
STRUCTURE

Structure is tested in the second section on both the paper TOEFL test and the computer TOEFL test. This section consists of a number of multiple-choice questions that test your knowledge of the structure of English sentences and error recognition questions that test your knowledge of correct written expression. The paper and the computer structure sections are **similar** in the following ways:

- *the types of questions*
- *the language skills tested*

The paper and the computer structure sections are **different** in the following ways:

- *the number of questions*
- *the amount of time*
- *the ordering of the questions*
- *the strategies*
- *the scoring*

STRUCTURE ON THE PAPER TOEFL® TEST

On the paper TOEFL test, the second section is called Structure and Written Expression. This section consists of forty questions (though some tests may be longer). You have twenty-five minutes to complete the forty questions in this section.

There are two types of questions in the Structure and Written Expression section of the paper TOEFL test:

1. **Structure** (questions 1–15) consists of fifteen sentences in which part of each sentence has been replaced with a blank. Each sentence is followed by four answer choices. You must choose the answer that completes the sentence in a grammatically correct way.
2. **Written Expression** (questions 16–40) consists of twenty-five sentences in which four words or groups of words have been underlined. You must choose the underlined word or group of words that is *not* correct.

The questions on the paper test are presented in *linear* order. The fifteen structure questions (1–15) progress from easy to difficult. The twenty-five written expression questions (16–40) also progress from easy to difficult. Your score in this section is based on your answers to these forty questions.

GENERAL STRATEGIES
(Paper TOEFL® Test) 

1. **Be familiar with the directions.** The directions on every paper TOEFL test are the same, so it is not necessary to spend time reading the directions carefully when you take the test. You should be completely familiar with the directions before the day of the test.
2. **Begin with questions 1 through 15.** Anticipate that questions 1 through 5 will be the easiest. Anticipate that questions 11 through 15 will be the most difficult. Do not spend too much time on questions 11 through 15. There will be easier questions that come later.
3. **Continue with questions 16 through 40.** Anticipate that questions 16 through 20 will be the easiest. Anticipate that questions 36 through 40 will be the most difficult. Do not spend too much time on questions 36 through 40.
4. **If you have time, return to questions 11 through 15.** You should spend extra time on questions 11 through 15 only after you spend all the time that you want on the easier questions that follow.
5. **Guess to complete the section before time is up.** There is no penalty for guessing, so it can only increase your score to guess the answers to questions that you do not have time to complete.

STRUCTURE ON THE COMPUTER TOEFL® TEST

On the computer TOEFL test, the second section is called the Structure section. This section consists of twenty to twenty-five questions. You have fifteen to twenty minutes to complete the questions in this section.

There are two types of questions in the Structure section of the computer TOEFL test:

1. **Structure** questions consist of sentences in which part of each sentence has been replaced with a blank. Each sentence is followed by four answer choices. You must choose the answer that completes the sentence in a grammatically correct way.
2. **Written Expression** questions consist of sentences in which four words or groups of words have been underlined. You must choose the underlined word or group of words that is *not* correct.

These two types of questions are intermixed in this section of the test.

The Structure section of the computer TOEFL test is *computer adaptive*. This means that the difficulty of the questions that you see is determined by how well you answer the questions. The section begins with a medium-level question, and the questions that follow will get easier or harder depending on whether or not you answer the questions correctly. Your answers to these questions count as only half of your structure score; the other half of your structure score comes from your answer to the writing question.

GENERAL STRATEGIES
(Computer TOEFL® Test) 

1. **Be familiar with the directions.** The directions on every computer TOEFL test are the same, so it is not necessary to spend time reading the directions carefully when you take the test. You should be completely familiar with the directions before the day of the test.
2. **Be familiar with computer adaptivity.** This section of the computer TOEFL test is adaptive. This means that you will start with a medium-level question, and the difficulty of the questions will increase or decrease depending on whether or not your answers are correct.
3. **Dismiss the directions as soon as they come up.** The time starts when the directions come up. You should already be familiar with the directions, so you can click on **Dismiss Directions** as soon as it appears and save all your time for the questions.
4. **Think carefully about a question before you answer it.** You may not return to a question later in the test. You only have one opportunity to answer a given question.
5. **Click on an answer on the computer screen when you have selected an answer.** You may still change your mind at this point and click on a different answer.
6. **Click on **Next** and then click on **Confirm Answer** to record your answer.** After you click on the Confirm Answer button, you cannot go back and change your answer. A new question, either a structure question or a written expression question, will appear.
7. **Do not spend too much time on a question you are unsure of.** If you truly do not know the answer to a question, simply guess and go on. The computer will automatically move you into a level of questions that you can answer.
8. **Be very careful not to make careless mistakes.** If you carelessly choose an incorrect answer, the computer will move you to an easier level of questions. You will have to waste time working your way back to the appropriate level of questions.
9. **Monitor the time carefully on the title bar of the computer screen.** The title bar indicates the time remaining in the Structure section, the total number of questions in the section, and the current number.
10. **Do not randomly guess at the end of the section to complete all the questions in the section before time is up.** In a computer adaptive section such as Structure, random guessing to complete the section will only lower your score.

THE STRUCTURE QUESTIONS

(PAPER TOEFL® TEST AND COMPUTER TOEFL® TEST)  

Multiple-choice questions that test your knowledge of the correct structure of English sentences appear on both the paper TOEFL test and the computer TOEFL test. Look at an example of a structure question from the paper TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper TOEFL® Test 

A camel _____ 30 gallons of water in ten minutes.

- (A) can drink
- (B) it can drink
- (C) a large drink of
- (D) with a drink of

In this example, you should notice that the sentence has a subject *camel* but needs a verb. Answer (A) is the correct answer because it contains the verb *can drink*. Answer (B) is incorrect because it has the extra subject *it*, and answers (C) and (D) are incorrect because they do not have verbs. You should therefore choose answer (A).

Now, look at an example of a structure question from the computer TOEFL test.

Example from the Computer TOEFL® Test 

_____, a firefighting specialist from Texas, has dealt with numerous major fires worldwide.

- Red Adair is
- For Red Adair
- Red Adair
- In Red Adair's life

In this example, you should notice that the sentence has a verb *has dealt* but needs a subject. The comma in front of the verb *has* indicates that *specialist* is an appositive and is not the subject. The third answer is the best answer because it contains the subject *Red Adair*. The first answer has an extra verb, and the second and fourth answers contain prepositional phrases, so these answers are incorrect. You should click on the third answer to this question.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STRUCTURE QUESTIONS
(Paper TOEFL® Test and Computer TOEFL® Test)  

1. **First, study the sentence.** Your purpose is to determine what is needed to complete the sentence correctly.
2. **Then study each answer based on how well it completes the sentence.** Eliminate answers that do not complete the sentence correctly.
3. **Do not try to eliminate incorrect answers by looking only at the answers.** The incorrect answers are generally correct by themselves. The incorrect answers are generally incorrect only when used to complete the sentence.

Now, you should move on to the language skills. The following language skills will help you to implement these strategies and procedures in the structure questions of both the paper TOEFL test and the computer TOEFL test.

SENTENCES WITH ONE CLAUSE _____

Some sentences in English have just one subject and verb, and it is very important for you to find the subject and verb in these sentences. In some sentences it is easy to find the subject and verb. However, certain structures, such as objects of prepositions, appositives, and participles, can cause confusion in locating the subject and verb because each of these structures can look like a subject or verb. An object of the preposition or an appositive can be mistaken for a subject, while a participle can be mistaken for a verb.

Therefore, you should be able to do the following in sentences with one subject and verb: (1) be sure the sentence has a subject and a verb, (2) be careful of objects of prepositions and appositives when you are looking for the subject, and (3) be careful of present participles and past participles when you are looking for the verb.

SKILL 1: BE SURE THE SENTENCE HAS A SUBJECT AND A VERB

You know that a sentence in English should have a subject and a verb. The most common types of problems that you will encounter in structure questions on the TOEFL test have to do with subjects and verbs: perhaps the sentence is missing either the subject or the verb or both, or perhaps the sentence has an extra subject or verb.

Example 1 from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests

_____ was backed up for miles on the freeway.

- (A) Yesterday
- (B) In the morning
- (C) Traffic
- (D) Cars

In this example you should notice immediately that there is a verb *was*, but there is no subject. Answer (C) is the best answer because it contains the singular subject *traffic* that agrees with the singular verb *was*. Answer (A), *yesterday*, and answer (B), *in the morning*, are not subjects, so they are not correct. Although answer (D), *cars*, could be a subject, it is not correct because *cars* is plural and it does not agree with the singular verb *was*.

Example 2 from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests

Engineers _____ for work on the new space program.

- (A) necessary
- (B) are needed
- (C) hopefully
- (D) next month

In this example you should notice immediately that the sentence has a subject *engineers* and that there is no verb. Because answer (B), *are needed*, is a verb, it is the best answer. Answers (A), (C), and (D) are not verbs, so they are not correct.

Example 3 from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests

The boy _____ going to the movies with a friend.

- (A) he is
- (B) he always was
- (C) is relaxing
- (D) will be

This sentence has a subject *boy* and has part of a verb *going*; to be correct, some form of the verb *be* is needed to make the sentence complete. Answers (A) and (B) are incorrect because the sentence already has a subject *boy* and does not need the extra subject *he*. Answer (C) is incorrect because *relaxing* is an extra verb part that is unnecessary because of *going*. Answer (D) is the best answer; *will be* together with *going* is a complete verb.

The following chart outlines what you should remember about subjects and verbs:

SUBJECTS AND VERBS
A sentence in English must have at least one <i>subject</i> and one <i>verb</i> .

EXERCISE 1: Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice in each of the following sentences. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. Last week went fishing for trout at the nearby mountain lake.
- C 2. A schedule of the day's events can be obtained at the front desk.
- ___ 3. A job on the day shift or the night shift at the plant available.
- ___ 4. The new computer program has provides a variety of helpful applications.
- ___ 5. The box can be opened only with a special screwdriver.
- ___ 6. The assigned text for history class it contains more than twenty chapters.
- ___ 7. The papers in the wastebasket should be emptied into the trash can outside.
- ___ 8. Departure before dawn on a boat in the middle of the harbor.
- ___ 9. Yesterday found an interesting article on pollution.
- ___ 10. The new machine is processes 50 percent more than the previous machine.

SKILL 2: BE CAREFUL OF OBJECTS OF PREPOSITIONS

An object of a preposition is a noun, pronoun, gerund or noun clause that comes after a preposition, such as *in*, *at*, *of*, *to*, *by*, *behind*, *on*, and so on, to form a prepositional phrase.

(After his *exams*) Tom will take a trip (by *boat*).

This sentence contains two objects of prepositions. *Exams* is the object of the preposition *after*, and *boat* is the object of the preposition *by*.

An object of a preposition can cause confusion in structure questions on the TOEFL test because it can be mistaken for the subject of a sentence.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests


With his friend B found the movie theater.

- (A) has
- (B) he
- (C) later
- (D) when

In this example you should look first for the subject and the verb. You should notice the verb *found* and should also notice that there is no subject. Do not think that *friend* is the subject; *friend* is the object of the preposition *with*, and one noun cannot be both a subject and an object at the same time. Because a subject is needed in this sentence, answer (B), *he*, is the best answer. Answers (A), (C), and (D) are not correct because they cannot be subjects.

The following chart outlines the key information that you should remember about objects of prepositions:

OBJECTS OF PREPOSITIONS

A *preposition* is followed by a noun, pronoun, gerund or noun clause that is called an *object of the preposition*. If a word is an *object of a preposition*, it is not the *subject*.

NOTE: A lengthy list of prepositions and practice in recognizing prepositions can be found in Appendix D at the back of the text. You may want to complete these exercises before continuing with Exercise 2.

EXERCISE 2: Each of the following sentences contains one or more prepositional phrases. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the prepositional phrases that come before the verb. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. The interviews by radio broadcasters were carried live by the station.
- I 2. In the last possible moment before takeoff took his seat in the airplane.
- ___ 3. At the neighborhood flower shop, flowers in quantities of a dozen or a half dozen can be delivered for free.
- ___ 4. The progressive reading methods at this school are given credit for the improved test scores.
- ___ 5. For the last three years at various hospitals in the county has been practicing medicine.
- ___ 6. In the past a career in politics was not considered acceptable in some circles.
- ___ 7. Shopping in the downtown area of the city it has improved a lot in recent years.

- _____ 8. At the building site the carpenters with the most experience were given the most intricate work.
- _____ 9. For the fever and headache took two aspirin tablets.
- _____ 10. The report with complete documentation was delivered at the conference.

SKILL 3: BE CAREFUL OF APPOSITIVES

Appositives can cause confusion in structure questions on the TOEFL test because an appositive can be mistaken for the subject of a sentence. An appositive is a noun that comes before or after another noun and has the same meaning.

Sally, the best student in the class, got an A on the exam.

In this example *Sally* is the subject of the sentence and *the best student in the class* can easily be recognized as an appositive phrase because of the noun *student* and because of the commas. The sentence says that *Sally* and *the best student in the class* are the same person. Note that if you leave out the appositive phrase, the sentence still makes sense (*Sally got an A on the exam*).

The following example shows how an appositive can be confused with the subject of a sentence in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example 1 from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



_____, George, is attending the lecture.

- (A) Right now
- (B) Happily
- (C) Because of the time
- (D) My friend

In this example you should recognize from the commas that *George* is not the subject of the sentence. *George* is an appositive. Because this sentence still needs a subject, the best answer is (D), *my friend*. Answers (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they are not subjects.

The next example shows that an appositive does not always come after the subject; an appositive can also come at the beginning of the sentence.

Example 2 from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



_____, Sarah rarely misses her basketball shots.

- (A) An excellent basketball player
- (B) An excellent basketball player is
- (C) Sarah is an excellent basketball player
- (D) Her excellent basketball play

In this example you can tell that *Sarah* is the subject and *misses* is the verb because there is no comma separating them. In the space you should put an appositive for Sarah, and Sarah is *an excellent basketball player*, so answer (A) is the best answer. Answers (B) and (C) are not correct because they each contain the verb *is*, and an appositive does not need a verb. Answer (D) contains a noun, *play*, that could possibly be an appositive, but *play* is not the same as *Sarah*, so this answer is not correct.

The following chart outlines the key information that you should remember about appositives:

APPOSITIVES				
An <i>appositive</i> is a noun that comes before or after another noun and is generally set off from the noun with commas. If a word is an <i>appositive</i> , it is not the <i>subject</i> . The following appositive structures are both possible in English:				
S,	APP,	V		
Tom,	a really good mechanic,	is fixing	the car.	
APP,		S	V	
A really good mechanic,		Tom	is fixing	the car.

EXERCISE 3: Each of the following sentences contains an appositive. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the appositive phrases. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. (The son of the previous owner,) the new owner is undertaking some fairly broad changes in management policy.
- I 2. Last semester, (a friend,) graduated *cum laude* from the university.
3. Valentine's Day, February 14, is a special holiday for sweethearts.
4. At long last, the chief executive officer, has decided to step down.
5. Tonight's supper, leftovers from last night, did not taste any better tonight than last night.
6. The only entrance to the closet, the door was kept locked at all times.
7. In the cold of winter, a wall heating unit, would not turn on.
8. The new tile pattern, yellow flowers on a white background, really brightens up the room.
9. The high-powered computer the most powerful machine of its type, was finally readied for use.
10. A longtime friend and confidant, the psychologist was often invited over for Sunday dinner.