

TOEFL Speaking Sample Paper 04

Task 1: Independent Speaking Task

Preparation Time: 15 seconds — Response Time: 45 seconds

Direction: Read the question. Take notes on the main points of your response. Then, respond to the question.

Question:

Is it better to reward employees with various job perks and gifts (such as gym memberships or travel vouchers) rather than simply paying them a higher salary? Give reasons and details to support your argument.

Sample Solution (Task 1)

In my opinion, it is better to **simply pay employees a higher salary**. Firstly, money provides **flexibility**. Every employee has different needs; while one might appreciate a gym membership, another might need that money for childcare or rent. A higher salary allows them to choose what is most important for their own lives. Secondly, higher pay is often seen as a more direct **recognition of value**. It builds long-term loyalty more effectively than a one-time gift. For example, if a company offers a high salary, it can attract more competitive talent than a company that offers many perks but lower base pay.

Task 2: Integrated Speaking (Campus-related)

Preparation Time: 30 seconds — Response Time: 60 seconds

Step 1: Reading Passage (Read for 45 seconds)

Letter to the Editor: Lack of Paper Recycling

After a recent search across campus, the Environmental Watch group found only 10 recycling bins compared to 30 vending machines. More importantly, only one paper recycling bin was found. This means most paper discarded in dormitories is being thrown into the regular garbage. University President James Wicker explained that the company the university currently employs does not recycle paper and that switching to a company that does would be a financial obstacle for the university.

Step 2: Transcript

Narrator: Now listen to two students discussing the letter.

Male student: Lisa, did you see this article about the lack of paper recycling?

Female student: Yeah, and I agree with the writer. The university is being way too nonchalant about it. I mean, what kind of institution uses more paper than a university?

Male student: True, but the President said it's a budget issue.

Female student: I don't buy that. They charge us student dues for things like **live entertainment**, which half the students don't even use! Why can't they redirect some of that money or charge us a small fee for a proper recycling program?

Male student: You think students would pay more?

Female student: Absolutely. I wouldn't have a problem throwing in a few dollars a year to save a few trees. The writer had a great point—it's embarrassing that an Ivy League school has 30 vending machines but only one bin for paper.

Question:

The woman expresses her opinion about the lack of recycling on campus. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.

Sample Solution (Task 2)

The woman believes that the university **should implement a better paper recycling program** and disagrees with the President's excuse about finances. Her first reason is that a university, by nature, produces a **huge amount of paper waste**, making it essential to have more than just one bin. Her second reason is that the university's **budget priorities are wrong**. She points out that they spend money on things like live entertainment, which many students do not use. She suggests that students would be willing to pay a small extra fee to support the environment, arguing that preserving trees is more important than the current "nonchalant" approach.

Task 3: Integrated Speaking (Academic Reading/Lecture)

Preparation Time: 30 seconds — Response Time: 60 seconds

Step 1: Reading Passage (Read for 45 seconds)

Flow

In psychology, "flow" is a state of complete and energized focus in an activity. When people enter this state, they lose their sense of time and experience a feeling of great satisfaction. Contrary to expectation, flow usually happens not during relaxing moments of leisure, but when an individual is actively involved in a difficult enterprise that stretches their mental or physical abilities for its own sake.

Step 2: Transcript

Narrator: Now listen to part of a talk in a psychology class.

Professor: I had a friend, Professor Jones, who retired last year. I remember passing his classroom early one morning, and he looked terrible—his clothes were rumpled and he looked like he hadn't slept at all. I asked if he was okay, and he said he had **never felt better**. He had spent the **entire night** in that classroom working on a single mathematics puzzle. He didn't stop to eat dinner, and he didn't stop to sleep. He wasn't doing it for research or for his job; he just found the puzzle in a journal and it really interested him. He worked furiously all night, covering the blackboards with equations, and he **never even realized** that time was passing by.

Question:

Explain the concept of "flow" and how the example used by the professor illustrates it.

Sample Solution (Task 3)

The concept of flow is a state of **intense focus and satisfaction** that occurs when someone is doing a challenging activity. The reading mentions that in this state, people lose track of time. The professor illustrates this with the story of his colleague, Professor Jones. Jones spent a whole night solving a math puzzle just for fun. He was so deeply involved in the challenge that he **forgot to eat or sleep** and didn't even realize how much time had passed. This perfectly matches the definition of flow because he was stretching his mental abilities for the sake of the activity itself and felt "totally happy" despite the exhaustion.

Task 4: Integrated Speaking (Academic Lecture)

Preparation Time: 20 seconds — Response Time: 60 seconds

Transcript

Narrator: Now listen to part of a lecture in a business class regarding pricing strategies.

Professor: When companies introduce a new product, they have to decide on a pricing strategy. Today we'll look at two very different approaches.

The first strategy is to **set the initial price high**. This is often used for innovative, high-tech products. Companies do this to build a "high-quality" image. Because the product is new and exciting, some consumers are willing to pay more just to have it first. Think about when **video cameras or cell phones** first came out; they were extremely expensive, and companies made high profits early on before eventually lowering the price.

The second strategy is to **set the initial price low**. This is common when the market is already saturated with similar products. The goal here is to undercut competitors and gain market share quickly. For example, a new **computer maker** might offer a laptop at a very low, affordable price to tempt customers to switch brands. Even if they don't make much profit on the computer itself, they make money later by encouraging customers to buy **accessories**, like printers or software, which are made by the same company.

Question:

Using the points and examples from the lecture, explain the two pricing strategies described by the professor.

Sample Solution (Task 4)

The professor describes two pricing strategies for new products. The first is **setting a high initial price**, which is typically used for innovative technology like the first cell phones. This builds a **premium image** and allows the company to profit from customers who want the latest tech regardless of cost. The second strategy is **setting a low initial price**, which is used in crowded markets to steal customers from competitors. The example given is a computer manufacturer that sells laptops cheaply to get people to buy their brand. While they make little profit on the laptop, they earn it back through **related sales**, such as printers and software.