

Short conversations

A

Strategy: Be familiar with polite ways of saying “no”
Listen carefully to the first exchange

Many of the conversations in Part 3 involve requests or inquiries with negative responses. Being familiar with the language and organization common to these types of situations can help to choose the correct answer. It is important to understand the first exchange, as this probably contains the answer to the first question.

Test tip


Conversations involving saying ‘no’ are common in the TOEIC test

Learn to identify denial and refusal phrases and listen carefully to the information that follows them. This information is often the focus of one of the questions.

1 Language building: Be familiar with the vocabulary of denial and refusal

- A Match the question on the left to the best response on the right. The common words and phrases used for denial and refusal are in **bold**. The first one is done for you.
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Jane, would you like to join us for drinks tonight? <i>e</i> | a We used to , but we stopped doing it last year. |
| 2. Could you fix this radio for me? | b No, I’m sure they wouldn’t allow it. The building owner hates animals. |
| 3. We are going skiing this weekend. Can you and Mary come along? | c We can , but I would prefer if we could put it off till tomorrow. I have a lot of other work. |
| 4. Are we still having the sales meeting after lunch? | d I’m afraid we can only service Tri-sonic units, madam. |
| 5. Is it OK to keep a cat in this building? | e I’d love to , but I’m afraid I have to pick up my sister. |
| 6. Do you accept personal checks? | f I don’t think we’ll be able to make it. My brother’s family is coming on Saturday. |
- B Look at the questions and correct answer choices for the six dialogs above. Write the number of the question/response above that best matches each question and answer below. The first one is done for you.

1	Why won’t the woman go out with her friends?	She has a previous commitment.
	What does the man suggest?	Postponing the meeting
	Why can’t the woman get service?	Her radio is the wrong brand.
	What are the speakers discussing?	The store’s payment policy
	How does the owner feel about pets?	He strongly dislikes them.
	What is the man planning for the weekend?	He is entertaining relatives.

-  C Now listen to three short conversations and answer the following questions.
- Why can’t Eric do what he asks?
 - He has to meet a client.
 - He needs to prepare some other papers.
 - He is leaving the office shortly.
 - He will be in a meeting until this evening.

2. How is the man planning on getting to the station?
 - (A) He will take the train.
 - (B) He will go by bicycle.
 - (C) Daphne will drive him.
 - (D) He is going to jog.
3. What does the woman say about the man's request?
 - (A) They won't be able to press the shirts on time.
 - (B) They can clean and press his trousers before 11:00.
 - (C) His shirts will need to be repaired.
 - (D) His pants need to go to another location.

Test tip

Most Part 3 conversations start with a question or request

Listen carefully to what the first speaker says, and the response, as this very often relates to the first question.

2 Test tactic: Understanding the first exchange

A Match the Part 3 question on the left to the first speaker's question/request on the right. The first one is done for you.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What advice does his friend give about trading in his car? 2. What kind of summer vacation is the man considering? 3. What experience does the man have? 4. How does Mr. Green feel about his request? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a "Mr. Green, I was wondering if it was OK if I took next Friday off." b "Do you think I should get a new car? It seems to cost me more money in repairs each year." c "I see you are applying for the sales clerk's job. Do you have any experience in sales?" d "What are you doing for your vacation this year, Dario?" |
|---|---|

B Now listen to the full conversations. After each one, stop the audio and repeat as much as you can of the second speaker's response, then choose the answer choice that best matches the response you heard.

- (A) He thinks the time is not good.
- (B) He may be able to save money over time.
- (C) He has done some work in retail sales.
- (D) A low budget one.

3 Tactic practice

Use the tactics you have practiced for the next two conversations. Before you listen to each conversation, stop the audio and use the time to a) predict the context and b) think of other ways to say the answer choices with a partner.

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|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the first man want to do? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (A) Buy a house (B) Rent somewhere to live (C) Go to the beach (D) Decorate his bedroom 2. What is the problem? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (A) The beach is too far away. (B) There are no suitable places left. (C) It is too expensive. (D) He can't see anything. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What does the second man offer? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (A) To show him the bedroom (B) To give him a discount (C) To show him a different place (D) To leave with him 4. What is Jim's problem? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (A) He hardly knows Bob. (B) He only has a little money. (C) He wants to lend some money. (D) He doesn't have any money. |
|---|---|

Tactics checklist

- Listen for denial/refusal statements and the information that follows them.

1	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
2	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
3	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
4	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
5	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
6	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

5. What does Bob do about the situation?
 (A) He helps Jim out.
 (B) He suggests asking someone else.
 (C) He lends him a few dollars
 (D) He offers to talk to Darryl.
6. What does Bob finally decide?
 (A) He will find the wallet.
 (B) He will speak to Darryl.
 (C) He will not speak to Darryl.
 (D) He will make him lunch.



Understanding natural English

In natural spoken English, sounds are changed, combined and dropped.
 Listen to these sentences spoken naturally and write in the missing words.
 I certainly use the exercise.
 I was wondering if you drive me there.

B

Mini-test

Now apply the *Test tactics* at the actual test speed with questions 1–12.



You will have 30 seconds to skim the questions and answer choices before the first listening starts. After that you will have exactly 8 seconds between each question to mark your answer and focus on the next question.

- What does the woman ask the man?
 (A) If he would like to go to the airport
 (B) If he can take her to the airport
 (C) If he can pick her up by 11:00
 (D) If he can drive
- What is the man's response?
 (A) He worries he can't cancel his flight.
 (B) He refuses her request.
 (C) He invites her to play golf.
 (D) He agrees to her offer.
- Where is the man going tomorrow?
 (A) To the airport
 (B) To the office
 (C) To the golf course
 (D) For a drive
- What was the man's experience of Prestige Air?
 (A) He enjoyed it.
 (B) He will go next month.
 (C) It was commendable.
 (D) It wasn't relaxing.
- Why did the man have trouble with the seats?
 (A) They didn't fully recline.
 (B) There wasn't enough leg room for him.
 (C) The seats were too narrow.
 (D) There were no footrests.
- What does the man say about the in-flight entertainment?
 (A) It met his expectations.
 (B) It was too noisy.
 (C) It was a cut above the competition.
 (D) He was unable to enjoy it.
- What is the caller complaining about?
 (A) A tennis racket
 (B) A vacuum cleaner
 (C) A superstore
 (D) An electric train
- What is wrong with the product?
 (A) It is too far away.
 (B) It is noisy and ineffective.
 (C) There is nothing wrong.
 (D) It only worked for one day.

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|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 2 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 3 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 4 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 5 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 6 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 7 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 8 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 9 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 10 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 11 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |
| 12 | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) |

9. What information does the service representative want to know?
 (A) If they can get a replacement
 (B) How much the product cost
 (C) The date and location of purchase
 (D) How far the mall is
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10. Where does the conversation probably take place?
 (A) In a travel agency
 (B) In an airplane
 (C) In a train station
 (D) In a baggage reclaim hall
11. What is the woman's problem?
 (A) Her luggage has not arrived.
 (B) She missed her flight.
 (C) She can't find her passport.
 (D) She took the wrong flight.
12. How does the man help her?
 (A) He replaces her documents.
 (B) He finds her bag.
 (C) He offers to represent her.
 (D) He tells her who to speak to.

C

Learn by doing: Refusing

Practice the following conversations involving a refusal. Then make new conversations by replacing the words in **bold** with the words in the boxes below.

A: A group of us are going **bowling** on **Tuesday night**. Would you care to join us?

B: I really would, but unfortunately I have a **tennis lesson**.

A: Oh, too bad. Maybe another time then?

B: Yes, for sure. Thanks for the offer.

C: Excuse me. Can I **park my car here**?

D: No, I'm afraid not. **This is a no parking zone**.

C: Oh, do you know of anywhere around here I can **park**?

D: Sorry, I'm afraid I don't.

for Greek food/Wednesday night/to pick up my sister from school

to a movie/Sunday afternoon/to go to a wedding

to have a barbecue/Saturday/to work

cash a check in this shop/We don't accept checks/cash one

leave my bags here/We can't be responsible/leave them

use US dollars here/We only take local money/change money

Follow up: Now make another conversation with a refusal using your own ideas.

D

Further study

Choose two of the conversations with refusals you made in activity C, write out the dialogs, and write two questions to test your classmates in the next lesson.

Go to word list and quiz page 181.