



How to Crack TOEFL® iBT

TOEFL® iBT Note-Taking

When you sit for the TOEFL iBT test, you will be allowed to take notes in the Listening, Speaking and Writing sections. Effective note-taking is essential for TOEFL as you will receive a lot of information and it would be impossible to remember all of it. Good notes will facilitate your responses and directly affect your TOEFL iBT score.

Why should you develop the skill of note-taking?

- It keeps you focused;
- It helps you remember information;
- It helps you answer the questions and organize your spoken or written responses.



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Note-taking strategies

- As you listen, focus on the main points and ideas. They can be recognized by the pause that is made before the essential information, by the repetition of some information, the emphasis that is placed on certain points, word signals (...two **main** aspects..., ...**second**.....**essential**...) etc.;
- Concentrate on important words, like nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, also names, dates, numbers, etc.;
- Listen carefully to the questions both professors and students ask and answers given – they often refer to major ideas;
- In conversations – identify the main problem/need, the solution and the main participants in the conversation, as well as the one who is more important or whose problem/need is the topic of conversation;
- Do not write down everything you hear, for example you can easily omit auxiliary verbs, determiners, pronouns and prepositions;
- Identify how the information is organized: the stages of a process, major points to minor points, problems and solutions, causes and results, etc.;
- Organize your notes in some logical form – graph, list with major points and sub-points, flow chart, etc.;
- Write clearly, as the notes will do you no good afterwards if you can't read what you have written;
- Use abbreviations and symbols.



Abbreviations and Symbols

with – **w/**
 without – **w/o**
 at – **@**
 about, approximately – **~**
 times – **x**
 that is – **i.e.**
 for example – **e.g.**
 because – **b/c**
 before – **b/4**

regarding, about – **re**
 difference – **diff**
 reference – **ref**
 especially – **esp**
 opposed to – **vs**
 and so on – **etc**
 department – **dept**
 page – **p**
 pages – **pp**

limited – **ltd**
 through – **thro**
 though – **tho**
 important – **imp**
 possible – **poss**
 probable – **prob**
 number – **#, no**
 compare – **cf**
 or – **/**

- You can use the first syllable of the word and drop the others: **reference – ref**;
- You can omit the vowels from the words: **people – ppl, problem – pblm**;
- You can use an apostrophe: **admitted – adm'd**;

Note-Taking Methods

Outline format

In this format you can take notes in the form of a list with main points, then sub-point, etc. For example:

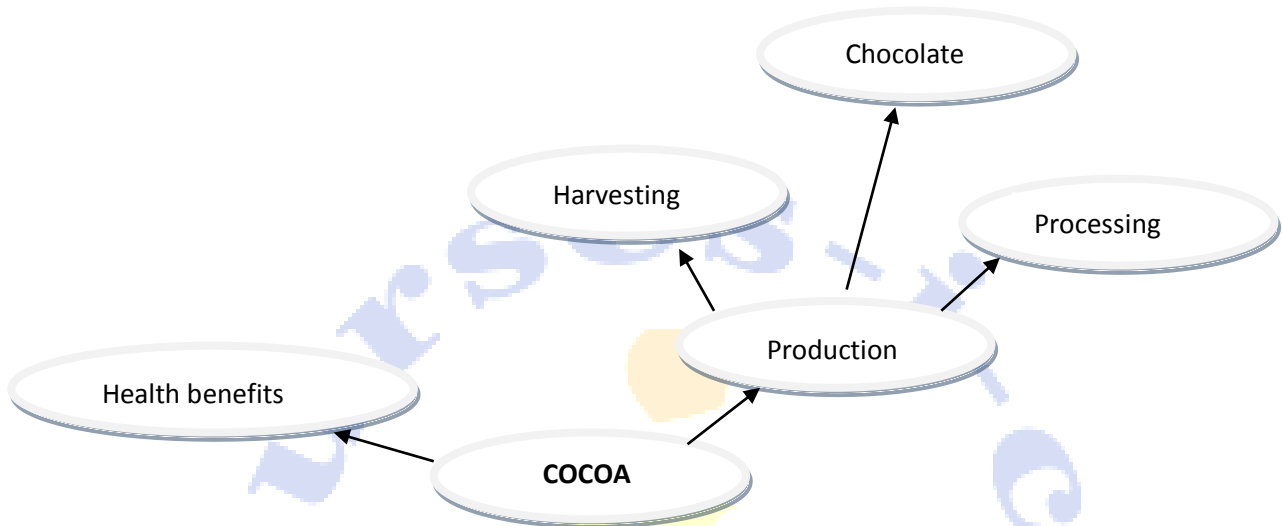
- I. Cocoa
 - a. Production
 - i. Harvesting
 1. Detail
 2. Detail
 - ii. Processing
 1. Detail
 2. Detail
 - iii. Chocolate
 1. Detail
 2. Detail
 - b. Health benefits

Mind mapping

A **mind map** is an image centered diagram that represents semantic or other connections between major ideas. For example, it can graphically illustrate the structure of a plant, the connections between certain major points, etc.

Here is how you can take notes by using this method:

1. Write the topic in the center;
2. Each key word/phrase should be alone on its own line;
3. The lines should be connected to the main topic;
4. Organize the ideas by some hierarchy, numbers or outlines.



See also the section [Test Taking Strategies](#) for more tips for each particular TOEFL task – Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing.

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