

TIPS FROM SUCCESSFUL TOEFL STUDENTS



WHAT TO DO ON THE LISTENING SECTION

- Look for opportunities to attend free lectures in English. If you are near a university that offers academic courses in English, ask the professors if you can listen to a lecture or two in their classes.
- If you have access to television in English, watch the Discovery Channel, National Geographic Channel, Smithsonian Channel, and other stations that offer academic topics. Don't pay too much attention to the screen. Take notes while you listen.
- When you are taking notes for the Internet iBT, don't try to write down every word. You are not required to take a dictation. Just jot down what you need to remember the main ideas and important details.
- Get familiar with the directions. If you don't have to read the directions and think about what to do, you will save time. Be sure that you understand how to use the **OK** button. On the Listening section of the iBT, you have to click on **Next** and then on **OK** to go to the next question. If you forget to click on **OK**, you will not move to the next screen.
- Don't click on the **Help** button on the iBT unless you absolutely don't understand what to do. The only information in the **Help** menu is a recap of the directions. And the clock keeps running!

Listening Strategy 1

Improve your concentration

Focus on the speaker and on your notes and learn to bring your attention back from external disturbances and internal distractions. External disturbances may include someone coughing or making noise or you may see movement out of the corner of your eye. Sometimes you will hear others as they begin the Speaking section while you are finishing the Listening section. To control your response to these distractions, focus your eyes on the notes you are taking. Don't follow the noise or movement with your eyes because your mind will also move away from the task. Internal distractions are emotions that cause you to think about something else. If you don't like the speaker's voice, if you can't understand a word, or if you don't know the answer to a question, you cannot allow yourself to get upset and start a worried conversation in your mind. This will cause you to miss more information in the passages. Learn to say "No" when you start to panic. Take a deep breath and focus on the passage or the current question instead of worrying about the last question.

EXAMPLE DISTRACTION

- The speaker's voice is irritating.
- Another student is coughing.
- You don't know the answer to a question.
- You feel afraid that you are not doing well.
- Someone is leaving the room.

EXAMPLE RESPONSE

- Focus on the speaker's words, not the voice.
- Do not look up. Stay focused on the notes.
- Guess and move on to the next question.
- Take a breath. Focus on the notes.
- Do not look at the person. Focus on the notes.

Practice 1

The audio for Practice 1 includes disturbances and distractions so that you can experience a typical amount of external noise while you are listening and taking notes. Take notes and check them using the example notes in the Answer Key on pages 318–319. To simulate the Internet iBT test situation, turn on a radio, TV, or other audio device at a low volume while you are completing some of the Practice activities for the Listening, Speaking, and Writing sections of the Internet iBT and the Internet iBT Practice Test. Be sure to select a program that features speech, not music. Try to ignore the noise and focus on the activities and test.



Track 2

Notes



Basic Strategy: Internet iBT Listening and Institutional ITP Listening

★★**Bonus:** Internet iBT Speaking, Writing

Strategies that help you concentrate on the Listening section will also help you on the parts of the iBT Speaking and Writing sections that include listening passages. You should expect to hear others speaking while you are listening to the questions, preparing your responses, and recording the speaking tasks.

Listening Strategy 2

Ignore the photographs of people in an academic setting

You will see photographs of people in a classroom at the beginning of each lecture and on discussion on the Internet iBT and you will see photographs of people in offices and on campus at the beginning of each conversation on the Internet iBT. Be careful. These photographs do not add information to the listening passages. Don't get distracted. Pay attention to the audio and don't focus on the people's faces, their clothing, the classroom, the office, or the objects in the setting. You will miss hearing the information that you need to answer the questions.

LISTENING LECTURE

EXAMPLE PHOTO



If you allow your mind to focus on the photograph, you will probably begin looking at the teacher, her hair, her clothing, her jewelry, and the expression on her face. Your focus may then stray to the blackboard, and you may try to read the information written on it. Then you may look at the students. You may count how many are in the photograph, whether they are men or women, and you may start to think about the color of their clothing, their hair, their ethnicity, or other aspects of the classroom setting. None of this visual information will be included in the questions about the lecture.

Practice 2

Listen to the lecture and take notes. Do not allow your mind to focus on the photograph of the classroom setting. Compare your notes with the example notes in the Answer Key on pages 319–320.



Track 3

Notes

Basic Strategy: Internet IBT Listening
The Institutional ITP does not include photographs or drawings in the Listening section.