

Essay Writing for Beginners

Independent Writing



Answer Key

Step 1

Getting to Know TOEFL® iBT Independent Writing

TOEFL® iBT Independent Writing Questions

→ Page 25

- (2) Outlining/Planning
- (2)
- (4)
- (3)
- (2)
- (4)
- (3)
- (1)
- (3)
- (3)
- (2)
- (4)
- In my opinion, requiring students to wear school uniforms is the best policy.
- (1)
- (4)
- There are many pet stores.

Review → Page 30

- conclusion
- agree or disagree
- explain or describe
- defend an opinion
- introduction
- body
- attention grabber
- thesis statement
- topic
- Supporting details
- Understanding the question (prompt)
- brainstorming

Step 2

Writing Key Sentences

(Skills - Brainstorming & Outlining)

Art, History, & Culture (Defend an Opinion)

Writing Question (Prompt) 1 → Page 33

A. (1)

C. **Outline**

Thesis Statement: can teach me more.

Topic Sentence 1: experience is easier to understand.

Topic Sentence 2: rarely forgotten

Conclusion: knowledge gained from experience is more important

D. "Knowledge is the key to success." We can get knowledge from our experiences and books. The knowledge gained from each source is important in different ways. However, I think life experiences can teach me more than anything I can learn from books.

First, the knowledge I gain from experience is easier to understand than the knowledge I gain from reading information in a book. It is more difficult to understand if I just read words and look at pictures in a book. For example, I can read about a science experiment, but I may not understand it. However, if I perform the experiment with my own hands, I can see exactly how it works. When I see or do something with my own eyes and hands, I am more likely to grasp

the idea or task. If I make a mistake in the experiment, I can learn how to correct it the next time. Experiences help me understand my failures and accomplishments.

Secondly, most life experiences are rarely forgotten. For example, I studied about Thailand in school. It was interesting, but after the test, I forgot everything that I learned from the book. Then, my family took a vacation to Thailand. I got to see how different everything was from my country. It was very interesting to see the people and listen to them speak their language. I learned a lot about their culture like what they wear, what they eat, and how they live. It was an experience I will never forget.

I can stay at home and read about the world, or I can go out and experience it. Both experience and books are important sources of knowledge. However, I think knowledge gained from experience is more important than knowledge gained from books because personal experiences can be easier to understand, more memorable, and life changing.

Skill Build-up → Page 36

Exercise 1 - Idea Web

Understanding the Questions & Brainstorming

- (1) Playing games
- (2) important part of life
- (3) sportsmanship
- (4) hide emotions

Writing Question (Prompt) 2 → Page 38

A. (3)

C. **Outline**

Thesis Statement: the greatest President of the United States.

Topic Sentence 1: his leadership and bravery.

Topic Sentence 2:

Reasons and examples: only President ever to receive the honor of being unanimously elected.

Conclusion: would learn how to impact others' lives like he did.

D. Someone once said that George Washington was the "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." He was a great leader who was admired by many. If I could travel back in time to meet a famous person from history, I would like to meet George Washington, the greatest President of the United States.

To begin with, I would want to meet George Washington because I admire his leadership and bravery. He was elected as the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army in 1775 by the Second Continental Congress. Although his troops lost many battles, he eventually led the Continental Army to victory over the British. George Washington also worked hard to create peace with the British after the war. By doing so, the United States avoided another war with Britain and enjoyed ten years of prosperous trade with the British. George

Washington showed bravery, courage, and patriotism in times of war and peace.

Furthermore, I admire George Washington because he was “first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

People loved him so much that he was unanimously elected as the first President of the United States.

He is still the only President ever to receive that honor. You can see the impact he had on his country everywhere you look. His face is carved into the side of Mount Rushmore. The U.S. one dollar bill and the quarter-dollar coin have his face printed on one side. The capital city of the United States is named after him. In addition, the state of Washington, the Washington Monument, and George Washington University all bear his name.

Meeting George Washington would be a dream come true. It would be an honor to meet the man who was the first leader of one of the greatest and most powerful nations in the world. If I met George Washington, I hope that I would learn how to impact others’ lives like he did.

Skill Build-up → Page 41

Exercise 2 - Idea Web

- (1) ways of escaping stress
(2) reading (3) traveling
- (1) can be beneficial (2) encourages unity
(3) save energy for education

Lifestyle and Education (Agree or Disagree)

Writing Question (Prompt) 3 → Page 43

- (2)

C. Outline

Thesis Statement: Games are an important part of our life

Topic Sentence 1: can teach me about sportsmanship.

Topic Sentence 2: hide my disappointment and anger

Conclusion: Many important lessons can be learned while having fun

- D. It has been said that, “all work and no play makes for a very boring day.” I agree with that statement. I believe people of all ages should have fun by playing games. Games are an important part of life and a great way to teach life lessons.

First, playing games can teach me about sportsmanship. Sportsmanship is showing a good attitude during a game, whether a person wins or loses. Losing a game can teach me how to deal with failure. Instead of crying, I can learn to be happy for others when they succeed. Playing games can also teach me to be a good winner by encouraging other people when they are sad or frustrated. For example, at the end of sports games, I shake hands with the players from the other team. I tell them that they played well as a sign of good sportsmanship.

Secondly, games can prepare me for when I have need to hide my disappointment and anger, or when I need to make quick decisions. There are some card games that require me to hide my emotions so other players can’t guess what cards I have. They help me develop a “poker-face,” which means that I don’t show any emotions on my face. There are also some fast-paced games that require me to make quick decisions. Sometimes in life, I have to be able to think quickly, or I might miss an opportunity. For example, teachers often ask difficult questions when I enter a college or an university. If I take too long to answer one of their questions, they might not accept me.

There are many benefits to playing games. Sportsmanship and hiding my emotions are just two of the things I can learn from playing games. Many important lessons can be learned while having fun, and playing games is a fun way for me to learn about life, no matter how old I am.

Skill Build-up → Page 43 - Page 47

Exercise 1 - Outlining/Planning

- Playing games is an important part of life.
- teaches me about sportsmanship
- prepares me for when I have to hide my disappointment
- I can learn important lessons from games

Writing Question (Prompt) 4 → Page 49

- A. (2)

C. Outline

Thesis Statement: spend most of their time playing.

Topic Sentence 1: help children use their imaginations.

Topic Sentence 2: good for children’s health,

Conclusion: will help children develop their creativity

- D. It is important for children to get a good education. However, it is also important for them to play and have fun. I believe that it is more important for young children to spend most of their time playing rather than studying.

First of all, playing can help children use their imaginations. When children play, they can be creative and invent their own games. They can build things with blocks, draw pictures, and make forts. When children study, they focus more on memorizing information rather than being creative. Most children that study a lot are not as creative as children who spend their time playing. It is easy for studious children to give answers that they have memorized, but it is difficult for them to think on their own.

Furthermore, playing is good for children’s health, but studying too much can damage it. Studying can hurt children’s eyesight because they spend too much time staring at computer screens and reading books. However, when children play, their eyes are

not focused on one thing for a long time. They are active and get a lot of exercise. When children study, they sit a lot and don't get enough exercise. It is important for children to learn to be active when they are young. Then they can continue this behavior into adulthood.

Childhood is a time for children to enjoy being kids. They should be able to play and have fun while they can. When they grow up, they will have more responsibilities and less time for playing. Playing while young will help children develop their creativity and imaginations in addition to keeping them active and healthy.

Skill Build-up → Page 52

Exercise 2 - Outlining/Planning

- (1) two favorite activities that help me relieve stress.
- (2) reading books with happy endings makes me forget my stress.
- (3) traveling makes me appreciate my present life
- (4) can choose activities that help to reduce stress

Careers (Explain)

Writing Question (Prompt) 5 → Page 54

A. (3)

C. Outline

Thesis Statement: most responsible for success.

Topic Sentence 1: it takes to accomplish their goals.

Topic Sentence 2: have enthusiasm and commitment.

Conclusion: when people are ambitious

D. Everyone wants to be successful, but what characteristic makes us successful? There are many characteristics, like hard work and motivation, which help us reach our goals and dreams. However, I think ambition is the characteristic that is the most responsible for success.

To begin with, people with ambition will do whatever it takes to accomplish their goals. Sometimes that means they have to make sacrifices in their personal lives. For example, they will work late every night in order to complete projects or meet deadlines. They may even do extra work on the weekends. Each sacrifice that these ambitious people make is something they do in order to help them succeed.

Next, ambitious people have enthusiasm and commitment. Ambitious people usually do not settle for jobs that they do not love. They go after their dream jobs and work hard to achieve them and keep them. Thus, they have enthusiasm for their jobs because they love them and they want to succeed. Also, people with ambition do not give up. They are committed to their jobs and goals and will go the extra mile because of this commitment. They always try their

best and strive to improve. However, people that do not have ambition will quit when their jobs become too difficult. They are not serious about being successful, so they don't care if they do good work or not.

There are many characteristics that help make people successful, but I believe that ambition is the most important. When people are ambitious they are enthusiastic and committed to their jobs, and they will do whatever it takes to succeed. Therefore, I think ambition is the most important key to success.

Skill Build-up → Page 57

Exercise 3 - Outlining/Planning

- (1) wearing school uniforms can be beneficial
- (2) uniforms encourage a feeling of unity
- (3) save their energy for their education
- (4) a sense of belonging and school pride
- (5) more time concentrating on their education

Step 3

Writing Paragraphs

(Skill: Writing the Drafts)

Art, History, & Culture (Defend an Opinion)

Skill Build-up → Page 62

Exercise 1 - Introduction

1. Question (Prompt) — (1)
2. Question (Prompt) — (2)

Writing Question (Prompt) 1

Sample Responses → Page 68 - Page 71

Exercise (Score 5)

- (1) It effectively addresses the topic and task.
- (2) It is well organized and well developed, using clearly appropriate details.
- (3) It displays unity, progression, and coherence.

Exercise (Score 4)

- (1) The points in the first body paragraph could be more elaborated.
- (2) The vocabulary could contain more variety.
- (3) The connection between ideas could be clearer and not so redundant.

Exercise (Score 3)

- (1) The details should be more developed.
- (2) The word choices should be more appropriate in order to make the ideas clearer and easier to understand.
- (3) The range of vocabulary should be expanded.

Exercise (Score 2)

- (1) The ideas should be more organized and connected better.
- (2) The choice of words and word forms should be more appropriate in order to better understand the meaning.

- (3) The errors in sentence structure and usage should be corrected.

Skill Build-up → Page 73

Exercise 2 - Introduction

- A.** 1. Question (Prompt) — (3)
 2. Question (Prompt) — (1)
- B.** 1. In my opinion, young people are driven by a desire to be accepted by their peers, and are therefore, more influenced by their friends than by their family.
 2. Although having several short vacations would help break up the monotonous schedule of school, I believe that having one long vacation each year is actually the best idea.

Writing Question (Prompt) 2

Sample Responses → Page 79 - Page 82

Exercise (Score 5)

- (1) It effectively addresses the topic and task.
 (2) It is well organized and well developed, using clearly appropriate details.
 (3) It displays unity, progression, and coherence.

Exercise (Score 4)

- (1) The ideas in the first body paragraph should be more elaborate.
 (2) The redundancy of vocabulary and the connection of ideas should be changed to include more variety and coherence.
 (3) It should include a few more details.

Exercise (Score 3)

- (1) It should have a wider range of vocabulary and syntactic structures.
 (2) The details should be better connected so that they flow together more smoothly.
 (3) The explanation of ideas should be more developed in order to better address the topic.

Exercise (Score 2)

- (1) The errors in sentence structure and usage should be corrected.
 (2) The choice of words and word forms should be more appropriate in order to make the essay clearer and easier to understand.
 (3) The ideas need to be more developed and better connected

 **Lifestyle and Education (Agree or Disagree)**

Skill Build-up → Page 84

Exercise 1 - Body

1. Question (Prompt)
 (1) SE (2) TS (3) TO
2. Question (Prompt)
 (1) TO (2) TS (3) SE
3. Question (Prompt)
 (1) TS (2) SE (3) TO

Writing Question (Prompt) 3

Sample Responses → Page 90 - Page 93

Exercise (Score 5)

- (1) It effectively addresses the topic and task.
 (2) It is well organized and well developed, using clearly appropriate details.
 (3) It displays unity, progression, and coherence.

Exercise (Score 4)

- (1) The explanations and details should be more developed and not so redundant.
 (2) There should be clearer connections of ideas so that the essay flows more smoothly.
 (3) Some points need to be more elaborate in order to address the topic better.

Exercise (Score 3)

- (1) The range of vocabulary should be broadened.
 (2) The choice of words should be corrected in order to make the meaning less obscure and easier to understand.
 (3) The ideas need to be better connected

Exercise (Score 2)

- (1) The ideas should be explained better so that the sentences are not so redundant.
 (2) The choice of words and word forms should be more appropriate so the ideas presented are clearer.
 (3) The errors in sentence structure and usage should be corrected.

Skill Build-up → Page 95

Exercise 1 - Conclusion

- Topic:** Eating in or eating out? (2)
Topic: Parents are the best teachers (4)
Topic: There is nothing that young people can teach older people (1)

Writing Question (Prompt) 4

Sample Responses → Page 101 - Page 104

Exercise (Score 5)

- (1) It effectively addresses the topic and task.
 (2) It displays unity, progression, and coherence.
 (3) It is well organized and well developed, using appropriate explanations and details.

Exercise (Score 4)

- (1) The ideas should be explained in more depth.
 (2) There should be more examples instead of repeating the same ideas.
 (3) The ideas need to be connected better to make the essay flow more smoothly.

Exercise (Score 3)

- (1) There should be more examples instead of repeating the same ideas.
 (2) The range of vocabulary should be expanded.
 (3) The choice of words should be more appropriate in order to make the meaning less obscure and easier to understand.

Exercise (Score 2)

- (1) The choice of words and word forms should be corrected to make the meaning less obscure and easier to understand.
- (2) The errors in sentence structure and usage should be corrected.
- (3) The ideas should be more developed so that they address the topic and task better and are not so redundant.

 **Careers (Explain)**

Skill Build-up → Page 106**Exercise 2 - Conclusion**

Topic 1: (2)

Topic 2: (1)

Writing Question (Prompt) 5**Sample Responses** → Page 112 - Page 115**Exercise (Score 5)**

- (1) It is well organized and well developed, using appropriate examples.
- (2) It displays unity, progression, and coherence.
- (3) It displays consistent facility in the use of language.

Exercise (Score 4)

- (1) Some points could be more developed.
- (2) There should be more examples instead of repeating the same ideas.
- (3) The ideas could be connected better.

Exercise (Score 3)

- (1) The choice of words should be changed to improve the clarity of the response.
- (2) The ideas should be more developed and better connected.
- (3) The range of vocabulary should be broadened.

Exercise (Score 2)

- (1) The errors in sentence structure and usage should be corrected.
- (2) The inappropriate choice of words and word forms should be corrected.
- (3) The ideas need to be more developed and better connected rather than repeating the same ideas.