

TOEFL Listening

TOEFL® Listening: Lecture 1

In this section, you will hear academic lectures. In the exam you will hear each lecture once before you look at the questions. In this practice test you can control the audio yourself. You can also see the script of the conversation.

Listen to the lecture about the poet Sylvia Plath. Take notes while you listen. Then answer the questions.

Read all the questions before you start listening. You should listen to the audio twice.

1. *The Bell Jar* was

A- about her father

B- her first novel

C- a very successful collection of poems

D- her last poem

2. *Sylvia Plath's 'Collected poems'*

A- won the Pulitzer Prize twenty years after it was published

B- were written during the last year of her life

C- won the Pulitzer Prize in 1982

D- were never published

3. *Sylvia Plath's 'Collected poems'*

A- made movies

B- died in 2003

C- was also a poet

D- had a movie made about him

4. *Susan Bassnett thought Sylvia's work*

A- was about her husband

B- wasn't very good

C- was about work life

D- was of great interest to women

5. *Sylvia's brother*

A- was two years older than her

B- was born two years after her

C- was a professor at Boston University

D- was a highly educated academic

6. *Sylvia Plath's time at college was difficult because*

- A- she got bad grades
- B- she won a scholarship
- C- boys didn't like her
- D- she was short of money

7. *In 1953 Sylvia*

- A- left New York to get a job as an editor
- B- rejected an offer to teach creative writing
- C- worked as a guest editor in New York
- D- returned to new York because she was depressed

8. *What does the lecturer imply when she says "Very few modern poets have captured the popular imagination as much as Plath"*

- A- Plath was able to understand the hopes of ordinary people.
- B- Plath has become very popular
- C- It is unusual for a modern poet to become popular with ordinary people.
- D- Plath's writing was about modern people and their imagination.

9. *What does the lecturer imply when she says "This domineering father figure became a common theme that recurred throughout Plath's writing."*

- A- The image of her father appears in many of her poems.
- B- Plath often wrote of her love for her father.
- C- Plath writings were dominated by the image of her father.
- D- Plath's father often told her what to write about.

10. *Which **THREE** sentences best summarise the passage?*

- A- What's remarkable about Plath's work is that it addresses many women's issues that were ahead of her time.
- B- Plath's father was one of her guiding influences and he supported and mentored her until he died in 1940.
- C- Plath's early life was spent living happily by the sea with her mother who had a part time job to support the family.
- D- The real significance and the greatness of work was never recognised within in her lifetime.
- E- Plath's academic path to success was secured by winning an early scholarship. After this she never looked back.
- F- Plath's work reflects the many of the personal difficulties that she had whilst growing up and later as a wife and mother.

Audio Script

Today we're gonna look at the life and some of the works of one of America's finest modern female poets, Sylvia Plath.

At the time of her death in 1963 Sylvia Plath was on the verge of the critical success and recognition that she had sought for most of her life. Her first novel '*The Bell Jar*' had just been published and the publication of her collection of poems '*Ariel*' had just been agreed.

These poems, which were mostly written during the last year of her life, chronicle the traumatic developments taking place in her personal life and were to make for her a reputation as a first rate poet. But it wasn't until 1982, almost twenty years after her death, that her posthumously published '*Collected poems*' won the Pulitzer Prize for literature. Since this time the fascination and intrigue with her work has continued to grow. Very few modern poets have captured the popular imagination as much as Plath, even to the extent that in 2003 a movie was made about her life and her intense relationship with husband and fellow poet Ted Hughes.

To understand the continued growth in interest in her work, we have to look at the issues which her life and work address. As Susan Bassnett writes in her book on women writers.

'Dying as she did in 1963, Sylvia Plath never knew that so soon afterwards the problems of what and how women write was to become such a crucial matter and was to be debated by so many other women'

So, Sylvia Plath was a woman writing about women's issues before they were recognised as being of any importance.

Sylvia Plath was born at Robinson memorial Hospital in Boston on 27th October 1932. She was the first born child of Otto and Aurelia Plath, both highly educated academic people. Her father Otto was a professor of biology at Boston University, but her mother had been subjugated into a domestic role as housewife despite her level of education. Her father was not too pleased with the birth of his daughter and demanded that his wife have a son within the next two years. Amazingly enough his wife obliged by giving birth to a son almost exactly two years later.

This domineering father figure became a common theme that recurred throughout Plath's writing. With the birth of her brother, Sylvia had to work much harder to win her father's attention and approval. When in 1936 Plath's father became ill, access to him became even more restricted, and Plath's main means of getting attention from her father was by achieving academic success. This meant that from an early age she began to equate love with success.

In 1940 Plath's father died and this left the family in a very difficult financial situation. They were forced to move away from the seaside home that Plath had enjoyed so much and into a suburb of Boston and her mother had to take a part time job to support the family.

In 1950 Plath graduated from Bradford High school and won a scholarship to Smith College. In the same year she published a short story entitled '*And summer will not come again*' and a poem called '*Bitter strawberries*'.

Plath's time at Smith was difficult as she had very high expectations of herself. She wanted to achieve immaculate grades, but she also wanted to be accepted by her peers and an important part of being accepted was being popular and dating lots of boys. This was difficult because as a scholarship girl she had only a very small allowance to spend on clothes and going out, and each year's continued scholarship was dependent on the level of her grades.

In 1953 Plath won a fiction contest sponsored by Madamouse magazine and was offered the opportunity to go to New York as a guest editor. She relished this opportunity to spend a month working in a professional publishing environment, but Plath returned from New York feeling exhausted and after hearing news that her application to a creative writing course had been rejected, she fell into what was to become one of many depressions.

Answer

1- B 2- C 3- C 4- D 5- B 6- D 7- C 8- C 9- A 10- A-D-F

TOEFL Listening

TOEFL® Listening: Lecture 2

In this section, you will hear academic lectures. In the exam you will hear each lecture once before you look at the questions. In this practice test you can control the audio yourself. You can also see the script of the conversation.

Listen to the lecture about population growth. For questions 1-6, choose the best answer.

1. Which of the following is defined as the number of children born per 1000 people per year?

A- Replacement Level

B- Fertility Rate

C- Birth Rate

D- Fertility Level

2. Which of the following countries in the UK has the highest fertility rate?

A- England

B- Scotland

C- Wales

D- Northern Ireland

3. Why is fertility rate in the UK higher than it was twenty years ago?

A- Couples are choosing to have larger families.

B- A higher proportion of women are having children.

C- Women who delayed childbirth are having children now.

D- Fewer women are interested in their careers.

4. What proportion of women in their mid-forties do not have children nowadays?




A- 10%

B- 4%

C- 25%

D- 40%

5. What do French couples who have eight children receive?

A- 	B- 
C- 	D- 

6. Which of the reasons for low fertility rates is NOT mentioned?

- A- Women are increasingly focused on their jobs
- B- People want to enjoy their lives before taking on responsibility.
- C- Parents do not have time to have many children.
- D- Children are considered to cost a lot of money.

Audio Script

Professor: Good morning everyone, now in today's lesson I'd like to talk about Population Growth, and in particular, fertility rate. Now, can anyone here define fertility rate?

Charlene: Er, is it the number of births in a population, measured per thousand people per year?

Professor: Oh, er no, that's what we call the birth rate. The number of children born in a year, per thousand people. No, the fertility rate is the average number of children born per woman in her lifetime, that is, if she lives beyond her child-bearing years. Now, do you think the British fertility level is higher or lower than it was ... say twenty years ago?

Charlene: I think it's lower, because these days women are far more focused on their careers than they used to be.

Professor: Well, that point is certainly true, but actually, fertility levels in Britain are relatively high at the moment. In 2008, it was 1.96; that means that on average, each woman gives birth to 1.96 children, and in 2009 it was only slightly lower, at 1.94. The last time fertility rates were this high was back in 1973. In the UK currently, the highest rate of fertility is in Northern Ireland, where the rate is 2.04, and the lowest is in Scotland, where the rate is just 1.77.

Charlene: I don't understand. How come fertility rate is going up? Women are just as career-driven these days as they were thirty years ago.

Professor: Well, the reason is that during the 1990s women really started to delay having families, and that was the reason for the decrease in birth rate then. Now those women are in their thirties and early forties, and they are starting to have families. So that's why the birth rate is going up.

Charlene: Oh, I see, so it's not actually as if people are actively choosing to have more children than they used to.

Professor: Yes, that's right Charlene. The number of children per family is continuing to fall. Women who are currently in their 70s had an average of 2.4 children. Those in their sixties had 2.2, those in their fifties had 2.0, and the current figure is 1.9. Actually, this figure isn't due to more families choosing to have only one child, although that certainly is occurring, it's mainly because of the increasing number of women who have no children at all. This figure was 1 in 10 among the age group who are now 65, but now 1 in 4 women in their mid-40s are childless.

Charlene: I heard that the fertility rate in Europe is, like, really low. 1.3 or something.

Professor: That's right, Charlene. It is. It's far below the replacement level. Can you tell me what replacement level means? No? It's the number of births you need to keep the population constant.

Charlene: Yes, I heard that in France they're trying to get people to have more children. They even give out gold medals if you have eight!

Professor: That's right. So, we've already mentioned that women are waiting before having children because of their careers. Why else is fertility rate generally decreasing?

Charlene: I think they have fewer children because they're so expensive. I mean, I heard one report that said it costs £200, 000 a year to raise a child here. But I find that difficult to believe. People's standard of living is far higher now than it used to be a hundred years ago when families had eight or nine kids.

Professor: That's very true, but these days people's expectations tend to be higher. Parents want their children to have the best opportunities in life, so they're prepared to pay to develop their children's talents.

Charlene: Yes, I heard that in China, where they're easing off some of the rules of the one child policy and allowing some couples to have two, many parents are still choosing to have one. They say it's just too expensive. But, you know, I reckon that, with all this parental micromanagement that's going on these days, parents only have the *time* to manage one or two children.

Professor: That's a good point. So, now I'd like to look at some different organisations, and examine what they believe about the current population issues...

Answer

1-C 2- D 3- C 4- C 5- B 6- B

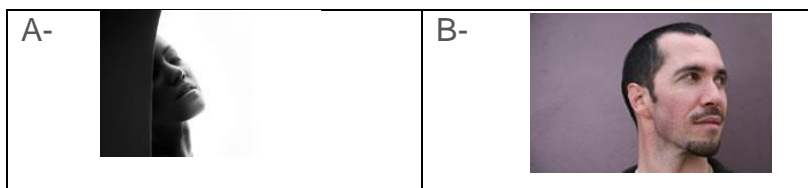
TOEFL Listening

TOEFL® Listening: Lecture 3

In this section, you will hear academic lectures. In the exam you will hear each lecture once before you look at the questions. In this practice test you can control the audio yourself. You can also see the script of the conversation.

Listen to the lecture about facial recognition. Then answer the questions.

1. Where does the TV show 'Las Vegas' take place?
A- In a shopping mall
B- In a police department
C- In a casino
D- In a crime lab
2. What is a faceprint?
A- a code which identifies a face
B- distinctive curves in the face
C- In a casino
D- the number of nodal points on the face
3. Identify TWO problems with 2D facial recognition from the list below.
A- It is not effective if a picture is dark.
B- The person in the photograph must face the camera.
C- Facial curves change over time.
D- Nodal points cannot be measured
4. What is the problem with the 3D technology?
A- It can only be used when the individual is directly facing the camera
B- The image might change over time
C- It's impossible to match a 3D image to a 2D image
D- It cannot distinguish between identical twins
5. Which TWO elements below can be measured by Skin Biometric technology?
A- the curve of someone's chin
B- the texture someone's skin
C- the existence of lines on the face
D- the distance between the eyes
6. Which of these faces will the Skin Biometric System be UNABLE to identify?





Audio Script

Lecturer: Hello class, so today we're going to be looking at facial recognition, and to the different sorts of technology that go into facial recognition. Now before we start, can any of you tell me where we can see facial recognition in action? yes, you at the back?

Student: In the TV show Las Vegas?

Lecturer: Yes, well you're right. In this popular TV show, the security team pull images of the individuals from their surveillance system and run the image through a data base to identify the person. In that way, all the card counters and blacklisted gamblers can be escorted from the poker tables. It looks easy on TV, but in the real world, facial recognition is a tricky business. So let's start with the more traditional methods of facial recognition. Every face has peaks and valleys, and these can be translated into what is termed as nodal points. Each face has about 80 of these, and they include distance between the eyes, the length of the jaw, the width of the nose, things like that. These measurements can be used to create a numerical code, and this is called a faceprint. This system is good, because it can compare two dimensional images, such as photographs. The problem is that the images have to be controlled. The person has to be staring straight at the camera, there must be no variance in facial expression or lighting, because any variance in these parameters reduces the effectiveness of the system. So they had to come up with another way.

So the new way of recognising faces is by using a 3D model. It has better accuracy, allegedly. 3D imagery detects distinctive features in the face, such as the curves of the eyes, nose and chin – features which do not change over time. These are measured at the sub-millimetre level. Interestingly, a 3D image can be taken not only from a live scan but also from a 2D photograph. And another good thing about the 3D system is that it can recognise a person from a range of angles, the person doesn't have to be directly facing the camera, as in 2D technology. Once again, the system gives each individual a unique code – a set of numbers that represents the face.

It's easy to match a 3D image to another 3D image, if you already have a 3D image in your database. It's less easy to match 3D images to 2D images. But what they can do is pull certain measurements from the 3D image, such as size of the eye and so forth, and use this to convert the 3D image into a 2D image, and this image can be more easily compared to the 2D images in the database.

But it's not just the measurements which can be used to recognise faces. There's also a new development called Skin Biometrics. This uses the uniqueness of skin texture to get its results. The process takes a picture of a patch of skin, and the system will then identify any pores, lines, moles, blemishes and other features of skin texture. This method can be used to identify identical twins, something that cannot be done with the 3D technology. Its other advantages over 3D imagery are that it's insensitive to changes in expression, blinking, smiling and so forth, and can compensate for changes in facial features – such as the growth of a beard, or wearing glasses. It's not perfect, though, as it is sensitive to lighting conditions and poor camera resolution, and if there is glare from the sun.

So, now we've covered the main types of facial recognition, we'll move on to its uses. Now, has anybody here ...

Answer

1-C 2- A 3- A-B 4- D 5- B-C 6- A

TOEFL Listening

TOEFL® Listening: Lecture 4

In this section, you will hear academic lectures. In the exam you will hear each lecture once before you look at the questions. In this practice test you can control the audio yourself. You can also see the script of the conversation.

Listen to a lecture about tunnels. Then answer the questions.

1. What is a borehole?

- A- A kind of tunnel
- B- A smaller version of the final tunnel
- C- A shaft drilled into the ground
- D- A tunnel construction method

2. Match the type of tunnel to its use.

1- Cut and Cover

- A- Tunnels close to the surface
- B- Underwater tunnels
- C- Tunnels under towns

2- Immersed Tube

- A- Tunnels close to the surface
- B- Underwater tunnels
- C- Tunnels under towns

3- Bored tunnel

- A- Tunnels close to the surface
- B- Underwater tunnels
- C- Tunnels under towns

3. What tunnelling system was used to create the tunnels in the London underground system?

- A- Cut and Cover
- B- Boring
- C- Top Down
- D- Immersed Tube

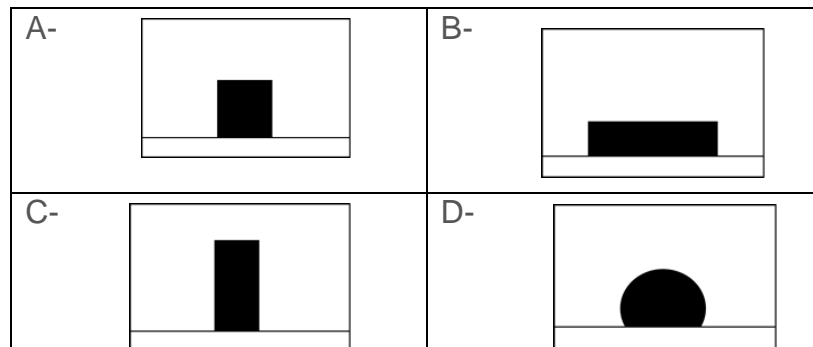
4. What will the choice of boring machine depend on?

- A- The number of buildings and roads in the area
- B- The depth and length of the tunnel
- C- The rock type and ground water content
- D- The time available to complete the project

5. What is the purpose of ground freezing?

- A- It increases the stand-up time

- B- It allows tunnels to be built in hard rock
 - C- It allows water to be pumped out of the ground
 - D- It softens the rock
6. Which of these tunnel shapes is MOST difficult to support?



Audio Script

Professor: Morning everyone. Now, in today's talk, I'm going to talk about tunnels, and I'm going to talk about the main ways in which tunnels are constructed.

Now, I'm sure you know what a tunnel is, but I'll give you a definition anyway. It's an underground passageway, and it's completely enclosed, except for exits, usually one at each end.

Before you can start building any tunnel, it's necessary to perform a comprehensive geotechnical investigation of ground conditions. This is done by taking samples from boreholes; that means drilling a narrow shaft into the ground and analysing the rock. After this has been done, engineers can choose the most appropriate method for excavating the tunnel and supporting the ground. If these samples don't reveal enough information – maybe it's difficult to detect the exact location of faults for example, then a pilot tunnel will be drilled. Pilot tunnels have a smaller diameter than the main tunnel, and so it will be easier to support, should any problems arise. This smaller tunnel can be incorporated into the final tunnel later on. Another alternative is to drill horizontal boreholes ahead of the advancing tunnel face. Now, are there any questions before I go on to construction methods? No? Good.

So, the type of construction you choose will depend on a wide range of things: the type of rock, the ground water conditions, how long and how wide your tunnel is going to be, how far underground it is and the final use of the tunnel. There are three main types of tunnel. The cut and cover technique; this is when a trench is dug up and then covered over; the bored tunnel, which is constructed without removing the ground above it, and the immersed tube tunnel, which is used underwater.

Let's look at these in more detail, starting with the cut and cover method. As I said, this is done by digging a trench and roofing it with an overhead support system strong enough to carry whatever is to be built over the tunnel. There are two types of cut and cover method. In the bottom-up method, a trench is built, with ground support as necessary, and the tunnel is constructed in the trench, using concrete or arches, or even brickwork. Then the trench is filled in again. But there's another method – the top-down method, in which the roof beams and the side walls are put into place before any of the ground is dug out. Only when the roof and the walls are in place does excavation take place. The advantage of this system is that it allows minimal disturbance to surface features such as roads and buildings. The cut and cover tunnel type is obviously better for tunnels which are quite shallow. London underground stations are good examples. Not the tunnels themselves, but the area where the ticket halls are located. The underground tunnels were created using the boring method.

Bored tunnels are preferable in most cases, because they eliminate the need to buy up the land on the surface. As a result, it's quicker, and there is no need for long planning enquiries. Bored tunnels are created using boring tunnels, and there are a variety of these available which can operate in different conditions, from hard rock to soft ground with a high water content. Another important thing that the engineer needs to know is the stand-up time. This denotes how long the tunnel will stay up by itself

before support is needed. Obviously hard rock and certain clays will have a longer stand-up time than sand and fine soils. It's also important to know the groundwater levels, because, if there is any water leaking into the tunnel, the stand-up time will be reduced. Groundwater levels, however can be reduced by ground freezing. Pipes are inserted into the ground surrounding the tunnel and cooled. This surrounds the tunnel in frozen soil which keeps water out. Another way to reduce groundwater levels is to pump the water out. Tunnel shape also affects the stand-up time. If a tunnel is wider than it is high, it is more difficult to support, whereas if a tunnel is higher than it is wide, the project is easier. Furthermore, rectangular or square tunnels are more difficult to support than circular ones.

Now let's go on to the immersed tunnel....

Answer

1-C 2-1- A 2-2- B 2-3- C 3- B 4- C 5- A 6- B

TOEFL Listening TOEFL® Listening: Conversation 1

In this section, you will hear academic lectures. In the exam you will hear each lecture once before you look at the questions. In this practice test you can control the audio yourself. You can also see the script of the conversation.

Listen to a student at the accommodation office. Then answer the questions.

1. When is this conversation taking place?

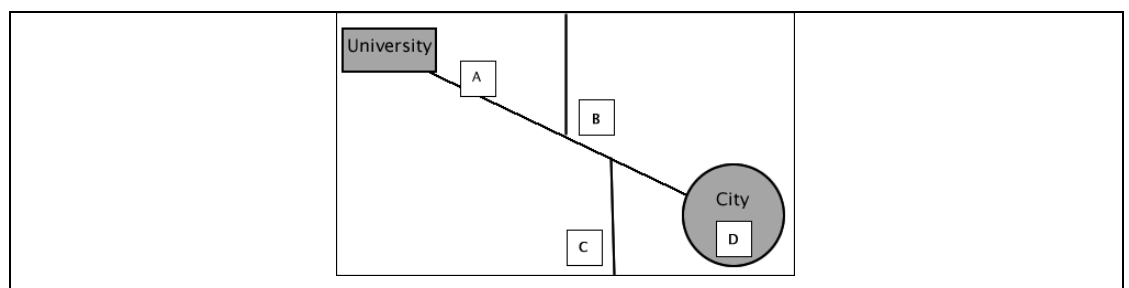
- A) July
- B) before term starts
- C) at the beginning of term
- D) midway through a term

2. Whose mistake was it that led to the problem?

- A) The student's
- B) The warden's
- C) Godfrey White's
- D) The accommodation office

3. Where is the YMCA on the map?

- A
- B
- C
- D



4. Which of the following **TWO** things does the accommodation officer provide for the student?

- A) a telephone
- B) a map
- C) information about bus routes
- D) a pen

5. Match the information to the type of accommodation.

- A) University Dormitories (1-You can buy meals cheaply 2- Meals are not included in the price 3- Meals are include in the rent)
- B) Private Houses (1-You can buy meals cheaply 2- Meals are not included in the price 3- Meals are include in the rent)
- C) YMCA (1-You can buy meals cheaply 2- Meals are not included in the price 3- Meals are include in the rent)

Audio Script

Student: Hello, er... is this the accommodation office?

Officer: Yes, how can I help you?

Student: Well, I've got a bit of a problem. I'm staying in the Godfrey White Dorm, and on Monday, the warden came and told me that I have to move out this Thursday.

Officer: Really? How long have you been staying in the Godfrey White Dorm?

Student: For the last ten weeks.

Officer: Oh, have you been doing one of the summer courses here then?

Student: Yes, I've been doing the Academic Language course since the beginning of July.

Officer: And didn't you realise that your accommodation was temporary?

Student: No, I thought I would be able to stay there for the whole year. I didn't read the small print on the document. The warden went through it with me, and now I see my mistake.

Officer: Oh dear. So, you're looking for somewhere to stay then.

Student: Yes.

Officer: Well, I'm afraid all the places in the dorms are full. I mean, there may be some students who don't show up when term starts, but we won't know that for the next couple of weeks. The best thing you can do is look for a private house. You'll have to share with three or four other students. Meals aren't included in the price of course, as they are in the university dorms, and you'll have to contribute to the electricity bills.

Student: Where can I find out about these houses?

Officer: I've got a list here, but it's not up to date. Rooms are taken up every day, so it's hard to know whether a house has a free place or not. I can give you a photocopy of this list and you can ring round.

Student: Can I use the phone here?

Officer: I'm afraid not! If we let everyone who asked do that, there'd be someone here all day!

Student: Do you have a map? It'd be useful to know where these places are.

Officer: Yes, I can give you a map. This one's got the bus routes on it too, so you can find out how easy it is to get from the house to the university.

Student: Great. And what if I can't find a place before Thursday?

Officer: Well, the YMCA offers cheap beds. It's located halfway between here and the city centre. You can get a bed in a shared room there, and you can also buy cheap meals. But you should phone up and book a bed in advance. It's very busy this time of year. I'll give you the number. Do you need a pen?

Student: No, don't worry, I've got one.

Officer: So, the number's 482 5903.

Student: 482 5903.

Officer: That's right. Anything else I can help you with?

Student: No, that's everything thanks. Bye.

Answer

1-B 2- A 3- B 4- B-C **5-A- 3 5-B- 2 5-C- 1**