L✔7 Check Negatives

Negative meaning is common in English sentences. There are several negative structures.

1. *Not* (which is often shortened to *–n't*) and other negative words, such as *never, nobody, no, none, no one, nothing,* and *nowhere*:

John is *not* here today.	*None* of that soup has been eaten.
John is*n't* here today.	There is *no* reason to be worried.
Kelly has *never* been here before.	*Nothing* bothers her.
Nobody/No one lives in this house.	Michael was *nowhere* to be found.

2. Negative prefixes such as *de–, dis–, il–, im–, in–, ir–, non–,* and *un–*. These prefixes can be added to the beginning of some words to change them to their opposite meanings:

*de*emphasize (not emphasize)	*in*considerate (not considerate)
*dis*interested (not interested)	*ir*replaceable (not replaceable)
*il*logical (not logical)	*non*payment (lack of payment)
*im*possible (not possible)	*un*attractive (not attractive)

3. Almost negative expressions such as *barely, hardly,* and *scarcely* (which describe how much), and *rarely* and *seldom,* (which describe how often):

We *barely / scarcely / hardly* had enough money to pay for the concert.

We *rarely / seldom* go to concerts.

It is common for one negative structure to occur in an English sentence. In addition, two or more negatives can be used in one sentence. When this happens, the total meaning of the sentence is sometimes difficult to understand. Compare the two sentences below.

John was *not* impressed.
John was *not un*impressed. (John was impressed.)

The second sentence contains two negatives. The two sentences are opposite in meaning. When two negatives are used, the meaning is affirmative.

The TOEFL tests your ability to understand negatives. Restatements of negative sentences can often be made without using negative words or structures.

MODEL

You will hear:
W: I think John is in big trouble.
M: Why? He didn't disobey his father.
Q: What does the man mean?

You will read:
(A) John didn't do what his father wanted.
(B) John did what his father wanted him to do.
(C) John's father was not happy with him.
(D) This wasn't approved by John's father.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

There are two negatives in the man's sentence, *–n't* (*not*) and *dis–* (*disobey*). These two negatives give the sentence an affirmative meaning. Answers (A), (C), and (D) all have negative meanings. Answer (B) is the correct answer to this question because even though it contains no negative structures, it accurately restates the meaning of the spoken sentence.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

MODEL

You will hear:

M: Peter is so modest about his accomplishments!
W: He can't deny that he is very clever. Everybody knows it!
Q: What does the woman mean?

You will read:

(A) Peter must admit that he is clever.
(B) No one can say that Peter is clever.
(C) Peter is not very clever.
(D) Peter pays careful attention to details.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

In the woman's sentence, the negative *–n't* (*not*) is used to change the meaning of *deny* from *not admit* to *admit*. Answer (A) is the correct answer to this question even though it does not contain a negative.

☛ ON THE TOEFL

- Check the negatives in TOEFL questions.

EXERCISE 7A: Tape Practice with Negative Words

Listen to each spoken sentence. Write a restatement for each sentence you hear. In some of your restatements, you will need to use negatives. In others you will not need to use negatives. Stop the tape after each question to allow yourself time to write.

1. I didn't get any calls about my ad./There weren't any responses to my ad.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

EXERCISE 7B: Negative Prefixes

Change the following words to negatives by writing the appropriate negative prefix.

1. il legal
2. _____ like
3. _____ value
4. _____ loyal
5. _____ pure
12. _____ motivated
13. _____ contaminate
14. _____ tolerant
15. _____ decided
16. _____ obey

LIVEWORKSHEETS

6. _____ frequent
7. _____ honest
8. _____ reverent
9. _____ legitimate
10. _____ perfect
11. _____ observant
17. _____ realistic
18. _____ human
19. _____ patient
20. _____ judge
21. _____ sense

EXERCISE 7C: **Tape Practice with Almost Negative Expressions**

Listen to each spoken sentence. Write a restatement for each sentence you hear. In some of your restatements, you will need to use negatives. In others you will not need to use negatives. Stop the tape after each question to allow yourself time to write.

1. I have the minimum amount of gas I need to get to school./
   I almost do not have enough gas to get to school.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

EXERCISE 7D: **Tape Practice with Sentences Containing More than One Negative**

Listen to each spoken sentence. Write a restatement for each sentence you hear. In some of your restatements, you will need to use negatives. In others you will not need to use negatives. Stop the tape after each question to allow yourself time to write.

1. Reading Shakespeare's plays is something I don't mind doing./
   It doesn't bother me to read Shakespeare's plays.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

EXERCISE 7E: **More Tape Practice with Negatives**

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

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1. (A) Carl said he would improve his grade.
   (B) Carl had a great job.
   (C) Carl's grade wasn't very good.
   (D) Carl wasn't unhappy about his grade.

2. (A) Visits from his parents are rare.
   (B) He visits his parents often.
   (C) His parents live near here.
   (D) He doesn't see his parents very often.

3. (A) Nothing is surprising.
   (B) This news is surprising.
   (C) She is surprised by these views.
   (D) Why is the news so surprising?

4. (A) We don't really like losing the game.
   (B) We aren't likely to win the game.
   (C) We will probably win the game.
   (D) This is a game that we don't like.

5. (A) She didn't think Andrew was feeling well.
   (B) Andrew isn't very well thought of.
   (C) She doesn't understand why Andrew isn't feeling well.
   (D) She thought Andrew was feeling much better.

6. (A) The results of the experiment were incorrectly analyzed.
   (B) The scientist accurately interpreted the results of his experiment.
   (C) The scientist hasn't had time to analyze the results of his experiment.
   (D) The scientist needs to re-analyze the results of his experiment.

L✔8 Check Time

Each English sentence contains a reference to time. Time is expressed using different verb tenses and different time marker words, such as *after, before,* and *while*. Some tense and time marker differences are especially important to keep in mind when you listen for the time in the mini-dialogues in Section One of the TOEFL.

1. The present tense usually means that the time of the action in a sentence is habitual or repeated.

   He *eats* breakfast at 7:30.

   This sentence expresses the idea that he habitually (every day) eats breakfast at the same time.

2. The present continuous tense (present tense of BE + present participle) usually means that the time of the action in a sentence is: (A) happening right now, or (B) going to happen in the future.

   He *is eating*.

   He *is eating* at the country club tomorrow night.

   The first sentence expresses the idea that he is eating right now. The second sentence expresses the idea that he will eat tomorrow.

3. The simple past tense usually means that the time of the action in a sentence began and ended in the past.

   He *ate* breakfast at 7:30.

   This sentence expresses the idea that he started and finished his breakfast in the past.

4. The present perfect tense (*have/has* + past participle) usually means that the time of the action in a sentence began in the past and is still continuing or is still important in the present.

   He *has eaten* breakfast at 7:30 for several years.

   This sentence expresses the idea that he ate breakfast at 7:30 in the past and that he continues to eat breakfast at 7:30 in the present.

5. The past perfect tense (*had* + past participle) is usually used in a sentence which also contains the past tense. These two tenses are used together to mean that one action occurred before another action in a sentence.

   He *had* already *eaten* breakfast by the time we arrived.

   This sentence expresses the idea that he ate before we arrived.

6. The verb *used to* usually means that the action of the sentence occurred in the past and no longer occurs in the present.

   He *used to* eat breakfast at 8:00.

   This sentence expresses the idea that he ate breakfast at 8:00 in the past, but now he eats breakfast at a different time.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7. Many time markers, including *after, as soon as, before, once,* and *until* are used to show that one action happens before another in a sentence.

   After he eats breakfast, he goes to work.

   As soon as he finishes his breakfast, he will go to work.

   Before he goes to work, he eats breakfast.

   Once he finishes his breakfast, he will go to work.

   He won't go to work *until* he finishes breakfast.

   All five of these sentences express the idea that he eats first and then goes to work.

8. Other time markers, including *as* and *while*, are used to show that two actions in a sentence happen at the same time.

   As he was eating his breakfast, the phone rang.

   While he was eating his breakfast, the phone rang.

   Both of these sentences express the idea that the phone rang at the same time that he was eating.

9. Sometimes the conjunction *and* is used as a time marker to show that one action occurs before another in a sentence.

   He ate breakfast *and* went to work.

   This sentence expresses the idea that he ate first and then went to work.

The TOEFL tests your ability to understand the time expressed in English sentences. The tense and time marker information discussed above is frequently tested.

MODEL

You will hear:
W: Is Andrew still looking for a new car?
M: He bought one last week.
Q: What does the man mean?

You will read:
(A) Andrew is buying a new car this week.
(B) Andrew's new car lasted only a week.
(C) Andrew has borrowed my new car for the week.
(D) Andrew purchased a new car a week ago.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

In this dialogue, the time of the car purchase is in the past. Andrew began and finished buying a car in the past. Only answer (B) and answer (D) contain verbs in the past. Answer (B), however, has a completely different meaning from that in the mini-dialogue. Answer (D) is the correct answer to this question because it restates the general meaning and the correct time expressed by the man in the mini-dialogue.

MODEL

You will hear:
M: I'm really anxious to go home.
W: Once the doctor gives you permission, you can leave the hospital.
Q: What does the woman mean?

You will read:
(A) You may leave the hospital at once.
(B) Get the doctor's approval before you leave the hospital.
(C) After you leave the hospital, talk to the doctor.
(D) You may leave the hospital before you talk to the doctor.

Answer:

▼ Explanation ▲

In this dialogue, the time marker *once* is used by the woman to show that the time sequence of the actions is: (1) doctor gives permission, and then (2) the man leaves. In answer (A), only one action, *leave the hospital*, takes place. No mention of the doctor or his approval is made in this answer. In answer (C) and answer (D), the time sequence of the actions is reversed so that *leaving the hospital* takes place before *talking to the doctor*. Answer (B) is the correct answer to this question because the time sequence of the actions is the same as it is in the mini-dialogue.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

EXERCISE 8A: Tape Practice with Time Sequences

Listen to each sentence. In the space provided, write the letter of the action which occurs/occurred first or is most likely to occur first. If both actions are likely to happen at the same time, write an S in the blank.

B 1. (A) buying the dog
(B) buying the cat
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 2. (A) talking
(B) writing on the blackboard
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 3. (A) eating lunch
(B) calling mother
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 4. (A) Anne arriving
(B) beginning the meeting
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 5. (A) watching other people dance
(B) dancing
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 6. (A) finding a job
(B) moving
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 7. (A) moving to New Jersey
(B) the semester ending
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 8. (A) phoning
(B) receiving my message
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 9. (A) her writing to him
(B) his writing to her
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 10. (A) the lights going out
(B) watching a movie
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 11. (A) moving to New York
(B) making several good friends
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 12. (A) giving the letter to John
(B) reading the letter
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 13. (A) drinking tea
(B) drinking coffee
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 14. (A) our moving in
(B) their moving out
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 15. (A) our calling
(B) their taking her to the hospital
(S) both happen at the same time

___ 16. (A) listening to music
(B) working
(S) both happen at the same time

EXERCISE 8B: More Tape Practice with Time

Circle the letter of the sentence that is closest in meaning to the sentence you hear on the tape.

1. (A) Most of us are waiting in the bus.
(B) The bus will be here in an hour.
(C) We are still waiting for the bus.
(D) The bus was an hour late.

2. (A) I think we should go to a movie after you finish writing.
(B) After the movie, you can start doing your paper.
(C) I didn't see any good movies advertised in the paper.
(D) Before you finish your paper, let's go out to a movie.

3. (A) Nancy will get married after she finds a job.
(B) Now that Nancy is married, she no longer works.
(C) Nancy plans to quit working once she is married.
(D) Nancy used to work with Mary.

7. (A) I'm not used to seeing movies.
(B) They used someone I know in that movie.
(C) I've never seen that movie.
(D) I don't remember everything about that movie anymore.

8. (A) They responded promptly to my request.
(B) I mailed them the information as soon as they asked for it.
(C) It took them a long time to answer my inquiry.
(D) They asked for the information after I sent it.

9. (A) She will move at the beginning of the month.
(B) She moved into the dormitory on the fourth.
(C) She has lived in the dormitory since the first of the month.
(D) She's making her first move into a dormitory.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

4. (A) Last week we took a lot of pictures.
   (B) We are supposed to bring our photos with us to the party.
   (C) We asked them to take our pictures at the party.
   (D) We took our pictures to last week's party.

5. (A) Marsha recently received her schedule of courses.
   (B) Marsha will get her class schedule in a few days.
   (C) Marsha doesn't know which classes she wants to take.
   (D) Marsha only has a few classes left to schedule.

6. (A) He always does his homework after he eats.
   (B) He often eats while he's studying.
   (C) When his homework is done, he can eat.
   (D) He doesn't eat much while he's studying.

the first of the month.
   (D) She's making her first move into a dormitory.

10. (A) Joan does her laundry every weekend.
    (B) She goes to Joan's once a week to wash clothes.
    (C) She and Joan are looking for a place to do their laundry.
    (D) She is at Joan's doing her laundry right now.

11. (A) Irene is still a professor, but she also sells real estate.
    (B) Irene has changed professions.
    (C) Irene inherited the professor's estate.
    (D) Irene teaches courses on real estate sales.

LIVEWORKSHEETS