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**Vocabulary is power**

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**Abstract (Summary)**

In the last column (Nov. 20), we looked at the TOEFL test. This week, we turn to the TOEIC test. We will look at Part VI, Text Completion. We will examine some example Text Completion questions that focus on vocabulary. As in other sections of the TOEIC test, vocabulary stands as one of the most important elements in determining your score.

Each of these questions directly tests test-takers' knowledge of English vocabulary. None of this vocabulary is uncommon or unpredictable. Instead, it's classic fare for TOEIC text completion. While some of these vocabulary items may seem "harder" or "easier" than others, the larger your English vocabulary, the higher the odds of answering these test questions correctly.

Vocabulary is key to your success, not only on the TOEIC test, but to your success in learning English. In particular, in the Text Completion section of the TOEIC, test-takers can gain from a broad, business-related vocabulary. Opportunities to expand your vocabulary abound, from everyday readings to formal textbook study. Wise TOEIC-takers should take advantage of these opportunities to improve their language skills and their test scores.

**Full Text (936 words)**

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Vocabulary is power

Lynn Stafford-Yilmaz / Special to The Daily Yomiuri

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In the last column (Nov. 20), we looked at the TOEFL test. This week, we turn to the TOEIC test. We will look at Part VI, Text Completion. We will examine some example Text Completion questions that focus on vocabulary. As in other sections of the TOEIC test, vocabulary stands as one of the most important elements in determining your score.

In the Text Completion portion of the TOEIC test, test-takers read a short passage. The passage contains four missing words or phrases. Test-takers must choose the best word or phrase to complete the missing portion. Let's look at some examples.

**Example 1**

Questions 1-4 refer to the following announcement.

Announcement about Phone-Related Changes:

The telephone changes we will undergo this week are massive. Although we hope not to run into major

1. (A) technology

(B) obstacles

(C) appliances

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(D) underpinnings

we are also aware of the glitches that users will invariably face. To minimize the disruption during this change, please note the following:

All users will need to

2. (A) record

(B) resign

(C) repeat

(D) resist

a new greeting.

to access your

3. (A) In order

(B) So that

(C) For

(D) With the purpose

greeting options, you will need to change your phone mailbox PIN access number. If you do not remember your number, you can check with the Technical Assistance Center.

Your new phone mailbox will provide you access not only to your voice mail, to your e-mail, calendar

4. (A) and also

(B) in addition

(C) but also

(D) separate

appointments and contacts.

Thank you for your patience during this phone transition.

The correct responses to the questions are 1. (B), 2. (A), 3. (A), 4. (C).

Each of these questions directly tests test-takers' knowledge of English vocabulary. None of this vocabulary is uncommon or unpredictable. Instead, it's classic fare for TOEIC text completion. While some of these vocabulary items may seem "harder" or "easier" than others, the larger your English vocabulary, the higher the odds of answering these test questions correctly.

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In sum, vocabulary is important on the TOEIC test--very important. With this in mind, let us note a couple of excellent ways to increase one's vocabulary with the purpose of scoring higher on the TOEIC test.

First, you can overtly study vocabulary words in lists. Such lists may come from English textbooks. Likewise, you can generate your own vocabulary lists.

Second, learners can learn vocabulary in context, by reading. Indeed, many learners find this to be a much more interesting way to learn. And by choosing reading material selectively, TOEIC-takers can increase the odds of acquiring the types of vocabulary they will encounter on the TOEIC, including words that are common to business, travel, marketing, the workplace and entertainment.

For instance, if we look again at Example 1, we find that many of the answer options represent language that would be common in workplace and business English, especially in Questions 1 and 2. (The terms in 3 and 4, while used in the workplace, are not so clearly business-oriented.)

With these thoughts in mind, let us look now at a second example set of Text Completion items. This example, like the first, contains only vocabulary questions.

This is worth noting primarily because on the actual TOEIC test, it would be uncommon to find a reading passage that contained four vocabulary-related questions. In actuality, any four Text Completion questions would comprise a mix of both vocabulary and grammar questions. It is just for the sake of today's discussion that our example items focus solely on vocabulary.

### Example 2

Questions 1-4 refer to the following note.

The purpose of this work is to investigate the energy of Syria.

1. (A) entries

(B) indicators

(C) policies

(D) fragments

Syria is a developing country and still has room for growth social and

2. (A) posing

(B) acquiring

(C) attending

(D) regarding

economic development. Due to its demographic and economic growth, Syria a major energy market.

3. (A) consumes

(B) constitutes

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(C) confirms

(D) considers

The country's energy policies are designed to provide the required energy on a reliable, cost-effective .

4. (A) basis

(B) function

(C) format

(D) operation

As with Example 1, you can see that these vocabulary questions may test every part of speech. As well, it may be of interest to note that the difficulty level of the vocabulary items varies significantly from one to the next.

The correct responses to Example 2 are 1. (C), 2. (D), 3. (B), and 4. (A). Regardless of whether you answered these items correctly, do you know every vocabulary word in each item? If not, now is a perfect opportunity to learn these words. Look them up in a dictionary, make flash cards, and use them in sentences.

Vocabulary is key to your success, not only on the TOEIC test, but to your success in learning English. In particular, in the Text Completion section of the TOEIC, test-takers can gain from a broad, business-related vocabulary. Opportunities to expand your vocabulary abound, from everyday readings to formal textbook study. Wise TOEIC-takers should take advantage of these opportunities to improve their language skills and their test scores.

If you have questions or comments about the TOEIC test, or about this column, please e-mail Lynn Stafford-Yilmaz at [dy-edu@yomiuri.com](mailto:dy-edu@yomiuri.com).

Stafford-Yilmaz is a former TOEIC test-question writer. She has authored multiple test preparation textbooks for both the TOEIC and TOEFL tests. She currently is a teacher educator for the School of Teaching English as a Second Language in Seattle, Washington.

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