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A S S O C I A T E S



TOEFL

**TOEFL  
SPEAKING  
PRACTICE  
TEST - 4**

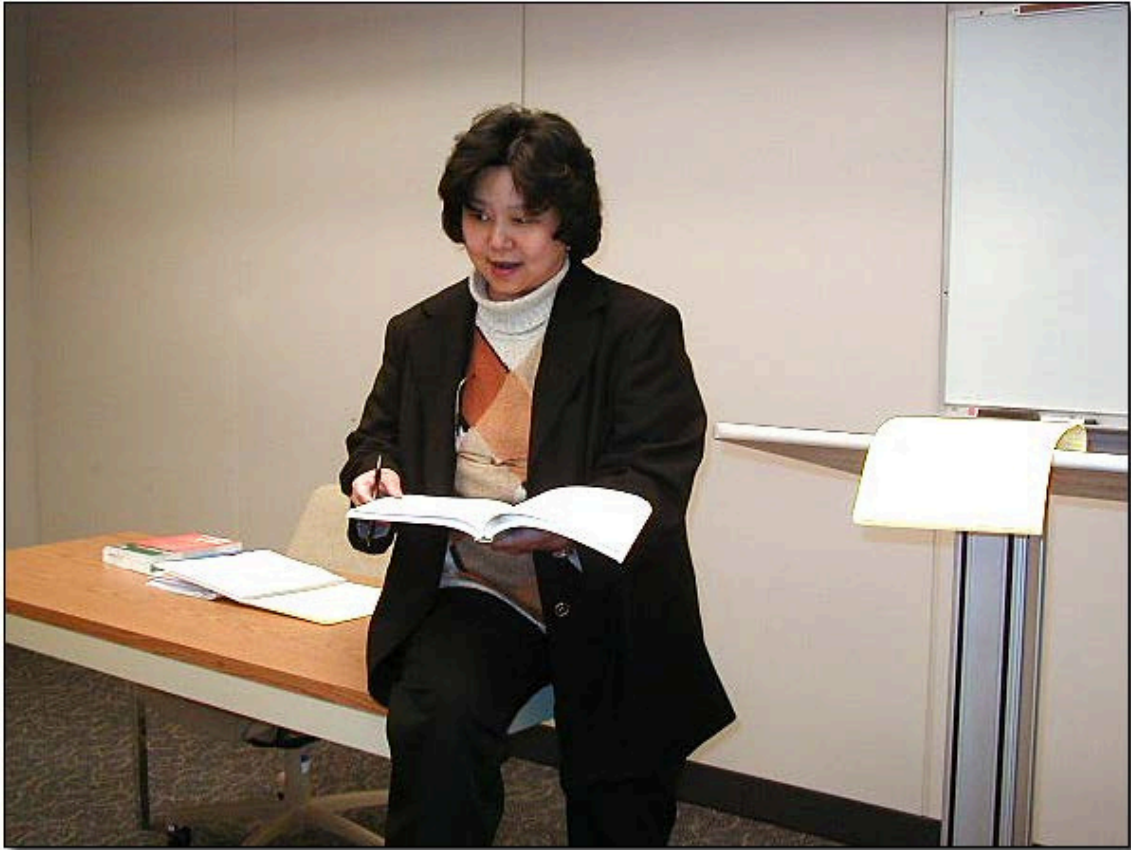
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# Speaking Practice test - 4

## Reliability vs Features



Narrator

Listen to part of a lecture  
in a business class.

Female Professor If a consumer has to  
choose between two  
products, what determines

the choice? Assume that someone, a purchaser, is choosing between two products that cost the same. OK? If people have a choice between two identically priced products, which one will they choose? They choose the one they think is of higher quality, of course. But what does it mean for a product to be a high-quality product? Well, business analysts usually speak of two major factors of quality—one factor is reliability, and the other is what we call features.

So, reliability. What's reliability? Well, a product is reliable if it works the way we expect it to work, if it can go a reasonable amount of time without needing repairs. If a product, a car for example, doesn't work the way it should and needs repairs too soon, we say it's [stress on the first syllable] unreliable. So, product reliability means, basically, the absence of defects or problems that you weren't expecting. [pause] It used to be that when people thought

about product quality, they thought mainly about reliability. Today it's different. People do still care about reliability, don't get me wrong. It's just that manufacturing standards are so now so high that, take cars for example, today, today's cars all very reliable. So reliability is important, but it's not gonna be the deciding factor.

So, if reliability isn't the deciding factor any more, what is? Features—all those extras, the things a product has that aren't

really necessary but that make it easier to use or that make it cool: for example, new cars today are loaded with features like electric windows, sun roofs, air conditioning, stereos, and so forth. When people are comparing products today, they look at features—because reliability's pretty much equal cross the board. And that's why manufacturers include so many features in their products.

Using points and examples from the lecture, explain the two major factors of product quality and how their role in consumer decision making has changed.

If this were an actual test question, you would have 20 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to record your response.

Preparation Time: 20 seconds
Record Time: 60 seconds

This is a mid-level response.

*Transcript: For example, you're going to purchase something which has the same price, so the choices, or the things that you have to look on is, uh, the quality, since they have the same price. So what do you mean by, uh, quality? So we're looking the*

*reliability as well as the features. So when is it reliable, it should work the way it should work, while with the features, what are present in the product. Now normally, if, uh, people purchase things now, they look more in the features rather than the reliability of the product. They, they look more on the things that the present and not on its use, which is actually not necessary. So, people tend to, or the consumers tend to focus more on the features rather than the reliability.*

While the speaker's pronunciation is clear and intonation is effective, the content is very vague and incomplete. Listeners who are not familiar with the lecture she is describing, would not be able to understand it from her response. Her response captures a few key ideas from the lecture. However, she does not

connect her ideas by using helpful transitional expressions, and as a result, the content is often difficult for the listener to follow. She also does not include any specific details such as the information about buying a car to help explain her ideas. So while she attempts to explain two aspects of quality, reliability and features, her explanation is vague and not complete.