

A SOCIALIZATION PROGRAM ON THE INTRODUCTION AND BENEFITS OF THE TOEFL FOR STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 1 PEMATANGSIANTAR

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Abstract

This study aims to socialize the importance and benefits of the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) to the twelve-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. TOEFL is an internationally recognized English proficiency test that assesses four language skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. Among these, the Reading skill is crucial because it measures the ability to understand academic texts, identify main ideas, make inferences, and analyze information. These skills are important for students to succeed in academic environments and improve their overall English proficiency. The socialization program was conducted through seminars and interactive discussions involving 30 students at SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. The program provided information about the TOEFL test format, benefits, and preparation strategies, with special emphasis on improving reading comprehension skills. Data were collected through observations and questionnaires to evaluate participants' understanding and motivation. Results indicated that students increased their awareness of TOEFL and the significance of the Reading section. However, challenges such as limited learning resources and insufficient practice opportunities were identified. The study recommends the integration of multimedia tools and continuous guidance to help students enhance their TOEFL reading skills. This program underlines the importance of TOEFL socialization in schools to prepare students for global academic challenges.

Keywords: *English Proficiency, Reading Skill, Socialization Program, TOEFL Preparation*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the world in the era of globalization and digitalization requires every individual to have skills that can compete at the international level. One of the main skills that must be possessed is the ability to speak English. English has become an international language used in various fields, such as education, technology, business, and global communication. For high school students, English language skills are very important as basic capital to face challenges and opportunities in the future. Language is a system that has meaning. Language is a means for individuals to convey messages both verbally and in writing, where the message has a meaning that is conveyed to the interlocutor so that the interlocutor can understand what is being discussed. Likewise,

language is a system that can be learned. As a system, language is systematic and systemic (Winata et al., 2025).

Language is a systematic tool for conveying ideas or feelings by using agreed signs, sounds, gestures, or signs that contain understandable meaning (Zadeh, 1975; Tseng, 2018). Based on this definition, language includes everything that functions as a means of communication, either through verbal expression or non-verbal cues. Non-verbal terms can be the sound of a bell, a car horn, Morse code, body movements (gestures), and similar forms (Oviogun & Veerdee, 2020). In conclusion, language, especially English, is a skill that every individual must have in various fields such as education, technology, business, and global communication.

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes through forms of learning. "Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that help individuals grow intellectually, morally, and socially" (Verma et al., 2023). It occurs in both formal settings, such as schools and universities, and informal environments, like family and community. The ultimate goal of education is to empower people to think critically, solve problems, and contribute positively to society. Education is the process of the individual mind, getting to its possible development (Dr. Zakir Husain in Verma et al., 2023). Education is a process that helps a person's mind or potential develop to its full potential. This means that through education, a person is directed to explore and develop his intellectual, emotional, and moral abilities until he reaches the best level of development he can achieve.

Durkheim views "education as a process of socialization of the younger generation. Durkheim states that education is a continuous effort to instill in children ways of seeing, feeling, and acting that they cannot achieve spontaneously" (Durkheim, 1956). Education functions to shape children's behavior and attitudes to be in accordance with the social norms that apply in society. Added to the opinion of John J. Macionis who defines "Education as a social institution that guides the transformation of knowledge in society, including basic facts, job skills, and cultural norms and values to its members" (Macionis, 2010). Education not only teaches basic facts and job skills, but also transmits cultural norms and values to members of society. Thus, education becomes an important mechanism in maintaining social and cultural sustainability, while preparing individuals to participate productively in social life.

F.J. Brown and J.S. Roucek in (Verma et al., 2023) stated that "Education is the totality of experiences that shape attitudes and determine behavior in both children and adults." This statement emphasizes that education is not only limited to teaching academic materials, but also involves the process of life experiences that influence a person's way of thinking, attitudes, and actions. In this context, teaching is important in Education because it includes the role of teachers in instilling values such as perseverance, responsibility, and motivation to achieve.

Teaching is a core process in education that involves interaction between teachers and students with the aim of conveying knowledge, skills, and attitudes effectively. According to Edmund Amidon (1967) in (Shirley & Shawnee, 1970), teaching is defined as "an interactive process that primarily involves classroom communication between teachers and students that takes place during certain definable activities." Furthermore, (Robertson 1987 in Nainggolan et al., 2023) stated that "Teaching is a general term that refers to actions carried out with the intention of bringing about learning in others (Herman et al., 2025). This statement emphasizes that the core of teaching is to produce changes or improvements in students' abilities through various actions that are

intentionally designed. In conclusion, Teaching is not just about delivering material, but also includes fostering a conducive learning environment so that students can understand and internalize the material being taught. An effective teaching process requires the right method, teacher communication skills, and the use of supporting media so that students actively participate and are motivated in learning.

In teaching in educational purposes, learning media is something that must be improved and used to increase student motivation in learning. According to Dewi, Kurnia (2018) in Alfansyur & Mariyani, (2019) that “one strategy to increase learning motivation must utilize interesting learning media.” The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has brought significant changes in the world of education. Media and ICT are not only teaching aids, but also important components that can improve the quality and effectiveness of learning. According to Mayer (2003), “the use of multimedia in learning can help improve student understanding by presenting information visually and auditorily simultaneously.” This enriches the student's learning experience so that the material presented becomes easier to understand and remember.

In today's era of globalization, mastery of English has become a primary need for every individual, especially students who want to access education and information from various parts of the world. “Good language skills are a tool for students to be able to seek information about the outside world which will bring together children to become a benchmark for success which will later have an impact on the progress of a country” (Sinambela et al., 2023). Good English skills not only improve students' academic achievement, but also become a benchmark of success that has an impact on the progress of a nation. Therefore, the importance of TOEFL socialization and provision from an early age is a strategic part in efforts to improve the competitiveness of the younger generation at the global level.

TOEFL is now one of the prerequisites for admission to institutions in Indonesia (Etika, 2020 in Herman et al., 2023) TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is an international standard test used to measure a person's ability in English, especially in an academic context. “TOEFL is one of the English-based tests that has been standardized to test a person's ability in English through reading, writing, speaking and listening tests” (Napitupulu et al., 2026). Husni and Susilowati (2011) explains that “TOEFL is a test used to measure a person's ability to understand and use English in an academic context.” That means, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is an English language proficiency test designed to measure how well a person can understand, use, and communicate in English, especially in an academic context.

The TOEFL was developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and is designed to assess proficiency in four core language skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing, all set in an academic context. Marbun et al (2026) explains that “This TOEFL test contains 4 skills that will be tested, namely reading (reading comprehension), writing (writing), speaking (speaking), listening (listening)”. TOEFL reading is a test that tests a person's ability to read English texts (Damanik et al., 2025). The reading section tests the ability to understand academic texts in English. The texts presented come from various fields of science such as science, history, and social sciences. Participants are asked to answer questions related to main ideas, inferences, meanings of words in context, references, and text structure. The purpose of this section is to assess how well participants understand scientific reading materials.

According to (Bridgeman et al., 2012), TOEFL listening skills are not only moderately correlated with local screening tests, but also become a better predictor in

assessing teaching competence because of its relationship with oral comprehension of materials. This shows that listening skills play an important role in the academic process because they enable students to understand information delivered in the form of lectures, discussions, and other oral instructions.

Speaking is an important skill in TOEFL that aims to measure the extent to which participants are able to express ideas, arguments, or information orally in English, both in personal and academic contexts. (Bridgeman et al., 2012) stated that "the TOEFL speaking score provides a good picture of oral communication skills in an academic context, including aspects of pronunciation, fluency, and the use of vocabulary and appropriate language structures." Thus, mastery of speaking skills is very important for students, especially in an international academic context, because it allows them to actively participate in discussions, presentations, and other academic interactions.

According to ETS, "The TOEFL iBT test Writing section measures your ability to write in English in an academic setting, and to present your ideas in a clear, well-organized way." The writing section of the TOEFL measures the test taker's ability to write essays in an academic context. Writing is one of the skills measured in the TOEFL iBT and serves to assess the participant's ability to convey ideas in writing in academic English. This ability reflects the extent to which participants can construct arguments, analyze information, and write with a logical, coherent structure and in accordance with grammatical rules.

In response to the importance of understanding English language skills in an academic context, especially through the TOEFL test, the implementing team conducted a socialization activity that focused on a general introduction to TOEFL as well as an in-depth understanding of reading skills. This activity was conducted for the students of Grade XII IPS 4 at SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. In addition, participants were also given practical tips and tricks in answering questions correctly and efficiently, such as strategies for understanding the main idea, scanning and skimming, and time management when working on questions. It is hoped that through this activity, participants will have initial readiness in facing the TOEFL test and realize the importance of reading skills as a foundation for academic success.

Through this program, students were expected to gain a clearer understanding of TOEFL Reading and be motivated to prepare themselves early for standardized English assessments. This socialization was held on July 17, 2025, for the students of Grade XII IPS 4 at SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar.

METHODS

The implementation method in this study was carried out through seminar and socialization activities that were systematically designed to introduce and explain the importance of TOEFL to students of Grade XII IPS 4 at SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. The design of the activity was descriptive qualitative, with a focus on delivering material orally and visually, as well as direct interaction between speakers and participants.

The seminar activity included delivering information about the definition of TOEFL, test structure, academic and career benefits, and learning strategies. Meanwhile, the socialization aimed to build student awareness of the importance of mastering English in the era of globalization, and to encourage them to start preparing for the TOEFL test early on. The session was supported by the use of infocus to display visual presentations and Google Forms to facilitate student responses to the practice test questions. These tools helped enhance the delivery of material and collect immediate feedback from participants.

The data source in this activity was students of Grade XII IPS 4 at SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar who participated in the seminar and socialization. Data were obtained through observations during the activity and from participant feedback collected through a simple questionnaire at the end of the session. In addition, documentation in the form of photos of activities and presentation materials were also part of the data analyzed.

Socialization is the process of conveying information or values to individuals or groups with the aim of increasing knowledge and awareness. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), socialization is the process by which a person learns to become a member of society and understands the prevailing norms and knowledge.

In the context of this activity, socialization is carried out in three phases:

1. Phase 1 – Preparation:

Preparing materials, preparing presentation media, and coordinating with the school regarding technical matters and activity schedules.

2. Phase 2 – Implementation:

Conducting seminars/socialization activities directly, delivering TOEFL-related materials, and opening discussion or question and answer sessions to build interaction.

3. Phase 3 – Evaluation:

Collecting feedback from participants through observation and simple questionnaires, then analyzing the results to determine the effectiveness of the activity.

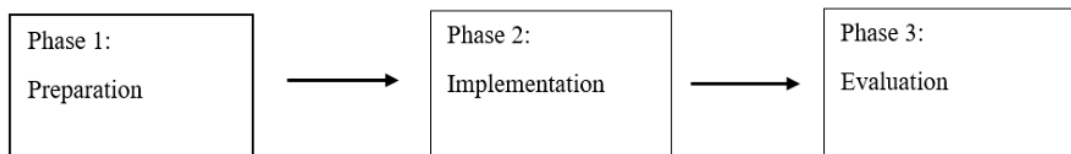


Figure 1. The procedures implemented in the socialization program

RESULTS

PHASE 1: Preparation

The TOEFL Socialization program for SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar was meticulously designed with an emphasis on improving "Reading Skill." Since English proficiency is essential for their future during this crucial academic era, we selected Class XII IPS 4 as our target audience. We went to the school to ask the administration for approval after creating interesting materials. We discussed the program's objectives with the Deputy Head of School during our discussion, emphasizing the advantages of reading proficiency for both TOEFL preparation and general academic achievement. After our idea was accepted by the school administration, we could proceed with confidence. To help students better grasp the TOEFL format and efficient reading techniques, we conducted interactive workshops, practice exercises, and discussions in the following phase. This will give them the knowledge and self-assurance they need to ace their exams.



Figure 2. Preparation Phase – Initial School Visit and Coordination.

PHASE 2: Implementation

On July 17, 2025, 35 students from Grade XII IPS 4 of SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar participated in the 90-minute TOEFL socialization session, which was held over two academic periods. The activity consisted of three parts: an introduction to TOEFL and its Reading section, an explanation of reading strategies, and a short practice test using Google Forms.

The session began with a brief overview of the importance of the TOEFL exam, especially in supporting students' access to higher education opportunities. This was followed by a focused explanation on effective reading comprehension techniques, including identifying main ideas, skimming, scanning, and managing time efficiently during the test.

Students were then given a set of sample TOEFL reading questions, which they answered using Google Forms. The session was delivered using an infocus projector, which helped make the content visually engaging.

In addition to equipping students with practical knowledge, this activity successfully increased their confidence and motivation to improve their English reading skills, particularly in preparing for standardized English tests such as the TOEFL.



Figure 3. Implementation Phase – Seminar and TOEFL Introduction.

PHASE 3: Evaluation

Using the test questions we had prepared, we evaluated each student's performance in Class XII IPS 4 of SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar during this evaluation phase. The students' answers were submitted via Google Forms, allowing us to efficiently analyze their responses and assess their understanding of the reading strategies presented.

The majority of the findings were positive, suggesting that the students successfully grasped the key reading skills emphasized during the socialization program. This result indicates that they paid attention to the material and were able to apply the strategies, such as skimming and scanning, during the practice session.

These outcomes also reflect the effectiveness of our approach and the relevance of the methods used. However, we also identified a few students who showed difficulty in applying certain strategies, particularly in inference-based questions. As a result, we recommend follow-up guidance and additional practice sessions to ensure that all students can further develop their English reading skills and be better prepared for standardized tests like the TOEFL.



Figure 4. Evaluation Phase – Closing and Group Documentation.

The implementation of the TOEFL socialization program for students of Grade XII IPS 4 at SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar successfully provided an in-depth

understanding of the TOEFL test structure, especially the Reading section. The interactive seminar format allowed students not only to receive theoretical input but also to actively engage through practice and digital feedback. This approach helped bridge the gap between knowledge and real application, which is crucial in skill-based assessments such as TOEFL.

One of the most significant findings was the students' increased awareness of the importance of English proficiency for academic success and global competitiveness. While some participants had previously heard about TOEFL, most of them lacked a clear understanding of its purpose, format, and practical relevance. Through this program, they gained clarity on the function and benefits of TOEFL, including its value in university admissions, scholarship opportunities, and career development.

The reading strategies introduced such as skimming, scanning, identifying main ideas, and managing time were particularly helpful. Through answers submitted via Google Forms and direct observations during the session, students demonstrated better comprehension and greater confidence in answering TOEFL-style questions.

However, several challenges were also identified. These included limited previous exposure to standardized English tests, insufficient access to TOEFL-specific materials, and varied English proficiency levels among participants. A few students still struggled with inference-based or vocabulary-in-context questions, indicating a need for continued support.

Therefore, follow-up activities are recommended, including online resource access, consistent practice, and potential integration of TOEFL training into the school's English program. The use of ICT-based tools such as infocus presentations and Google Forms assessments also proved effective in engaging students and facilitating interactive learning beyond conventional methods.

In conclusion, the program not only increased awareness of TOEFL among students but also emphasized the importance of sustainable and accessible learning strategies to improve their English proficiency systematically and prepare them for global academic challenges.

CONCLUSION

The TOEFL socialization program conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar, specifically for Grade XII IPS 4, proved to be a valuable initiative in enhancing students' understanding of English proficiency assessments, particularly in academic reading. It successfully increased students' awareness, motivation, and initial readiness to face the TOEFL test through comprehensive explanation, practical exercises, and interactive discussions supported by infocus-based visual presentation and Google Forms assessment.

The results showed that students were highly responsive and benefited from the strategies taught, which improved their reading comprehension and test-taking confidence. Nevertheless, some challenges remain, especially in terms of access to learning resources and individual learning pace, which require continuous support and structured follow-up efforts.

Therefore, this study concludes that early socialization of TOEFL is essential in secondary education to prepare students for higher education and international opportunities. To maximize its impact, future programs should incorporate multimedia learning tools, provide ongoing guidance, and involve collaboration with educational stakeholders to integrate TOEFL preparation into regular school programs. Such efforts

will ensure that students are not only informed but also well-equipped to succeed in a globally competitive academic environment.

THANKYOU NOTE

As the organizing team of the TOEFL Socialization Program at SMA Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the school for the opportunity and support given throughout the activity. We especially thank the Vice Principal and the English teacher for their kind assistance, coordination, and warm welcome that helped the program run smoothly from beginning to end. We are also grateful to all the students of Class XII IPS 4 who participated actively. The enthusiasm, attention, and willingness to learn made this program more meaningful for us. We truly appreciate the positive response and hope that the knowledge shared will be useful for their future academic journey.

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