



**International Test
of English Proficiency**

iTEP Exams Overview

Introduction: The primary function of iTEP (International Test of English Proficiency) is to assess the English language proficiency of learners of English as a Second Language. There are three iTEP exams available: iTEP Academic, iTEP Business, and the new high school English proficiency exam, SLATE (Secondary Level Assessment Test of English). All three exams have the same basic structure, standardized rubric scoring, and administration procedures.

Typical Uses of the **iTEP Academic** exam for academic institutions:

- Making admissions decisions
- Placing students within language programs
- Guiding course instruction and curriculum development
- Evaluating pre- and post-course progress
- Assessing proficiency of English language teachers
- Determining eligibility for scholarships

Typical uses of the **iTEP Business** exam for businesses and government agencies:

- Screening new hires for English language ability
- Qualifying employees for assignments requiring English proficiency
- Assisting in making job promotion decisions
- Evaluating return on investment of English teaching and training program

Typical uses of the **SLATE** exam for high schools, academies, and language institutes:

- Making high school admissions decisions
- Placing students within language programs
- Guiding course instruction and curriculum development
- Evaluating pre- and post-course progress
- Assessing proficiency of English language teachers
- Determining eligibility for exchange programs

There are two versions of each of these three exams:

iTEP Academic:

- **iTEP Academic** assesses Reading, Listening, and Grammar and is 50 minutes in length, with an additional 10 minutes for pre-test preparation.
- **iTEP Academic-Plus** assesses Reading, Listening, Grammar, Writing, and Speaking and is 80 minutes in length, with an additional 10 minutes for pre-test preparation.

iTEP Business:

- **iTEP Business** assesses Reading, Listening, and Grammar and is 50 minutes in length, with an additional 10 minutes for pre-test preparation.
- **iTEP Business-Plus** assesses Reading, Listening, Grammar, Writing, and Speaking and is 80 minutes in length, with an additional 10 minutes for pre-test preparation.

SLATE:

- **SLATE** assesses Reading, Listening, and Grammar and is 50 minutes in length, with an additional 10 minutes for pre-test preparation.
- **SLATE-Plus** assesses Reading, Listening, Grammar, Writing, and Speaking and is 80 minutes in length, with an additional 10 minutes for pre-test preparation.

Test Structure: The exam consists of a short "preliminary" section and the test content itself. The preliminary section guides the examinee through a series of steps to ensure technical compatibility and examinee readiness. This includes the complete technical checklist of the software required for test administration, as well as examinee identification items such as log in and registration.

Test Content:

- The iTEP Academic, iTEP Business, and SLATE each have three components – Reading, Listening, Grammar – presented in the order listed below.
- The iTEP Academic-Plus, iTEP Business-Plus, and SLATE-Plus each have five components – Reading, Listening, Grammar, Writing, Speaking – 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/2 parts

Part 1: One intermediate-level passage about 250 words in length followed by 4 multiple-choice questions

Part 2: One college-level paragraph about 450 words in length followed by 6 multiple-choice questions

(*Note:* The SLATE exam has one extra reading part, with two passages, geared towards lower level high school test-takers.)

B. Listening – 20 minutes/3 parts

Part 1: Four high-beginning to low-intermediate-level short conversations of 2-3 sentences, each followed by 1 multiple-choice question

Part 2: One 2-3-minute intermediate-level conversation followed by 4 multiple-choice questions

Part 3: One 4-minute college-level lecture followed by 6 multiple-choice questions

C. Grammar (Structure) – 10 minutes/1 part

This section is comprised of twenty-five multiple-choice questions, each of which tests the examinee's familiarity with a key feature of English structure. This 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 types, each with on-screen examples.

D. Writing – 25 minutes/2 parts

Part 1: Examinee is asked to write a short note, geared at the low-intermediate level, on a supplied topic in response to instructions (5 minutes / 50-75 words).

Part 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/2 parts

Part 1: Examinee hears and reads a short question geared at low-intermediate level.

Examinee has 30 seconds to prepare spoken response, and 45 seconds to speak.

Part 2: Examinee hears a brief college-level statement presenting two sides of an issue.

Examinee is then asked to express his/her thoughts on the topic, with 45 seconds to prepare, and 60 seconds to speak.

Delivery Method: All iTEP exams are delivered via the Internet and must be administered at a secure location or a Certified iTEP Test Center. The iTEP Academic, iTEP Business, and SLATE exams are also available in paper-based format.

- Reading, Listening, and Grammar sections: Examinee clicks on one of four answer choices for each question.
- Writing samples are keyboarded directly into a text entry field.
- Speaking samples are recorded with a headset/microphone at the examinee's computer.

Timing Mechanism: Each section has a fixed time allotted to it. If an examinee completes a section with time left, s/he may advance to the next section.

- *Reading and Grammar sections:* Examinees are free to use any extra time to review, and if they wish, revise their answers.
- *Listening section:* Review is not possible since the listening selections play only once.
- *Writing section:* There are fixed time limits for each part, but examinees may advance to the next section before time expires.
- *Speaking section:* There are fixed time limits for each part.

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, s/he 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 completed test sections and remaining test sections. After the last test section (Speaking) is completed, examinees see an "End of Test" screen, which tells them to wait for further directions from the iTEP administrator.

Scoring/Grading: 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 skills tested. 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.

- 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 English speaking ESL-trained professionals, according to a standardized scoring rubric.
- Each test section is weighed equally. There is no penalty in the multiple-choice sections for guessing or 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 skills evaluated by the test.

The Seven Levels: The seven 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