

So, although we at Kaplan are sure that this is one of the best TOEFL preparation books available, we will not lie to you. The practice tests and the Power Lessons in this book may not be enough for you to get the score you need to get into the American college or university you want to attend.

What you need to do is—as the title of this section suggests—take charge! Don't wait for English proficiency to come to you; go out and get it. In the rest of this section, you will find out what kind of self-teaching you need to do, and discover how this book is more than just a TOEFL preparation book—it's a guide book that will take you on a journey of English acquisition.

The Importance of Vocabulary

Look at the sentences below; they could all easily appear on the TOEFL exam. Do any of the underlined words seem incorrect to you?

She wants to marry as tall a man as possible.

You'll just have to make do with what you have.

Don't talk with your mouth full.

The French founded the city in 1678.

The fact is, there is nothing wrong with any of these sentences, no matter how strange they may look to a non-native English speaker. The point of this is to show that even though no section of the TOEFL is called "Vocabulary," vocabulary undoubtedly plays an important—perhaps the most important—role in *every* section.

Perhaps you are saying to yourself, "Sure, I can see why vocabulary is important in the Reading Comprehension Section, but why is it so important in the Listening or Structure and Written Expression sections?"

Of course, the Listening Section tests your listening skills. But how can you expect to answer questions about what you have heard if you do not know the meaning of what has been said? Moreover, on the Structure and Written Expression Section (the grammar section) of the TOEFL, getting the correct answer often depends more on your knowledge of English idioms than on your knowledge of English grammar. Even more often, it depends on your knowing whether something "sounds right" or not.

Look at the sentences above again. Do the underlined words sound right to you? If one or more of them doesn't, then you need to add those expressions to your English vocabulary.