



# iTEP Overview

## International Test of English Proficiency

**Purpose:** The primary function of the iTEP (International Test of English Proficiency) is to assess the English language proficiency of learners of English as a second language. There are two versions of the test: Academic iTEP, and Business iTEP. While each addresses different audiences, both share the same general structure as outlined in this section.

The test will determine an overall proficiency level from 0 (Beginner) to 6 (Advanced), as well as individual proficiency levels from 0 to 6 for each of the five skills tested (Reading, Listening, Grammar, Writing, Speaking).

**Test Length:** Total actual test time per examinee will be approximately 80 minutes. In addition to this, test administrators should allocate an additional 10 minutes for pre-test instructions and examinee questions.

**Test Structure:** The exam consists of a short "preliminary" section, and the test itself.

**Test Preliminaries** – The following screens prepare examinees to take the test:

- **Candidate Log-In:** Asks candidates for their Test ID Number and Password.
- **Registration:** Requests completion of a brief registration form.
- **Headphones:** Instructs examinees to put their headphones on whenever they see a photo of a man wearing headphones.
- **Audio Check:** Allows examinees to adjust the volume level while listening to an audio sample.
- **Voice Recorder Installation:** Installs a small software application that allows recording of candidate's responses in the Speaking section.
- **Recording Check:** Allows examinees to record a short speaking sample and to confirm that their recorded speech is clearly audible.
- **Timing Tools:** Explains the timing mechanisms used throughout the test.

**Test Content** – The test has five separate components presented in the order listed below. Please note that, in each section, examinees will encounter content and questions targeted at varying levels of proficiency.

### A. Reading – 20 minutes

- 1) One intermediate-level passage about 250 words in length followed by multiple-choice questions; and 2) One college-level monograph approximately 450 words long followed by multiple-choice questions.

## **B. Listening – 20 minutes**

1) Four high-beginning to low-intermediate-level short conversational exchanges of 2-3 sentences, each followed by 1 multiple-choice question; 2) One 2- to 3-minute intermediate-level conversational exchange followed by multiple-choice questions; and 3) One 4-minute college-level lecture followed by multiple-choice questions.

## **C. Grammar (Structure) – 10 minutes**

Twenty-five written multiple-choice questions, each of which tests the examinee's familiarity with a key feature of English structure. The section includes a range of structures from simple to more complex, as well as a range of vocabulary from beginning to advanced. There are two question format types, each illustrated with on-screen examples.

## **D. Writing – 25 minutes**

1) In response to instructions phrased at the low-intermediate level, examinee is asked to write a short note on a supplied topic (5 minutes: 50-75 words); and 2) Examinee is presented with a brief, college-level written topic and is asked to express and support his/her opinion on the topic (20 minutes: 175-225 words).

## **E. Speaking – 5 minutes**

1) Examinee hears and reads a short question phrased at the low-intermediate level; examinee has 30 seconds to prepare his/her spoken response, and 45 seconds to speak; and 2) Examinee hears a brief college-level statement presenting two sides of an issue; examinee is then asked to give his/her thoughts on the topic (45 seconds to prepare, 60 seconds to speak).

**Delivery Method:** The entire test is delivered via the Internet, and must be administered in a secure environment at an approved test center. For the Reading, Listening, and Grammar sections, the examinee clicks on one of four answer choices for each question. (There are a few exceptions in the Reading section which require the examinee to use the mouse to drag and drop items or click to insert a new item.) The Writing samples are keyboarded directly into a text entry field. The Speaking samples are recorded with a headset/microphone at the examinee's computer.

**Timing Mechanism:** Each section has a fixed time allocated to it. If an examinee completes a section with time left, he/she may advance to the next section. In the Reading and Grammar sections, examinees are free to use any extra time to review and, if they wish, revise their answers. In the Listening section, review is not possible since the listening selections play only one time. The Writing sections have fixed time limits, but examinees may advance to the next section before time expires if they wish. The Speaking section has structured time limits, which all examinees must follow.

The directions for each section are displayed for a set amount of time. This amount varies according to the amount of text to be read, and should be adequate for most examinees. If an examinee needs more time to read a particular section's directions, he/she can always access them by clicking the "Help" button. This displays a complete menu of directions for all test sections.

**Transition Screens:** Following the Reading, Listening, Grammar, and Writing sections, examinees see a screen titled, "Beginning Next Section . . . ." These "transition screens" give the examinees a 15-second break between sections, and display which test sections have been completed and which sections remain. After the last test section (Speaking) is completed, examinees see an "End of Test" screen – this tells them to wait for further directions from the iTEP administrator.

**Scoring/Grading:** The Reading, Listening, and Grammar sections are scored automatically by the computer, which generates both an index score and a corresponding level (0-6). The Writing and Speaking samples are evaluated by native speakers according to a standardized scoring rubric.

Each test section is weighted equally. There is no penalty in the multiple-choice sections for guessing/incorrect answers.

The Official Score Report presents an individual's scoring information in both tabular and graphical formats. The graphical format, referred to as the Skill Profile, is particularly useful for displaying an examinee's strengths and weaknesses in each of the five areas evaluated by the test.

**The Seven Levels:** The seven primary proficiency levels identified by the test may be expressed briefly as follows:

- A.** Level 0: Beginning
- B.** Level 1: Elementary
- C.** Level 2: Low Intermediate
- D.** Level 3: Intermediate
- E.** Level 4: High Intermediate
- F.** Level 5: Low Advanced
- G.** Level 6: Advanced

In addition to the seven primary levels, an examinee's Overall level score will be expressed in half-levels (2.5, 3.5, etc) if the Overall score falls between two primary levels.