

## **YOU'RE IN CHARGE!**

This section is entitled "You're in Charge!" because we want to emphasize that you must manage your own English learning. In addition to introducing you to the TOEFL, giving you practice tests, and suggesting test-taking strategies, this book will show you how to take charge of your own English learning.

### **The Limitations of Test Preparation**

For a good TOEFL score, it is essential that you become familiar with the test and the common types of questions it asks. A student who takes the test without this kind of preparation will not do as well as he or she would have with test preparation. So test preparation helps. The authors of this book have seen students' scores jump as much as 50 (approximately 40 on the CBT) points in a short ten-week, 40-hour course.

The problem is that an increase of 30 (20), 40 (30), or even 50 (40), points may not be enough. If a student starts with a proficiency level of 440 (123), a jump of 50 (40) points will not be sufficient for him or her to get into a university that requires a score of 520 (213) for admission.

Even worse, a second TOEFL-preparation course almost never improves student scores as much as the first. And a third preparation course seldom does much better. So our imaginary student, who jumped from a 450 (133) to a 490 (163) after just ten weeks of TOEFL preparation, may have only a score of 500 (173) after two or three more courses—still not enough to get into the university to which he or she wants to go.

What this student needs is more knowledge of English, not more TOEFL preparation. Too many learners of English don't understand this, and they continue to spend more money on too many TOEFL-preparation courses, or—worse—they become frustrated and abandon their dreams of studying in the United States.

ETS, the makers of the TOEFL exam, once conducted a study that showed that, on average, an *increase of 40 points* on the TOEFL requires about *300 hours of intensive* English study. The details of the study are in the graph on the next page.