

# TOEFL Listening Lesson 13

**Setting:** After a discussion section for an Introduction to Environmental Science course. The student stays behind to talk to the TA.

## Questions

### 1. What is the main purpose of the conversation?

- A. To ask for help with a specific homework assignment
- B. To get clarification on what will be covered on the midterm exam
- C. To register for a review session for the final exam
- D. To discuss the student's performance in the course

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- D. The entire semester, including student presentations

### 3. What type of question format will be included on the exam?

- A. Essay questions only
- B. Multiple choice and essay questions only
- C. Multiple choice, short-answer, and essay questions
- D. True/false and matching questions

4. Why does the TA mention the Yellowstone wolf case study?

- A. To warn the student that it will not be on the test
- B. To give an example of how ecosystems are studied in the lab
- C. To explain a concept that will appear in a short-answer question
- D. To suggest that the student write their essay about predators

5. Why does the student say, “I guess I need to go back and review those reading quizzes too”?

- A. She realizes she missed a question on a quiz
- B. She wants to improve her quiz grades before the midterm

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## Script

**Student:**

Hi, do you have a minute?

**TA:**

Sure, what's up?

**Student:**

I wanted to ask about the midterm. I've been reviewing the lectures and readings, but I'm not totally sure which topics we're supposed to focus on.

**TA:**

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Okay, so ecosystems, biogeochemical cycles, and biodiversity?

**TA:**

Exactly. And you'll want to be familiar with the nitrogen and carbon cycles in particular. Those always show up in one form or another.

**Student:**

Right, we spent a lot of time on those. Are we expected to memorize the diagrams or just understand the processes?

**TA:**

You won't have to draw the diagrams from memory, but you'll need to

be able to interpret them. There might be a diagram on the test where you have to label parts or explain what's happening.

**Student:**

Got it. What about the case studies? Like the one about the wolves being reintroduced to Yellowstone?

**TA:**

Yes, definitely. That example comes up in one of the short-answer questions. It's meant to test your understanding of trophic cascades and keystone species.

**Student:**

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How to inform: Write it in the Skype chat or the comments section when making a reservation. Exactly. That's a great example of how interconnected ecosystems are.

Just make sure you understand the chain of effects—like how removing or reintroducing one species can have ripple effects throughout an ecosystem.

**Student:**

Are the questions going to be mostly multiple choice?

**TA:**

It's a mix. There are twenty multiple choice questions, five short-answer, and one longer essay question at the end.

**Student:**

Do we know what the essay question is?

**TA:**

You'll get a choice between two prompts. One will probably be about comparing different ecosystem types, like tropical rainforests versus deserts, and the other might involve analyzing a scenario where human activity has altered an ecosystem.

**Student:**

Hmm. So we'll need to use examples from the lectures?

**TA:**

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Some of that stuff didn't seem super important at the time, but I'm starting to think otherwise.

**TA:**

That's pretty common. A lot of the quiz material ends up being helpful when writing essay responses.

**Student:**

Oh! And are we supposed to know the scientific names for any of the species we talked about?



TA:

No, we're not testing on Latin names. Just use the common names—like “gray wolf” instead of *Canis lupus*.

Student:

Thank goodness. I was trying to memorize them just in case.

TA:

Yeah, don't stress about that. Focus more on the concepts—how things interact, what the consequences are, that sort of thing.

Student:

Alright. And will we need to bring a blue book?

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Perfect. Thanks for clearing that up. I feel a little less panicked now.

TA:

Anytime. And if you want to go over anything in more detail, I'm holding a review session on Tuesday evening in Room 204.

Student:

Awesome, I'll definitely be there.

TA:

Great. See you then—and good luck studying!

Student:

Thanks! I'm going to need it.

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## Answers

1. What is the main purpose of the conversation?

**Correct Answer:** B. To get clarification on what will be covered on the midterm exam

2. According to the TA, what topics will the midterm cover?

**Correct Answer:** C. Weeks one through six, ending with the biodiversity unit

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**Correct Answer:** C. To explain a concept that will appear in a short-answer question

5. Why does the student say, “I guess I need to go back and review those reading quizzes too”?

**Correct Answer:** C. She now understands the quiz content will be useful for the essay