

## The Independent Writing Topics

The following is a list of the actual Independent Writing topics that were eligible for use on former versions of the TOEFL test. You will see topics very similar to these on the TOEFL iBT. Whatever the topic, you will be asked to give your opinion and to support your opinion with specific reasons and examples.

It does not matter whether you agree or disagree with the topic; the raters are trained to accept all varieties of opinions. What matters are the skills discussed in the previous section: your ability to respond directly to the question, to take a clear position, and to write an essay characterized by good organization, proper use of supporting examples, sentence variety, and correct sentence structures.

None of the topics requires specialized knowledge. Most topics are general and are based on the common experience of people in general and students in particular.

What should you do with this list of topics? To prepare for the Writing section of TOEFL iBT, you should choose topics from the list and practice writing essays in response. Make sure you time yourself, taking 30 minutes to read the question, plan your work, and write your essay. After completing the essay, read it over and compare it with the scoring guide. Or better yet, have a friend or teacher evaluate the essay against the scoring criteria and give you feedback.

### TOPIC LIST

>• People attend college or university for many different reasons (for example, new experiences, career preparation, increased knowledge). Why do you think people attend college or university? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

>• Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
Parents are the best teachers.  
Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

>• Nowadays, food has become easier to prepare. Has this change improved the way people live? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

>• It has been said, "Not everything that is learned is contained in books." Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books. In your opinion, which source is more important? Why? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

>• A company has announced that it wishes to build a large factory near your community. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this new influence on your community. Do you support or oppose the factory? Explain your position.

>• If you could change one important thing about your hometown, what would you

Change? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

> How do movies or television influence people's behavior? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

>• Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
Television has destroyed communication among friends and family.  
Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

>- Some people prefer to live in a small town. Others prefer to live in a big city.  
Which place would you prefer to live in? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

>• "When people succeed, it is because of hard work. Luck has nothing to do with success."  
Do you agree or disagree with the quotation above?  
Use specific reasons and examples to explain your position.

>• Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
Universities should give the same amount of money to their students' sports activities as they give to their university libraries.  
Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

> Many people visit museums when they travel to new places. Why do you think people visit museums? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

> Some people prefer to eat at food stands or restaurants. Other people prefer to prepare and eat food at home. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

> Some people believe that university students should be required to attend classes. Others believe that going to classes should be optional for students. Which point of view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.

> Neighbors are the people who live near us. In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good neighbor? Use specific details and examples in your answer.

>- It has recently been announced that a new restaurant may be built in your neighborhood. Do you support or oppose this plan? Why? Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.

> Some people think that they can learn better by themselves than with a teacher. Others think that it is always better to have a teacher. Which do you prefer? Use specific reasons to develop your essay.

>-What are some important qualities of a good supervisor (boss)? Use specific details and examples to explain why these qualities are important.

> Should governments spend more money on improving roads and highways, or should governments spend more money on improving public transportation (buses, trains, subways)? Why? Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay

>- It is better for children to grow up in the countryside than in a big city Do you agree or disagree? Use specific reasons and examples to develop your essay

> In general, people are living longer now. Discuss the causes of this phenomenon. Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.