



Practice Test #13

FOR THE TOEFL®
LISTENING SECTION



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The TOEFL Listening Section: *Directions*



This section measures your ability to understand conversations and lectures in an academic setting in English.

You will first listen to a passage and then answer questions about it. You may listen to each passage **only once**. You are allowed to take notes while you listen.

You will be asked about the main idea and supporting details from each passage. Sometimes, you will be asked to infer meaning and determine the author's purpose. These answers are usually not explicitly stated in the passage but must be answered based on your own ideas in regard to the speaker's attitude, tone, and the context in which he or she is speaking.



When you see the audio icon, it means that there is an audio passage you must listen to. [Please click the icon to get redirected to the audio file.](#)

Most questions are worth one point each. If a question is worth more than one point, it will be indicated in the directions.

Answer each question in sequential order. You will not be allowed to skip or go back to questions during the actual TOEFL iBT exam.

At the end of this test, you will find a scoring chart to help you determine your score and an answer key with explanations to help you understand the questions.

When you're ready, turn the page to listen to the first passage.



Passage #1



Directions: Now listen to a conversation between a student and a professor.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.



[Listen to a conversation between a student and a professor](#)



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. Why does the student go to see the professor?

- a. To talk about her paper on farming practices
- b. To ask if she can study abroad in Guatemala
- c. To discuss her research on agricultural practices and environmental conditions
- d. To see if she can become a Spanish major

2. Why does Christy want to go to Guatemala? Select two.

- a. To continue her research on cost-effective farming
- b. Because she has already studied it and wants to learn more in person
- c. The agricultural and economic landscape closely matches what she wants to research
- d. She wants to learn more Spanish

3. Why might Christy not be able to go on the trip to Guatemala?

- a. She is not a Spanish major
- b. The Spanish department is in charge of this program
- c. She does not speak enough Spanish
- d. There are no more spots left in the program

4. Why does the professor decide to help Christy? Select two.

- a. Christy is one of the most intelligent students in the class
- b. The professor agrees that Guatemala is a good place to do more research
- c. Christy is extremely motivated to study abroad in Guatemala
- d. Christy knows some Spanish, so it will be easy to convince the Spanish department

5. Why does the professor ask Christy if she has thought of other places to go?

- a. He wants to know if there are any other countries Christy wants to travel to
- b. He does not think Christy will be allowed to go to Guatemala
- c. He is leading up to suggest a better place for her to study abroad
- d. He is curious if Christy can do her research in another country



Passage #2



Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.



[Listen to part of a talk in an astronomy class](#)

Source: Fraknoi, A., Morrison, D., & C. Wolff, S. C. (2016).

******Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student but essential for understanding the lecture.***

the capture theory

the fission theory

the sister theory

the giant impact
hypothesis



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. What is the professor mainly discussing?

- a. How the moon formed after a giant object impacted the Earth
- b. The composition of the moon in comparison to Earth
- c. Problems with theories about the origin of the moon
- d. Whether or not the moon was connected to the Earth at one point

2. How is the lecture organized?

- a. The professor discusses information previously learned before introducing a new idea
- b. The professor introduces an experiment and some possible problems with it
- c. The professor compares theories about the moon with other objects in space
- d. The professor gives a historical account of theories on the origin of the moon

3. What are some problems with the capture theory? Select two.

- a. There are too many chemical differences between the Earth and the moon
- b. It is more plausible that the Earth and the moon were never connected
- c. During entry into the solar system, the moon would have had too much energy to be captured
- d. The moon would have a strange orbital path if it were captured by Earth

4. Which theory about the moon is most likely true?

- a. The fission theory
- b. The giant impact hypothesis
- c. The sister theory
- d. The capture theory



5. What does the professor imply about the sister theory?

- a. Modern astronomers do not believe this theory is correct
- b. It explains why the moon is made out of the same materials as Earth
- c. The density of the moon compared to Earth proves it is true
- d. It was less popular than the capture and fission theories

6. Why is the giant impact hypothesis also problematic?

- a. The impact likely would have caused Earth to break apart into many pieces
- b. The moon is too small for such an impact
- c. There is more proof that the sister theory is correct
- d. There is no way to prove it is correct



Passage #3



Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a geology class.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.



[Listen to part of a talk in a geology class](#)

******Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student but essential for understanding the lecture.***

plate tectonics

Alfred Wegener

Pangaea

supercontinent



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. What is the purpose of the lecture?

- a. To describe how plate tectonics has contributed to the way Earth looks today
- b. To prove that plate tectonics is the reason Pangea broke up into several continents
- c. To provide examples of why it is important to have solid research to support scientific theories
- d. To explain why geology is an important subject to study

2. Why does the professor start the lecture by defining geology?

- a. To make sure the students know which class they are in
- b. To remind the students what they learned in the previous class
- c. To introduce the topic of plate tectonics and its relevance
- d. To compare it to plate tectonics

3. How is the lecture organized?

- a. The topic is introduced, followed by an example and a historical narrative
- b. Historical views of plate tectonics are compared to current theories
- c. A problem is introduced followed by a possible solution
- d. The topic is described and then followed by two examples

4. According to the lecture, what is the purpose of plate tectonics?

- a. To create valleys, volcanoes, and mountains
- b. To shape the continents
- c. It allows the earth to cool itself off
- d. It is a theory explained by continental drift

5. Why does the professor say this?

- a. To prove that she knows a lot about Wegener
- b. To emphasize Wegener's relevance to the topic
- c. To show the students that it is important to have dreams
- d. To describe what Wegener was like as a child



6. According to the lecture, what evidence did Wegener find to support his theory of Pangea? Select two.

- a. He found similarities in fossils on separate continents
- b. He discovered rare plants in Africa and South America
- c. He identified the continents were similar in shape
- d. He noticed a likeness between animal species living in South America and Africa



Passage #4



Directions: Now listen to a conversation between a student and a professor.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.



[Listen to a conversation between a student and a professor](#)



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. What do the professor and student mainly discuss?

- a. How the student can improve her grades
- b. What information must the student read
- c. Where the student can get access to books
- d. Why the professor has called her into the office

2. Why is the student confused?

- a. She believes that she understood the writing assignment
- b. She thought the deadline for submitting her work was later than it was
- c. The professor's instructions for completing the homework were wrong
- d. She misunderstood which books she should read to complete the task

3. Listen again to part of the conversation. Why does the student say this?

- a. To ask the professor to explain his expectations again
- b. To prove the professor misworded the assignment instructions
- c. To confirm she has understood what the professor wanted
- d. To give an example of a topic she could discuss in her essay

4. Listen again to part of the conversation. What does the professor imply when he says this?

- a. His instructions for the assignment were confusing
- b. The student should have asked if something was unclear
- c. Most of the other students understood the assignment
- d. A number of students submitted excellent assignments

5. What do you think the student is most likely to do next?

- a. Start to work on the assignment again
- b. Submit a formal complaint about the professor
- c. Ask another professor to look at her assignment
- d. Wait until the weekend to work on the assignment



Passage #5



Directions: Now listen to part of a talk in a psychology class.

NOTE TO STUDENT:

Do NOT look at the questions on the next page until after you listen. Get a pen and a piece of paper and get ready to take notes. Click the icon above or the link below when you're ready.



[Listen to part of a talk in a psychology class](#)

******Vocabulary is sometimes provided in written form when it may be unfamiliar to the student but essential for understanding the lecture.***

circadian rhythm

sleep debt



Directions: Now, answer the questions.

1. What is the lecture mainly about?

- a. What happens when you do not get enough sleep in college
- b. How many hours of sleep should people get each night
- c. The effects of sleep deprivation on the body
- d. Why people need plenty of sleep

2. Why does the professor start the lecture talking about circadian rhythms?

- a. To provide an example of sleep debt
- b. To begin his lecture on this topic, even though he changes the subject
- c. To later compare sleep deprivation to circadian rhythms
- d. To introduce the idea that lack of sleep disrupts our natural sleep cycle

3. Why does the professor mention college students in the lecture?

- a. To show that he empathizes with his students
- b. To prove that sleep debt is an important topic because it is relevant
- c. To highlight the need for his students to sleep more
- d. To show that college students have too much work interfering with their sleep

4. What does the professor imply about the dangers of sleep deprivation?

- a. It could be as dangerous as driving a car while intoxicated
- b. People could fall asleep no matter what they are doing
- c. The person will probably do a poor job at work and may risk getting fired
- d. It may lead to overconsumption of alcohol

5. Which one of the following is an indicator that you might suffer from sleep debt?

- a. You tend to fall asleep at 10 pm or earlier
- b. You wake up multiple times throughout the night
- c. You fall asleep easily when you lie down during the day
- d. Your age since almost all young people and college students have sleep debt



6. Why does the professor say this?

- a. To tell the class how many hours of sleep per day someone over 65 years old gets
- b. To prove that people are more sleep-deprived as they age
- c. To emphasize the idea that older people get less sleep naturally
- d. To give an example of an average night's sleep for a 65-year-old



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Practice Test #13
For the TOEFL® Listening Section
Answer Key



The Grading Rubric

Use the chart below to determine your score in the listening section.

There are only 28 questions in this section, but the highest raw score **might be** different. Questions that require multiple answers, usually in the form of tables, are worth two points.

For questions with two choices, if two choices are correct, you get one point. If one of the choices is incorrect, you earn zero points for the given question.

If you correctly filled out the given table, award yourself two points. If you made one mistake in the table, award yourself one point. If you made two mistakes or more, you earn zero points for the given question.

Raw Points	Score Estimate	Raw Points	Score Estimate	Raw Points	Score Estimate
28	30	18	20	8	9
27	29	17	18	7	8
26	28	16	17	6	7
25	27	15	16	5	5
24	26	14	15	4	4
23	25	13	14	3	3
22	24	12	13	2	2
21	23	11	12	1	1
20	22	10	11		
19	21	9	10		



Passage #1: Transcript**1. B (Gist-Purpose)**

A seems like the correct answer at first because the conversation starts with the student and professor talking about the student's paper, but then the student says that she wants to talk to the professor about the student exchange program. She then reveals that she wants to study specifically in Guatemala. So **B** is the correct answer. She says:

"-Speaking of real-world applications... that's sort of what I wanted to talk to you about... the student exchange program.

-Oh, sure, absolutely. Are you thinking of going somewhere? That's a great program.

-Well, I have a couple of places in mind... but I really have my heart set on Guatemala."

2. B, C (Detail)

In the beginning, the professor mentions that Christy wrote her paper about farming practices on \$10 a day, but Christy does not say this is a reason she wants to go to Guatemala, so **A** is not correct. Also, **D** is not correct because she says that she knows a little bit of Spanish but not that she necessarily wants to learn more. Instead, she says she wants to go to Guatemala because she has already done research on it, and it has the agricultural, economic, and environmental conditions that she wants to continue studying.

"-I think Guatemala would be the most relevant place for me... it would be perfect to go there so I can do some research about my ideas.

-I can see where you're coming from, Christy. I think you have some good reasons. I hate to tell you this, but the exchange program in Guatemala is only for Spanish majors, and the Spanish department is usually pretty strict about that. No, there has to be some way I can go. I've already done so much research about it. Guatemala is perfect for my research. It has the exact type of agricultural practices, economy, and environmental conditions I want to study and explore."



3. A (Detail)

A is the correct answer. **C** and **D** are never mentioned in the conversation. The professor says explicitly that the program in Guatemala is only for Spanish majors; therefore, Christy technically cannot go. In addition, the professor mentions twice that the Spanish department generally does not let students who are not Spanish majors go on the trip. Even though the Spanish department is in charge, the reason she cannot go is that she is not a Spanish major, which is why **B** is incorrect. He says:

"-I can see where you're coming from, Christy. I think you have some good reasons. I hate to tell you this, but the exchange program in Guatemala is only for Spanish majors, and the Spanish department is usually pretty strict about that.

-No, there has to be some way I can go. I've already done so much research about it. Guatemala is perfect for my research. It has the exact type of agricultural practices, economy, and environmental conditions I want to study and explore.

-You make a fair argument, but have you thought of other places? I really wouldn't want you to get your hopes up since it's a program run by the Spanish department, and I can't remember the last time a student was able to go who wasn't a Spanish major."

4. B, C (Detail)

Near the end of the conversation, when the professor agrees to talk to the Spanish department, he tells Christy why he thinks it could be a good idea for her to go to Guatemala. He says: *"Look, I want you to have the opportunity to go, and I agree that it could be an ideal place for your research. Since you are very passionate about going, I will talk to the person in charge of the situation and see if they can find a way to accommodate you,"* so **B** and **C** are the correct answers. **D** is not correct because the professor never mentions that Christy knowing some Spanish will help her situation. Choice **A** is never mentioned or implied.

5. B (Understanding the Function)

D looks like it could be the correct answer, but the reason for the question is not out of curiosity. The professor agrees with Christy that she has good reasons to go to Guatemala. He says: *"You make a fair argument, but have you thought of other places?"* Having already told Christy she probably will not be able to go to Guatemala because she is not a Spanish major, the professor wants to see if Christy has any other options in mind. Therefore, **B** is the best option.



Passage #1: Transcript

Woman: Hi Professor, you got a minute?

Man: Sure, Christy. Did you pick up your paper yet? I just finished grading them, and I was really impressed with yours.

Woman: Really?

Man: Of course, I loved your arguments and what you wrote about farming for less than \$10 a day. It really has incredible real-world applications...I can tell you put a lot of thought into this paper.

Woman: Speaking of real-world applications, that's sort of what I wanted to talk to you about the student exchange program.

Man: Oh sure, absolutely. Are you thinking of going somewhere? That's a great program.

Woman: Well, I have a couple of places in mind, but I really have my heart set on Guatemala.

Man: What draws you to Guatemala?

Woman: I think Guatemala would be the most relevant place for me. It would be perfect to go there so I can do some research about my ideas.

Man: I can see where you're coming from, Christy. I think you have some good reasons. I hate to tell you this, but the exchange program in Guatemala is only for Spanish majors, and the Spanish department is usually pretty strict about that.

Woman: Nooo, there has to be some way I can go. I've already done so much research about it. Guatemala is perfect for my research. It has the exact type of agricultural practices, economy, and environmental conditions I want to study and explore.

Man: You make a fair argument, but have you thought of other places? I really wouldn't want you to get your hopes up since it's a program run by the Spanish department, and I can't remember the last time a student was able to go who wasn't a Spanish major.

Woman: That doesn't seem fair! Is there nothing I can do? They must have let someone go before who isn't a Spanish major, right? I mean, I know some Spanish, if that's any consolation.

Man: Look, I want you to have the opportunity to go, and I agree that it could be an ideal place for your research. Since you are very passionate about going, I will talk to the person in charge of the situation and see if they can find a way to accommodate you.

Woman: Really, professor? Thank you! Thank you! That means so much to me.

Man: I think you should prepare a solid argument to present to the Spanish department, just in case. Can you do that?

Woman: Of course, absolutely, I'll do anything. I will be ready!

Man: Ok, glad to hear it. Let me talk to the department, and I will let you know if anything changes, ok?

Woman: Ok! Thanks, Professor!



Passage #2: Answer Key

Source: Fraknoi, A., Morrison, D., & C. Wolff, S. C. (2016).

1. C (Gist-Content)

The answer is **C** because the entire lecture is based on describing different theories of how the moon was created and then discussing the problems with each theory. **A** is incorrect because this is a detail mentioned toward the end of the talk. **B** and **D** are also details that are indeed true and mentioned in the passage but are not the main idea.

2. A (Understanding Organization)

A is the correct answer because, at the very beginning of the lecture, the professor says, *"We talked about three possible solutions, uh, more like theories, about how the moon was created. Can anyone tell me the name of one of these theories?"*. Therefore, the lecture is then based on discussing these three theories, after which the professor introduces a new theory they have not talked about yet. **B** is incorrect because the professor mentions an experiment with the impact, but this is not how the lecture is organized. **C** is never mentioned, and **D** is incorrect because there is no historical account, only a report, and summation of the theories about the moon's formation.

3. C, D (Detail)

C and **D** are the correct answers. One must rely on memory or notes on the problems associated with each theory. The professor says, *"...no one knows of any way that Earth could have captured such a large moon from elsewhere. One body approaching another cannot go into orbit around it without a serious loss of energy. Furthermore, if such a capture did take place, the captured object would go into a very strange orbit rather than the nearly circular orbit our moon goes through today."* **A** is incorrect because chemical differences are mentioned later in the passage. **B** is incorrect because it is not connected to the capture theory, and the lecturer will later point out that it is more likely that the Earth and the moon were connected at some point.

4. B (Detail)

We know that **B** is the correct answer because the professor says:

"Now, in an effort to resolve these apparent contradictions, scientists developed a fourth hypothesis for the origin of the moon, one that involves a giant impact early in Earth's history... While we do not have any current way of showing that the giant impact hypothesis is the correct model of the moon's origin, it does offer potential solutions to most of the major problems raised by the chemistry of the moon."

The other choices are mentioned at the beginning of the passage but later dispelled for various reasons.



5. A (Making Inferences)

The author says that *"the sister theory was the dominant idea accepted by most astronomers in the past, but, like the capture and fission theory, it had some problems,"* and then in the next part of the lecture, she states that *"...in an effort to resolve these apparent contradictions, scientists developed a fourth hypothesis for the origin of the moon."* Therefore, **A** is the correct answer choice because we can infer that modern astronomers do not believe this theory is correct since the professor said *"astronomers of the past"* and that scientists developed a fourth hypothesis. **B** is wrong because this is a problematic conclusion of the fission theory, not an inference about the sister theory. Option **C** is incorrect because the professor says that the lower density of the moon compared to Earth is why this theory is problematic. **D** is not correct because, if anything, the professor implies that it was more popular than the former two theories.

6. D (Detail)

Although the professor talks about the giant impact hypothesis positively, this is because it is the best explanation available so far. However, the professor points out that scientists actually are not able to prove this is the correct model. She says, *"While we do not have any current way of showing that the giant impact hypothesis is the correct model of the moon's origin, it does offer potential solutions to most of the major problems raised by the chemistry of the moon."* **A** is incorrect because the professor mentions that the object hitting the Earth had to be just big enough to break off a piece of Earth but not so big that it would destroy the planet. **B** and **C** are never mentioned.



Passage #2: Transcript

Source: Fraknoi, A., Morrison, D., & C. Wolff, S. C. (2016).

So I would like to continue our discussion about the moon, more particularly about the origins of the moon and how it was actually created.

We talked about three possible solutions, uh, more like theories, about how the moon was created. Can anyone tell me the name of one of these theories?

Sarah.

Well, I do remember the capture theory, which proposes that the moon was located somewhere else in the galaxy until, eventually, it was kind of, like, captured by the Earth's gravitational pull.

Yes, and I'm glad you started with the capture theory because it's the easiest one to reject. Its primary drawback is that no one knows of any way that early Earth could have captured such a large moon from elsewhere. One body approaching another cannot go into orbit around it without a serious loss of energy. Furthermore, if such a capture did take place, the captured object would go into a very strange orbit rather than the nearly circular orbit our moon goes through today. Finally, there are too many similarities in composition between Earth and the moon. It's much more likely than the Earth and the moon were somehow connected at one point in the past.

What was another theory discussed, James?

The fission theory. Like you just said, the moon was once a part of the Earth but somehow separated from it early in their history. But I remember you mentioned some problems with this theory, too.

Yes, the fission theory suggests that the moon separated from the Earth, but modern calculations have shown that this type of splitting is nearly impossible. Furthermore, it is difficult to understand how a moon made out of materials from the Earth could have developed so many chemical differences from our own.

And the third? James again.

Yeah, the last one is the sister theory. It claims that the moon formed together with the Earth but also remained independent from it. This is what many other astronomers once believed of other moons in the solar system, too.

Yes, the sister theory was the dominant idea accepted by most astronomers in the past, but, like the capture and fission theory, it had some problems, particularly when trying to explain how it could have such a lower density when compared to the Earth.

Now, in an effort to resolve these apparent contradictions, scientists developed a fourth hypothesis for the origin of the moon, one that involves a giant impact early in Earth's history. This idea, known as the giant impact



hypothesis, proposes that Earth was struck by an object approximately one-tenth of Earth's mass, which is about the size of Mars. This is very nearly the largest impact Earth could experience without being shattered.

Such an impact would disrupt much of Earth and eject a vast amount of material into space, releasing almost enough energy to break the planet apart. Computer simulations indicate that material totaling several percent of Earth's mass could be ejected in such an impact. Most of this material would be from the stony mantles of Earth and the impacting body, not from their metal cores. This ejected rock would then cool and form a ring of material orbiting Earth. It was this ring that ultimately came together and formed the moon.

While we do not have any current way of showing that the giant impact hypothesis is the correct model of the moon's origin, it does offer potential solutions to most of the major problems raised by the chemistry of the moon. Most importantly, since the moon's raw material is from the deep rocks of Earth and the asteroid that hit it, the composition and chemistry of the moon is better understood and explained.



Passage #3: Answer Key**1. A (Gist-Content)**

A is correct because not only does the professor talk about how plate tectonics has formed valleys, mountains, and volcanoes in the first half of the lecture, but she also continues to discuss the theory that plate tectonics formed the continents that we know today. **B** is incorrect because the professor does not prove the plate tectonics theory in her lecture. **C** is also wrong because, although the professor mentions this at the end, it is not the main purpose of the lecture.

2. C (Understanding Organization)

A and **B** are incorrect because the lecturer never mentions what the students learned in a previous class, nor does she give any indication that some of the students may be in the wrong class. **D** can also be eliminated because plate tectonics is a concept in the field of geology, not something that can be compared to geology.

3. A (Understanding Organization)

A is the better choice here. The professor spends the first half of the lecture discussing what plate tectonics is, and then the second half of the lecture is an example of plate tectonics in theory through a historical narrative. **B** is not correct because there is no comparison of theories. **D** is also incorrect because the professor gives one example followed by a historical narrative, not two examples.

4. C (Detail)

C is the correct answer because the professor says, *"Looking at it from a different perspective, plate tectonics is a way for Earth to transport heat efficiently from the interior, where it has accumulated, out to space. It is a cooling system for the planet. All planets develop a heat transfer process as they evolve."* **A** and **B** are not correct because these are the effects of plate tectonics, not the purpose. **D** is also incorrect because continental drift is actually the theory that is explained by plate tectonics, not the other way around.

5. B (Understanding the Function)

B is the correct answer because it best describes the function of this statement. **B** is the only answer which relates to the main idea of the lecture. Therefore, **A**, **C**, and **D** can be eliminated because, although true, they do not relate to the purpose of the lecture or the information the professor gives to the students.



6. A, D (Detail)

A and **D** are correct because the professor says:

"Wegener's evidence went far beyond the similarities in the shapes of the continents. He proposed that the similarities between fossils found only in South America and Africa indicated that these two continents were joined at one time. He also showed that similarities among living animal species on different continents could best be explained by assuming that the continents were once connected in a supercontinent he called Pangaea (from Greek elements pan meaning "all" and gaea meaning "land")."

B is not correct because the professor never mentions rare plants. **C** is wrong because the shapes of the continents were the reason for his theory, not evidence that supported his theory.



Passage #3: Transcript

Geology is the study of Earth's crust and the processes that have shaped its surface throughout history. Heat escaping from the interior provides energy for the formation of our planet's mountains, valleys, volcanoes, and even the continents and oceans themselves. But not until the middle of the twentieth century did geologists succeed in understanding just how these landforms are created.

Plate tectonics is a theory that explains how slow motions within the earth's interior move large pieces of land, resulting in a gradual "drifting" or spreading out of the continents. Plate tectonics is a concept as basic to geology as evolution by natural selection is to biology, or gravity is to understanding the orbits of planets. Looking at it from a different perspective, plate tectonics is a way for Earth to transport heat efficiently from the interior, where it has accumulated, out to space. It is a cooling system for the planet. All planets develop a heat transfer process as they evolve.

Earth's crust is divided into about a dozen tectonic plates that fit together like the pieces of a puzzle. In some places, such as the Atlantic Ocean, the plates are moving apart; in others, such as off the western coast of South America, they are being forced together. The power to move the plates is provided through a process by which heat escapes from the interior through the upward flow of warmer material and the slow sinking of cooler material.

As the plates slowly move, they bump into each other and cause dramatic changes in Earth's crust over time.

You know, when studying maps of Earth, many students notice that the coast of North and South America could fit pretty well against the coast of Europe and Africa. It seems as if these great landmasses could have once have been together and then were somehow torn apart. The same idea had occurred to others, including Francis Bacon, as early as 1620, but not until the twentieth century could such a proposal be more than just speculation. The scientist who made the case for continental drift in 1920 was the German meteorologist named Alfred Wegener.

Born in Berlin in 1880, Wegener, from an early age, dreamed of exploring. Later in his life, his interests turned more toward Earth's weather. He carried out experiments using kites and balloons, becoming so accomplished that he and his brother set a world record in 1906 by flying for 52 hours in a balloon.

Wegener first thought of continental drift in 1910 while examining a world map in an atlas, but it took 2 years for him to assemble enough data to propose the idea in public. He published the results in book form in 1915. Wegener's evidence went far beyond the similarities in the shapes of the continents. He proposed that the similarities between fossils found only in South America and Africa indicated that these two continents were joined at one time. He also showed that similarities among living animal species on different continents could be best explained by assuming that the continents were once connected in a supercontinent he called Pangaea (from Greek elements pan meaning "all" and gaea meaning "land").



Wegener's suggestion was met with a hostile reaction from most scientists. Although he had collected an impressive list of arguments for his hypothesis, he was missing a mechanism. No one could explain how solid continents could drift over thousands of miles. A few scientists were impressed by Wegener's work and continued searching for additional evidence, but many found the idea of moving continents too revolutionary to take seriously. Developing an understanding of the mechanism --plate tectonics-- would take decades of further research.

Critics of science often point to the resistance to the continental drift hypothesis as an example of the flawed way that scientists regard new ideas. But there is a more positive light in which to view Wegener's story. Scientists in his day maintained a skeptical attitude because they needed more evidence and a clear mechanism that would fit what they understood about nature. Once the evidence was clear, Wegener's hypothesis quickly became the centerpiece of our view of a dynamic Earth.



Passage #4: Answer Key**1. D (Gist-Content)**

After listening to the entire passage, it becomes clear that **D** is the best answer. **A** is incorrect because her grades are never mentioned in the passage. **B** is incorrect because the student does not have to read any additional materials, but instead redo her assignment. **C** is incorrect because, while books are mentioned in the conversation, accessing the books is not the main discussion.

2. A (Detail)

In the passage, the student states, *"Really? I remember the assignment, and I'm sure it said to review a book from the reading list."* Therefore, **A** is the best answer. **B** is incorrect because deadlines are not mentioned in regard to the original assignment. **C** is not right because the professor later says, *"And as you are the only person who misunderstood the assignment, I don't think what I wrote was unclear, do you?"*. **D** is incorrect because the professor never says she used the wrong books on the assignment.

3. C (Understanding the Function)

The student was confused when she first arrived, but at this point in the conversation, it is becoming a bit clearer. When she says, *"So, you were using the phrase 'review a book' in the assignment to mean something like 'study the book' rather than 'write a review of the book?'"* She is confirming what the professor meant by an important word in the assignment, so **C** is the best answer. **A** is wrong because the phrasing of these questions indicates that she is not asking the professor to explain anything to her again, and his reply, *"Yes, that's exactly right,"* also indicates this. **B** is not correct because, as the rest of the conversation explains, the professor did not misword the assignment, rather the student misread the assignment.

4. C (Making Inferences)

In response to the student's question, the teacher responds, *"Yes, that's exactly right. And as you are the only person who misunderstood the assignment, I don't think what I wrote was unclear, do you?"*. The last part of this question is what is being asked. **C** is the best answer because he is implying that since she was the only one to misunderstand, his instructions were not confusing because all other students understood the assignment correctly except her. This comment does not address how well the other students did, so **D** is incorrect. **B** is also wrong because there is nothing in this statement to imply that the student should have asked if something was unclear.



5. A (Making Inferences)

A is correct because, toward the end of the conversation, the woman asks the professor, *"Can I submit a revised assignment next week on Tuesday or Wednesday?"* **B** is incorrect because while there is confusion about the wording of the assignment, it is never implied through words or tone that she will submit a complaint. **C** is also never implied, and **D** is incorrect because the professor states at the very end, *"Actually, Anya, it's only Monday. So, I'd like it before the weekend, please."*



Passage #4: Transcript

Woman: Hi professor, you wanted to see me?

Man: Yes, come in, Anya. It's about the paper you submitted for your assignment. I'm afraid I'm going to ask you to do the assignment again.

Woman: Really? I'm kind of shocked. I mean, I worked so hard on that paper-- wasn't it good?

Man: I can see how much work you put in. In many ways, it's a very good assignment, but...

Woman: I'm confused. If it's good, why do I have to do it again?

Man: I understand that you are upset, Anya, but let me finish, OK? The situation isn't nearly as bad as you think. As I was saying, your assignment was well-written and well-researched, but it wasn't what I asked you to do. You submitted a review of one of the books from a reading list, but the assignment I said was to write an essay.

Woman: Really? I remember the assignment, and I'm sure it said to review a book from the reading list.

Man: It did say that, but here.. let me get the actual assignment and read it. Here we go. It says, 'Review one of the three books on this week's reading list and then write an essay that compares the arguments in the book with those we discussed in class.' Do you see the difference? I wanted you to review the opinions in the book and then write about how that differ from what we discussed in class. And you just reviewed the book and didn't address the second part of the assignment at all.

Woman: So, you were using the phrase 'review a book' in the assignment to mean something like 'study the book' rather than write a review for the book?

Man: Yes, that's exactly right. And as you are the only person who misunderstood the assignment, I don't think what I wrote was unclear, do you?

Woman: I see. Listen, I'm really sorry about my mistake, professor. Can I submit a revised assignment next week on Tuesday or Wednesday?

Man: Actually, Anya, it's only Monday. So, I'd like it before the weekend, please.



Passage #5: Answer Key**1. C (Gist-Content)**

A, **B**, and **D** are all true, yet they do not capture the topic of the entire lecture. Instead, **A**, **B**, and **D** are too specific to certain parts of the lecture. **C** is the best answer because it best summarizes the main idea of the lecture.

2. D (Understanding Organization)

D is the correct answer because the professor mentions the sleep-wake cycle as an example of a circadian rhythm and then gets into what happens when this cycle is disrupted. **A** is incorrect because circadian rhythms are not examples of sleep debt. **B** is incorrect because he never changes the subject. **C** is wrong because he does not compare circadian rhythms to sleep deprivation.

3. B (Understanding Organization)

Remember that the professor is trying to give the students relevant and important information. With this in mind, **B** is clearly the correct answer. The professor never mentions or reveals how much sleep the students get, so **A** and **C** are irrelevant. Similarly, it is not clear whether **D** is a true statement or not.

4. A (Making Inferences)

A is the correct answer because the professor states, *"Some research suggests that sleep deprivation affects cognitive and motor function as much as if not more than, alcohol intoxication."* **B** is too extreme, in that people could fall asleep *"no matter what"* they are doing, to be the answer here. **C** could potentially be true, but it is something that is not even mentioned in the lecture. **D** sounds possible because we hear the word alcohol in the lecture, but the professor is actually comparing the effects of sleep to alcohol intoxication.

5. C (Detail)

C is the correct answer because the professor states, *"If you lie down to take a nap and fall asleep very easily, chances are you may have a sleep debt."* **A** and **B** are never mentioned in the passage. In regard to choice **D**, the professor mentions that *"Given that college students are famous for suffering from significant sleep debt, chances are you and your classmates deal with these issues on a regular basis,"* but this does not mean that *"almost all"* college students have sleep debt, which is why **D** can be eliminated.



6. C (Understanding the Function)

The professor says, *"In fact, recent research indicates that by the time we are 65 years old, we average fewer than 7 hours of sleep per day."* Based on the keywords the professor uses, *"in fact"* and *"research shows us,"* **A** and **D** can be eliminated. **B** and **C** are the most relevant here because these keywords indicate that the professor is trying to prove something or state why it is a true fact. **B** can be eliminated because, although we sleep less when we are older, it is not necessarily because we are sleep-deprived, so **C** is the best answer.



Passage #5: Transcript

All right, let's settle down and start talking about everyone's favorite subject: sleep.

And we are going to start with your circadian rhythm.

So, a circadian rhythm is a biological rhythm that takes place over a period of about 24 hours. It's basically how we biologically experience each day. Our sleep-wake cycle, which is linked to our environment's natural light-dark cycle, is perhaps the most obvious example of a circadian rhythm, but we also have daily fluctuations.

Now, does anyone remember a few other examples? Janet?

Yes, I think that your glucose level changes based on the last time you ate.

Yes, that's right, anyone else?

I think they also mentioned heart rate and body temperature, but I forget the specific examples.

Don't worry about that, George. We will discuss these other circadian rhythms in much more detail later in the course. For now, the most important thing to keep in mind about circadian cycles is that they are usually aligned with the outside world. For example, most people sleep during the night and are awake during the day. Now, one important regulator of sleep-wake cycles is the hormone melatonin. Melatonin release is stimulated by darkness and inhibited by light.

When people have difficulty getting sleep due to their work or the demands of day-to-day life, they accumulate a sleep debt. A person with a sleep debt does not get sufficient sleep on a chronic basis. The consequences of sleep debt include decreased levels of alertness and mental efficiency. Interestingly, since the advent of the electric light, the amount of sleep that people get has declined. While we certainly welcome the convenience of having the darkness lit up, we also suffer the consequences of reduced amounts of sleep because we are more active during the nighttime hours than our ancestors were. As a result, many of us sleep less than 7–8 hours a night and accumulate a sleep debt. While there is tremendous variation in any given individual's sleep needs, the National Sleep Foundation cites research to estimate that newborns require the most sleep, between 12 and 18 hours a night and that this amount declines to just 7–9 hours by the time we are adults.

If you lie down to take a nap and fall asleep very easily, chances are you may have a sleep debt. Given that college students are famous for suffering from significant sleep debt, chances are you and your classmates deal with these issues on a regular basis.



Sleep debt and sleep deprivation have significant negative psychological and physiological consequences. As mentioned earlier, lack of sleep can result in decreased mental alertness and cognitive function. In addition, sleep deprivation often results in depression-like symptoms. These effects can occur as a function of accumulated sleep debt or in response to more acute periods of sleep deprivation. It may surprise you to know that sleep deprivation is associated with obesity, increased blood pressure, increased levels of stress, and reduced immune functioning. A sleep-deprived individual generally will fall asleep more quickly than if they were not sleep deprived. Some sleep-deprived individuals have difficulty staying awake when they stop moving, for example, sitting and watching television or driving a car. That is why individuals suffering from sleep deprivation can also put themselves and others at risk when they go behind the wheel of a car or work with dangerous machinery. Some research suggests that sleep deprivation affects cognitive and motor function as much as if not more than, alcohol intoxication.

The amount of sleep we get varies across our lives. When we are very young, we spend up to 16 hours a day sleeping. As we grow older, we sleep less. In fact, recent research indicates that by the time we are 65 years old, we average fewer than 7 hours of sleep per day. As the amount of time we sleep varies over our lifespan, presumably, the sleep debt would adjust accordingly.



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