Overview: Score Profiles, Task Decisions and Preparation

TOEFL iBT

Check the requirement before choosing a target

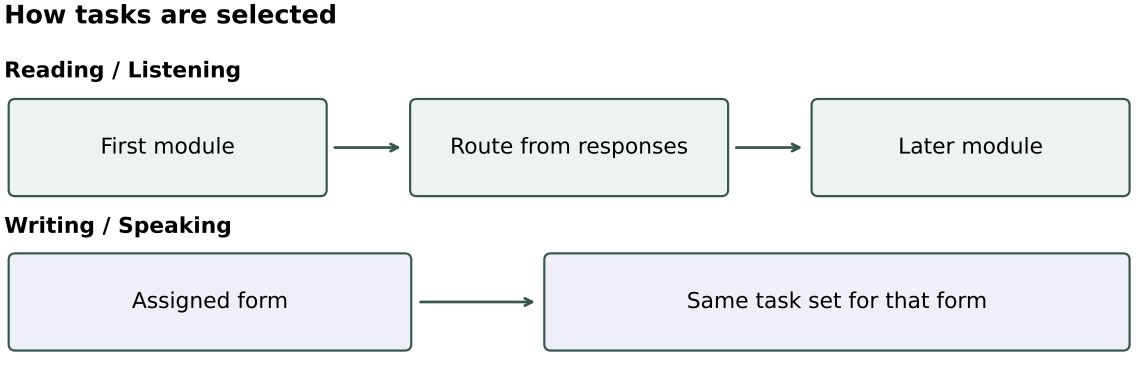
A student sees “overall 5” and stops reading a course’s language requirement. The next line says “at least 4.5 in every section.” An overall 5 does not show that all four section floors have been met. Careful preparation begins with reading the whole requirement.

This supplement adds original worked decisions to the existing overview. All programmes, score profiles and practice examples below are fictional. They teach how to check information; they are not university admission advice or official rated tasks. The preserved skill handouts remain beside these additional notes.

Separate the adaptive sections from the whole test

The 2026 ETS blueprint describes Reading and Listening as two-stage **adaptive** 自适应 sections. Writing and Speaking are linear: test takers receiving a particular form get its same task set. Do not read the older overview’s broad description as saying every section adapts question by question.

A first module helps route a learner to a later module. A **module** 模块 is a group of tasks, not a score report. A difficult question alone does not prove that you have done well or badly. Its difficulty to you also depends on your knowledge and the topic.



Task selection and score reporting answer different questions.

ETS notes that Reading and Listening can contain unscored items. A **raw score** 原

始分 records points before conversion to a reported scale. You cannot convert "thirty answers felt right" into a reported band here. Do not assume every displayed item contributes equally to that reported band. Use practice errors to choose a learning action, rather than guessing your live result.

The public timing table gives approximate base times. Directions and administration mean that adding its section times does not give the full appointment length. Use the current official instructions for your test and any approved arrangements. Our classroom practice clocks below are teaching choices, not a copy of the live test interface.

Read an overall score and section floors together

Fictional requirement: Riverside Programme asks for overall 5 and at least 4.5 in each section. It also asks applicants to submit other documents. Meeting this language requirement does not guarantee admission.

Profile	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking
A	5.5	5	5	3.5
B	4.5	5	5	5

■ Profile A

The sum is 19. The average is 19 divided by 4, or 4.75. Rounded to the nearest half band, the overall score is 5. That meets the overall requirement, but Speaking 3.5 is below the section floor of 4.5. The language requirement is therefore not fully met. Writing "overall passed" in your notebook would hide the missing part.

■ Profile B

The sum is 19.5. The average is 4.875, which rounds to overall 5. Every section is at least 4.5, so this profile meets the fictional language requirement. Reading is the lowest score, but it does not automatically prevent meeting this requirement. A lowest section matters in relation to the actual floor, not as a universal rule.

A **threshold** 门槛 is a stated minimum that you must compare against the correct score. Record the programme, score scale, overall threshold, section thresholds and when you checked the information. A different programme may ask for different evidence. Use its current written requirement.

Round the average without adding the bands

The new overall scale averages the four section bands, then rounds to the nearest half band. Do not report the sum of the four new bands as the overall band. ETS gives 5.125 becoming 5, and 5.25 becoming 5.5. The midpoint example tells you how that exact boundary is handled.

For practice, consider section bands 5.5, 5.5, 5 and 5. Their sum is 21; dividing by four gives 5.25; the reported overall is 5.5. This is a calculation from supplied bands,

not a way to grade your own practice answers.

During the transition, reports also provide a comparable overall result on the older 0–120 scale. That number does not make the report outdated. A practice resource can still teach useful vocabulary while describing tasks that are no longer in the current format. Check its actual task descriptions, date and purpose rather than reject it only because it mentions 120. Do not multiply a new band by twenty and call the result an exact conversion. Use the reported comparable score and official guidance for a requirement written on the older scale.

Practise a communication decision before chasing speed

The following short original examples show what different language skills do. They introduce practice; the later skill supplements will develop complete task sets.

■ Reading a practical message

Message: The workshop remains on Friday, but it will begin at 3 p.m. in Room 12. Bring your draft. If you have already emailed it, bring a copy anyway.

Question: What should someone who emailed a draft do?

They should still bring a copy. "Anyway" keeps that instruction in force. The message changes the time and room, not the day. An answer about Thursday would add a change that the message never states.

■ Choosing a useful reply

Speaker: "Could you show me where the registration desk is?"

Possible replies: A "It opens at nine." B "Sure, it is just beside the main entrance." C "I registered last week."

B responds to the request for a location. A gives a time, and C gives the speaker's own past action. All three mention registration-related information, but only B answers this request. A repeated word alone would not make a reply correct or incorrect. Hear the sentence from a partner before reading these options to turn it into listening practice.

■ Building a clear sentence

Use these groups: "the librarian" / "because" / "I asked" / "the printer was not working."

One complete sentence is: "I asked the librarian because the printer was not working." The main clause gives the action; the because clause explains its reason. "I asked because the librarian the printer was not working" leaves the ideas in the wrong relationship. Word-order practice should preserve the message as well as grammar.

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■ Answering a spoken question

Question: "Where do you prefer to study?"

Original response: "I prefer the library because it is quieter than my flat. For example, I can finish my reading without the television distracting me. If I need to discuss a project, I meet my group in a separate study room."

The speaker gives a preference, a reason, an example and a relevant exception. This is an interview-style response, not a sentence to substitute in a Listen and Repeat task. In repetition practice, reproduce the supplied sentence rather than change its meaning into your own answer. Speak aloud. Written text alone cannot show whether your delivery is understandable.

Choose a practice action from the error

A **diagnosis** 诊断 identifies the difficulty you need to work on. "Bad at English" does not tell you what to practise tomorrow. A small error record can make the next action precise.

What happened	What to check	Useful next action
You chose Thursday	Day change invented	Mark changes in a fresh message
You chose the opening time	Location request missed	Identify a new question's purpose
Your because sentence broke	Clause order unclear	Rebuild a new sentence; explain its action
Your listener missed the reason	Delivery or link unclear	Record a new answer; ask what was understood

Use a first attempt to discover the difficulty, then review the evidence. A replay, slower reading or dictionary check can help learning after that attempt. They are not failures simply because a live test limits those supports. A timed attempt and a careful review train different parts of preparation.

Review ten overview decisions

Try the questions before reading the explanations.

1. Profile A reports overall 5. Does it meet Riverside's complete language requirement?
2. Does Profile B fail simply because Reading is its lowest section?
3. What is the average of 5.5, 5.5, 5 and 5, and its rounded overall?
4. Should you report their sum, 21, as the new overall band?
5. Does a comparable 0–120 total prove that a 2026 report is old?

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6. Does one difficult Reading item prove your previous answers were correct?
7. Can the practice worksheet's total correct answers determine your reported band here?
8. In the workshop message, has the day changed?
9. In the registration question, why is an opening time not the best reply?
10. Can the written library response certify a learner's live speaking performance?

■ Explained answers

1. No. Speaking 3.5 is below the fictional section floor of 4.5, even though the overall threshold is met.
2. No. Reading 4.5 meets that floor. All four section requirements and the overall requirement are met.
3. The average is 5.25 and the rounded overall is 5.5. Divide the sum by four before rounding.
4. No. Twenty-one is the sum used in the calculation, not a band on the 1–6 overall scale.
5. No. The transition includes a comparable older-scale total. Check the report and actual task format.
6. No. The section routes across modules, and your experience of a question does not reveal the whole result.
7. No. Our original practice is not the scored adaptive test or its conversion system.
8. No. It remains Friday. The time and room change; the requirement to bring a copy remains.
9. The speaker asked where the desk is. A location response answers that request; a time response does not.
10. No. It shows ideas and language choices. Actual speaking needs aloud practice and a listener's check.

Keep a record that supports the next session

Write the requirement you are working towards and where it came from. Choose one current task type and one difficulty to practise. After the attempt, keep your answer, the evidence for a correction and the next action.

For example: "Workshop message; missed anyway; still need a copy; practise another exception instruction." Review the next attempt to see whether the same error returns. A completed worksheet is useful evidence of practice, not a guarantee of a test result or admission.

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