

TOEFL iBT Practice Test 3

READING

Directions: This section measures your ability to understand academic passages in English.

The Reading section is divided into separately timed parts.

Most questions are worth 1 point, but the last question for each passage is worth more than 1 point. The directions for the last question indicate how many points you may receive.

You will now begin the Reading section. There are three passages in the section. You should allow **20 minutes** to read each passage and answer the questions about it. You should allow **60 minutes** to complete the entire section.

At the end of this Practice Test you will find an answer key, information to help you determine your score, and explanations of the answers.

ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is the art and science of designing structures that organize and enclose space for practical and symbolic purposes. Because architecture grows out of human needs and aspirations, it clearly communicates cultural values. Of all the visual arts, architecture affects our lives most directly for it determines the character of the human environment in major ways.

Architecture is a three-dimensional form. It utilizes space, mass, texture, line, light, and color. To be architecture, a building must achieve a working harmony with a variety of elements. Humans instinctively seek structures that will shelter and enhance their way of life. It is the work of architects to create buildings that are not simply constructions but also offer inspiration and delight. Buildings contribute to human life when they provide shelter, enrich space, complement their site, suit the climate, and are economically feasible. The client who pays for the building and defines its function is an important member of the architectural team. The mediocre design of many contemporary buildings can be traced to both clients and architects.

In order for the structure to achieve the size and strength necessary to meet its purpose, architecture employs methods of support that, because they are based on physical laws, have changed little since people first discovered them—even while building materials have changed dramatically. The world's architectural structures have also been devised in relation to the objective limitations of materials. Structures can be analyzed in terms of how they deal with downward forces created by gravity.

They are designed to withstand the forces of *compression* (pushing together), *tension* (pulling apart), *bending*, or a combination of these in different parts of the structure.

Every development in architecture has been the result of major technological changes. Materials and methods of construction are integral parts of the design of architectural structures. In earlier times it was necessary to design structural systems suitable for the materials that were available, such as wood, stone, or brick. Today technology has progressed to the point where it is possible to invent new building materials to suit the type of structure desired. Enormous changes in materials and techniques of construction within the last few generations have made it possible to enclose space with much greater ease and speed and with a minimum of material. Progress in this area can be measured by the difference in weight between buildings built now and those of comparable size built one hundred years ago.

Modern architectural forms generally have three separate components comparable to elements of the human body: a supporting *skeleton* or frame, an outer *skin* enclosing the interior spaces, and *equipment*, similar to the body's vital organs and systems. The equipment includes plumbing, electrical wiring, hot water, and air-conditioning. Of course in early architecture—such as igloos and adobe structures—there was no such equipment, and the skeleton and skin were often one.

Much of the world's great architecture has been constructed of stone because of its beauty, permanence, and availability. In the past, whole cities grew from the arduous task of cutting and piling stone upon stone. Some of the world's finest stone architecture can be seen in the ruins of the ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu high in the eastern Andes Mountains of Peru. The doorways and windows are made possible by placing over the open spaces thick stone beams that support the weight from above. A structural invention had to be made before the physical limitations of stone could be overcome and new architectural forms could be created. That invention was the *arch*, a curved structure originally made of separate stone or brick segments. The arch was used by the early cultures of the Mediterranean area chiefly for underground drains, but it was the Romans who first developed and used the arch extensively in aboveground structures. Roman builders perfected the semicircular arch made of separate blocks of stone. As a method of spanning space, the arch can support greater weight than a horizontal beam. It works in compression to divert the weight above it out to the sides, where the weight is borne by the vertical elements on either side of the arch. The arch is among the many important structural breakthroughs that have characterized architecture throughout the centuries.

PARAGRAPH
1

Architecture is the art and science of designing structures that organize and enclose space for practical and symbolic purposes. Because architecture grows out of human needs and aspirations, it clearly communicates cultural values. Of all the visual arts, architecture affects our lives most directly for it determines the character of the human environment in major ways.

Directions: Mark your answer by filling in the oval next to your choice.

1. According to paragraph 1, all of the following statements about architecture are true EXCEPT:

- ☐ Architecture is a visual art.
- ☐ Architecture reflects the cultural values of its creators.
- ☐ Architecture has both artistic and scientific dimensions.
- ☐ Architecture has an indirect effect on life.

PARAGRAPH
2

Architecture is a three-dimensional form. It utilizes space, mass, texture, line, light, and color. To be architecture, a building must achieve a working harmony with a variety of elements. Humans instinctively seek structures that will shelter and enhance their way of life. It is the work of architects to create buildings that are not simply constructions but also offer inspiration and delight. Buildings contribute to human life when they provide shelter, enrich space, complement their site, suit the climate, and are economically feasible. The client who pays for the building and defines its function is an important member of the architectural team. The mediocre design of many contemporary buildings can be traced to both clients and architects.

2. The word "enhance" in the passage is closest in meaning to

- ☐ protect
- ☐ improve
- ☐ organize
- ☐ match

3. The word "feasible" in the passage is closest in meaning to

- ☐ in existence
- ☐ without question
- ☐ achievable
- ☐ most likely

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PARAGRAPH
3

In order for the structure to achieve the size and strength necessary to meet its purpose, architecture employs methods of support that, because they are based on physical laws, have changed little since people first discovered them—even while building materials have changed dramatically. The world's architectural structures have also been devised in relation to the objective limitations of materials. Structures can be analyzed in terms of how they deal with downward forces created by gravity. They are designed to withstand the forces of *compression* (pushing together), *tension* (pulling apart), *bending*, or a combination of these in different parts of the structure.

4. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
- ☐ Unchanging physical laws have limited the size and strength of buildings that can be made with materials discovered long ago.
 - ☐ Building materials have changed in order to increase architectural size and strength, but physical laws of structure have not changed.
 - ☐ When people first started to build, the structural methods used to provide strength and size were inadequate because they were not based on physical laws.
 - ☐ Unlike building materials, the methods of support used in architecture have not changed over time because they are based on physical laws.
5. The word “devised” in the passage is closest in meaning to
- ☐ combined
 - ☐ created
 - ☐ introduced
 - ☐ suggested

PARAGRAPH
4

Every development in architecture has been the result of major technological changes. Materials and methods of construction are *integral* parts of the design of architectural structures. In earlier times it was necessary to design structural systems suitable for the materials that were available, such as wood, stone, or brick. Today technology has progressed to the point where it is possible to invent new building materials to suit the type of structure desired. Enormous changes in materials and techniques of construction within the last few generations have made it possible to enclose space with much greater ease and speed and with a minimum of material. Progress in this area can be measured by the difference in weight between buildings built now and those of comparable size built one hundred years ago.

6. The word “integral” is closest in meaning to
- ☐ essential
 - ☐ variable
 - ☐ practical
 - ☐ independent

7. According to paragraph 4, which of the following is true about materials used in the construction of buildings?
- ☐ Because new building materials are hard to find, construction techniques have changed very little from past generations.
 - ☐ The availability of suitable building materials no longer limits the types of structures that may be built.
 - ☐ The primary building materials that are available today are wood, stone, and brick.
 - ☐ Architects in earlier times did not have enough building materials to enclose large spaces.
8. In paragraph 4, what does the author imply about modern buildings?
- ☐ They occupy much less space than buildings constructed one hundred years ago.
 - ☐ They are not very different from the buildings of a few generations ago.
 - ☐ They weigh less in relation to their size than buildings constructed one hundred years ago.
 - ☐ They take a long time to build as a result of their complex construction methods.

PARAGRAPH
5

Modern architectural forms generally have three separate components comparable to elements of the human body: a supporting *skeleton* or frame, an outer *skin* enclosing the interior spaces, and *equipment*, similar to the body's vital organs and systems. The equipment includes plumbing, electrical wiring, hot water, and air-conditioning. Of course in early architecture—such as igloos and adobe structures—there was no such equipment, and the skeleton and skin were often one.

9. Which of the following correctly characterizes the relationship between the human body and architecture that is described in paragraph 5?
- ☐ Complex equipment inside buildings is the one element in modern architecture that resembles a component of the human body.
 - ☐ The components in early buildings were similar to three particular elements of the human body.
 - ☐ Modern buildings have components that are as likely to change as the human body is.
 - ☐ In general, modern buildings more closely resemble the human body than earlier buildings do.

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PARAGRAPH 6

Much of the world's great architecture has been constructed of stone because of its beauty, permanence, and availability. In the past, whole cities grew from the arduous task of cutting and piling stone upon stone. Some of the world's finest stone architecture can be seen in the ruins of the ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu high in the eastern Andes Mountains of Peru. The doorways and windows are made possible by placing over the open spaces thick stone beams that support the weight from above. A structural invention had to be made before the physical limitations of stone could be overcome and new architectural forms could be created. That invention was the *arch*, a curved structure originally made of separate stone or brick segments. The arch was used by the early cultures of the Mediterranean area chiefly for underground drains, but it was the Romans who first developed and used the arch extensively in aboveground structures. Roman builders perfected the semicircular arch made of separate blocks of stone. As a method of spanning space, the arch can support greater weight than a horizontal beam. It works in compression to divert the weight above it out to the sides, where the weight is borne by the vertical elements on either side of the arch. The arch is among the many important structural breakthroughs that have characterized architecture throughout the centuries.

10. The word "arduous" in the passage is closest in meaning to
- ☐ difficult
 - ☐ necessary
 - ☐ skilled
 - ☐ shared
11. Why does the author include a description of how the "doorways and windows" of Machu Picchu were constructed?
- ☐ To indicate that the combined skeletons and skins of the stone buildings of Machu Picchu were similar to igloos and adobe structures
 - ☐ To indicate the different kinds of stones that had to be cut to build Machu Picchu
 - ☐ To provide an illustration of the kind of construction that was required before arches were invented
 - ☐ To explain how ancient builders reduced the amount of time necessary to construct buildings from stone
12. According to paragraph 6, which of the following statements is true of the arch?
- ☐ The Romans were the first people to use the stone arch.
 - ☐ The invention of the arch allowed new architectural forms to be developed.
 - ☐ The arch worked by distributing the structural load of a building toward the center of the arch.
 - ☐ The Romans followed earlier practices in their use of arches.

- Modern architectural forms generally have three separate components comparable to elements of the human body: a supporting *skeleton* or frame, an outer *skin* enclosing the interior spaces, and *equipment*, similar to the body's vital organs and systems.
- The equipment includes plumbing, electrical wiring, hot water, and air-conditioning.
- Of course in early architecture—such as igloos and adobe structures—there was no such equipment, and the skeleton and skin were often one. ■

13. Look at the four squares [■] where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

However, some modern architectural designs, such as those using folded plates of concrete or air-inflated structures, are again unifying skeleton and skin.

Where would the sentence best fit?

- ☐ **However, some modern architectural designs, such as those using folded plates of concrete or air-inflated structures, are again unifying skeleton and skin.** Modern architectural forms generally have three separate components comparable to elements of the human body: a supporting *skeleton* or frame, an outer *skin* enclosing the interior spaces, and *equipment*, similar to the body's vital organs and systems. ■ The equipment includes plumbing, electrical wiring, hot water, and air-conditioning. ■ Of course in early architecture—such as igloos and adobe structures—there was no such equipment, and the skeleton and skin were often one. ■
- ☐ ■ Modern architectural forms generally have three separate components comparable to elements of the human body: a supporting *skeleton* or frame, an outer *skin* enclosing the interior spaces, and *equipment*, similar to the body's vital organs and systems. **However, some modern architectural designs, such as those using folded plates of concrete or air-inflated structures, are again unifying skeleton and skin.** The equipment includes plumbing, electrical wiring, hot water, and air-conditioning. ■ Of course in early architecture—such as igloos and adobe structures—there was no such equipment, and the skeleton and skin were often one. ■
- ☐ ■ Modern architectural forms generally have three separate components comparable to elements of the human body: a supporting *skeleton* or frame, an outer *skin* enclosing the interior spaces, and *equipment*, similar to the body's vital organs and systems. ■ The equipment includes plumbing, electrical wiring, hot water, and air-conditioning. **However, some modern architectural designs, such as those using folded plates of concrete or air-inflated structures, are again unifying skeleton and skin.** Of course in early architecture—such as igloos and adobe structures—there was no such equipment, and the skeleton and skin were often one. ■

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- ■ Modern architectural forms generally have three separate components comparable to elements of the human body: a supporting *skeleton* or frame, an outer *skin* enclosing the interior spaces, and *equipment*, similar to the body's vital organs and systems. ■ The equipment includes plumbing, electrical wiring, hot water, and air-conditioning. ■ Of course in early architecture—such as igloos and adobe structures—there was no such equipment, and the skeleton and skin were often one. **However, some modern architectural designs, such as those using folded plates of concrete or air-inflated structures, are again unifying skeleton and skin.**

14. **Directions:** An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some answer choices do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. **This question is worth 2 points.**

Architecture uses forms and space to express cultural values.

Answer Choices

1. Architects seek to create buildings that are both visually appealing and well suited for human use.
2. Both clients and architects are responsible for the mediocre designs of some modern buildings.
3. Over the course of the history of building, innovations in materials and methods of construction have given architects ever greater freedom to express themselves.
4. Modern buildings tend to lack the beauty of ancient stone buildings such as those of Machu Picchu.
5. Throughout history buildings have been constructed like human bodies, needing distinct "organ" systems in order to function.
6. The discovery and use of the arch typifies the way in which architecture advances by developing more efficient types of structures.