ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Essential Words for the TOEFL Lesson 23 Vocabulary Test

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Explanations

1. **Choose the synonym.**
intrusive
✓ **D) annoying**
Intrusive describes something that enters your space or life when it is not wanted, so it feels **annoying** (e.g. **intrusive questions**, **intrusive noise**). Not **intricate**, which looks similar but means 'complicated and detailed'.

2. obliged
✓ **C) compelled**
To be **obliged** to do something means you are forced to do it by a rule, duty or situation, so it is the same as **compelled**. Example: **We were obliged to leave early.**

3. assemble
✓ **C) compile**
To **assemble** means to bring things or people together into one group or whole. **Compile** means the same: to collect pieces of information or items together, e.g. **compile a list**. Not **compel**, which means 'force'.

4. formidable
✓ **B) overwhelming**
Something **formidable** is so large, powerful or difficult that it is impressive or even frightening, so it can feel **overwhelming**. Example: **a formidable task**.

5. similar to
✓ **B) analogous**
Analogous means **similar to** something in some way, often used for comparisons: **The heart is analogous to a pump.** Not **unlike**, which means the opposite.

6. teeming
✓ **D) overflowing**
Teeming means full of a very large number of living things, so full that it is **overflowing**. Example: **The river was teeming with fish.** Not **grouping**, which only means putting things together, not being extremely full.

7. hesitatingly
✓ **A) reluctantly**
If you do something **hesitatingly**, you are slow and unsure because you don't really want to do it, which means **reluctantly**. Not **readily**, which is the opposite: quickly and willingly.

8. allusion
✓ **A) reference**
An **allusion** is an indirect mention of something, so it is a kind of **reference**. Example: **The poem contains an allusion to Greek mythology.** Not **summary**, which gives the main points of a whole text.

9. regularly
✓ **C) periodically**
Regularly means at fixed or repeated intervals of time, which is the meaning of **periodically**. Example: **The machines are checked periodically.** Not **gradually**, which means slowly, little by little.

10. renown
✓ **C) prominence**
Renown means fame: being well known and respected, which is close to **prominence**. Example: **a scientist of international renown.** Not **position**, which is just a place or rank and does not mean being famous.

11. New annual growth of trees produces growth rings. In most instances, the age of a tree can be **reliably** determined by counting the rings of a trunk's cross section. Most of the growth ring wood cells are dead. Only young xylem cells, those that grow during the current growing season, are alive. As a result, the ratio of dead to living wood cells increases as the girth of the tree increases.

The word **reliably** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✓ **B) dependably**
Reliably means in a way that can be trusted to be correct, so it means **dependably**. The passage says counting the rings gives an age you can trust. Not **approximately**, which would mean the age is only a rough guess.

12. Lightships and buoys have an important function in coastal waters. They mark channels and thereby safely guide passing ships around hazards or shallow waters. Their great advantage is mobility, making them **readily** redeployable to meet changing conditions. For example, submerged hazards such as sandbars can change location rapidly under the influence of the sea. The use of buoys makes it possible to efficiently mark safe channels at all times.

The word **readily** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✓ **A) freely**
Readily means easily and without difficulty, so **freely** is closest here. The passage says the advantage of buoys is mobility: they can be moved **readily** when sandbars change location. Not **reluctantly**, which means unwillingly.

13. The construction of the Saint Lawrence Seaway was an undertaking of great **proportions**. Constructing a link between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic seaboard had been proposed since 1535. Locks built in the 1800s by Canada became operational in 1901 on the upper Saint Lawrence River. But this original seaway was not deep or wide enough for modern ships. Canada and the United States constructed the new seaway, which became operational in 1959.

The word **proportions** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **C) dimensions**
Proportions here means size or extent, so an undertaking of great **proportions** is a project of great **dimensions**, a very large project. Not **strength**, which refers to power, not size.

14. In European folklore, mermaids are mythical beings who, like sprites, have magical and **prophetic** powers. They love music and song. Though very long-lived, they are mortal and have no souls. Although sometimes kindly, mermaids are generally dangerous to man. Their gifts have typically brought misfortune, and, if offended, they have caused floods or other disasters. To see one on a voyage is an omen of shipwreck.

The word **prophetic** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **C) predictive**
Prophetic powers are powers to tell what will happen in the future, so the closest word is **predictive**. The passage supports this: seeing a mermaid is an **omen** (a sign of the future).

15. In Western cultures, the absence of a formal definition of responsibilities has produced an ambiguous and often conflicting set of expectations for young people. At the same time, young people are **prone** to experience peer pressure. They are told to behave maturely, while being denied access to the rights and privileges of adults.

The word **prone** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) inclined**
If people are **prone to** something, they are likely to do or experience it, i.e. **inclined** to it. Example: **He is prone to colds.** Not **obliged**, which means forced, not just likely.

16. Among the great orchestras of the world, the Philadelphia Orchestra stands out for several reasons. One is the overall quality of its musicians, although it is especially **renowned for** its violin players. Another is the orchestra's famous recordings of nineteenth-century music, including the nine symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven. A third is the orchestra's many international concert tours. For example, it was the first U.S. orchestra to visit China.

In saying that this orchestra is especially **renowned for** its violinists, the author means that it _____.
✔ **B) is famous for the violin players.**
To be **renowned for** something means to be famous or well known for it. So the orchestra **is famous for the violin players**. Not **has an unusual violin section**: the passage praises its quality, not anything strange about it.

17. The body of scales or bracts of a cone contains the reproductive organs of certain flowerless plants. The cone, a distinguishing feature of pines and other evergreens, is crudely **analogous** to the flowers of other plants.

The word **analogous** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) similar**
Analogous means **similar** in some way, especially in function. The passage says a cone does roughly the same job (reproduction) as a flower. **Crudely analogous** means 'roughly similar'. Not **apparent**, which means 'easy to see'.

18. Most physicians participate in continuing education to keep up with the massive amount of information being discovered each year in their fields. Many states require that physicians **periodically** prove that they have actively participated in continuing medical education in order to maintain their certification to practice medicine.

The word **periodically** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) regularly**
Periodically means at regular intervals, again and again after a certain time, so it means **regularly**. Doctors must prove their education every few years. Not **persistently**, which means continuing without stopping, often in an annoying way.

19. Peace pipes are the large, ornately decorated tobacco pipes of the Indians of eastern North America. They functioned as symbols of truce and were ceremonially smoked for purposes of binding or renewing alliances. Peace pipes attained so much symbolic importance that it was thought that smoking the pipe with others **compelled** everyone present to be united in friendship.

The word **compelled** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **A) obliged**
Compelled means forced or required, so the closest word is **obliged**. Smoking the pipe together was believed to make everyone present **obliged** to be friends. Not **dependable**: it is an adjective meaning 'reliable' and does not fit the meaning.

20. The Spanish conquerors attempted to replace Aztec medicine with their own. When Aztec medical personnel resisted, they were pushed aside and Spanish medicine **intruded** into Aztec culture. However, some elements of Spanish medicine were compatible with the folk medical practices and became part of a new folk system. Mexican folk medicine thrived, yet there were many regional differences.

The word **intruded** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) imposed**
To **intrude** means to enter a place or situation where you are not wanted. Spanish medicine was forced on the Aztecs against their will, so the closest word is **imposed**. Not **imported**: this only means brought in from outside and does not include the idea of force or being unwanted.