



International Test  
of English Proficiency

## iTEP English Ability Guide

Use this table to see at a glance how well an individual can use English to communicate in the "real world" at each of iTEP's seven levels.

LEVEL	READING	WRITING	LISTENING	SPEAKING
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehends virtually all aspects of a wide variety of academic material written for non-specialists</li> <li>Reads at near-native speed</li> <li>Rarely requires use of a dictionary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes complex documents such as research reports using appropriate style and vocabulary</li> <li>Grammar is at near-native level</li> <li>Expresses complex relationships between ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehends overall meaning and virtually all details of lectures on diverse topics</li> <li>Understands English spoken in a variety of non-native accents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates accurately and effectively on practically all academic and social topics in culturally appropriate ways</li> <li>Pronunciation is close to that of native speakers</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands main ideas and most of the details of academic texts, journal articles, abstracts</li> <li>Requires some extra reading time and occasional use of dictionary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfies demands of most general academic tasks with occasional grammar and style mistakes</li> <li>Vocabulary is strong in specialty</li> <li>Exhibits fairly good organization, development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grasps main ideas and the majority of supporting details from academic lectures, especially those on familiar topics</li> <li>Is challenged by complex social and cultural references</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses moderately complex ideas</li> <li>Some errors in grammar, word choice, and cultural appropriateness</li> <li>Pronunciation demands only slight extra effort from listeners</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gathers most main ideas from textbooks and articles, but has uneven grasp of details</li> <li>Misinterprets some abstract content and cultural references</li> <li>Proceeds slowly, and with effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes reasonably coherent essays on familiar topics, but with noticeable grammatical weaknesses</li> <li>Vocabulary frequently lacks precision and sophistication</li> <li>Little grasp of stylistic features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands main ideas from academic lectures and discussions, but misses significant details</li> <li>Occasionally needs to ask for repetition or clarification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begins to express abstract concepts, especially on familiar topics</li> <li>Fluency is hampered by gaps in vocabulary, grammar</li> <li>Is sometimes asked to repeat words or phrases</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grasps the gist of material on familiar subjects, and identifies some significant details</li> <li>Follows step-by-step instructions in exams, labs, assignments</li> <li>Limited vocabulary impedes speed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates basic ideas, but with weak organizational structure and grammatical mistakes that hinder understanding</li> <li>Limited vocabulary results in repetitive style and simple sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grasps general outline of topics discussed in an academic setting, but unfamiliarity with complex structures and higher-level vocabulary leaves major gaps in understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manages day-to-day communications with peers and instructors, though marked by frequent grammar and vocabulary errors</li> <li>Pronunciation requires significant effort from listeners</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands simplified material</li> <li>Major vocabulary gaps lead to frequent inaccurate or incomplete comprehension, and slow pace</li> <li>Attempts word-for-word translation using dictionary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses only basic vocabulary and simple grammatical structures</li> <li>Considerable effort required by the reader to identify intended meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands very basic exchanges when spoken slowly using simple vocabulary</li> <li>Relies heavily on non-verbal cues and repetition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates simple questions, greetings, expressions of needs, and preferences</li> <li>Pronunciation often obscures meaning</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehends only highly simplified phrases or sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes only short, simple sentences, often characterized by errors that obscure meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands simple greetings, statements, and questions when spoken with extra clarity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates with single words, short phrases at "survival" level</li> <li>Intense listener effort required</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes the alphabet and isolated words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produces isolated words and phrases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands a few isolated words or phrases spoken slowly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produces a few, isolated words and phrases</li> <li>Pronunciation mostly unintelligible</li> </ul>

Abilities described are for the typical iTEP test-taker. The International Test of English Proficiency is developed by Boston Educational Services. Please visit us on the web at [www.bostoneducational.com](http://www.bostoneducational.com).

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