

General writing tips for TOEFL and IELTS

While writing your TOEFL or IELTS essay, avoid using unfamiliar vocabulary. In a bid to impress the examiner with complex vocabulary, many students commit this mistake.

Instead use the vocabulary you would normally use. During the preparation stage itself try to incorporate new words into your writing. Make it a habit so that you learn their correct usage. You can then use these words while writing your TOEFL essays. However, avoid the temptation to use unfamiliar words on the actual TOEFL test. Remember that to add variety and sophistication to your writing you don't have to use long, obscure words. In fact, most ideas can be expressed using more common words. You must still make a conscious effort to use precise vocabulary. For example, some English words are used to express a large number of ideas. A common example is the word 'get'. It can be used to express ideas such as 'acquire', 'catch', 'earn', 'coax', 'become', 'score' and so on.

While writing your TOEFL essay, try to use words that express the idea more precisely.

Correct: While holidaying in London, Susie acquired a strong British accent.

Incorrect: While holidaying in London, Susie got a strong British accent.

If you use so many general words, the examiner will not be too happy with your essay.

Use familiar and natural sentence structures

While evaluating your essay, the examiner will pay close attention to your grammatical range and accuracy. That means you will not get a good score if you only write short and simple sentences of the same pattern. If you repeat the same sentence patterns, it will make your writing boring. To avoid this try to use different sentence structures. Also write sentences of various lengths. For example, by writing a long sentence after one or two short sentences you can add variety to your writing. However, you must not use different sentence structures just for the sake of adding variety. Avoid unfamiliar sentence patterns because you are more likely to make grammar mistakes while writing them. Also avoid extremely long sentences. Instead, keep your sentences relatively short.