Providing Additional Meaning to TOEFL® iBT Reading Scores

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Purpose:

Determine if TOEFL iBT Reading scores can be successfully linked to Lexile measures.
Provide Lexile measures to TOEFL examinees to allow them to locate appropriate reading materials.

TOEFL iBT:

English language test that measures the ability to use and combine listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills to communicate in an academic environment.
Reading measure is one of four sections on the test; examinees receive section scores as well as a total test score.
Examinees also receive performance feedback that describes tasks that examinees within a particular score range are able to do.

Lexile measure:

Represents two dimensions:
1. a reader-level measure that indicates a person’s reading ability on the Lexile scale
2. a text-level measure that represents the difficulty of the text that is read

The same scale is used for both reader ability and test difficulty; when used together, they provide an estimate of the person’s reading level and help determine the appropriate difficulty level of reading material.

The higher the Lexile measure, the higher the examinee’s level of reading ability.

Lexile framework is well-established for use with native English speaking students in the K-12 population in the United States.

Study design and results:

Since the population for TOEFL is comprised of non-native English speakers who tend to be older than the traditional K-12 student, it was important to ensure that an appropriate link could be established between the TOEFL and Lexile scales.
Examinees registered for several spring 2009 TOEFL administrations were invited to participate in the study. A single-group/common person design was chosen.
- Participants took the TOEFL as part of their regular test administration
- Participants took one of four Lexile forms as part of an online administration of the test within two weeks of their TOEFL examination

The final sample consisted of 2,867 with both TOEFL and Lexile scores.
- Sample appeared generally to reflect the distribution of TOEFL examinees
- Participants came from 104 countries
- More females than males participated
- Proportion of participants from each country resembled the proportion seen in the test-taking population, with fewer than expected participants from Korea

Results of the study provided support for the creation of a comparison table (next column).

The final linking table was evaluated by comparing the TOEFL performance levels and the Lexile reading levels.
- Scores at the “High” performance level correspond to reading materials commonly found at the college (junior/senior) and graduate school level
- Scores at the “Intermediate” performance level correspond to reading levels at the high school (10th grade to 12th grade) level
- Scores at the “Low” performance level correspond to fairly low reading levels (6th to 8th grade)

Information for examinees:

Beginning in fall 2009, examinees receive information on their TOEFL score report about the Lexile measure.
Examinees are instructed to go to an internet site and enter their TOEFL reading score. At the site, they are provided with information about the meaning of their Lexile measure.
Examinees may then request a listing of reading materials appropriate for their reading level (“Find Books”).
- Reading materials that range 50 Lexiles above and 100 Lexiles below a given Lexile measure are considered appropriate for an individual examinee
- Reading materials are those that a reader with a Lexile measure within the range can read at 75% comprehension
- Materials at the top end of the range present challenging reading that may help the reader increase their reading skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOEFL-Lexile Comparison Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL Reading Performance Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Lexile Information for a Low-Scoring TOEFL Test-Taker

What is my Lexile measure?

To get started, select your TOEFL IBT Reading score to determine your Lexile measure and range. Then click on the “Find Books” button to build a customized list of books that match your reading level and interests. You can use the reading list at the library, bookstore or on the Internet to select the right materials to practice your reading.

TOEFL IBT
Reading score: 18
Lexile Measure: 1215L
Lexile Range: 1115L To 1265L

What does this mean?
Your Lexile range spans 100L below to 50L above your Lexile measure. Selecting reading materials in this Lexile range supports successful reading practice and promotes growth.

Find Books

How does my Lexile measure compare?

Typical Reading Demands of Materials in English

1700L
1600L
1500L
1400L
1300L
1200L
1100L
1000L
900L
800L
700L
University Textbooks
On-Line Reference Articles
On-Line Newspapers

The green band represents your Lexile range, and helps you to predict how well you will be able to comprehend these materials.

More information about this diagram

Examples of reading materials for low-scoring TOEFL examinees

Forrest Gump
Author: Steven Spielberg
1210L
Pages: 248

Jungle, The
Author: Rudyard Kipling
1170L
Pages: 410
Series: American Library

Cold Mountain
Author: Frank G. Carpenter
1210L
Pages: 449

Animal Farm
Author: George Orwell
1170L
Pages: 116
Series: Penguin Classics
Lexile Information for a High-Scoring TOEFL Test-Taker

What is my Lexile measure?

To get started, select your TOEFL IBT Reading score to determine your Lexile measure and range. Then click on the “Find Books” button to build a customized list of books that match your reading level and interests. You can use this reading list at the library, bookstore or on the Internet to select the right materials to practice your reading.

TOEFL IBT
Reading score:
Lexile Measure:
Lexile Range:

What does this mean?
Your Lexile range spans 100L below to 50L above your Lexile measure. Selecting reading materials in this Lexile range supports successful reading practice and promotes growth.

Find Books

How does my Lexile measure compare?

Typical Reading Demands of Materials in English

- University Textbooks (US)
- Online Reference Articles
- WorldWide Workplace (US)

Lexile Measure

- 1700L
- 1600L
- 1500L
- 1400L
- 1300L
- 1200L
- 1100L
- 1000L
- 900L
- 800L
- 700L

The green band represents your Lexile range, and helps you to predict how well you will be able to comprehend these materials.

More information about this diagram

Don Quixote
Author: Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de
Lexile: 1480L
Pages: 940
Series: P. S. Sel.

Confessions of Nat Turner, The
Author: St.owe, William
Summary: A NOVEL BASED ON THE TRUE STORY OF AN ABORTED SLAVE REBELLION IN 1831.
Lexile: 1450L
Pages: 426

When We Were Romans
Author: Macneil, Matthew
Lexile: 1440L
Pages: 225

Love in the Time of ...
Author: Marquez, Gabriel
Lexile: 1440L
Pages: 348