

TOEFL SPEAKING SECTIONS 5 & 6

OVERVIEW

In this concluding article on the TOEFL examination, we will be taking a glance at the last two parts of the Speaking section. These two parts are made up of a lecture or conversation (Part 5 is a conversation, Part 6 a lecture), approximately two to three minutes long, followed by the question. You will have 20 seconds to prepare an answer, and 60 seconds to respond. Again, remember to take notes.

PART 5 — CONVERSATION

In this task, one of the two speakers will have a problem. The other speaker will offer two to four solutions or alternatives to deal with the situation. You are then asked to: 1) state the problem, 2) summarize the alternatives given (quickly), and, 3) explain which of the presented options you would prefer to do, and why.

Here is the conversation. Have a couple of friends or classmates read it to you.

Brock: Hello, Stacy. How are you doing in Dr Forrest's class?

Stacy: History of ideas? Fine. Why?

Brock: I'm having some trouble. I can't remember the reading assignments. Or I get them confused.

Stacy: Oh, I see. Do you think that's because it covers so many different areas of study?

Brock: Maybe. I mean, satire in A Modest Proposal, democracy & the US Constitution, Freud, Nietzsche, mythology... IT'S JUST TOO MUCH!!

Stacy: Well, don't read them at the same time. And don't read them back-to-back either. Give yourself some time between readings to let the material sink in. At least a few days.

Brock: Hmm, that makes sense.

Stacy: Or, you could cross-reference the readings with the appropriate classes: You know, study democracy when you review your political science notes, Freud and maybe mythology with psychology, and so on.

Brock: OK.

Stacy: What time do you study?

Brock: Late. Usually way past midnight.

Stacy: That's another problem. Try reading in the morning, BEFORE class, like me.

Brock: Thanks, Stacy. You've really given me a lot to think about.

Q: The speakers discuss possible solutions for the man's problem. Describe the problem. Then state which of the options you prefer and explain why.

PART 6 – LECTURE

In this task, the last of the Speaking tasks, you will listen to part of a lecture given in a class. You will then be asked to answer a question somehow related to the lecture, using points and examples from the lecture. Note-taking is extremely important here.

Listen to the following lecture given in a pathology class. Have someone read it to you.

OK, now you have all certainly heard of CANCER. One particularly lethal type of this disease is lung cancer, which has a five-year survival rate of just 14%. Lung cancer tends to be more prevalent among men, but that is very likely due to the higher number of male smokers. It is, generally speaking, the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the world. But what causes lung cancer?

I expect all of you know that the chief cause of lung cancer is smoking, especially cigarette smoking. This accounts for about 90% of lung cancer deaths all around the world. Cigarette smoke contains more than 60 known carcinogens and may also harm the response system that fights cancerous growths. Passive, or second-hand smoking, is also a cause of cancer in non-smokers.

The second-leading cause of lung cancer is radon exposure. Radon is a gas produced by the breakdown of uranium, an element found in the Earth's crust. Levels of radon vary by locale, but radon itself is not dangerous unless it begins to decay, in which case it produces polonium, lead, and bismuth. It is these radioactive heavy metals, particularly polonium, that trigger genetic mutations and cancer. However, steps can be, and have been, taken to reduce the levels of radon in certain areas.

Now, these two agents account for most lung cancer cases and deaths, but certain viruses and materials, such as asbestos, can also cause lung cancer.

Q: Using points and examples from the talk, describe the factors that can cause lung cancer.