The TOEFL® Primary™ Test Design and Research Framework

The TOEFL® Primary™ Test Design and Research Framework is based on combining general knowledge drawn from existing literature about foreign-language learning of young learners, with empirical evidence of what young learners of English as a foreign language are expected to learn during the early years of English instruction based on curriculum and textbook analyses. The framework articulates the knowledge, skills and abilities measured by the TOEFL Primary Tests, recommends a set of design principles and best practices for assessing young language learners, and proposes a range of language assessment tasks. It also includes a brief summary of the validity evidence gathered through prototyping, piloting and field studies during the development phase, and a long-term research agenda toward building a comprehensive validity argument for the TOEFL Primary Tests.

To what extent do the TOEFL Primary Tests reflect the target construct?

This study aimed to provide evidence to support the content validity of the TOEFL Primary Tests by employing expert judgments. A panel of 17 experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, representing 15 countries, participated in the study. The teachers completed a survey designed to facilitate the evaluation of: (a) the relevance of the language abilities assessed by the TOEFL Primary Tests, and (b) the match between the target construct and the test content. Results of the study showed that the majority of the test items measured what they were intended to measure and that the language abilities assessed were important for effective classroom performance.

Teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the TOEFL Primary Tests’ assessment tasks: A survey study

A survey was administered to 29 EFL teachers and 281 students during the pilot study of the development phase to evaluate the appropriateness of the assessment tasks proposed for the TOEFL Primary Tests. Results suggested that the content of the test substantially reflected those introduced in various EFL curricula for young learners and that test takers had a generally positive attitude toward a computer-delivered speaking test. The study results were used to refine task types and contributed to the development of the final test specifications.

Examining the impact of the TOEFL Primary Tests on teaching and learning for young EFL learners

This longitudinal study investigates the impact of the TOEFL Primary Tests on teaching and learning. One of the intended uses of the tests is to support teaching and learning. Survey and interview data were collected from test developers and educators about their beliefs on teaching and assessment practices, before and after the introduction of the TOEFL Primary Tests. Analysis will be conducted to determine what differences in English instruction, if any, can be attributed to the introduction of the TOEFL Primary Tests.

Mapping the TOEFL Primary Tests onto the Common European Framework of Reference

This research project used standard setting to link scores on the TOEFL Primary Reading, Listening and Speaking Tests to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels. A variation of a Yes/No Angoff standard-setting approach was applied to the TOEFL Primary Reading and Listening Tests, and a variation of a Performance Profile approach was applied to the TOEFL Primary Speaking Test. Eighteen educators from 15 countries served on the standard-setting panel. Based on their judgments, the TOEFL Primary Test scores that map to different CEFR levels were recommended.
Lexile® linking study

Research was conducted to determine whether the TOEFL Primary Reading Test score could be used to identify an appropriate level of reading materials for young EFL learners. TOEFL Primary Reading test forms and Lexile linking items were administered to students across 12 countries and nine native languages during the field study of the TOEFL Primary Tests. The results from the study indicated that the scores for the TOEFL Primary Reading Test and the Lexile measures could be appropriately linked. Based on the study results, Lexile measures were incorporated in the TOEFL Primary score report to help teachers and parents find appropriately challenging reading materials for their students and children.