

What is TOEIC?

TOEIC stands for the Test of English for International Communication. It is written and run by ETS, the Educational Testing Service.

TOEIC is a North American Business English exam, but developed primarily in Japan in the 1970s. It is designed to test the ability of candidates to communicate in everyday situations in an English-speaking international working environment.

TOEIC test has been around for more than 30 years. Today TOEIC test scores are used by over 10,000 companies, government agencies and English Language Learning programs in 120 countries. More than 7 million TOEIC tests were taken in 2013, including 1.5 million in Japan.

TOEIC results are valid for 2 years. However, TOEIC can be re-taken a month later if the required score was not achieved.

TOEIC Test Format

There are 2 parts to the TOEIC, the TOEIC Listening & Reading Test, and the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test. It is not necessary to take them both. However, they are designed to complement each other.

The questions from both are taken from common business and work scenarios, such as sales and marketing, meetings, making appointments, socialising, and business travel.

TOEIC Listening & Reading Test

The TOEIC Listening & Reading Test is a paper-based test, and takes around 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete - 2 hours for the tests and a further 30 minutes to answer some questions about yourself.

Listening (45 minutes): there are 100 multiple-choice questions in total, taken in 4 sections. These are all listening texts, which start simple and become progressively more difficult, moving from photograph prompts to question-response dialogues to conversations to short talks.

Reading (75 minutes): there are also 100 multiple-choice questions in total. These are a mix of gap-fills, paragraph completion, and reading comprehension

Scoring: each candidate receives independent scores for the listening and reading sections on a scale from 5 to 495 points each. The total score is then calculated, on a range from 10 to 990 points.

TOEIC Speaking and Writing Test

The TOEIC Speaking and Writing test is taken online at an official test centre.

Speaking (20 minutes): there are 11 questions, including reading aloud, describing pictures, responding to questions, responding to questions using specific information, proposing a solution to a problem, and expressing opinions on a particular topic.



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Scoring: the answers are digitally recorded and then sent to ETS for marking. The first four task types are rated on a scale of 0 to 3 and the final two on a scale of 0 to 5. The sum of all the scores is then converted to an overall score of 0 to 200.

Writing (60 minutes): there are 8 questions in total. The first 5 are writing sentences about pictures, following specific guidelines. Questions 6 and 7 ask you to respond to emails, and the final task is to write an opinion-based essay of around 300 words.

Scoring: the Writing test answers are also sent to ETS. The first task type (Questions 1–5) is rated on a scale of 0 to 3, the second task type (Questions 6–7) from 0 to 4, and the last task one (Question 8) is from 0 to 5. The sum of all the scores is then converted, as with the Speaking, to an overall score of 0 to 200.

TOEIC Institutional Program Test

Companies can arrange for staff to take the TOEIC test on-site in company premises. While this is not a ‘Secure Program’ test, taken at an official test centre, many companies use TOEIC in this way to assess the work-related English language skills of their staff. It can be an excellent recruitment and language auditing tool.

TOEIC Fees

TOEIC test centres set the fees, and they do vary from country to country. It is best to go to the [ETS TOEIC website](#) to find out the contact detail of a national office, who can advise what you would need to pay.

TOEIC with Specialist Language Courses

SLC designs and arranges TOEIC Preparation courses so learners can achieve the score they need. Courses can be:

- ✓ Bespoke, organisation-specific programmes delivered in-country, in-company or online
- ✓ In-country, immersion TOEIC courses in the US, Canada and the UK
- ✓ Online One-to-One or Closed Group Tuition TOEIC courses

[Contact us](#) for full details.

About the Author

Chris Moore is Managing Director of [Specialist Language Courses](#) (SLC), an international business and technical language training consultancy. SLC works with companies around the world to improve their language capabilities. BULATS is now used by companies around the world to assess workforce Business English language skills.

Please contact Chris on chris@specialistlanguagecourses.com or on +44 1273 900213 to discuss how you can best prepare your workforce for the BULATS test.



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