

7. Look at the expression **Milky Way** in paragraph 2. The **Milky Way** is
- part of Earth
 - a galaxy close to Earth
 - the galaxy that is home to Earth
 - a creamy-colored cloud in the sky
8. Click on the word in paragraph 2 that is closest in meaning to “unusual occurrence.”

SKILL 9: DETERMINE MEANINGS FROM WORD PARTS

When you are asked to determine the meaning of a long word that you do not know in the reading section of either the paper TOEFL test or the computer TOEFL test, it is sometimes possible to determine the meaning of the word by studying the word parts. Look at a multiple-choice example from the paper TOEFL test where the answer can be determined from a word part.

Example from the Paper TOEFL Test

The passage:

Ring Lardner was born into a wealthy, educated, and cultured family. For the bulk of his career, he worked as a reporter for newspapers in South Bend, Boston, St. Louis, and Chicago. However, it is for his short stories of lower middle-class Americans that Ring Lardner is perhaps best known. In these stories, Lardner vividly creates the language and the ambiance of this lower class, often using the misspelled words, grammatical errors, and incorrect diction that typified the language of the lower middle class.


The question:

The word “**vividly**” in line 6 is closest in meaning to

- (A) in a cultured way
- (B) in a correct way
- (C) in a lifelike way
- (D) in a brief way

This question asks about the meaning of the word *vividly*. To answer this question, you should notice that the word *vividly* contains the word part *viv-*, which means *life*. Answer (C) is therefore the best answer to this question.

Now look at a multiple-choice example from the computer TOEFL test where the answer can be determined from a word part.

Example from the Computer TOEFL Test 

Reading


Ring Lardner himself was born into a wealthy, educated, and cultured family. For the bulk of his career, he worked as a reporter for newspapers in South Bend, Boston, St. Louis, and Chicago. However, it is for his short stories of lower middle-class Americans that Ring Lardner is perhaps best known. In these stories, Lardner vividly creates the language and the ambiance of this lower class, often using the misspelled words, grammatical errors, and incorrect diction that typified the language of the lower middle class.

Look at the word misspelled in the passage. This word is closest in meaning to

- highly improper
- incorrectly written
- quite vulgar
- extremely long

This question asks about the meaning of the word *misspelled*. To answer this question, you should notice that the word *misspelled* contains that word part *mis-*, which means *error* or *incorrect*. The second answer is therefore the best answer to this question. You should click on the second answer to this question.

Next, look at a click-on example from the computer TOEFL test where the answer can be determined from a word part.

Example from the Computer TOEFL Test 

Reading

Ring Lardner himself was born into a wealthy, educated, and cultured family. For the bulk of his career, he worked as a reporter for newspapers in South Bend, Boston, St. Louis, and Chicago. However, it is for his short stories of lower middle-class Americans that Ring Lardner is perhaps best known. In these stories, Lardner vividly creates the language and the ambiance of this lower class, often using the misspelled words, grammatical errors, and incorrect diction that typified the language of the lower middle class.

Click on the word in the passage that is closest in meaning to "speech."

This question asks you to find a word that is close in meaning to *speech*. To answer this question, you should find the word *diction*, which contains the word part *dic-*, in the passage. The word part *dic-* means *speak*, so *diction* is the best answer to this question. You should click on *diction* to answer this question.

The following chart contains a few word parts that you will need to know to complete the exercises in this part of the text. A more complete list of word parts and exercises to practice them can be found in Appendix I at the back of the text.

A SHORT LIST OF WORD PARTS					
PART	MEANING	EXAMPLE	PART	MEANING	EXAMPLE
CONTRA	(against)	contrast	DIC	(say)	dictate
MAL	(bad)	malcontent	DOMIN	(master)	dominant
MIS	(error)	mistake	JUD	(judge)	judgment
SUB	(under)	subway	MOR	(death)	mortal
DEC	(ten)	decade	SPEC	(see)	spectator
MULTI	(many)	multiple	TERR	(earth)	territory
SOL	(one)	solo	VER	(turn)	divert
TRI	(three)	triple	VIV	(live)	revive

TOEFL EXERCISE 9: Study each of the passages and choose the best answers to the questions that follow.

PASSAGE ONE (Questions 1–5)

Line
(5) Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was a Portuguese-born explorer who is credited with the exploration of the coast of what is today the state of California. Sketchy military records from the period show that early in his career he served with the Spanish army from 1520 to 1524 in Spain's quest for subjugation of the people in what are today Cuba, Mexico, and Guatemala. Little is known of his activities over the next decades, but apparently he succeeded in rising up through the ranks of the military; in 1541, he was ordered by Antonio de Mendoza, the Spanish ruler of Mexico, to explore the western coast of North America. Cabrillo set out in June of 1542 in command of two ships, the *San Salvador* and the *Victoria*; he reached San Diego Bay on September 28, 1542, and claimed the terrain for Spain. The peninsula where he landed is today named
(10) Cabrillo Point in his honor; the area has been established as a national monument and park, and local residents each year hold a celebration and reenactment of Cabrillo's landing.

(15) From San Diego, Cabrillo continued northward for further exploration of the spectacular California coastline. By November 1542, he had reached as far north as San Francisco Bay, although he missed the entrance of the bay due to a huge storm. Soon after, with the approach of winter, he veered south and turned back to Mexico. He made it as far south as the Channel Islands off the coast of what is today Santa Barbara. Cabrillo, who died on San Miguel Island in the Channel Islands, never made it back to Mexico.

1. The word "subjugation" in line 4 is closest in meaning to
 - (A) religion
 - (B) flag
 - (C) control
 - (D) agreement
2. Look at the word decades in paragraph 1. This word is closest in meaning to
 - months
 - centuries
 - long epoch
 - ten-year periods
3. In line 9, the word "terrain" is closest in meaning to
 - (A) land
 - (B) population
 - (C) minerals
 - (D) prosperity

4. Look at the word *spectacular* in paragraph 2. This word is closest in meaning to which of the following?

- Ruggedly handsome
- Visually exciting
- Completely uneven
- Unendingly boring

5. Look at the word *veered* in paragraph 2. Click on another word in paragraph 2 that is close in meaning to *veered*.

PASSAGE TWO (Questions 6–10)

Line (5) Checks and balances are an important concept in the formation of the U.S. system of government as presented in the Constitution of the United States. Under this conception of government, each branch of government has built-in checks and limitations placed on it by one or more different branches of government in order to ensure that any one branch is not able to usurp total dominance over the government. Under the Constitution, the United States has a tripartite government, with power divided equally among the branches: the presidency, the legislature, and the judiciary. Each branch is given some authority over the other two branches to balance the power among the three branches. An example of these checks and balances is seen in the steps needed to pass a law. Congress can pass a law with a simple majority, but the president (10) can veto such a law. Congress can then counteract the veto with a two-thirds majority. However, even if Congress passes a law with a simple majority or overrides a presidential veto, the Supreme Court can still declare the law unconstitutional if it finds that the law is contradictory to the guidelines presented in the Constitution.

6. The expression “dominance over” in line 5 is closest in meaning to

- (A) understanding of
- (B) dispute over
- (C) authority over
- (D) rejection of

7. Look at the word *tripartite* in the passage. This word suggests that something is

- divided into three
- totally democratic
- powerfully constructed
- evenly matched

8. The “judiciary” in line 7 is

- (A) the electorate
- (B) the authority
- (C) the legal system
- (D) the government

9. Look at the word *counteract* in the passage. This word is closest in meaning to

- vote for
- debate
- surpass
- work against

10. “Contradictory to” in line 12 is closest in meaning to which of the following expressions?

- (A) In agreement with
- (B) Opposite to
- (C) Supported by
- (D) Similar to