

TOEFL Writing Sample Paper 01

Task 1: Integrated Writing Task

Time: 20 Minutes — Recommended Length: at least 150-225 words

Task Instructions:

- Read the passage below and take notes on the main points.
- Listen (or read the summary) of the lecture provided in the box.
- Write a response explaining how the lecture's points specifically challenge the arguments made in the reading passage.
- *Note:* Do not just summarize; compare and contrast the two sources.

Reading Passage: (Read for 3 minutes)

The Mystery of the Stonehenge Bluestones

Several rocks making up Stonehenge were traced to a location in Wales, almost 200 miles away. It is unlikely that humans transported these "bluestones" using sleds, as the technology of the time would make this back-breaking work unnecessary when local rocks were available.

A more exciting theory is the "**glacial erratics**" theory. This suggests that during an icier interval in Earth's history, slow but violent glaciers methodically carved through the earth, transporting these massive stones to Salisbury far earlier than human arrival. This would explain the "unfinished" look of Stonehenge—builders simply ran out of the bluestones that the glaciers happened to leave behind.

Listening Lecture: (Read for 2 minutes)

Lecture Highlights (Audio Summary)

The professor casts doubt on the glacial erratic theory:

- **Geological Evidence:** Geologists have found no other glacial debris (smaller stones or gravel) near Stonehenge that would typically accompany a glacier-transported boulder.
- **Human Capability:** Recent experiments show that a small group of men using wooden sleds and grease could actually move such stones over long distances surprisingly efficiently.
- **Archaeological Find:** New excavations in Wales show evidence of human stone-quarrying tools at the exact site where the bluestones originated, dating to the time Stonehenge was built.

Question:

Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they cast doubt on the specific points made in the reading passage.

Task 2: Academic Discussion Task

Time: 10 Minutes — Recommended Length: at least 100 words

Task Instructions:

- Read the prompt provided by the professor and the responses from your classmates.
- Write a response that contributes to the discussion.
- State your opinion clearly and provide supporting reasons or examples.
- Engage with the existing discussion by referencing or building upon what Alice or Mark said.

Professor Miller: "This week, we are discussing the 'Sugar Tax' or 'Junk Food Tax.' Many international health bodies are lobbying for additional taxation on unhealthy foods to combat the obesity epidemic. However, opponents argue this punishes personal choice and may not even change behavior. What is your take? Should the government use high taxes to discourage unhealthy eating, or is this an overreach of authority?"

Alice: "I believe people should be allowed to eat whatever they like without being 'punished' by the government. Most people know junk food is unhealthy, but the enjoyment they get outweighs the long-term health costs. A tax won't make them eat

salad; it will just leave them with less disposable income to spend on other things, like a varied diet.”

Mark: ”I disagree with Alice. The problem isn’t just personal choice; it’s the cost. Healthy food is often much more expensive than processed junk food. If we tax the bad stuff, we can use that revenue to subsidize fresh vegetables and fruits. This makes the healthy choice the easy, affordable choice for low-income families.”

Question:

Write a response to the professor’s question. In your response, you should:

- Express and support your personal opinion.
- Contribute to the discussion in your own words.

Solutions-

Task 1: Integrated Writing

The reading passage argues that the bluestones of Stonehenge were likely transported from Wales to Salisbury by glaciers, rather than by humans. However, the professor in the lecture disputes this theory by providing geological, experimental, and archaeological evidence.

First, the reading suggests that glaciers, acting as "erratics," moved the stones over long distances. The professor challenges this by noting that glaciers do not transport single large boulders in isolation. If a glacier had moved the bluestones, it would have also left behind a trail of smaller debris and gravel. Since no such geological evidence has been found near Stonehenge, the glacial theory is unlikely.

Second, the passage claims that human transport would have been too difficult and unnecessary. The professor counters this by citing recent experiments showing that even a small group of people could move such heavy stones efficiently using wooden sleds lubricated with grease. This demonstrates that the technology of the time was indeed sufficient for the task.

Finally, the reading posits that the "unfinished" look of Stonehenge is due to builders running out of stones deposited by glaciers. The professor refutes this by pointing to recent excavations in Wales. Archaeologists found human stone-quarrying tools at the exact source of the bluestones, dating back to the period of Stonehenge's construction. This strongly suggests that humans intentionally extracted and transported the stones for a specific purpose.

Task 2: Academic Discussion Task

In my opinion, implementing a tax on unhealthy foods is a necessary step for public health. While I understand Alice's concern regarding personal freedom, we must consider that the "personal choice" to eat poorly creates a massive financial burden on the public healthcare system. When individuals develop chronic illnesses due to diet, the society often bears the cost.

Furthermore, I strongly agree with Mark's point about using tax revenue for subsidies. In many urban areas, "food deserts" make it nearly impossible for low-income residents to find affordable, fresh produce. If the government taxes sugary drinks and uses that money to lower the price of organic vegetables, it isn't just "punishing" bad habits; it is actively incentivizing better ones. For example, some cities that have implemented a soda tax have seen a measurable decrease in consumption and a simultaneous increase in water and juice sales. Therefore, I believe such a policy is a practical tool for improving societal well-being rather than a mere overreach of authority.