

Reading and Listening Parts 1 to 7 – Vocabulary

Overview: This lesson helps students improve the type of language knowledge they need throughout the TOEIC Reading and Listening test, particularly words and expressions that mean the same thing (synonyms).

Part of Exam: TOEIC Reading and Listening sections I (Listening) and II (Reading), all parts.

Language/Skills practised:

- Reading
- Speaking

Materials:

- one copy of Worksheet 1 per student
- one copy of both Memory chains game worksheets per group
- around five small pieces of blank paper per student (any size or shape)
- optional: one copy per student of a few texts from the TOEIC Reading section where the questions use different words to the text
- optional: one copy of Worksheet 2 and/or 3 per student

Time: 60-75 minutes (not including variations and extensions)

Preparation:

Photocopy copies of the two Memory chains game worksheets (one full set per group) and cut up the cards as follows: cut along the horizontal lines and fold along the middle to make double sided cards with the synonyms on the back.

If you are photocopying TOEIC reading texts for the optional section of Part two of the lesson, underline the words and expressions in the questions that are written differently in the text.

Procedure:**Part 1: Warmer – ‘Random but the same’ Pellmanism**

1. As you are chatting to students at the beginning of the class and/or checking homework, write down five of the words that come up on your little slips of blank paper.

Show the students what you are doing.

2. Give out the rest of the blank pieces of paper (around five per student) and ask students to do the same, i.e. write any one word or expression on each slip of paper. These could be, for example, words in their notebooks that the class has studied recently.
3. Place your slips of paper face down on the table in front of you and get the students to do the same. Pick up two pieces of paper, show the class what they are, and try to come up with some way in which they are the same, e.g. *Notebook and leisure are the same because I had more of both of these when I was younger*. If the class accepts your connection, score a point and keep the pieces of paper. If not, place the two pieces of paper back down where you took them from.
4. Students play the same game with their slips of paper in pairs or threes.
5. Stop when the first group has finished and discuss if there really are other ways of saying the same thing that's written on each of their pieces of paper, e.g. *leisure = 'free time'*.

Part 2: Synonyms reading practice

1. As a class, discuss how words and expressions that mean the same thing are important in the TOEIC exam. If you have worked through any Listening and Reading papers, students are probably already aware that the words of the questions and the words in the texts are not always the same. Tell them that you are going to practise coping with these kinds of questions and will make sure they learn some useful synonyms for the test.
2. Give out the copies of Worksheet 1. Do the first example or two as a class and then let them finish the sheet on their own. If they are finding it difficult, it might be because they are looking for different parts of the question sentences in different parts of the text, which can sometimes happen in the exam but is not tested here.
3. Go through the answers. Probably the most difficult one to understand is *We have simplified ... = '... has been made less complicated'*: this is because the grammar is so different, but changes in grammatical form

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between question and text like this do often come up in the exam. Explaining that the second sentence means *by us* can help.

Key:

1. *less than 13 = no more than 12*
 2. *Thank you very much = we are very grateful / company = firm*
 3. *You can come to see us = We are open for visits / from 11 o'clock in the morning to half-past three in the afternoon = between 11 a.m. and 3.30 p.m.*
 4. *We are closed = We are not open / on Saturday and Sunday = at the weekend*
 5. *the number of models has decreased over the last few years = there are fewer models available now than there were a few years ago*
 6. *It is possible for you to visit = You can make a visit / storage facilities = warehouse*
 7. *website = home page / has been made less complicated = we have simplified*
 8. *It is possible for you to visit = You can make a visit / executives = top managers / as well = also*
 9. *We are sure = we are certain / is better = has improved*
4. (Optional) If students need more practice of this point, you could ask them to do the same with underlined words and expressions from real TOEIC exam texts, then move on to answering the test questions.
 5. When there are no more questions, make students turn over their sheets and test them on a few of the more difficult ones, e.g. *What means the same as 'the number of models has decreased over the last few years'?* Discuss as a class how students can make sure they remember this language in the future, e.g. by writing it in columns in their notebook, covering one column and testing themselves. Tell students they are now going to play a game that helps them remember these words and expressions in a similar way.

Part 3: Synonyms memory chain game

1. Give out the cut-up memory chain game cards, one full set per group of two or (preferably) three people.

2. Ask students to spread the cards out with each placed horizontally so you can read one side and arranged in a column in front of them on the table (so that it looks a bit like an apartment block). Make sure they don't unfold the cards. It doesn't matter which card goes where in the column or which side is up.
3. Starting with the card closest to them, the first student should try to guess what is on the other side of the card and then turn over and check. If they are correct, the card stays on the new side and they pass onto the next card. The aim is to reach the top of the column without making any mistakes.
4. If students make a mistake, play passes to the next player. Everyone must always start again from the bottom of the column and try to reach the very top. This means that students can use a combination of their memory and language knowledge to try to finish the game, and that weaker students can learn from stronger ones.
5. Let the groups start playing. If one group finishes long before the others, you can get them to mix up the cards and try again. Instead of or after this, you can get them to test each other by taking out words from some of the expressions, e.g. *I work for the Human **blank** department.*
6. If any of the groups are really slow, you can take away the bottom few cards from the column and/or let them work together rather than against each other.

Part 4: Link to Reading section I (optional)

1. If you want to move on to practice of Reading Section 1 in this lesson or the next lesson, you can give students Worksheet 2 to do in class or for homework as revision of the language of this lesson and an easy introduction to Reading Section 1. Alternatively, Worksheet 3 can be done as further revision, for example as homework.

Key:

Worksheet 2

1. a
2. d
3. c
4. b

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- 5. a
- 6. c
- 7. d
- 8. d
- 9. b

Worksheet 3

students' own answers

- 1. no more than 12
- 2. we are very grateful
- 3. a company
- 4. half-past three in the afternoon
- 5. between 11 and ...
- 6. at the weekend
- 7. you can
- 8. warehouse
- 9. simplified
- 10. top managers
- 11. also
- 12. certain
- 13. has improved
- 14. free
- 15. lunch
- 16. twice a year
- 17. place
- 18. completely
- 19. change
- 20. buy
- 21. every year
- 22. before
- 23. breakable
- 24. conference
- 25. construction
- 26. personnel Dept
- 27. mortgage
- 28. sorry
- 29. a contract
- 30. bookings
- 31. first
- 32. hardly ever

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Tip 1: Although skills training can help students get a quick boost in their TOEIC score, if they want to make a substantial improvement over the long term, what they most need is vocabulary – especially, but not exclusively, business vocabulary. Knowing different parts of speech and common collocations is very important for the first part(s) of the reading section, but for all other parts of the exam, the thing that comes up most is words and expressions that mean the same (synonyms).

Tip 2: The first thing you need to do when tackling this language point is to show the students how it is relevant to the exam. This should not be difficult, as any reading or listening section you do will have several questions where the words in the question and the words in the text are not the same.

Tip 3: As with learning any vocabulary, the secret to teaching synonyms well is making sure students get plenty of revision of the language until they know it properly and keeping up their interest in the language.

Tip 4: One great motivator is, of course, fun. To make sure they really learn the language, you will need games where they use the same language over and over. See the lesson plan for one example. Another is to play Vocabulary Tennis, where they take turns 'serving' with a word and phrase and then try to 'return' with something with the same meaning. If the server knows the synonym and the returner doesn't, they score one point.

Tip 5: Another way of keeping up interest is for students to find and choose the language that want to learn for themselves. For example, after you have finished card games like the memory chain game, let students choose ten cards to take home and learn for the next lesson. At the end of the next lesson, get them to divide the cards they chose between ones they now know really well, ones they almost know, and ones they still don't know at all. They can then choose some more vocabulary for the last two categories to learn for the following week.

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Less than 13	No more than 12
Thank you very much	We are very grateful
A firm	A company
Three thirty p.m.	Half past three in the afternoon
On Saturday and Sunday	At the weekend
It is possible for you...	You can...
Storage facilities	A warehouse
Made less complicated	Simplified
An executive	A top manager
As well	Also
Sure	Certain
Is better	Has improved
At no cost	Free
Midday meal	Lunch
Once every six months	Twice a year

Memory chains game 1

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A location	A place
In full	Completely
To modify	To change
To purchase	To buy
Prior to	Before
Fragile	Easily breakable
A symposium	A conference
Building	Construction
The HR (Human Resources) Department	The Personnel Department
I apologize	Sorry
An agreement	A contract
A reservation	A booking
The initial ...	The first...
Rarely	Hardly ever
My colleagues	My workmates

Memory chains game 2

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Information for visitors

We are very grateful for your interest in our firm. You can make a visit to our warehouse. You can also meet with our top managers, if you make a special request. We can also accept groups of visitors, but the number of people must be no more than 12. We are open for visits between 11 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. We are not open at the weekend. Although there are fewer models available now than there were a few years ago, we are certain you will find that the quality has improved. We have simplified the map on our home page, but please feel free to ask us for more detailed directions if you need them.

Find sentences in the text above that mean the same as those below. Then write the word(s) that have the same meaning as the words or expressions that are green and underlined.

1. The number of visitors must be less than 13.
2. Thank you very much for your interest in our company.
3. You can come and see us from eleven o'clock in the morning to half past three in the afternoon.
4. We are closed on Saturday and Sunday.
5. Although the number of models has decreased over the last few years,...
6. It is possible for you to visit our storage facilities.
7. The map on our website has been made less complicated.
8. It is possible for you to have a meeting with executives of our company as well.
9. We are sure you will think that the quality is better.

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Choose one word or phrase from a), b), c) and d) that best completes the sentence.

1. Please let us know if you would like to pay in installments or pay everything _____ full now.
a) in
b) of
c) at
d) on
2. I will be out of the office between 7 _____ 9.
a) to
b) until
c) by
d) and
3. We will be here _____ Friday and Saturday only.
a) in
b) at
c) on
d) the
4. We will send you a replacement _____ no cost.
a) with
b) at
c) by
d) although
5. We have fewer _____ 20 people in our department.
a) than
b) that
c) from
d) to
6. We are very _____ for you having made time to see us today.
a) gratefully
b) gratitude
c) grateful
d) grate
7. I go to the dentist once _____ six months.
a) a
b) the
c) one
d) every
8. All the _____ managers got together for an emergency meeting.
a) high
b) chief
c) lead
d) top
9. We haven't signed anything with those suppliers, but we do have a verbal _____ .
a) agreed
b) agreement
c) agree
d) agrees

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Without looking back at the text, write as many words and expressions as you can with the same meanings as the words below:

1. Less than 13 _____
2. Thank you very much _____
3. A firm _____
4. 3:30 pm _____
5. From 11 to ... _____
6. On Saturday and Sunday _____
7. It is possible for you... _____
8. Storage facilities _____
9. Made less complicated _____
10. Executives _____
11. As well _____
12. Sure _____
13. Is better _____
14. At no cost _____
15. Midday meal _____
16. Once every six months _____
17. Location _____
18. In full _____
19. Modify _____
20. Purchase _____
21. Annual _____
22. Prior to _____
23. Fragile _____
24. Symposium _____
25. Building _____
26. HR (Human Resources) _____
27. Secured loan _____
28. Please forgive me _____
29. An agreement _____
30. Reservations _____
31. Initial _____
32. Rarely _____

Identify the words and expressions in the text below. Match them to the words and phrases in the exercise above which have the same meaning.

you can place completely change top managers sorry a contract bookings first buy before breakable conference warehouse a company also certain has improved no more than 12 we are very grateful between 11 and at the weekend free lunch hardly ever construction Personnel Dept half past three in the afternoon twice a year simplified every year mortgage