

The TOEFL Speaking is Weird - Video #1 Answer Key

(1) The TOEFL speaking is weird. This is the first video of the series about the TOEFL speaking being weird, and in this video, we are going to talk about having an **opinion about** everything.

(2) The idea is for you is to stop answering questions because there are so many different questions you can get asked and instead think of the questions in terms of **themes**.

(3) So, on the TOEFL speaking you'll be asked 2 **independent** questions and the questions are random, they can be about anything, for example, "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: My government should invest a significant amount of money in space travel."

(4) This is a real TOEFL question. Maybe you have no idea, you've never thought about it. "I don't know what they should do about the space travel, that's the government's job, not my job." I **totally agree** with you for the most part. Maybe you do have an opinion about this, but it's a pretty random question.

(5) Now, how can you prepare for the TOEFL speaking so you can answer any question that they give to you? No matter what, it doesn't matter, you can answer any question. That's the **power of themes**, of thinking about the questions in terms of themes and that's what I'm going to show how to do right now.

(6) So, instead of thinking about it in terms of space travel like "Do you want to space travel or not?", instead think about it in terms of risk, think about your answer to this question. Do you like to take risks, or do you prefer to play it safe? If you had to work at a company or make your own business. If you want to make your own business and it could either be **wildly successful** or a **terrible failure**. Or would you like to have a job that is more comfortable? That is kind of stable?

(7) Your answer to this question reveals if you like to take risks. Are you the type of person who likes to take a risk or not?

(8) So, you want to think about this question. You don't have to, but when you think about this question about space travel in terms of risk, space is a very big place, and you don't know what you are going to get when you go out there, you could lose **millions of dollars** for pretty much nothing. Or, you could invest that

money into something you know: into farming, into agriculture, into building roads and bridges.

(9) Think about the type of person you are. Think about how you feel about taking risks. Do you like that? Do you like to take risk, or do you **prefer** to kind of relax and chill and be more comfortable. Your answer to that question will help you answer this question.

(10) So, there are only about 5 to 10 themes that you need to think about for you to use on test day because the questions will be something about these kinds of themes. So, one theme is RISK.

(11) To give you a couple of other examples of questions that are similar is "Would you prefer to work in a small business or a large company?" Small business is risky, but it's **more rewarding** at the end.

(12) There's another question I had, let's see here, "If you receive a gift of money, if somebody gave you money, would you prefer to go to a concert and have an experience or buy jewelry?" Think about it. Jewelry is something that's reliable, it doesn't lose too much value, but a concert comes and goes. You could not have fun at the concert, it could be a terrible concert, that's a risk. So, you have to think about it in terms of risk, so you could see that there's a lot of different questions you can think about in terms of risk and you can use the same answer, over and over again, for any question that has to do with risk.

(13) I want to show you **another example** of this, this is my beautiful space ship, by the way. Another question in terms of risk is this one; let me read it to you, "Do you think that important historical sights should be opened to the public or **accessible** only to scientists and researchers?" So, this is an **actual question** that a student of mine got recently. The idea is that these historical sights get a little bit **ruined** because of so many people coming, right? So, should we stop letting people come and instead just restrict it to scientists and researches or should we still let people come and try to manage and **preserve** the place anyway?

(14) Another theme you can think about is FREEDOM. You can think about this in terms of freedom. How? So, do you think that you should be able to do whatever you want? Is that you want to do? Or do you prefer to listen to other people and you think that your responsibilities to other people are more important than what

you want? So what you want is most important or what other people want to do is more important?

(15) Think about it this way, let's say, **for example**, your parents want you to stay in your **neighborhood**, they don't want you to go abroad, and you want to go and study in America, for example, they want you to stay. What do you do? Do you follow your heart, do what you want to do? Or do you feel you are more responsible for your parents and you have to take care of them and you have to do what they want you to do? That's a very simple way to think about **freedom**.

(16) Here the government or somebody is telling you, "You can't go here, this is only for scientists," so be responsible, consider the place more than your desire, or "I want to see this place. I think everyone should see this place". Freedom! Think about your idea, how do you feel about personal freedom, about doing what you want **when you want** or being responsible to other people; and you'll see this type of question come up over and over again.

(17) "Is it better to work alone or in a group," for example. You can think about that in terms of freedom. When you are in a group, you have to compromise, you can't always do what you want all the time, or you want to just do what you want. You can think about that in terms of freedom.

(18) Here's another question I wrote, let me see, there was one question, that's a very **weird** question. "Do you want to make your own decisions or do you prefer to have people **make decisions** for you?" So, this is very simple, it has to do with freedom, but some people don't like making decisions, they want somebody else to make decisions for them.

(19) Or here's a question that you probably don't think about in terms of freedom. "Do you agree or disagree: The automobile has improved the lives of people." Now, for an American, for example, a car represents freedom, automobile represents freedom, so I would think about this, if I think freedom is a good thing and I would think of a car as a **symbol of freedom**. Something that opens up the world. I can go to a lot of different places, so I think it's a good thing.

(20) OK, that's pretty much it. So, RISK and FREEDOM. If you want to know more about themes, I think on the top of my head there are 10 themes that you need

to know and prepare for. There will be a link in a **description below**, for you to download a couple of pages from my book *TOEFL Speaking Success* and that's available at the website toeflspeakingteacher.com and you can try out these themes, think about your answers, do the exercises, and actually use them on test day, and the book is \$5 and that would be nice, but either way, hope you guys get some benefit out of it and I will talk to you next time. Take care guys, bye-bye.

1. In paragraph 3, the word **significant**, is closest in meaning to...

a. relationship

b. large

c. signature

2. The word **stable** in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to

a. steady

b. station

c. even

3. The word **accessible** in paragraph 13 is closest in meaning to

a. reliable

b. assuring

c. available

4. The word **preserve** in paragraph 13 is closest in meaning to

a. to maintain

b. to pressure

c. to service

5. How many independent questions will you be asked in the TOEFL Speaking section

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

6. How many themes should you prepare to answer for before the test?

a. 1-2

b. 2-5

c. 5-10

7. What are the two themes discussed in this video?

1. independence and risk

2. risk and reward

3. risk and freedom

8. According to the video, what could the automobile represent?

a. life

b. modernization

c. freedom

9. What do you think is the main idea of this lesson?

The main idea is for you the student to get more comfortable and confident to answer any type of question on test day by thinking of the questions in terms of themes. The two themes discussed in this lesson is if you like to take risks and if you feel personal freedom is more important than other responsibilities. These two themes can be used to answer questions ranging from space travel to childhood education.

10. List two of the most important lessons you have learned from this lesson:

A.

B.

11. What do you plan on doing next? How will you apply what you have learned?