must place in the chart. The number of points that this question is worth will be indicated in the directions. For each one that you get wrong, you lose a point, so be careful!

You will not use all the possible answer choices given to you. Usually, one or two are not mentioned in the passage and therefore do not belong in the chart. Correct answers will be paraphrases of information you saw in the reading. The language may be simpler in the answer choices than the original sentence from the passage.

Here is a simple example to get you started:

Cats and Dogs

Cats and dogs are both carnivorous mammals. They are the most popular house pets in the world. Cats require less maintenance than dogs. For instance, dogs need daily walks and demand a lot of attention. On the other hand, cats have no difficulty being left alone, even overnight. In addition, cats require very little grooming, as they spend a good part of their day grooming themselves. Cats cost less, on average, both in veterinary bills and food costs. The ability to learn language is one of the most appealing characteristics of dogs. They can learn commands that are strung together, even without intensive training. Cats generally respond only to their names and the tone of voice of their owners. Cats enjoy games that engage their hunting instincts. Their favorite games include chasing balls across the floor

or attacking a toy mouse. Dogs like simple games that consist of jumping, catching, and chasing. Dogs play “fetch” in which they retrieve an object their owner has thrown, and they are also fond of the game “tug-of-war.”

Complete the table below with five of the six answer choices. **One answer choice will not be used.**

Answer Choices	Cats
A. Enjoys games that are easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Can be left alone overnight	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Responds to commands	
D. Groom themselves	
E. Are more expensive to care for	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Can be left outside all day	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

Answers:

Cats: **B, D**

Dogs: **A, C, E**

F is not used.

Of course, in the real TOEFL the questions will be much more difficult and will cover the entire passage. Your challenge will be to skim quickly and find the correct answer choices for each category. The biggest trap here is answers which are not used. These can be tricky because they appear plausible (believable). For example, F seems like it could easily be true. However, be careful—this was not mentioned in the passage.

Now that you know how to do chart questions, try a full-length example:

The Works of William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, in 1564. He is considered the greatest English language dramatic writer of all time. In the 20 years of his writing career, he wrote plays that would be performed for the next five hundred. His plays explore themes of love, redemption, avarice, cruelty, and heartbreak. He created some of the most admirable and some of the most despicable characters of all time.

Shakespeare's early works were considered uneven, with elaborate metaphors, long rhetorical speeches, and confusing events. However, Shakespeare was an innovative writer and adapted his style to linear storylines and captivating poetic verses. In the first part of his life, Shakespeare wrote histories such as *Julius Caesar*, *Richard III*, *Henry VI* and *Henry V* which dramatized the destructiveness of weak or corrupt rulers. Shakespeare enjoyed studying history and wrote so convincingly of real historical characters that even today we tend to think of these figures the way Shakespeare presented them.

It was also during this period that he wrote his most famous comedies: A

Midsummer Night's Dream, *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Comedies of Shakespeare's time shared common elements. The emphasis was more on the situation than the characters. Usually, they recount absurd or difficult situations that were brought upon the characters by forces beyond their control. Cases of mistaken identity are common themes. This could be the mix-up of identical twins, clever disguises, or gender switching in order to deceive others. Women often disguised themselves as men with amusing results. For example, in *As You Like It*, Rosalind dresses up as a man and continues with the deception even when she meets up with her love interest, Orlando. She then tricks Orlando into confessing his true feelings for her, only revealing herself much later.

Comedies also involve complex plots with several storylines intertwining at once. These plots contain many twists and turns to keep the audience guessing. Shakespeare loved wordplay and used it liberally. Characters make frequent use of puns. They hurl cutting insults at each other. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the adventurer Petruchio arrives in Padua to hear of Kate, a beautiful heiress whose sarcastic, acerbic wit has repelled all romantic overtures from potential suitors. Professing to admire a woman of such spirit, Petruchio immediately sets about to win her heart. The initial encounter between Kate and her clever suitor is spiked with a passionate exchange of insults and verbal barbs. After an outrageous wedding ceremony, Kate is whisked away and becomes a loving wife. Such a happy ending is fundamental to a comedy: true identities are revealed, justice is served, and lovers unite. The message is that justice prevails and that love overcomes all obstacles.

In the later period of his writing, Shakespeare wrote the tragedies *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. The hero of a tragedy is someone of affluence

and power, so his fall is all the more compelling to the audience. The psychological makeup of the protagonist of tragedies follows a pattern: he is a hero, but a tragically flawed one. Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, may be noble in intention, but procrastinates and then acts rashly. Othello is a general in the Venetian army; powerful and respected, yet cannot control his jealousy. Macbeth begins the play as a noble fighter for his country but is easily manipulated by those around him into committing horrible acts of treachery. The tragic flaw of the hero is what eventually leads to his downfall. These moral failures propel the twists and turns of the story, finally destroying the hero and those he loves.

Tragedies often contain supernatural elements which contribute to this downfall but do not cause it directly. In these stories, the supernatural presence of witches and ghosts are not merely a figment of the character's imagination but are actual forces that act upon him. Sometimes they are seen only by the hero; other times they can be seen by other players. These beings are manipulative and use the hero's weaknesses for their own purposes. Opportunities for redemption or the avoidance of danger are offered but rejected. Tragedies do not resolve peacefully, but rather in the death of the hero and often those closest to him. Probably the best known tragic ending is that of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which the young lovers are so impatient to be together that they cannot wait until a resolution is found for their separation, and commit suicide.

Complete the table below by matching six of the eight answer choices with the elements of Shakespeare's plays they exemplify. **Two answer choices will not be used.**

Answer Choices

Shakespeare's Comedies

A. The main character has power in society	•
B. The stories focus on corrupt rulers	•
C. There are supernatural elements	•
D. Families are reunited after long separations	
E. The plots are complicated	•
F. The characters use disguises	•
G. The characters get manipulated	•
H. There is a stronger emphasis on the situation	•
I. Danger is not successfully avoided	•

Shakespeare's Tragedies

Answers:

Shakespeare's Comedies: **E, F, H**

Shakespeare's Tragedies: **A, C, G, I**

Answers **B** and **D** are not used. **B** refers to Shakespeare's histories, and **D** is not mentioned.

Chapter 8

Final Test

The Victorian Style of Design

1 Victorian style is a broad term that refers to the characteristics of design from the latter period of Queen Victoria's rule, from 1837 until her death in 1901. At the time, the style was used as a signal of **affluence** among the upper class of British society due to its ornate, showy interiors. Today, it is still popular across the globe; particularly in Asia, where it is used to create opulent spaces that convey a high position in society.

2 One of the principles of Victorian design is that unused space in a room is a sign of poor taste and lower economic status. With that in mind, European designers sought to fill every space. Victorian design has sometimes been viewed as **indulging in** a grand excess of ornament. Every room was decorated with objects that reflected the owner's influences and preferences. Extravagant decorations, lace tablecloths, stained glass, vases, busts, framed paintings or prints, multi-layered window treatments, richly patterned fabrics, and accessories were used throughout the house. The Victorian Hotel in Vancouver, British Columbia, exemplifies the classic Victorian Style. Chandeliers hang from the ceiling, vases with fresh flowers dot every table, and the dining room features elaborately carved furniture and decorative teapots made of china. It is elegantly appointed, true to the Victorian style. This hotel often hosts the royal family when they visit Canada.

3 The use of vibrant, brightly colored fabrics is another convention of Victorian design. Complex patterns covered every surface of the Victorian

home. Oriental rugs and heavy draperies were thought of as the height of good taste. Windows were rarely left uncovered; rather, on them hung thick, decorative drapes. The lack of light that could enter rooms through these heavy draperies was compensated for with eye-catching appointments of velvet, silk, and satin. Linen patterns ranged from flowers and animals to geometric shapes, stripes, and woven Arabic symbols: squares and circles, typically repeated, overlapped and interlaced to form intricate patterns. Victorians loved these patterns and used them liberally.

4 The decoration of walls and ceilings was yet another element of Victorian design. Ceilings were covered in embossed paper or painted a light color so as not to detract from the wall decorations. Wallpaper became enormously popular and is an enduring feature of Victorian design. At first, this was because of the development of mass production as well as the repeal of the 1712 Wallpaper Tax. Wallpaper was decorated with beautiful flowers in primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, printed on beige paper. This was followed by the latter half of the Victorian era when wallpaper was inspired by Gothic art of earth tones and stylized leaf and floral patterns. William Morris was one of the most renowned designers of wallpaper and fabrics during this period. He was influenced by medieval art, which he saw as the noblest art form, and used Gothic tapestries from that era in his work.

1. The word affluence is closest in meaning to

- influence
- impact
- wealth
- interest

2. According to Paragraph 1, the Victorian style is used in Asia

- to conform to cultural norms
- to signal an elevated status
- to attract visitors
- to create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere

3. According to Paragraph 2, why did Europeans fill up every space?

- To show visitors their collections of objects
- To prove that they appreciated Victorian design
- To interest guests in their family history
- To show that they had wealth and sophisticated taste

4. What can be inferred about the Victorian Hotel in British Columbia?

- It was meticulously designed to meet the standards of the Victorian style
- It was one of the most expensive hotels to design in the Vancouver area
- It is more elegant than the home of an affluent family during the Victorian era
- It was designed to accommodate visits from the royal family

5. The phrase **indulging in** is closest in meaning to

- living in
- deriving pleasure from

- obsessing about
- showing an interest in

6. In Paragraph 2, why does the author mention the objects found in a Victorian style home?

- To illustrate the objects that could be purchased only by the rich
- To point out that Victorians indulged in many objects that were not practical
- To give examples of the items that were popular in the Victorian era
- To suggest that design has changed a great deal since Victorian times

7. What is the purpose of Paragraph 3?

- To describe another feature of Victorian style
- To explain why Arabic symbols were popular during the Victorian era
- To describe the patterns used in Victorian design
- To illustrate a disadvantage of covering windows with heavy draperies

8. The word **intricate** is closest in meaning to

- interesting
- colorful
- attractive
- complicated

9. All of the following are patterns that could probably be seen in Victorian linens EXCEPT

- roses and lilies
- bows and arrows
- squares and circles
- horses and sheep

10. The word **liberally** is closest in meaning to

- literally
- freely
- beautifully
- carefully

11. According to Paragraph 4, why did wallpaper first become popular?

- It became more widely available and more affordable
- It was a way to cover up plain walls and make them more interesting
- It was a reflection of how popular the Gothic style had become
- It was not as heavily taxed by the government as paint

12. Look again at Paragraph 3:

The use of rich, brightly colored fabrics is another convention of Victorian design. Complex patterns covered every surface of the Victorian home.

Oriental rugs and heavy draperies were thought of as the height of good taste. Windows were rarely left uncovered; rather, on them hung thick, decorative drapes. ■ The lack of light that could enter rooms through these heavy draperies was compensated for with eye-catching appointments of velvet, silk, and satin. ■ Linen patterns ranged from flowers and animals to geometric shapes, stripes, and woven Arabic symbols: squares and circles, typically repeated, overlapped and interlaced to form intricate and complex patterns. ■ Victorians loved these patterns and used them liberally. ■

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

These materials made an otherwise dark room appear brighter.

13. Look again at Paragraph 4:

The decoration of walls and ceilings was yet another element of Victorian design. Ceilings were covered in embossed paper or painted a light color so as not to detract from the wall decorations. Wallpaper became enormously popular and is an enduring feature of Victorian design. At first, this was because of the development of mass production as well as the repeal of the 1712 Wallpaper Tax. Wallpaper was often made in elaborate floral patterns with primary colors (red, blue, and yellow) in the backgrounds and overprinted with colors of cream and tan. This was followed by the latter half of the Victorian era when wallpaper was inspired by Gothic art of earth tones and stylized leaf and floral patterns. William Morris was one of the most renowned designers of wallpaper and fabrics during this period. He was influenced by medieval art, which he saw as the noblest art form, and used Gothic tapestries from that era in his work.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- William Morris studied tapestries that were made during the medieval period, and used them in his work.
- Because Gothic art was so popular in medieval times, William Morris decided it should be used in his designs.
- William Morris admired medieval art and used it in his own work.
- William Morris used Gothic designs to improve artwork that he had created.

Answer Key:

1. The third answer is correct
2. The second answer is correct
3. The fourth answer is correct
4. The first answer is correct
5. The second answer is correct
6. The third answer is correct
7. The first answer is correct
8. The fourth answer is correct
9. The second answer is correct
10. The second answer is correct
11. The first answer is correct

12. The second square is correct

13. The third answer is correct

The Irish Potato Famine

1 The Irish Potato Famine, also called The Great Famine, took place in Ireland between 1845 and 1849 when potato crops failed across the country. This failure was caused by a disease known as blight, which destroys the edible roots and tubers of the potato plant. Potato blight is relentless in wet weather and spread unchecked throughout Ireland, rotting the potatoes on which entire villages relied. The Irish Potato Famine was the worst agricultural disaster in Europe in the 19th Century.

2 The potato had been the staple crop of Ireland for most of the century, appealing because it is densely packed with nutrients and calories and relatively easy to grow in conditions in which some crops fail, such as inclement weather. However, by relying on one crop, the Irish were extremely vulnerable to any disease that might affect their harvests. To compound the problem, these potatoes were genetically uniform. If crops are diverse, genetic variability allows some individual plants to survive should a disturbance occur. Because the crops in Ireland lacked diversity, any disease could wipe out an entire farm's yield. In the beginning of the 1800's, Irish farmers struggled to provide both for themselves and for the growing demand for cereal crops from the British market. Although struggling to exist at a mere sustenance level, they were not starving.

3 In 1845, blight was brought over accidentally from North America. That same year, Ireland experienced an unusually cold and wet winter, conditions in which blight thrived. The disease took hold of potato crops and spread rapidly. Over the next few years, each attempt at growing new potatoes failed as blight swept across the country. People began to die of starvation, typhus,

and other diseases related to malnutrition. Rural populations suffered the biggest losses. At the time, Britain owned most of the land in Ireland, but when disaster struck, the Irish farmers were mostly left to their own devices; attempts from Britain to send aid were insufficient and ineffective. The British sent cornmeal which the Irish disliked, and expected any able-bodied Irish to work on the railroads and eat from soup kitchens. Unfortunately, the congregation of the hungry at soup kitchens, food depots, and overcrowded workhouses created conditions that caused the spread of infectious diseases such as typhoid and relapsing fever. Meanwhile, the British government sent a mere £8 million in relief and little more in private donations from a few sympathetic individuals. The impoverished Irish, unable to purchase food and nearly destitute and in danger of eviction from British landowners, were forced to continue sending cereals and meats to Britain. Britain's reluctance to send aid due to the prevailing attitude in Britain that the famine was merely a corrective measure to control overpopulation added to the resentment that the Irish felt towards their British rulers. Meanwhile, taxes, rent, and food exports were collected by British landlords in an amount surpassing £6 million.

4 By the time the blight receded and the famine began to lose its hold, the demographics of Ireland had undergone a dramatic change. The population, which had been over 8 million, had dropped to 6 million by 1851. The number of agricultural laborers had declined, as many of the surviving farmers had been evicted or emigrated to the Americas or Australia. The concentration of land that had been distributed among many was now in the hands of a fortunate few. Land began to be used for grazing sheep and cattle rather than agricultural purposes. Since many of those who perished in the famine spoke Irish, English began to take over as the national language of Ireland. By 1921, the Irish had overthrown British rule, but its population was

half of what it had been at its peak.

1. What can be inferred about blight?

- It affects only potato crops
- It spreads quickly in certain conditions
- It no longer poses a threat on modern farms
- It did not spread outside of Ireland

2. The word **unchecked** is closest in meaning to

- underestimated
- unexamined
- unchanged
- uncontrolled

3. Look again at Paragraph 2:

The potato had been the staple crop of Ireland for most of the century, appealing because it is densely packed with nutrients and calories and relatively easy to grow in conditions in which some crops fail, such as inclement weather. However, by relying on one crop, the Irish were extremely vulnerable to any disease that might affect their harvests. To compound the problem, these potatoes were genetically uniform. If crops are diverse, genetic variability allows some individual plants to survive should a disturbance occur. Because the crops in Ireland lacked diversity, any disease could wipe out an entire farm's yield. In the beginning of the 1800's, Irish farmers struggled to provide both

for themselves and for the growing demand for cereal crops from the British market. Although struggling to exist at a mere sustenance level, they were not starving.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- The Irish developed a preference for the potato because it met the basic caloric needs of the population.
- For several centuries, the potato had the highest nutrient content of any staple food in Ireland.
- For a long time the primary crop of the Irish was the potato because it is both nutritious and hardy.
- The weather in Ireland is generally poor, so potatoes became the staple crop over the centuries.

4. What is the purpose of Paragraph 2?

- To warn about the dangers of crop disturbances
- To emphasize the importance of the potato to the Irish
- To explain why the Irish were in a vulnerable position
- To explain how genetic variability can lead to crop failure

5. In Paragraph 3, why does the author mention places where the Irish congregated?

- To illustrate the daily activities of the Irish during the famine
- To explain how diseases spread through the population
- To show how limited the food supplies had become in Ireland
- To give examples of charitable organizations the British established in Ireland

6. According to Paragraph 3, all of the following contributed to the disaster EXCEPT

- disease which spread in close quarters
- insufficient aid from the British
- an unusually short harvesting season
- pressure to export food

7. The word **destitute** is closest in meaning to

- bankrupt
- distressed
- troubled
- deserted

8. According to Paragraph 3, why were the British reluctant to send aid to the Irish?

- Private individuals did not have the economic means to send assistance
- British landowners were interested in taking over the land in Ireland

- They believed the famine would keep the population of Ireland under control
- They were not aware of the terrible suffering in Ireland

9. It can be inferred that before 1921

- English was not spoken in Ireland
- The Irish relied solely on exports to survive
- Less than half of all vacant land was used for raising livestock
- Britain had authority over Ireland

10. Look again at Paragraph 4:

By the time the blight receded and the famine began to lose its hold, the demographics of Ireland had undergone a dramatic change. The population, which had been over 8 million, had dropped to 6 million by 1851. The number of agricultural laborers had declined, as many of the surviving farmers had been evicted or emigrated to the Americas or Australia. The concentration of land that had been distributed among many was now in the hands of a fortunate few. ■ Land began to be used for grazing sheep and cattle rather than agricultural purposes. ■ Since many of those who perished in the famine spoke Irish, English began to take over as the national language of Ireland. ■ By 1921, the Irish had overthrown British rule, but its population was half of what it had been at its peak. ■

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

With this new trend, the Irish now had other commodities such as milk and wool to sell rather than relying only on crops.

11. The phrase **distributed among** is closest in meaning to

- divided between
- directed toward
- shared with
- harvested by

Answer Key:

1. The second answer is correct
2. The fourth answer is correct
3. The third answer is correct
4. The third answer is correct
5. The second answer is correct
6. The third answer is correct
7. The first answer is correct
8. The third answer is correct
9. The fourth answer is correct
10. The second square is correct
11. The first answer is correct

Dreams

1 Sleep takes up about a third of each person's life but did not attract the interest of scientists until relatively recently. Sleep was considered a period of dormancy, a **bland** state without much activity and so had not been studied for more than a few minutes at a time. That changed in 1953 when Eugene Aserinsky and Nathaniel Kleitman hooked sleepers up to an early version of the electroencephalogram machine, a machine which monitors brain activity. To their surprise, the machine recorded a great deal of activity during sleep; in fact, the machine scribbled furiously across half a mile of paper each night. They also noticed that sleepers had cycles of 90 minutes in which their eyes moved quickly back and forth underneath their eyelids; they called this sleep cycle Rapid Eye Movement (REM). During REM sleep, brain activity became indistinguishable from that of a person who is awake and active. When Aserinsky and Kleitman awoke their subjects during REM sleep and asked them what was happening, they reported that they had been dreaming. The brain also has periods during sleep in which activity slows down, appropriately named slow-wave sleep. Dreams can also happen during slow-wave sleep, but most dreams occur during REM.

2 Dreams are a puzzling phenomenon. Most dreams are forgotten immediately; yet, they contain events which are so extraordinary that if they happened during waking hours, they would leave a lifelong impression. Why is sleep filled with such intense and exciting events, only to be immediately forgotten? It is unlikely that living creatures must dream to survive. After all, reptiles do not dream but have existed on Earth for 200 million years—far longer than modern humans. The answer to this question still eludes science. The scientific method is like trying to put together **a jigsaw puzzle** in which

some of the pieces are missing, some are under the couch, and some have been chewed up by the family dog. It is therefore not surprising that science cannot immediately answer every question completely and satisfactorily.

3 Still, some tentative explanations have been put forth. The first is that slow-wave and REM sleep play a crucial role in consolidating memories in the brain. During consolidation, events that occurred during the day are recorded and associated with previously stored memories. While using electrodes in experiments, researchers determined that brain activity in a sleeping animal strongly resembles brain activity observed during learning events that had occurred that day. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that about fifty percent of dreams include circumstances that relate to real life events, especially if the event involved learning a new skill, or a particularly unusual experience. For instance, 60% of research subjects who played the video game *Tetris* for the first time reported that the game appeared in their dreams. Such a learning event repeated in a dream could be linked to moving the experience into a person's permanent memory. When learning a new language, students who experience vivid, intense dreams that include the use of the language they are studying are able to pick it up more quickly.

4 This only gives us a partial picture of the hypotheses regarding the need for REM sleep and dreams. Another explanation is more physiological than psychological. According to David Maurice of Columbia University, dreams trigger REM sleep which helps prevent blindness. According to this theory, the transparent surface of the eye lacks blood vessels and is in danger of suffocating. Thus, the eyes need to constantly move to carry oxygen through the eye. He explains that we dream in order to experience REM sleep and thus prevent visual damage. Maurice supports this theory by pointing out that reptiles do not experience REM sleep or dreams because the eye requires less

oxygen at lower temperatures, and reptiles sleep at a lower temperature than mammals. This theory is fascinating, but the evidence for it is rather dubious.

5 The least **intriguing** theory is that dreams don't really serve any purpose at all. They could be a pointless byproduct of the fact that the nerve cells in the brain continue to fire during sleep. Since the brain is still such a mystery, scientists probably won't be able to **pinpoint** with absolute certainty why we dream, at least in the near future.

1. The word **bland** is closest in meaning to
 - complex
 - dull
 - crucial
 - pleasant
2. According to Paragraph 1, all of the following are true of dreams EXCEPT
 - They are connected to brain activity
 - They can occur during either sleep cycle
 - They are more common during REM sleep
 - They are 90 minutes long
3. In Paragraph 2, why does the professor mention that reptiles have existed on Earth for 200 million years?
 - To cast doubt on the idea that dreams are necessary for survival

- To give an example of animals that do not dream
- To compare dreaming in humans and reptiles
- To emphasize the idea that dreams serve no useful purpose

4. Why does the author mention a jigsaw puzzle in Paragraph 2?

- To illustrate the difficulties faced by scientists
- To give an example of a common game played in dreams
- To criticize the scientific approach to explaining dreams
- To imply that science has more disadvantages than other methods of investigation

5. According to paragraph 3, a person would most likely learn how to play an instrument

- If they go to sleep right after practicing it
- If they experience a lot of slow-wave sleep
- If they are woken up during REM sleep
- If they practice playing it in their dream

6. Look again at Paragraph 3:

Still, some tentative explanations have been put forth. The first is that slow-wave and REM sleep plays a crucial role in consolidating memories in the brain. During consolidation, events that occurred during the day are recorded and associated with previously stored memories. While using electrodes in experiments, researchers

determined that brain activity in a sleeping animal strongly resembles brain activity observed during learning events that had occurred that day. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that about fifty percent of dreams include circumstances that relate to real life events, especially if the event involved learning a new skill, or a particularly unusual experience. For instance, 60% of research subjects who played the video game *Tetris* for the first time reported that the game appeared in their dreams. Such a learning event repeated in a dream could be linked to moving the experience into a person's permanent memory. When learning a new language, students who experience vivid, intense dreams that include using the language they are studying are able to pick it up more quickly.

Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

- This theory could be true because half of all dreams contain information about a skill the individual wants to learn.
- During the day, we learn new skills that are reflected in about half of our dreams.
- Evidence for the hypothesis is that half of our dreams include events from the day, particularly new information.
- When we relate a new skill to an unusual event that happened during the day, we are more likely to dream about it.

7. What is the purpose of Paragraph 4?

- To cast doubt on the theory in Paragraph 3
- To introduce another theory about dreaming
- To explain how eye movement helps transport oxygen
- To point out the importance of REM sleep

8. What does the author imply about the physiological explanation for dreams?

- It is promising grounds for further research
- It is interesting but unproven
- It can be used to understand blindness
- It helps complete our understanding of dreams

9. The word **intriguing** is closest in meaning to

- fascinating
- stimulating
- satisfying
- puzzling

10. The word **pinpoint** is closest in meaning to

- perceive
- demonstrate
- identify

- classify

11. Look again at Paragraph 5:

■ The least intriguing theory is that dreams don't really serve any purpose at all. ■ They could be a pointless byproduct of the fact that the nerve cells in the brain continue to fire during sleep. ■ Since the brain is still such a mystery, scientists probably won't be able to pinpoint with absolute certainty why we dream in the near future. ■

Look at the four squares ■ that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage. Where would the sentence best fit?

What we do know is that REM sleep is vital, both physiologically and psychologically.

12. An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas according to the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

While the purpose of dreams is still a mystery to science, several hypotheses have been put forth.

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-
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- Dreams were ignored for many years because they were not considered interesting subjects for research.
- Dreams could be used to consolidate the events of the day and help in moving events into permanent memory.
- Subjects who played video games in their dreams, such as *Tetris*, are likely to become better players.
- David Maurice of Columbia University has hypothesized that dreams could be useful in preventing blindness by moving oxygen through the eye.
- Dreams could be a form of wish fulfillment, in which we act on impulses and thoughts that we have during the day but cannot complete.
- It's possible that dreams serve no specific purpose, but are simply the consequence of the nerves in the brain continuing to fire while people are asleep.

Answer Key:

1. The second answer is correct
2. The fourth answer is correct
3. The first answer is correct
4. The first answer is correct
5. The fourth answer is correct
6. The third answer is correct
7. The second answer is correct

8. The second answer is correct
9. The first answer is correct
10. The third answer is correct
11. The fourth square is correct
12. The second, fourth, and sixth answers are correct

In this book you will find:

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Kathy Spratt has been teaching TOEFL® since 2010. She has helped hundreds of students reach their goals on the TOEFL® and beyond. This is her second TOEFL® writing project.

