How to Choose the Right TOEFL Online Prep for You?

Why Most Online TOEFL Prep is Bad (How to Ask on What They Really Offer)

By PrepScholar TOEFL Prep

PrepScholar
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Learn more at:

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INTRODUCTION:
What is the ideal online prep?

Hi there! This is Yuan, and I’m the Director of TOEFL at PrepScholar. I’m wrote this guide to help you choose an online TOEFL prep that WORKS.

With the spread of the internet and e-learning, online test prep programs have become more popular. These
programs try to use technology to innovate beyond the classroom and traditional tutoring techniques that have existed for centuries.

Online prep has the potential to be extremely effective. The IDEAL online prep program is comprehensive and covers all aspects of your learning. It guides you through a structured study program so you know what to work on at every point in time.

It customizes the learning to your unique strengths and weaknesses so you can make the most progress. It’s multimedia, using text, pictures, and video to engage you. It contains enough practice questions and lessons so you
don’t have to scramble and get together other resources for your prep.

PrepScholar TOEFL also offers an engaging learning experience such that you are fascinated and excited to learn more and find out how to conquer the next level!

Sounds great? It can be. But most online TOEFL prep courses do not come close to delivering on these promises!

It is your job to really understand exactly what each online TOEFL prep program is offering underneath the marketing so that you can make the right decision for you.

In this buyer’s guide, we warn you about major problems and how to avoid them, and how to research prep programs. We’ll give you questions to ask TOEFL companies about their TOEFL programs to decide what’s right for you. We’ll also talk about why our PrepScholar Complete TOEFL Prep program succeeds where others fail.

We believe we’ve created the best prep program available, but even if you don’t work with us, these guidelines will help you make the right decision for you.
We’ve purchased and used nearly all of the online TOEFL prep programs available. Unfortunately, most online prep programs are simply glorified books, taking minimal advantage of the capabilities of technology, including personalized learning algorithm optimization.

One major TOEFL book publisher has an online TOEFL program that is literally the exact copy of the book it sells in book stores, copied word-for-word online - but it costs 10 times as much as the textbook. Another TOEFL tutor has released an “online TOEFL course” that simply gives the same instructions to students on what books to use and how to use them without offering customized instruction.
Other online prep programs offer more content and technology, but they fail in major ways. One program is partly heavy on using videos to do some instruction. However, once you sign up, you realize that it simply throws its content at you all at once and in no apparent order, giving no direction on what you should study first and when. As a result, you feel lost watching videos and don’t know if you are actually improving.

Another TOEFL program promises you to score better, but when you buy it, you realize it doesn’t actually personalize the program to you in a meaningful way, so you end up learning things you already know. You receive lessons already know, and when you do practice, you do not get any customized feedback on how to improve.
In an age where everyone wants to be “online” and profit from the growing popularity of online courses, it is unfortunate that so many companies are doing the minimum to qualify as online prep. Often, once you’ve signed up it’s too late - the program doesn’t even offer you a money-back refund if you’re not happy. Careful!

We see too many students fall for the traps of other companies, and we wrote this guide to explain the factors that really matter in an online TOEFL prep program.

From the next page forward, we’ll explain each major component of an effective TOEFL prep program. If the program you’re looking at doesn’t have these features, you’re not going to get good results.
Research shows that one of the major factors in improving your TOEFL score is the number of hours you study. You won’t improve very much if you just spent ten hours studying. However, if you find a program that can motivate you to put in 50, 100 or 300 hours, you’ll make huge strides in your TOEFL score.

It’s important, then, that the program you’re looking for is directly reaching out to you and engaging you in helpful ways. This could mean many things.

First, the program should help to remind you when to study. You probably understand that the TOEFL is
important, but even the best of us get distracted or forget to stick to the plan over time. The program should actively remind students that there is work to be done, and hold you accountable for the work you are committed to do. **In PrepScholar, we accomplish this through our personalized study scheduling system.** Every week, we ask you to schedule specific study times when you’ll be using PrepScholar. We then email reminders to you so that we can all keep you on track.

Second, the program should give you feedback on how you’re doing and whether you’re on the right track. If you’re studying for the TOEFL over several weeks, you want to make sure that you’re not doing anything wrong and that you’re putting in enough time and getting results.

That’s why PrepScholar sends out **personalized weekly progress reports** to you detailing the work you’ve done, successes along the way, and suggestions on how to improve. This way, you have a clear idea on the effort you’ve put in and the progress you’ve made, motivating you to reach the next level come next week.

“I can’t thank you enough for all the personal attention you’ve given me. Your individual feedback keeps me working hard every day.

-- Shwetha, India
Last, the program should make an active effort to keep you engaged and interested. PrepScholar accomplishes this through our gaming features and interactive lessons.

We divide the TOEFL into over 40 skills and assign you a level. You can see your progress every time you log into PrepScholar, and you’ll see yourself in a clear trajectory, leveling up your skills from core to advanced, from advanced to mastery. Our entire TOEFL program is designed with the same principles that makes the world’s best-selling games so addictive. Our features will make you feel excited to study and fulfilled at winning the game of TOEFL.

We also know that it’s easy to lose attention with boring content. At PrepScholar, you’ll benefit from our engaging and interactive lessons. Our lessons are not one-sided lectures: they intertwine stories, humor, hardcore materials, and, most importantly, input from YOU to learn and move forward. Our detailed answer explanations are written by the world’s top TOEFL instructors!

If you are doing a Speaking or Writing practice, we have human graders grading exactly like the way the official TOEFL would do, and provide you with real feedback on YOUR performance, so you’ll know exactly how to improve and score even higher on the TOEFL.
Each one of you have different strengths and weaknesses, based on the education you’ve received up to this point and your own interests. Because of this, each one of you should have a different study program, designed to help overcome your own weaknesses and build on strengths.

This is really important for studying efficiency. If you customize your TOEFL prep, you can achieve in 100 hours what it would take someone else 300 hours to do. That’s because every minute that you spend studying what’s best for you gives you the best result possible, compared to
wasting time. This just seems like common sense, but nearly every prep program fails to deliver on this.

At PrepScholar, we take this seriously because it’s how we’ve learned to master the TOEFL. When you sign up for PrepScholar, the first thing you do is to take a diagnostic test. The diagnostic test is designed by our co-founder, an Economist from Harvard. The diagnostic test uses advanced algorithms to run thousands of simulations to find your unique strengths and weaknesses and what so study first to maximize your chances of success.

Frankly, when others talk about “customized” learning, they are referring to a few simple formulas that generalize users into a few different groups, most of it isn’t even accurate. To our knowledge, PrepScholar has the only truly personalized TOEFL prep course that is unique for every one of our TOEFL students. Our algorithm also goes beyond the Diagnostic Test - it exist throughout your experience with PrepScholar. Every minute you give to PrepScholar has an outsized impact on your TOEFL score.

“ I’m LOVING how every lesson suits my ability! I’m challenged just right and I’m excited to conquer this!

-- Sasha, Ukraine ”
Our **customized study plan** is exactly that - it’s based on our proprietary algorithm that truly personalizes the TOEFL journey for YOU, not anybody else. We place you into a level depending your ability - Core, Advanced, or Expert. Depending on your level, you get a different interactive lesson and a different set of practice questions for every single skill.

Every time you take one of our lessons, you’re working at the skill level that’s right for you - **not so easy that it’s wasting your time, but hard enough that it’s pushing your limits** of understanding. Doesn’t this make sense?

This takes a lot of technical computation and even more TOEFL knowledge to create thousands of questions that mirror the exact question format, difficulty level, and tricks and traps of the Official TOEFL questions. We’ve hired the world’s top 1% TOEFL writers to write custom lessons for every skill and level, and assign each one of our thousands of practice questions into a specific level.

This is why so many companies fail to deliver on this promise - they don’t have the technical expertise, the deep knowledge of the TOEFL itself, and the willingness to care and invest in student results. We’ve taken the great care to make it great, to make it the best.

Here’s one example of how a student’s skill level can vary across skills within PrepScholar:
Core progress suggests the student has started to conquer the fundamental basics required to ace this skill.

Advanced progress suggests the student has conquered the core skills and is on a path to learn and ace the most difficult questions and concepts that fall under that skill.

Mastery progress is a milestone to celebrate! It indicates that the student has fully mastered the skill. A person at the Mastery level will know how to tackle ANY twisted questions this skill throws at them on the TOEFL.

As you can see, this person’s needs vary across each skill and each difficulty level. In fact, this person needs very different strategies and practice problems compared to another student. On PrepScholar, this student gets exactly what he or she needs to make the most progress.
The TOEFL is a strange test, even stranger than the GRE and the GMAT. The TOEFL asks strange topics purposefully designed to trick the average non-native English speaker. Questions will be worded in twisted ways to confuse you, with answers designed to trick students into picking the wrong ones.

“Practice only with real TOEFL questions or the most realistic TOEFL practice questions”
At PrepScholar, we’re obsessive about adapting our TOEFL questions extremely closely to the real TOEFL. Our Complete TOEFL Prep teaches you every single TOEFL question type that will appear on the real TOEFL, and we have thousands of realistic TOEFL questions across every skill, difficulty level, and question format.

Signed up for a TOEFL test prep course or buying a TOEFL prep book? Make sure you ask when the questions were written because it’s entirely possible that a prep program’s TOEFL questions were written a few years ago and are now totally obsolete, with plenty of the New TOEFL question formats missing!

At PrepScholar, we take the TOEFL multiple times a year and our Complete TOEFL Prep contains practice questions that are continuously updated. We are constantly identifying and finding the most recent TOEFL question types and teach them to you as soon as we identify them.

Because the TOEFL has a very specific style, questions and answers are written in a very specific way. This style is consistent across every single TOEFL test. By practicing with realistic TOEFL questions and learning to expect and ace every possible question type, you’ll understand all the ways the TOEFL tries to trick you and be able to avoid being tricked.
Most online prep programs fail to provide realistic questions because it’s hard and expensive to do it right.

The content creators at other companies often haven’t actually scored well on the TOEFL. Worse, they don’t understand the subtleties of TOEFL questions. These test prep companies get by doing just a mediocre job, not a stellar one.

“Practice only with only recently updated TOEFL practice questions that reflect the newly added question formats.”

At PrepScholar, we take this problem seriously. We’ve hired the best TOEFL experts in the country to craft thousands of the most realistic TOEFL questions available.

These experts have scored in the top 1% of all students on the TOEFL, have graduated from top graduate programs from Harvard and MIT, and deeply understands how to teach TOEFL to students of all nationalities. They know the TOEFL in and out, and the questions they write are better than anything else out there (aside from the official TOEFL practice tests).
Furthermore, every single question has a detailed, interactive answer explanation designed to help you figure out your mistakes and not make it again.

Furthermore, you are always practicing TOEFL under the most realistic scenarios - time is limited, questions are weird, and you are always practicing on a desktop computer.

This is really expensive for us to do, which is why no other online prep program bothers to do this right. But it’s one of the most important parts of effective test prep.
5: SUMMARY
Why PrepScholar delivers when others fail

PrepScholar wins where most online TOEFL prep fails because...

1. We leverage features that have succeeded in gaming and use interactive triggers to engage you to study more and to feel excited and fulfilled to win.

2. We give personalized feedback throughout your TOEFL prep so you can be sure you’re always on the fastest track and the most direct path to score high.

3. We TRULY customize your prep program to your strengths and weaknesses. You’re always working on what is most effective for you.

4. We use thousands of realistic TOEFL questions and 4 official TOEFL practice tests so that you train on what’s actually being tested on the TOEFL.

We do this because we care deeply about helping students to get a great TOEFL score. After working with thousands of students, we understand what problems you face and how to get you to improve. Don’t take our word for it. Ask the companies the questions below and see for yourself.
Get online and ask each company these questions. Our answers are given for your reference. If other companies can’t answer these questions, it’s a bad sign!

Use this to make your final decision on the best online prep for you.

**How does your program guide me so I know exactly what to work on at every time?**

PrepScholar creates a personalized (i.e. unique) study program for you and assigns you lessons and quizzes every week. All you have to do is log in and put in time - you never have to worry about what to study and what resources to use.

**Do you customize each student’s study program? How specifically does your customization work? How will my study program differ from everyone else’s?**

When you start using PrepScholar, you take a diagnostic test so that we can understand your strengths and weaknesses. We then create a custom study schedule for you, which means we give you a specific lesson at a specific level in a specific sequence. No two students ever have the exact same program.
How does your program adapt to my progress over time, instead of just at the beginning?

Every week, we rerun thousands of simulations to understand your changing skill level and how your study program should change. You’ll get assigned different lessons at different levels to adjust to you as you get better at the TOEFL. So you’re always working on whatever’s best for you to make the most improvement.

How are your practice problems customized to me based on my strengths and weaknesses?

We believe in the Goldilocks principle - you need to practice with questions that are perfect for your ability and not too easy or too hard. This means questions that not only work at your exact skill level, but push you to get better and better. We assign you these practice questions automatically based on your skill level.

I get distracted a lot. How do you make me NOT procrastinate? Tell me specific features.

PrepScholar does this in three ways:

1. We help you schedule TOEFL prep into your weekly schedule, and we remind you when to study.
2. Our lessons are not lectures: they are always interactive, so you’re always actively engaged and learning.
3. We send personalized feedback reports and celebrate your successes every step of the way. Our students are hooked on leveling up their TOEFL skills with our
program—they can’t wait to master skills and win!

Do you help me schedule TOEFL prep? How specifically?
At the beginning of each week, PrepScholar asks you to fill in your study schedule. We prompt you to schedule specific times and days, instead of vague promises of “5 hours this week.” We then send reminders about these times and it keeps you accountable to your own words.

How do you make sure I’m studying and hold me accountable if I’m not?
Our precise tracking technology only counts time when you’re actually working on PrepScholar. If you login at PrepScholar, visit Facebook for an hour, and log out, we don’t count that as any time spent toward studying! Only when engaging with PrepScholar and learning do we give you credit for your time. At the end of each week, we email the time you’ve spent and you’ll have a clear picture of your own effort!

How can I figure out whether I’m on track all the way to my test date? How do I know if I’m falling behind?
We give you detailed analysis of your skill levels so that you can see how your ability is changing over time. We assign you practice tests strategically throughout your study program so that we can see how your TOEFL score improves over time. Our instructor also checks into every single student three weeks before the test to give custom feedback on what they can improve.
Do you use real practice tests and questions in your program? If not, why not?

PrepScholar absolutely does. We believe that realistic practice tests are the best way to get used to the length and format of the exam, and to understand your current TOEFL score. We assign you these practice tests throughout your study program so that you work on them when it’s most efficient for you.

If you use questions that are not official, what are the credentials of the people writing them?

At PrepScholar, we’ve hired the best TOEFL experts in the country to craft thousands of the most realistic TOEFL questions available. These experts have scored in the top 1% of all students on the TOEFL with decades of experience teaching the TOEFL. Most have graduated from top schools like Harvard and MIT, and have earned multiple teaching awards. They know the TOEFL in and out, and the questions they write are significantly better than anything else out there (aside from the official TOEFL practice tests).

How do I learn from my mistakes with your program?

Every single one of our thousands of questions has a detailed answer explanation that shows you how to find the right answer, and why the wrong answers are wrong. This is very important because real TOEFL questions have tricks that trap students into picking the wrong answers.
Do you have a refund guarantee? How specifically does it work? Do I get my money back? What are the requirements?

PrepScholar has a full money-back 15+ point guarantee. It’s pretty simple to get this:

- Take an official TOEFL before signing up
- Complete the PrepScholar program before your next test

If you do this and your score doesn’t improve by 15 points, you get your money back, no questions asked. Other companies don’t give you your money back and only let you use the program for more time, so watch out!
AND NOW WHAT?

If you found this guide helpful, please share it with any other people who might benefit.

Got questions? Email us at toefl@prepscholar.com

Are you looking to increase your TOEFL score? Need a 100 on the TOEFL score? Need a 26 on Speaking? Learn more about PrepScholar TOEFL Prep, the only TOEFL course in the world guaranteed to get you your target score. [https://www.prepscholar.com/toefl/s/](https://www.prepscholar.com/toefl/s/)

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See why PrepScholar TOEFL Prep is ideal for you!

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PrepScholar’s Complete TOEFL Prep Course comes with a 5-day free trial... but we don’t stop there. We promise you will get a 15-point score increase on the TOEFL. We promise you’ll get instant access and can take the course on your own terms. We promise to assess and identify your weakness and strength across 50 skills tested on the TOEFL via our adaptive Diagnostic Test. We promise you will receive a completely customized course focused on teaching YOU your weakest areas so that you can improve the most on the TOEFL. We promise we’ll work together to keep you on track. You will see a dramatically improved TOEFL score, and you will achieve your target TOEFL score at a faster pace than you would with any other TOEFL program in the world. There’s a good reason that PrepScholar is the #1 Online Test Prep company in the United States. If you follow our Complete TOEFL Prep Course, you will succeed.

If you achieve your target TOEFL score through our customized Complete TOEFL Prep Course, you will have crushed the TOEFL and be one step closer to getting attending your dream graduate program, one step closer to reaching your dream life. And I want to
offer you more. If you don’t get the 15-point increase we promised, I will shoulder 100% of the responsibility and return 100% of your money back. This is our promise to you, our signed, sealed, and delivered guarantee. You can find all the information about our refund policy on our PrepScholar TOEFL website. Just for the record, we have sold thousands of these courses with the test prep industry’s MOST ambitious guarantee and have had only a handful of refunds!

So **TRY US FOR FREE** for 5 days, no strings attached. And even after the 5-day period, you are STILL guaranteed to get your money back if you don’t get our promised score increase! (See detailed terms and conditions here). You have NOTHING TO LOSE, and EVERYTHING TO GAIN. We shoulder all of the risks, and you capture all the win. We designed our guarantee this way because we are just this confident in our program.

If you learned a lot from this guide, I ask you to do ONE thing NEXT: **Try our Complete TOEFL Prep Course FOR FREE. Take this next step to change your life.**

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