

## Some Important Points about the Book

The book you are going to read has been written based on the fascinating book of “Barron’s How to Prepare for the TOEFL Essay (2nd Edition)”, 2004, by Lin Lougheed. This great book inspired me to write a book for the TOEFL iBT Writing Task 2, which is intended for the intermediate to **advanced candidates** who want to take part in the TOEFL iBT Test and achieve a high score in the writing section. It helps you to build necessary skills to address the writing task in an excellent manner. It also familiarizes you with the format of TOEFL iBT Writing Tasks and teaches essential test-taking strategies to help you guarantee a great score.

For the Independent Writing Task, all the nine types of writing tasks, that is, **Stating a Preference**, type 1 and type 2; **Agree or Disagree**, type 1, type 2, and type 3; **Argument; Explanation; Compare and Contrast** the Advantages and Disadvantages of Something; and Compare the Advantages of Two Things, are separately and fully discussed. For all of these nine types, quite a few samples, including my own samples, are presented so that you become familiar with them. There are **more than 210 Independent Writing samples** based on **183 Topics**, including all **TPO 1 to 55 Writing Questions**, some of which are on **Avaye Shahir Site** and some in the book. To find a specific sample, you can search the topic in **a PDF file** named **“Topics Written in the Book in Order They Appear There,”** which is available on the site. There are many other writing samples on the site, written based on the most recent iBT TOEFL tests in many of these samples, the mistakes have been crossed out, and the correct word or structure is mentioned after them. These corrections greatly help you become aware of the mistakes others have made and help you avoid them in your own writing. It also contains some sections for punctuation, grammar, and common mistakes that are of great help to those who want to take part in such exams as **IELTS, GMAT**, and **GRE** tests in general and to those wanting to take the **TOEFL** test in particular.

Since the vocabularies used in the example answers seem to be difficult to follow, a **glossary** was prepared for these words, which is also available on the site. These words or phrases are either underlined or boldfaced all through the book.

Apart from what you learn from this book for the writing tasks, this book is an invaluable source of practical vocabulary that is good for your general English and is full of great ideas that will help you in TOEFL iBT Speaking Task as well.

It is worth mentioning that the writing samples in this book may look, in some cases, too advanced to have been written within the given time, thirty minutes. My students have spent much time writing these samples, and their writing samples have been edited by the author of the book. Therefore, I hope these advanced samples do not discourage you, because a sample writing which is much simpler than these samples, concerning quality, words and grammar structures, and quantity, number of words, can still earn a high score. The **writing samples** are categorized into **four groups** and are identified with: **“Level 1”** for almost pre-intermediate samples, **“Level 2”** for intermediate samples, **“Level 3”** for upper-intermediate samples, and **“Level 4”** for advanced samples.

*Amir Khadem*

## Chapter 1 – Part 1

### 1.1 Essay Writing in Nine Steps

1.2 Planning <sup>1</sup>
<b>1.2.a</b> Read the essay topic carefully (at least two times). <b>Step 1</b>
<b>1.2.b</b> <u>Identify</u> the writing task (one of the nine major tasks that are frequently offered in the TOEFL iBT Test: Stating a Preference, type 1 and type 2; Agree or Disagree, type 1, type 2, and type 3; Argument; Explanation; Compare and Contrast the Advantages and Disadvantages of Something; and Compare the Advantages of Two Things, each of which will be <u>elaborated upon</u> in the next chapters). <b>Step 2</b>
<b>1.2.c</b> Write down your idea (thesis statement). <b>Step 3</b>
<b>1.2.d</b> Start <u>brainstorming</u> , <u>that is</u> , writing general ideas about your position. <b>Step 4</b>
<b>1.2.e</b> Add specific details to your general idea. <b>Step 5</b>
1.3 Writing
<b>1.3.a</b> Write the introduction. <b>Step 6</b>
<b>1.3.b</b> Write the body paragraphs of the essay. <b>Step 7</b>
<b>1.3.c</b> Write the conclusion. <b>Step 8</b>
1.4 Revising
<b>1.4.a</b> Check the punctuation, spelling, as well as the clarity of the text. <b>Step 9</b>

### 1.2 Planning the Essay

As was already mentioned, for any task and activity to be successful, it is supposed to be meticulously (carefully) planned in advance, and the writing task of the TOEFL is not an exception. Therefore, the five steps outlined previously should be thoroughly (completely) followed. What will follow is a detailed description of these five steps.

#### 1.2.a Read the Essay Topic Carefully (At Least Two Times). Step 1

Many exam candidates lose marks simply because they do not read the essay topic properly. To fully understand the essay topic, you should **read the topic at least two times**. After having a thorough comprehension of the topic and its direction, you should identify the writing task.

#### 1.2.b Identify the Writing Task. Step 2

Knowing the essay type is of great importance in writing a sample response which can cover all aspects of the question and earn the maximum score. One type of *the Independent Task* is *Stating a Preference*. Here, this type will be briefly discussed, but, in section “1.2.b Identifying the Task,” all *nine types* will be thoroughly

<sup>1</sup> ibid

(completely) analyzed, and some samples for each of them will be provided for you to make you familiar with all essay types.

In *Stating a Preference*, you must consider the pros and cons of, the *advantages* and *disadvantages* of, something, and must *discuss, compare, or contrast both sides of the issue in hand*, by giving support, details, and examples, and then *tell which side* you agree with. You should not state that you agree with both sides of the issue, i.e. sitting on the fence. Rather, you must make a choice.

### 1.2.c Write down Your Idea (Thesis Statement). Step 3

Unlike *the Integrated Task*, *the Independent Task* is personal. What I mean is that, in *the Integrated Task*, other people's ideas are dealt with, while in *the Independent Task*, you should present your own ideas and are supposed to explain your opinion on that issue. The thesis of your essay is your stance, your opinion, on the subject.

A good essay enjoys a *thesis* that is *clearly stated*. A thesis statement, whose focus is on the direction of the topic, *tells the reader what you mean to say*. In other words, it conveys to the reader what your essay is about. As a concluding remark on this issue, I want to remind you that thesis statement should be about the topic rather than off topic.

### 1.2.d Start Brainstorming: Writing General Ideas about Your Position. Step 4

After you decide about the thesis statement, you are supposed to start **making notes** about **general ideas**, which depends on recognizing the writing task. Here, the essay type **Stating a Preference** will be dealt with, then we will discuss other types. These notes provide you with **a map** all through the writing process, by means of which you will surely *avoid writing off topic* or impairing the **organization** of the essay.

Now, you are to start jotting down as many **ideas** as you can, as your *general notes*, before embarking on (starting) the writing task. This is sometimes called *the brainstorming stage*.

### 1.2.e Add Specific Details to Your General Idea. Step 5

Having written my general notes, I am supposed to *write specific details* which *support my argument*. As for the essay type, *State a Preference*, we should have a table like the one that follows in order that the *specific details for or against each choice* can be clearly written. Just a word of caution, in *State a Preference*, *never ever see things simply as "black and white."* By this, I mean you should *not mention only positive points about one choice and negative points about the other*, but rather discuss the **merits** and **demerits** of **both cases** and finally express your own preference based on your argument and reasoning. To clarify what I mean by this, let's see the specific supports provided in the following table concerning our topic.

➔ To read the sample writing for this topic, go to **Chapter 1 – Part 3**.

## Chapter 1 – Part 2

### 1.3. Writing

#### 1.3.a: Write the Introduction. Step 6

The *introduction* of your writing should enjoy four important elements, three of which—that is—the first three elements, which will follow, must be mentioned in your introduction, and the last one is usually mentioned, but if it is not, your score will not suffer.

#### 1.3.f Write the Body of the Essay: Step 7

The **body** of your essay should contain *at least two developmental paragraphs*. Each developmental paragraph should have a **topic sentence** that supports and develops the controlling idea presented in the thesis statement of your essay. The ideas in each paragraph should support the topic sentence of that paragraph.”

#### 1.3.g Write the Conclusion. Step 8

The Conclusion of the Essay Should Include the Following:

- “1. An allusion, *reference*, to the pattern used in the introductory paragraph.
- “2. A *restatement of the thesis statement*, using some of the original language or language that “echoes” the original language. (The restatement, however, must not be a duplicate of the thesis statement).
- “3. A *summary of the two / three main points from the body of the paper* (it should **NOT** introduce any **new ideas**).
- “4. A *final statement that gives the reader signals that the discussion has come to an end*.

The final statement can consist of one of the following formats:

- A. *A general statement*,
  - B. *A prediction*,
  - C. *A recommendation*, or
  - D. *A rhetorical question*
- “5. It—*the conclusion*—should have the form of a paragraph (although *it is usually the shortest of all paragraphs* in the essay, just *one or two sentences* will **not** be *enough*).”

### 1.4 Revising

#### 1.4.a Check the Punctuation, Spelling, and the Clarity of the Text. Step 9

In order to acquire the mastery of revising, you are supposed to take part in grammar classes or gain this skill through self-study. To do so, refer to *the Punctuation Section* of this book to learn some good points in this regard.

## 1.5 Summary of Chapter 1 So Far - Task Two Writing

### How to Write the Introduction

1. **A general statement** (a fact) / a proverb / a quote / a rhetorical question / an anecdote
2. **Restatement of the topic**
3. **Your thesis statement**—your stance—which is necessary
4. **Your reasons** (optional)

### How to Write the Body of the Essay

(Two or three paragraphs)

1. **Write a topic sentence**
2. **Write ideas that support your topic sentence.**
3. **Add details.**
  - A. Using **Facts**
  - B. Using an **Imaginary Example** or **Situation**
  - C. Using an **Anecdote**: an allusion to a famous 1. book, 2. a movie, 3. lyrics of a music, or 4. a fable / allegory / tale / myth
  - D. Using a **Quotation** from a Well-known Person
  - E. Mentioning a **Proverb**
  - F. Mentioning **Personal Experiences**
  - G. Using **Statistics**

### How to Write the Conclusion

1. **A restatement of the thesis statement**
2. **A summary of the three or two main points** from the body of the paper
3. **A final statement** that gives the reader signals that the discussion has come to an end.
  - A. A general statement
  - B. A prediction
  - C. A recommendation
  - D. A rhetorical question

→ Now, let's see how all the above-mentioned steps are followed in a *complete writing sample* with its brainstorming, planning, introduction, the body paragraphs, and conclusion having to do with the following topic: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? **Boys and girls** should attend **separate schools**. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.” In each paragraph, each of the reasons introduced in the introduction is separately supported and dealt with.

**1.2.b Step 2:** Identify the Writing Task. Here, it is **A/D Type 2**, which is fully discussed in the next chapters.

**1.2.c Step 3:** Write down Your Idea (Thesis Statement). **My thesis: Co-educational** (Co-ed) schools are better than **Segregated** ones.

**1.2.d Step 4:** Start Brainstorming: Writing General Ideas about Your Position. To do so, you should learn how to use shorthand writing skill, which is taught in the Integrated Task in this book.

1. **St Lrn Scl Skls:** Students learn social skills.
2. **St Mtv Stdy Hrd:** Students are motivated to study harder.
3. **St Lrn Op Sx:** Students can learn from their opposite sex.
4. **St Obsrv Etqt:** Students observe etiquette.
5. **Co-ed Ls Cstly Gvnmt:** Co-ed schools are less costly for the government.
6. **St Suc Mrg:** Students can have successful marriages.

**1.2.e Step 5:** Add Specific Details to Your General Idea.

**My plan:** For your plan, you should write fewer words than the one you see below. It is written with details so that you become familiar with the invaluable step of planning.

Co-ed + + + - 80/20	My Reasons	Segregated - - - + 20/80
Scls Sml Scty Sts Expsd Op Sx → Prctc Scl Skls. – Frst Sm Msndrg / Dsrspct but Fnly Aqr Skl	<b>P1. Lrn Scl Skls</b>	Nt Mch Intrct → Nt Prctc → Ntrl Expctn → Bys <u>gauche</u> & socially <u>awkward</u> and Grls Tmd / <u>Self-</u> <u>conscious</u> → Wt Ftr Expct → Ftur Crr / Scl Lf / Mrd Lf
Grls & Bys Dif Abilty → If Shr, Vrstl 1 <sup>st</sup> Ex: Imgn Bys Phscs & Grls Chmst, Mult-skl St Knw Bth WI → 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ex: Bys Whl & Grls Dtls → Lrn Bth Aprch → Ftur Crr / ... Sccs	<b>P2. Lrn Op Sx</b>	No Chnc Shr / Nt Lrn Op Sx → Lmt Knlg & Skls

**1.3.a Step 6:** Write the *Introduction*.

We are living in an era in which educational systems are of significant consequence (**General Statement**). Accordingly, different countries all over the globe do their best to make the most out of them (**Narrowing the General Statement**). Some consider co-ed schools as the best educational system, while others strongly believe in the merits that segregated schools can bring about (**Restatement of the topic**). I do believe that both approaches have some advantages and some disadvantages (**Mentioning that they are both OK**). However, I think the privileges of co-ed schools basically outweigh those of the segregated ones, two of which are as follows (**Mentioning My Idea, Necessary – but Mentioning My Reasons, If I desire, of Course**).

**1.3.f Step 7:** Write the *Body* of the Essay.

**Body Paragraph 1:** The first advantage of co-ed classes as compared to segregated schools is that they provide students with the opportunity of learning social skills (**Topic Sentence**). This is mainly because these schools can be considered as a small society in which students can practice social skills (**Supporting the topic sentence**). It is true that students may, due to lack

of experience, disrespect the opposite sex (**A minor negative point about co-ed classes**). However, through the repeated exposure they have to their opposite sex, the final result will be highly likely promising, that is, acquiring the invaluable blessing of social competence (**Supporting co-ed classes again despite the mentioned drawback**). On the other hand, in segregated schools, students are deprived of a normal social life, resulting in gauche and socially awkward boy students and timid as well as self-conscious girl students (**Comparison with segregated schools and disagreeing with them**). The graduates of such a system will presumably encounter huge problems regarding their future career, their social life, as well as their married life, which is not the case in co-educational systems (**Using the technique of future results and finally closing the paragraph with another support for co-ed classes**).

**Body Paragraph 2:** The second reason why co-educational systems are preferable to segregated ones is that students can learn from their opposite sex (**Topic Sentence**). It is common knowledge that girl students have abilities that are quite different from those of boy students. Thus, it is logical that their being in the company of each other prepares the ground for them to acquire the skills they are not good at, the result of which would be some versatile graduates whose future career is highly likely guaranteed (**Supporting the topic sentence**). This is not the case in segregated schools in which students are deprived of sharing their skills, abilities, and knowledge with their opposite sex, resulting in “one-dimensional” graduates whose skills and abilities would presumably be limited to only one area of knowledge (**Comparison with segregated schools that lack this quality**). The following two examples serve to support this point. Let’s imagine that boy students are good at physics and not chemistry and girls are the other way around. If they share their knowledge with each other, the result would be some “multi-faceted” graduates who master both fields. Another example in this regard can be the fact that boys have a (w)holistic approach to learning, while girls pay much attention to details, both of which have some drawbacks (**Using two examples to support my stance**). If they can, by learning from each other, keep a balance between the two approaches, they will presumably be invaluable assets to the would-be companies or businesses in which they are supposed to work (**Using the technique of future results and finally closing the paragraph with another support for co-ed classes**).

### 1.3.g Step 8: Write the *Conclusion*.

In conclusion, based on what was already discussed, the two systems have their merits and demerits (**Mentioning once again that they are both OK**); however, as I mentioned before, students’ becoming socially competent and having the opportunity to learn from the opposite sex are the two qualities that make co-ed classes much preferable to segregated schools (**A summary of the two or three main points, together with our stance**). I hope we do not take the blessing of co-ed schools for granted and make the most out of them (**A final statement that gives the reader signals that the discussion has come to an end**).

**1.3.h: Revise** Your Sample Response, **Step 9**.

Having written your response, you are supposed to review the writing to see if there are any minor or major mistakes in it, which is of great importance in the real test.

**Wish You All the Best**

**Amir Khadem**