

# TOEFL SPEAKING

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# LESSON 1

## PART 1



**Directions:** For this task, you will be asked to speak about a topic that is familiar to you. You will hear a question. You will then have 15 seconds to prepare your response and 45 seconds to speak.





## QUESTION:

Talk about an interesting class you have taken in school and why it stands out in your mind. Include details and examples to support your decision.



## SAMPLE ANSWER:

I recently took a class on Georgia folklore. It was a class about how my part of America, the south, was different from the northern and the western parts of America. Many things in this class I learned or had heard of from my grandfather. Most of the material in this class was from traditions that were only a few hundred years old, so my grandfather had told me much about it in his stories. Many people who live in the South don't know about their special history: where they came from and how their recent grandparents and great-grandparents lived. The southern states of America have their own history in housing, food, celebrations, and furniture. Some of this can still be seen today.



## PART 2



**Directions:** In this question, you will be asked to give your opinion about a familiar topic. After you hear the question, you will have 15 seconds to prepare your response and 45 seconds to speak.



## QUESTION:



Some people think that to keep animals in zoos is cruel and animals should only live in their natural habitat. Others think that zoos serve the purpose of educating people about animals that they would not normally have seen. Which argument do you favor and why? Use details and examples in your explanation.



## SAMPLE ANSWER

I think, if a zoo can really recreate the natural habitat of an animal, that I have no problem with animals living in a zoo. I believe that zoos can be great for animals to live in. Some animals become endangered by living in the wild through the destruction of their natural habitat by humans. If we can recreate their natural habitat with a controlled environment, the zoos can help the animals and maybe one day there would be enough of the animals to take them off of the endangered list and put them back in the wild. Zoos can help to repopulate endangered species and let visitors to the zoo learn about these animals that would become extinct without the help of the zoos. I think that some zoos are cruel. It serves no purpose to take an animal out of the wild and keep it in a concrete cage,. We cannot learn about an animal that doesn't live naturally. We should study it as it lives naturally and we can in a caring zoo.



## PART 3



**Directions:** In this question, you will read a short announcement and then listen to a dialogue on the same topic. You will then answer a question about them. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.





**Narrator:** The local state University is planning on moving their campus bookstore across campus. Read the notice about the move. You will have 45 seconds to read the notice. Begin reading now.



## Attention! Bookstore Moving!

The university bookstore will be moving to its new location across campus for this Fall semester. The new location of the bookstore will be next to the Delaney Building on Wang street. Construction of the new bookstore will be completed this summer and the store and inventory will be moved and ready for the Fall semester the week of September 4. This location will remain open through the summer, and students will be able to sell their textbooks back after the summer semester here as well.





**Narrator:** Now listen to two students as they discuss the announcement.



**Student 1(male):** Wang street??? That's just great!

**Student 2(female):** That is a little far away from the old location, but I think it is for the best.

**Student 1:** A little far away? This campus here is huge. That is about a 20 minutes walk from here to there. All of the dorms are right across the street from this location. Why would they move the bookstore so far away?

**Student 2:** Well, this bookstore has been a little crowded lately. And because there are only 3 counters, sometimes the line to buy books at the beginning of the semester stretches out the door. I heard the new bookstore will be a lot bigger.

**Student 1:** That's great and all, but I still think they could have found a more convenient place for students to go. And what are they going to put in the old bookstore? I hope it doesn't turn into an empty eyesore.

**Student 2:** I read in the school paper that it will become a coffee shop for students. That will be real nice to be able to just walk across the street for coffee now.



**Narrator:** Now get ready to answer the question.



**QUESTION:** The woman expresses her opinion about the move the university bookstore has announced. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.



## SAMPLE ANSWER

The woman thinks that the move is a little inconvenient, but that it is for the best. She agrees with the man that the new location of the bookstore is far away from the current location, but she thinks that the new bookstore will be so big that the convenience of the size will outweigh the problem of the long walk. Now, students have to wait in very long lines to buy books, but at the new location, she thinks that the lines will be much shorter because there will be more counters to buy books at. The woman is also happy that the bookstore is moving because there will be a new coffee shop in the old bookstore's location. Because the dorms are right across the street from the current bookstore, when the coffee shop moves in, it will take less than a minute to get there and have coffee.



## PART 4



**Directions:** In this question, you will read a short passage and then listen to a talk on the same academic topic. You will then answer a question about them. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak. You have 45 seconds to read the passage.



## U.S. Joining WWI



There were several factors involved with Congress' decision to enter World War I that all pointed toward the joining of the Allied forces. Although the United States' original position when the war started was to remain neutral and isolated, the Imperial German Government forced the US into joining the war with hostile and aggressive actions that warranted a response. The sinking of the *Lusitania* as well as three other ships and the intercepted Zimmermann note that revealed Germany's hostile intentions toward the U.S. were both important issues in the final decision to declare war on Germany.





**Narrator:** Now listen to  
part of a lecture in a  
U.S. history class.



**Professor:** On May 7, 1915, the British steam liner, *Lusitania*, was sunk by a German U-boat patrolling off the coast of Ireland. The *Lusitania* went down with more than 1,100 passengers and crew, 124 of which were Americans. Just weeks before, German submarines had sunk the British passenger steamer *Falaba*, the American *Gulflight*, and attacked the American vessel *Cushing* by plane. It was several years later that the U.S. actually declared formal war on Germany, but the President's patience was wearing thin and this sinking of the passenger liner without warning helped push him to his eventual breaking point.



Another important factor that led the U.S. into entering the war was the Zimmerman note. In early months of 1917, British intelligence intercepted an encoded message from German Secretary of State, Zimmermann, to the German minister to Mexico. Zimmermann proposed in his message that after Germany began its unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, that if the United States decided to enter the war, Mexico should be propositioned to enter the German alliance with the promise of financial support and the chance to reconquer its lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The President received this note from British intelligence on February 24 and released it to the press on March 1, 1917. This forced the U.S. into the war. When released to the press, this helped strengthen the position of advocates into the U.S. entry to war and swayed public opinion against Germany.



**Narrator:** Now get ready to answer the question.



**QUESTION:** The professor describes the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the Zimmerman note. Describe how these two issues were important factors for the U.S. to give up its neutrality and enter the war on the side of the Allies.



## SAMPLE ANSWER

During this war, the U.S. remained neutral. When the Germans sunk to Lusitania, over 1,000 people died and lots of them were Americans. The Germans had also sunk the ship *Falaba* and attached the ship *Cushing*...umm...The British intercepted a coded message from an official in Germany to another German official in Mexico, ...umm...saying that Mexico should join Germany against the U.S. The Germans would ...um...provide financial help to Mexico so that Mexico could take over Texas. These events forced the U.S. into the war.



## PART 5



**Directions:** For this task, you will listen to a dialogue. You will hear a question about it. You will then have 20 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.



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**Narrator:** Listen to a conversation between two students.



**Student 1 (female):** Hey, Barry. How's your study group going?

**Student 2 (male):** Not so good. I don't know if you can really call it a study group. We never study.

**Student 1:** What do you mean?

**Student 2:** Well, when we meet after class to study, all my group-mates do is talk about who likes who, what movies they want to go see, what parties they went to over the weekend. We never even mention our Physics class.

**Student 1:** Oh yeah, aren't all the other members of your study group roommates? They all know each other and hang-out outside of class too.

**Student 2:** Yeah. I didn't do very well on the last exam because we didn't study so much.



**Student 1:** Why don't you talk to your group-mates and see if you can get them to actually study? Maybe they didn't do so well on the last exam too.

**Student 2:** That's an idea. But I don't want to sound like a parent, "You all need to stop talking so much and study!"

**Student 1:** How about you talk to your professor and see if he will let you change your group?

**Student 2:** Hmm, I don't know. I think I heard that last semester somebody wanted to switch study groups in the middle of the semester, and he told them it was too late.

**Student 1:** Well, if you don't want to fail another exam, you'd better think of something.



**Narrator:** Now get ready to answer the question.



**QUESTION:** The students discuss two possible solutions to the man's problem. Describe the problem. Then state which of the two solutions you prefer and explain why.



## SAMPLE ANSWER

The man isn't doing well in his class. He did poorly on the test because his study group didn't do any studying. All of the other group members know each other outside of class, they all do things together outside of class, and they all live together! When they all get together to study, the roommates all talk about other things and don't study. I think the man should talk to the teacher first and see if he can change groups. Sometimes it can be a little difficult to tell your peers, or classmates, to do something. If the professor says he can change groups, that is great. But if the professor says no and the group members find out, then that could be very, very embarrassing when they have their next study group.




## PART 6



**Directions:** For this task, you will hear a short academic talk. You will hear a question about it. You will then have 20 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.



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**Narrator:** Now listen  
to part of a talk in an  
English literature  
class.



**Professor:** There have been many famous pieces of literature written that have used satire. One of the more famous authors who used satire in his writing is Chaucer. You might recognize this name. Chaucer used satire when he wrote the famous *Canterbury Tales*. But first, what is satire? Satire is a technique used to make fun of or ridicule someone or something. It is not a direct attack, but more of a subtle, often less noticeable way to criticize. Satire is usually used with the intent of bringing some sort of social change about.



In the opening of the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer describes several types of people. One of them is a prioress. A prioress is supposed to care only about other people and not themselves, right? A prioress is a person who is supposed to travel around with little or no money and do good deeds and care for the poor. But this prioress travels with some pet dogs that she feeds expensive food to. While there are poor people out in the world starving, that she should be caring for, she feeds her little dogs only the best of food: roast meat, milk, white bread. Only the rich had these things back then, and this prioress gives them to her dogs. Who does she love more, people or pets?



She also wears jewelry. She wears a beaded bracelet with gold. The prioress's appearance is described as being very clean and neat and proper. Now, do you think a person who is supposed to have no money and who only lives to help others has mind to think about her own appearance? It appears that this prioress cares more about spending time and money on her appearance than helping others.



**Narrator:** Now get ready to answer the question.



**QUESTION:** The professor describes the literary device satire. What is satire and how is it used in the description of the prioress?



## SAMPLE ANSWER

Satire is a literary device used to criticize someone. It is not used to directly criticize someone. Umm...with satire, you couldn't say "This person is very bad." You would say things about the person that makes you think they are bad. Satire is often a less noticeable way to criticize someone or something. Sometimes, the person doesn't know they are being criticized. In the description of the prioress there is satire. The woman is supposed to be nice and care for the poor. She is supposed to have devoted herself to helping other people, but she helps her little dogs more than she helps poor people. While poor people have nothing to eat, she feeds her dogs really good food. Also, this woman wears expensive jewelry and is always clean. A person who travels around and helps the poor should give what ever money they have to help the poor, but this woman has used her money to buy jewelry.