

Timed Writing 2

This timed writing tip section and practice is focused specifically on the unique aspects of the TOEFL independent writing task (30-minute essay). As previously mentioned, all of the timed writing practice in this book will help you work toward success on the TOEFL writing section. However, there are some specific points that need to be made about the expectations for the writing on the test.

The TOEFL independent writing task requires you to explain and defend a position.

Response format

Your answer should look like a balanced essay. You should write a four or five paragraph essay with an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Choosing the number of body paragraphs will depend on your ability to write fluently and develop your ideas. Typically, it is easier for students to develop their ideas if they choose to write two body paragraphs. Writing two developed body paragraphs is better than writing three underdeveloped body paragraphs. An effective response is usually around 300 words. Remember that quality is more important than quantity in this instance.

Focus on what is possible for you to do well during the time limit without access to any additional help.

Scoring

This is the biggest difference between TOEFL timed writing and the others discussed in the previous section. Because the TOEFL is a *language* test, the emphasis in the grading will be on your language use. Your actual ideas are a secondary to the language you use to express the ideas. Therefore, while the TOEFL is imitating the type of writing you will do in a college setting, the task itself is different because of the rubric.

Timed Writing Tips

Because students take the TOEFL at various points in the semester, here is a list of strategies that are discussed at other points in this textbook. All of these strategies are things to keep in mind as you prepare. You may want to skim through the textbook ahead of the class schedule to learn more about these points in more detail.

- Read the prompt carefully.
- Brainstorm your ideas for each part of the prompt.
- Organize your ideas into a logical outline.
- Decide on what is the most important to include.
- Write a thesis statement that directly answers the main part of the prompt.
- Write topic sentences for your main points.
- Write a restated thesis statement.
- Begin developing your ideas into full paragraphs. There are different approaches to this. Find what works for you.
 - Start with the point that is easiest to write, leaving the sections that are hardest for when you have some momentum to your writing. (Note: This may create a challenge if you are still stuck and have no time to revise)
 - Start with the body paragraphs and then work your way

to the introduction and conclusion. (Note: This does not mean the introduction and conclusion are unimportant! Make sure to include them)

- Start from the beginning and work to the end. (Note: Although this seems like the obvious way to approach writing, it can often lead to disorganized thoughts)
- Leave at least 5-10 minutes to review and revise your writing.
 - Before the test, look at feedback your writing teacher has given you on your writing. Are there patterns of organization, development, coherence, or unity errors? Meet with your teacher during office hours before if possible to get tips for how to recognize and resolve those errors during the test.
 - Also look at feedback your grammar teacher has given you on your accuracy errors. Are there patterns of errors with grammar structures that you can look for? Meet with your teacher during office hours before if possible to get tips for how to recognize and resolve those errors during the test.
- Any additional points in your brainstorm and outline can be added if there is time.

Exercises

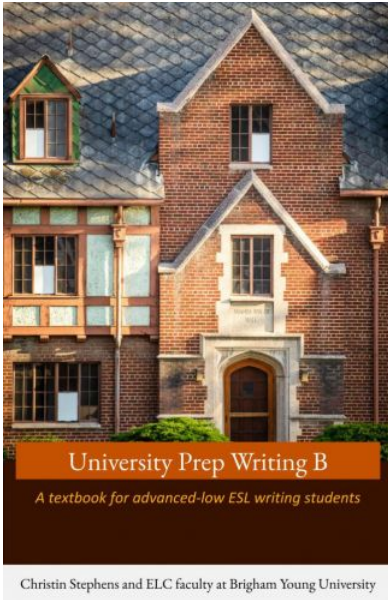
Exercise 1: TOEFL Rubric

Take some time to look over the [*TOEFL Independent Writing Rubric*](#).

1. What will the test raters be focusing on as they assign a score to your essay?
2. How is this rubric similar or different from the rubrics your UP Writing teacher has used this semester?
3. Imagine a writing rubric for a class in your anticipated major. What similarities or differences would you expect there to be? Why would you see those differences?

Exercise 2: Independent Question

Prompt: What is the most important skill for students to develop before they attend college? You have 30 minutes to respond to this prompt. Your answer should be around 300 words long.



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