Course notes

ETS · TOEFL Junior

Toefl Junior

TOEFL Junior Standard, Speaking and Writing; ETS Test Taker Handbook checked 15 November 2026

Standard: Listening Comprehension 42 items, 40 min; Language Form and Meaning 42 items, 25 min; Reading Comprehension 42 items, 50 min; each section 200–300, total 600–900. Speaking: 4 tasks, about 18 min, 0–16, ETS-trained raters. Writing: Edit (two sets), E-mail, Opinion and Listen-Write, 5 questions, about 40 min, 0–16, automated scoring. Schools or local ETS offices arrange the tests.

Official scope: https://www.ets.org/content/dam/ets-org/pdfs/toefl/toefl-junior-handbook.pdf

OV · The TOEFL Junior tests: formats, scores and CEFR

- ETS offers three TOEFL Junior tests: Standard (paper, multiple choice), Speaking (4 tasks, about 18 minutes) and Writing (4 task types, 5 questions, about 40 minutes). Schools choose which ones to give.
- Standard has three sections of 42 questions each: Listening Comprehension (40 min), Language Form and Meaning (25 min) and Reading Comprehension (50 min). The whole test is 1 hour 55 minutes.
- Each Standard section is scored 200–300 and the total is 600–900. Speaking and Writing are each scored 0–16. ETS maps every score to a CEFR level, from below A2 up to B2.
- Students do not book alone. A school, a language centre or a local ETS office arranges the test and receives the scores.

■ Checked example

A Reading score of 250 is in the ETS band 245–285, which is CEFR B1. A total of 750 is in the 730–780 band, overall level 3 (“Expanding”). The same number 750 on another test would mean something else.

■ Common error

A practice raw score (for example 30 out of 42) is not a scaled score. ETS adjusts each test form for difficulty, so you cannot turn a raw count into 200–300 yourself.

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L.1 · Listening: announcements and classroom instructions

- The first Listening talks are short announcements by a teacher, principal or librarian. Each talk has one question. You hear it once only.
- The first sentence usually tells you why the speaker is talking ("I have some news about…"). The question often asks for this purpose or the main topic.
- Many questions ask what students should do. Listen for imperatives (bring, remember, don't) and for changes ("instead", "not… but…").
- You do not see the question before the talk. Keep the main point and the requested action in mind, then choose the option that says the same thing in different words.

■ Checked example

Talk: "The science fair was going to be in the gym, but the gym floor is being repaired, so please bring your projects to the cafeteria on Friday." Question: What are students asked to do? Answer: take their projects to the cafeteria. The gym is mentioned, but it is the old plan.

■ Common error

The wrong options often use a word you heard ("gym", "floor") in a different meaning. Choose the option that matches the speaker's instruction, not the one that repeats a word.

L.2 · Listening: conversations at school

- The second kind of talk is a short conversation, usually between friends or with a teacher. Each conversation has three or more questions.
- The first question is often "What are the speakers mainly discussing?" Listen to the opening lines; the topic is usually set there.
- Other questions ask why someone does something or what they will do next. Listen for because, so and the last few lines, where plans are often made.
- Some questions ask how a speaker feels or why one speaker suggests something. Use tone and the words around the suggestion ("Why don't you…", "Maybe you should…").

■ Checked example

Girl: "Have you finished the poster?" Boy: "Almost, but the printer in the library is broken." Girl: "Mr Lee has one in the art room. Why don't you ask him?" Question: Why does the girl mention the art room? Answer: so the boy can print his poster there.

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■ **Common error**

Do not choose an option just because it was mentioned. A place or person named in the talk is often in a wrong option with the wrong reason attached.

L.3 · Listening: academic talks

- The third kind of talk is a short lesson or class discussion about an academic topic. Each one has four or more questions, and you hear it once.
- Teachers often name the topic early: "Today we'll look at…", "Let's talk about…". The first question usually asks for this main topic.
- Listen for contrast signals ("Many people think… but actually…", "However…"). The question often asks what is really true, or what people wrongly believe.
- Write 3–5 words per idea, in order. Numbers, names and results of experiments are worth noting; full sentences are not.

■ **Checked example**

Talk: "Penguins are birds, but they cannot fly. Instead, their wings work like flippers, so they are very fast swimmers." Question: How do penguins use their wings? Answer: to swim. "Fly" is said, but only to say they cannot.

■ **Common error**

The most common wrong option is the popular belief the teacher corrects. Check whether the teacher agreed with an idea or said it was wrong.

LFM.1 · Language Form and Meaning: verbs, agreement and comparison

- Language Form and Meaning has 42 questions in 25 minutes. You read emails, notices and short articles. In some sentences there is a box with four choices; choose the one that completes the sentence correctly.
- Look for time words (yesterday, since, next week, already) and for verb patterns (want to do, enjoy doing, make someone do). They decide the form.
- Find the real subject. Words like of the students, with his friends or which I bought do not change it. Each, every and everyone take a singular verb.
- Comparatives use -er or more + than; superlatives use the -est or the most. Watch for as … as and for irregular forms: good, better, best; bad, worse, worst.

■ **Checked example**

Box: "My cousin _____ in Canada since 2022." (A) lives (B) lived (C) has lived (D) is living. Since 2022 means from then until now, so the answer is (C) has lived.

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■ Common error

Do not stop at the first form that "sounds" fine. Read the whole sentence, because the clue (since, than, every) may come after the box.

LFM.2 · Language Form and Meaning: connectors, pronouns and word choice

- Connectors show the relation between ideas: result (so, therefore), reason (because, since), contrast (but, although, however), condition (if, unless) and time (when, while, after).
- Relative words join extra information to a noun. Who is for people, which for things, where for places and when for times. A pronoun must point to one clear noun.
- Some boxes test vocabulary. All four words may be grammatical; only one has the right meaning or collocation (make a mistake, do homework, take a photo).
- The questions sit inside emails and articles. Read the sentence before and after the box; the topic often decides the meaning.

■ Checked example

Box: "We visited the old town, _____ my grandfather was born." (A) which (B) where (C) when (D) who. The old town is a place where he was born, so (B) where.

■ Common error

Do not choose a word just because it appeared earlier in the text. A repeated word may be the wrong part of speech or the wrong meaning in the new sentence.

R.1 · Reading: notices, emails, schedules and menus

- Reading Comprehension has 42 questions in 50 minutes. It starts with everyday texts (notices, emails, schedules, menus) and moves to stories and academic passages.
- Read the question first, then scan for its key word (a time, a name, a place). Read the sentences around the key word carefully before choosing.
- Everyday texts list several times and people. Draw a small line in your mind between who does what and when, so the details do not swap places.
- "In line 3, the word … is closest in meaning to …" asks about meaning in this text. Put each option into the sentence and keep the one that keeps the meaning.

■ Checked example

Notice: "The book sale opens at 10 a.m. Teachers may enter at 9:30 to choose books early." Question: When can students enter? Answer: 10 a.m. The 9:30 time is for teachers.

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■ **Common error**

A wrong option is often a real detail from the text, attached to the wrong person or time. Check who and when, not only what.

R.2 · Reading: academic passages

- Academic passages are about science, history, art or nature. They have paragraphs with one main point each, and the first paragraph usually introduces the topic.
- For a main idea or best title question, choose the option that covers the whole passage. Options that describe only one paragraph or one detail are too narrow.
- For "they", "it" or "this", look back to the nearest noun that makes sense. Read the sentence again with that noun in place to check.
- Some questions ask why the writer mentions something. Is it an example, a comparison, a reason or a result? The words around it (for example, like, because, unlike) tell you.

■ **Checked example**

Passage: "Some trees share food through fungi under the ground. For example, an old tree can send sugar to young trees in its shade." Why does the writer mention the old tree? To give an example of trees sharing food.

■ **Common error**

An option can be true and still wrong. If it is a fact from the passage but not the answer to this question (for example a detail, not the main idea), reject it.

R.3 · Reading: stories, inference and purpose

- Some Reading passages are short stories about students, families or friends. Questions ask about events, characters, feelings and the best title.
- Writers show feelings through actions and words ("she smiled", "he shook his head"). Look for these clues and choose the feeling they show.
- Questions with why ask for a character's reason. The reason is often a few lines before or after the action; read both sides.
- In an EXCEPT or NOT question, three options are true in the story. Find each one in the text and cross it out; the remaining option is the answer.

■ **Checked example**

Story: "Leo looked at the empty seat where his best friend used to sit and pushed his lunch away." How does Leo feel? Sad – he misses his friend and has lost his appetite.

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■ Common error

Do not choose a feeling from your own experience. Choose the one the text supports with a clear clue.

S.1-2 · Speaking: Read Aloud and Picture Narration

- The Speaking test has 4 tasks in about 18 minutes, recorded on a computer. ETS-trained raters score each response; the total is 0–16.
- Read Aloud: one minute to read a short passage silently, then one minute to read it aloud. Pause at commas and full stops, stress the important words and keep a steady speed.
- Picture Narration: six pictures, one minute to prepare and one minute to speak. Say something about every picture, in order, using past tense and links like first, then, after that, finally.
- Record yourself and listen back. Check that every picture is in the story, the sentences are complete and a listener could follow without seeing the pictures.

■ Checked example

Pictures: girl misses bus → walks in rain → arrives wet → teacher gives towel → class laughs kindly → girl dries off and smiles. Story start: "One morning, Mei missed the school bus, so she had to walk in the rain…"

■ Common error

Do not describe pictures one by one ("In picture one there is a girl…"). Tell a connected story with a reason linking each step.

S.3-4 · Speaking: Listen-Speak tasks

- Task 3 (non-academic): a teacher or students talk about a school event or plan. Task 4 (academic): a teacher explains a topic. You talk about what you heard.
- You may take notes. Write the key points in order with short words and symbols; numbers, names and reasons are most useful.
- You have 45 seconds to prepare. Decide your first sentence and the order of points: main idea, then two or three details.
- You speak for one minute. Start with the main point ("The teacher explained that…"), then give the details with links like first, also and because.

■ Checked example

Talk: rainforests make their own rain – trees release water into the air, it forms clouds, rain falls back on the forest. Answer start: "The teacher explained that rainforests help make their own rain. First, trees release water…"

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■ Common error

Do not give your own opinion or new facts. The task asks you to report what the speaker said.

W.1-2 · Writing: Edit and E-mail

- The Writing test has 4 task types and 5 questions in about 40 minutes: two Edit sets, then E-mail, Opinion and Listen-Write. ETS scores the responses with an automated engine trained on human ratings; the total is 0–16.
- Edit: an academic paragraph with choices. You have 2 minutes 30 seconds for each set. Use the same checks as Language Form and Meaning: subject, time, connector, meaning.
- E-mail: you read a school-related e-mail with questions and write a reply in 7 minutes. Turn each question into a checklist and answer every one with a detail.
- Save one minute to reread. Check that each question has an answer, sentences are complete and the greeting and closing fit the reader (a teacher or a friend).

■ Checked example

E-mail asks: Which club will you join? What day suits you? Do you need anything? Reply: "Dear Ms Park, I would like to join the robotics club. Wednesday afternoons suit me best because I have football on Mondays. Could you tell me if I need my own laptop? Thank you, Jun."

■ Common error

Do not copy long parts of the e-mail into your reply. Use the questions as a checklist and write the answers in your own words.

W.3-4 · Writing: Opinion and Listen-Write

- Opinion: you read a question about a school-related topic and write a paragraph of about 100–150 words giving your opinion. You have 10 minutes.
- Use one shape: opinion sentence → reason 1 with an example → reason 2 with an example → closing sentence. Link with first, also, for example and that is why.
- Listen-Write: you hear a short academic talk while seeing pictures, then write about the information. Take notes; use the pictures to remember the steps or parts.
- Each of these tasks has 10 minutes. Plan for one or two minutes, write for seven, and check for the last one.

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■ Checked example

Question: Should students have a longer lunch break? Opinion: “I think students should have a longer lunch break. First, they would have time to eat slowly… Also, a short walk after lunch helps them focus in afternoon lessons… That is why a longer break would help both health and learning.”

■ Common error

In Listen-Write, do not write what you already knew about the topic. Report what the speaker said, in the order it was explained.

PLAN · Study plan and test day

- Approximate time per question: Listening is paced by the recording; Language Form and Meaning about 35 seconds; Reading about 70 seconds, including reading time. ETS scores are based on the number of correct answers, so a blank earns nothing: always choose your best answer.
- Plan short, regular practice. For example, each week do one listening set, one grammar set, two reading passages, one recorded speaking task and one timed writing task.
- Start with the free ETS sample questions and the handbook so you know the real format. Then use the original practice sets on this site to build skills.
- On paper test day, bring several sharpened No. 2 or HB pencils and a good eraser (the handbook says pens and coloured pencils are not allowed), plus the signed consent form and any ID your school asks for. If one question is hard, choose your best answer and move on.

■ Checked example

Week plan: Mon – 1 listening set (20 min); Tue – Language Form and Meaning set (15 min); Wed – reading passage + notes (25 min); Thu – record Picture Narration (10 min); Sat – e-mail and opinion (25 min); Sun – rest.

■ Common error

Do not spend all your practice on the section you like. Your total depends on all three Standard sections equally.

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