Speaking: Repeats and Interviews, Worked Practice

TOEFL iBT

What this practice supplement is

A candidate repeats "The library opens at nine" perfectly, then freezes on "I usually study in the evening because the building is quieter after class." One sentence was held in the head long enough; the other was not. Speaking practice trains that holding, and the interview's quick start, on real mouths rather than on paper.

This supplement adds original worked practice to the preserved Speaking notes. It covers Listen and Repeat and Take an Interview. All sentences, questions and model answers below are newly written teaching examples, not official ETS items or rated responses. Reading them silently cannot certify pronunciation, rhythm or spoken delivery. Say every line aloud, ideally into a recording, before reading its coaching notes.

The old independent and integrated speaking tasks are gone from the 2026 test, so this material follows the two current task families only. Classroom timings here are practice choices, not official limits.

Listen and Repeat: three length sets

In this task you hear a sentence and say it back. You are scored on what you say: **pronunciation** 发音, **stress** 重音, and reproducing the whole sentence, not on inventing anything new. The skill is holding a whole sentence in your head long enough to say it.

■ Set A: short sentences, exact rhythm

1. The lab closes at five.
2. My cousin studies engineering.
3. These seats are reserved today.
4. I printed the form yesterday.
5. The north entrance is closed.

Say each at normal speed. Slowing down to be careful breaks the **rhythm** 节奏 of the sentence, and rhythm is part of what is being judged. A careful slow-motion version of "The lab closes at five" is worse than a natural one with normal linking.

■ Set B: medium sentences, hold the shape

1. The workshop moved to Room 21 because the projector is being repaired.
2. You may bring a notebook, but a printed draft is required.
3. My supervisor answered the email before noon on Tuesday.
4. The second bus was cheaper and less crowded than the first.
5. Registration closes on Friday unless the page states otherwise.

Sentence 6 carries a reason clause; sentence 7 carries a contrast; sentence 9 carries a comparison. Hold the whole shape, not the first four words plus a guess. If you miss a word, keep going and finish the sentence: a complete sentence with one wrong word usually communicates more than half a perfect one.

■ Set C: longer sentences, chunk by meaning

1. The study-support desk keeps morning appointments in Room 4 while afternoon appointments move to the library annex.
2. I decided to take the earlier train because it arrives before my first class and leaves the evening free for the library.
3. Although the form says one photograph is enough, the office asks international students to bring a second copy.

Long sentences are spoken in **chunks** 意群, not word by word: "The study-support desk / keeps morning appointments in Room 4 / while afternoon appointments / move to the library annex." Practise hearing the chunk boundaries, then repeat the chunks in order. This is the same skill the interview needs for long answers.

■ Coaching notes for all three sets

- Practise with a partner or a recording, never with your eyes only. Cover this page, hear the sentence once, speak, then check.
- Lengthen the sentences as you improve. Start where you succeed, then add one clause.
- Final **consonants** 辅音 carry meaning: "cost" and "cos", "asked" and "ask" are different words to a listener. Finish the last sound before starting the next sentence.
- If a sentence collapses, say it once more and move on. Five sentences repeated well train more than one sentence repeated thirty times.

Take an Interview: answer, reason, example

You answer a series of spoken questions, as you would in a conversation. The shape that fits almost every question is answer first, then one reason, then one example. It starts you speaking within a second; a relevant answer still matters most.

■ Three original questions with worked responses

Question 1. Where do you usually study – at home or somewhere else?

Strong: "Somewhere else, usually the library. Because at home I start checking my phone, and in the library everyone around me is working, so I keep working too. For example, last week I finished a full lab report there in one evening."

Weak: "Both places are good. Home is comfortable and the library is quiet and also the cafe sometimes and my friend studies at home too and it depends."

The strong version answers first (the library), gives one reason (phone at home, others working), and one example (the lab report). The weak version is a list of unexplained places; lists of three or four items are weaker than one explained choice.

Question 2. Do you prefer studying in the morning or the evening?

Strong: "Morning, I think. I suppose my head is clearest before lunch, and there are fewer messages arriving. For instance, I write my essays between eight and ten, and that is when they come out best."

Notice the **hedges** "I think" and "I suppose": they soften an opinion and buy a moment, so the answer sounds like speech. Long pauses do not. **Fillers** 填充词 such as "well" and "let me think" do the same timing job without the hedge.

Question 3. Your friend wants to learn a new skill quickly. What advice would you give?

Strong: "I'd say practise a little every day rather than a lot once a week. Well, because small daily sessions stay in your memory, and a long Sunday session mostly evaporates. When I learned to type, fifteen minutes a day worked better than a two-hour class."

The answer starts within a second of the question. The repair phrase "sorry, what I mean is" belongs in your toolkit too: if you lose your way mid-sentence, repair it out loud and carry on. That is what fluent speakers do: a brief self-repair keeps your **fluency** 流利度 and the answer going.

■ What to avoid

- **Reciting** 背诵. A memorised answer is audible: the rhythm changes, the vocabulary jumps a level, and it usually does not quite fit the question. The worked responses above are shapes to reuse, not scripts to memorise.
- **Silence.** A silence is worse than an imperfect sentence. Use "well", "that's an interesting one", "let me think" – short, natural, then speak.
- **Decoration.** Do not reach for difficult vocabulary. "The library is quieter" is better than "the library offers a conducive ambience" if the simple words are yours and the hard phrase is not.

Pronunciation that changes meaning

Being understood is the standard, not sounding native. An **accent** 口音 is not an error. Sounds that change a word's meaning are.

■ Final consonants

Say these pairs aloud, finishing the last sound: cost / cos; asked / ask; fifths / fits; worked / work. In "asked" the -ed is a single /t/ sound after the /k/; it is not the syllable "ed". Chinese does not end syllables with these clusters, so they need deliberate practice – regular short practice can make you easier to understand.

■ /θ/ and /ð/, and the /l/–/n/–/r/ family

- *think* (air, no voice) versus *sink*; *this* (voice, tongue light) versus *dis*.
- *light* / *night* / *right*: the tongue tip touches for /l/ and /n/, and does not touch for /r/. Say "red lorry, yellow lorry" slowly, then at speed.

■ Word stress travels through a family

PHOtograph, phoTOGrapher, photoGRAPHic: the stressed **syllable** 音节 moves, and the weak vowels change with it. A listener tracks the stress first, so a misplaced stress hides an otherwise correct word. Practise the family aloud as one chain.

■ Sentence stress carries meaning

"I didn't say she stole it" means six different things depending on which word you lean on. Try it, leaning on the word in bold: "**I** didn't say she stole it" (somebody else said it); "I didn't **say** she stole it" (I only implied it); "I didn't say she **stole** it" (I said she borrowed it). In the interview, lean on the word that carries your answer: "MORNING, because my head is clearest before lunch."

A practice routine you can keep

- Record yourself answering one interview question per day, and **listen back** 听回放. It is uncomfortable, and it is one of the most useful things you can do: you will hear pauses, repetitions and unfinished sentences you did not notice while speaking.
- Repeat-sentence drill: five sentences from any recording, growing length. Use news podcasts: pause the recording after each sentence and repeat it aloud.
- Talk to yourself in English during ordinary tasks: describe what you are cooking, argue with a podcast, explain your plan for tomorrow out loud.
- Practise with a timer running. The short response windows take getting used to, and rehearsing against a clock is free.
- A typed answer usually flatters you: no hesitation, no silence to fill, unlimited time. Speak it aloud instead, or the practice measures your writing, not your speaking.

Check yourself

1. In Listen and Repeat, is slowing down a kindness to your pronunciation or a problem?
2. What does the answer-reason-example shape buy you in the interview?
3. Why is a silence worse than an imperfect sentence?
4. Which is the error: an accent, or a sound that changes a word's meaning?
5. Where does the stress move in PHOtograph, phoTOGrapher, photoGRAPHic – and why does it matter to a listener?
6. What does recording yourself and listening back show you that speaking alone cannot?

■ Explained answers

1. A problem. Slowing down breaks the sentence's rhythm, and rhythm is part of what is scored. Say it at normal speed and finish the final consonant.
2. It starts you speaking within a second, and it gives one explained point instead of a list. The clock is short; a quick start helps, and a relevant answer still matters most.
3. Fillers and repairs sound like speech and keep the turn alive; a long silence gives the marker nothing to score and costs the clock.
4. The sound that changes meaning. An accent is not an error; "cos" for "cost" is, because it lands as a different word.
5. To the first, second and third syllables in turn, with the weak vowels shifting too. Listeners track stress first, so a misplaced stress can hide a correct word.
6. The pauses, repetitions and unfinished sentences you cannot hear while producing speech. The recording is the most honest mirror of your timing and rhythm.

Format facts referenced in the preserved notes were checked on the ETS website on 13 September 2026. All worked material here is original classroom practice.

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