L✔4 Check Sound-Alikes

There are many words in English that sound almost the same. These sound-alikes include minimal pairs, numbers, and longer sound-alikes.

Some sound-alikes are separated by only one difference in sound. Words which differ by only one sound are called minimal pairs.

*t*all	*b*all
bi*t*	bea*t*
pi*ck*	pi*t*

The different sound in a minimal pair can occur at the beginning of a word (as in *tall/ball*). It can also occur in the middle of a word (as in *bit/beat*) or at the end of a word (as in *pick/pit*). Although minimal pairs differ by only one sound, they usually differ a great deal in meaning. If you cannot hear minimal pair sound differences, you will be confused about the meanings of English sentences.

Many English numbers are also sound-alikes.

four forty fourteen

Four has one syllable. *Forty* and *fourteen* have two syllables. *Forty* receives stress on its first syllable. *Fourteen* receives stress on its second syllable. If you cannot hear these syllable and stress differences, you can be confused about the meanings of English sentences.

first fourth fifth

These three numbers all begin with the same sound. If you cannot hear the difference in their endings, you might be confused about the meanings of English sentences.

Longer English phrases also can be sound-alikes.

reception	exception
make a mistake	bake a cake
clearing out the store	cleaning up the floor

The first set of longer sound-alikes above consists of two long words. The second two sets consist of phrases including minimal pairs (*bake/make*) as well as other similar sounding words and phrases (*clearing/cleaning, a cake/mistake* and *the floor/the store*). If you cannot hear the differences in these longer sound-alikes, you might be confused about the meanings of English sentences.

The TOEFL tests your ability to distinguish between sound-alikes. Often the answer that sounds the LEAST like the sentences in a mini-dialogue is the correct answer in TOEFL questions.

MODEL

You will hear:

M: What *are* Jane Smith's children ***up to*** these days?
W: Her daughter is in Tennessee. Her thirty-year-old son is living with his father.
Q: What does the woman say about Jane Smith's son?

You will read:

(A) Her son, who is thirteen years old, is leaving his father's.
(B) Her son, who is thirty years old, stays with his dad.
(C) Her thirty-year-old son will go a little farther.
(D) Her third son lives with his father.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

In this question, several sound-alikes are used. Answer (A) contains the number *thirteen*, which sounds like *thirty*. It also contains *leaving his father's*, which sounds like *living with his father*. Answer (C) contains *farther*, which sounds like *father*. Answer (D) contains *third*, which sounds like *thirty*. Answer (B) is the correct answer to the question even though it sounds the least like the spoken sentence.

☛ ON THE TOEFL

- Check for sound-alikes in TOEFL questions.

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EXERCISE 4A: Tape Practice with Minimal Pairs

Listen to the sentences on the tape. For each sentence, circle the word you hear.

1. (pest)	past	7. whale	hail
2. gold	cold	8. west	vest
3. watched	washed	9. fan	van
4. yam	jam	10. folding	holding
5. breed	bred	11. tense	tenth
6. far	fair		

EXERCISE 4B: Tape Practice with Sound-Alike Numbers

Listen to the sentence. Write the number you hear on the blank line provided.

1. Last week I saw her for the 4th time this year.
2. I wish they'd spend their _____ anniversary here with us.
3. It took _____ days to drive to Los Angeles.
4. This is the _____ year of professional basketball.
5. _____ children came running around the corner.
6. I can't help wondering who won _____ place.
7. The _____ members of the executive board made this decision.
8. There were _____ new students at the meeting.
9. Her new address is _____ Maple Street.
10. The _____ person to call this number will win a prize.
11. I have _____ friends in Chicago.

EXERCISE 4C: Tape Practice with Longer Sound-Alikes

Listen to each pair of sentences. As you listen, underline the parts of the sentences that sound alike but are different in meaning.

1. (A) I like your new coat.
   (B) My bike's down the road.

2. (A) The music in this country is expressive.
   (B) On the contrary, this is excessive.

3. (A) I use it to cream the butter.
   (B) I used to clean for my mother.

4. (A) The corporation chief disapproved of the explanation.
   (B) The cooperation of the chef fulfilled our expectations.

5. (A) Today I had to work awhile after school.
   (B) Every day I walk a mile by the pool.

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6. (A) Grandmother made a big steak last night.
   (B) Our mother made a mistake yesterday.

7. (A) The sensitive child gave his mother a rose.
   (B) The sensible man covers his nose in the cold.

8. (A) The light of the candle was behind you.
   (B) The bright sun at an angle can blind you.

9. (A) My sunny room faces west.
   (B) My son's new room is the best.

10. (A) He was last seen eating pie and apples at the lake.
    (B) We make a fast and easy pineapple cake.

11. (A) The young man returned later on.
    (B) John can turn the light on.

EXERCISE 4D: **Tape Practice with Sound-Alikes**

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

1. (A) They ***took a seat*** by the door.
   (B) They looked for it on the floor.
   (C) They have seen that concert before.
   (D) They sat down on the floor.

2. (A) They tried very hard to leave that place.
   (B) They hid the rest in another place.
   (C) They tried very hard to win the competition.
   (D) They did the rest before the race.

3. (A) Larry and Dave aren't going.
   (B) The days are getting long.
   (C) Larry has been gone for days.
   (D) Larry and Dave are incompatible.

4. (A) The preacher was shocked when he opened the door.
   (B) The teacher found chalk when she opened the drawer.
   (C) Each of her talks was behind closed doors.
   (D) The teacher was shocked when she opened the drawer.

5. (A) She can borrow his book, but he must have it back.
   (B) She can borrow his story, but she can't keep it.
   (C) He'll send her his story about the thirsty man.
   (D) She can borrow his book on Thursday.

6. (A) She has an elderly cousin who gets up precisely at 6:15 A.M.
   (B) Her young cousin gets up each day at exactly 6:50 A.M.
   (C) Her eighteen-year-old cousin nicely gets up each day at 6:15 A.M.
   (D) Her eighty-year-old cousin gets up every day at 6:50 A.M.

7. (A) Tomorrow Anne is going to the neighbor's to bake.
   (B) Anne is with her neighbor at the lake.
   (C) Anne has gone to the neighbor's to borrow a garden tool.
   (D) Anne is going to her neighbor's lake tomorrow.

8. (A) On Sundays, he sees her walking in the garden.
   (B) On Sundays, she works in the garden.
   (C) She works for the Gardiners some days.
   (D) Some days he sees her walking in the garden.

9. (A) She troubled her aunt for tea a lot before she returned.
   (B) She had a lot of trouble with her aunt when she was fourteen.
   (C) She traveled a lot with her aunt before she was fourteen.
   (D) She and her aunt took a lot of trips together before she was forty.

10. (A) She wants advancement.
    (B) She lives by the ocean near here.
    (C) She doesn't like the motion here.
    (D) She'll soon hear about her promotion.

11. (A) Bill gets by at the store.
    (B) Bill got a good buy at the store.
    (C) We filled the safe by the door.
    (D) Bill bid us farewell at the entrance.

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L✔5 Check Exclamations

One sentence type that is commonly used in spoken English is the exclamation. Exclamations are sentences which express strong emotion, such as pleasure, disbelief, excitement, anticipation, enthusiasm, and displeasure.

An exclamation can occur in the following forms.

1. What (+ adjective) + noun (+ subject + verb)!
   What a beautiful day it is!
   (It is a very beautiful day.)
   What a day!

2. How + adjective/adverb (+ subject + verb)!
   How beautiful it is!
   (It is really beautiful.)
   How beautiful!

Exclamations occurring in these two forms are accompanied by strong stresses.

Another type of exclamation can occur when a regular statement or question is given special stress and intonation.

Is this good?

Is this good!

Both sentences have the same form as a question. However, the second sentence in this pair does not function as a true question. It functions as an exclamation which expresses a strong emotion—pleasure.

I'm *looking forward* to seeing him.

I'm looking forward to seeing him!

Both sentences have the same form as a statement. However, the second sentence in this pair does not function as only a single statement of fact. It functions as an exclamation which expresses strong emotions—excitement and anticipation.

The TOEFL tests your ability to recognize exclamations.

MODEL

You will hear:
M: I bought another car today.
W: How could you do that!
Q: What does the woman mean?

You will read:
(A) How were you able to do that?
(B) How often did you do that?
(C) You do that very well.
(D) That wasn't a wise thing to do.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

In this mini-dialogue, a question form is being used as an exclamation. Answer (A) contains a restatement of the question form, but not of its exclamatory meaning. Answer (B) asks *how often* rather than *how*. Answer (C) contains parts of the exclamation, but it also contains *very well*, which is not part of the meaning of the exclamation. Answer (D) is the correct answer to the question because it is the only answer which restates the exclamatory meaning expressed in the mini-dialogue.

☛ ON THE TOEFL

- Listen carefully for exclamations in TOEFL questions.

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EXERCISE 5A: **Tape Practice with Exclamations**

Listen to each exclamation. Write it on the first blank line. Then write a restatement for each exclamation on the second blank line. Stop the tape after each question to allow yourself extra time to write.

1. How lovely she looks in that dress! _____
   She looks very lovely in that dress. _____
2. _____
   _____
3. _____
   _____
4. _____
   _____
5. _____
   _____
6. _____
   _____

EXERCISE 5B: **Tape Practice with Questions, Declarative Statements, and Exclamations**

Listen to the sentence pairs. At the end of each sentence, write a period (.) if it makes a statement, a question mark (?) if it asks a question, and an exclamation point (!) if it is an exclamation.

1. (A) What do you mean ?
   (B) What do you mean !
2. (A) Has this been difficult _____
   (B) Has this been difficult _____
3. (A) I can't believe he's a thief _____
   (B) I can't believe he's a thief _____
4. (A) What are you doing that for _____
   (B) What are you doing that for _____
5. (A) I'm tired _____
   (B) I'm tired _____
6. (A) Doesn't this poetry inspire you _____
   (B) Doesn't this poetry inspire you _____

EXERCISE 5C: **More Tape Practice with Questions, Declarative Statements, and Exclamations**

Listen to each sentence. At the end of each sentence, write a period (.) if it makes a statement, a question mark (?) if it asks a question, and an exclamation point (!) if it is an exclamation.

1. We need a new tire .
2. Have you ever seen this many people before _____
3. Rita could be in France by now _____
4. Hasn't the seminar been good _____
5. What could he want _____
6. She likes raw fish _____

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EXERCISE 5D: **Tape Practice with Exclamations**

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

1. (A) She looks very tired.
   (B) She needs to change the tire.
   (C) She's looking for a tire.
   (D) How can she be tired?

2. (A) What day is this?
   (B) This has been quite a day.
   (C) What do you want to do today?
   (D) How are you today?

3. (A) I'd like to take a vacation.
   (B) Have you had a good vacation?
   (C) This has been a wonderful vacation.
   (D) When shall we take our vacation?

4. (A) She'll have to wait to see him.
   (B) He won't be able to wait until she arrives.
   (C) He's very excited about seeing her.
   (D) He'll wait for her at the airport.

5. (A) The basketball coach certainly is tall.
   (B) Did the basketball coach call?
   (C) How tall is the basketball coach?
   (D) The basketball coach finally called.

6. (A) Who built this house?
   (B) Is this house well-built?
   (C) When was this house built?
   (D) This house certainly is well-constructed.

L✔6 Check Question Intonation

Questions in English are normally asked using question forms, in which the subject and the verb of the sentence change places (V+S). Sometimes, however, questions are asked using regular declarative statement forms, in which the subject comes before the verb in the sentence (S+V). When questions are asked using declarative forms, these forms end with a rising, question intonation. This question intonation tells you that what you hear is a question and not a statement.

He wants to go. (a statement telling what he wants to do)

He wants to go? (a question asking what he wants to do)

Another type of question used in English is the tag question. Tag questions are questions added on to statements. Speakers use tag questions to find out information or to seek agreement. Tag questions normally take one of the following two forms.

Affirmative sentence	+	negative tag
Tom is here,		*isn't he?*
Negative sentence	+	affirmative tag
Tom isn't here,		*is he?*

Tag questions may be spoken with two different intonation patterns.

Jane lives near here, doesn't she?

It's a beautiful day today, isn't it.

In the first sentence above, a rising question intonation is used because the speaker is questioning whether her or his information or idea is correct.

In the second sentence above, a falling intonation is used because the speaker is expressing an idea with which she or he is almost certain the listener will agree.

The TOEFL tests your ability to hear question intonation.

MODEL

You will hear:

M: I had a nice visit with Martha this morning.

W: You called her? (rising question intonation)

Q: What does the woman mean?

You will read:

(A) You telephoned Martha.
(B) You should call Martha.
(C) Did you call Martha?
(D) When did Martha call you?

Answer:

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▼ Explanation ▲

In this mini-dialogue, a statement form is being used to ask a question. Answer (A) and answer (B) contain statements, not questions. Answer (D) contains a question, but this question is not a restatement of the question asked in the mini-dialogue. Answer (C) is the correct answer to this question because it contains a question which is a restatement of the spoken question.

EXERCISE 6A: Tape Practice with Question Intonation in Statement Form

Listen to each spoken sentence. Write a *Q* on the line for each sentence that asks a question. Write an *S* on the line for each sentence that makes a statement.

1. Q
2. ____
3. ____
4. ____
5. ____
6. ____

EXERCISE 6B: Tape Practice with Question Intonation in Tag Questions

Listen to each spoken sentence. Write the letter of the correct restatement for each sentence that you hear.

A 1. (A) Is the dog sleeping next to the fire?
(B) I think the dog is sleeping next to the fire.

____ 2. (A) Was the accident a terrible tragedy?
(B) The accident was a terrible tragedy.

____ 3. (A) Is Greg's boss a compassionate man?
(B) I believe that Greg's boss is a compassionate man.

____ 4. (A) Is Nancy a teacher like her mother?
(B) I think Nancy is a teacher like her mother.

____ 5. (A) Is this the best season of the year?
(B) I think this is the best season of the year.

____ 6. (A) Is Mary coming at around 8:00?
(B) I'm quite sure Mary is coming at around 8:00.

____ 7. (A) Are you the man I saw at the bus station?
(B) I think you are the man I saw at the bus station.

____ 8. (A) Is he the one who showed us the factory?
(B) I believe he is the one who showed us the factory.

____ 9. (A) Does your typewriter need a new ribbon?
(B) I think your typewriter needs a new ribbon.

____ 10. (A) Are you going to finish this project on time?
(B) I believe you are going to finish this project on time.

____ 11. (A) Does Willie live with his mother?
(B) I am quite sure that Willie lives with his mother.

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EXERCISE 6C: More Tape Practice with Question Intonation

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

1. (A) Someone else delivered the package.
   (B) She recognizes the man.
   (C) She wants to know if the man received the package.
   (D) She would like the man to deliver the package.

2. (A) If Glen borrowed the woman's books.
   (B) What books he needs for the course.
   (C) If Glen lent the woman his books.
   (D) If the woman is going to borrow his notes.

3. (A) Peter doesn't like classical music.
   (B) Peter is enjoying his music class.
   (C) She isn't sure whether or not Peter likes classical music.
   (D) She doesn't like Peter very much.

4. (A) If Boston is still quite far away.
   (B) How long it took to drive to Boston.
   (C) Whether or not it will take three hours to get to Boston.
   (D) If the three of them can drive to Boston together.

5. (A) Won't you be starting your new job next week?
   (B) You're going to look for a job again, aren't you?
   (C) What are you going to do at your new job?
   (D) How long have you been working at your new job?

6. (A) What the doctor said about Carolyn's niece.
   (B) Who took Carolyn's niece to the doctor.
   (C) If the doctor is talking to Carolyn's niece.
   (D) If someone took Carolyn's niece to the doctor.

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