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# Inside the *TOEFL*® Test - Reading Factual Information and Negative Factual Information Questions

## People in this video

Michael

## Intro

[music playing]

*On-screen:*

***Inside the TOEFL® Test – Reading  
Factual Information  
Negative Factual Information***

*Michael:* Hi, I'm Michael from ETS. Today on Inside the TOEFL Test, we're going inside the TOEFL iBT Reading section. Specifically, the factual information and negative factual information questions.

Factual Information questions ask you to recognize information that is explicitly stated in the text.

These may include facts such as major ideas, supporting details, or definitions.

Negative factual information questions are similar, except that, instead of only one answer being true, three of the four answers are true, and you have to determine which one is false.

*On-screen: Question Structure*

*Factual Information – explicitly stated*

- Major ideas
- Supporting details

- Definitions

*Negative Factual Information* – 3 out of 4 answers are true. Which one is FALSE?

*Michael:* Factual Information questions will have phrases like “According to the paragraph,” or “Paragraph X answers which of the following?” in the question.

For negative factual information questions, look for the words “NOT” or “EXCEPT” in capital letters.

*On-screen: Recognizing the Question Type*  
*Factual Information*

- According to the paragraph
- Paragraph X answers which of the following

*Negative Factual Information*

- According to the paragraph, which of the following is NOT true?
- The author mentions all of the following EXCEPT

*Michael:* Here are some tips for answering factual and negative factual information questions:

Number 1. Don’t automatically select an answer just because it contains words or phrases from the paragraph. Make sure you carefully evaluate each option to determine if it is correct.

2. For the negative factual information questions, remember that you’re looking for an answer that either isn’t in the paragraph, or directly contradicts information in the paragraph.

*On-screen:*  
*Factual Information*

- Don’t select an answer just because it contains words or phrases from the paragraph.
- Evaluate each option to determine if it is correct.

*For Negative Factual Information questions*

- Answer is either not in the paragraph, or it contradicts information in the paragraph.

*Michael:* Let’s look at a sample factual information question. First, here’s an excerpt from a reading passage about meteorite impacts.

*On-screen: Sample Questions – Factual Information*

The body that impacted Earth at the end of the Cretaceous period was a meteorite with a mass of more than a trillion tons and a diameter of at least 10 kilometers. Scientists first identified this impact in 1980 from the worldwide layer of sediment deposited from the dust cloud that enveloped the planet after the impact. This sediment layer is enriched in the rare metal iridium and other elements that are relatively abundant in a meteorite but very rare in the crust of Earth. Even diluted by the terrestrial material excavated from the crater, this component of meteorites is easily identified. By 1990 geologists had located the impact site itself in the Yucatán region of Mexico. The crater, now deeply buried in sediment, was originally about 200 kilometers in diameter.

*Michael:* And here's the question.

*On-screen:* According to paragraph 3, how did scientists determine that a large meteorite had impacted Earth?

- They discovered a large crater in the Yucatán region of Mexico.
- They found a unique layer of sediment worldwide.
- They were alerted by archaeologists who had been excavating in the Yucatán region.
- They located a meteorite with a mass of over a trillion tons.

*Michael:* Be careful when selecting your answer, because 3 of the 4 answer choices misstate information from the passage OR contradict information from the passage.

One answer we can definitely eliminate is C, because there is no mention in this paragraph of archeologists working in the Yucatan region.

Choice A looks like what is said here in the last two sentences, where it does say they found the crater in 1990. But they determined in 1980 that there was a meteorite impact, so it's not choice A.

Choice D is incorrect because it says that "they located a meteorite," which is not true because what they found was the crater, and other evidence of the meteorite impact, not the meteorite itself.

That leaves choice B, which is supported by the second and third sentences. The second sentence mentions "the worldwide layer of sediment" and the third sentence explains how it is unique. Therefore B is the correct answer.

*On-screen:*

- Red X appears next to answer option C. They were alerted by archaeologists who had been excavating in the Yucatán region.
- Highlight appears on answer option A. They discovered a large crater in the Yucatán region of Mexico.
- Highlight appears on last two sentences of the reading excerpt "By 1990 geologists had located the impact site itself in the Yucatán region of Mexico. The crater, now deeply buried in sediment, was originally about 200 kilometers in diameter."
- Highlight appears on this sentence from the reading excerpt, "Scientists first identified this impact in 1980 from the worldwide layer of sediment deposited from the dust cloud that enveloped the planet after the impact."
- Red X appears next to answer option A. They discovered a large crater in the Yucatán region of Mexico.
- Red X appears next to answer option D. They located a meteorite with a mass of over a trillion tons.

- Highlight appears on last two sentences of the reading excerpt “By 1990 geologists had located the impact site itself in the Yucatán region of Mexico. The crater, now deeply buried in sediment, was originally about 200 kilometers in diameter.”
- Highlight appears on answer option B. They found a unique layer of sediment worldwide.
- Highlight appears on reading excerpt sentences: “Scientists first identified this impact in 1980 from the worldwide layer of sediment deposited from the dust cloud that enveloped the planet after the impact. This sediment layer is enriched in the rare metal iridium and other elements that are relatively abundant in a meteorite but very rare in the crust of Earth.”
- Green check mark appears on answer option B. They found a unique layer of sediment worldwide.

*Michael:* Now let’s look at a Negative Factual Information question. Here is another paragraph about meteorite impacts from the same reading passage. And here’s the question.

*On-screen:* Negative Factual Information Questions

This impact released an enormous amount of energy, excavating a crater about twice as large as the lunar crater Tycho. The explosion lifted about 100 trillion tons of dust into the atmosphere, as can be determined by measuring the thickness of the sediment layer formed when this dust settled to the surface. Such a quantity of material would have blocked the sunlight completely from reaching the surface, plunging Earth into a period of cold and darkness that lasted at least several months. The explosion is also calculated to have produced vast quantities of nitric acid and melted rock that sprayed out over much of Earth, starting widespread fires that must have consumed most terrestrial forests and grassland. Presumably, those environmental disasters could have been responsible for the mass extinction, including the death of the dinosaurs.

According to paragraph 4, all of the following statements are true of the impact at the end of the Cretaceous period EXCEPT:

- a. A large amount of dust blocked sunlight from Earth.
- b. Earth became cold and dark for several months.
- c. New elements were formed in Earth’s crust.
- d. Large quantities of nitric acid were produced.

*Michael:* You know it’s a Negative Factual Information question because of the word EXCEPT in capital letters. So three of the choices are going to match information in the paragraph, and only one will not.

Let’s see how many correct choices we can find by scanning for key words that appear in the answers, like dust, sunlight, cold, dark, elements, crust, and nitric acid. We may also need to look for synonyms of these words.

So if we scan the paragraph for some text about dust and blocked sunlight that corresponds to choice A, we find this, and it’s a match.

Choice B is here, where it talks about the cold and darkness.

There is nothing in the paragraph that talks about new elements or the Earth’s crust, so choice C looks like it might be the answer.

For choice D, we found that information here, where it talks about nitric acid.  
So choice C is our answer.

*On-screen:*

- Highlight appears on EXCEPT in the question: According to paragraph 4, all of the following statements are true of the impact at the end of the Cretaceous period EXCEPT:
- 3 of 4 answers are true. Which one is FALSE?
- Highlight appears on dust, sunlight, cold, dark, elements, crust, and nitric acid in the answer options
- Highlight appears on reading excerpt sentences: “The explosion lifted about 100 trillion tons of dust into the atmosphere,” and “Such a quantity of material would have blocked the sunlight completely from reaching the surface,”
- Highlight appears on reading excerpt phrase: “plunging Earth into a period of cold and darkness that lasted at least several months.”
- Highlight appears on reading excerpt phrase: “The explosion is also calculated to have produced vast quantities of nitric acid”
- Highlight and green check appear on answer option C. New elements were formed in Earth’s crust.

*Michael:* Here is a tip to help you improve your reading skills.

Read news and magazine articles about various subjects as often as you can, and practice taking notes. When deciding what to write down, ask yourself what pieces of information are important, or relevant or credible? Then write those down, but keep the notes short. That will help you remember important information in what you read.

*On-screen:* Skill Building Tips – Taking Notes

- What is important, relevant or credible?
- Keep the notes short to help you remember important facts

*Michael:* There are lots of ways to improve your English skills. Whatever you do, keep practicing. And good luck on your TOEFL test.

*On-screen:* For more information about the TOEFL® test and to register, visit the TOEFL® website at

[www.toeflgoanywhere.org](http://www.toeflgoanywhere.org)

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Total length of video: 4:55

