

MUST-KNOW WORDS FOR TOEFL IBT

Prepared by
Hamed Aalae
TOEFL iBT Instructor
www.ibtil.org



WEEK 1

Be determined to boost your vocabulary! This is where success on the test starts!

1: ABERRANT (ADJECTIVE)

Unusual: unacceptable: atypical: abnormal

Aberrant behavior/trees/weather



2: ACCELERATE(VERB)

Speed up: expedite: hasten: quicken ≠ decelerate

measures to **accelerate** the rate of economic growth

The car **accelerated** smoothly away.



3. ACCOUNT FOR(VERB)

Explain: clarify: rationalize: illuminate: justify

Recent pressure at work may **account for** his behavior.

Can you **account for** your movements on that night?



4. ACKNOWLEDGE(VERB)

Accept: admit: concede: confess: grant: profess: recognize

The family **acknowledge** the need for change.

He **acknowledges that** when he's tired he gets bad-tempered.

Claire **acknowledged** that she was guilty.

The government must **acknowledge** what is happening and do something about it.

This is a fact that most smokers readily **acknowledge**.

The film festival **is acknowledged** as an event of international importance.



5. ADJACENT (ADJECTIVE)

Next: adjoining: neighboring: close

We stayed in **adjacent rooms**.

the building **adjacent to** the library



6. AGGRAVATE(VERB)

Worsen: exacerbate: intensify: increase

irritate: bother: nettle: offend

Their money problems **were further aggravated** by a rise in interest rates.

Building the new road will only **aggravate** the situation.

What really **aggravates** me is the way she won't listen.



7. AGILE(ADJECTIVE)

Nimble: active: supple: swift: alert: sharp

Dogs are **surprisingly agile**.

He was physically strong and **mentally agile**.

With surprising **agility**, Karl darted across the road.



8. ALLUDE(VERB)

Refer: hint: mention: touch upon: imply

Rick didn't want to discuss his past, though he **alluded** darkly to 'some bad things that happened.'

The committee made no **allusion** to the former President in its report.

literary/classical/cultural etc. **allusions**

Eliot's poetry is full of biblical **allusions**.

In his poetry we find many **allusions** to the human body.



9. ANNIHILATE (VERB)

Destroy: abolish: eradicate: exterminate: obliterate

Just one of these bombs could **annihilate** a city the size of New York.

Tyson **annihilated** his opponent in the first round.



10. ARDUOUS (ADJECTIVE)

Difficult: exhausting: fatiguing: laborious: onerous: strenuous: tiring:
tough, challenging, daunting

arduous task/work

arduous journey/voyage

an **arduous** journey through the mountains



11. ARID(ADJECTIVE)

Dry: barren: sterile

Boring: tedious: uninteresting

Water from the Great Lakes is pumped to **arid** regions.

My mind was **arid**, all inspiration gone.

Arid years of dictatorship

Arid life



12. ASSERT(VERB)

State: insist on: claim: stress

French cooking, she **asserted**, is the best in the world.

He **asserted that** nuclear power was a safe and non-polluting energy source.

Native Americans **asserting their rights** to ancestral land

Women began to **assert themselves** politically.

National pride began to **assert itself**.



13. ASSET(NOUN)

Benefit: advantage: blessing: boon: resource: capital: wealth

a corporation with \$9 billion **in assets**

the value of a **company's assets**

A sense of humor is **a great asset** in this business.

be an asset to somebody/something

I think Rachel **would be an asset to** the department.



14. ASTOUNDING(ADJECTIVE)

Astonishing: amazing: impressive: sensational:
breathtaking: brilliant: staggering: stunning

The concert was an **astounding** success.

astoundingly beautiful scenery

The judge's decision **astounded** everyone.



15. ATTAIN(VERB)

Achieve: accomplish: acquire: gain: obtain: reach

More women are **attaining** positions of power.

Share prices **attained** a high of \$3.27.

After a year she had attained her ideal weight.

attainable: adjective

This target should be **attainable**.



16. ATTRIBUTE(VERB)

Ascribe: assign: refer: trace to

attribute something to somebody/something phrasal verb

The fall in the number of deaths from heart disease **is generally attributed to** improvements in diet.

The saying is usually **attributed to** Confucius.



17: AUGMENT(VERB)

Increase: raise: enlarge

Any surplus was sold to **augment their income.**

To **augment** the supplies



18: AVID(ADJECTIVE)

Enthusiastic: ardent: eager: fanatical: keen:
passionate: zealous

an **avid** collector of old jazz records

an **avid** reader



19: BOAST

Brag

Possess

'I wouldn't be afraid,' she **boasted**.

Amy **boasted that** her son was a genius.

He's **boasting about** how much money he has made.

The company is inclined to **boast of** its success.

The city **boasts** two excellent museums.

The Society **boasts** 3000 members worldwide.



20: BOOM(VERB)

Flourish: develop: prosper: thrive

Business was **booming**, and money wasn't a problem.

Tourism on the island has **boomed**.



21: BOON(NOUN)

Benefit: advantage: blessing

The bus service is **a real boon** to people in the village.



22: BREAKTHROUGH(NOUN)

Development: advancement: progress: quantum leap,
leap

Scientists have **made a major breakthrough** in the treatment of cancer.



23: BREW(VERB)

Make: develop: start: foment

Every beer on the menu **was brewed** locally.

He read the paper while **the tea brewed**.

freshly brewed coffee

There's trouble **brewing** in the office.

If a storm **is brewing**, it will happen soon



24: BURGEON(VERB)

Develop: flourish: grow: expand

My confidence started to **burgeon** later in life.
the **burgeoning** market for digital cameras



25: CARDINAL(ADJECTIVE)

Principal: capital: central: chief: fundamental:
leading: main: primary

Having clean hands is one of the **cardinal**
rules when preparing food.

an issue of **cardinal importance**



26: CELEBRATED(ADJECTIVE)

Renowned: eminent: noted: legendary:
acclaimed: prominent: distinguished

a **celebrated** actress

a **celebrated** legal case



27: CHAOTIC(ADJECTIVE)

Disordered: anarchic: confused: riotous

a **chaotic** mixture of images

The filthy and **chaotic** house

Chaotic social and economic conditions



28: CHRONIC(ADJECTIVE)

Persistent

Chronic arthritis/heart disease

chronic unemployment

There is a **chronic shortage** of teachers.

He was a **chronic alcoholic** and unable to hold down a job.

a **chronic smoker**

The service is **chronically** underfunded.



29: CLING TO

Stick: adhere: clasp: embrace: grip: hug

Passengers clung desperately onto the lifeboats.

His wet shirt **clung to his body**.

The smell of cigarette smoke **clung to her clothes**.

an attempt to **cling to** power



30: COLLIDE(VERB)

Crash: clash: conflict

A car and a van **collided** on the motorway.

I ran around the corner, and almost **collided with** Mrs. Laurence.

Two trains **collided head-on** (=when they were moving directly towards each other).

The President **has again collided with** Congress over his budget plans.

Istanbul, where east and west **collide**



31: COMPRISE(VERB)

Be composed to: consist of: contain: embrace:
encompass

The house **comprises** two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a living room.

The committee **is comprised of** well-known mountaineers.

Women **comprise** a high proportion of part-time workers.



32: CONSENSUS(NOUN)

Agreement: assent: unanimity: concord

a lack of consensus about the aims of the project

There is a consensus among teachers that children should have a broad understanding of the world.

The EU Council of Finance Ministers failed to reach a consensus on the pace of integration.

The general consensus was that technology was a good thing.



33: CONGREGATE(VERB)

Assemble: convene: gather

Crowds began to **congregate** to hear the President's speech.



34: CONSPICUOUS(ADJECTIVE)

Obvious: blatant: clear: evident: salient: outstanding: remarkable: striking

The notice must be displayed in a **conspicuous** place.

a bird with **conspicuous** white markings

I felt very **conspicuous** in my red coat.

He had represented Italy with **conspicuous success**.

The award is given for notable or **conspicuous achievement** in science.

a group that were **conspicuous by** their absence from the awards ceremony



35: CONTENTIOUS(ADJECTIVE)

Argumentative: disputatious

contentious issue/area/subject etc

Animal welfare did not become a contentious issue until the late 1970s.



36: CONTIGUOUS(ADJECTIVE)

Neighboring: adjacent: adjoining

America's 48 **contiguous** states



37: CONTRIVE(VERB)

Bring about: manage: create: succeed

Schindler **contrived** to save more than 1,000 Polish Jews from the Nazis.

The lawsuit says oil companies **contrived** the oil shortage in the 1970s. (to do sth secretly)

In 1862, a technique was **contrived** to take a series of photographs showing stages of movement. (make sth skillfully)



38: CONVICTION(NOUN)

Belief: creed: opinion: principle

Certitude: confidence

a woman of strong **political convictions**

The Dotens have **a deep conviction** that marriage is for life.

The students **possess the conviction** that they can make a difference to their community.

He was able **to say with conviction** that he had changed.

'No,' she said, **without conviction**.

It was a reasonable explanation, but his voice **lacked conviction**.

It took her so much effort to speak that what she said **carried great conviction** (=showed she felt sure of what she said).

Applicants are checked for criminal **convictions**.

This was her third **conviction** for theft.



39: COUNTERPART(NOUN)

Match: complement: equal: mate: equivalent

Belgian officials are discussing this with their French **counterparts**.



40: CRISIS(NOUN)

Critical point: climax: emergency: plight: predicament

The country now faces **an economic crisis**.

The Prime Minister was criticized for the way in which he **handled the crisis**.

the current **debt crisis**

a major **political crisis**

I was relieved that we had averted yet another **financial crisis**.

Oil companies were heavily criticized when they made large profits during the oil crisis **of the 1970s**.

The car industry is now **in crisis**.

an **emotional crisis**

In times of crisis, you find out who your real friends are.

He seems to be **going through a crisis**.

Both parties experienced an **identity crisis** (=feeling of uncertainty about their purpose) at the end of the '90s



41: SATURATE(VERB)

Saturate: soak: drench*

to make something very wet [= soak; ≠ dry]:

Water poured through the hole and saturated the carpet.

Most TV channels are **saturated with** ads.(adjective)

His T-shirt was saturated with sweat.(adjective)

*Drenched in sth



42: ABUNDANT(ADJECTIVE)

Abundant: plentiful: adequate: ample: rich # scarce

Abundant supplies / opportunities / work force(adjective)

You can find the material **in abundance** in this region.(noun)

Examples of this reason **abound**. (verb)



43: CONSOLIDATE(VERB)

Consolidate: strengthen: fortify: stabilize

Samsung tries to **consolidate** its position in the market through introducing user-friendly smartphones. (verb)

You need to **consolidate** your language learning through regular practice.

Further **consolidations** in political power might follow the coup.(Noun)



44: CHAMPION(VERB)

Champion (v.): support: advocate: back:
espouse

This idea has been widely **championed** by
academicians.(Verb)



45: ABANDON(VERB)

Abandon: leave: desert

Abandon your family/ city/ country/ house/ attempts to do sth/ the idea of sth

Fearing further attacks, most of the population had **abandoned** the city. (Verb)

There were lots of **abandoned** houses in the district.(Adjective)

Government's **abandonment** of the policy was criticized. (Noun)



46: SOPHISTICATED (ADJECTIVE)

Sophisticated: cultivated: refined: urbane

Complex: complicated: intricate

Sophisticated cutting-edge tablets

He is recognized as a **highly sophisticated** university professor. (adjective)

Tourists have been amazed by the sophistication of this rich cosmopolitan city. (Noun)



47: SUCCESSIVE(ADJECTIVE)

Successive: consecutive: in sequence

Successive classes left him absolutely worn-out. (adjective)

Successive governments have tried to deal with this issue. (adjective)

A **succession of** visitors came to the door. (Noun)

If the prince dies, the **succession** passes to his son. (Noun)

She won the championship four times **in succession**. (Noun)

Who will **succeed** him to the throne? (verb)



48: AMBIGUOUS(ADJECTIVE)

Ambiguous: indefinite: dubious: equivocal: enigmatic: vague: obscure

The poem is highly **ambiguous** and open to various interpretations. (adjective)

The rules are **ambiguously** worded. (adverb)

There was an element of **ambiguity** in the president's reply. (Noun)



49: INTRUSIVE(ADJECTIVE)

Intrusive: interfering: meddlesome

The paparazzi can be **intrusive** at times. (Adjective)

I resented this **intrusion into/upon/on** my personal affairs.(Noun)

Governments should not **intrude into/on/upon** the private lives of their citizens.(Verb)



50: FORMIDABLE(ADJECTIVE)

Formidable: terrifying: intimidating: fearful: dismaying

You have to deal with the **formidable** task of scoring high on TOEFL iBT. (adjective)

A **formidable** challenge in your life was ...(adjective)

The **formidability** of the issue prevented any further progress. (Noun)



51: WITHSTAND(VERB)

Withstand: endure: resist: bear: tolerate

This fabric can **withstand** steam and high temperatures.

The bridge is built to **withstand** an earthquake of 8.3 magnitude.

Exercise helps you enormously **withstand** stresses and strains more easily.



52: ENHANCE(VERB)

Enhance: boost: improve: heighten: elevate

The publicity has **enhanced** his reputation. (Verb)

Rich vocabulary will **enhance** your reading skill.(Verb)

Performance-enhancing drugs are strictly forbidden. (adjective)

Recent improvements in Internet have led to **enhanced** access to websites. (adjective)

flavor **enhancers**(noun)

Music is an **enhancement to** her brilliant performance.(Noun)



53: ACCLAIM(VERB)

Acclaim: praise: compliment: applaud: honor

This movie has been widely **acclaimed** by film critics.
(Verb)

He published a paper which won great **acclaim** among the academicians. (Noun: acclamation)

The book has been widely/ universally/ highly **acclaimed** by teachers and pupils. (adjective)



54: PROFOUND(ADJECTIVE)

Profound: intense: extreme: acute

a **profound** effect/influence/impact/consequence/
question/ thinker/ change(adjective)

Widespread crackdown had a **profound** effect on
people's dissatisfaction with the government.
(adjective)



55: PREVAILING(ADJECTIVE)

Prevailing: prevalent: widespread: customary: popular: usual:
predominant

The **prevailing** economic conditions are not favorable.(adjective)

Justice will **prevail**.(Verb)

Your inner strength will enable you to **prevail over/against** life's obstacles. (verb)

She **prevailed upon her father** to say nothing.(verb)

The **prevalent** beliefs in superstitions really bothered him. (adjective)



56: SHORTCOMING(NOUN)

Shortcoming: imperfection: flaw: weakness: defect: fault

Peter was painfully aware of his own **shortcomings**.(Noun)

The report suggested that there were severe **shortcomings** in police tactics. (noun)



57: ELABORATE(VERB/ ADJECTIVE)

Elaborate:

Adjective: detailed: precise: thorough: complete

Verb: expand: amplify

The city is equipped with a very **elaborate** telecommunications network. (Adjective)

She had an **elaborate** lecture on the topic.(adjective)

McDonald refused to **elaborate** on his reasons for resigning. (Verb)

Would you please **elaborate** on that topic? (Verb)

He will some further **elaboration** on the topic. (Noun)



58: SECLUDED(ADJECTIVE)

Secluded: Private: solitary: sheltered: lonely
secluded garden/spot/beach etc

He's 80 years old now and lives a very **secluded** life.

He preferred to stay at home **in seclusion**.



59: BIZARRE(ADJECTIVE)

Bizarre: unusual, strange, odd, extraordinary, exceptional, remarkable: weird

They had worn **bizarre** costumes. (adjective)

It was rather a **bizarre** coincidence. (adjective)



60: SUPPRESS(VERB)

Suppress: oppress: crush: stifle

The uprising was ruthlessly **suppressed**. (Verb)

Harry could scarcely **suppress** a smile.(Verb)

You should **suppress** your emotions.(Verb)

The virus **suppresses** the body's immune system. (Verb)

There was a shocking **suppression** of the opposition parties. (Noun)

