



International Test of English Proficiency

iTEP SLATE Orientation Guide



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Welcome to iTEP

The International Test of English Proficiency was developed by Boston Educational Services to measure how well you communicate in English. We designed it to be an efficient test that accurately represents your English skill level. We hope you enjoy taking the test and that the results are useful to you.

I. Overview: iTEP SLATE

iTEP SLATE (Secondary Level Assessment Test of English) is for early high school students and young learners' admission and placement in international programs. The test is specifically designed for middle and secondary school students, whereas our iTEP Academic is used by colleges and universities, and iTEP Business is used by companies and organizations.

There are two versions of the iTEP SLATE. The iTEP SLATE-Core takes 50 minutes to complete. It tests reading, listening, and grammar skills through multiple-choice questions. The iTEP SLATE-Plus exam takes 80 minutes to complete and tests reading, listening, grammar, writing, and speaking skills through multiple-choice questions and writing and speaking samples. Both exams allow 10 minutes for the iTEP administrator to provide pre-test instructions. Each section is presented in the order below.

SECTION	PART	FORMAT	NUMBER & TYPE OF QUESTIONS	TIME
Reading	Part 1	50 word passage	2 multiple-choice	20 minutes
	Part 2	200 word passage	4 multiple-choice	
	Part 3	500 word passage	6 multiple-choice	
Listening	Part 1	4 short conversations	4 multiple-choice	20 minutes
	Part 2	One 2-3 minute conversation	4 multiple-choice	
	Part 3	One 4 minute lecture	6 multiple-choice	
Grammar	Part 1	Complete the sentences	13 questions	10 minutes
	Part 2	Identify <u>incorrect</u> phrase or word	12 questions	
Writing	Part 1	Listen and respond to instructions	Write a response of 50-75 words	25 minutes
	Part 2	Listen to a topic and respond	Write 175-225 words to express and support an opinion on the topic	
Speaking	Part 1	Listen to and read a short question	Prepare and speak	5 minutes
	Part 2	Listen to two (2) sides of a topic	Prepare and speak an opinion	

Overview (continued)

A. What to Expect on Exam Day

Before the Exam:

- The night before the exam, relax and get a good night's sleep.
- Please arrive a few minutes before the scheduled exam time set by the test center.
- Bring your government-issued picture ID. You must present the same ID to the administrator that you provided on the registration form.
- Inform the test center if you are applying to a specific school(s).
- Reference materials, tools, dictionaries, mobile phones, audio recording devices, PDAs, notebooks, and other personal items are not permitted in the exam room.
- Smoking, eating, and drinking are not permitted during the exam.
- You will be seated at a computer, sometimes separated from others by partitions.

During the Exam:

- Once the exam begins, you may not ask questions about content or directions.
- You may alert the administrator of technical difficulties if they occur.
- The "Help" button allows you to look at the directions at any point during the exam.
- During the examination process, you may only have two items on the desk: a pen or pencil, and one sheet of paper for note-taking during the listening and speaking sections. All notepaper will be collected at the end of the exam and destroyed by the administrator. The notes will not be graded.
- During the exam, one or more test administrators will be in the room at all times.
- Each iTEP section begins with instructions. The questions for Part 1 of each section are less challenging than questions for Parts 2 and 3.
- Try to answer all questions to the best of your ability. There is no penalty for a wrong answer. Each question is worth the same number of points.
- During the reading, listening, and grammar sections, you will select one of four answer choices for each question.
- You may go back to review your answers in the reading and grammar sections by using the "Back" button, as long as there is time remaining. Time remaining is shown at the bottom of the screen.
- During the listening section, the selections play once, so review is not possible.
- During the writing section, you will type your writing samples directly into a text entry field. There are time limits for each part of the writing section, but you may go on to the next section before time expires.
- During the speaking section, speaking samples are recorded with a headset and microphone at your computer. There are time limits for each part of the speaking section.
- Stay calm. Have fun. The exam can be re-taken if needed.
- The iTEP administrator reserves the right to dismiss anyone from the exam or to void exam results if any of the above rules are broken or if the administrator's instructions are not followed.

B. Scoring

The exam will determine an overall English skill level from 0 (Beginner) to 6 (Advanced) as well as levels for each section of the test. Half-levels (2.5, 3.5, etc.) are possible.

- The reading, listening, and grammar sections are scored automatically by iTEP software.
- The writing and speaking samples are graded by native English speaking ESL-trained professionals, according to standardized scoring guidelines.
- Each exam section is weighted equally. There is no penalty in the multiple-choice sections for guessing or incorrect answers. In the writing and speaking sections, it is important that you try to use all the words and time available for each section.
- [The Score Report](#) presents an individual's scoring information. In the Skill Profile you can see a visual display of your strengths and weaknesses.
- [iTEP Ability Guide](#) shows how an individual of a certain skill level can usually communicate in the "real world."

C. The Seven Levels

The seven proficiency levels identified by the exam are:

- Level 0: Beginning
- Level 1: Elementary
- Level 2: Low-Intermediate
- Level 3: Intermediate
- Level 4: High-Intermediate
- Level 5: Low-Advanced
- Level 6: Advanced

II. Sample Test Materials

Now that you have a general idea of what to expect on the exam, take a look at some sample materials from the test.

A. Reading Exercises

Part 1 of the reading section will include a passage and questions like these.

Cartoons

In the early 19th century, Mark Roget showed that actions could be broken down into a series of separate images. If the images were displayed one after another quickly, the eye did not see them as separate. Instead, the image looked like it was really moving. This discovery influenced the way future cartoons were made.

Motion picture film was developed several decades later. It used a series of many photographs to create the illusion of movement. Cartoon artists realized that the same technology could be used to make animated cartoon films. Instead of photographs, each frame of the film was a picture drawn by hand. Twenty four drawings were needed for each second of film. By 1892, short black and white cartoon films were being shown in movie theaters. Because the cartoons were only 5-10 minutes long, they became known as shorts. After seeing how much audiences liked them, many artists who had drawn comics for newspapers began to use their skills to draw animated cartoons. The animated film industry gave artists new ways to tell stories.

The first animated cartoon with sound was Disney's Steamboat Willie. This cartoon short was also Mickey Mouse's first appearance as a cartoon character. Animation and sound worked together to tell the story. Matching the sound to the action of the cartoon was made easier by actions that were repeated, such as Mickey Mouse steering the boat. The short length of the cartoons also made the task less difficult. In 1937, Snow White was the first full-length animated feature film with sound and color. The sounds included character voices, background noises, and music.

*The word **task** as used in the passage means:*

- A. method
- B. concept
- C. job
- D. product

Correct Answer = C

B. Listening Exercises

There are three parts to the listening section of the test. As with other sections, each part is more difficult than the one before.

Listening Part 1: In this section you will hear 4 short conversations, each followed by a question. You will have a total of 80 seconds to answer the 4 questions. Time remaining will be shown in the “Time Left” window. Click on “Confirm Answer” before moving to the next question. Once you confirm your answer, you cannot change it.

Listening Part 2: In this section, there will be a longer conversation, followed by 4 questions. You will hear each question once, and read it on the screen. You may write notes as you listen.

Below is an example of the type of question you will find in Part 2 of the listening section. [Click here](#) to hear the passage for the question.

What new fact about Einstein did Michael learn from Dr. Slinsky?

- A. Einstein did not attend college at all, because his family did not have the money.*
- B. Despite working in an office, Einstein was able to think in new ways about the basic principles of physics.*
- C. Because of Einstein’s religion, he was not able to attend the best college for the study of mathematics and physics.*
- D. Einstein did not use previous scientists’ and philosophers’ writings to propel his intellectual thinking.*

Correct Answer = B

Listening Part 3: You will listen to a lecture and then have 3 minutes to answer 6 questions. You will hear the lecture only once, and it will not appear on the screen. You may take notes while listening. No previous knowledge of the topic is required. All questions can be answered by using your listening skills.

C. Grammar Exercises

These are examples of the sort of questions you will find in this section of the test.

Select the answer that correctly completes the sentence.

The students _____ to visit a museum tomorrow.

- A. is going*
- B. are going*
- C. will going*
- D. will be go*

Correct Answer = B

Sample Test Materials (continued)

Select the word or phrase in the sentence that is not correct.

He is studying law at the university in order becoming an attorney.

- A. *is studying*
- B. *in order*
- C. *becoming*
- D. *an*

Correct Answer = C

D. Writing Exercises

These sections only appear on the iTEP SLATE-Plus. You will write and speak your answers, which will be graded by trained professionals. Your score will be based on your ability to communicate a **clear, coherent, and relevant** message.

The skills that are evaluated in the writing section are: overall ability/fluency, grammar, vocabulary, cultural/stylistic appropriateness, and effort required by reader for understanding.

Writing Part 1: You will be asked to write a short (50–75 words) note or letter about a simple situation or topic. You will have 5 minutes to type your answer using the keyboard.

Below is an example of the type of topic you may encounter in this section:

Think of your favorite book. Write a note to the author telling him or her that you are a big fan.

Here is a sample response:

Dear Andrew McCall-Smith,

*I am a big fan of your book *The Number One Ladies Detective Agency*. The character of Mma Ramotswe and the details about her daily life have given me a sense of what it would be like to live in Botswana. I especially enjoyed learning that she has the same feelings about her country, her life, and her family that I do. Thank you for such a wonderful lesson about human nature.*

Sincerely,

James Myers

Sample Test Materials (continued)

Writing Part 2: You will be asked to write an essay of 175–225 words (maximum 250 words) expressing an opinion on a topic. You must give reasons and examples to support your opinion. You will have 20 minutes to type your answer using the keyboard.

This is an example of the type of topic you may find in this section.

Some people like to spend time alone when they are not at school. Other people like to do activities with their friends. Which do you prefer and why? Use specific details and examples to support your answer.

Here is a sample response:

When I am not at school, I usually prefer to spend time with my friends, but some days I like to be by myself. Most of the time when I finish school I have lots of energy and I like to play football with the other kids in my neighborhood. When the weather is bad, we sometimes play cards or other games inside. I think that it is important to have this time to play before eating and doing homework. It is important to me because I exercise and I get a break from all my schoolwork.

Other days, however, I like to be alone. These days do not happen very often. If I am tired, sick, or in a bad mood, I will go straight home after school and close myself in my room. Most of the time I read fun books, like comics, so that I can escape from the world for a little while. If I am too tired or too sick, I watch TV instead. I also like to go for a walk when it is sunny outside. I almost never like to be alone during the weekends.

In conclusion, some people prefer to spend time with their friends when they are not at schools, and others like to be alone. I would say that I am a combination of both, but mainly I am someone who likes to be with my friends.

Sample Test Materials (continued)

E. Speaking Exercises

Your score in the speaking section is based on your overall ability/fluency, grammar, vocabulary, cultural/stylistic appropriateness, and pronunciation.

Here is an example of what you will see on the screen during Part 1 of this section.

iTEP Speaking - Part1

You will both hear and read a short question. Answer the question giving specific reasons and examples that support your answer. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your answer, and 45 seconds to speak.

Prepare **Speak**

30 **45**
SECONDS SECONDS

1/1
QUESTION

< Back Next >

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Talk about an artist or sportsperson from your country that you admire. Tell why.

Here is a sample response:

Because I am from Spain, one artist that I admire is Salvador Dali. I admire his imagination and creativity. He developed the surrealistic movement in paintings, architecture, sculpture, film, and photography. He was very skilled at drawing. I do not know if I would admire him as a person, but as an artist I have lots of respect for him.

Here is an example of what you will see on-screen during Part 2 of this section.

iTEP Speaking - Part2

Listen to a short topic statement. Then express your thoughts on the topic, giving specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

You will only hear the topic statement -- it will not appear on your screen. After you hear the statement, you will have 45 seconds to prepare, and 60 seconds to speak. Remember, you may take notes.

Statement

Prepare **Speak**

45 **60**
SECONDS SECONDS

1/1
QUESTION

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Below is an example of the type of opinion statement you will hear in this section. You will not see this statement on your screen. You may take notes as you listen.

Talk about one thing you want to change about your school and explain why. Use specific details and examples to support your answer.

After hearing the statement, you will have 45 seconds to prepare, and 60 seconds to speak your answer. Here is a sample response:

One thing I do not like about my school is that I have to turn my mobile phone off and cannot use it after I arrive at school. Telephones and other electronic devices can be very useful in learning, and I believe that students should be able to use mobile phones in school. Of course, it is important that phones and other electronics are used for schoolwork and not play, which can be difficult to control. When used as an education tool, however, it can be very powerful. Students of this generation are excited to use technology, so including technology in education helps keep students' interest in the subject.

Also, many schools in the world are limited by money and resources. Lots of students at these schools have access to the Internet on their phone, but are forbidden to use it. I believe that schools could save money on things like dictionaries and other materials by allowing students to use the powerful resource that is sitting in their backpacks. I think it is wasteful to have all of these tools in students' hands, and not use them.



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