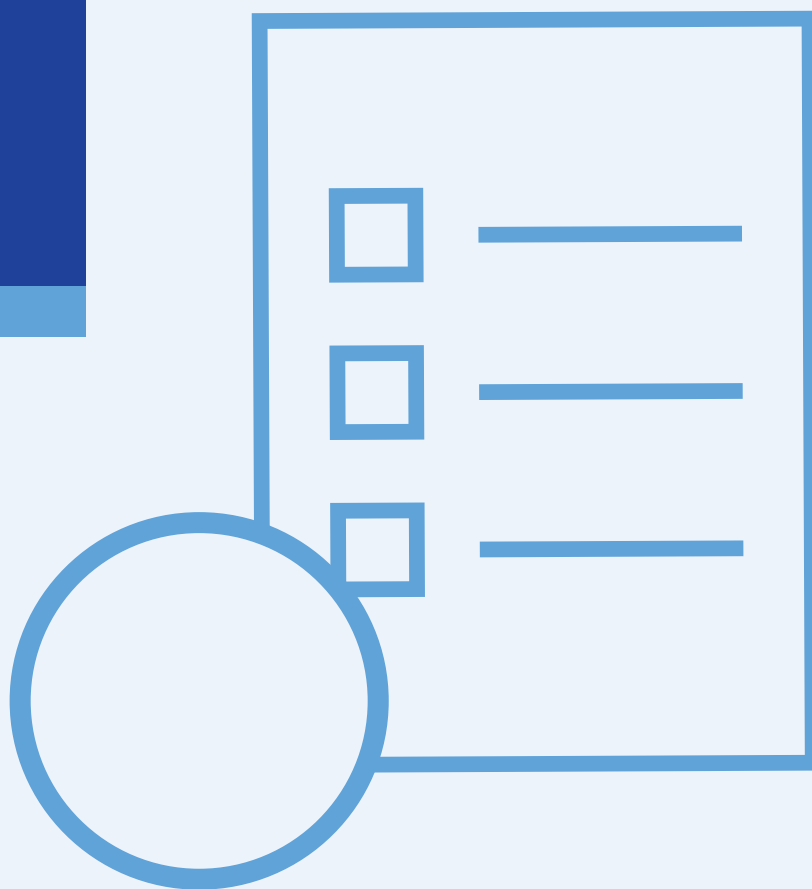




# SCORE USER GUIDE



## *Listening & Reading* TESTS



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For more information, visit us on the web at [www.ets.org/toeic](http://www.ets.org/toeic) or contact your local ETS Preferred Network (EPN) office. A list of local EPN offices can be found on the web at [www.ets.org/epn\\_directory](http://www.ets.org/epn_directory).  
If there is no ETS preferred Network office in your country, please contact us at:

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# Foreword

The TOEIC User Guide was prepared for testing centers, companies, schools, TOEIC ETS Preferred Network (EPN) members, and others who have an interest in the TOEIC test. This Score user guide describes the approved uses of the TOEIC test and explains how it is administered. TOEIC program staff located around the world are available to explain how to use the TOEIC test most effectively, whether it is to help develop language assessment, training and recruiting policies, or simply to answer questions that arise after reading this guide.

Companies around the world have come to recognize that English-language proficiency is a key to global competitiveness. The TOEIC® test is a valuable tool that enables organizations to evaluate English-language communication skills almost anywhere in the world.

For further information or to make testing arrangements, please contact an EPN member. A list of EPN members can be found on the web at **[www.ets.org/epn\\_directory](http://www.ets.org/epn_directory)**.

# Overview

## About ETS

We help teachers teach, students learn, and parents measure the educational and intellectual progress of their children. We do this by:

- Listening to educators, parents, and critics
- Learning what students and their institutions need
- Leading in the development of new and innovative products and services

The ETS mission is to advance quality and equity in education for all people worldwide.

**Our Mission: To advance quality and equity in education** by providing fair and valid assessments, research, and related services. Our products and services measure knowledge and skills, promote learning and educational performance, and support education and professional development for all people worldwide.

**Our Vision: To be recognized as the global leader** in providing fair and valid assessments, research, and related products and services to help individuals, parents, teachers, educational institutions, businesses, governments, countries, states, and school districts, as well as measurement specialists and researchers.

**Our Values: Social responsibility, equity, opportunity, and quality;** we practice these values by listening to educators, parents, and critics. We learn what students and the institutions they attend need. We lead in the development of products and services.

## The TOEIC® Test

The TOEIC® test is an English language proficiency test for people whose native language is not English. It measures the everyday English skills of people working in an international environment. TOEIC test scores indicate how well people can communicate in English with others in the global workplace. The test does not require specialized knowledge or vocabulary; it measures only the kind of English used in everyday work activities.

The TOEIC test is the world's leading test of English-language proficiency in a workplace context. Thousands of corporations throughout the world use the TOEIC test and more than 5 million people take the test every year.

## Development of the TOEIC Test

In 1979, representatives of the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) approached ETS with a request for a full-range test of English proficiency. The primary purpose of the test was to determine the proficiency levels of employees, or potential employees, for human resource planning and development in the contexts of business, industry, and commerce. In addition, the test designers focused neither on "American English" nor "British English," but rather on "international English," the language used by nonnative speakers of English communicating in English both with native speakers and with other nonnative speakers of English. The test had to be reliable and affordable on a per-candidate basis, and easy to administer and score to ensure the broadest possible application.

## Overview *(continued)*

At MITI's request, ETS sent a team of language specialists to Japan to study the English ability of international business people. Charged with the task of ascertaining the language that business people used in everyday work situations, the team observed English employed in a variety of settings.

The studies were revealing. One important finding was that the language of nonnative speakers clearly focuses on communication and is delivered with relatively few embellishments. For example, the least proficient person present out of necessity invariably determines the level of English used in meetings. Nonnative English speakers use fewer idiomatic expressions. They employ technical terminology only when necessary. Furthermore, they tend to use fewer complex grammatical structures, even though the more capable speakers in the studies were capable of speaking quite impressively.

The language specialists also noted that the business people seldom need to read very long narratives. Instead, the international business community receives much of its English-language exposure from letters, and memoranda, and other short texts.

The language used on the TOEIC® Listening and Reading test reflects these findings. Both the Listening and Reading sections of the TOEIC L&R test incorporate stimulus material found in the business world. The test avoids esoteric, low-frequency, and highly technical vocabulary. While the vocabulary and structures found in the Reading section of the TOEIC test are more difficult than the vocabulary and structures found in the Listening section, it should be noted that when low-frequency vocabulary or structures do appear, they are typical of the international workplace.

## Who Takes the TOEIC Test?

- Personnel who use English in real-life work settings, such as businesses, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, international meetings, conventions, and sports events
- Managerial, sales, and technical employees in international business, commerce, and industry who require English to communicate in their workplace
- Individuals preparing to enter the workplace

## Why Take the TOEIC Test?

The TOEIC test is the choice of nearly five million test takers a year and is recognized by thousands of corporations around the world. As a fair and objective measure of English proficiency, the TOEIC test will help test takers:

- Verify current English proficiency levels
- Qualify for a new position and/or promotion in a company
- Enhance professional credentials
- Monitor progress in English
- Set individual learning goals
- Involve employers in advancing their employees' English ability

# TOEIC Test Content and Format

## Test Content

The TOEIC test was developed to meet the needs of the working world. The test questions are developed from samples of spoken and written language collected from various countries around the world where English is used in the workplace.

Test questions incorporate many different settings and situations, such as:

- **Corporate development**—research, product development
- **Dining out**—business and informal lunches, banquets, receptions, restaurant reservations
- **Entertainment**—cinema, theatre, music, art, exhibitions, museums, media
- **Finance and budgeting**—banking, investments, taxes, accounting, billing
- **General business**—contracts, negotiations, mergers, marketing, sales, warranties, business planning, conferences, labor relations
- **Health**—medical insurance, visiting doctors, dentists, clinics, hospitals
- **Housing/corporate property**—construction, specifications, buying and renting, electric and gas services
- **Manufacturing**—plant management, assembly lines, quality control
- **Offices**—board meetings, committees, letters, memoranda, telephone, email messages, office equipment and furniture, office procedures
- **Personnel**—recruiting, hiring, retiring, salaries, promotions, job applications, job advertisements, pensions, awards
- **Purchasing**—shopping, ordering supplies, shipping, invoices
- **Technical areas**—electronics, technology, computers, laboratories and related equipment, technical specifications
- **Travel**—trains, airplanes, taxis, buses, ships, ferries, tickets, schedules, station and airport announcements, car rentals, hotels, reservations, delays and cancellations

These settings provide only the context for TOEIC test questions—test takers are not required to have business experience or to understand specialized vocabulary. The TOEIC test is suitable for use in all environments where English is used by native speakers of other languages.

## Test Format

The TOEIC Listening and Reading test is a multiple-choice test that consists of 200 questions divided into two separately timed sections.

### Section I: Listening Test

This section consists of 100 questions and has an audio component. The test section is divided into four parts. Test takers listen to a variety of statements, questions, conversations, and talks recorded in English, then answer questions based on the listening segments. The Listening section takes approximately 45 minutes.

- Part I: **Photographs** – 6 questions
- Part II: **Question–Response** – 25 questions

## TOEIC Test Content and Format *(continued)*

- Part III: **Conversations** – 39 questions; 13 conversations with 3 questions each
- Part IV: **Talks** – 30 questions; 10 talks with 3 questions each

### Section II: Reading Test

This section consists of 100 questions. Test takers read a variety of materials and respond to questions based on the item content. The Reading section takes 75 minutes.

- Part V: **Incomplete Sentences** – 30 questions
- Part VI: **Text Completion** – 16 questions
- Part VII: **Single Passage**: 29 questions; 10 reading texts with 2-4 questions each  
**Multiple Passages**: 25 questions; 5 sets of double or triple passages with 5 questions per set

Test takers respond to each test question by marking the letter (A), (B), (C), or (D) as their response. Although the actual testing time is approximately two hours, additional time is needed to allow test takers to respond to biographical questions and to respond to a brief questionnaire about their educational and work history. Therefore, approximately 2 1/2 hours should be allowed to take the test.

## Computer-Delivered Testing

A computer-delivered version of the TOEIC Listening and Reading test is available for organizations participating in the Institutional Testing Program (IP). The computer-delivered version of the test is identical to the paper-and-pencil version in terms of scoring, timing, content, and test format. For more information about TOEIC IP Online tests, please contact your local EPN member.

## Preparing to Take the TOEIC Test

The TOEIC test is not based on the content of any particular English course, but rather on the test-taker's proficiency—the overall ability to use English. Improvement in proficiency may take some time and is generally achieved through a combination of practice and study. Before taking the TOEIC test, it is important to become familiar with the test format and how to mark the answers on the answer sheet. Attention can then be focused on the questions themselves, rather than on the format. The Examinee Handbook provides information about the test and familiarizes test takers with the content and format of the test so that they will be more at ease when taking the test. In addition, test takers are encouraged to immerse themselves in the language as frequently and in as many ways as possible if it has been some time since they have had contact with English. Reading, watching TV and videos, taking an English course, and speaking with friends and colleagues are some ways to practice English.

# Administration of the TOEIC Test

## Where is the Test Offered?

The TOEIC test is available throughout the world. Testing can be arranged through corporations or other organizations that ask employees or job applicants to take the TOEIC test. In addition, many language-training programs and schools offer TOEIC testing. If testing is not available through a particular organization, contact the local EPN member to find out when and where to take the test.

## How Often Can the TOEIC Test Be Taken?

TOEIC Public Testing is scheduled by the local EPN member. Contact your local EPN member for more information on test dates, locations and how to register.

Institutional Testing is scheduled by an institution or sponsoring organization and can be taken as offered. Test takers should contact the institution or sponsoring organization for more information. Institutions or sponsoring organizations should contact the local EPN member to arrange dates for testing.

## Test Security

In administering a worldwide testing program, the TOEIC program and its local EPN members consider the maintenance of security at testing centers to be of utmost importance. To offer score users the most valid and reliable measurements of English-language proficiency available, the TOEIC program continuously reviews and refines procedures to increase the security of the test before, during, and after administrations.



# TOEIC Test Results

## Scoring Procedures & Reports

### Paper-Delivered Tests

Each test taker uses a pencil to mark answers to the TOEIC test questions on a scannable answer sheet. Information on the test-taker's English-learning history and use of English is also collected at the time of the test session. The answers and test-taker information are then read by an optical scanner and recorded by a secure software package designed to support EPN member offices in scanning and scoring TOEIC answer sheets, as well as tracking the performance of individual test takers, groups of test takers, clients, and countries.

### Computer-Delivered Tests

Test takers will select from on-screen response options to record their response to each question. Scoring will be completed by the same secure online system used to deliver the test.

### Reporting

The TOEIC test can be administered either through the Public Testing Program or the Institutional Program. In the Public Testing Program test takers register for the test individually and receive Official Score Certificates directly. The Institutional Program is administered by organizations or institutions who will receive the test scores and then distribute the scores to their test takers. Both the Public and Institutional Programs are available worldwide.

After Institutional tests have been scored, the results are reported to the test-taker's employer or school in the form of a Score Roster. The Score Roster is intended for internal use only and cannot be used by individual test takers as an indication of their "official" score. Clients may choose to supply their test takers with an individual Score Report.

Additional statistical reports, such as the results for all of an organization's test takers for a given time period, can be produced by the local EPN member at the client's request.

### Score Roster

Clients receive a listing of all their test-takers' results in the form of a Score Roster. Each Score Roster includes:

- Individual scores (Listening, Reading, and Total scores)
- Scores from the most recent testing session (including average score, frequency distribution, and range of scores)
- Scores obtained in all testing sessions within the same institution
- Scores within the industry with which the client is affiliated
- Scores within the country with which the client is affiliated

### Scaled Scores

Both the Public Score Certificates and the Institutional Score reports provide Listening and Reading scaled scores, and a Total scaled score. The Total scaled score is derived from adding the two section scores together.

## TOEIC Test Results *(continued)*

### Percentile Rank

Both the Public Score Certificate and the Institutional Score report provides percentile rank information. The percentile rank refers to the percentage of the TOEIC Public Testing Program population of test takers in the past three years who score below the test-taker's scaled scores. The percentile rank table is calculated based on a pool of test takers from the past three years and is updated every May and made available on the ETS website at [www.ets.org/pdfs/toEIC/toEIC-listening-reading-percentile-rank.pdf](http://www.ets.org/pdfs/toEIC/toEIC-listening-reading-percentile-rank.pdf). For example, in April 2025, the percentile rank table was calculated based on test takers from January 2022 to December 2024.

### Score Proficiency Descriptions

Based on the scaled score, both the Public Score Certificate and the Institutional Score report provides a description of the English-language abilities typical of test takers scoring at about the same level. Because of limited space in the score report, only statements of strength are provided in the report. There are three possible descriptions for the Listening section and four possible descriptions for the Reading section. A complete table of these descriptions is available on the ETS website, [www.ets.org/pdfs/toEIC/toEIC-listening-reading-score-descriptors.pdf](http://www.ets.org/pdfs/toEIC/toEIC-listening-reading-score-descriptors.pdf). The proficiency descriptors were developed based on a scale anchoring study, available on the ETS website, [www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/TC-10-05.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/TC-10-05.pdf).

### Abilities Measured

Both the Public Score Certificate and the Institutional Score report also include the percentage of questions answered correctly for specific abilities measured. These percentages can be compared with the percentage scores of other people who take the same form of the TOEIC test.

If the test is taken through an employer or sponsoring organization, scores are provided to that organization. It is the responsibility of the employer or organization to provide the test taker with a score report. Those who take the test independently will receive an Official Score Certificate directly from the local EPN member.

## Release of Test Results

For Public Testing, EPN members are required to publish score reporting timelines so that test takers can determine, prior to registering for a public TOEIC test, when they may expect to receive their Official Score Certificate.

Official Score Certificates for the Public Test may be delayed if any type of security review is required. Test takers must be notified if their scores will be delayed or withheld.

Depending on local policies, test takers may expect to receive their Official Score Certificate for the Public Test anywhere from 7 to 21 days after the test administration.

For Institutional Testing, the timelines for test takers being notified of their results will vary depending on the policy established by the Institution.

## Passing the TOEIC Test

The TOEIC test is not the type of test that awards a pass or fail grade. Not every job or task requires the same level of English proficiency. Because it was developed specifically to meet the needs of the workplace, the TOEIC test measures many levels of ability. It enables test takers to demonstrate their current English-language skills, while the single, continuous scale makes it possible for learners to set attainable goals and measure their progress as their English improves.

## TOEIC Test Results *(continued)*

Many companies use the TOEIC test to set their own score standards based on the levels of English necessary to carry out particular responsibilities. Some companies may require employees to have a minimum TOEIC score based on the corresponding level of English that is needed on the job. The local EPN member can offer assistance in setting cut-scores. Many companies offer English-language training to help employees reach target TOEIC scores that reflect specific levels of proficiency based on professional need.

## Interpreting Scores

TOEIC test scores are determined by the number of questions answered correctly. There is no penalty for wrong answers. The number of correct responses on each section, Listening and Reading, is converted to a number on a scale of 5 to 495. The statistical procedure used to convert scores to a common scale for each section seeks to ensure that TOEIC Listening and Reading scores obtained on different administration dates mean the same thing in terms of the level of English proficiency indicated.

If several versions of the test were taken within a short period of time, you would obtain a number of scores that center around an average value known as your “true” score. Two-thirds of the time, your listening score would be within 25 points of your true score on the listening section, and your reading score would be within 25 points of your true score on the reading section.

## Repeat Test Takers

Test takers who take another version of the TOEIC test may obtain slightly different scores from those they received the first time. A question like this may arise, “How much of a difference must there be between two Listening scores or between two Reading scores before I can say that there is a real difference in my level of proficiency?” This question involves two tests given at two different times. The error of measurement associated with the score obtained from one administration is called the Standard Error of Measurement (SEM). The Standard Error of Difference ( $SE_{diff}$ ) is the error of measurement associated with the difference between scores from two test administrations. The  $SE_{diff}$  for each of the TOEIC Listening and Reading sections is about 35 scaled score points.

Another question that may arise, “If a person began training with a Listening score of 300 and, following training, received a score of 340 on a different test form, has that test taker really improved in Listening or is this increase just a statistical fluke?” Given random errors, one should expect the true difference to fall within a certain score range within a specified percent of the time. For instance, a band of  $\pm 1 SE_{diff}$  or  $\pm 35$  points, around the obtained score (i.e., 265–335) corresponds to a 68 percent confidence interval. In this case, a 40-point increase is not very likely due to chance alone. This suggests that the test taker made a real improvement.

## Score Review

Test takers who feel their scores do not accurately reflect their English-speaking abilities may contact their local EPN member within three months from the test date. The local EPN member will rescore the answer sheet and give a second score report. If a discrepancy is found between the first score report and the second one, the local EPN member will pay for rescoring the answer sheet. However, if a discrepancy is not found, the test taker may be charged a small fee for rescoring costs.

## TOEIC Test Results *(continued)*

### Test Score Data Retention

To provide test takers and employers with a historical summary of test scores, all scores will be kept on file and reported for two years from the test date.

### Score Cancellation

ETS and the EPN members reserve the right to take any and all actions — including, but not limited to, barring a test taker from future testing and/or withholding or canceling test-taker's scores — for failure to comply with test administration regulations, the test administrator's directions or where the validity of the scores is questionable. If test-taker's scores are canceled, they will not be reported, and test-taker's registration and test fees will not be refunded.

## Fairness of the TOEIC Test Scores

### Test Fairness

The ETS TOEIC Program and its authorized local EPN members have taken steps to ensure, to the extent possible, that tests and test scores are fair for all test takers, regardless of gender, age, nationality, and test-taker industry background.

All of our products and services—including individual test questions, assessments, instructional materials, and publications—are evaluated during development to ensure that they:

- Are not offensive or controversial
- Do not reinforce stereotypical views of any group
- Are free of racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic and other forms of bias
- Are free of content believed to be inappropriate or derogatory toward any group

All of our tests and other products undergo rigorous, formal reviews to ensure adherence to our fairness guidelines, which are set forth in three publications that can be found on our website, [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org):

- **ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness**

Every test ETS produces must meet the exacting criteria of our *Standards for Quality and Fairness*. These standards reflect our commitment to producing fair, valid, and reliable tests that can stand up to the most intense scrutiny, either in the courtroom or in the court of public opinion.

The ETS Office of Professional Standards Compliance audits each ETS testing program to ensure its adherence to the *ETS Standards for Quality and Fairness*.

- **ETS Fairness Review Guidelines**

The *ETS Fairness Review Guidelines* identify aspects of test questions that might hinder people in various groups from performing at optimal levels. Fairness reviews are conducted by specially trained reviewers.

- **ETS International Principles for Fairness Review of Assessments**

The *International Principles for Fairness Review of Assessments* are designed to ensure that our tests and related products are fair and appropriate for the culture and country in which they are used.

Every member of the ETS staff responsible for writing and reviewing test questions undergoes extensive training in our fairness review process. Our commitment to fairness helps distinguish ETS from other assessment companies.

# Policies and Guidelines for the Use of TOEIC Scores

## Introduction

These guidelines are designed to provide information about the appropriate use of TOEIC test scores for corporations or schools that use the scores in making hiring, evaluation, and career promotion decisions, as well as school-related decisions. They are also intended to protect test takers from unfair decisions that may result from the inappropriate use of scores. Adherence to the guidelines is important.

The TOEIC tests are designed to assess English-language proficiency relevant to today's international market. As measures with known statistical properties and high-quality technical characteristics, the scores from these tests, when used properly, can improve the hiring, evaluation, and career promotion decision processes of local and multinational corporations, and other organizations where English-communication skills are critical job requirements.

As more and more students attend colleges to acquire job skills in the global marketplace, more schools are using TOEIC scores to evaluate student proficiency in English.

The TOEIC Program and its authorized local EPN members have a particular obligation to inform users of the appropriate uses of TOEIC scores and to identify and try to rectify instances of misuse. To this end, the following policies and guidelines are available to all TOEIC test takers, institutions, and organizations that are recipients of TOEIC scores.

## Policies

In recognition of their obligation to ensure the appropriate use of TOEIC scores, the TOEIC Program and its authorized local EPN members developed policies designed to make score reports available only to approved recipients, to encourage these organizational score users to become knowledgeable about the validity of the tests, to protect the confidentiality of test-takers' scores, and to follow up on cases of possible misuse of scores. The policies are discussed below.

- **Confidentiality.** TOEIC scores, whether for an individual or aggregated for an institution, are confidential and can be released only by authorization of the individual or institution or by compulsion of legal process.
- We recognize the test-taker's right to privacy with regard to information that is stored in data or research files held by ETS and its local EPN members, and our responsibility to protect test takers from unauthorized disclosure of the information.
- **Encouragement of appropriate use and investigation of reported misuse.** All organizational users of TOEIC scores have an obligation to use the scores in accordance with the guidelines below, i.e., using multiple criteria, accepting only official TOEIC scores, etc. Organizations have a responsibility to ensure that all individuals using TOEIC scores are aware of these guidelines and to monitor the use of the scores, correcting instances of misuse when they are identified. The TOEIC Program and its authorized local EPN members are available to assist institutions in resolving score-misuse issues.

## Policies and Guidelines for the Use of TOEIC Scores *(continued)*

### Score Verification

Score users have the ability to verify score reports sent directly to them by test takers. Only score reports from the Public Testing Program can be verified. At the written request of the institution or agency, ETS will verify the official scores for tests administered within the last 2 years. ETS or its authorized representative will also verify score information at the request of any institution or agency that has a copy of a score report.

### Guidelines

- **Use Multiple Criteria**

Regardless of the decision to be made, multiple sources of information should be used to ensure fairness and to balance the limitations of any single measure of knowledge, skills, or abilities. These sources may include graduate or undergraduate grade point average, years of experience in the target position, and recommendations from past test center administrators and colleagues. When used in conjunction with other criteria, TOEIC scores can be a powerful tool in making hiring, evaluation, promotion, or school-related decisions.

- **Accept Only Official TOEIC Score Reports**

The only official reports of TOEIC scores are those issued by authorized local EPN members or by ETS in the Public Testing Program. If an organization administers a TOEIC test internally, with ETS knowledge and approval, it can obtain and keep score reports of that test, however, those scores are intended for the use of the institution sponsoring the administration and not intended for use by other entities.

Scores obtained from other sources should not be accepted. If there is a question about the authenticity of a score report, the question should be referred to the local EPN member, who will then verify the accuracy of the scores and whether an official report was issued.

- **Maintain Confidentiality of TOEIC Scores**

All individuals who have access to TOEIC scores should be aware of the confidential nature of the scores and agree to maintain their confidentiality. Policies should be developed and implemented to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

### Normally Appropriate Use of TOEIC Scores

The suitability of a TOEIC test for a particular use should be explicitly examined before using test scores for that purpose. The following list of appropriate uses of TOEIC scores is based on the policies and guidelines previously outlined. The list is meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive, in nature. There may be other appropriate uses of TOEIC test scores, but any uses other than those listed below should be discussed in advance with TOEIC Program staff and authorized local EPN members to determine their appropriateness.

If a use other than those listed in the “appropriate use” section is contemplated, it will be important for the user to validate the use of scores for that purpose. The TOEIC Program staff and its authorized local EPN members will provide advice on the design of such validity studies.

## Policies and Guidelines for the Use of TOEIC Scores *(continued)*

### Appropriate Uses

Provided all applicable guidelines are followed, TOEIC scores are suitable for the uses described below.

- Hiring of applicants for an open position within a corporation or organization where workplace/ everyday English is a required job skill
- Placement of applicants or test takers within a corporation or organization where workplace/ everyday English is a required job skill
- Promotion of test takers within a corporation or organization where workplace/ everyday English is a required job skill
- Measurement of workplace/ everyday English proficiency levels of students in secondary schools and universities
- Measurement of individuals' progress in workplace/ everyday English proficiency levels over time

### Misuse

Any use of test scores for purposes other than those listed should be discussed with ETS before being implemented.

# Statistical Characteristics of the TOEIC Test

## Population Defined

The test-taker population of the TOEIC test consists of people around the world working or intending to work in an international environment, whose native language is not English. They could be:

- Personnel who use English in real-life work settings, such as businesses, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, international meetings, conventions, and sports events
- Managerial, sales, and technical employees in international business, commerce, and industry who require English for their work
- Test takers for training to be conducted in English
- Employees of government agencies
- College students who intend to work in multinational companies where certain levels of English proficiency are required

The TOEIC test can be administered either through the Public Testing Program or the Institutional Program. In the Public Testing Program test takers register for the test individually and receive score reports directly. The Institutional Program is administered by corporations who will receive employee's test scores. Both the Public and Institutional Programs are available worldwide.

Tables 1 and 2 provide the means and standard deviations of Listening and Reading scaled scores of the Public Testing Program and Institutional Program populations, respectively.

TABLE 1. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE PUBLIC TESTING PROGRAM POPULATION						
	2018		2019		2020	
	Listening	Reading	Listening	Reading	Listening	Reading
Mean	352	289	353	289	363	298
Std	87	101	89	101	86	102
N	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.7	1.7	1.7

\* The sample size N is in the unit of millions.

TABLE 2. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAM POPULATION						
	2018		2019		2020	
	Listening	Reading	Listening	Reading	Listening	Reading
Mean	287	231	283	227	282	225
Std	100	106	100	105	106	110
N	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.2	1.2	1.2

\* The sample size N is in the unit of millions.

## Intercorrelations Among Scores

As shown in Table 3, the correlation between Listening and Reading is around 0.85 in three consecutive years. Both Listening and Reading sections are highly correlated with the total score with a correlation coefficient larger than 0.9.

TABLE 3. INTERCORRELATIONS AMONG LISTENING, READING AND TOTAL SCORES				
	2018	2019	2020	Overall
Listening and Reading	0.85	0.85	0.86	0.85
Listening and Total	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96
Reading and Total	0.97	0.96	0.97	0.97



## Statistical Characteristics of the TOEIC Test *(continued)*

### Reliability

Reliability is defined as the proportion of observed score variance that is due to true score variance. It is an indicator of the extent to which test scores will be consistent across different conditions of administration and/or administration of alternate forms of a test. The type of reliability used in the TOEIC test is reported as an internal consistency measure using the KR-20 reliability index. The KR-20 reliability index assesses the extent to which all items measure the same construct. The more homogeneous the test items, the more consistently the test takers will perform. The reliability of the TOEIC Listening and Reading section scores across all forms of our norming samples has been approximately 0.90.

### Standard Error of Measurement

Errors of measurement occur when a test taker performs differently on one occasion or test form than on another for reasons that may or may not be related to the purpose of the test. A person may try harder, be more (or less) tired or anxious compared to some other occasion, have greater familiarity with the content of questions on one test form than on another test form, or simply guess more questions correctly on one occasion than on another. These reasons for inconsistency are generally referred to as errors of measurement. The Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) is an estimate of average difference between true scores and obtained test scores, and is about 25 scaled score points for each of the TOEIC Listening and Reading sections. A test-taker's true score could be estimated by  $\pm 25$  scaled score points around the test score obtained from one administration. For example, if a scaled score of 300 is obtained on the TOEIC Listening section, 68 percent of the time the true score will fluctuate between approximately 275 and 325.

# Research

Through the work of research scientists, psychometricians, and test developers, TOEIC research takes a broad, critical and rigorous approach to investigating and support claims about the quality and uses of TOEIC tests. Following best practices, TOEIC research adopts an argument-based approach to justifying test use that involves making explicit claims about fundamental aspects of test quality (reliability, validity, fairness) and the intended uses of the tests (Schmidgall, 2017; see also <https://www.ets.org/toEIC/research/theory-behind-program.html>).

The first fundamental area of research pertains to **reliability**, or the claim that TOEIC Listening and Reading test scores are consistent and not improperly influenced by factors unrelated to language ability. Reliability estimates are routinely monitored by psychometricians, and the equivalence or consistency of scaled scores across test forms is supported via the use of equating. Additionally, researchers and psychometricians periodically conduct research projects to investigate and collect empirical evidence regarding different aspects of reliability. For example, Wei and Low (2017) examined the score change patterns of nearly 20,000 repeat test takers and concluded that the results provided evidence that TOEIC Listening and Reading test scores are consistent over time and across administrations of the test. For more research pertaining to the reliability of TOEIC test scores, please visit <https://www.ets.org/toEIC/research/score-consistency.html>.

Another fundamental area of research pertains to **validity**, which typically focuses on the meaning of test scores. Research evidence to support claims about the meaning of TOEIC Listening and Reading test scores primarily comes from two strands of research: criterion-related validity studies and the internal structure of the test.

The first strand of validity evidence has come from examinees themselves in the form of self-assessments of their own language skills. In a research study, TOEIC Listening and Reading test takers completed a self-assessment questionnaire, administered in their first language, which requested self-evaluations of their ability to perform each of a variety of practical English language tasks (Powers, Kim, & Weng, 2007). Moderately strong relationships of TOEIC scores with examinee self-reports were noted for each of the four language domains, with correlations of .52 and .57 for the reading and listening sections of the TOEIC, respectively. For virtually all of the language tasks, higher-performing TOEIC examinees were much more likely than lower-scoring examinees to report that they could perform the task.

Two studies have examined the relationships among all four TOEIC measures (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) to investigate how empirical relationships compare to theoretical expectations. Liu and Costanzo (2013) examined the empirical relationship among the four language skills as measured by the TOEIC tests. Their studies also explored whether TOEIC listening and reading scores can be useful for predicting improvement in speaking and writing proficiencies, as measured by TOEIC tests. The results suggest that, although the four skills are moderately related, they are nonetheless unique, with each TOEIC measure making a distinct contribution to measuring English proficiency. Furthermore, the receptive skills of listening and reading are strongly related to the improvement of productive skills (e.g., speaking and writing). The authors concluded that assessing all four skills should provide a more complete picture of English communicative competency. Another study by Powers, Yu, and Yan (2013) assessed the value of using a combination of all four TOEIC measures (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) as indicators of English-language proficiency (instead of using them more selectively). The results indicated that TOEIC scores related moderately strongly to test taker self-assessments of proficiency for each language skill, with self-reported proficiency in each skill being best predicted by the TOEIC test that directly measures that skill. However, prediction improved slightly but significantly when other TOEIC measures that do not directly measure the skill of interest are also considered as predictors of proficiency in that skill. The results provided support for using each TOEIC test independently, as well as support for employing TOEIC measures in combination when more nuanced estimates of English proficiency are needed.

## Research *(continued)*

Several studies have examined the internal structure of the TOEIC Listening and Reading test using factor analytic methods. In a study conducted independently of ETS with learners in Japan, In'nami and Koizumi (2012) examined the factor structure of TOEIC Listening and Reading test scores using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and determined that correlated two-factor model (reading and listening) was most parsimonious. Yoo and Manna (2017) also used CFA to examine the factor structure of TOEIC Listening and Reading test scores, but used a comparatively larger and more heterogeneous sample of test takers. They examined four CFA models (single-factor, correlated two-factor, correlated four-factor, higher-order) and concluded that the correlated two-factor model provided the most parsimonious fit. Yoo and Manna's findings were consistent with In'nami and Koizumi's, which provided support for reporting separate scores for each test section (language skill). In addition, the high correlation between the reading and listening constructs supported the practice of reporting a composite score for the TOEIC Listening and Reading test.

A third fundamental aspect of research pertains to **fairness**, or the claim that TOEIC Listening and Reading test scores are impartial or unbiased. In the same study reported above, Yoo and Manna (2017) examined the factorial invariance of a correlated two-factor model for TOEIC Listening and Reading test scores across five groups (i.e., test taker background characteristics): gender, age, employment status, time spent studying English, and having lived in a country where English is the main language. Their analysis found that strict measurement invariance and structural invariance was upheld across all subgroups; thus, the underlying structure of construct was the same across subgroups. In a subsequent study, Yoo, Manna, Monfils, and Oh (2019) used score equity assessment to examine the extent to which subgroup membership (gender, age, educational background, language exposure, previous experience with the assessment) influenced the statistical and psychometric methods used in producing test scores; results provide evidence in support of the comparability and meaning of test scores across the subgroups studied.

In a more recent study, researchers and psychometricians investigated whether the TOEIC Listening and Reading test unfairly advantaged employed (vs. student) test takers. To investigate potential bias at the item level, researchers conducted DIF analysis using 9 forms of the test (1800 items) and flagged 18 items (1.0%) for statistical DIF which were then reviewed by content experts (Schmidgall, Huo, Cid, & Wei, 2024). To investigate bias at the test level (i.e., in test scores), the researchers used score equity assessment and found that test scores do not unfairly advantage full-time employee (versus student) test takers. Finally, the researchers coordinated a content review using two expert panels that produced examples of how workplace-oriented content is incorporated into test items without disadvantaging fulltime students (versus fulltime employees). The results of these analyses provided support for claims in the TOEIC Listening and Reading test's validity argument about the impartiality (or fairness) of test scores for postsecondary test takers. For more research into the validity and fairness of TOEIC test scores, please visit <https://www.ets.org/toEIC/research/validity-fairness.html>.

Another important aspect of research pertains to the use of the TOEIC Listening and Reading test, including research into its **intended uses** and the **consequences of test use**. For example, Oliveri and Tannenbaum (2017) conducted a study to investigate how TOEIC scores are used to inform human resource management decisions. Study results revealed examples of how managers use scores to inform decisions, including hiring, promotion, and progress ("as a yardstick to measure job applicants' readiness"). In another study, Hsieh (2017) examined test-takers' perceptions about the use of the TOEIC Listening and Reading test as one of the college English-language exit tests of Taiwan's higher education institutions. In general, students reported positive views about the use of TOEIC Listening and Reading test scores for graduation, and they believed that preparing to take the test had a positive impact on their language proficiency and future employment prospects. Please visit the TOEIC research website for more research pertaining to appropriate test use (<https://www.ets.org/toEIC/research/appropriate-test-use.html>) and the impact of test use (<https://www.ets.org/toEIC/research/positive-impact.html>).

## Mapping TOEIC Scores on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment provides a common basis for describing the skills needed to reach different levels of language proficiency and is used by language instructors, educators, curriculum designers and agencies working in the field of language development. The CEFR describes language proficiency in listening, reading, speaking and writing on a six-level scale:

- A1– A2 (Basic User)
- B1– B2 (Independent User)
- C1–C2 (Proficient User)

The CEFR provides a descriptive context that may be used to interpret the meaning and practical significance of scores on language tests. If a test score can be one of the levels of the CEFR, what that score means and what candidates with at least that score are likely to be able to do becomes clear.

Standard setting is the process by which a panel of informed experts makes score requirement recommendations that correspond with the level of knowledge, skill, proficiency, mastery or readiness candidates need in order to be placed in a certain category. The end result of standard setting is a recommended minimum score requirement, or cut score. The minimum scores for each CEFR level in this particular study are presented as lower limits of the level for each modality.

For this study, the panel consisted of 22 experts (English-language instructors, administrators or directors of language programs, and language testing experts) from 10 different European countries (Tannenbaum & Wylie, 2008). The expert panel was asked to recommend minimum test scores (cut scores) for each of the six CEFR levels (A1 through C2). Because it was possible that not all panelists would believe that a test section addressed each CEFR level, ETS established a criterion whereby at least two-thirds (67 percent) of the 22 panelists had to indicate that it was appropriate to recommend a cut score for a level. The table below presents the recommended minimum score for each test section at each CEFR proficiency level for the tests reviewed.

<b>Test Section</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>
TOEIC Listening	60	110	275	400	490	
TOEIC Reading	60	115	275	385	455*	

Table entries are minimum scores needed to be categorized in the level specified.

\*TOEIC Reading C1 minimum score is based on 45% of the panelists.

The results represent the recommendations of informed experts using recognized standard-setting approaches. However, they should be considered guidelines, as ETS does not recommend the use of rigid cut scores.

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## Contacting the TOEIC Program

For more information about TOEIC, please visit us on the web at [www.ets.org/toEIC](http://www.ets.org/toEIC).

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For more than 45 years as an industry leader, the TOEIC® program has set the global standard for assessing English-language communication skills needed in the workplace. With about seven million tests administered every year, the TOEIC tests are the most widely used around the world, with 14,000+ organizations across more than 160 countries trusting TOEIC scores to inform the decisions that matter.

