

BARRON'S

The Leader in Test Preparation



ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR THE TOEFL®

6TH EDITION

Steven J. Matthiesen

- A fully updated list of 500 words that frequently appear on the TOEFL
- Definitions, sample sentences, and practice exercises to build your word power
- An overview of each section of the TOEFL iBT and ITP
- A Reading Section test with answers to help you assess your test-taking readiness

LESSON 15

- **adhere**
- **harbor**
- **redundant**
- **durable**
- **harmful**
- **reject**
- **foster**
- **insignificant**
- **substantial**
- **gain**
- **mysterious**
- **trait**
- **halt**
- **perilous**
- **underscore**
- **handle**
- **promote**

adhere *v.* to stick to or follow precisely
n. adherence *syn.* comply

Travelers must *adhere* to the laws of the country they are visiting.
The referee's excessively strict *adherence* to the rules upset the players.

durable *adj.* something that lasts a long time
n. durability **time during which something lasts*
n. duration* *syn.* sturdy

It was a *durable* refrigerator, but it finally broke.
The *durability* of tires is a key factor in determining their quality.

foster *v.* to promote growth or development
syn. stimulate

The industrial revolution *fostered* the rise of the middle class.
Parents usually *foster* the development of good habits in their children.

gain *v.* to obtain something needed or useful;
adj. gainful *to increase to the amount of something*
n. gain *syn.* attain

He *gained* a lot of experience working as a volunteer.
His *gain* in knowledge was impressive.

halt *v.* to stop or discontinue
adv. haltingly *syn.* stop
adj. halting
n. halt

Bus service to the city was *halted* due to poor road conditions.
The supervisor put a *halt* to the tardiness of the employees.

handle *v.* to deal with or control
n. handling *syn.* manage

They *handled* themselves very well given the circumstances.
 The president's *handling* of the crisis was widely applauded.

harbor *v.* to give protection; to not express a
 desire or opinion, usually bad
syn. shelter

He *harbors* ill feelings for her.
 They *harbored* the political refugee in their home.

harmful *adj.* something that causes pain or damage
adv. harmfully *syn.* unhealthy
v. harm
n. harm

Excessive radiation is *harmful* to the body.
 Bleach *harms* certain fabrics.

insignificant *adj.* not important; of little value
adv. insignificantly *syn.* meaningless
n. insignificance

The amount of rainfall this summer has been *insignificant*.
 The *insignificance* of his comment became apparent with the passing
 of time.

mysterious *adj.* not easily understood or figured out
adv. mysteriously *syn.* baffling
n. mystery
n. mysteriousness

He had a *mysterious* effect on everyone who heard him speak.
 The man's disappearance was a *mystery*.

perilous *adj.* threatening or risky; harmful
adv. perilously *syn.* dangerous
n. peril

It is *perilous* to exceed the speed limit.
 There are ample *perils* in the sport of mountain climbing.

promote

n. promoter
n. promotion

v. to encourage or advertise; to elevate in rank or grade

syn. boost

Many nations *promote* tourism to lure foreign currency.

The customers responded favorably to the half-price *promotion*.

redundant

n. redundancy
adv. redundantly

adj. being excessive; showing unnecessary repetition

syn. repetitious

Students who ask teachers to “repeat that again” are being *redundant* because “repeat” means “again.”

Lush, *redundant* vegetation is common in tropical climates.

reject

n. rejection

v. to refuse

syn. refuse

The insurance company *rejected* the claim.

The *rejection* of his work was difficult for him to understand.

substantial

adv. substantially
adj. substantive

adj. important; strongly made; of value

syn. significant

The discovery of a vaccine for smallpox was a *substantial* medical achievement.

This *substantive* article will change your opinion of rock music.

trait

n. specific qualities that distinguish one from another

syn. characteristic

Her sense of humor and cheerful personality are some of her most impressive *traits*.

Alma's blonde hair is a *trait* inherited from her father.

underscore

v. to make evident or emphasize

syn. highlight

The high quality of the student's science fair project *underscored* her talent in biology.

The conclusion of the report should *underscore* its main ideas.

MATCHING

Choose the synonym.

1. **foster**
 - (A) exaggerate
 - (B) stimulate
 - (C) gain
 - (D) enhance
2. **halt**
 - (A) evaporate
 - (B) avoid
 - (C) defy
 - (D) stop
3. **trait**
 - (A) dwelling
 - (B) characteristic
 - (C) function
 - (D) abundance
4. **durable**
 - (A) ample
 - (B) crucial
 - (C) dominant
 - (D) sturdy
5. **redundant**
 - (A) repetitious
 - (B) creative
 - (C) round
 - (D) active
6. **substantial**
 - (A) haphazard
 - (B) diverse
 - (C) significant
 - (D) perilous
7. **underscore**
 - (A) shelter
 - (B) highlight
 - (C) boost
 - (D) exaggerate
8. **mysterious**
 - (A) unhealthy
 - (B) dangerous
 - (C) dramatic
 - (D) baffling
9. **insignificant**
 - (A) meaningless
 - (B) rudimentary
 - (C) vigorous
 - (D) spacious
10. **adhere**
 - (A) exhaust
 - (B) reject
 - (C) comply
 - (D) withstand

LESSON 15—MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST QUESTIONS

1. Scientists can only speculate on the possible fate of the Cosmos. If the universe is unbound, there is little possibility that its expansion will **halt**. Thus, eventually the galaxies and stars will all die. The Cosmos then would be a cold, dark, and virtually empty place. If the universe *is* bound, the mass and energy content will come together again in a big fiery squeeze.

The word **halt** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) continue
- (B) stop
- (C) expand
- (D) intensify

2. The perception of depth and distance depends on information transmitted through various sense organs. Sensory cues indicate the distance at which objects are located from the individual and from each other. The senses of sight and hearing transmit depth and distance cues that are **substantially** independent of one another.

The word **substantially** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) significantly
- (B) absurdly
- (C) critically
- (D) vigorously

3. Because the needs of human communication are so various, the study of meaning is probably the most difficult and **mysterious** aspect of serious language study. Traditionally, language has been defined as the expression of thought. But this idea is far too narrow an interpretation of language and far too broad a view of thought to be worthwhile. The expression of thought is just one of the many roles of language.

The word **mysterious** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) substantial
- (B) meaningful
- (C) promising
- (D) baffling

4. The theory of environmental determinism says that the physical surroundings of a people, including natural resources, climate, and geography, are the major determining factors in the development of their culture. Therefore, determinism **rejects** the idea that history and tradition, social and economic factors, and other elements of culture explain social development.

The word **rejects** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) refuses
- (B) ignores
- (C) promotes
- (D) withstands

5. The greatest benefit of a regular exercise program is an improvement in overall fitness. Appropriate exercise **boosts** muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and cardiorespiratory endurance. The level of maximum oxygen intake or cardiorespiratory endurance is usually not of great importance to most individuals. The most important thing is to attain their maximum level of performance.

The word **boosts** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) harms
- (B) manages
- (C) promotes
- (D) alters

6. The number of giant pandas in the world is dwindling. The chief reason is that their natural habitat in China has been reduced as bamboo forests have been cleared to increase available land for China's vast human population. In fact, the world came **perilously close** to losing the panda altogether in the 1980s as a result. Today, the panda's future is brighter. The Chinese government now protects most of the panda's natural habitat.

In saying that the world came **perilously close** to losing the panda, the author means that the giant panda

- (A) has been set free from zoos.
- (B) endangered human beings.
- (C) threatened the extinction of bamboo.
- (D) was nearly entirely eliminated.

7. Several pilots were **killed** during the competition for the Orteig Prize, which was promised to the first pilot to fly nonstop from New York to Paris. Charles Lindbergh believed he could win it if he had the right airplane, and he was right. He received the \$25,000 prize in 1927 for being the first to make the **perilous** flight across the Atlantic.

The word **perilous** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- Ⓐ substantial
- Ⓑ dangerous
- Ⓒ haphazard
- Ⓓ prosperous

8. In parts of the world that lack modern sewage treatment plants, water carrying human waste can flow into drinking water supplies. Disease-carrying bacteria in the waste can make the drinking water **harmful**. Even in certain U.S. cities, such contaminants have been found in urban water supplies.

The word **harmful** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- Ⓐ frail
- Ⓑ adverse
- Ⓒ conspicuous
- Ⓓ unhealthy

9. Commercial arbitration has been practiced in European countries for many years. In the United States, commercial arbitration to **handle** disputes is gaining in popularity. The American Arbitration Association hires panels of arbitrators who mediate disagreements and propose solutions. The decisions of these panels have been enforced by the courts of many states.

The word **handle** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- Ⓐ face
- Ⓑ manage
- Ⓒ enact
- Ⓓ promote

10. Martin Luther King Jr. had a magnificent speaking ability. This quality enabled him to effectively express African-Americans' need for social justice. He **gained** the support of millions of people, both black and white, through his eloquent pleas for nonviolent social action. He received international acclaim when he was awarded the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, after many years of struggle to assure basic civil rights for all citizens.

The word **gained** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- Ⓐ observed
- Ⓑ created
- Ⓒ extended
- Ⓓ attained