

To the Teacher

Introduction

Step Up to the TOEFL® iBT for Intermediate Students is a skills-based textbook that helps low to mid-intermediate students prepare to take a **step up** toward the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This is not a test-preparation book: instead, it teaches some of the **grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation** skills necessary to successfully use a TOEFL®-level preparation book, such as *The Michigan Guide to English for Academic Success and Better TOEFL® Test Scores*.

The Internet-based Test (iBT) assumes a high level of linguistic competency, and many students may not have the language skills necessary to follow a test-preparation book or to attempt the reading, writing, listening, and speaking tasks on the test. Therefore, *Step Up to the TOEFL® iBT* focuses on the underlying abilities that students will need before they prepare to take the test. Specifically, students learn key grammar points of academic English, high-frequency vocabulary (both content and function words) that may occur on the test or be useful in the productive sections of the test, and pronunciation skills that will improve listening and speaking ability. Although the iBT does not directly score grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, weaknesses in these areas will severely impair students' performance on all areas of the test. Therefore, every point covered in this textbook will benefit test-takers on one or more sections of the iBT.

Unit Tour

Each of the eight units addresses one rhetorical function and includes:

- learning targets and their relevance to the four sections of the test
- two **Grammar You Can Use** topics that strengthen students' receptive and productive language
- samples of test-level use of the grammar from *The Michigan Guide to English for Academic Success and Better TOEFL® Test Scores*
- two **Vocabulary You Need** sections highlighting common language functions seen on the iBT
- a list of high-frequency and useful **Words to Learn** from the unit
- two **Speaking Clearly** points focusing on comprehension and fluent delivery
- **Skill-Building Exercises** that practice the language point through high-interest reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities

- **iBT Practice Exercises** that give students practice using the language point in tasks similar to those on the test (including the integrated speaking and writing tasks) but at their level of competency
- **Step Up Notes** with useful hints and tips about stepping up to the TOEFL®.



Grammar You Can Use

Since the Educational Testing Service has removed the discrete grammar test from the TOEFL®, it is no longer useful to study grammar rules and exceptions as a form of preparation for the test. However, it is also unrealistic for low-intermediate learners to study every possible grammar structure in English. As a result, *Step Up to the TOEFL®* focuses on grammar points that express the language **function** of the unit, are often difficult for learners, and/or increase the complexity of students' production.

The **Grammar You Can Use** sections do not provide the final word on these grammar points. Most areas of English grammar can be studied in increasing depth at higher levels (for example, Unit 7 only discusses subject adjective clauses; object clauses and objects of prepositions are reserved for future study). The goal of this book is to give students the confidence to understand these structures and use them accurately in order to step up to the next level of proficiency.



Vocabulary You Need

The distinction between grammar and vocabulary is an artificial one, and this text shows learners the connections between grammar structures and the words that fit them. The vocabulary topics are therefore connected to the grammar structures in that they all serve the function of the unit. For example, verbs describing effects are often used in the present perfect tense (Unit 4). By studying the vocabulary in these sections, students will solidify their general vocabulary and begin to develop their academic vocabulary.

Some words from the grammar and vocabulary sections of each unit appear in the **Words to Learn** list. These words have been selected because they are either: (1) high-frequency content words from the General Service List (West 1953); (2) commonly occurring words in university English from the Academic Word List (Coxhead 2000); or (3) useful words for talking about higher education. According to vocabulary experts, students need to learn a basic vocabulary of the General Service List and the Academic Word List plus area-specific content words (Nation 2001). The TOEFL® no longer specifically tests vocabulary knowledge, but it assumes competence in this basic vocabulary.

To use the **Words to Learn** list, students can be asked to search for the use of the item in the unit and study it in more detail. For instance, they could work out the word class (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc.), look up a definition, write the sentence from the textbook, or create an original sentence.



Speaking Clearly

The main focus of this section is improving students' delivery score on the speaking section of the iBT by highlighting learnable features of English prosody and pronunciation. Students use the accompanying audio CD as a model to improve their fluency. If possible, it is beneficial for learners to record their voices using a computer, voice recorder, or cassette player. Teachers and students can then compare the recording to the models and easily see areas of strength and weakness.



A Word about the Listening Exercises

Test-takers can only listen to each lecture and conversation once on the TOEFL®. In class or for self-study, learners studying this book are encouraged to listen more than once to most exercises for practice. However, to simulate the test conditions more closely, they can be restricted to one playback of the recording.

I hope you enjoy teaching *Step Up to the TOEFL® iBT*, and I wish your students good luck as they prepare for the test and their future studies!

—Nigel A. Caplan

References

- Coxhead, A. "The New Academic Word List." *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, no. 2 (2000): 213–38.
- Nation, I.S.P. *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- West, M. *A General Service List of English Words*. London: Longman, 1953.