

ADDITIONAL SPEAKING RESPONSES

Each score level on the Speaking rubrics represents a range of ability. Performances within a level can vary slightly from one test taker to the next and from one response to the next. Additional Speaking Sample Responses are provided here for a better understanding of the performance range for each level. As you listen to several test takers' responses to the Paired Choice and General-Specific tasks of the TOEFL iBT Speaking practice test, please refer to the following:

- Speaking section of your practice test book
- Independent Speaking Rubric (Paired Choice)
- Integrated Speaking Rubric (General-Specific)
- Annotations (manual)

For your reference, a transcript of each test taker response follows each annotation.

Item Transcripts

Independent Item: Paired Choice

[*Prompt*] Some universities require first-year students to live in dormitories on campus. Others allow students to live off campus. Which policy do you think is better for first-year students and why? Include details and examples in your explanation.

Integrated Item: General-Specific

[*Narrator*] Now read the passage about animal domestication. You have 45 seconds to read the passage. Begin reading now.

Animal Domestication

For thousands of years, humans have been able to domesticate, or tame, many large mammals that in the wild live together in herds. Once tamed, these mammals are used for agricultural work and transportation. Yet some herd mammals are not easily domesticated. A good indicator of an animal's suitability for domestication is how protective the animal is of its territory. Non-territorial animals are more easily domesticated than territorial animals because they can live close together with animals from other herds. A second indicator is that animals with a hierarchical social structure, in which herd members follow a leader, are easy to domesticate, since a human can function as the "leader".

[*Narrator*] Now listen to part of a lecture on this topic in an ecology class.

[Lecture] So we've been discussing the suitability of animals for domestication, particularly animals that live together in herds. Now, if we take horses for example... In the wild, horses live in herds that consist of one male and several females and their young. When a herd moves, the dominant male leads, with the dominant female and her young immediately behind him. The dominant female and her young are then followed immediately by the second-most important female and her young, and so on. This is why domesticated horses can be harnessed, one after the other in a row. They're... programmed to follow the lead of another horse. On top of that, you often find different herds of horses in the wild occupying overlapping areas. They don't fight off other herds that enter the same territory.

But it's exactly the opposite with an animal like the um, the antelope, which... well, antelopes are herd animals too, but unlike horses, a male antelope will fight fiercely to prevent another male from entering its territory during the breeding season, OK?...very different from the behavior of horses. Try keeping a couple of male antelope together in a small space and see what happens!

Also, antelopes don't have a social hierarchy—they don't instinctively follow any leader. That makes it harder for humans to control their behavior.

[Prompt] The professor describes the behavior of horses and antelope in herds. Explain how their behavior is related to their suitability for domestication.

Responses and Annotations

LEVEL 4

SPEAKER A

Paired Choice

Test Taker Response: I think/the first-year students/should live on campus/that is because/the first year/especially the first semester/they will have a heavy load of subjects/they have to follow/and that means they ha/they have to be able to be/uh/on time/in campus//and also/uh/the first year of campus life/needs them to familirized//with buildings//with the surroundings//with the environment//of the campus itself//so/more times in campus nee/will uh/help them to do that//and/also/you you have to have lots of friends to be uh/able to/make yourself at home/ in the campus//at least//this is the home for you/in the next four years//so it's important to socialize//

Annotation: The speaker maintains an even pace throughout the response with little noticeable hesitancy. Her speech is clear with few pronunciation errors. She is able to use intonation effectively to convey

meaning. She makes some systematic mistakes of grammar and minor errors of word choice. For example, she uses the expressions “in campus” and “in the campus,” rather than “on campus.” She begins the response discussing what “they” (students) should do, but then changes to the second person “you” (“...help them to do that//and/also you have to have/lots of...”). The errors are generally minor and do not pose a problem for the listener. She provides a fairly complete answer to the question. She clearly states her opinion and then gives several reasons to explain why she thinks first-year students should live on campus. Most of the ideas are well supported. Overall, the response is complete and clearly presented.

General-Specific

Test Taker Response: Both horses/ and antelopes /are herd animals// but they are differ/ in the um domestication//horses are fo/ um/tend to follow /one horse at a time/ to/ in a herd //because they understand the hierarchy/ of the leader /of the group// whereas antelope/ does not follow/ this same pattern//this could be seen/ by the example of /um/ putting two males together /in the/ in the group of antelopes /and they will not/ let render the leadership /to another male antelope/ until they/one of them/wins in the fight//that means that/ it is not natural/ for the antelopes /to follow human/ as their leaders// and domestication/ efforts/they would fight/ and not easily tamed/ as horses do

Annotation: The speaker demonstrates a fairly good range of grammar and vocabulary that allow her to express ideas somewhat fluently. She does make some noticeable errors of agreement and word form and is not very successful at using new vocabulary introduced in the reading and listening material (“they understand the hierarchy of the leader of the group whereas antelope does not follow this same pattern”). While these errors do not generally interfere with meaning, they may cause temporary problems for a listener who is unfamiliar with the reading and listening material. Overall, her speech is a little choppy but clear, and she makes fairly good use of intonation patterns to help convey information. She covers the key information from the combined reading and listening material, with some minor omissions. While she includes a lot of detail in her response, some ideas are not fully developed. In general, she was able to complete the content requirements satisfactorily but struggled a bit with grammar and word choice with the more difficult content.

Overview—Level 4 Speaker A

Overall, the speaker is most fluent and clear on familiar topics. When speaking about reading and listening material, she is able to demonstrate an understanding of the material, but she makes more consistent errors of agreement, word choice and form, and to a lesser degree, pronunciation. However, the errors do not interfere with overall intelligibility.

LEVEL 3

SPEAKER A

Paired Choice

Test Taker Response: It's better if/ at the first-year/the students ?[sleep] in dormitories on a campus/ because it's very difficult/the kind of adaptation they have to suffer/because it's their first/ year/ and um first experience/in that place/so they need help/to recognize a ?[location] they need time to/to um/to?[live] all those/um/aspects/ um/to have more friends/and/because the first year/is the more difficult/because of adaptation/they need to be more closely relations

Annotation: The speaker's delivery is generally good. She is able to sustain speech at a mostly consistent pace. While interference from the speaker's first language is evident in her speech, mispronunciations only occasionally interfere with the listener's ability to follow. The speaker's grammatical range, while not sophisticated, is appropriate to the task with only minor errors evident. However, there are errors of word choice ("... the kind of adaptation they have to suffer") and word form ("they need to be more closely relations"), which at times create confusion for the listener. This is especially true when these errors result in an inability to provide sufficient elaboration or support for information the speaker is trying to explain. While the response does convey information relevant to the topic, in general, the development of ideas is limited. As mentioned, some key ideas are vaguely expressed or unsupported. Overall, the speech is mostly intelligible, but ideas are sometimes unclear due to limitations in vocabulary.

General-Specific

Test Taker Response: First of all/animals who live in herds/are easier to domesticate/because they are not? [breed]/ ? [?] a certain territory/so they/um/live in/live with/other animals of the same specie/that territory is one of the main factors of their behavior like the antelopes/ the horses follow a leader and the antelopes does not/s is better to domesticate a horse than a antelope/ the reason is that an antelope/would always attack/to defend the territory/or the other/the others from/her or his/specie/and the horse would not because he is just following a leader so it's easier...[trails off]

Annotation: The speech is generally clear and well paced. There are some minor pronunciation problems, but they do not obscure meaning for the listener. The speaker shows some automaticity of expression and moderate control of grammatical structures. Vocabulary is limited, and errors of word choice and word formation cause the listener confusion at times. Most errors of grammar are minor and do not present a problem for the listener. The response most noticeably lacks coherence. The speaker uses neither intonation nor rhetorical cues effectively in order to clarify relationships among ideas, resulting in a somewhat "rambling" quality at times. Her limited use of cohesive devices and limited vocabulary contribute to some confusion about the accuracy of the content. For example, she does address the two key traits relevant to the discussion of domestication (following a leader and defending territory), yet she seems to conflate the two in supporting her position. ("...an antelope would always attack to defend the territory... and the horse would not because he is just followin' a leader so it's easier.")

Overview—Level 3 Speaker A

Overall, this speaker's delivery is well paced, and her speech is easy to understand. However, vocabulary is sometimes limited, resulting in vague expression of ideas and incomplete content.

SPEAKER B**Paired Choice**

Test Taker Response: in my opinion / it would be in the better interest of a first-year student / to live in a dormitory / on campus // but i wouldn't / make it // a requirement // i'd make it a / person / uh a personal / choice // just because they // get to know the other students better and the life and the community that is kind of stronger than to / when they live on the outside of [the/a?] campus

Annotation: The speaker expresses an opinion with nuances and gives some support for it. His pronunciation is clear, though his speech lacks fluidity and his pauses tend to break up natural syntactic groupings. He also has a rather flat intonation. Thus, while perfectly intelligible, his overall delivery makes the response somewhat difficult to listen to. He demonstrates control over a range of vocabulary, though it is not as automatic as that of a level 4 speaker. He makes some notable grammatical errors (“the community that is kind of stronger than to / when they live on the outside of [the/a?] campus”). At one point, the cohesion of the response breaks down noticeably. The sentence that includes “just because they // get to know the other students better” sounds at first like a counterargument to ideas expressed about living on campus. The listener must do some reprocessing to realize that this is actually an explanation of an earlier statement supporting why it would be in the students’ best interest to live on campus. Because of these weaknesses and because the speaker only provides one reason for his opinion, the response does not seem fully developed.

General-Specific

Test Taker Response: horses are more suitable for domestication because / they are not / bound / for on a territory they / do not fight / for the territories / they // are more like a submif submissive / uh creature / which means / that the human / can / take the role of the leader of the group and they follow them / antelopes for example uh // territor territory uh related uh species which will / fight for its / freedom and // is not very suitable for domestication

Annotation: The speaker’s pronunciation is clear, but his delivery is quite choppy. He often seems to pause to search for the proper word or idea. This causes very short groupings of words and interrupted syntactic phrases. He seems to struggle somewhat to convey clearly the ideas he heard and read. He uses a good range of vocabulary and attempts to use some sophisticated vocabulary, though in some cases he does not use words successfully (“bound” in “they are not / bound / for on a territory”). In other cases, he merely utters a phrase but does not connect it appropriately within a sentence (“for example uh // territor territory uh related uh species which will”). He does not make a lot of grammatical mistakes, but his response is limited to short, simple phrases with basic connections between phrases and clauses. He conveys a number of key ideas about horses and is able to connect their behaviors with their suitability for domestication. But he only makes one clear, accurate statement about antelopes (“is not very suitable for domestication”). The other thing he says about antelopes is a vague statement about antelope behavior (“uh // territor territory uh related uh species”), part of which is inaccurate. (The stimulus says nothing about antelopes fighting for their freedom.) Thus, his response lacks full development.

Overview—Level 3 Speaker B

Overall, the speaker is clear and mostly easy to understand. His pronunciation is good but his slow, deliberate pace is distracting for the listener. His use of vocabulary and grammar is fairly good although the range is limited. He too often settles for a vague or imprecise term and makes basic grammatical errors. In general, these limitations prevent him from fully explaining information or supporting his ideas.

LEVEL 2**SPEAKER A****Paired Choice**

Test Taker Response: I think living in dormitories/ is better for first-year students/ because in the first year/ in the first year/ students may have troubles/ in doing/ in studying in living in school/ and/ they don't have many friends in school/ so if/ if/ they live in dorm they/ they/ could make many friends/ living in dormitory/y and it would be helpful for...

Annotation: Although her pronunciation is generally clear, this candidate has a difficult time choosing words and forming sentences. She speaks phrase by phrase at a very slow pace. Her slow pace also severely limits what she is able to say. She is able to express her opinion that first-year students should live in the dorm (“first year students have troubles” and “they can make many friends living in dormitory”). She is unable, however, to elaborate on either idea. She does not explain the kinds of troubles students encounter nor does she provide any support for her reasons. Her vocabulary and grammar are limited. Overall, she is able to express a few ideas with some difficulty, but statements are vague and unsupported.

General-Specific

Test Taker Response: Horses live in herd/ for example one male and females and their young. / they live in herd and/ one male domesticate a female so horse horse domestication is very hard (is?). / Wild antelope/ doesn't have a social hierarchy so they are very fierce. Horses and antelopes are very different in social hierarchy. So horses horse domesticate more...

Annotation: The pace of the response is slow because of her difficulty in selecting words and forming sentences. This limits her response to a few basic and unclear ideas expressed with little coherence or organization. She struggles to link phrases together grammatically, failing throughout to formulate sensible ideas. She demonstrates little comprehension of the basic ideas in the stimulus. She does manage to relate a few ideas (“Horses live in herd,” “Wild antelope doesn't have a social hierarchy so they are fierce,” and “horses and antelopes have very different social hierarchy”), but she is unable to connect these together rationally to form a coherent paraphrase of the stimulus. Her speech is for the most part clear, but extremely slow and clipped into phrases. She runs out of time, leaving her response significantly incomplete.

Overview—Level 2 Speaker A

Overall, the candidate's good pronunciation and fair grasp of the most basic grammar and vocabulary allow her to express simple ideas. She is unable, however, to move beyond the most basic structures and simplest words. She exhibits little automaticity, but instead speaks at a slow and labored pace, struggling to find words and form sentences.

SPEAKER B**Paired Choice**

Test Taker Response: The firs/first-year students/to live in the dormitory/ on campus/ is very good/ because of/uh uh uh/in losing time /when we go to the home//and also mmm/the importance of/ getting materials/from/the/campus//for examples/library use/and computer use/and uh stuff like that/is very avila/available/when they are in the/ that campus//so/when we/but/ when we go to home/there will be a a ?? ?? ?? time/ which/which/which is not good for them/to ?? ?? with their family/and other things/so confine in cam...

Annotation: The speaker clearly addresses the question, states an opinion, and attempts to support the opinion. However, because of limited control of grammar and a limited range of vocabulary, his ideas are sometimes vague or incomplete. He struggles at times to develop an explanation for his opinion, as when he says he supports living in the dorm "because of...losing time when we go to the home." Most noticeable are the speaker's difficulties with pronunciation. Several times words are unintelligible, leaving gaps in content for the listener.

General-Specific

Test Taker Response: Well/uh/ is horses is/ because horses are /little bit ?? / ?? ?? ?? live in herds / and also/ ?? the female horse which live with the/ mmm/ many male/horses/so/so and uh in ?? adaptation for/they are also hierarchy of so so so sosocial?/ but in the antelope uh fights?/the antelopes fight ??/ scarshly/ scarcely/ no social hierarchy/ can be seen/ in the antelope/ /so/ it's difficult to/ be/um/ domesticated//antelope/uh/the life of antelope/ is very difficult/ from the/that of/horses

Annotation: Pronunciation is a particular problem in the response. Several key words and phrases are unintelligible, requiring considerable listener effort and, ultimately, causing some confusion about meaning. The speaker is very slow getting started. He makes numerous false starts and is unable to organize information coherently. He struggles to construct coherent phrases. The speaker is eventually able to demonstrate some understanding of the reading and listening material (horses are hierarchical; antelopes are not and, therefore, are difficult to domesticate), but he struggles to convey the information coherently and seems unable to elaborate further. This is largely because of limitations in vocabulary and grammar. Only familiarity with the topic allows the listener to follow what is being said.

Overview—Level 2 Speaker B

In general, even though the speaker is able to convey some relevant content, his limited grammar and vocabulary prevent the full expression of ideas. The result is incomplete or vaguely expressed ideas. Numerous problems with pronunciation also cause difficulty for the listener. At times, key words or phrases are totally unintelligible.

LEVEL 1**SPEAKER A****Paired Choice**

Test Taker Response: [the university is uh very good and / the schools ? // think it better for first year students / who because he is new in / [the college life?] and / um // and / new // ? and no knowledge of / [all the? college?] study / and]

Annotation: The speaker’s delivery is muted (i.e., in whispers) and hesitant. Her articulation of words is rather unclear, so much so that at several points her meaning is obscured. The speaker shows control over a very limited range of vocabulary. Although several complex grammatical constructions are used, omissions and brevity of speech make it very difficult to get a good sense of the speaker’s control of grammar. Moreover, the response does not complete the task. The speaker makes no clear choice between on-campus dormitories and off-campus housing, and only one rather vague point is made clearly (that something is better for first-year students because first-year students are new to college life). The speaker seems unable to produce enough adequate speech to complete the task.

General-Specific

Test Taker Response: Animal domestination uh the professor describe the behavior of horse and antelope in herds / then // my[mine?] opinion is / opinion ? // um / horse and antelope uh behavior is // is / s not said ? // is short time and / change in behavior / because the / horse and antelope and / antelope is good to

Annotation: Much of the response is difficult to understand because the speaker was too close to the microphone, which exacerbates her pronunciation problems. However, listening repeatedly make it possible to determine most of the response. The speaker first reads the title of the reading passage and then the prompt question (“animal domestination, uh, the professor describe the behavior of horse and antelope in herds”). However, the speaker does not produce any other complete sentences or make any clear, coherent statements. Thus, the speaker seems to lack the vocabulary and grammar needed to complete even simple statements. Given the lack of coherent content, the speaker fails to complete the task at even the most rudimentary level.

Overview—Level 1 Speaker A

Overall, extremely limited vocabulary and grammar prevent any clear, coherent expression of ideas.

SPEAKER B**Paired Choice**

Test Taker Response: Most of [(th)e?] students live in / uh // [n] live off campus // uh but / uh // like me / uh // is to need to require / uh live to live in dormitories / uh // example [there is there is young?] aand / uh // like this uh / especially // uh lives in dormitories on campus / uh // they can / uh [each?] // [each?]/ is / with play and sing and worship / and [(thi)s?] relationship is [very?]

Annotation: The response is very limited in content and coherence. Although several words are not intelligible, most words are pronounced clearly and the speaker also exhibits some control of intonation (“like me, is need to ...live in dormitories”). However, words are clear only when they are articulated almost as discrete entities, making the delivery sound very choppy and fragmented. This contributes to the difficulty listeners have in following the response. A larger problem, though, is the speaker’s severe limitation in control of vocabulary and grammar. Only one statement is fully expressed and mostly accurate (“Most of students live off campus”). The rest of the response is composed largely of disjointed groupings of words. It contains numerous errors of word choice, word formation, and grammar (“is to need to require uh live in dormitories,” “this especially lives in dormitories” and “they can? with play and sing...”) that make it difficult to determine a coherent message. As a result of the limitations in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, little relevant content is expressed.

General-Specific

Test Taker Response: Behavior of horses uh / and antelope in [herd?] // ? // [th]ere [th]ere / [th] ere lives in / there live in / domestic / domestic situation / is very related with / human human being / um but //// um // it is / there is reason / uh they // are tame? / [their real?] [?] / vironment? // [n] tame and /// I don’t know what

Annotation: The response communicates very little information. Although many words are clearly pronounced, pronunciation problems obscure the meaning of a number of words. Such difficulties are compounded by numerous hesitations and pauses, resulting in considerable listener effort to follow the response. The speaker exhibits insufficient control of grammar and vocabulary to communicate meaningful expressions. As a result of delivery and language use problems, the response conveys no relevant content.

Overview—Level 1 Speaker B

In general, the speaker struggles to construct meaningful phrases and relies heavily on individual words to convey meaning.