

Magosh

**TOEFL Reading  
Question Types and  
Strategies PDF**

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# The Magoosh Team

## Who is Magoosh?

We are a group of passionate educators in Berkeley, California.



Email us at [help@magoosh.com](mailto:help@magoosh.com) if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions!

# What is Magoosh?

Magoosh is an [online TOEFL prep course](#) that offers:

- over 100 TOEFL video lessons
- 330+ practice questions
- material created by expert tutors
- e-mail support
- personalized statistics based on performance
- access anytime, anywhere from an internet-connected device

The screenshot shows the Magoosh dashboard interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Magoosh logo and links for Dashboard, Lessons, Practice, Review, Resources, Help, and Account. The main content area is titled "Dashboard" and is divided into several sections:

- Suggested Lessons:** Includes links for "See all lessons", "Exam" (with sub-links for "Overview of the TOEFL" and "Task 1 - Choose One from Many"), and "Grammar" (with sub-links for "Subject" and "Period"). A note states "Suggestions are based on your lesson progress".
- Quick Practice:** Features four buttons: "Practice Reading" (168 questions left), "Practice Listening" (136 questions left), "Practice Speaking" (18 questions left), and "Practice Writing" (10 questions left). A link "Customize your practice" is also present.
- Results Summary:** Displays performance metrics for four sections: Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. Each section has a circular progress indicator and a table of statistics.

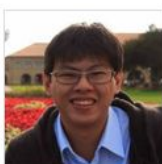
Section	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Progress	No Answer Data 100%	No Answer Data 100%	Incorrect 0%   Correct 100%	No Answer Data 100%
Questions Answered	0	0	6	0
Your Pace	0:00	0:00	5:28	0:00
Others' Pace	0:00	0:00	4:38	0:00
- Your Notes:** Provides links to view notes for each section: "You have taken 0 notes on Reading", "You have taken 0 notes on Listening", "You have taken 0 notes on Speaking", and "You have taken 0 notes on Writing". A "View all notes" link is also available.

Featured in



## Why Our Students Love Us

These are survey responses sent to us by students after they took the TOEFL. All of these students and many more have used the [Magoosh TOEFL prep course](#) to improve their scores!



<b>What was your overall score on the actual TOEFL?</b>	102
<b>What was your reading score?</b>	27
<b>What was your listening score?</b>	23
<b>What was your speaking score?</b>	24
<b>What was your writing score?</b>	28
<b>How did Magoosh help you?</b>	
I used it to find how the flow and the structure of the test is like. I did not have a lot of time to prepare for the test so reading the official ETS book was not advisable. I wanted something quick, interactive and not too pricey. I am glad that I turned to Magoosh! The videos, especially on the writing section gave really good tips and I am proud to say, it is the section that I scored the highest!	



<b>What was your overall score on the actual TOEFL?</b>	103
<b>What was your reading score?</b>	26
<b>What was your listening score?</b>	25
<b>What was your speaking score?</b>	24
<b>What was your writing score?</b>	28
<b>How did Magoosh help you?</b>	
Magoosh TOEFL is really good and i especially loved the reading and listening questions.	



<b>What was your overall score on the actual TOEFL?</b>	110
<b>What was your reading score?</b>	27
<b>What was your listening score?</b>	27
<b>What was your speaking score?</b>	28
<b>What was your writing score?</b>	28
<b>How did Magoosh help you?</b>	
Primarily, Magoosh taught me the test much faster than I ever would if I had to do it by myself. Considering I had very little time, and that I had very good experience with Magoosh previously with their GRE product, I thought I'd give it a go. From the time I had registered, I had about 3 weeks to my TOEFL.??	
Being a non-native speaker, it helps to have your academic background in English medium--which I did. So, what I needed was to learn the TOEFL i.e. the test pattern, the kind of questions, how to practice (especially note-taking!), what counts as a good answer, etc. Mr. Lucas Fink of Magoosh did a great job at breaking every section down and explaining the best ways to prepare for and tackle them. Additionally, it was nice to see they had quite a lot of well-made grammar lessons to help those not quite as adept in English, especially in their sentence-making.	
Although many tend to overlook the need to learn the test, I believe it is crucial to anyone who wants to attain a good score. And for that, I highly recommend prepping with Magoosh. They have helped me familiarize with and understand the TOEFL very quickly--all from the comfort of my home.	

## How to Use This PDF

Ask any experienced TOEFL teacher what the key to improving a TOEFL score is, and you'll end up with some version of the same answer: practice! With that in mind, Magoosh's experts have put together this TOEFL Reading Question Types and Strategies PDF for you.

In this document, you'll find two sample TOEFL passages, accompanied by five questions each, and one sample TOEFL passage with 10 questions. On the actual TOEFL, you can expect to find three to four passages. However, those will all have 10 questions each.

You can think of the first two passages here as "mini-TOEFL question sets." You can do them all at once, or go through it one passage at a time, or even one question at a time--whatever works for your schedule. We've put in a full set of 10 questions for the third set, so you can use these for timed, test-day-like practice.

We've presented the passages first, followed by the answers, then the explanations. This is because, as with any TOEFL practice, the best method is to answer the questions, then review the answers, then check explanations--even for the questions you got right! This way, you'll know if you answered the question correctly because you understood the materials, because you were guessing, or for another reason. Then, you can work on adjusting your practice accordingly to make sure you can repeat your performance on test day.

Happy studying!

## Set 1: The Legacy of Edmund Wilson

The novelists of the "Lost Generation" are well remembered and well loved, even nearly a century after the height of their fame: Ford Maddox Ford, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein. However, one of the most talented Lost Generation writers, while well-known in his day, has been nearly forgotten: Edmund Wilson. An essayist, literary, and social critic, Wilson played a vital role both in promoting his fellow writers and in instituting social change in the United States.

A classmate of F. Scott Fitzgerald's at Princeton, graduating in 1916, Wilson served in the military before he made his name in literary circles. It is therefore stunning that he became managing editor of the venerable magazine *Vanity Fair* in 1920 and 1921, within five years of his graduation. After his stint there, he would hold various positions for other publications, including *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Review of Books*. Wilson began to become known for his insightful, sometimes sharp, criticism of contemporary writing. His books included work on the literary movement Symbolism and, as he got older, commentary on the course of European socialism.

In his day, Wilson was known best for his assessment of his peers. While Wilson did make some enemies in his time (for example, for his comments that H.P. Lovecraft's stories were "hackwork" or that J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* books were "juvenile trash"), he had a larger circle of friends. Still, he didn't hesitate to criticize his friends' work when he thought it deserved it; he was an outspoken critic of Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Lolita*, and the latter broke off their friendship for good after Wilson publicly criticized what he thought was a strange translation of Pushkin by Nabokov. Nevertheless, he didn't hesitate to reward his friends with favorable reviews, either —when they were merited. Fitzgerald, for example, referred to Wilson as his "intellectual conscience." Moreover, Wilson was intelligent, and self-- confident, enough to admit when he didn't understand some of the complex, sometimes indecipherable, prose of his time. Of Modernist poet Wallace Stevens, he wrote "even when you don't know what he is saying, you know he is saying it well." Similarly, he reviewed James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* with an understanding of its complexity, remarking that it was "for all its excesses...a great work of literature."

Wilson's writings were important in establishing what would become the twentieth-- century canon of English language literature, including works from the nineteenth century. For example, he brought works by Charles Dickens and Rudyard Kipling back into the public eye, emphasizing their worth and importance. However, his most

important work was undoubtedly on behalf of fiction writers of his own generation, which included F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Dos Passos, and Vladimir Nabokov.

In terms of politics, Wilson became more politically active from the 1940s onward. He was a critic of the United States' Cold War policies at a time when it was dangerous to be one. In fact, in protest of these policies, he refused to pay his income taxes for almost a decade. This led, eventually, to an IRS investigation that ended with a \$25,000 fine; that, in turn, led Wilson to write another book, *The Cold War and the Income Tax: A Protest*, in 1963. Wilson would eventually be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom under President John F. Kennedy, which he accepted in absentia; however, when invited to the White House under President Johnson, of whom he did not approve, Wilson apparently issued a brusque ejection.

Despite all of his accomplishments, Wilson is not widely remembered for them today. Instead, readers know his work—if they know his work at all—only as an editor of F. Scott Fitzgerald's posthumous work. As executor of Fitzgerald's literary estate, Wilson had the herculean task of preserving and presenting his friend's work for future generations. He did so in exceptional style, editing and finding a publisher for the unfinished novel *The Last Tycoon*, as well as sorting through hundreds of Fitzgerald's papers, letters, notebooks, and essays to create the lauded collection *The Crack-Up*.



## Questions

1. All of the following are examples of the types of writing Edmund Wilson did, EXCEPT

- a. literary criticism
- b. fiction
- c. social commentary
- d. essays

2. All of the following are examples of literature of which Wilson disapproved, EXCEPT

- a. *Lord of the Rings*
- b. H.P. Lovecraft's stories
- c. *Lolita*
- d. Wallace Stevens' poetry

3. Which of the following can be inferred about Wilson's view of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*?

- a. Wilson found it intellectual, but lacking a conscience.
- b. Wilson could not understand it, and so was impressed.
- c. Wilson found the writing wordy but important.
- d. Wilson believed the length of the book to be excessive.

4. The author of the passage implies that the relationship between F. Scott Fitzgerald and Edmund Wilson

- a. led to the downfall of Wilson's career.
- b. remains more famous than the work of either author individually.
- c. dominates Wilson's literary legacy.
- d. was troubled by Fitzgerald's conscience.

5. All of the following are examples of books that Wilson worked on, EXCEPT
- a. *The New Republic*
  - b. *The Last Tycoon*
  - c. *The Cold War and the Income Tax: A Protest*
  - d. *The Crack-Up*

### Answers

- 1. b
- 2. d
- 3. c
- 4. c
- 5. a

### Explanations

#### 1. Question Type: **Negative Factual Information**

Make sure that you don't choose an answer to an "except" question that's actually mentioned in the text! It can be tricky to remember that you're looking for what DOESN'T appear, since this is a different kind of task than we're usually asked to do on tests.

Here, we find that the answer lies in paragraph 4, which tells us that Wilson's "most important work was undoubtedly on behalf of fiction writers." Remember that "on behalf of" means "for," not "as." In other words, that means that Wilson helped fiction writers, not that he was one.

Unfortunately, "except" questions can be time consuming, because you have to eliminate each of the other answers not just to check your answer, but to get to the right answer in the first place. We have to find what is mentioned in the passage and eliminate those answers. Luckily, this is summarized for us in the first paragraph: Wilson was an essayist, literary and social critic. You may be tempted to eliminate C, but this question also has a vocabulary element in disguise: a critic can be somebody who writes commentary.

To select the correct answer for TOEFL “except” questions, make sure that you go through the text in a methodical and careful way. You want to be especially sure that you’re not just skimming for terms and taking them out of context—taking notes as you read can ensure that you’re getting the full meaning of each paragraph.

## 2. Question Type: **Negative Factual Information**

Make sure that you don’t choose an answer to an “except” question that’s actually mentioned in the text! It can be tricky to remember that you’re looking for what DOESN’T appear, since this is a different kind of task than we’re usually asked to do on tests.

Luckily, a lot of the words we’re skimming for are either italicized or proper nouns with capital letters (or both), making them easier to find! When you come to the passage’s discussion of Wilson’s opinion of Wallace Stevens’ work (whew!), you’ll see that it tells us that Wilson wrote that “even when you don’t know what he is saying, you know he is saying it well.” While that’s not unbridled praise, it’s certainly more positive than what he writes about the other works.

Unfortunately, “except” questions can be time consuming, because you have to eliminate each of the other answers not just to check your answer, but to get to the right answer in the first place. We have to find what is mentioned in the passage and eliminate those answers. Luckily, we can skim as mentioned above and find these works mentioned in paragraph 3. *Lord of the Rings*? “Juvenile trash.” H.P. Lovecraft’s stories? “Hackwork.” In terms of *Lolita*, we don’t have a direct quote, but the passage does tell us that Wilson was an “outspoken critic” of the book.

Some of these vocabulary terms (e.g. “hackwork”) are very specific and complex; you could also get to this answer by looking at the structure of paragraph 3, in which these writings are discussed, to see that they are cited in terms of enemies Wilson made or friends he alienated.

To select the correct answer for TOEFL “except” questions, make sure that you go through the text in a methodical and careful way. You want to be especially sure that you’re not just skimming for terms and taking them out of context—taking notes as you read can ensure that you’re getting the full meaning of each paragraph.

## 3. Question Type: **Inference**

The first step in solving an inference question is to locate the context of the subject it's referring to. Here, that comes at the end of paragraph 3, where the author tells us that Wilson referred to James's work as "for all its excesses...a great work of literature." Interpret this in your own words: how could a book be excessive? It could be too long, but then "excesses" wouldn't be plural. Instead, it is most likely wordy. Still, Wilson found the book "great."

The other answers here either make the error in interpreting "excesses" as described above, or they misunderstand or confuse Wilson's quotes on other authors' works (or other authors' comments about Wilson, in the case of A).

To select the correct answer for TOEFL inference questions, make sure that the inference you're making is text-based. It should not be too different from what is directly stated, but will still require you to take the argument to its logical conclusion or next step. If the answer choice is too extreme, refers to something not mentioned in the passage, or refers to something mentioned in the passage but unrelated to the subject of the question, eliminate it!

#### 4. Question Type: **Inference**

The first step in solving an inference question is to locate the context of the subject it's referring to. Here, that comes at the beginning of the final paragraph, sentence 2, in which the passage tells us that "readers know [Wilson's] work—if they know his work at all—only as an editor of F. Scott Fitzgerald's posthumous work." This shows that Wilson's legacy, or how people remember his work, is thought of in terms of the work he did for Fitzgerald's estate.

The other answers here either take the above characterization of Wilson's work with Fitzgerald to an extreme (it did not, for example, lead to his "downfall") or distort the meaning of other sections of the passage. Fitzgerald did call Wilson his "intellectual conscience," but this is presented as a good thing; on the other hand, the passage shows us that Fitzgerald remains famous, and certainly more famous than Wilson.

To select the correct answer for TOEFL inference questions, make sure that the inference you're making is text-based. It should not be too different from what is directly stated, but will still require you to take the argument to its logical conclusion or next step. If the answer choice is too extreme, refers to something not mentioned in the passage, or refers to something mentioned in the passage but unrelated to the subject of the question, eliminate it.

## 5. Question Type: **Negative Factual Information**

Make sure that you don't choose an answer to an "except" question that's actually mentioned in the text! It can be tricky to remember that you're looking for what DOESN'T appear, since this is a different kind of task than we're usually asked to do on tests.

Luckily for us, these words are all in italics, so we can skim the passage for them relatively easily! Unluckily for us, there are lots of italics in this passage. Still, paragraph 2 tells us that Wilson first worked for the magazine *Vanity Fair* and then went on to work for "other publications." Because of the word "other," we can infer that "publications" is being used here as a synonym for magazines—not books.

Unfortunately, "except" questions can be time consuming, because you have to eliminate each of the other answers not just to check your answer, but to get to the right answer in the first place. We have to find what is mentioned in the passage and eliminate those answers.

The last paragraph here tells us that Wilson edited both *The Last Tycoon* and *The Crack Up*, characterized as a novel and a collection of essays, both books. Skimming higher, you can see in paragraph five that he was the author of *The Cold War and the Income Tax: A Protest*, in 1963, a book.

To select the correct answer for TOEFL "except" questions, make sure that you go through the text in a methodical and careful way. You want to be especially sure that you're not just skimming for terms and taking them out of context—taking notes as you read can ensure that you're getting the full meaning of each paragraph.

## Set 2: Paul Revere's Midnight Ride

While many schoolchildren have learned about Paul Revere from the famous poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, fewer remember the historical details about Revere's midnight ride that Longfellow did not include. Sent by Revolutionary Joseph Warren after British army activity suggested that the troops were beginning to move, Revere rode to alert the Massachusetts Provincial Congress to move military supplies away from town.

Little over a week later, the British commanders in the colonies (as the United States was then known) received orders to "disarm" the rebels, literally meaning to take their arms away, and to imprison their leaders. British General Gage was told to conduct this mission with the utmost secrecy, so as not to inspire further **rebellion** among the colonists. However, Warren found out about this mission and told Revere, as well as another colonist named William Dawes, that the British troops would sail from Boston for Cambridge, and eventually Lexington and Concord. The two men were sent to warn leaders in Lexington, as well as militias in the area.

Meanwhile, Revere had previously asked the sexton of a church to signal by lantern to let Charlestown residents know about the movement of the British troops. One lantern in the steeple window would indicate that the army was coming by land, while two lanterns would signify that it was coming by water. Secretly rowing across the Charles River, Revere rode to Lexington and warning almost every house he passed. Many patriots began to join him on horseback; by the end of the night, as many as 40 men may have been riding throughout the county. However, unlike the apocryphal legend, Revere never did shout "The British are coming!" To do so would have made him **conspicuous** to the British troops, as well as to the colonists.

The system that Revere and his fellow patriots used is known as "alarm and muster," which the group had developed after an ineffectual colonial response to an alarm in September of 1774. By using this system, the Americans were able to deploy local militia quickly in the event of an emergency. In fact, this system had been used in early colonial battles in the "Indian wars," but had fallen out of use during the French and Indian War.

Unluckily, Revere, Dawes, and another revolutionary were stopped by a British army control. The other two men were able to escape, but Revere was captured and held for questioning by the British. He informed them that the army was coming in from Boston, and also let it be known that a large number of patriots were gathered in Lexington. A British major led Revere towards Lexington, but approximately half a mile from the town,

a gunshot rang out. As they approached, the town bell began to ring, which the captives told the British major was the militia's call to arms. Taking heed of this, the British soldier decided to let his captives free and to head back to his base to warn his commander. The battle on Lexington Green had begun. Meanwhile, Revere made his way to the house of a nearby friend, where both John Hancock and John Adams were **lodged**. During the battle, Revere aided Hancock's family as they escaped from the town.

Paul Revere would remain politically active for the rest of his life. He was passionate about the Federalist cause, and particularly concerned about the economy and power of the United States. Even after his 1811 retirement, Revere still contributed to petitions and political discussions. His actions were long remembered; even 40 years after his death, Longfellow's poem "Paul Revere's Ride," infamously beginning "Listen, my children, and you shall hear/Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere" commemorated his heroic actions. Though the poem is less than historically accurate, Longfellow constructed it this way deliberately, in order to make the subject even more poetic and dramatic, ensuring that the patriot would live on in the memory of the nation.

## Questions

1. The word “rebellion” in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to

- a. uprising
- b. battles
- c. anger
- d. fighting

2. The word “conspicuous” in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to

- a. content
- b. adversarial
- c. obvious
- d. important

3. According to paragraphs 3 and 4, the system of “alarm and muster” involved

- a. two leaders in Lexington, Massachusetts
- b. signaling messengers to spread word of enemy activity
- c. a water-based system of communication
- d. messages passed by the French and Native Americans.



4. The word “lodged” in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to
- a. housed
  - b. hiding
  - c. meeting
  - d. fighting
5. The author’s description of Longfellow’s poem most nearly indicates that the poet
- a. did not know the details of Revere’s ride.
  - b. had not realized the importance of Revere’s actions.
  - c. was interested in mythologizing Revere.
  - d. did not believe historical accuracy was important.

### Answers

- 1. a
- 2. c
- 3. b
- 4. a
- 5. c

### Explanations

#### 1. Question Type: **Vocabulary**

To select the correct answer for TOEFL vocabulary questions, make sure that you study the context around the sentence. Here, looking over paragraph 2, we can pull out the sentence containing our term: “British General Gage was told to conduct this mission with the utmost secrecy, so as not to inspire further rebellion among the colonists.”

It can be helpful to come up with your own definition of the right term, even if it’s not perfect, before going over the answer choices. Here, you might guess something along the lines of “dissent” or even “trouble.” Basically, the General was hiding his mission so that the colonists wouldn’t make any more trouble.

Then, scan the answer choices to see which one makes the most sense in this context. Here, “uprising” is the closest we have to a synonym, so (a) is correct.

You can double-check your answer by plugging it back into the sentence and seeing if the sentence still makes sense. “British General Gage was told to conduct this mission with the utmost secrecy, so as not to inspire further uprisings among the colonists.”  
Makes sense!

Now, let’s try that with the other answer choices. We haven’t actually heard about a battle yet, so it wouldn’t make sense for the General to try to prevent “further,” or more, battles. The same applies to “fighting.” While we might assume that the colonists were angry, we don’t actually know this from the passage—all the passage tells us is that Revere had already made a rebellious ride.

## 2. Question Type: **Vocabulary**

To select the correct answer for TOEFL vocabulary questions, make sure that you study the context around the sentence. Here, looking over paragraph 3, we can pull out the sentence containing our term, as well as part of the previous sentence: “...Revere never did shout ‘The British are coming!’ To do so would have made him conspicuous to the British troops, as well as to the colonists.” We know we have to pull out part of the previous sentence because our sentence begins with “To do so,” clearly referring to something previously mentioned.

It can be helpful to come up with your own definition of the right term, even if it’s not perfect, before going over the answer choices. Here, you might guess something along the lines of “point him out” or even “show him.” Of course, these terms don’t work grammatically in the sentence, but they give us the gist of the correct answer we’ll be searching for.

Then, scan the answer choices to see which one makes the most sense in this context. Here, “obvious” is the closest we have to a synonym, so (c) is correct.

You can double-check your answer by plugging it back into the sentence and seeing if the sentence still makes sense. “...Revere never did shout ‘The British are coming!’ To do so would have made him obvious to the British troops, as well as to the colonists.” Makes sense!

Now, let's try that with the other answer choices. It doesn't make sense for somebody to be "content to" someone or something else, let alone a rebel being content with the ruling British. "Adversarial," or opposed, could work here—but it is not the meaning of "conspicuous." Revere was already important to the British troops, as a rebel; this, as well, is not a meaning of the word "conspicuous."

Vocabulary questions are some of the most common questions on the TOEFL. You'll come across about three per passage, but there can be as many as five. You want to watch out for words that make sense in the context of the passage, but aren't definitions of the word being tested. Returning to our example here, while "adversarial" makes sense in the context of colonists opposing colonizers, it's not Revere's shouting that would have MADE him adversarial—he already was!

### 3. Question Type: **Factual Information**

To select the correct answer for TOEFL factual information questions, make sure that you pull out the relevant information from the surrounding text. Here, we're directed to paragraphs 3 and 4, and we want to find information about "alarm and muster." There are several places in the text that refer to this system: In paragraph 4, we have: "The system that Revere and his fellow patriots used is known as "alarm and muster"; "By using this system, the Americans were able to deploy local militia quickly in the event of an emergency."

Now, we need to find where the system the Americans used is described. This is back in paragraph 3: "One lantern in the steeple window would indicate that the army was coming by land, while two lanterns would signify that it was coming by water. Secretly rowing across the Charles River, Revere rode to Lexington and warning almost every house he passed. Many patriots began to join him on horseback; by the end of the night, as many as 40 men may have been riding throughout the county."

It can be helpful to come up with your own answer, even if it's not perfect, before going over the answer choices. Here, you might guess something along the lines of "a system of letting people know what was happening by spreading the word."

Then, scan the answer choices to see which one makes the most sense in this context. Here, "signaling messengers to spread word of enemy activity" is the closest we have to a synonym, so (b) is correct.

If you examine the other answer choices, some of them don't come from the paragraphs that the passage is referencing: the "two leaders" (b) appear in paragraph 2, not 3 or 4.

Revere may have crossed the river in a boat before the ride, but he and other patriots rode horses to spread the word after the alarm (the lanterns) had been "sounded"; this was not a water-based activity. Finally, although paragraph 4 tells us that this system had been used in the French-Indian War, this does not mean that it necessarily had to involve messages passed by the French or Native Americans.

Detail questions are some of the most common questions on the TOEFL. You'll come across between one and four per passage. You want to watch out for details that come from parts of the passage other than the part the question stem references, anything that doesn't directly relate to the question stem, and—especially—answers that contain words or phrases from the passage but mean totally different things (think of the French-Indian War example above!)

#### 4. Question Type: **Vocabulary**

To select the correct answer for TOEFL vocabulary questions, make sure that you study the context around the sentence. Here, looking over paragraph 5, we can pull out the sentence containing our term: "Meanwhile, Revere made his way to the house of a nearby friend, where both John Hancock and John Adams were lodged."

It can be helpful to come up with your own definition of the right term, even if it's not perfect, before going over the answer choices. Here, you might guess something along the lines of "staying."

Then, scan the answer choices to see which one makes the most sense in this context. Here, "housed" is the closest we have to a synonym, so (a) is correct.

You can double-check your answer by plugging it back into the sentence and seeing if the sentence still makes sense. "Meanwhile, Revere made his way to the house of a nearby friend, where both John Hancock and John Adams were housed." Makes sense!

Now, let's try that with the other answer choices. You'll find that they all work grammatically—however, none of them are synonyms for "lodged." In addition, you'll see that there aren't any indications in the text that Hancock and Adams were hiding, meeting, or fighting, just that they were there. We have to go with the most basic answer choice on this one!

Vocabulary questions are some of the most common questions on the TOEFL. You'll come across about three per passage, but there can be as many as five. You want to watch out for words that make sense in the context of the passage, but aren't definitions of the word being tested. Returning to our example here, while "hiding" makes sense in the context of war, we don't actually have any clues or keywords to indicate that the two men were deliberately hiding, rather than just staying, at this friend's house.

#### 5. Question Type: **Factual Information**

To select the correct answer for TOEFL factual information questions, make sure that you pull out the relevant information from the surrounding text. Here, we're directed to information about Longfellow. Even though we're not given a paragraph number, we can skim the passage to discover that this information will be in the first or last paragraphs. The first paragraph isn't too informative—it just tells us that he wrote a poem about Revere—but the last paragraph is more helpful:

"Though the poem is less than historically accurate, Longfellow constructed it this way deliberately, in order to make the subject even more poetic and dramatic, ensuring that the patriot would live on in the memory of the nation."

From this, make a prediction about what was important to Longfellow in representing Revere. He wanted to make Revere seem more "poetic and dramatic." Summarize this in your own words: he wanted to make Revere seem more heroic, or legendary.

Then, scan the answer choices to see which one makes the most sense in this context. Here, "was interested in mythologizing Revere." is the closest we have to a match, so (c) is correct. The other answer choices here aren't supported by any keywords from the passage. The passage doesn't mention anything about Longfellow's ignorance of Revere's actions (a) or their importance (b). In terms of historical accuracy, he seemed to think it was LESS important than making Revere into a legend—but that doesn't mean that he didn't believe it was important at all.

## Set 3: The Caravaggio Mystery

Italian painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610), usually known simply as “Caravaggio,” had a dramatic life, of which parts remain mysterious to scholars even today. Why, then, would it be a surprise that mysteries also surround his work? For example, *The Taking of Christ*, one of his paintings that had been considered lost since the eighteenth century, was rediscovered in 1990. It had hung, seemingly unrecognized, in the dining room of the Society of the Jesuits in Dublin, Ireland, for more than fifty years. The discovery that the painting was, indeed, a Caravaggio, led many to wonder how such a **treasure** could be hidden—seemingly in plain sight.

The first clue historians have about *The Taking of Christ* is in the 1603 accounts of an Italian nobleman, Ciriaco Mattei, who paid 125 “scudi” for “a painting with its frame of Christ taken in the garden.” At the time, Caravaggio’s style, with its striking use of light and dark, was admired and often imitated by both students and fellow artists. However, trends in the art world come and go, and two centuries later, Caravaggio’s work had fallen out of favor with collectors. In fact, it wouldn’t be until the 1950s that a Caravaggio “renaissance” occurred, and interest in the artist was renewed.

In the meantime, *The Taking of Christ* had traveled far and wide. Ironically, it was the Mattei family itself that originally misidentified the work, though several centuries after the original purchase. In 1802, the family sold it as a Honthorst to a Scottish collector. This collector kept it in his home until his death in 1921. By 1921, *The Taking of Christ*—now firmly attributed to Gerard van Honthorst—was auctioned off in Edinburgh for eight guineas. This would have probably been a fair price if the work had been a van Honthorst; for a true Caravaggio, though, it was the bargain of the century. An Irish doctor bought the painting and donated it to the Dublin Jesuit Society the following decade.

From the 1930s onward, *The Taking of Christ* hung in the offices of the Dublin Jesuits. However, the Jesuits, who had a number of old paintings in their possession, decided to bring in a conservator to discuss restoring them in the early 1990s. Sergio Benedetti, the Senior Conservator at the National Gallery of Ireland, went to the building to examine the paintings and oversee their restoration. Decades of dirt, including smoke from the fireplace above which it hung, had to be removed from the painting before Benedetti began to suspect that the painting was not a copy of the original, but the original itself.

Two graduate students from the University of Rome, Francesca Cappelletti and Laura Testa, were primarily responsible for verifying that Caravaggio did, in fact, create this version of the painting. Over years of research, they found the 1603 Mattei accounts. The verification of the painting, though, went far beyond this circumstantial evidence. Certifying that a painting came from a certain artist's hand is not easy, though forensic science that wouldn't have been available in the 1920s helped to attribute the work to Caravaggio definitively. The canvas underwent a number of treatments. [▣] It was X-rayed and scanned with an infrared light. The cracks on the surface of the painting (known in the industry as "craquelure") were studied. [▣] Furthermore, *The Taking of Christ* underwent much analysis by art historians, who studied the form and color in the painting to determine its authenticity. [▣] For example, Caravaggio never used sketches to set up the composition of his paintings. [▣] Instead, he made marks with the end of his brush as he painted—marks that can still be visible today.

Of course, the verification of the painting required entire teams of people, in addition to the three mentioned above, and took years. By 1993, the announcement was finally made that the long-lost Caravaggio had been found. Rather than sell the painting, which is most likely worth millions of dollars, the Jesuits decided to make it available to the nation of Ireland for viewing. Thus, the painting is on "indefinite loan" to the National Gallery of Ireland. Nevertheless, the painting continues its travels as it features in exhibitions around the world, from the United States to Amsterdam. In 2010, it even travelled back to Rome to be displayed for the 400th anniversary of the painter's death. A fitting tribute, many would say, to a mysterious master.

## Questions

1. The word “treasure” in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to
  - a. valuable
  - b. stolen good
  - c. treat
  - d. plunder
  
2. According to paragraph 2, one sign that the painting is by Caravaggio is that
  - a. a similar painting was recorded being purchased by the Mattei family.
  - b. the Mattei family had a long-standing quarrel with the artist.
  - c. an 1801 sale shows that the Mattei family deliberately obscured the origin of the painting.
  - d. it was purchased by a Scottish collector at a time when Caravaggio’s work was unpopular.
  
3. In paragraph 3, why does the author mention that the Mattei family misidentified the artist who painted the work?
  - a. To show that rich families often lose track of their belongings.
  - b. To illustrate how the painting became “lost.”
  - c. To demonstrate the influence that even minor painters had.
  - d. To argue that Scottish and Italians have similar taste in paintings.
  
4. Which of the following can be inferred about Gerard van Honthorst?
  - a. His work was considered more valuable than Caravaggio’s when they were alive.
  - b. His work is now considerably more popular than Caravaggio’s.
  - c. His work has historically commanded lower prices than Caravaggio’s has.
  - d. His work is similar to Caravaggio’s in style, though not in subject matter.



5. According to paragraph 5, which of the following is NOT a technique used to verify that The Taking of Christ was painted by Caravaggio?

- a. Infrared scanning
- b. Expert analysis
- c. The study of craquelure
- d. Comparison to Caravaggio's sketches

6. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in paragraph 6?

- a. The National Gallery of Ireland now owns the painting.
- b. The National Gallery of Ireland bought the painting from the Jesuits.
- c. The National Gallery of Ireland can display the painting, but the Jesuits still own it.
- d. The National Gallery of Ireland can display the painting as long as they allow it to travel.

7. The phrase "a mysterious master" in the final paragraph refers to

- a. the Jesuits
- b. Rome
- c. The National Gallery of Ireland
- d. Caravaggio

8. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence can be added to the passage.

These included not only attributes of aging paintings in general, but also attributes of Caravaggio's work in particular.

Where would the sentence best fit?

- a. [■] It was X-rayed and scanned with an infrared light.
- b. [■] Furthermore, The Taking of Christ underwent much analysis by art historians, who studied the form and color in the painting to determine its authenticity.

- c. [ ] For example, Caravaggio never used sketches to set up the composition of his paintings.
- d. [ ] Instead, he made marks with the end of his brush as he painted—marks that can still be visible today.

9. 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 in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

**Caravaggio’s painting *The Taking of Christ* was rediscovered in 1993.**

This painting shows stylistic similarities to other works by Caravaggio. It took many experts years to verify the painting’s authenticity. Originally bought by the Mattei family, the painting’s trail was lost in the 1800s. Caravaggio’s art has fallen in and out of favor. The painting hung in the dining room of the Jesuit Society for decades before being rediscovered.

10. Select the appropriate phrases from the answer choices below and match them to the category to which they relate. ONE of the answer choices will not be used.

Scholars	Painters	Collectors

1. The Jesuit Society
2. Francesca Cappelletti
3. Laura Testa
4. Gerard van Honthorst
5. The Mattei family

6. Sergio Benedetti
7. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio
8. The University of Rome

**Answers**

1. a
2. a
3. b
4. c
5. d
6. c
7. d
8. b
9. Originally bought by the Mattei family, the painting’s trail was lost in the 1800s. **(3)**

The painting hung in the dining room of the Jesuit Society for decades before being rediscovered. **(5)**

It took many experts years to verify the painting’s authenticity. **(2)**

10.

Scholars	Painters	Collectors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sergio Benedetti</li> <li>● Francesca Cappelletti</li> <li>● Laura Testa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio</li> <li>● Gerard van Honthorst</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Mattei family</li> <li>● The Jesuit Society</li> </ul>

**Not used:** The University of Rome

**Explanations**

1. Question Type: **Vocabulary**

To select the correct answer for TOEFL vocabulary questions, make sure that you study the context around the sentence. Here, looking over paragraph 1, we can pull out the sentence containing our term: The discovery that the painting was, indeed, a Caravaggio, led many to wonder how such a treasure could be hidden—seemingly in plain sight.”

It can be helpful to come up with your own definition of the right term, even if it's not perfect, before going over the answer choices. Here, you might guess something along the lines of "expensive artwork" or even "good thing." Basically, something amazing was hiding in plain sight!

Then, scan the answer choices to see which one makes the most sense in this context. Here, "valuable" is the closest we have to a synonym, so (a) is correct. (Note that "valuable," though often used as an adjective, can also be a noun.)

You can double-check your answer by plugging it back into the sentence and seeing if the sentence still makes sense. "The discovery that the painting was, indeed, a Caravaggio, led many to wonder how such a valuable could be hidden—seemingly in plain sight." Makes sense! Now, let's try that with the other answer choices. You'll notice that (b) and (d) are negative, which doesn't make sense in this context, while "treat" has an entirely different meaning, usually meaning "entertainment," "diversion," or even "sweet"!

## 2. Question Type: **Factual Information**

To answer this Factual Information question, you'll need to find keywords in the question, then skim paragraph 2 to see where they appear. The keywords here are "sign" and "by Caravaggio." Rephrase this to remind yourself what you're looking for: you want to know how we know the painting is by Caravaggio.

Returning to paragraph 2, you won't see "sign," but you will see a synonym for "clue." This is in the first sentence: "The first clue historians have about The Taking of Christ is in the 1603 accounts of an Italian nobleman, Ciriaco Mattei, who paid 125 'scudi' for 'a painting with its frame of Christ taken in the garden.'" This is a good match for answer choice A: the Mattei family purchased a similar painting.

B can't be correct because paragraph 2 doesn't mention anything about a "quarrel," or argument. While paragraph 3 mentions the sale of the painting in 1802 as a "Honthorst," this doesn't mean that the Mattei family deliberately lied—we don't have enough information to make this inference. Plus, this information is in paragraph 3, and the question asks about paragraph 2! Finally, while a Scottish collector did buy the painting, this information is also in paragraph 3—and we don't know that Caravaggio's paintings were unpopular at this time, based on the passage.

### 3. Question Type: **Rhetorical Purpose**

This question asks you to identify the purpose of a fact: that the Mattei family misidentified the painting's artist. To answer this question, look at the main idea of the paragraph as a whole.

Here, paragraph 3 focuses on the painting's travels and sales. Ask yourself: Why would the author include this information? The passage as a whole is about the misidentification and ultimate correct identification of the painting. In this case, the detail of the painting being misidentified very early on help us to show exactly why people didn't know who painted it—in other words, why it became "lost" (Choice B).

Although A could be true in other contexts, there isn't enough information about "rich families" in general here, only about the Mattei family—and not much about them. There isn't enough information to make this inference. This paragraph is about the painting's history, not Caravaggio's influence, so C cannot be correct. Finally, while the painting had both Scottish and Italian owners, we only have one example of each here—not enough to make this inference about national tastes more generally.

### 4. Question Type: **Inference**

This question asks you to make an inference about Gerard van Honthorst. To do this, use his name as a keyword and scan the passage to find where he is referenced. In this case, Honthorst appears in the third paragraph: "the family sold it as a Honthorst," and "*The Taking of Christ*—now firmly attributed to Gerard van Honthorst—was auctioned off in Edinburgh for eight guineas. This would have probably been a fair price if the work had been a van Honthorst; for a true Caravaggio, though, it was the bargain of the century." You can make several inferences from this, but the most important is that his work was worth less than Caravaggio's—a good match for answer choice C.

The statement that eight guineas was a "fair price" for a van Honthorst but a "bargain of the century" for a Caravaggio tells us that van Honthorst's work was worth less, not more, than Caravaggio's; however, notice that answer choice A also adds "when they were alive," which the passage doesn't tell us about, so there is not enough information to make this inference. The passage also doesn't tell us about the relative popularity of each artist's work, so B is also incorrect. Finally, although we can make the inference that his work was similar to Caravaggio's in style, as they were mistaken for each other, we don't have any information from the passage telling us that their subject matter was different, so D is also incorrect.

## 5. Question Type: **Negative Factual Information**

Scan the passage for paragraph 5. If you took notes as you read, you'll notice that the list of techniques used to verify the painting's authenticity come towards the end of the paragraph. Go through the answer choices and tick them off. The one you won't be able to is the final one, choice d: because, as the passage tells us, "Caravaggio never used sketches to set up the composition of his paintings." Because he never used them, neither could experts.

If you selected another answer choice here, go back and re-read the question. It's asking us to identify which is NOT a "correct" statement. This means that three of the answer choices you read will be correct, according to the passage—but if you're going too fast, you might just pick one of the "correct" statements, while NOT/EXCEPT questions are actually asking us to find the single incorrect statement in the bunch!

## 6. Question Type: **Sentence Simplification**

To correctly answer a sentence simplification question, you'll need to put the highlighted sentence into other words while retaining the meaning. Here, we're asked to consider what an "indefinite loan" might mean. Because it is a loan, or an object is being lent, we know that the Jesuits must still be the technical owners, even though the National Gallery of Ireland displays the painting.

We know that A and B can't be correct because of the word "loan"; the National Gallery did not buy, and does not own, the painting. D has to go, as well, as—while the gallery can display the painting—this is not contingent upon it traveling.

## 7. Question Type: **Reference**

This question asks you to identify what the phrase "a mysterious master" references. To answer it, go back and read the full sentence in context. Here, this is: "A fitting tribute, many would say, to a mysterious master."

However, we still can't be sure who the "mysterious master" is based on just this sentence. For this reference question (and many others), you'll need to read around the original context. Return to the previous sentence: "In 2010, it even travelled back to

Rome to be displayed for the 400th anniversary of the painter's death." Aha! The "master" is the "painter," or Caravaggio (D).

A is incorrect. In the first place, "Jesuits" are plural, and "master" here is singular. However, the Jesuits also are discussed many lines above in this paragraph—too far away to be the reference. The same is true for the "National Gallery of Ireland," C, which is also tricky because an institution makes an unlikely "master." This is also the case for Rome, a city, B. Although this is mentioned in the previous sentence, the city is not the master being saluted here—the painter is.

#### 8. Question Type: **Insert Text**

To answer this question correctly, follow each sentence before the sentences that begin with the box. These sentences will have to be linked logically to the following sentences that start with boxes. Now, return to the sentence to be inserted: it describes the study of some kind of attribute that would apply to both Caravaggio and other painters' works. Only the sentence before answer choice B ("The cracks on the surface of the painting (known in the industry as 'craquelure') were studied") makes sense.

You can—and, in fact, should, if you have time—double-check your answer by plugging it back into the paragraph and seeing if the train of thought still makes sense. Here, it does. However, if you plug the sentence into the other boxes, they disrupt from what seems to be a logical flow of ideas.

Text insertion questions give you a sentence not found in the passage and ask you to choose where the sentence would fit best into the passage. Usually the new sentence will provide you with a clue as to where it should go; this can be a transition word that gives you an idea of how the new sentence relates to surrounding sentences, or it may be a pronoun, including demonstratives like "this" or "those." If it's the latter, you can use a process similar to the one you might use to answer a reference question to decide first what the pronoun or demonstrative refers to. That may help you choose the most logical place to put the new sentence.

Even if you think you know the correct answer, it's always a good idea to try the sentence in every possible location. You can insert and remove the sentence as many times as you need to by clicking on the squares that mark each possible location. Before submitting your answer, be sure that the sentence follows logically from the preceding sentence and leads logically to the next sentence, and that any pronouns agree with the nouns they should refer to.

## 9. Question Type: **Prose Summary**

It can be helpful to come up with your own definition of the main ideas of the passage, even without going back to it (or relying solely on your notes). Think carefully about what you just read. What was the main idea? Well, the main idea was that a painting thought to be lost was found. How did the passage develop that main idea? It showed us the steps that led to the painting being lost (3, 5), and then found (2).

For TOEFL summary questions, watch out for distractors that:

1. Share words or synonyms with the paragraph, but distort meanings;
2. Bring in outside information;
3. Focus too much on small details.

In this case, we have examples of both 2 and 3. We don't know a lot about Caravaggio's style based on the information in the passage; and Caravaggio's popularity is a small detail that the passage tells us, not one of the main ideas.

## 10. Question Type: **Fill-in-the-Table**

Like all Fill-in-the-Table questions, this question will take some time to answer, because you will need to return to the text for each answer choice. Luckily, these words are capitalized in the text, as they are proper nouns, so they are easy to skim for.

When you return to the text, you will find the following:

1. The Jesuit Society—paragraph 1, "It had hung, seemingly unrecognized, in the dining room of the Society of the Jesuits." They owned the painting, so they are collectors.
2. Francesca Cappelletti—paragraph 5, "Two graduate students from the University of Rome, Francesca Cappelletti and Laura Testa, were primarily responsible for verifying that Caravaggio did, in fact, create this version of the painting." She was a graduate student, so she is best classified as a "scholar."
3. Laura Testa—paragraph 5, "Two graduate students from the University of Rome, Francesca Cappelletti and Laura Testa, were primarily responsible for verifying that



Caravaggio did, in fact, create this version of the painting." She was a graduate student, so she is best classified as a "scholar."

4. Gerard van Honthorst—paragraph 3, "By 1921, The Taking of Christ—now firmly attributed to Gerard van Honthorst—was auctioned off..." People thought the painting was by Honthorst, so he must be another painter.

5. The Mattei family—paragraph 3, "it was the Mattei family itself that originally misidentified the work, though several centuries after the original purchase. In 1802, the family sold it..." The family sold it, so they must have owned it; they were collectors.

6. Sergio Benedetti—paragraph 4, "Sergio Benedetti, the Senior Conservator at the National Gallery of Ireland." He is a conservator, so he is also a scholar.

7. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio—paragraph 1, "Italian painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio..." He is a painter.

Not used: The University of Rome—paragraph 5, "Two graduate students from the University of Rome, Francesca Cappelletti and Laura Testa, were primarily responsible for verifying that Caravaggio did, in fact, create this version of the painting." The University of Rome is an educational institution, not fitting into any of the above categories.

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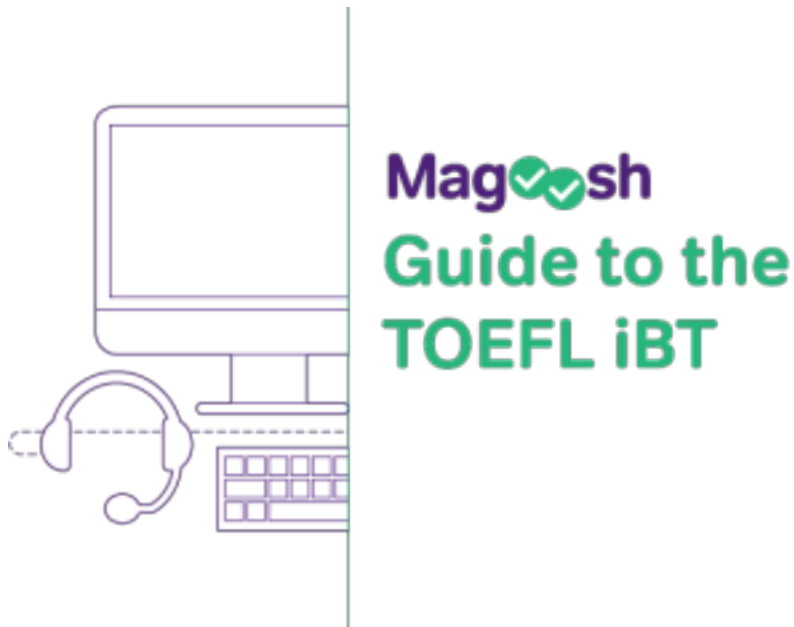
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- [The Complete Guide to the TOEFL Test](#)
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### Okay

- [Barron’s TOEFL iBT](#)
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- [Kaplan TOEFL iBT Premier 2014](#)
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