

TASK: Read the target words. Practice using them by means of the exercises presented here.

LESSON

5

Time Efficiency

Target Words

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. adjust | 6. maximize |
| 2. arbitrary | 7. parallel |
| 3. denominator | 8. proportion |
| 4. exponentially | 9. rate |
| 5. infinitesimal | 10. sequence |

Definitions and Samples

1. **adjust** *v.* To change; to get accustomed to something

Travelers are advised to **adjust** their watches before arriving in the new time zone.

Parts of speech adjustment *n*, adjustable *adj*

2. **arbitrary** *adj.* Chosen simply by whim or chance, not for any specific reason

The decision to build a school in Blackberry Township was **arbitrary**, without any thought to future housing patterns.

Parts of speech arbitrate *v*, arbitrator *n*, arbitrarily *adv*

3. **denominator** *n.* The number written below the line in a fraction

In the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$, the number 2 is the **denominator**.

Usage tips The phrase *lowest common denominator* means “the most basic and unsophisticated things that most people share.”

Parts of speech denominate *v*, denomination *n*, denominational *adj*

4. **exponentially** *adv.* At a very fast rate

In Turkey, the value of the lira has decreased **exponentially** in the last several decades.

Usage tips *Exponentially* is taken from mathematics, where an exponent is a number indicating how many times something is multiplied by itself. For example, 4^3 contains the exponent “3,” indicating $4 \times 4 \times 4$.

Parts of speech exponent *n*, exponential *adj*

5. **infinitesimal** *adj.* Immeasurably small

The number of contaminants in the water was **infinitesimal**, so the water was safe to drink.

Parts of speech infinitesimally *adv*

6. **maximize** *v.* To increase or make as great as possible

A coach helps each athlete **maximize** his or her potential.

Parts of speech maximum *n*, maximum *adj*

7. **parallel** *adj.* Being an equal distance apart everywhere

The street where I live runs **parallel** to the main road through town.

Usage tips *Parallel* is often followed by *to*.

Parts of speech parallel *n*, parallel *adv*

8. **proportion** *n.* A part in relation to the whole

The average employee spends a large **proportion** of each workday answering e-mails.

Usage tips *Proportion* is often followed by *of*.

Parts of speech proportionate *adj*, proportionally *adv*

9. **rate** *n.* The cost per unit of a good or service; the motion or change that happens in a certain time.

Postal **rates** in Japan are among the highest in the world.

Some grasses grow at the **rate** of one inch per day.

Parts of speech rate *v*, rating *n*

10. **sequence** *v*. To organize or arrange in succession

Volunteers have been asked to **sequence** the files and organize the boxes.

Parts of speech sequence *n*, sequentially *adv*

TOEFL Prep I Complete each sentence by filling in the blank with the best word from the list. Change the form of the word if necessary. Use each word only once.

adjust *arbitrary* *denominator* *infinitesimal* *rate*

1. Students felt that the exam was unfair and the grading system was rather _____.
2. The _____ of increase in prices made it difficult for people to afford basic goods.
3. Politicians promised great changes in the coming year, but any improvement in people's lives was _____.
4. She quickly overcame her culture shock and found it easy to _____ to the new country.
5. You can add two fractions that have the same _____.

TOEFL Prep II Find the word or phrase that is closest in meaning to the opposite of each word in the left-hand column. Write the letter in the blank.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| _____ 1. arbitrary | (a) mix up |
| _____ 2. maximize | (b) intersecting |
| _____ 3. sequence | (c) minimize |
| _____ 4. infinitesimal | (d) huge |
| _____ 5. parallel | (e) planned out |

TOEFL Success Read the passage to review the vocabulary you have learned. Answer the questions that follow.

Bonus Structure—
As we all know
is a writer's device
for appealing to
common knowledge.

Time is, as we all know, money. Such valuation of time leads people to extreme efforts to *maximize* their use of time. Some people obsess over knowing the exact time. They buy clocks and watches that automatically *adjust* themselves over the Internet or by radio waves. These measurements allow them *infinitesimal* accuracy in dealing with time. Regardless of how one tracks time, most people share a common goal: They want to use time effectively. Since about 1982, this efficiency has increased *exponentially* each year, thanks to computers and their ability to multitask. In multitasking, a computer executes several different tasks in *parallel*. Rather than being set *arbitrarily*, each task is given a priority in the computer's operating system, and time is spent in *proportion* to the priority of the task. The computer executes different *sequences* of tasks at different clock cycles, thereby increasing the *rate* of output from a process.

1. Why does the author mention computer multitasking in this article?
 - a. because it is new
 - b. because it measures time better than any clock
 - c. because it helps people to arrange their activities sequentially
 - d. because it is a good example of the efficient use of time
2. The underlined word *sequences* in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - a. styles
 - b. lengths
 - c. orderings
 - d. difficulty levels