

TOEFL IBT WRITING TASK 2

2025-2026



**WITH 93 REAL QUESTIONS &
SAMPLE RESPONSES**

DR. HIKMET SAHINER

TOEFL WRITING TASK 2

2025-2026

93 FULL-LENGTH AUTHENTIC PRACTICE TESTS

DR. HİKMET ŞAHİNER

TOEFL WRITING TASK 2 - 2025-2026
DR. HİKMET ŞAHİNER

Copyright ©

ISBN: 978-605-9866-81-1

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This book contains material protected under International and Turkish Laws and Treaties. Any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is prohibited. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without express written permission from the author.

BÜTÜN HAKLARI SAKLIDIR. Bu kitapta yer alan yazı, fotoğraf ve sair içeriklerin, yazardan izin alınmadan kısmen ya da tamamen kopyalanması, çoğaltılması, kullanılması, yayınlanması ve dağıtılması kesinlikle yasaktır. Bu yasağa uymayanlar hakkında gerek Uluslararası gerekse 5846 sayılı Türk Fikir ve Sanat Eserleri Kanunları uyarınca yasal işlem yapılacaktır.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Hikmet ŞAHİNER

<https://www.hikmetsahiner.com>

Ankara doğumlu Dr. Hikmet ŞAHİNER Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF Fakültesinden 1993 yılında Üniversite birincisi olarak (94/100) mezun oldu.

1991-1993 yılları arasında Ankara’da çeşitli şirket ve kuruluşlarda İngilizce mütercim-tercüman olarak çalıştı.

1995 yılında Cornell Üniversitesinden yüksek lisansını aldı.

1997 yılında The University of Texas at Austin Üniversitesinden yüksek lisans derecesini aldı.

2002 yılında The Johns Hopkins Üniversitesinden doktora derecesini aldı.

Dr. Hikmet Şahiner, 2006 yılından bu yana TOEFL sınav soruları, bu sınava yönelik kurs kitapları ve materyalleri hazırlamaktadır.

CONTENTS

UNIT 1. OVERVIEW OF TOEFL IBT ACADEMIC DISCUSSION TASK	1
UNIT 2. SAMPLE QUESTIONS & SCORING OF SAMPLE RESPONSES	6
UNIT 3. ACADEMIC DISCUSSION TASK QUESTION TYPES	16
UNIT 4. THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS	21
UNIT 5. GRAMMAR PATTERNS AND EXAMPLES	23
UNIT 6. REAL TOEFL ACADEMIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND SAMPLE RESPONSES	27

PREFACE

TOEFL Writing Task 2 - 2025-2026 is designed to give test takers an edge in responding to the Academic Discussion task based on Reading and Listening on the TOEFL Writing Section.

This ebook features a total of 93 REAL “Academic Discussion Task” questions and 1-2 sample responses for each of them. In addition to 93 authentic practice tests, it includes thorough review sections to walk test takers through everything they need to know to succeed on the Writing Section of the exam. Test takers will learn how to construct effective responses based on four individual templates.

TOEFL Writing Task 2 – 2024-2025 features:

- Test-taking strategies**
- 2 Templates for high-score responses and Grammar Points**
- 93 full-length practice TOEFL Academic Discussion Tasks**

UNIT 1. OVERVIEW OF TOEFL IBT ACADEMIC DISCUSSION TASK

Starting on July 26th, 2023, the new TOEFL writing task REPLACED the independent writing task. This new task is called "**Writing for an Academic Discussion.**" You will encounter a simulated discussion board on a university website during the exam. The setup includes a question posted by a professor and two student responses. Your task is to read the entire discussion and then write your response.

The question will ask for your opinion. There will already be a couple of responses from other students, and you'll need to contribute your ideas to the discussion. You'll have a total of 10 minutes for the task.

Here's an example of what you'll see on your screen.


Writing: Question 1
Help
Next

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

In your response you should:


- express and support your opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.




Doctor Smith

Next week, we're going to be discussing the use of technology in schools. I think most of us would agree that, generally speaking, technology enhances learning, but what about smartphones? In recent years, there's been a lot of debate around whether students should be allowed to use them in class. I'd like to know what you think. Should smartphones be permitted in school classrooms? Or are they an unnecessary distraction?



I think they should be allowed. I mean, they give students access to so much information that isn't covered in textbooks. I'm thinking of things like news and current affairs. If they don't have their smartphones, students have to rely on what the teacher brings into class. This means they don't learn to do their own research.



I take Omar's point, but I think smartphones usually end up being a major distraction in class. Most young people don't have the discipline to ignore notifications and stay off social media during class time. Their attention becomes divided between the lesson and their device, and that's not good for learning.

Cut
Paste
Undo

Word Count: 0

Hide
9:59

1

WRITING TASK FOR AN ACADEMIC DISCUSSION

The test taker is expected to

- * respond to or build on ideas expressed in other texts
- * clearly state or elaborate on a position or argument
- * show accurate and meaningful use of a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary in the academic context

ACADEMIC DISCUSSION SCORING RUBRIC

5 - A fully successful response

The response is a relevant and very clearly expressed contribution to the online discussion, and it demonstrates consistent facility in the use of language.

A typical response displays the following:

- Relevant and well-elaborated explanations, exemplifications and/or details
- Effective use of a variety of syntactic structures and precise idiomatic word choice
- Almost no lexical or grammatical errors other than those expected from a competent writer writing under timed conditions (e.g., common typos or common misspellings or substitutions like there/their)

4 - A generally successful response

The response is a relevant contribution to the online discussion and facility in the use of language allows the writer's ideas to be easily understood.

A typical response displays the following:

- Relevant and adequately elaborated explanations exemplifications and/or details
- A variety of syntactic structures and appropriate word choice
- Few lexical or grammatical errors

3 - A partially successful response

The response is a mostly relevant and mostly understandable contribution to the online discussion and there is some facility in the use of language.

A typical response displays the following

- Elaboration in which part of an explanation example or detail may be missing unclear or irrelevant
- Some variety in syntactic structures and a range of vocabulary
- Some noticeable lexical and grammatical errors in sentence structure, word form or use of idiomatic language

2 - A mostly unsuccessful response

The response reflects an attempt to contribute to the online discussion but limitations in the use of language may make ideas hard to follow.

A typical response displays the following:

- Ideas that may be poorly elaborated or only partially relevant
- A limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary
- An accumulation of errors in sentence structure word forms or use

1 - An unsuccessful response

The response reflects an ineffective attempt to contribute to the online discussion, and limitations in the use of language may prevent the expression of ideas.

A typical response may display the following:

- Words and phrases that indicate an attempt to address the task but with few or no coherent ideas
- Severely limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary
- Serious and frequent errors in the use of language
- Minimal original language; any coherent language is mostly borrowed from the stimulus

0 - The response is blank, or the topic

- is not in English
- is entirely copied from the prompt
- is entirely unconnected to the prompt or
- consists of arbitrary keystrokes.

SAMPLE QUESTION

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

In your response you should:

- * express and support your opinion
- * make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words. You will have 10 minutes to write it.

Dr. Gupta

As I mentioned in class, governments make public policies to describe their responses to various problems that affect a community. Part of this process involves setting and defending priorities about which issues deserve the most attention and resources. For example, governments need to decide whether they should spend more money on education or on environmental protections. If you were a policy maker, which issue would you argue is more important: education or environmental protections? Why?

Kelly

We all live on planet Earth, and it is the only planet we have. Therefore, we must take care of it. Clearly, protecting the environment should be the government's priority over education. I think the REAL question is which approach to protecting the environment-restricting pollution regulating population promoting clean energy, or something else-should be the governments' priority.

Andrew

I disagree with Kelly that that the environment is more important than education. Education is actually the best way to protect the environment. Educated people can see how their decisions affect the world around them. Also, with better science and technology education, we can develop solutions to environmental problems. Therefore, I think the government should spend more money on education.

RESPONSE TIPS

To earn a top score, you should state and support your opinion about whether education or environmental protections should be the priority for governments to spend money on. Your response is a contribution to the other two students' posts in an online discussion for the class. Be sure to add your own perspective to the discussion, not merely repeat ideas that have already been stated.

Typically, an effective response will contain a minimum of 100 words. You might agree with Kelly that environmental protections should be the priority. You will need to add your own support for this viewpoint. For example, you could argue that environmental protections are a more important investment to sustain our economies. You could point out that governments currently spend a great deal of money compensating for climate change catastrophes such as increased flooding, wind damage, or ruined crops. Investing more in environmental protections now could actually save governments money later on—which could then be used for more education funding. This would differ from the support Kelly gave for her opinion.

If you agree with Andrew that education should be the bigger priority, you could add to his argument by pointing out the amount of research that universities conduct not only on solving environmental problems, which Andrew alluded to, but also on treating diseases, creating useful technology, and developing sustainable agriculture. Therefore, education funding has a bigger overall impact on improving human lives than investment in environmental protections only. This would be a meaningful addition to the support Andrew provided for his opinion.

You may find you agree with a point Kelly made about the environment even though you think education is more important. Or you might even find that your opinion about government priorities depends on certain factors—that education should be a priority in some circumstances, environmental protections in others. This is perfectly acceptable as long as you explain and support your reasoning. There is no correct answer to the question. The important part of this task is to make sure that you state your opinion and provide reasonable, relevant support for it in a way that makes a meaningful contribution to the online discussion. Try to develop your opinion as well as you can within the time limit. A well-developed response will contain clearly appropriate reasons, examples, and details—ones that do a good job supporting or illustrating your own viewpoint.

The quality and accuracy of the sentence structure and vocabulary you use to express your ideas is also very important and part of what is considered when your response is scored. The task context—a post to an online discussion group—is not quite as informal as you might think. While the task asks you to contribute to a discussion with fellow students, imagine that the professor would also be reading your post. It is true that your tone might be more casual than what you would use in an academic paper, but you should still follow standard grammar rules. Also, if disagreeing with another student's post, be sure to express your disagreement in a respectful way as you would in a real online discussion.

UNIT 2. SAMPLE QUESTIONS & SCORING OF SAMPLE RESPONSES

SAMPLE QUESTION 1

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

In your response you should:

- express and support your opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words.

Dr. Diaz

Over the next few weeks, we are going to look at lots of different materials about the role of television programs and television watching in people's lives but first, I want to know what you think about this topic. So here is a question for the class discussion board: What do you think is the most significant effect that watching television has on people? Why do you think television has this effect?

Kelly

I know that one way that television influences people's behavior is that when you are watching television, you are not moving around or exercising. This is especially true for children. The American Academy of Pediatrics says that when children spend a lot of time watching television, they have a greater tendency to be overweight.

Paul

I think the main effect that television has on people is to broaden their experience. There are so many programs devoted to nature and travel. Think of all the different places in the world you can experience through television! Last night I watched a program about life in Antarctica and it was fascinating!

SAMPLE RESPONSES

Score of 3 - This is a mid-level response.

In my opinion television makes the life more interesting and fun There are so many interesting channels and programs and they make people laugh during watching TV. I think this is a big effect that television on people's time is passing by. Especially these days, people live with the serious problems and accidents. People need something fresh and can entertain. Televisions do this kind of works very well. Through Music program people can have relaxing time through comedy program, people can laugh and so on. Therefore, the television influences people's feeling much better, and I think this is very important effect!!

Rationale:

This essay is in the medium writing proficiency range. It would probably earn the score of 3 based on the Academic Discussion Scoring Rubric. It is a mostly understandable contribution to the discussion. The writer provides a different point of view than either Kelly or Paul, arguing that TV makes the life more interesting." (But including the article "the" in the life" is a mistake. The correct phrase is "makes life more interesting.") The writer then explains why people welcome a bit of Ty fun: they "lives with the serious problems and accidents (the correct phrasing would be "they live with serious problems or experience accidents), and "through Music program (should be "when watching music programs) they can relax through comedy program (should be when watching comedy programs) they can laugh, and so on. But there is quite of bit of repetition of the same idea: TV is fun and makes people laugh. Also some ideas are unclear: what does the writer mean by "pastime is passing by" in the third sentence? The writer seems unable to provide many clearly expressed details or to elaborate on the basic ideas and so the contribution to the discussion feels only partly successful. There are noticeable errors in almost every sentence. In addition to the ones indicated above there is "a big effect that television on people "which should read "a big effect that television has on people) "People need something fresh and can entertain (which should read "People need something fresh and entertaining and others. However most of the meaning is still understandable despite the errors.

Score of 5 - This is a high-level response.

In my opinion, Paul is right when he says that watching television might broaden your experience. By watching for example science programs you can gain valueable insights into new topics. On the other hand, I think that a high percentage of people don't watch TV to increase their knowledge I am of the opinion that many people watch TV in order to get distracted from their real lives. They watch films or series to be entertained and to forget problems they have at work or in their private lives. At least for me this works well-for instance if I am sad, I watch a comedy or a funny soap opera and afterwards, am in a better mood. Therefore, I think that being entertained and distracted is the most significant effect of TV.

Rationale:

This response is in the high writing proficiency range. It would probably earn the score of 5 based on the Academic Discussion Scoring Rubric. The writer conveys complex and well-argued ideas that contribute nicely to the discussion. While the writer mentions Paul's point of view the writer does not just repeat it. Instead, the writer takes Paul's ideas as the starting point and goes on to present a different point of view, arguing that watching TV is not mainly educational but rather a relaxing experience. The writer then goes on to develop this point of view explaining why people need to relax and providing the writer's own personal experiences: why the writer usually watches Tv which programs, and so on. The language the writer uses has a nice variety, both in how the sentences are formed and in the range of the vocabulary used. There are almost no errors; the word "valuable" in the second sentence is misspelled but that may be expected from even competent writers writing under timed conditions as the Scoring Rubric explains.

SAMPLE QUESTION 2

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

In your response you should:

- express and support your opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words. You will have 10 minutes to write it.

Dr. Achebe

When people are asked about the most important discoveries or inventions made in the last two hundred years, they usually mention something very obvious, like the computer or the cell phone. But there are thousands of other discoveries or inventions that have had a huge impact on how we live today. What scientific discovery or technological invention from the last two hundred years - other than computers and cell phones - would you choose as being important? Why?

Paul

I mean, were so used to science and technology that we are not even aware of all the things we use in our daily lives. I would probably choose space satellites. This technology happened in the last hundred years and it has become important for so many things. just think about navigation or telecommunications or even the military.

Claire

I am thinking about medical progress. Like for example when scientists discovered things about healthy nutrition. I am thinking of identifying all the vitamins we need to stay healthy. I am not sure exactly when the vitamin discoveries happened, but I know they are very important. Our health is much better than it was 200 years ago.

SAMPLE RESPONSES

Score of 4

From my personal point of view, I think the most important invention is the light bulb. Before it was invented people had have to use candles for illumination in the evening. It's performance is not very stable and it is produce really high tempreture which would probably lead to a fire accident. Light bulbs, however, produce constant and bright lighting at nights. One light bulb could use for several years, which is quite convenient-people don't need to storage many bulbs. What's more it is safer than past candles. This is a huge progress in technology, and I consider it as the most vital invention from the last 200 years.

Rationale:

This is a generally successful response. The writer chooses the light bulb as the most important invention and contrasts it with the disadvantages of using candles(their unstable performance high temperatre and possibility of fire The writer then names several advantages of the light bulb(a stable, long-lasting performance; brightness; and safety Notice these points are in direct contrast to the mentioned drawbacks of candles which is an effective way to support the choice. However, the argument might have been a little stronger if the writer had discussed not only why light bulbs are better than candles, but also why light bulbs are the most important invention of the past 200 years (other than computers and cell phones, perhaps by mentioning at least one way in which they have helped societies progress. While the writer uses a nice variety of grammatical constructions and fairly precise vocabulary, the number and type of errors in grammar and vocabulary prevent it from reaching the highest score level. Multiple small errors such as "had have to use "it is produce", "one light bulb could use for years, and dont need to storage "are distracting for the reader even though the intended meaning is still usually clear.

Score of 5

In the past 200 years, tons of scientific discoveries or technological inventions have been shown to the world. If I had to choose one in particular it will probably be vaccine or antibiotics. With Pasteur's work and discoveries the world changed in a way people couldn't imagine. So many people were dying really young because at that time life's conditions were not as good as the one we have now. With vaccine we could now irradicate diseases that were killing millions of people, we learn so much about the immune system and ways our body was reacting to pathogens and the answers he could produce to defend us against it. Medicine evolved so much and keeps evolving every day because scientists are curious to understand how our body is working and how he is able to communicate with our environment. People aged 40 are now not that old and still have a really long life to live and enjoy when 2 centuries ago it was synonymous of 80% chance of dying.

Rationale:

This is a fully successful response. The writer chooses vaccines/antibiotics as the most important invention of the past 200 years. The author then provides a description, for contrast of what life was like before Pasteur's work (people dying young) and after the vaccine was created (millions of lives saved more understanding of the immune system). The writer continues on to point out that medicine continues to evolve because of Pasteur's work and how human lifespans have been extended. Overall, the response provides well-elaborated explanations and details to support the main opinion and provides a relevant contribution to the discussion.

While there are almost no errors in grammar and word choice there are a few minor ones that have little impact on meaning (such as "life's conditions were not as good as the one we have" rather than "were not as good as they are now," and "how our body is working and how he is able to communicate" rather than "how it is able to communicate"). However, these errors are fairly minor and such errors might be expected when writing under timed conditions. The writer is able to use some complex sentences and relatively precise vocabulary which is expected in a 5-level response.

ADDITIONAL SAMPLE QUESTIONS WITH SAMPLE RESPONSES

Sample Question 1

Your professor is teaching a class on public administration. Write a post responding to the professor's question. In your response you should:

- express and support your opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words. You will have 10 minutes to write it.

Professor

As environmental protection develops, more people have come to realize that everybody should play a part in preserving the planet we live on. These years, many people want to protect and improve the natural environment. In terms of what individuals in their daily lives could do if they want to protect the environment, some put forward walking or bicycling instead of driving a car to work or school, while others recommend buying locally grown organic foods grown without pesticides, and which one do you think would work better?

Lila

I think walking or cycling instead of driving works better in reducing carbon emissions. Everybody needs to commute, and a lot of people drive every day. If they can switch to walking or riding bicycles, the outcome of such a collective effort would be considerable.

Steve

Buying locally grown organic foods is more effective, I think. Growing crops organically means giving up pesticides to get rid of pests, which significantly reduces pollutants that pose great threats to soil and water. Therefore, the food chain could be less contaminated.

Sample Response

For individuals to do in their daily lives to protect the environment, I think walking or cycling instead of driving works better than promoting organic foods. Steve did have a point when he talked about how organically grown crops help reduce water and soil pollution. However, he did not see the practicality of the approach. First, organic foods are so much more costly that they are not universally affordable for most people. Besides, organic crop yields are rather small compared to the demand. If organic foods replaced all regular foods, food supplies would be insufficient and people would starve. Lila, by contrast, proposed a much more viable option. In addition to the considerable outcome of the collective effort she mentioned, it is quite feasible. It is true that some people live far away from where they work or go to school, but not everybody does. In fact, quite a number of people live within walking or cycling distance from their workplace or school. Considering the health benefits and the universal lack of exercise nowadays, a lot of people would be fully motivated to do so. In short, walking or cycling instead of driving is a better option than promoting organic foods.

Sample Question 2

Your professor is teaching a class on public health. Write a post responding to the professor's question. In your response you should:

- express and support your opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words. You will have 10 minutes to write it.

Professor

As discussed in class, the concept of health has evolved over time, and with advancements in technology and medicine, it is often believed that staying healthy is easier in modern times. However, some argue that current lifestyles and environmental factors have made it more challenging to maintain good health. In which period would you argue it is easier for people to stay in a healthy condition—at present or in the past? Why?

Amber

I would definitely say that it is easier to maintain good health nowadays than in the past. It is important to consider the various factors that contribute to people's health. In the past, access to healthcare was limited and medical knowledge was not as advanced as it is today. Also, people's lifestyles were often less healthy due to factors such as limited access to healthy food and a lack of awareness about the importance of exercise.

Jonah

I hold a different view from Amber and believe that it was actually easier to stay healthy in the past. Most people led healthier, more active lives in the past so there was no need to go to the gym in their spare time. There were far fewer sedentary jobs in those days so there was no obsession to keep fit. Also, in terms of the issue of food and diet, there were far fewer additives and processed foods in the past, meaning that people had healthier diets.

Sample Response

I personally would vote for Amber's opinion. It is true that there are still numerous obstacles to maintaining good health in today's society. For example, factors such as pollution, stress, and the prevalence of unhealthy food options can lead to a wide range of health issues, from obesity to heart diseases. Also, access to quality healthcare remains an enormous challenge for many individuals, particularly those in low-income communities. Despite these challenges, it is important to acknowledge the fact that there have actually been significant advancements in healthcare and medical technology in recent years. Thanks to these advances, an increasing number of people now have access to a broader range of treatments and preventative measures, such as vaccines and screenings. Furthermore, there is a greater emphasis on healthy living, with more and more people taking an active interest in nutrition and exercise. Also, due to the rise of the internet, such information is now at people's fingertips.

Sample Question 3

Your professor is teaching a class on education. Write a post responding to the professor's question. In your response you should:

- express and support your opinion
- make a contribution to the discussion

An effective response will contain at least 100 words. You will have 10 minutes to write it.

Professor

As we all know, the education system plays a crucial role in shaping the future of any society by providing a strong foundation for the upcoming generations. However, there are different ways of instruction for high school teachers across the nation and this has led to a debate on their merits. Which approach would you argue is better—teacher centered education or student-centered education? Why?

Alisa

I strongly believe that teacher-centered education is the better approach for high school instruction. In this type of education, the teacher is the expert and the students are there to learn from them. This approach ensures that students receive a comprehensive and structured education that covers all necessary topics. It may seem like a good idea that student-centered education places the focus on the student's interests and preferences, but it often results in a lack of structure and a failure to cover important topics.

Jason

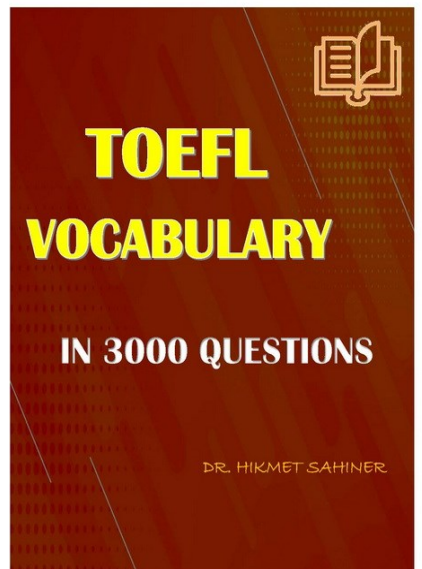
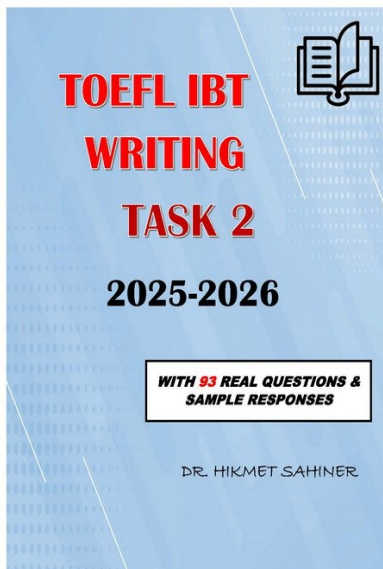
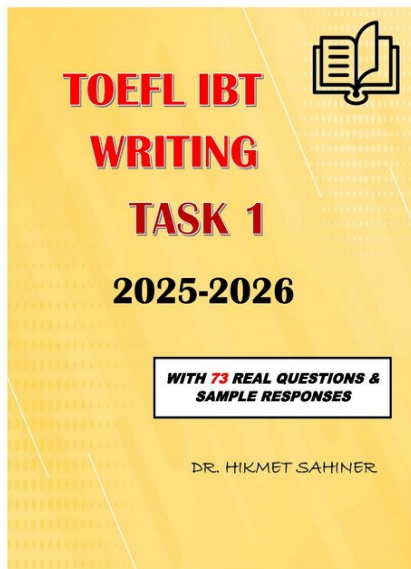
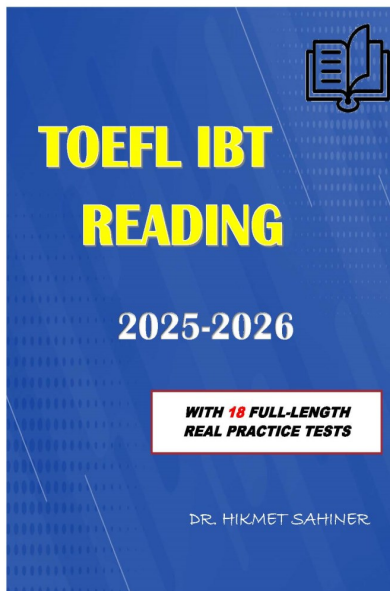
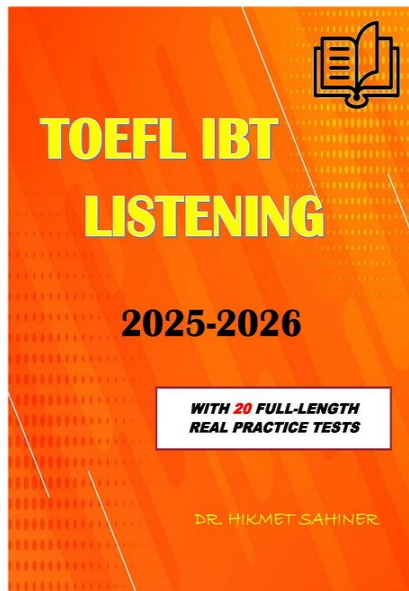
Unlike Alisa, I strongly believe that student-centered education is the better approach. I mean, this method prioritizes the needs and interests of the students, allowing them to take an active role in their own learning. It is more likely for them to retain information and develop critical thinking skills. Also, such an education promotes collaboration and communication among peers, preparing students for the real world where teamwork is essential. Therefore, I think the student-centered way of instruction is better.

Sample Response

I would subscribe to Jason's idea that student-centered education is much preferable. In addition to the benefits of fostering a supportive community and promoting collaboration, another important point to consider relates to students' learning preferences and the cultivation of their self-assurance during the learning journey. In a traditional lecture-style approach, the teacher asks questions at the end of the session by choosing students at random. This can be intimidating and daunting, especially if students are unsure of the answer and are expected to speak in front of the entire class. In contrast, group work and discussions provide a more conducive environment for students to build their confidence and knowledge before presenting in front of the class. By engaging in group-based conversations and activities, students would certainly feel more confident to speak to the teacher and the class. Therefore, in comparison

with the lecture-style approach, student centered education empowers students to take ownership of their learning and enhances their confidence.

TOEFL PREP SERIES



<https://www.hikmetsahiner.com>