

Practice Test #13


FOR THE TOEFL®
WRITING SECTION



Practice Test #13
*For the TOEFL®
Writing Section*




The TOEFL Writing Section: *Directions*

 This section measures your ability to use writing to communicate in an academic environment. There will be two writing tasks.

For the first writing task, you will read a passage and listen to a lecture and then answer a question based on what you have read and heard.

For the second task, you will read an online discussion. A professor has posted a question about a topic, and some classmates have responded with their ideas. You will write a response that contributes to the discussion.

When you see the audio icon  it means that there is an audio version of the text. [Please click the icon to get redirected to the audio file.](#)

If you would like to see a model essay of the question you are answering, you can refer to the answer key.

When you're ready, turn the page to see the directions for the first writing task.



Writing Task 1 - Integrated Question



Directions: For this task, you will read a passage and listen to a lecture about an academic topic.

You may take notes during this time. After the passages have finished, you will then be asked a question about them. After the question, you will have 20 minutes to write your response. Effective responses are usually between 200 to 350 words. You may look at the reading passage and your notes as you write. Keep in mind that the question will not ask for your opinion.

You have 3 minutes to read. You may begin reading now.

These days, if you pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV or radio, you may hear or read about the advantages of driverless cars, also called self-driving or autonomous cars. The technology is simple to understand: using sensors and computers, these cars can drive without input from a human. This might sound like science fiction, but such vehicles are already on our roads and they will have a positive impact on our driving experience.

Traffic accidents are a leading cause of injuries and fatalities in the United States, and studies show that most crashes are caused by human error. The software that runs driverless cars is not capable of making mistakes. As a result, such vehicles will be much safer. One technology company has a self-driving car that has driven for over 700,000 miles – over one million kilometers – without an accident: a better record than all but the best human drivers.

In addition, self-driving vehicles are good for the environment because they drive more efficiently. On a typical journey within a city, drivers deal with urban traffic by stopping and starting their engines repeatedly. This type of driving means engines work less efficiently and this causes a lot of pollution. Driverless cars, on the other hand, can communicate with other vehicles, which will reduce traffic problems. Autonomous cars will be able to start and stop their engines less often and travel at higher speeds.

Finally, autonomous cars will give passengers time. Instead of having to focus on driving, human occupants can focus on other things. The average time for commuting to and from work in the United States is about thirty minutes each way. Instead of using this time to focus on the road, passengers in driverless cars can read, watch videos, or catch up on work.



Now listen to part of a lecture on the same topic you just read about.



After you listen to the passage, answer the question.

Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they cast doubt on the specific points made in the reading passage.

You have 20 minutes to plan and write your response.



Writing Task 2 - Writing for an Academic Discussion

Your professor is teaching a class on education. Write a post responding to the professor's question.

In your response, you should do the following.

- Express and support your opinion.
- Make a contribution to the discussion in your own words.

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.



Mr. Smith

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. Do you think that the focus on STEM subjects should outweigh the importance of liberal arts education? Why or why not?



Sam

I believe that while STEM education is crucial for technological advancement and addressing global challenges, it should not overshadow the importance of liberal arts education. A well-rounded education that includes subjects like literature, history, and philosophy fosters critical thinking, creativity, and a broader understanding of the human experience.



Ally

In today's rapidly evolving world, the focus on STEM education is justified. The demand for STEM-related skills and expertise is increasing, and prioritizing STEM education can better equip individuals for the changing job market. However, integrating elements of liberal arts education within STEM curricula can foster interdisciplinary thinking and cultivate a more holistic approach to problem-solving.

Space for typing answers on test day. You will have ten minutes to read and write.



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



Integrated Writing Transcript

A lot of people are very excited about driverless cars, but most of the media attention and praise ignores the problems with driverless cars. The author seems to believe that autonomous cars will cure all of our driving troubles when nothing could be further from the truth.

Take the idea the driverless cars will be safer. Remember, all computer software is designed by humans, so any type of automatic guidance system within driverless cars will be prone to error. For example, the driverless car mentioned by the author, the one that drove over 700,000 miles without an accident, actually hit another car just last month. It was all over the news because it makes everyone doubt just how safe driverless cars actually are.

And what about the idea that driverless cars will reduce pollution? Well, some studies suggest that more people will begin to drive once driverless cars become available. Since people will no longer need a driver's license to get behind the wheel, age restrictions for both young and old will no longer matter. More people will be on the road, and it will increase the number of cars. Pollution levels may actually increase with driverless cars, even if they drive in a more fuel-efficient manner.

As for the extra time the driverless cars are supposed to give us, well, that may not be such a benefit after all. You see, most people nowadays find driving relaxing. They enjoy driving their cars while listening to music or talk radio. It's a welcome distraction from the usual routine. Once people start to use driverless cars, it becomes another space to do work or watch videos, which is how most people already spend most of their day. I'm afraid that this extra time in driverless cars will just be another way to work or waste time.



Task #1: Integrated Writing

The article introduces the topic of driverless cars. More specifically, the writer discusses the benefits of using driverless car technology. The lecturer in the listening passage disagrees. He believes that driverless cars are potentially dangerous and attacks each of the claims made in the reading.

In the reading, the author begins by stating that driverless cars are safer than ones operated by humans. In the listening, the speaker mentions that driverless cars are made by humans, which implies that they can malfunction. On top of that, the example mentioned in the article about the car that drove thousands of miles without an incident actually got into an accident just last month.

The author also claims that driverless cars are safer for the environment because they will be more efficient in managing when to stop and start the engine. Again, the lecturer believes there are flaws in the writer's logic. The speaker holds that more people will buy driverless cars because there will be fewer age restrictions. Younger teens and older seniors will be able to drive since they don't have to control the vehicle, which, in turn, will lead to an increase in emissions.

Another reason why the author feels that driverless cars are a more efficient alternative to the current driving system is that they provide passengers with increased time to focus on work and other important matters. The professor in the listening passage is doubtful that this extra time will be helpful. Most people enjoy the time they spend driving because they can listen to music and relax in a different type of environment. The lecturer believes that this extra time will be wasted with distracting entertainment or extra work.

To sum up, both the writer and professor hold conflicting views about driverless cars. It's clear that they will have trouble finding some common ground on this issue.



Writing Task 2 - Writing for an Academic Discussion

“Do you think that the focus on STEM subjects should outweigh the importance of liberal arts education? Why or why not?”

In my opinion, STEM subjects should be prioritized over liberal art subjects. My personal belief is that students who are proficient in STEM subjects tend to get better jobs. For example, while in university, I studied computer programming, and when I graduated, I was offered over \$200,000 per year to work in cyber security. The salary was so high because the demand was constantly increasing. In contrast, the number of available teaching or art history jobs remains relatively the same.

Additionally, a solid STEM background is required to use simple day-to-day products because technology is advancing rapidly. In fact, the average smartphone has many advanced programs, such as photo and video editing, which require basic technological know-how. Moreover, new programs like ChatGPT can allow people with a STEM background to take full advantage of the rapidly developing features in the field of AI.



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