



# TOEFL VOCABULARY

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# Vocabulary

- Abridged [v.] shortened, condensed
- Approbation [n.] praise, admiration, accolade
- Hailed [v.] greeted, called to
- Mere [adj.] that and nothing more; measly [paltry, ungenerous]
- Memoir [n.] account, diary, history
- Paramount [adj.] supreme, utmost
- Prestigious [adj.] significant, impressive
- Zenith [n.] peak, pinnacle, apex

# The Sound of Olympic Gold

A **paramount** accomplishment of a world-class athlete is the winning of a gold medal at the Olympics. The awarding of an Olympic gold medal is accompanied by the raising of the flag and the playing of the national anthem of the recipient's country. The oldest national anthem, *Wilhelmus*, is the Dutch national anthem, which was composed between 1568 and 1572; it was officially adopted in 1932. The melody, originally a French catholic soldiers' song that dates to 1568, has undergone several adaptations over the centuries. At the 2008 Olympics, athletes from the Netherlands who won gold medals in swimming, rowing, women's water polo and field hockey were honored to hear Walther Boer's arrangement of their national anthem.

Uganda, which has the shortest national anthem, a **mere** eight bars of music, last heard its anthem at the Munich Games in 1972 when John Akii-Bua won the men's 400 meter hurdles. Uruguay, which has the longest national anthem with 105 bars of music, has two Olympic gold medals. Both were awarded to its national football teams—one at the 1924 Paris Olympics and the second at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics

Several national anthems were written by classical composers. Franz Joseph Hayden (1732-1809) composed the music for Germany's national anthem, *Deutschlandlied*. The piece, frequently called the *Emperor's Hymn*, is Movement II (*Poco adagio*) of *Opus 76 No. 3*. This song **hailed** the German Equestrian Team that captured the gold medal at the Beijing Summer Olympics by besting Austria's team. Austria, however, won four gold medals [luge, alpine skiing, ski jumping and Nordic combined] at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. Austria's national anthem is sung to the melody, *Lasst uns mit geschlungnen Händen* [*Let us with joined hands*]. While Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's (1756-1771) authorship of this piece is disputed, the anthem's lyrics were written by the Croatian-Austrian writer Paula von Peradović, one of the few women to have written lyrics for a national anthem.

Another woman who was instrumental in the creation of a national anthem is Margaret Cousins. *Jana Gana Mana*, the national anthem of India was penned by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in 1911. In 1919, Tagore visited the Besant Theosophical College, Madanapalle, where he translated the anthem from Bengali to English. Cousins, the Principal of the college and a music teacher, repeatedly tried to set the lyrics to music. Finally, she composed a tune that Tagore accepted and that song in its Hindi version was adopted by the Constituent assembly as their national anthem on January 24, 1960. A formal rendition of the anthem, like the one performed for Abhinav Bindra, India's first ever individual gold medalist [men's 10m air rifle shooting] at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, lasts 52 seconds, but an **abridged** version of 20 seconds consisting of the first and last lines is played at less **prestigious** venues.

Olympians regard the winning of their gold medals as the **zenith** of their careers. Some, like Amanda Beard [swimming 1996 and 2004] and Dara Torres [swimming 1984, 1992 and 2001] have written **memoirs** in which they recount their experiences and the **approbations** they received.

A **paramount** accomplishment of a world-class athlete is the winning of a gold medal at the Olympics.

Select the correct synonym or antonym of the **boldfaced** words.

1. The word **paramount** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A. condensed
- B. impressive
- C. accolade
- D. utmost

Uganda, which has the shortest national anthem, a **mere** eight bars of music, last heard its anthem at the Munich Games in 1972 when John Akii-Bua won the men's 400 meter hurdles.

Select the correct synonym or antonym of the **boldfaced** words.

2. The word **mere** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A. reflect
- B. ordinary
- C. measly
- D. small

This song **hailed** the German Equestrian Team that captured the gold medal at the Beijing Summer Olympics by besting Austria's team.

Select the correct synonym or antonym of the **boldfaced** words.

3. The word **hailed** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A. ignored
- B. summoned
- C. greeted
- D. came from

A formal rendition of the anthem, like the one performed for Abhinav Bindra, India's first ever individual gold medalist [men's 10m air rifle shooting] at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, lasts 52 seconds, but an **abridged** version of 20 seconds consisting of the first and last lines is played at less prestigious venues.

Select the correct synonym or antonym of the **boldfaced** words.

4. The word **abridged** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A. connected
- B. condensed
- C. repeated
- D. celebrated

A formal rendition of the anthem, like the one performed for Abhinav Bindra, India's first ever individual gold medalist [men's 10m air rifle shooting] at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, lasts 52 seconds, but an abridged version of 20 seconds consisting of the first and last lines is played at less **prestigious** venues.

5. The word **prestigious** in the passage is a synonym to all of the following **EXCEPT**

- A. prominent
- B. impressive
- C. inevitable
- D. respected

Olympians regard the winning of their gold medals as the **zenith** of their careers.

6. The word **zenith** in the passage is a synonym to all of the following **EXCEPT**

- A. apex
- B. ethereal
- C. pinnacle
- D. summit

Some, like Amanda Beard [swimming 1996 and 2004] and Dara Torres [swimming 1984, 1992 and 2001] have written **memoirs** in which they recount their experiences and the approbations they received.

Select the correct synonym or antonym of the **boldfaced** words.

7. The word **memoirs** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- A. autobiography
- B. anecdote
- C. monologue
- D. fabrication

Some, like Amanda Beard [swimming 1996 and 2004] and Dara Torres [swimming 1984, 1992 and 2001] have written memoirs in which they recount their experiences and the **approbations** they received.

Select the correct synonym or antonym of the **boldfaced** words.

8. The word **approbations** in the passage is an antonym of

A. criticism

B. acclaim

C. money

D. endorsements

# Answer Key

- 1. D utmost [best choice]
- 2. D small [best choice] measly has negative connotations
- 3. C greeted
- 4. B condensed
- 5. C Except Question: inevitable [adj.] certain, expected, unavoidable
- 6. B Except Question: ethereal [adj.] otherworldly, ghostly, eerie
- 7. A autobiography
- 8. A Antonym Question: criticism [n.] disapproval, blame, censure