✔ MINI-DIALOGUE CHECKPOINT STUDY

L✔1 Check Key Words and Key Word Synonyms

The mini-dialogues you hear in Part A of Section One of the TOEFL all contain key words. Key words are important words in the sentence that give you an overall understanding of the statement. Listen carefully for key words in the mini-dialogues.

In addition, look for repeated words and their synonyms in the printed answer choices for Part A questions. These words are also key words because they usually relate to the key meaning in the mini-dialogues.

MODEL

You will hear:
W: What is this?
M: It's a composition Peter wrote for his business class.
Q: What does the man mean?

You will read:
(A) This class was for Peter.
(B) This is an essay Peter composed for a course.
(C) Peter's taking this composition to class.
(D) Peter is not interested in his composition course.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

In this question, the key words *Peter, wrote, composition,* and *class* give you important information about the overall meaning of the sentence. All four answer choices for this question contain the key word *Peter*. However, only answer (B) contains key word synonyms for *wrote, composition,* and *class*. These words are *composed, essay,* and *course*. Answer (B) is the correct answer.

☛ ON THE TOEFL

- Listen for the key words in TOEFL mini-dialogues.
- Check ahead for repeated words and their synonyms in answer choices so that you can predict the content of mini-dialogues before you hear them.

EXERCISE 1A: Practice with Key Words and Key Word Synonyms

In each of the sentences below, two key words are underlined. Write a restatement for each sentence. Use key word synonyms for the underlined key words.

1. I will make a cake for supper.
   I will bake a cake for dinner.
2. The laboratory is closed this evening.
3. Students always enjoy this course.
4. I misplaced the snapshots of Denmark.
5. We mailed the box to Laurie.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7. The carpet in this room is dirty.

_____

8. Gary completed his test early.

_____

9. I didn't really understand the lecture.

_____

10. The teacher of this course requires a lot of work.

_____

11. Rick has been sick a lot lately.

_____

EXERCISE 1B: Practice Predicting Key Meanings

Each of the four answer choices contains key words. *Quickly* underline the repeated words and synonyms that appear in the four answer choices. Then use these key words to predict the topic. Write your prediction on the line beneath each set of answer choices.

1. (A) Jane is at the library studying for the test.
   (B) Jane thinks the library is a good place to study.
   (C) Jane took the exam in the library.
   (D) We should go to the library to find Jane.

   Probable topic: Jane studying at the library

2. (A) I didn't have time to eat.
   (B) I needed some dinner.
   (C) I couldn't eat all of my dinner.
   (D) Please let me eat the rest of my dinner.

   Probable topic: _____

3. (A) We attempted the ascent.
   (B) We tried to solve the crime.
   (C) The climb was easy for us.
   (D) We tried to climb over the wall.

   Probable topic: _____

4. (A) Clarence just got some gifts that are cheap.
   (B) Clarence gave Judy a costly present.
   (C) Judy's gift for Clarence was expensive.
   (D) Judy doesn't like expensive presents.

   Probable topic: _____

5. (A) Jim knows a talented painter.
   (B) Jim gave his painting to the gallery.
   (C) Jim is a gifted artist.
   (D) Jim has many paintings.

   Probable topic: _____

6. (A) She moved her purse.
   (B) She needed some change.
   (C) I paid her for the purse.
   (D) The money is in her bag.

   Probable topic: _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

EXERCISE 1C: Tape Practice Predicting Key Meanings

Using the tape, now listen to the spoken sentences for Exercise 1B. Keep in mind the written predictions you made about these sentences. Circle the letter of the answer choice that is closest in meaning to the sentence you heard.

L✔2 Check Idioms

Idioms are tested extensively in Section One of the TOEFL. (See page 43.) In Part A questions, idioms are often included in the sentences you hear. When you hear an idiom used in a sentence, you must look for the best restatement of the meaning in the printed answer choices. Incorrect answer choices often contain the literal or non-idiomatic meaning of idioms.

MODEL

You will hear:
M: Look what you've done!
W: Wait a minute! Jane ***had a hand in*** this mess, too!
Q: What does the woman say about Jane?

You will read:
(A) Jane's job is messy.
(B) Jane is partly responsible for this situation.
(C) Jane put her hand in the dirt.
(D) Jane applauded.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

In this question, the meaning of the idiom *to have a hand in* is being tested. Answer (A) contains a form of the key word *mess*, but it does not contain a restatement of the idiom. Answer (C) contains a literal (non-idiomatic) restatement of the meaning of the individual parts of the idiom. However, the meaning of an idiom cannot be understood by understanding its parts. Answer (D) restates the meaning of a different idiom, ***to give a hand***, which sometimes means *to applaud*. Answer (B) is the correct answer to the question. It is the only answer that contains an accurate restatement of the meaning of the idiom *to have a hand in*. This idiom means *to be partly responsible for*.

☛ ON THE TOEFL

- Listen for idioms in TOEFL questions.
- Beware of answer choices which contain the literal meaning of idiom parts.

EXERCISE 2A: Understanding Idiomatic Expressions

A literal definition and an idiomatic meaning are given for each expression. Read the expression. Circle the letter of the phrase listed below that is the idiomatic meaning of the expression.

1. ***to hit the nail on the head***
   (A) to pound the nail on its top
   (B) to be right about something

2. ***to look on the bright side***
   (A) to see the side that is bright or lit by the sun
   (B) to be optimistic

3. ***on the side***
   (A) in addition to a main thing
   (B) beside or next to

4. ***on the whole***
   (A) on top of the entire thing
   (B) in most ways

5. ***can of worms***
   (A) container full of bugs
   (B) complex problem

6. ***to get off the ground***
   (A) to make a successful beginning
   (B) to leave the earth

7. ***ball of fire***
   (A) person with great energy
   (B) globe of flames

8. ***to be short***
   (A) not to have enough
   (B) not to be tall

9. ***to be tied up***
   (A) to be busy
   (B) to be secured with a rope

10. ***to blow the whistle***
    (A) to breathe heavily into a whistle until it makes a loud sound
    (B) to tell secret information about

11. ***to pull someone's leg***
    (A) to grab someone's leg
    (B) to tease someone

LIVEWORKSHEETS

EXERCISE 2B: Idiomatic and Literal Expressions

Put an I on the line in front of each sentence which uses an expression as an idiom. Put an L on the line in front of each sentence which uses an expression literally.

___I___ 1. The president *hit the nail on the head* with his analysis of our budget problems.

_____ 2. Jane always seems happy. She really knows how to *look on the bright side* of things.

_____ 3. There was a big scratch *on the side* of his new car.

_____ 4. *On the whole*, Clark has done well in school.

_____ 5. The young boy gathered up his fishing pole and his *can of worms* and headed off to the lake.

_____ 6. The airplane couldn't *get off the ground* because of the bad weather.

_____ 7. Peter is a real *ball of fire*.

_____ 8. The police officer *blew the whistle* to stop the cars.

_____ 9. Grace *is short* three cups of sugar, so she can't bake the cake.

_____ 10. The horse *was tied up* at the corral so he wouldn't run away.

_____ 11. I thought Jake was serious, but he was only *pulling my leg*.

EXERCISE 2C: Tape Practice with Idioms

Listen carefully to each dialogue and the corresponding question. Circle the letter that best answers the question you hear.

1. (A) She is having trouble holding on to Janet.
   (B) Janet is holding a meeting this week.
   (C) She has been unable to contact Janet.
   (D) Janet is getting four weeks vacation.

2. (A) He stopped to buy this in the afternoon.
   (B) She thinks he will visit her today.
   (C) She will stop waiting for him.
   (D) He is hoping to stop before the end of the day.

3. (A) They can't make anything to take to the dinner.
   (B) They are afraid of going to the dinner.
   (C) They might not be able to go to the dinner tonight.
   (D) They fear they will be late to tonight's dinner.

4. (A) They were unable to do what they had planned because it started raining.
   (B) They slipped and fell through the ice when it started to melt in the rain.
   (C) They planned to take their ski trip in spite of the rain.
   (D) They weren't through skiing when it started to rain.

5. (A) He scratched his eye on the necklace.
   (B) It hurt his eyes to look at the diamond necklace.
   (C) He didn't like looking at the diamond necklace.
   (D) That diamond necklace really attracted his attention.

6. (A) She doesn't take care of her new bike.
   (B) It doesn't bother her if you borrow her new bike.
   (C) She doesn't really like her new bike very much.
   (D) Her new bike doesn't need much maintenance.

7. (A) Write this information down.
   (B) Forget this information.
   (C) Not give anyone else this information.
   (D) Give this information to him.

8. (A) The house needs to be put in order.
   (B) He needs to straighten the structure of the house.
   (C) The house really stands straight up.
   (D) He wants to move out of the house.

9. (A) She and Bob never look at each other.
   (B) She and Bob never agree with one another.
   (C) Neither she nor Bob sees very well.
   (D) She and Bob haven't been together for a long time.

10. (A) He came for her at her house and took her to the hospital.
    (B) He carried her from her house to the hospital.
    (C) He drove to the hospital in his truck.
    (D) He chose her to work with him at the hospital.

11. (A) Marsha is learning how to make ropes where she works.
    (B) Marsha is learning what to do at her new job.
    (C) Marsha feels uncomfortable where she works.
    (D) All of Marsha's work is tied up.

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L✔3 Check Words with Many Meanings

Some English words have only one meaning and one function. Many, however, have several functions and many meanings. Look at the following examples:

I would like to buy a new winter *coat*.
This wall needs a second *coat* of paint.
She *coated* her ice cream with chocolate syrup.

In the first sentence above, *coat* is a noun meaning *a heavy jacket worn over other clothing*.
In the second sentence above, *coat* is a noun meaning *layer*.
In the third sentence above, *coat* is a verb meaning *to cover* or *to layer*.

In Part A of Section One of the TOEFL, words with many meanings are used. In a mini-dialogue, you will often hear a key word having one meaning. Then, in the written answer choices, you may see the same word used again, but it will have a different meaning. Answer choices containing words with many meanings are usually not the correct answers. You should be careful not to be tricked by words with many meanings.

MODEL

You will hear:
M: Jack's been very busy lately, hasn't he?
W: Yes. He's running his father's office.
Q: What does the woman mean?

You will read:
(A) Jack runs to his father's office.
(B) Jack's father is running for a public office.
(C) Jack manages his father's office.
(D) Jack is running away from his father's office.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

In this question, the many meanings of *run* and *office* are being tested. In the sentence you hear, *runs* means *manages*, and *office* means *place of work*. In answer (A), *runs* means *goes faster than a walk*. In answer (B), *is running* means *is trying to win a political race*, and *office* means *political position*. In answer (D), *running* is combined with *away* to mean *leaving without permission*. Answer (C) is the correct answer to this question. It replaces *runs* with *manages*, and *office* has the same meaning as it does in the statement you hear.

☛ ON THE TOEFL

- Check for words with many meanings in TOEFL questions.

EXERCISE 3A: Words with Many Meanings

On the lines provided write at least two different meanings for each word listed below. Use your dictionary if necessary.

1. date month, day, year — go out with
2. light _____ _____
3. just _____ _____
4. box _____ _____
5. mean _____ _____
6. finish _____ _____

EXERCISE 3B: Tape Practice with Words with Many Meanings

Listen to the sentences containing the key words given. Then circle the letter of the word or phrase that has the same meaning as the key word you heard in the sentence.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

EXERCISE 3B: Tape Practice with Words with Many Meanings

Listen to the sentences containing the key words given. Then circle the letter of the word or phrase that has the same meaning as the key word you heard in the sentence.

1. **clear**
   (A) cloudless
   (B) obvious
   (C) approve
   (D) intelligible

2. **band**
   (A) stripe
   (B) orchestra
   (C) gather
   (D) assembly

3. **park**
   (A) garden
   (B) playground
   (C) leave in a place
   (D) boulevard

4. **following**
   (A) audience
   (B) according to
   (C) after
   (D) admirers

5. **major**
   (A) field of study
   (B) important
   (C) officer
   (D) urgent

6. **copy**
   (A) imitate
   (B) replica
   (C) forge
   (D) manuscript

7. **class**
   (A) category
   (B) course
   (C) elegance
   (D) school group

8. **see**
   (A) meet
   (B) understand
   (C) perceive
   (D) inspect

9. **course**
   (A) route
   (B) sequence
   (C) flow
   (D) class

10. **plain**
    (A) modest
    (B) obvious
    (C) prairie
    (D) unattractive

11. **trip**
    (A) expedition
    (B) stumble
    (C) activate
    (D) blunder

12. **show**
    (A) exhibition
    (B) performance
    (C) reveal to
    (D) explain to

EXERCISE 3C: More Tape Practice with Words with Many Meanings

Read the four answer choices in each question set. Listen to each sentence on the tape. Circle the letter of the sentence that is closest in meaning to the sentence you hear on the tape.

1. (A) Please check this for me.
   (B) May I please have money in exchange for this check.
   (C) I will put a check next to each incorrect answer.
   (D) I will not be able to pay with cash.

2. (A) He found a lovely source of water at the bottom of the hill.
   (B) He hurt his foot this spring while running down the hill.
   (C) It has been a beautiful spring for him.
   (D) He accidentally uncovered a beautiful spring with his foot.

3. (A) Clara wears as much makeup as possible to work every day.
   (B) It will not be possible for Clara to come to work today.
   (C) Clara will make it upstairs to work as soon as she can.
   (D) Clara wants to do the work she missed right away.

4. (A) Andrew wasn't sure what to call you.
   (B) You didn't answer when Andrew telephoned last night.
   (C) Andrew visited you last night but you weren't home.
   (D) The man you met last night is called Andrew.

5. (A) This restaurant is for people with money.
   (B) This restaurant is beautifully decorated.
   (C) They serve very rich food at this restaurant.
   (D) The owners of this restaurant are rich.

6. (A) John is associated with me on this project.
   (B) It is difficult for me to associate with John.
   (C) My colleague has been working with John.
   (D) John's project is related to mine.

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