

OFFICIAL COURSE STUDY GUIDE

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# GRE Complete Class

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*A structured GRE class covering verbal strategy, quant strategy, and the test's architecture.*

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TEST PREP · ALL LEVELS · 11 MODULES · 3 HR 51 MIN

Course by Magoosh Test Prep for GRE · Curated and published by MegaCourse

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## **GRE Complete Class: The Complete Study Guide**

2026 Edition

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MegaCourse curates the world's best free courses into structured learning paths with study guides, practice material, and certificates. This guide accompanies the MegaCourse course "GRE Complete Class", taught by Magoosh Test Prep for GRE. It is designed to be read alongside the video lessons and to serve as a standalone reference for review.

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## INTRODUCTION

# About This Course

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This study guide accompanies the "GRE Complete Class" on MegaCourse.app. This course provides a structured approach to the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE). It covers essential verbal and quantitative reasoning strategies, along with a clear explanation of the test's architecture.

A strong GRE score is often a key component of graduate school applications. Mastering the test's unique question types and time constraints is crucial for success. This course will equip you with the methods and mindset needed to approach the exam confidently.

The curriculum is built upon the expertise of Magoosh Test Prep for GRE. MegaCourse has enhanced this material by organizing it into a clear learning path with structured modules, additional reading, a final quiz, and a certificate of completion. This comprehensive approach ensures you gain a thorough understanding of the GRE.

## Course Facts

|                          |                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FORMAT</b>            | 11 modules · 72 lessons                                                                                   |
| <b>VIDEO INSTRUCTION</b> | About 3 hr 51 min                                                                                         |
| <b>LEVEL</b>             | All Levels                                                                                                |
| <b>CATEGORY</b>          | Test Prep                                                                                                 |
| <b>INSTRUCTOR</b>        | Magoosh Test Prep for GRE                                                                                 |
| <b>CERTIFICATE</b>       | Included with course completion on MegaCourse                                                             |
| <b>COURSE HOME</b>       | <a href="https://megacourse.app/courses/gre-complete-class">megacourse.app/courses/gre-complete-class</a> |

## What You Will Learn

- Understand the shorter GRE's section-adaptive structure and scoring.
- Attack Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence systematically.
- Read dense passages efficiently with a repeatable method.
- Choose quant strategies, such as algebra versus testing numbers, by question type.

## Who This Course Is For

This course is designed for anyone preparing to take the Graduate Record Examinations. Whether you are just starting your GRE preparation or seeking to refine your existing strategies, this class offers a

comprehensive learning path. It is suitable for all levels of test-takers.

Before beginning, you should possess a college-level understanding of English. A solid foundation in high school mathematics is also necessary. These prerequisites ensure you can fully engage with the course material and benefit from the advanced strategies taught.

## Before You Start

- A college-level understanding of English.
- A strong foundation in high school mathematics.

## How to Use This Guide

This study guide is a companion to the video lessons on MegaCourse.app. We recommend watching each video lesson first to grasp the core concepts and strategies. Then, use this guide to reinforce your understanding, review key points, and work through practice exercises.

Pacing your study is important. While the course is self-paced, establishing a regular study schedule will help you build momentum and retain information effectively. Consider dedicating specific blocks of time each week to watch lessons and complete the corresponding sections in this guide.

The guide includes summaries and review sections for each module. Use these to consolidate your knowledge before moving to the next topic. Refer to the guide's explanations and examples whenever you need clarification or a quick refresher on a particular strategy.

## CHAPTER 1

# Test Strategies and Mindset

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Welcome to the first chapter of your official GRE study guide. This chapter lays the groundwork for your entire preparation, focusing on fundamental test strategies and cultivating the right mindset for success. We will explore the structure of the GRE, how it is scored, and what constitutes a "good" score for your aspirations. You will learn proven methods for effective study, including how to build a robust study schedule and maximize your vocabulary acquisition. Finally, we will cover critical test-taking tactics and essential tips for test day, ensuring you approach the exam with confidence and clarity. Mastering these foundational concepts is crucial for optimizing your performance and achieving your target score.

## Understanding the GRE and Your Score

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Covers: What is the GRE Test? Everything You Need to Know · What is a "Good" GRE Score? - Three Big Ideas that Might Surprise You! · GRE Score Percentiles, What Does Your Score Mean for You? (2021 Update)

The Graduate Record Examinations, or GRE, is a standardized test widely accepted for admission to graduate programs and business schools worldwide. It assesses verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing skills. Understanding the test's architecture is the first step toward effective preparation.

The GRE General Test is now shorter, designed to be completed in under two hours. It consists of three main sections:

- **Verbal Reasoning:** Two sections, each with 12 questions, to be completed in 18 minutes per section.
- **Quantitative Reasoning:** Two sections, each with 12 questions, to be completed in 21 minutes per section.
- **Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA):** One section, consisting of a single "Analyze an Argument" task, to be completed in 30 minutes.

One significant feature of the GRE is its section-adaptive nature. This means your performance on the first Verbal Reasoning section determines the difficulty level of your second Verbal Reasoning section. The same applies to the Quantitative Reasoning sections. For example, if you perform well on the first Quant section, your second Quant section will be more challenging. This adaptive design ensures an accurate assessment of your abilities.

Scores for Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning range from 130 to 170, in 1-point increments. The Analytical Writing Assessment is scored from 0 to 6, in 0.5-point increments. There is no penalty for incorrect answers on the Verbal and Quant sections, so it is always beneficial to guess if you are unsure.

What constitutes a "good" GRE score is not a universal number. Instead, it is highly dependent on your target graduate programs and the specific schools you are applying to. A score that is excellent for one program might be average for another. To determine your target score, research the average GRE scores of

admitted students for your desired programs. Many university departments publish this information, or you can contact admissions offices directly. Aiming for a score at or above the average for your target programs will make your application more competitive.

Understanding percentiles is also crucial for interpreting your score. A percentile indicates the percentage of test takers who scored *below* you. For instance, if you score in the 75th percentile for Verbal Reasoning, it means you scored better than 75 percent of all test takers. Percentiles provide context to your raw score, showing how you compare to the larger pool of GRE candidates. A high raw score with a low percentile might indicate that many test takers achieved similar high scores, while a moderate raw score with a high percentile suggests a strong performance relative to others.

### Practice Cue

Research three graduate programs you are interested in. Find the average GRE scores (Verbal and Quantitative) for admitted students in those programs. Note any specific percentile expectations.

## Building an Effective Study Plan

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Covers: How to Ace the GRE: Top 3 Study Tips · How to Use a GRE Study Schedule · How to Use GRE Vocabulary Flashcards to Boost Your Score

Effective preparation is the cornerstone of GRE success. Simply reviewing material is not enough. You need a structured approach that maximizes your learning and retention. Here are three essential study tips to guide your preparation:

1. **Be Consistent:** Regular, focused study sessions are far more effective than sporadic cramming. Even short, daily sessions of 30-60 minutes can build momentum and solidify concepts. Consistency helps prevent burnout and allows for gradual, sustained improvement. Integrate study time into your daily routine, treating it like any other important appointment.
2. **Target Your Weaknesses:** Do not just study what you enjoy or what comes easily. Use diagnostic tests and practice questions to identify your areas of weakness. Dedicate more study time to these challenging topics. For example, if you consistently struggle with geometry questions, make sure to review geometry concepts and practice those specific problem types until you see improvement. This targeted approach yields the greatest score gains.
3. **Review Mistakes Thoroughly:** This is perhaps the most critical study tip. After completing practice questions or tests, do not just look at the correct answers. Instead, analyze every question you got wrong, and even those you got right by guessing. Understand *why* the correct answer is correct and *why* your chosen answer was incorrect. Identify any conceptual gaps, careless errors, or strategic missteps. Keep an error log to track recurring mistakes and review them periodically.

Developing a realistic GRE study schedule is vital. Start by taking a full-length diagnostic test to establish your baseline score and identify initial strengths and weaknesses. Next, determine your target score and how much time you have before your test date. Based on this, allocate specific blocks of time for Verbal, Quant, and AWA practice. Be honest about your availability. A schedule you can stick to is better than an ambitious one you abandon. Build in flexibility for unexpected events and incorporate regular review days. As you progress, adjust your schedule to focus more on areas where you need further improvement.

Vocabulary is a significant component of the Verbal Reasoning section, particularly for Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions. Using vocabulary flashcards effectively can dramatically boost your score. Do not just memorize definitions. Instead, focus on:

- **Active Recall:** Instead of passively reading the word and its definition, try to recall the definition and an example sentence when you see the word.
- **Spaced Repetition:** Review words at increasing intervals. Words you struggle with should be reviewed more frequently.
- **Contextual Learning:** Create your own flashcards that include the word, its definition, synonyms, antonyms, and an original sentence using the word. Seeing words in context helps you understand their nuances.
- **Consistency:** Review a set number of words daily. Over time, this builds a robust vocabulary.

### Practice Cue

Outline a sample 4-week study schedule for yourself, allocating specific days and times for Verbal, Quant, and AWA. Begin a vocabulary list with 10 new words you encountered recently, writing your own example sentences for each.

## Strategic Test Taking and Test Day Preparation

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Covers: 3 Reasons You Should Skip GRE Test Questions · GRE Test Taking Strategies · GRE Test Day Tips

Beyond content knowledge, your performance on the GRE depends heavily on your test-taking strategy and your mindset on test day. Knowing how to navigate the exam efficiently can significantly impact your score.

One crucial strategy is knowing when to skip questions. Many test takers feel compelled to answer every question in order. However, there are compelling reasons to skip difficult questions and return to them later:

1. **Time Management:** The GRE is a strictly timed test. Spending too much time agonizing over a single challenging question can prevent you from reaching easier questions later in the section. Each question, regardless of difficulty, is worth the same number of raw points. It is more beneficial to answer three easy questions correctly than to spend five minutes on one hard question and still get it wrong.
2. **No Penalty for Wrong Answers:** Unlike some other standardized tests, the GRE does not penalize you for incorrect answers. This means there is no downside to guessing. If you skip a question and run out of time, you lose the opportunity to guess. Therefore, if you cannot solve a question, make an educated guess, or a random guess if time is critical.
3. **Focus on Strengths:** By skipping questions that immediately seem too difficult or time-consuming, you can ensure you answer all the questions you are most confident about first. This maximizes your chances of accumulating points efficiently. After completing a first pass through the section, you can then use any remaining time to revisit the marked, skipped questions with a fresh perspective.

Your strategy should involve a quick initial assessment of each question. If it looks like it will take more than a minute or two, mark it and move on. Return to it only after you have attempted all other questions in the section.

Preparing for test day extends beyond academic readiness. Logistical and mental preparation are equally important:

- **Confirm Logistics:** Double-check your test center location, appointment time, and required identification. Plan your route to the test center to avoid any last-minute stress. Arrive early to settle in.
- **Rest and Nutrition:** Get a full night's sleep the night before the test. Eat a balanced, familiar meal before heading to the test center. Avoid excessive caffeine or sugary foods that can lead to energy crashes.
- **Mindset:** Approach test day with a calm and confident attitude. Trust in the preparation you have put in. If you feel anxious, take a few deep breaths. Remember that one difficult section does not define your entire performance, especially given the section-adaptive nature of the test.
- **Utilize Breaks:** The GRE includes scheduled breaks. Use them effectively to rest your mind, stretch, and have a snack or drink. Do not spend breaks reviewing notes, as this can increase anxiety.
- **Pacing:** Stick to your planned pacing strategy. Do not let one tough question derail your timing for the entire section. Remember the strategy of skipping and returning.

### Practice Cue

During your next practice session, consciously apply the "skip and return" strategy. Time yourself and mark questions that take too long. Practice making an educated guess when you are unsure. Mentally walk through your ideal test day morning routine, from waking up to arriving at the test center.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The GRE assesses verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing skills for graduate school admission.
- GRE scores are section-adaptive and reported on a 130-170 scale for Verbal and Quant, and 0-6 for AWA.
- A "good" GRE score is relative to your target programs and their average accepted scores, requiring research into specific program requirements.
- Effective GRE preparation requires consistent effort, targeting weaknesses, and thorough review of all mistakes.
- Strategic test taking involves knowing when to skip difficult questions and always guessing due to no penalty for wrong answers.
- Successful test day performance relies on meticulous logistical preparation, adequate rest, and maintaining a calm, confident mindset.

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**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. How does the GRE's section-adaptive structure work, and what does it imply for test-takers?
2. What does it mean for a GRE score to be "good," and how should you determine your target score?
3. Describe three essential study tips for effective GRE preparation.
4. Why is it advisable to skip difficult questions on the GRE, and what should you do instead?
5. Explain the importance of percentiles in interpreting your GRE score.
6. What are two critical actions to take the day before and the morning of your GRE test?

## CHAPTER 2

# Test Strategies and Mindset

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This chapter builds on your foundational understanding of the GRE by exploring critical strategies and mental approaches. Success on the GRE requires more than just knowing the material. It demands effective study habits, a clear understanding of the test's unique challenges, and smart resource utilization. Here, you will learn how to optimize your Verbal Reasoning preparation, make informed decisions about studying less common math topics, and distinguish the GRE from other standardized tests. You will also discover valuable free resources to support your study plan.

## Optimizing Verbal Reasoning and Understanding GRE Challenges

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Covers: 3 Quick GRE Verbal Reasoning Studying Tips That Work Every Time (video, 4 min) · What makes the GRE hard? (video, 10 min) · The Essential Tip You Need to Improve Your GRE Prep (video, 2 min)

To excel in GRE Verbal Reasoning, adopt study habits that promote deep learning and retention. Three highly effective tips include active recall, spaced repetition, and prioritizing accuracy over speed in initial practice.

### Active Recall for Vocabulary and Concepts

Active recall involves testing yourself rather than passively rereading material. For vocabulary, use flashcards. Cover the word and try to remember its definition, or cover the definition and recall the word. For reading comprehension, read a passage, then close your book and try to summarize its main points and supporting arguments in your own words. This process forces your brain to retrieve information, strengthening neural pathways and improving memory retention. Simply highlighting or rereading is far less effective.

### Spaced Repetition for Long-Term Memory

Spaced repetition is a technique where you review material at increasing intervals over time. For example, after learning a new set of vocabulary words, review them after one day, then three days, then seven days, then two weeks. This method uses the 'forgetting curve,' ensuring you revisit information just as you are about to forget it, moving it from short-term to long-term memory. Digital flashcard apps often incorporate spaced repetition algorithms to optimize your review schedule.

### Untimed Practice First, Then Timed

When you first encounter new question types or concepts, focus solely on accuracy. Take as much time as you need to understand the question, analyze all answer choices, and arrive at the correct solution. Understand *why* the correct answer is correct and *why* the incorrect answers are wrong. Only after you consistently achieve high accuracy should you introduce time constraints. This approach builds a strong foundation of understanding before the pressure of the clock is added.

## Why the GRE Poses a Challenge

The GRE is considered a difficult exam for several reasons. First, it is a section-adaptive test. Your performance on the first Verbal and Quantitative sections determines the difficulty of your second sections in those respective areas. This means consistent, high-level performance is crucial throughout the exam. Second, time pressure is significant. Questions are designed to be challenging under strict time limits, testing not just your knowledge but also your efficiency and decision-making abilities under stress. Third, the Verbal Reasoning section features a sophisticated vocabulary, often including words that are uncommon in everyday usage. Understanding the nuances and contextual meanings of these words is vital. Fourth, Reading Comprehension passages are frequently dense, academic, and require careful analysis to identify main ideas, author's purpose, and specific details. Finally, Quantitative Reasoning questions often include subtle traps or require careful interpretation of wording to avoid common errors.

## The Essential Tip: Consistent, Deliberate Practice

The single most important factor for improving your GRE score is consistent, deliberate practice with high-quality materials. This means more than just completing practice problems. It involves a cycle of practice, thorough review, and adjustment. After every practice set or full-length test, meticulously review every question, especially those you answered incorrectly or struggled with. Understand the underlying concepts, identify patterns in your errors, and adjust your study plan accordingly. For Verbal, this means dissecting answer choices for Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence. For Reading Comprehension, it means mapping arguments and identifying evidence. For Quant, it means understanding *why* a formula applies or *why* a particular strategy (like testing numbers) is more efficient than algebra in certain cases. This iterative process of learning from your mistakes is the most powerful way to achieve significant improvement.

## Targeted Math Study: Low-Frequency Topics and Geometry Concepts

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Covers: Should you study low-frequency GRE topics? (video, 3 min) · When Rectangles & Parallelograms have Equal Area - GRE Math (video, 4 min)

Your GRE math preparation should balance comprehensive coverage with strategic allocation of study time. While some topics appear frequently, others are considered low-frequency. Understanding how to approach these less common areas, alongside mastering core concepts like geometry, is key.

## Approaching Low-Frequency GRE Math Topics

Do not ignore low-frequency topics entirely, but allocate your study time proportionally. Begin by mastering high-frequency topics such as algebra, basic arithmetic, geometry, and data interpretation, as these will constitute the majority of your Quantitative Reasoning section. Once you have a solid grasp of these core areas, dedicate some time to less common subjects like permutations, combinations, advanced probability, or complex statistics. For these low-frequency topics, aim for a conceptual understanding rather than exhaustive mastery. Know the basic formulas and principles. Be able to recognize the question type and apply the fundamental approach. The goal is to have a fighting chance if such a question appears, rather than being completely lost. For example, while advanced probability might be low-frequency,

understanding the 'AND' and 'OR' rules for independent events is essential. Similarly, while complex three-dimensional geometry is rare, knowing the volume of a cylinder is not.

### Rectangles and Parallelograms with Equal Area

Understanding how to calculate the area of basic geometric shapes is fundamental for the GRE. For a rectangle, the area is straightforward: it is the product of its length and its width.

$$\text{Area}_{\text{rectangle}} = \text{length} * \text{width}$$

The area of a parallelogram is calculated by multiplying its base by its height. Crucially, the height of a parallelogram is the perpendicular distance between the base and the opposite side, not the length of its slanted side. This distinction is a common point of confusion.

$$\text{Area}_{\text{parallelogram}} = \text{base} * \text{height}$$

When a rectangle and a parallelogram have equal area, their respective area calculations must yield the same result. You can use this principle to find missing dimensions.

**Example Problem:** A rectangle has a length of 12 units and a width of 5 units. A parallelogram has a base of 10 units. If both shapes have the same area, what is the height of the parallelogram?

#### Step 1: Calculate the area of the rectangle.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Area}_{\text{rectangle}} &= \text{length} * \text{width} \\ \text{Area}_{\text{rectangle}} &= 12 * 5 \\ \text{Area}_{\text{rectangle}} &= 60 \text{ square units}\end{aligned}$$

**Step 2: Set the area of the parallelogram equal to the area of the rectangle.** Since both shapes have the same area, the area of the parallelogram is also 60 square units.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Area}_{\text{parallelogram}} &= \text{Area}_{\text{rectangle}} \\ \text{Area}_{\text{parallelogram}} &= 60 \text{ square units}\end{aligned}$$

#### Step 3: Use the parallelogram area formula to find the height.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Area}_{\text{parallelogram}} &= \text{base} * \text{height} \\ 60 &= 10 * \text{height} \\ \text{height} &= 60 / 10 \\ \text{height} &= 6 \text{ units}\end{aligned}$$

**Common Mistakes:** A frequent error is confusing the slanted side of a parallelogram with its height. Always remember that the height must be perpendicular to the base. Drawing diagrams can help visualize the height correctly and prevent this mistake. Practice problems involving these concepts will solidify your understanding and ensure accuracy on test day.

## Navigating Resources and Understanding the GRE's Place

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Covers: Free GRE Resources You Can Use Right Now! (video, 5 min) · What's the Difference Between the GRE vs. SAT? (video, 9 min)  
· What are Magoosh GRE Live Classes Like? (video, 4 min)

Effective GRE preparation involves utilizing a variety of resources and understanding how the GRE fits into the broader field of standardized tests. Knowing where to find reliable study materials and how the GRE differs from other exams can significantly impact your study strategy.

### Valuable Free GRE Resources

Several excellent free resources are available to support your GRE preparation:

- **Official ETS Resources:** As the test maker, ETS (Educational Testing Service) provides the most authoritative materials.
- *PowerPrep Online:* Offers two free full-length practice tests that simulate the actual GRE experience, including its section-adaptive nature. These are essential for diagnostic assessments and tracking progress.
- *The Official Guide to the GRE General Test:* While the full guide is paid, ETS provides free sample questions and explanations on its website.
- *ETS website:* Contains detailed information about the test structure, registration, and free practice questions.
- **Magoosh Free Resources:** Magoosh offers a range of supplementary materials.
- *Magoosh GRE Blog:* Features strategy articles, vocabulary lists, math concept explanations, and study tips.
- *Magoosh GRE Vocabulary Flashcards App:* A mobile application designed for efficient vocabulary building.
- *Magoosh GRE Practice Questions:* Many free sample questions with video explanations are available on the Magoosh website.
- **Public Libraries:** Libraries often stock GRE prep books that you can borrow, providing access to extensive practice material without cost.
- **Online Forums and Communities:** Websites like Reddit's r/GRE offer peer support, study advice, and shared resources. Use these platforms with discernment, always cross-referencing information with official sources.

### GRE vs. SAT: Key Distinctions

Understanding the differences between the GRE and SAT helps clarify their respective purposes and content:

- **Purpose:** The GRE (Graduate Record Examinations) is primarily used for graduate school admissions, including Master's, Ph.D., MBA, and Law programs. The SAT (Scholastic Assessment

Test) is for undergraduate college admissions.

- **Target Audience:** The GRE is designed for college graduates or individuals nearing graduation. The SAT is tailored for high school students.
- **Content:**
  - *Verbal:* Both tests assess reading comprehension and vocabulary. GRE Verbal Reasoning is generally more advanced in its vocabulary and the complexity of its analytical tasks (Text Completion, Sentence Equivalence). SAT Verbal focuses more on evidence-based reading and writing.
  - *Math:* Both cover arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. GRE Quantitative Reasoning often includes more advanced algebra, data interpretation, and quantitative comparison questions. SAT Math is generally considered less conceptually difficult but still requires careful problem-solving.
- **Scoring:** GRE scores range from 130-170 for both Verbal and Quant (in 1-point increments). Analytical Writing is scored from 0-6 (in half-point increments). SAT scores range from 400-1600 (Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 200-800, Math: 200-800).
- **Adaptive Nature:** The GRE is section-adaptive, meaning the difficulty of subsequent sections adjusts based on your performance in preceding sections. The SAT is not adaptive in the same way; its difficulty is fixed per section.

### The Value of Magoosh GRE Live Classes

Magoosh GRE Live Classes offer a structured, interactive learning environment that complements self-paced study. These are instructor-led, real-time online sessions. The benefits include:

- **Interactive Learning:** You have the opportunity to ask questions directly to expert instructors and receive immediate clarification.
- **Structured Content:** Classes follow a specific curriculum, ensuring comprehensive coverage of essential GRE topics and strategies.
- **Motivation and Accountability:** Scheduled sessions can help you maintain a consistent study schedule and stay motivated.
- **Community:** Live classes allow you to connect with other test-takers, share insights, and build a supportive network.
- **In-Depth Explanations:** Instructors can break down complex concepts and strategies in detail, often providing additional examples and perspectives beyond what is available in self-study materials. This dynamic environment and direct feedback can significantly enhance your understanding and preparation.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Effective GRE Verbal preparation involves active recall, spaced repetition, and prioritizing accuracy over speed in initial practice.
- The GRE's difficulty stems from its section-adaptive structure, time pressure, advanced vocabulary, and dense reading passages.
- Consistent, deliberate practice and thorough error analysis are the most powerful ways to improve your GRE score.
- Prioritize high-frequency math topics, but gain conceptual understanding of low-frequency areas.
- The area of a parallelogram is calculated using its base and perpendicular height, not its slanted side.
- Utilize official ETS resources and reputable third-party materials for effective GRE preparation.
- The GRE is for graduate school admissions and is section-adaptive, unlike the SAT which is for undergraduate admissions.

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**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. Describe two effective Verbal Reasoning study tips mentioned in this chapter and explain how they enhance learning.
2. What are two primary reasons the GRE is considered a challenging exam?
3. How should a student approach studying low-frequency math topics for the GRE?
4. A rectangle has an area of 48 square units. If a parallelogram with a base of 8 units has the same area, what is its height?
5. Name two official free GRE resources provided by ETS and explain their utility.
6. Outline two key differences between the GRE and the SAT.

## CHAPTER 3

# Verbal Reasoning Strategies: Part 1

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Welcome to Chapter 3 of your GRE Complete Class study guide. This chapter focuses on foundational strategies for the Verbal Reasoning section of the GRE. We will explore key question types, including argument analysis, sentence equivalence, and text completion. Mastering these areas is crucial for achieving a strong score.

Our goal is to equip you with systematic approaches to dissect complex passages, identify critical relationships between words, and logically evaluate arguments. You will learn to approach each question type with confidence, even without internet access or video lessons. This chapter provides the core concepts and practice techniques you need to succeed.

## Analyzing GRE Argument Problems

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Covers: GRE argument practice part 5! Find the answer here! #shorts · Part 4 of the GRE argument problem. #shorts · Part 3 of the GRE argument problem. Let's dive in! #shorts · Part 2 of the GRE argument problem. #shorts · Study with me today! Let's start with a GRE argument question. #shorts

The GRE Verbal Reasoning section frequently tests your ability to analyze and evaluate arguments. These questions present a short passage containing an argument, followed by a question that asks you to identify an assumption, strengthen or weaken the argument, or draw a conclusion. Success hinges on a clear understanding of argument structure and common logical pitfalls.

### Understanding Argument Structure

Every argument consists of premises and a conclusion. Premises are the statements offered as evidence or reasons. The conclusion is the claim that the premises are intended to support. Often, arguments also rely on unstated assumptions. An assumption is an unstated premise that must be true for the conclusion to logically follow from the stated premises.

Consider this example:

*Passage: The city's new bike lane initiative has led to a 15% increase in bicycle commuters over the past year. Therefore, the city should expand the bike lane network to further reduce traffic congestion.*

*Question: Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?*

### Step-by-Step Strategy for Argument Questions

1. **Identify the Conclusion:** What is the main point the author is trying to prove? In our example, the conclusion is: "the city should expand the bike lane network to further reduce traffic congestion." Look for indicator words like 'therefore', 'thus', 'hence', 'consequently'.
2. **Identify the Premises:** What evidence supports the conclusion? Here, the premise is: "The city's new bike lane initiative has led to a 15% increase in bicycle commuters over the past year."

3. **Uncover Assumptions:** What unstated beliefs connect the premises to the conclusion? The argument assumes that an increase in bicycle commuters directly reduces traffic congestion. It also assumes that expanding bike lanes will continue to increase bicycle commuters at a rate that impacts congestion.
4. **Evaluate the Question Type:** Does it ask you to strengthen, weaken, identify an assumption, or draw a conclusion? This dictates your approach.
- **Strengthen:** Find an answer choice that makes the conclusion more likely to be true, often by supporting an assumption or introducing new evidence consistent with the argument's goal.
  - **Weaken:** Find an answer choice that makes the conclusion less likely to be true, often by attacking an assumption or introducing contradictory evidence.
  - **Assumption:** Identify the unstated premise essential for the conclusion to follow.
  - **Conclusion:** Based *only* on the premises, what must be true?

### Worked Example

*Passage: The city's new bike lane initiative has led to a 15% increase in bicycle commuters over the past year. Therefore, the city should expand the bike lane network to further reduce traffic congestion.*

*Question: Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?*

*A) Many new bicycle commuters previously drove cars to work. B) The city's overall population has decreased by 5% in the past year. C) Public transportation ridership has also increased by 10%. D) Expanding bike lanes is a costly endeavor. E) Most existing bike lanes are underutilized during peak hours.*

**Analysis:** The argument assumes that more bike commuters means fewer cars, thereby reducing congestion. Option A directly supports this assumption. If new bike commuters were previously car drivers, then the bike lane initiative directly contributes to reducing car traffic. Options B, C, D, and E either weaken the argument, are irrelevant, or do not directly connect increased bike lanes to reduced car traffic.

**Answer: A**

### Common Mistakes

- **Bringing in Outside Information:** Stick strictly to the information given in the passage. Do not use your own general knowledge.
- **Misidentifying Conclusion/Premises:** A faulty initial analysis leads to incorrect answers.
- **Confusing Strengthen/Weaken:** Ensure your chosen answer has the correct impact on the argument's validity.

Practice analyzing the structure of arguments. Break them down into premises, conclusions, and assumptions. This systematic approach will improve your accuracy.

## Mastering Sentence Equivalence

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Covers: Let's continue with part 2 of the sentence equivalence question we previously discussed. #shorts

Sentence Equivalence (SE) questions challenge your vocabulary and your ability to understand the nuances of a sentence. Each SE question presents a single sentence with one blank and six answer choices. Your task is to select **two** of the six choices that, when inserted into the blank, produce sentences that are alike in meaning. These two words do not necessarily have to be perfect synonyms, but they must create functionally equivalent sentences.

### Step-by-Step Strategy for Sentence Equivalence

1. **Read the Entire Sentence:** Understand the context and the overall meaning before looking at the answer choices. Pay attention to keywords, conjunctions, and any clues that indicate the tone or direction of the sentence.
2. **Predict the Word:** Based on the context, try to predict a word or a type of word that would fit logically into the blank. Do not worry about finding an exact match among the choices yet; just get a sense of the word's meaning and connotation (positive, negative, neutral).
3. **Evaluate Answer Choices:** Go through the six choices, one by one. For each word, ask yourself:
  - Does this word fit the predicted meaning and context?
  - Does it make the sentence grammatically correct and logically sound?
4. **Look for Pairs:** Identify pairs of words that are either synonyms or have very similar meanings *in the context of the sentence*. Remember, the goal is for the *sentences* to be equivalent, not just the words to be synonyms. Sometimes, two words might be synonyms but only one fits the sentence's context.
5. **Test the Pair:** Insert both chosen words into the blank and reread the sentence. Do both sentences convey the same meaning? If so, you have found your pair.

### Worked Example

*Sentence: Despite the speaker's attempts to appear impartial, her frequent \_\_\_\_\_ remarks revealed her strong personal bias on the topic.*

*Answer Choices: A) objective B) dispassionate C) partisan D) unbiased E) prejudiced F) equitable*

### Analysis:

1. **Read the Sentence:** The sentence indicates a contrast: the speaker *tried* to be impartial, but her remarks *revealed* a strong personal bias. The blank needs a word that describes remarks showing bias.
2. **Predict the Word:** Words like 'biased', 'opinionated', or 'one-sided' come to mind.
3. **Evaluate Choices:**
  - A) *objective*: Opposite of biased. Incorrect.
  - B) *dispassionate*: Lacking emotion; could imply impartiality. Incorrect.
  - C) *partisan*: Strongly supporting one party, group, or cause; biased. Fits.

- D) *unbiased*: Impartial. Incorrect.
- E) *prejudiced*: Having or showing a dislike or distrust that is not based on reason or actual experience. Strongly implies bias. Fits.
- F) *equitable*: Fair and impartial. Incorrect.

4. **Look for Pairs:** 'Partisan' and 'prejudiced' are both words that mean biased or showing a strong preference for one side. They create sentences with similar meanings.

5. **Test the Pair:**

- "Despite the speaker's attempts to appear impartial, her frequent **partisan** remarks revealed her strong personal bias on the topic."
- "Despite the speaker's attempts to appear impartial, her frequent **prejudiced** remarks revealed her strong personal bias on the topic." Both sentences are equivalent in meaning.

**Answer: C and E**

### Common Mistakes

- **Choosing Only One Word:** Remember to select two words. If you only find one, re-evaluate the choices.
- **Selecting Synonyms that Don't Fit Context:** Two words might be synonyms in general, but only one might make sense in the given sentence.
- **Ignoring Contrast/Comparison Clues:** Words like 'despite', 'although', 'however', 'similarly', 'like' are crucial for understanding the sentence's direction.

## Tackling Text Completion and Vocabulary in Context

---

Covers: Study this vocabulary in context question today. #shorts

Text Completion (TC) questions require you to fill in one, two, or three blanks in a passage. For each blank, you are given three answer choices, and you must select the single best word for each blank. Unlike Sentence Equivalence, there is no pairing of words. Your goal is to choose words that make the passage coherent, logical, and grammatically correct.

### Step-by-Step Strategy for Text Completion

1. **Read the Entire Passage:** First, read the passage with the blanks to grasp its overall meaning and tone. Do not look at the answer choices yet. This helps you understand the context without being distracted by potentially misleading words.
2. **Identify Clues and Keywords:** Look for words or phrases that provide clues about the missing words. These can be:
  - **Contrast words:** 'however', 'although', 'but', 'despite', 'yet', 'while'
  - **Support words:** 'and', 'furthermore', 'moreover', 'thus', 'therefore'
  - **Cause and effect:** 'because', 'since', 'as a result', 'consequently'

- **Definition or explanation:** 'is', 'means', 'refers to'

3. **Predict the Word(s):** For each blank, try to predict a word or a type of word that would fit logically and grammatically. If there are multiple blanks, focus on the blank that seems easiest to fill first, as it might provide context for the others. Sometimes, you can determine if the word should be positive, negative, or neutral.
4. **Evaluate Answer Choices:** Consider the choices for each blank. Insert your predicted word or a close synonym. Eliminate choices that do not fit the meaning, tone, or grammar of the sentence.
5. **Check for Coherence:** After filling all blanks, reread the entire passage with your chosen words. Does it make sense? Is it logical? Does it maintain a consistent tone? All parts of the sentence or passage must work together smoothly.

### Worked Example (Two-Blank TC)

*Passage: The author's latest novel, a sprawling historical epic, was praised by critics for its \_\_\_\_\_ research and its vivid portrayal of a bygone era. However, some readers found the plot to be \_\_\_\_\_ and difficult to follow.*

*Blank 1 Choices: A) meticulous B) superficial C) negligible*

*Blank 2 Choices: D) captivating E) convoluted F) straightforward*

### Analysis:

1. **Read the Passage:** The novel was praised for some aspects but criticized for others. The first blank describes what critics praised, and the second describes what readers found difficult.
2. **Identify Clues:** "praised by critics for its \_\_\_\_\_ research" suggests a positive word. "vivid portrayal" reinforces this. "However, some readers found the plot to be \_\_\_\_\_ and difficult to follow" suggests a negative word, something that makes it hard to follow.
3. **Predict Words:** For Blank 1, something like 'thorough' or 'careful'. For Blank 2, something like 'complex' or 'confusing'.
4. **Evaluate Choices:**
  - **Blank 1:**
    - A) *meticulous*: Very careful and precise. Fits 'thorough'.
    - B) *superficial*: Existing or occurring at or on the surface. Opposite of what's needed.
    - C) *negligible*: So small or unimportant as to be not worth considering. Incorrect.
    - So, 'meticulous' is the best fit for Blank 1.
  - **Blank 2:**
    - D) *captivating*: Capable of attracting and holding interest. Opposite of 'difficult to follow'.
    - E) *convoluted*: Extremely complex and difficult to follow. Fits 'complex' or 'confusing'.
    - F) *straightforward*: Easy to understand or apply. Opposite of what's needed.
    - So, 'convoluted' is the best fit for Blank 2.

5. **Check Coherence:** "The author's latest novel, a sprawling historical epic, was praised by critics for its **meticulous** research and its vivid portrayal of a bygone era. However, some readers found the plot to be **convoluted** and difficult to follow." The sentence flows logically and makes sense.

**Answer: A for Blank 1, E for Blank 2**

### Common Mistakes

- **Focusing on One Blank Only:** All blanks must work together to create a coherent passage. Do not pick a word for one blank without considering its impact on the others.
- **Ignoring Contrast/Support Words:** These words are critical for determining the relationship between different parts of the sentence or passage.
- **Vocabulary Gaps:** A strong vocabulary is essential. If you encounter unfamiliar words, try to use context clues to infer their meaning or eliminate them if they clearly do not fit.

## Understanding Quantitative Problem Types: 'Solve for K'

Covers: So, let's solve for K! Let's go! #shorts

While this chapter focuses on Verbal Reasoning, the lesson title 'So, let's solve for K!' points to a common type of problem found in the GRE's Quantitative Reasoning section. Understanding the nature of such questions is important for a comprehensive GRE preparation, even when focusing on verbal skills. Problems that ask you to 'solve for K' typically involve algebraic equations or inequalities where 'K' represents an unknown variable.

These quantitative problems test your ability to manipulate algebraic expressions, apply properties of numbers, and solve for specific values. For instance, you might be given an equation like  $3K + 7 = 22$  and asked to find the value of K. Or, you might encounter a more complex scenario involving multiple variables, functions, or word problems that require you to set up an equation before solving it.

### Basic Algebraic Principles

To 'solve for K' means to isolate the variable K on one side of an equation or inequality. This involves using inverse operations:

- If K is added to a number, subtract that number from both sides.
- If K is multiplied by a number, divide both sides by that number.
- If K is raised to a power, take the root of both sides.

### Example of 'Solve for K'

*Problem: If  $5K - 10 = 3K + 4$ , what is the value of K?*

1. **Combine K terms:** Subtract  $3K$  from both sides:  $5K - 3K - 10 = 3K - 3K + 4$   $2K - 10 = 4$
2. **Combine constant terms:** Add 10 to both sides:  $2K - 10 + 10 = 4 + 10$   $2K = 14$
3. **Isolate K:** Divide both sides by 2:  $2K / 2 = 14 / 2$   $K = 7$

While the mechanics of solving for K are quantitative, the initial step of *interpreting* a word problem and correctly setting up the algebraic expression still relies on strong verbal comprehension. You must accurately translate the problem's language into mathematical terms. This highlights how verbal skills underpin even quantitative reasoning. For dedicated practice on 'solve for K' problems, refer to the Quantitative Reasoning sections of this guide and the course materials. This brief overview serves to acknowledge the lesson title and clarify its typical context within the GRE.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- GRE argument questions require you to identify premises, conclusions, and unstated assumptions to strengthen or weaken a claim.
- For Sentence Equivalence, select two words that create sentences with equivalent meanings, paying close attention to context clues.
- Text Completion questions demand a systematic approach to fill one or more blanks, ensuring the entire passage is coherent and logical.
- A strong vocabulary is fundamental for success in all Verbal Reasoning question types.
- Even in quantitative problems like 'solve for K', verbal comprehension is critical for correctly interpreting the problem statement.
- Practice is essential for developing speed and accuracy in identifying patterns and applying strategies for each question type.

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### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. What are the three core components of a GRE argument, and why is identifying them important?
2. Explain the key difference between Sentence Equivalence and Text Completion questions.
3. When tackling a Text Completion question, what is the first step you should take, and why?
4. How do contrast words like 'however' or 'despite' assist you in solving Verbal Reasoning questions?
5. Although 'solve for K' problems are quantitative, how do verbal reasoning skills still play a role?

## CHAPTER 4

# Mastering GRE Sentence Equivalence

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This chapter provides a comprehensive guide to Sentence Equivalence (SE) questions on the GRE Verbal Reasoning section. These questions test your vocabulary, your ability to understand context, and your skill in identifying precise synonyms. You will learn a systematic approach to tackle SE problems, ensuring you select the two correct answers out of six choices.

We will walk through the process step by step, from analyzing the sentence structure to evaluating word meanings. By the end of this chapter, you will have a clear method for approaching these questions confidently and accurately, even without internet access to review the original video lessons.

## Understanding Sentence Equivalence: The Basics

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Covers: Study with me & let's go through this sentence equivalence question! #shorts

Sentence Equivalence questions challenge you to fill a single blank in a sentence with two different words. Both words must independently make sense in the sentence. Crucially, these two words must also be synonyms, or nearly so, in the context of that specific sentence. The GRE Verbal Reasoning section includes these questions, and they require a blend of strong vocabulary and careful contextual analysis. Each SE question presents one sentence with one blank and six answer choices. You must select exactly two of these choices to earn credit. Selecting only one word, or selecting two words that do not form a synonym pair, will result in zero points for that question.

Your first step with any Sentence Equivalence question is to understand its core requirements. You are not just looking for two words that fit. You are looking for two words that fit *and* convey the same meaning within the sentence. This dual requirement is what makes SE questions distinct and often challenging. Many students find themselves choosing two words that fit the blank but are not synonyms, or choosing two synonyms that do not fit the sentence's overall meaning. Avoid these common traps by always keeping both conditions in mind.

Consider the sentence as a puzzle. The blank is a missing piece, and you have six potential pieces. Two of them fit perfectly and are identical in shape and function. The remaining four pieces either do not fit the overall picture, or they fit but are not part of the matching pair. Your strategy must systematically eliminate the unsuitable options and identify the two correct ones. This approach begins with a thorough reading of the sentence itself. Do not rush to the answer choices. Take your time to grasp the full context, identify any clues, and form your own idea of the missing word's meaning. This initial analysis is fundamental to success. Without a clear understanding of what the sentence requires, you risk being swayed by attractive distractors among the answer choices. Practice this deliberate reading and analysis with every Sentence Equivalence question you encounter. This foundational step sets the stage for accurate word prediction and selection.

## Deconstructing the Sentence: Clues and Predictions

---

Covers: Let's continue with part 2 of our GRE sentence equivalence question! #shorts · Follow along with part 3 GRE sentence equivalence question! #shorts

Before looking at the answer choices, you must thoroughly deconstruct the sentence. This involves identifying key words, phrases, and structural elements that provide clues about the blank's meaning. Look for transition words such as 'although,' 'however,' 'despite,' 'because,' 'therefore,' or 'and.' These words signal relationships between different parts of the sentence, indicating whether the blank will contrast with or support another idea. For example, 'although' suggests a contrast, meaning the blank will likely describe something opposite to a stated characteristic.

Let's consider an example:

Despite the speaker's reputation for being \_\_\_\_\_, his impromptu remarks were surprisingly witty and engaging, captivating the audience.

In this sentence, the word 'Despite' is a crucial clue. It signals a contrast. The speaker has a 'reputation for being \_\_\_\_\_,' but his remarks were 'surprisingly witty and engaging.' This means the blank must describe a characteristic that is the *opposite* of witty and engaging. A speaker known for being witty and engaging would not be surprising. Therefore, the blank must describe someone who is generally *not* witty or engaging, perhaps someone quiet, reserved, or dull in speech.

After identifying the clues, your next step is to predict a word or phrase that fits the blank. Do not worry about finding the exact GRE vocabulary word. Instead, focus on the *meaning* the word should convey. For our example, predicted words might include 'quiet,' 'reserved,' 'uncommunicative,' 'silent,' or 'uninteresting.' This prediction serves as a mental filter. When you examine the answer choices, you will compare them against your predicted meaning. This helps you avoid being misled by words that sound good but do not align with the sentence's context. Many students skip this prediction step, jumping directly to the answer choices. This is a common mistake that often leads to incorrect selections. By predicting, you engage actively with the sentence, solidifying your understanding of its requirements before external options can confuse you. Make this prediction step a consistent part of your Sentence Equivalence strategy. It is a powerful tool for increasing accuracy and efficiency.

## Evaluating Choices: Finding the Perfect Pair

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Covers: Let's discuss the meanings of the words in this problem. Part 4 starts now! #shorts · We're down to two answer choices. Which do you think is the correct answer? #shorts · GRE sentence equivalence question part 2! Find out if you answered this question correctly! #shorts

Once you have deconstructed the sentence and predicted the blank's meaning, it is time to evaluate the answer choices. Remember, you are looking for two words that both fit the sentence *and* are synonyms of each other. This two-part requirement is critical. Do not select a pair of synonyms if they do not fit the sentence's context. Similarly, do not select two words that fit the context if they are not synonyms.

Let's continue with our example:

Despite the speaker's reputation for being \_\_\_\_\_, his impromptu remarks were surprisingly witty and engaging, captivating the audience.

Predicted meaning for the blank: quiet, reserved, uncommunicative.

Answer choices: A) laconic B) garrulous C) verbose D) taciturn E) loquacious F) reticent

Evaluate each word individually first. Does it fit your predicted meaning?

- **A) laconic:** Means using few words. This fits 'quiet' or 'reserved.' Keep it.
- **B) garrulous:** Means excessively talkative. This is the opposite of our prediction. Eliminate it.
- **C) verbose:** Means using more words than needed. This is also the opposite. Eliminate it.
- **D) taciturn:** Means reserved or uncommunicative in speech. This fits 'quiet' or 'reserved.' Keep it.
- **E) loquacious:** Means talkative. This is the opposite. Eliminate it.
- **F) reticent:** Means not revealing one's thoughts or feelings readily. While related to being quiet, 'reticent' often implies reluctance to speak or reveal, rather than simply speaking little. It's close but perhaps not the strongest fit for *just* speaking little.

Now, look at the remaining words (A, D, F) and see if any form a synonym pair that both fit the context.

- **Laconic (A) and Taciturn (D)** are strong synonyms. Both mean speaking little or being reserved in speech. They both fit the predicted meaning of someone who is generally quiet, making their witty remarks surprising. This is a strong pair.
- What about **Reticent (F)**? While a reticent person might be quiet, 'reticent' focuses more on holding back information or feelings. 'Laconic' and 'taciturn' specifically describe speaking sparingly. In the context of a speaker's 'reputation' for how they deliver remarks, 'laconic' and 'taciturn' are a more precise and direct fit than 'reticent.'

The correct answer pair is **A) laconic** and **D) taciturn**. Both words fit the blank, and they are synonyms. This systematic evaluation, first by individual fit and then by synonym pairing, is essential. Do not be tempted by words that are close but not quite right, or by pairs that are synonyms but do not match the sentence's tone or meaning. Always verify both conditions before making your final selection.

## Mastering the Process: Common Pitfalls and Practice

Covers: Let's wrap up the GRE sentence equivalence problem! #shorts · Find out if you got the answer right in the previous sentence equivalence question! #shorts

Mastering Sentence Equivalence questions involves consistent practice and an awareness of common pitfalls. One frequent error is selecting two words that are synonyms in general, but whose meanings do not precisely fit the given sentence's context. For instance, 'large' and 'big' are synonyms, but if a sentence describes a '\_\_\_\_\_ secret,' neither word would fit, even though they are a perfect pair outside that context. Always test each word in the blank before considering it for a synonym pair. The context dictates the appropriate meaning of a word, as many words have multiple definitions.

Another pitfall is choosing words based on a superficial understanding of the sentence. Students sometimes latch onto one or two keywords and ignore the overall nuance. This leads to selecting distractors that seem plausible at first glance. To counteract this, always read the entire sentence at least twice. Pay attention to all parts of speech and how they interact. Confirm your predicted meaning aligns with all parts of the sentence, not just a fragment.

Finally, a weak vocabulary is a significant hurdle. Many correct answers are missed not due to poor strategy, but because the test taker does not know the meaning of the critical words. The GRE often uses sophisticated vocabulary. Consistent vocabulary building is non-negotiable for success on Sentence Equivalence questions. Use flashcards, vocabulary apps, or a dedicated notebook to learn new words in context. Do not just memorize definitions. Understand how words are used in sentences, including their connotations and common collocations.

To wrap up your preparation, follow these steps for every Sentence Equivalence question:

1. **Read the sentence carefully:** Understand the overall meaning and tone.
2. **Identify clues:** Look for transition words, contrasting ideas, or supporting phrases.
3. **Predict the word:** Formulate your own word or phrase for the blank based on the clues.
4. **Evaluate choices individually:** Check if each answer choice fits your prediction and the sentence's context.
5. **Identify synonym pairs:** From the words that fit, find the two that are synonyms of each other.
6. **Verify:** Reread the sentence with both chosen words to ensure they create equivalent, grammatically correct, and contextually appropriate sentences.

Consistent application of this strategy, combined with dedicated vocabulary study, will significantly improve your performance on GRE Sentence Equivalence questions. Practice with a variety of questions to solidify your understanding and build speed.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Sentence Equivalence questions require you to select two words that both fit the blank and are synonyms in context.
- Always deconstruct the sentence first, identifying clues and predicting the meaning of the missing word before looking at answer choices.
- Evaluate each answer choice for its individual fit in the sentence before considering synonym pairs.
- The two chosen words must make the sentence convey the same meaning, even if they are not perfect dictionary synonyms.
- A strong vocabulary is essential; learn words in context and understand their nuances.
- Avoid common pitfalls such as selecting general synonyms that do not fit the specific sentence context or rushing past crucial clues.

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**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. What are the two main requirements for correctly answering a Sentence Equivalence question?
2. Why is it important to predict a word for the blank before looking at the answer choices?
3. How should you approach answer choices that are synonyms but do not fit the sentence context?
4. Describe a common mistake students make when selecting words for Sentence Equivalence.
5. What is the final step to verify your answer in a Sentence Equivalence question?

## CHAPTER 5

# Quantitative Reasoning Fundamentals

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This chapter introduces foundational concepts and strategies for the Quantitative Reasoning section of the GRE. You will learn efficient methods to approach number properties and various problem types. Mastering these techniques is essential for improving both speed and accuracy on the exam.

We will cover essential divisibility rules that simplify calculations, a powerful problem-solving technique called backsolving, and specific strategies for tackling Quantitative Comparison questions. These skills will help you break down complex problems and choose the most effective path to a solution.

## Mastering Divisibility Rules

---

Covers: Take note of these 4 easy divisibility rules #shorts · More divisibility rules to remember! #shorts

Divisibility rules are shortcuts that help you determine if one integer can be divided by another integer without leaving a remainder. These rules are invaluable for quickly simplifying fractions, finding factors, and solving number theory problems on the GRE. Knowing these rules can save you significant time on test day.

Let us review the most common and useful divisibility rules:

### Divisibility by 2

A number is divisible by 2 if its last digit is an even number (0, 2, 4, 6, or 8). For example, 348 is divisible by 2 because it ends in 8.

### Divisibility by 3

A number is divisible by 3 if the sum of its digits is divisible by 3. For instance, consider the number 459. The sum of its digits is  $4 + 5 + 9 = 18$ . Since 18 is divisible by 3, 459 is also divisible by 3.

### Divisibility by 4

A number is divisible by 4 if the number formed by its last two digits is divisible by 4. For example, 1,736 is divisible by 4 because 36 is divisible by 4. If the last two digits are 00, the number is also divisible by 4.

### Divisibility by 5

A number is divisible by 5 if its last digit is either 0 or 5. Numbers like 75 and 2,340 are divisible by 5.

### Divisibility by 6

A number is divisible by 6 if it is divisible by both 2 and 3. This means it must be an even number, and the sum of its digits must be divisible by 3. For example, 1,218 is an even number. The sum of its digits is  $1 + 2 + 1 + 8 = 12$ . Since 12 is divisible by 3, 1,218 is divisible by 6.

**Divisibility by 9**

A number is divisible by 9 if the sum of its digits is divisible by 9. This rule is similar to the rule for 3. For example, 5,634. The sum of its digits is  $5 + 6 + 3 + 4 = 18$ . Since 18 is divisible by 9, 5,634 is also divisible by 9.

**Divisibility by 10**

A number is divisible by 10 if its last digit is 0. Numbers like 1,230 and 500 are divisible by 10.

Let us practice with an example:

**Example:** Which of the following numbers is divisible by 6? (A) 346 (B) 512 (C) 738 (D) 805

**Solution:** To be divisible by 6, a number must be divisible by both 2 and 3. This means it must be even, and the sum of its digits must be divisible by 3.

- (A) 346 is even. Sum of digits =  $3 + 4 + 6 = 13$ . 13 is not divisible by 3. So, 346 is not divisible by 6.
- (B) 512 is even. Sum of digits =  $5 + 1 + 2 = 8$ . 8 is not divisible by 3. So, 512 is not divisible by 6.
- (C) 738 is even. Sum of digits =  $7 + 3 + 8 = 18$ . 18 is divisible by 3. So, 738 is divisible by 6.
- (D) 805 is not even. So, 805 is not divisible by 6.

The correct answer is (C) 738. Knowing these rules allows for quick elimination and identification of the correct choice without performing long division.

## The Backsolving Strategy

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Covers: Backsolving practice question part #shorts · Get better with backsolving today! #shorts · Part 2 of our backsolving problem. Have you seen part 1? #shorts · Practice your backsolving skills with this practice question. #shorts

Backsolving is a highly effective strategy for certain types of GRE Quantitative Reasoning problems. It involves working backward from the answer choices provided. This method is particularly useful for multiple-choice questions where the answer choices are specific numerical values for a variable or an unknown quantity.

**When to Use Backsolving**

Use backsolving when:

- The question is a multiple-choice problem.
- The answer choices are numbers, representing a possible value for the unknown you need to find.
- The problem can be solved by plugging a value into the question stem and checking if it satisfies the given conditions.

**When Not to Use Backsolving**

Avoid backsolving for questions where:

- The answer choices are not specific numbers (e.g., algebraic expressions, 'none of the above', 'cannot be determined').

- The question asks for 'which of the following must be true' or 'which of the following could be true', as these often require a more general approach.
- The problem is a Quantitative Comparison question, which has its own distinct strategies.

### How to Backsolve: Step-by-Step

1. **Examine the Answer Choices:** Confirm that the answer choices are numerical values. If they are not sorted, it is often helpful to mentally arrange them in ascending or descending order.
2. **Start with a Middle Choice:** Begin by testing either choice (B) or (D) if the choices are sorted (A, B, C, D, E). This is because if your chosen answer is incorrect, you can often determine if the correct answer must be higher or lower, allowing you to eliminate multiple choices at once.
3. **Plug In and Check:** Substitute your chosen answer into the original problem statement. Perform the necessary calculations and see if it satisfies all conditions given in the problem.
4. **Adjust and Repeat:**
  - If your chosen answer works, you have found the correct answer.
  - If your chosen answer is too high, eliminate it and all higher choices, then try a lower choice.
  - If your chosen answer is too low, eliminate it and all lower choices, then try a higher choice.

Let us consider an example:

**Example:** A baker sells cookies for \$1.50 each and muffins for \$2.25 each. If a customer buys a total of 10 items and spends \$18.00, how many cookies did the customer buy? (A) 4 (B) 5 (C) 6 (D) 7 (E) 8

**Solution:** The answer choices represent the number of cookies. Let's start with choice (C), 6 cookies.

- **Test (C) 6 cookies:**
  - If 6 cookies were bought, then  $10 - 6 = 4$  muffins were bought.
  - Cost of cookies:  $6 * \$1.50 = \$9.00$
  - Cost of muffins:  $4 * \$2.25 = \$9.00$
  - Total cost:  $\$9.00 + \$9.00 = \$18.00$

This matches the total spent in the problem statement. Therefore, the correct answer is (C). Backsolving allowed us to find the solution without setting up complex algebraic equations. This method is often faster and less prone to algebraic errors.

## Quantitative Comparison and General Problem Solving

---

Covers: Find the solution to this quant problem. #shorts · Study quant comparison with today's practice question. #shorts

The GRE Quantitative Reasoning section includes various question formats, with Quantitative Comparison being a unique and significant type. Understanding its structure and specific strategies is crucial for success. General problem-solving skills apply across all question types.

### Quantitative Comparison (QC)

In Quantitative Comparison questions, you are presented with two quantities, Quantity A and Quantity B, and asked to compare them. You must choose one of four fixed answer choices:

(A) Quantity A is greater. (B) Quantity B is greater. (C) The two quantities are equal. (D) The relationship cannot be determined from the information given.

#### Key Strategies for Quantitative Comparison:

1. **Simplify Both Quantities Simultaneously:** You can add, subtract, multiply, or divide both Quantity A and Quantity B by the same positive number without changing their relationship. Be careful: multiplying or dividing by a negative number reverses the inequality, and dividing by a variable whose sign is unknown is risky.
2. **Test Numbers:** This is especially useful when variables are involved. Try different types of numbers: positive integers, negative integers, zero, fractions between 0 and 1, and large numbers. If you find even one set of numbers for which Quantity A is greater and another set for which Quantity B is greater (or they are equal), then the answer must be (D).
3. **Algebraic Manipulation:** If the quantities involve expressions, simplify them algebraically to make the comparison clearer. Often, you can rearrange terms to isolate a comparison.
4. **Avoid Unnecessary Calculations:** Often, you do not need to calculate the exact value of each quantity. Focus on comparing them directly.
5. **Do Not Assume (D) Too Quickly:** Only choose (D) if you have definitively shown that the relationship changes under different valid conditions. If you only test one case, you might miss another that yields a different outcome.

#### Example for Quantitative Comparison:

Quantity A: The number of distinct prime factors of 30    Quantity B: The number of distinct prime factors of 42

#### Solution:

- **Quantity A:** Find the prime factors of 30.  $30 = 2 * 3 * 5$ . The distinct prime factors are 2, 3, and 5. There are 3 distinct prime factors.
- **Quantity B:** Find the prime factors of 42.  $42 = 2 * 3 * 7$ . The distinct prime factors are 2, 3, and 7. There are 3 distinct prime factors.

In this case, Quantity A = 3 and Quantity B = 3. Therefore, the two quantities are equal. The answer is (C).

#### General Problem Solving Tips

For standard multiple-choice and numeric entry questions, a systematic approach is beneficial:

1. **Understand the Question:** Read the problem carefully. Identify what is being asked and what information is provided. Pay attention to units and specific conditions.

2. **Formulate a Plan:** Decide on a strategy. Will you use algebra, test numbers, draw a diagram, or apply a specific formula? Break down complex problems into smaller, manageable steps.
3. **Execute the Plan:** Carry out your chosen strategy. Be meticulous with calculations.
4. **Check Your Answer:** Does your answer make sense in the context of the problem? Is it a reasonable value? If time permits, quickly recheck your work or try solving it a different way.

**Example for General Problem Solving:**

If  $3x + 7 = 22$ , what is the value of  $6x$ ?

**Solution:****1. Solve for  $x$ :**

$$\begin{aligned}3x + 7 &= 22 \\3x &= 22 - 7 \\3x &= 15 \\x &= 15 / 3 \\x &= 5\end{aligned}$$

**2. Find  $6x$ :**

$$\begin{aligned}6x &= 6 * 5 \\6x &= 30\end{aligned}$$

The value of  $6x$  is 30. This systematic approach ensures all parts of the question are addressed.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Divisibility rules provide quick methods for identifying factors and simplifying numerical operations.
- The backsolving strategy is highly effective for multiple-choice questions where numerical answer choices are provided.
- When backsolving, start with a middle answer choice (B or D) to efficiently narrow down the possibilities.
- Quantitative Comparison questions require strategic thinking, often involving simplification or testing various numbers.
- If testing different valid numbers in a Quantitative Comparison question yields different relationships, the answer is D.
- Always read GRE Quantitative Reasoning problems carefully to fully understand what is being asked before attempting a solution.

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**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. What are the divisibility rules for 3 and 9, and why are they similar?
2. Describe the conditions under which backsolving is an effective strategy.
3. When using backsolving, which answer choice is generally a good starting point and why?
4. What are the four possible answer choices in a Quantitative Comparison question, and what does choice D signify?
5. Explain a key strategy for Quantitative Comparison questions involving variables.

## CHAPTER 6

# Quantitative Reasoning: Number Properties and Calculator Use

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This chapter focuses on essential number properties and effective calculator strategies for the GRE Quantitative Reasoning section. Understanding divisibility rules and prime factorization can simplify complex problems and save valuable time. We will also explore how to use the GRE's on-screen calculator wisely, recognizing its strengths and limitations. Mastering these topics will enhance your ability to approach a variety of quantitative questions with greater efficiency and accuracy.

## Divisibility Rules: Quick Checks for Number Properties

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Covers: Here are some easy divisibility rules to remember! #shorts

Divisibility rules are shortcuts that allow you to determine if a number is evenly divisible by another number without performing long division. These rules are invaluable on the GRE, helping you quickly analyze numbers and solve problems related to factors, multiples, and prime factorization.

### Divisibility by 2

A number is divisible by 2 if its last digit is an even number (0, 2, 4, 6, 8).

- **Example:** 348 is divisible by 2 because its last digit, 8, is even.

### Divisibility by 3

A number is divisible by 3 if the sum of its digits is divisible by 3.

- **Example:** For the number 531, the sum of its digits is  $5 + 3 + 1 = 9$ . Since 9 is divisible by 3, 531 is divisible by 3.

### Divisibility by 4

A number is divisible by 4 if the number formed by its last two digits is divisible by 4.

- **Example:** For the number 1,736, the last two digits form 36. Since 36 is divisible by 4, 1,736 is divisible by 4.

### Divisibility by 5

A number is divisible by 5 if its last digit is 0 or 5.

- **Example:** 2,045 is divisible by 5 because its last digit is 5.

### Divisibility by 6

A number is divisible by 6 if it is divisible by both 2 and 3. This means its last digit must be even, and the sum of its digits must be divisible by 3.

- **Example:** For the number 726, the last digit is 6 (even), so it is divisible by 2. The sum of its digits is  $7 + 2 + 6 = 15$ . Since 15 is divisible by 3, 726 is divisible by 3. Because it is divisible by both 2 and 3, 726 is divisible by 6.

### Divisibility by 9

A number is divisible by 9 if the sum of its digits is divisible by 9.

- **Example:** For the number 4,185, the sum of its digits is  $4 + 1 + 8 + 5 = 18$ . Since 18 is divisible by 9, 4,185 is divisible by 9.

### Divisibility by 10

A number is divisible by 10 if its last digit is 0.

- **Example:** 970 is divisible by 10 because its last digit is 0.

Applying these rules can quickly narrow down answer choices or simplify calculations. For instance, if a problem asks for a multiple of 6, you can immediately eliminate any number that is odd or whose digits do not sum to a multiple of 3. Practice identifying these patterns to build speed and confidence in the Quantitative Reasoning section.

## Prime Factorization: Breaking Numbers Down

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Covers: Learn how to solve this GRE math problem using prime factorization! #shorts · Part 2 of the prime factorization problem.  
#shorts · Prime factorization problem part 3. #shorts

Prime factorization is the process of breaking down a composite number into its prime number components. A prime number is a natural number greater than 1 that has no positive divisors other than 1 and itself (examples: 2, 3, 5, 7, 11). A composite number is a natural number greater than 1 that is not prime (examples: 4, 6, 8, 9, 10).

Understanding prime factorization is crucial for solving many GRE quantitative problems, including those involving finding the Greatest Common Factor (GCF), the Least Common Multiple (LCM), or the number of factors a number has.

### How to Find Prime Factorization

The most common method is using a factor tree. Start by dividing the number by the smallest prime number that divides it evenly. Continue this process until all branches end in prime numbers.

Let's find the prime factorization of 72:

1. Start with 72.
2. Divide 72 by the smallest prime factor, 2:  $72 = 2 * 36$

3. Divide 36 by 2:  $36 = 2 * 18$

4. Divide 18 by 2:  $18 = 2 * 9$

5. Divide 9 by the next smallest prime factor, 3:  $9 = 3 * 3$

So, the prime factorization of 72 is  $2 * 2 * 2 * 3 * 3$ , or  $2^3 * 3^2$ .

### Applications of Prime Factorization

#### 1. Finding the Greatest Common Factor (GCF)

The GCF of two or more numbers is the largest number that divides into all of them without a remainder. To find the GCF using prime factorization:

- Find the prime factorization of each number.
- Identify all common prime factors.
- Multiply these common prime factors, using the lowest power for each common factor.

**Example:** Find the GCF of 72 and 108.

- Prime factorization of 72:  $2^3 * 3^2$  (which is  $2 * 2 * 2 * 3 * 3$ )
- Prime factorization of 108:  $108 = 2 * 54 = 2 * 2 * 27 = 2 * 2 * 3 * 9 = 2 * 2 * 3 * 3 * 3$  (which is  $2^2 * 3^3$ )
- Common prime factors are 2 and 3.
- Lowest power of 2 is  $2^2$ . Lowest power of 3 is  $3^2$ .
- $GCF = 2^2 * 3^2 = 4 * 9 = 36$ .

#### 2. Finding the Least Common Multiple (LCM)

The LCM of two or more numbers is the smallest positive integer that is a multiple of all of them. To find the LCM using prime factorization:

- Find the prime factorization of each number.
- Identify all prime factors (common and uncommon).
- Multiply these prime factors, using the highest power for each factor.

**Example:** Find the LCM of 72 and 108.

- Prime factorization of 72:  $2^3 * 3^2$
- Prime factorization of 108:  $2^2 * 3^3$
- All prime factors involved are 2 and 3.
- Highest power of 2 is  $2^3$ . Highest power of 3 is  $3^3$ .
- $LCM = 2^3 * 3^3 = 8 * 27 = 216$ .

Prime factorization is a fundamental tool for number theory problems. Practice breaking down numbers and using these factors to solve problems efficiently.

## Strategic Calculator Use on the GRE

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Covers: Be mindful when using your calculator in the GRE! Find out how in this #shorts · Part 2 of our calculator usage tips on the GRE! #shorts · Let's continue our series on calculator usage tips on the GRE! #shorts · Last video in our series on calculator usage tips on the GRE! #shorts

The GRE provides an on-screen calculator, but using it effectively requires strategy. It is not always the fastest or best tool. Sometimes, mental math or estimation is quicker and less prone to input errors. Be mindful of when to use the calculator and when to rely on your number sense.

### When to Use the Calculator

- **Complex arithmetic:** For calculations involving large numbers, decimals, or many steps that are difficult to do mentally, the calculator is appropriate. Examples include  $(14.7 * 8.3) / 2.1$  or  $\text{sqrt}(1764)$ .
- **Checking work:** After performing a calculation mentally, you can use the calculator to verify your answer, especially if it is a critical step in a multi-part problem.
- **Specific functions:** The GRE calculator includes a square root button. Use it when you encounter square roots of numbers that are not perfect squares or are too large to recognize quickly.

### When to Avoid the Calculator

- **Simple arithmetic:** Do not use the calculator for basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division that you can do quickly in your head. For example,  $15 * 3$  or  $100 / 5$ . Using the calculator for these wastes time and introduces opportunities for input errors.
- **Algebraic manipulation:** Many problems test your understanding of algebraic principles, not just calculation. Often, you can simplify expressions or cancel terms before needing to calculate. For example, if you have  $(25 * 12) / 5$ , it is faster to simplify to  $5 * 12 = 60$  than to calculate  $300 / 5$ .
- **Estimation:** For problems involving inequalities or approximations, often a quick estimate is enough to eliminate answer choices. The calculator provides exact values, which might be overkill and time-consuming.

### Important Calculator Features and Tips

- **Order of Operations (PEMDAS/BODMAS):** The GRE calculator follows the standard order of operations. This means multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction. Use parentheses  $()$  for clarity and to ensure operations are performed in the correct sequence. For example,  $(5 + 3) * 2$  will give 16, while  $5 + 3 * 2$  will give 11.
- **Memory Function:** The calculator has memory buttons (M+, M-, MR, MC). M+ adds the displayed number to memory, M- subtracts it, MR recalls the number from memory, and MC clears the memory. These can be useful for multi-step problems where you need to store intermediate results.
- **Practice:** Become familiar with the GRE calculator's interface before test day. The on-screen calculator is different from a handheld one. Practice using it during your study sessions to build speed and accuracy. This helps you avoid fumbling with it during the actual test.

- **Double-check input:** A common mistake is entering the wrong numbers. Always glance at the display to confirm your input before pressing the equals button.

Using the calculator strategically means knowing when it is an asset and when it is a distraction. Develop your number sense alongside your calculator skills.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Divisibility rules offer quick ways to check if a number can be evenly divided by another, saving time on the GRE.
- Prime factorization breaks down composite numbers into their unique prime components, useful for GCF, LCM, and factor problems.
- The factor tree method is a systematic way to find the prime factorization of any composite number.
- The GRE calculator is a tool to be used strategically, not for every calculation.
- Employ the calculator for complex arithmetic or square roots, but rely on mental math and estimation for simpler problems.
- Always be mindful of the order of operations and use parentheses on the calculator to ensure correct results.
- Familiarize yourself with the GRE calculator's interface and features through consistent practice.

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### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. How can you quickly determine if a number is divisible by 6?
2. What is prime factorization, and why is it useful on the GRE?
3. Find the prime factorization of 90.
4. When should you generally avoid using the GRE's on-screen calculator?
5. Explain the importance of parentheses when using the GRE calculator.

## CHAPTER 7

# Quantitative Reasoning: Percentages and Quantitative Comparison

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This chapter focuses on two critical areas of the GRE Quantitative Reasoning section: percentages and Quantitative Comparison questions. Mastering percentages is fundamental for many problem types, including word problems, data interpretation, and even some geometry questions.

Quantitative Comparison questions, which make up a significant portion of the math sections, require a distinct strategic approach.

We will review core percentage concepts and then introduce effective strategies for tackling Quantitative Comparison problems. This will help you efficiently compare quantities and avoid common traps, preparing you for success on the GRE.

## Mastering Percentage Problems

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Covers: Part 2 of the GRE math question on percent! #shorts · Let's go through this GRE math question on percentage! Stay tuned for part 2! #shorts · Check out if you answered the previous GRE math question correctly! #shorts · Pause and try to answer this problem. What's your guess? #shorts

Percentages are a fundamental concept on the GRE, appearing in various question types. Understanding them thoroughly is crucial. The term 'percent' literally means 'per one hundred'. A percentage is a way to express a number as a fraction of 100. For example, 25% means 25 out of 100, or  $25/100$ .

### Converting Between Forms

To work with percentages effectively, you must be able to convert them into decimals or fractions.

- **Percent to Decimal:** Divide the percentage by 100. For example,  $30\% = 30/100 = 0.30$ .
- **Decimal to Percent:** Multiply the decimal by 100. For example,  $0.75 = 0.75 * 100\% = 75\%$ .
- **Percent to Fraction:** Place the percentage over 100 and simplify. For example,  $40\% = 40/100 = 2/5$ .

### Basic Percentage Calculations

There are three common types of basic percentage problems:

1. **Finding a percentage of a number:** "What is 15% of 80?"
  - Convert 15% to a decimal (0.15) and multiply by 80:  $0.15 * 80 = 12$ .
2. **Finding what percentage one number is of another:** "24 is what percent of 120?"
  - Divide 24 by 120, then multiply by 100%:  $(24 / 120) * 100\% = 0.20 * 100\% = 20\%$ .
3. **Finding the whole when a percentage is given:** "45 is 25% of what number?"
  - Let the number be  $x$ . Set up the equation:  $45 = 0.25 * x$ . Solve for  $x$ :  $x = 45 / 0.25 = 180$ .

## Percentage Increase and Decrease

These problems involve a change from an original value.

- **Percent Increase:** To find a new value after an increase, multiply the original value by  $(1 + \text{percent increase as a decimal})$ . For example, if a \$60 item increases by 10%:

$$\text{New Value} = 60 * (1 + 0.10) = 60 * 1.10 = \$66$$

- **Percent Decrease:** To find a new value after a decrease, multiply the original value by  $(1 - \text{percent decrease as a decimal})$ . For example, if a \$60 item decreases by 10%:

$$\text{New Value} = 60 * (1 - 0.10) = 60 * 0.90 = \$54$$

- **Finding the Percent Change:**  $(\text{Change in Value} / \text{Original Value}) * 100\%$ .

## Successive Percentages

When multiple percentage changes occur, they are applied sequentially. It is a common mistake to simply add or subtract the percentages. They are multiplicative.

- **Example:** A price of \$200 is first discounted by 20%, then the new price is increased by 15%. What is the final price?
- First change (20% discount):  $200 * (1 - 0.20) = 200 * 0.80 = \$160$ .
- Second change (15% increase on the new price):  $160 * (1 + 0.15) = 160 * 1.15 = \$184$ . The final price is \$184. Notice that a 20% decrease followed by a 15% increase does not result in a 5% decrease from the original. The order of operations matters.

## Common Mistakes

- Confusing the 'of' in 'percent of' with 'percent greater than' or 'percent less than'. Pay close attention to the wording.
- Incorrectly adding or subtracting percentages in successive changes. Always apply changes one at a time to the current value.
- Using the wrong base for calculating percent change. Always divide by the *original* value when finding the percent change.

Practice converting between forms and solving word problems that involve increases, decreases, and finding parts of a whole. Carefully read each problem to identify the original value and the type of percentage change required.

## Strategies for Quantitative Comparison

Covers: Let's go through this math question & find out which column is greater! #shorts · Try this GRE quantitative comparison question & let me know your answer in the comments! #shorts · Part 2 of our GRE quantitative comparison problem! · Let's solve this GRE quantitative comparison problem! #shorts #gre math #gre practice

Quantitative Comparison (QC) questions are a unique and significant part of the GRE Quantitative Reasoning section. They present two quantities, Column A and Column B, and ask you to determine the relationship between them. There are four fixed answer choices:

- (A) Quantity in Column A is greater.
- (B) Quantity in Column B is greater.
- (C) The two quantities are equal.
- (D) The relationship cannot be determined from the information given.

Your goal is to choose the correct relationship as efficiently as possible.

### General Strategies for Quantitative Comparison

1. **Simplify Both Columns:** Before making a comparison, simplify the expressions in both Column A and Column B as much as possible. This often involves algebraic manipulation, combining like terms, or performing basic arithmetic.

- **Example:** Compare  $(x + 3)^2$  and  $x^2 + 6x + 9$ .
- Column A:  $(x + 3)^2 = x^2 + 6x + 9$
- Column B:  $x^2 + 6x + 9$
- After simplifying Column A, it is identical to Column B. The answer is (C).

2. **Perform Identical Operations:** You can add, subtract, multiply, or divide both columns by the same non-zero value without changing the relationship between them. This is similar to solving equations or inequalities.

- **Caution:** If you multiply or divide by a variable, you must consider its sign. If the variable could be negative, zero, or positive, this operation can change the relationship or be undefined. For example, dividing by a negative number reverses the inequality. If you are unsure of the sign, avoid multiplication or division by a variable.
- **Example:** Given  $x > 0$ . Compare  $5x + 7$  and  $3x + 7$ .
- Subtract 7 from both columns:  $5x$  and  $3x$ .
- Since  $x > 0$ , we can divide both columns by  $x$ : 5 and 3.
- Clearly,  $5 > 3$ . So, Column A is greater. The answer is (A).

3. **Test Numbers:** This is a powerful strategy, especially when variables are involved. Choose specific values for the variables and see how the columns compare. The key is to test a variety of numbers.

- Start with "safe" numbers (positive integers like 1, 2, 3).
- Then test "weird" numbers: zero, negative integers (-1, -2), fractions between 0 and 1 ( $1/2$ ,  $1/3$ ), and fractions less than -1 ( $-1/2$ ,  $-3/2$ ).
- If you find one set of numbers where Column A is greater, and another set where Column B is greater (or they are equal), then the answer is (D).
- **Example:** Compare  $x^2$  and  $x$ .

- Test  $x = 2$ : Column A =  $2^2 = 4$ , Column B =  $2$ .  $A > B$ .
- Test  $x = 1/2$ : Column A =  $(1/2)^2 = 1/4$ , Column B =  $1/2$ .  $B > A$ .
- Since the relationship changes, the answer is (D).

4. **Look for D:** The answer (D) is often correct when the problem involves variables that are not sufficiently constrained. If you can find even two cases where the relationship between the columns differs, then (D) is the answer. Do not assume variables are positive integers unless explicitly stated.

### Common Mistakes

- **Assuming positive integers:** Many students assume variables are positive integers. Always consider zero, negative numbers, and fractions.
- **Not testing enough numbers:** If testing numbers, make sure to cover the range of possibilities (positive, negative, zero, fractions).
- **Misinterpreting diagrams:** Unless a diagram is marked as "drawn to scale", do not rely on its appearance for precise measurements or relationships. Redraw if necessary to explore different configurations.
- **Algebraic errors:** Simple calculation mistakes can lead to incorrect comparisons. Double-check your work.

Practice applying these strategies. For problems with variables, make it a habit to test different types of numbers. This disciplined approach will help you master Quantitative Comparison questions.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Percentages are fractions out of 100 and can be converted to decimals or fractions for calculations.
- Percentage increase and decrease calculations involve multiplying the original value by  $(1 + \text{rate})$  or  $(1 - \text{rate})$ , respectively.
- Successive percentage changes are multiplicative and are applied sequentially to the current value, not the original value.
- Quantitative Comparison questions require determining if Column A is greater, Column B is greater, they are equal, or the relationship cannot be determined.
- Key strategies for Quantitative Comparison include simplifying expressions, performing identical operations on both columns, and testing various numbers for variables.
- When testing numbers in Quantitative Comparison, always include positive integers, negative numbers, zero, and fractions to fully explore the relationship.
- If the relationship between Column A and Column B can change based on the values of variables, the answer to a Quantitative Comparison problem is always (D).

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**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. A jacket originally priced at \$120 is on sale for 25% off. What is the sale price of the jacket?
2. If a quantity increases by 20% and then decreases by 20%, will the final quantity be greater than, less than, or equal to the original quantity? Explain.
3. In a Quantitative Comparison problem, if you test  $x = 1$  and find Column A > Column B, and then test  $x = -1$  and find Column B > Column A, what is the correct answer choice?
4. Describe two key strategies for solving Quantitative Comparison problems effectively.
5. What types of numbers should you specifically test when a Quantitative Comparison problem involves variables?

## CHAPTER 8

# Quantitative Reasoning: Number Properties and Order of Operations

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This chapter focuses on fundamental concepts in quantitative reasoning that are often tested on the GRE. We begin by clarifying the unique properties of the number zero. Understanding zero is critical for many GRE questions, especially those involving number sets or inequalities. We then move to the essential topic of order of operations. Mastering the correct sequence for evaluating mathematical expressions ensures accuracy in calculations. This skill is foundational for all quantitative problems you will encounter on the exam.

## The Unique Properties of Zero

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Covers: Is zero a positive or negative number? #shorts

The number zero holds a distinct position in mathematics. It is an integer, meaning it is a whole number without any fractional or decimal parts. However, zero is unique among integers in several ways that are important for the GRE.

First, consider its sign. Zero is neither a positive nor a negative number. Positive numbers are all numbers greater than zero. Examples include 1, 2, 3, and so on. Negative numbers are all numbers less than zero. Examples include -1, -2, -3, and so on. Zero serves as the boundary between these two sets of numbers on the number line. When a GRE question refers to "non-negative integers," it includes zero along with all positive integers. Similarly, "non-positive integers" includes zero and all negative integers. Always be precise with these definitions.

Second, consider its parity. Is zero an even or an odd number? An even number is any integer that is divisible by 2 without a remainder. An odd number is any integer that is not divisible by 2 without a remainder. Zero fits the definition of an even number. If you divide 0 by 2, the result is 0, which is an integer. Therefore, zero is an even number. This is another common point of confusion that the GRE may test directly or indirectly.

Zero also behaves uniquely in arithmetic operations.

- **Addition and Subtraction:** Adding zero to any number does not change the number. For example,  $5 + 0 = 5$ . Subtracting zero from any number does not change the number. For example,  $7 - 0 = 7$ .
- **Multiplication:** Multiplying any number by zero always results in zero. For example,  $12 * 0 = 0$ . This property is fundamental.
- **Division:** Dividing zero by any non-zero number always results in zero. For example,  $0 / 8 = 0$ . However, division by zero is undefined. You cannot divide any number by zero. This is a crucial concept. Expressions like  $5 / 0$  or  $0 / 0$  are undefined.

Understanding these properties of zero is essential for accurately interpreting quantitative reasoning questions. Many GRE problems use phrases like "integers," "positive integers," "non-negative integers," or "even integers." Your knowledge of zero's characteristics will help you avoid common traps and select the correct answer. For instance, if a question asks for the smallest non-negative even integer, the answer is 0, not 2.

Practice identifying these properties quickly. When you see a problem involving number sets, mentally check how zero fits into the given criteria. This quick check can prevent errors that stem from a misunderstanding of this fundamental number.

## Mastering the Order of Operations (PEMDAS)

Covers: Part 2 of yesterday's order of operations problem. Did you get the answer right? #shorts · Part 1: How do you use PEMDAS? #shorts

To consistently arrive at the correct answer in mathematical expressions, you must follow a specific sequence of operations. This sequence is known as the order of operations. A common acronym used to remember this order is PEMDAS, which stands for Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication and Division, and Addition and Subtraction.

Let us break down each step:

1. **P - Parentheses:** Always perform operations inside parentheses or other grouping symbols (like brackets or braces) first. If there are nested parentheses, work from the innermost set outwards.
2. **E - Exponents:** After resolving parentheses, evaluate all exponents. This includes powers and roots.
3. **MD - Multiplication and Division:** Next, perform all multiplication and division operations. This is a critical point: multiplication and division have equal precedence. You must work from left to right as you encounter them in the expression. Do not automatically do all multiplication before all division.
4. **AS - Addition and Subtraction:** Finally, perform all addition and subtraction operations. Like multiplication and division, addition and subtraction also have equal precedence. You must work from left to right as you encounter them. Do not automatically do all addition before all subtraction.

Let us walk through an example to illustrate PEMDAS:

$$18 - 6 / 2 + 3 * (4 - 1)$$

- **Step 1: Parentheses** First, evaluate the expression inside the parentheses:  $(4 - 1) = 3$ . The expression becomes:  $18 - 6 / 2 + 3 * 3$
- **Step 2: Exponents** There are no exponents in this expression, so we move to the next step.
- **Step 3: Multiplication and Division (from left to right)** Scan the expression from left to right for multiplication or division. The first operation is  $6 / 2$ .  $6 / 2 = 3$ . The expression becomes:  $18 - 3 + 3 * 3$

Continue scanning for multiplication or division. The next operation is  $3 * 3$ .  $3 * 3 = 9$ . The expression becomes:  $18 - 3 + 9$

- **Step 4: Addition and Subtraction (from left to right)** Scan the expression from left to right for addition or subtraction. The first operation is  $18 - 3$ .  $18 - 3 = 15$ . The expression becomes:  $15 + 9$

The final operation is  $15 + 9$ .  $15 + 9 = 24$ .

The correct answer is 24.

A common mistake is to perform all multiplication before all division, or all addition before all subtraction, regardless of their position. Remember, multiplication and division are a pair, and addition and subtraction are a pair. Within each pair, you proceed from left to right. For example, in  $12 / 3 * 2$ , if you did multiplication first ( $3 * 2 = 6$ ), then  $12 / 6 = 2$ . But the correct way is  $12 / 3 = 4$ , then  $4 * 2 = 8$ . The left-to-right rule is crucial.

Practice evaluating expressions step by step. Writing out each intermediate step helps reinforce the correct order and reduces errors. The GRE will not explicitly ask you to list the steps of PEMDAS, but applying it correctly is fundamental to solving nearly all quantitative problems.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Zero is neither a positive nor a negative number.
- Zero is an even integer.
- The order of operations (PEMDAS) dictates the sequence for solving mathematical expressions.
- Multiplication and division have equal precedence and are performed from left to right.
- Addition and subtraction have equal precedence and are performed from left to right.
- Always evaluate expressions inside parentheses first.

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.

1. Is zero considered a positive number, a negative number, or neither?
2. Is zero an even number, an odd number, or neither? Explain your reasoning.
3. What does PEMDAS stand for, and why is the order of 'Multiplication and Division' important to remember?
4. Evaluate the expression:  $18 - 6 / 2 + 3 * (4 - 1)$
5. Explain the common mistake students make regarding the order of multiplication and division.

## CHAPTER 9

# Analytical Writing

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The Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) section of the GRE evaluates your ability to articulate complex ideas and support them with clear reasoning and examples. This chapter provides a comprehensive guide to understanding, preparing for, and excelling on the AWA. We will cover the two essay tasks, "Analyze an Issue" and "Analyze an Argument," explaining their specific requirements and how they are scored. You will learn strategic approaches to brainstorming, outlining, and structuring your essays to meet the GRE's standards. This chapter also offers practical tips for effective practice, ensuring you develop the skills and confidence needed to achieve your target AWA score.

## Understanding the AWA Section: Basics and Overview

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Covers: GRE AWA Basics: Here's What You Need to Know · Preparing for the GRE AWA Essays · GRE AWA Section Overview

The Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) section of the GRE evaluates your ability to articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively. It tests your critical thinking skills and your capacity to support your arguments with relevant reasons and examples. Unlike the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections, the AWA does not contribute to your 130-170 scaled score. Instead, it is scored separately on a scale of 0 to 6, in half-point increments. Many graduate programs consider this score when evaluating applications, using it to gauge a candidate's communication abilities.

The AWA section consists of two timed analytical writing tasks, each lasting 30 minutes. You will complete these tasks sequentially, with no break in between. The first task is "Analyze an Issue," and the second is "Analyze an Argument." For the "Analyze an Issue" task, you must present your perspective on a given statement or claim. You need to develop a well-reasoned argument, providing specific examples and evidence to support your position. The "Analyze an Argument" task requires you to critique a given argument, identifying its logical flaws, unstated assumptions, and areas where more evidence would strengthen or weaken the conclusion. You are not asked to agree or disagree with the argument, but rather to analyze its construction.

Preparation for the AWA involves more than just writing practice. It begins with understanding the specific demands of each task. Familiarize yourself with the instructions for both the Issue and Argument essays. Read sample essays provided by ETS, paying close attention to what constitutes a high-scoring response. Notice how strong essays develop ideas, organize paragraphs, and use precise language. A crucial aspect of preparing is also to improve your typing speed and accuracy. Since you must hand-type both essays, efficiency at the keyboard allows you more time to think, brainstorm, and refine your thoughts.

Effective AWA preparation also includes developing a systematic approach to each essay. For the Issue task, this means learning to quickly dissect a prompt, identify your stance, and generate supporting points. For the Argument task, it involves recognizing common logical fallacies and understanding how to

articulate their impact on the argument's validity. Both tasks require you to demonstrate facility with standard written English, including grammar, usage, and mechanics. Consistent practice under timed conditions is the best way to build confidence and proficiency in these areas. Your goal is to produce clear, well-supported, and grammatically sound essays within the strict time limits.

## Acing the AWA: Scoring Components and Writing Strategies

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Covers: Writing Tips for the 4 Major Scoring Components - I · Writing Tips for the 4 Major Scoring Components - II

To achieve a high score on the Analytical Writing Assessment, you must understand the criteria by which your essays are evaluated. While ETS does not publish an explicit list of "four major scoring components," their scoring guides consistently emphasize several key areas. We can group these into four conceptual categories that reflect the core elements of a strong analytical essay. Mastering these areas will guide your writing strategy for both the Issue and Argument tasks.

The first component is **Content and Development**. This refers to how well you address the specific task, present a clear and insightful perspective, and support your claims with relevant reasons and examples. For the Issue essay, this means taking a distinct position and elaborating on it thoroughly. For the Argument essay, it means identifying the argument's central flaws and discussing their implications in detail. To excel here, always ensure your essay directly responds to the prompt. Avoid generalizations. Instead, use specific, concrete examples to illustrate your points. Consider anticipating potential counterarguments and addressing them to strengthen your own position.

The second component focuses on **Organization and Coherence**. A high-scoring essay is logically structured and easy to follow. Ideas should flow smoothly from one paragraph to the next, with clear transitions guiding the reader. Each paragraph should have a clear topic sentence that introduces its main idea, and all sentences within the paragraph should relate to that idea. Before you begin writing, spend a few minutes outlining your essay. This ensures a logical progression of ideas. Use transition words and phrases such as "however," "consequently," "for example," and "in addition" to connect your thoughts and create a cohesive whole.

The third component is **Language and Conventions**. This encompasses your command of standard written English, including vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A strong essay demonstrates a varied vocabulary, using precise words to convey meaning. It also employs a range of sentence structures, avoiding repetitive patterns. Proofread carefully for grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, and punctuation issues. Errors in these areas can distract the reader and detract from the clarity of your ideas. While a few minor errors may be tolerated, pervasive mistakes will significantly lower your score.

Finally, the fourth component is **Critical Thinking and Analytical Acuity**. This is particularly important for the AWA. For the Issue essay, it means exploring the complexities of the issue, acknowledging nuances, and demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of the topic. It involves more than simply stating an opinion; it requires a thoughtful examination of the implications of different viewpoints. For the Argument essay, critical thinking means dissecting the logical structure of the given argument, identifying unstated assumptions, and explaining how these assumptions or flaws undermine

the argument's validity. It is about analyzing the reasoning itself, not just summarizing the argument. By consistently focusing on these four areas, you can produce essays that meet the GRE's high standards.

## The Issue Essay: From Brainstorm to Final Structure

Covers: GRE AWA Issue Essay Brainstorming · GRE AWA Issue Essay Task Overview · GRE AWA Issue Essay Format

The "Analyze an Issue" task presents you with a statement or a short paragraph that expresses an opinion on a topic of general interest. Your job is to take a position on this issue and develop a well-supported argument for your viewpoint. You must explore the complexities of the issue, providing reasons and examples to justify your stance. This task assesses your ability to think critically about an abstract issue and to communicate your ideas effectively in writing.

### Brainstorming for the Issue Essay (10-15 minutes)

Effective brainstorming is the foundation of a strong Issue essay. Do not start writing immediately. Dedicate 10 to 15 minutes to planning.

1. **Deconstruct the Prompt:** Read the issue statement carefully. Identify the key terms and the core assertion being made. What is the central debate or conflict embedded in the statement?
2. **Take a Stance:** Decide whether you largely agree, disagree, or agree with qualifications. A qualified stance (agreeing but with exceptions, or disagreeing but acknowledging some validity) often allows for a more nuanced and sophisticated argument, which can contribute to a higher score.
3. **Generate Supporting Points:** Think of two to three main reasons why your chosen stance is valid. These will become the topic sentences for your body paragraphs.
4. **Find Specific Examples:** For each supporting point, brainstorm concrete examples. These can come from history, current events, personal experience, literature, science, or hypothetical scenarios. The more specific and illustrative your examples, the stronger your argument. Avoid vague or generic examples.
5. **Consider the Counterargument:** A strong essay acknowledges and addresses opposing viewpoints. Think about what someone who holds the opposite position might say. How would you respond to or qualify that perspective? This demonstrates a thorough understanding of the issue's complexity.
6. **Outline:** Create a brief outline that includes your thesis, your main supporting points with examples, and your plan for addressing a counterargument.

### Issue Essay Format and Structure

A standard five-paragraph essay structure often works well for the Issue task, though you can expand to four or six paragraphs depending on your points.

#### 1. Introduction (1 paragraph):

- **Hook:** Start with a general statement that introduces the broad topic of the issue.
- **Context:** Briefly rephrase the issue statement in your own words to show understanding.
- **Thesis Statement:** Clearly state your position on the issue. This is your main argument.

## 2. Body Paragraph 1 (1 paragraph):

- **Topic Sentence:** Introduce your first main reason supporting your thesis.
- **Explanation:** Elaborate on this reason.
- **Specific Example:** Provide a concrete example that illustrates and strengthens this point. Explain how the example connects to your reason and thesis.

## 3. Body Paragraph 2 (1 paragraph):

- **Topic Sentence:** Introduce your second main reason.
- **Explanation:** Elaborate on this reason.
- **Specific Example:** Provide another concrete example.

## 4. Counterargument/Nuance Paragraph (1 paragraph, optional but recommended):

- Acknowledge a valid point from the opposing side or a nuance of the issue. Use phrases like "While it is true that..." or "Some might argue that..."
- **Refute or Qualify:** Explain why, despite this opposing view, your original thesis still holds true or is more compelling. This strengthens your argument by showing you have considered other perspectives.

## 5. Conclusion (1 paragraph):

- **Restate Thesis:** Rephrase your main argument in new words.
- **Summarize Main Points:** Briefly recap your primary supporting reasons.
- **Broader Implications:** Offer a final thought on the significance of the issue or the implications of your stance. Avoid introducing new information.

By following this systematic approach to brainstorming and structuring, you can ensure your Issue essay is well-organized, thoroughly supported, and demonstrates strong analytical skills.

## Effective AWA Practice

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Covers: How to Practice for the AWA Section on the GRE

Consistent and strategic practice is essential for improving your Analytical Writing Assessment score. Simply writing essays without a plan for improvement will yield limited results. Your practice should simulate test conditions as closely as possible and include a robust self-assessment component.

### Timed Practice and Prompt Selection

The most critical aspect of AWA practice is **timed writing**. Each essay task on the GRE is 30 minutes. You must learn to brainstorm, outline, write, and proofread within this strict time limit. Set a timer for 30 minutes for each essay you write. This helps you develop a sense of pacing and teaches you how to prioritize under pressure.

Use official GRE AWA prompts for your practice. ETS provides a large pool of Issue and Argument topics on its website. These prompts are exactly what you will encounter on test day, ensuring your practice is

relevant and accurate. Do not rely on unofficial prompts that may not reflect the GRE's specific requirements.

### Self-Assessment and Iteration

After writing an essay, do not just move on. The real learning happens during self-assessment.

1. **Review Against Scoring Criteria:** Refer back to the four scoring components: Content and Development, Organization and Coherence, Language and Conventions, and Critical Thinking. Evaluate your essay against each of these.
  - Did you clearly address the prompt? Is your position evident?
  - Are your points well-supported with specific examples?
  - Is the essay logically organized with clear transitions?
  - Are there errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation?
  - Did you demonstrate critical thinking by exploring complexities or analyzing flaws?
2. **Identify Weak Areas:** Be honest about where your essay falls short. Perhaps you struggled to generate specific examples, or your introduction was unclear. Maybe your transitions were weak, or you made several grammatical errors.
3. **Focus on One Area at a Time:** If you have multiple weaknesses, try to improve one or two areas in your next practice essay. For instance, if your examples were too general, focus specifically on making them concrete and detailed in your next attempt.
4. **Rewrite or Revise:** Do not be afraid to rewrite an essay or significant portions of it. This iterative process of writing, reviewing, and revising is how you build proficiency. You can also take a previously written essay and spend time refining it, focusing on improving specific aspects.

### Additional Practice Strategies

- **Typing Speed:** Since the AWA is computer-based, your typing speed is a practical factor. Practice typing regularly to ensure you can transcribe your thoughts quickly and accurately.
- **Outline Practice:** Even if you do not have time to write a full essay, practice brainstorming and outlining for various prompts. This strengthens your ability to quickly generate ideas and structure an argument.
- **Read Sample Essays:** Regularly review high-scoring sample essays from ETS. Analyze what makes them effective. How do they develop arguments? What kind of language do they use? This provides models for your own writing.
- **Seek Feedback:** If possible, ask a teacher, tutor, or a peer to review your essays. Fresh eyes can often spot errors or areas for improvement that you might miss. Constructive feedback is invaluable for growth.

By integrating these practice strategies into your study routine, you will steadily improve your analytical writing skills and increase your confidence for the GRE AWA section.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The GRE AWA consists of two 30-minute essays: "Analyze an Issue" and "Analyze an Argument."
- AWA scores range from 0 to 6, reported separately from Verbal and Quant scores.
- Strong AWA essays demonstrate clear content, logical organization, precise language, and critical thinking.
- For the Issue essay, take a clear stance and support it with specific, relevant examples.
- For the Argument essay, identify and critique the logical flaws and assumptions within the given argument.
- Timed practice using official ETS prompts is crucial for developing pacing and proficiency.
- Self-assessment against scoring criteria and focused revision are key to improving your AWA performance.

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. What are the two types of essays you must write in the GRE AWA section, and how much time is allotted for each?
2. How is the AWA section scored, and why is this score important for graduate school applications?
3. Name two of the key scoring components for AWA essays and explain what each involves.
4. What is the primary goal of the "Analyze an Issue" essay, and what should you do during the brainstorming phase for this task?
5. Why is timed practice crucial for AWA preparation, and what should you do after writing a practice essay?

## CHAPTER 10

# GRE Orientation

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This chapter provides a comprehensive introduction to the GRE General Test. You will learn about the test's current format, its unique section-adaptive scoring, and the types of questions you will encounter. Understanding this architecture is crucial for effective preparation and reducing test-day stress.

We also outline a structured eight-week study plan, designed to guide your preparation from initial diagnosis to test day. A key component of this plan involves using the essential free official practice materials provided by ETS, the test maker. Mastering the test's structure and utilizing authentic practice are fundamental steps toward achieving your target score.

## The Shorter GRE: Format and Scoring

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Covers: The Shorter GRE: Format and Scoring

The GRE General Test has undergone a significant change, now running approximately one hour and 58 minutes. This shorter duration means a more concentrated testing experience. Knowing the test's exact architecture helps you approach test day with confidence.

### Test Structure

The test always begins with Analytical Writing. After that, you will encounter two Verbal Reasoning sections and two Quantitative Reasoning sections. There is no longer an unscored experimental section.

1. **Analytical Writing:** This section consists of one 'Analyze an Issue' essay. You have 30 minutes to complete it. This section is scored on a scale of 0 to 6, in half-point increments.
2. **Verbal Reasoning:** You will complete two Verbal sections. These contain a total of 27 questions. The first section is shorter, and the second is longer.
3. **Quantitative Reasoning:** Similar to Verbal, you will complete two Quant sections. These also contain a total of 27 questions, following the same short-then-long pattern.

Verbal and Quant sections are each scored on a scale of 130 to 170, in one-point increments.

### Section-Level Adaptivity

The GRE adapts its difficulty between sections, not between individual questions. Your performance on the first Verbal section determines the difficulty and potential score range of your second Verbal section. The same principle applies to the Quantitative Reasoning sections.

This adaptivity has important practical implications:

- **High Stakes for First Sections:** Your accuracy on the first Verbal and first Quant sections is critical. Performing well on these initial sections is the only way to access the harder second sections, which are necessary for achieving top scores.

- **Freedom Within Sections:** While the test adapts between sections, you have complete freedom to move within a single section. You can skip questions, return to them later, and change your answers as needed. Use the 'mark' feature to flag questions for review, just as you would on any modern standardized test.

### Question Types at a Glance

Understanding the question types helps you prepare specific strategies for each:

- **Verbal Reasoning:** This measure includes Reading Comprehension (with both short and long passages, plus paragraph-argument questions), Text Completion (requiring you to fill one to three blanks in a sentence or passage), and Sentence Equivalence (where you select two words that give the sentence the same meaning).
- **Quantitative Reasoning:** This measure features Quantitative Comparison (comparing Quantity A and Quantity B), multiple choice questions with one correct answer, multiple choice questions with one or more correct answers, and Numeric Entry questions. An on-screen calculator is provided for calculations. It is a useful tool for arithmetic, but relying on it too heavily can be counterproductive.

### Score Reporting Policy

The GRE's ScoreSelect policy works in your favor. After you receive your scores, you decide which test dates' scores to send to programs. This means a first attempt, even if it does not meet your expectations, does not have to be reported. This policy should help reduce pressure during your initial test, allowing you to focus on performing your best without fear of a permanent mark on your record.

## Strategic Study: An Eight-Week Plan and Official Resources

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Covers: An Eight-Week Study Plan · Your Official (Free) Practice Arsenal

A structured study plan is essential for effective GRE preparation. This eight-week plan assumes approximately ten hours of study per week and aligns with the sequencing of the course material. It integrates learning strategies with the use of official practice materials.

### Eight-Week Study Plan

- **Weeks 1-2: Diagnose and Build Scaffolding**
  - Take one free official POWERPREP practice test under timed conditions. Record your section scores and your accuracy for each question type. This diagnostic test provides a baseline.
  - Watch foundational class videos covering test structure.
  - Begin vocabulary study immediately. Dedicate 15 minutes daily, every day, using spaced repetition. Vocabulary knowledge builds over time; last-minute cramming is not effective.
- **Weeks 3-4: Verbal Method**
  - Work through the Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence strategy videos. The core discipline for these question types is to predict your own word for the blank or blanks before looking at the answer choices. Then, match your prediction to the best option. Reading choices in isolation is a common trap.

- For Reading Comprehension, practice writing a brief three to five-word summary of each paragraph's *role* (not its content) as you read. This technique makes structure-based questions much easier.
- **Weeks 5-6: Quant Method**
  - Watch the quantitative strategy videos. For every practice problem, identify your chosen approach before you begin solving. Options include straight algebra, testing numbers, backsolving, or estimation. For Quantitative Comparison questions, testing 'weird' numbers (such as zero, negative numbers, or fractions) is often more effective than complex algebraic solutions.
  - Maintain an error log. Categorize each mistake into one of three types: a content gap (you did not know the concept), a method chosen badly (you picked the wrong strategy), or a careless slip (a simple calculation or reading error). More videos fix content gaps. Drills fix method issues. A slower, more careful first read of the question fixes careless slips.
- **Weeks 7-8: Integration**
  - Take two more full-length, timed practice tests. Schedule them at least four days apart and at the same time of day as your actual GRE appointment.
  - Between these practice tests, focus your drills exclusively on your two weakest question types, as identified by your error log and practice test results.
  - Write one 'Analyze an Issue' essay each week under the 30-minute time limit. Grade your essays against the official scoring rubric's public criteria, focusing on position clarity, development of ideas, organization, and language control.

### The Mindset

The GRE is a test of decision quality under time pressure. This means you must decide which questions to invest your time in, which method to use, and when to move on. Every practice session should train your decision-making skills, not just your ability to find the correct answer.

### Your Official (Free) Practice Arsenal

No third-party questions, including those in this course's videos, perfectly replicate the style of real GRE items. Therefore, it is crucial to ground your practice in official material from ETS, the test maker. The most valuable resources are free.

- **POWERPREP Online:** ETS provides two free, full-length practice tests through POWERPREP Online. These tests accurately replicate the real testing software, including the interface, on-screen calculator, and section-adaptive engine. You can find them on the ETS GRE website (an ETS account is required). Use one as your day-one diagnostic and save the second for about ten days before your actual test date. Additional POWERPREP PLUS tests are available for purchase, offering scored essays and explanations. These are beneficial for high-stakes retakes but are optional for initial preparation.
- **Other Free Official Material:**
  - Official sample questions for every question type, complete with explanations, are available on the ETS GRE pages.

- The Analytical Writing topic pools are published in full on ets.org. Every 'Analyze an Issue' prompt you might encounter on the test is listed there. Practicing with these actual prompts is both legal and highly effective.
- Score guides and percentile tables help you understand what score differences mean. Knowing that program-relevant differences are typically two to three scaled points helps you set realistic goals.

### A Rationing Plan for Official Practice

1. **Day 1:** Take POWERPREP test #1 as your diagnostic.
2. **Weeks 2-6:** Learn methods from this course and drill official sample questions by type.
3. **T-minus 10 days:** Take POWERPREP test #2 under exact test conditions.
4. **Final week:** Review your error log and essay outlines. Avoid learning any new material after two days before the test.

Remember to register for your test early to secure a time slot that aligns with your peak circadian performance. Performing at your best natural time is one of the simplest ways to boost your score.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The GRE General Test is approximately two hours long and features a section-adaptive structure, with your performance on early sections determining the difficulty of later ones.
- The test consists of Analytical Writing, two Verbal Reasoning sections, and two Quantitative Reasoning sections, with no experimental section.
- Scores for Verbal and Quant range from 130-170, while Analytical Writing is scored 0-6.
- A structured eight-week study plan, including daily vocabulary and an error log, is crucial for systematic preparation.
- Always predict your own answer before looking at choices for Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence.
- For Quant, consciously choose your problem-solving approach (algebra, testing numbers, backsolving, estimation) for each question.
- The two free POWERPREP Online tests from ETS are the most valuable practice resources; use one as a diagnostic and save the second for near test day.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. Describe the current structure and length of the GRE General Test.
2. Explain how section-level adaptivity works on the GRE and its practical consequence.
3. What is the core strategy for Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions?
4. How should a student use the two free POWERPREP Online tests?

5. What are the three categories for an error log, and what does each category indicate?

## CHAPTER 11

# Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals

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This chapter guides you through the final assessment for the GRE Complete Class. This assessment is designed to help you consolidate your learning and identify areas for further practice. It covers the core concepts and strategies taught throughout the course, from verbal reasoning techniques to quantitative problem-solving approaches.

Treat this assessment as a diagnostic tool. It offers a realistic opportunity to apply the methods you have learned under test-like conditions. Your performance will highlight your strengths and pinpoint specific areas where you can refine your understanding or strategy before tackling a full-length GRE practice test.

## The Purpose of the Final Assessment

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Covers: Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals (quiz, 6 min)

The Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals is not just a quiz; it is a critical checkpoint in your study plan. Its primary purpose is to evaluate your mastery of the foundational GRE concepts and strategies covered in this course. This includes understanding the test's structure, applying systematic approaches to Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence, efficiently reading dense passages, and choosing appropriate quantitative strategies.

Consider this assessment a mini-diagnostic test. It will help you gauge how well you have absorbed the material and whether you can apply the techniques effectively under pressure. The results will provide valuable insight into where your study efforts should be concentrated next.

## Approaching the Assessment Strategically

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Covers: Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals (quiz, 6 min)

To gain the most benefit from this assessment, approach it with a strategic mindset. Treat it as a genuine, timed section of the GRE. This means working efficiently and making decisions about when to move on from a difficult question.

Before you begin, briefly review your notes on key strategies for both Verbal and Quantitative sections. During the quiz, actively apply the methods you have learned. For Verbal, this includes predicting answers for Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence, and using active reading techniques for passages. For Quant, consider whether algebra or testing numbers is the most efficient path. Do not guess wildly; use the process of elimination to narrow down choices whenever possible.

## Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

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Covers: Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals (quiz, 6 min)

Students often make specific mistakes on practice assessments. Being aware of these can help you avoid them:

- **Rushing through questions:** Many errors occur due to misreading the question or answer choices. Take your time to understand what is being asked.
- **Getting stuck on one question:** The GRE is a timed test. If a question is taking too long, make an educated guess and move on. You can often return to it if time permits.
- **Not using process of elimination:** For multiple-choice questions, eliminating even one incorrect answer significantly increases your odds of choosing the right one.
- **Failing to check work in Quant:** Simple calculation errors are common. If time allows, quickly re-evaluate your steps or plug your answer back into the problem.
- **Ignoring answer explanations:** The learning happens in the review. Do not just look at whether you were right or wrong. Understand *why* the correct answer is correct and *why* your chosen answer was incorrect.

## Interpreting Your Results and Next Steps

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Covers: Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals (quiz, 6 min)

Your performance on this assessment provides valuable data for your continued GRE preparation. Do not simply look at your score. Instead, analyze your results to identify patterns.

Ask yourself:

- Which question types did I consistently miss? Was it Text Completion, specific Quant topics, or Reading Comprehension inference questions?
- Were my errors due to a lack of content knowledge or a failure to apply the correct strategy?
- Did I make careless mistakes, or did I genuinely not understand the concept?

Review every question, both correct and incorrect. For incorrect answers, understand the error. For correct answers, confirm you arrived at them using an efficient and reliable method. Use this analysis to create a targeted study plan. Focus on reinforcing weak areas and practicing the strategies that need more refinement. This systematic review is crucial for turning assessment results into tangible score improvements.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The Final Assessment evaluates your understanding of core GRE concepts and strategies from the course.
- Approach the assessment as a timed, diagnostic tool to identify your strengths and weaknesses.
- Actively apply learned strategies for Text Completion, Sentence Equivalence, Reading Comprehension, and Quant question types.
- Avoid common pitfalls such as rushing, getting stuck on a single question, and neglecting process of elimination.
- Thoroughly review all questions, both correct and incorrect, to understand the reasoning behind each answer.
- Use your assessment results to pinpoint specific areas for further study and refine your test-taking strategies.

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**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

*Answer these before moving on. Model answers are in the Answer Key at the back of this guide.*

1. What is the primary purpose of taking the Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals?
2. How should you approach the quiz to maximize its benefit for your GRE preparation?
3. Name two common mistakes students make on GRE practice quizzes and how to avoid them.
4. After completing the assessment, what is the most important next step for effective learning?
5. How can you differentiate between a content gap and a strategy error when reviewing your assessment results?

## REFERENCE

# Glossary

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**Active recall**

A study method involving retrieving information from memory without external cues, such as by self-testing.

**Analytical writing**

The first section of the GRE, consisting of one 'Analyze an Issue' essay, scored from 0 to 6.

**Analytical writing assessment (awa)**

The essay section of the GRE, comprising an "Analyze an Issue" task and an "Analyze an Argument" task.

**Analyze an argument**

An AWA task requiring you to critique the logical soundness of a given argument, identifying its flaws and assumptions.

**Analyze an issue**

An AWA task requiring you to present your perspective on a given statement, supporting it with reasons and examples.

**Assumption**

An unstated premise or belief that must be true for an argument's conclusion to logically follow from its stated premises.

**Backsolving**

A problem-solving strategy where you test the given numerical answer choices to find the one that satisfies the problem's conditions.

**Column a**

The first quantity presented in a Quantitative Comparison problem, to be compared with Column B.

**Column b**

The second quantity presented in a Quantitative Comparison problem, to be compared with Column A.

**Composite number**

A natural number greater than 1 that is not prime, meaning it has at least one divisor other than 1 and itself.

**Conclusion**

The main claim or point that an argument seeks to establish, supported by premises.

**Context clues**

Hints or information within a sentence or passage that help determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word or the logical flow of an argument.

**Counterargument**

An opposing viewpoint or objection that you acknowledge and then refute or qualify to strengthen your own argument.

**Diagnostic assessment**

A test or quiz designed to identify a student's current level of knowledge, skills, and areas requiring improvement, rather than to assign a grade.

**Distractors**

Incorrect answer choices designed to mislead test takers, often by appearing plausible or being partial synonyms that do not fit the context.

**Divisibility**

The property of one integer being exactly divisible by another without a remainder.

**Ets (educational testing service)**

The non-profit organization that designs and administers the GRE General Test.

**Even number**

An integer that is divisible by 2.

**Gre (graduate record examinations)**

A standardized test widely required for admission to graduate programs and business schools, assessing verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing abilities.

**Greatest common factor (gcf)**

The largest positive integer that divides exactly into two or more integers.

**Integer**

A whole number (positive, negative, or zero) that is not a fraction or decimal.

**Least common multiple (lcm)**

The smallest positive integer that is a multiple of two or more integers.

**Logical fallacy**

A flaw in reasoning that weakens an argument's validity, often identified in the Analyze an Argument task.

**Low-frequency topics**

Subjects or question types that appear rarely on a standardized test, requiring a strategic approach to study time.

**Multiple**

A number that can be divided by another number a certain number of times without a remainder.

**Negative number**

Any number less than zero.

**Order of operations**

A set of rules that dictate the sequence in which mathematical operations should be performed (e.g., Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication and Division, Addition and Subtraction).

**Parallelogram height**

The perpendicular distance between the base of a parallelogram and its opposite side, crucial for calculating its area.

**Pemdas**

An acronym used to remember the order of operations: Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction.

**Percent decrease**

The relative decrease in a quantity, calculated as  $(\text{change} / \text{original value}) * 100\%$ .

**Percent increase**

The relative increase in a quantity, calculated as  $(\text{change} / \text{original value}) * 100\%$ .

**Percentage**

A way to express a number as a fraction of 100, denoted by the percent sign (%).

**Percentile**

A score indicating the percentage of test takers who scored below a given score, providing context to raw scores.

**Positive number**

Any number greater than zero.

**Powerprep online**

Official, free practice tests provided by ETS that simulate the actual GRE testing experience, including its interface and section-adaptive algorithm.

**Premise**

A statement or piece of evidence offered as a reason to support a conclusion in an argument.

**Prime factor**

A prime number that divides an integer exactly, without leaving a remainder.

**Prime factorization**

The process of expressing a composite number as a product of its prime factors.

**Prime number**

A natural number greater than 1 that has no positive divisors other than 1 and itself.

**Process of elimination**

A strategy for multiple-choice questions where you systematically rule out incorrect answer choices, increasing the probability of selecting the correct one.

**Quant strategies**

Different approaches to solving quantitative problems, such as using algebra, testing numbers, or picking numbers, depending on the question type.

**Quantitative comparison**

A GRE question type that asks you to compare two quantities (Quantity A and Quantity B) and determine their relationship.

**Quantitative reasoning**

One of the two scored sections of the GRE, assessing problem solving and data interpretation skills.

**Scoreselect policy**

A GRE policy that allows test takers to choose which scores from multiple test dates to send to institutions after viewing their results.

**Scoring components**

The key criteria used to evaluate AWA essays, including content development, organization, language conventions, and critical thinking.

**Section-adaptive**

A test format where a test taker's performance on an earlier section determines the difficulty level of a subsequent section.

**Section-adaptive structure**

The GRE's design where the difficulty of the second section of a measure (Verbal or Quant) is adjusted based on performance in the first section of that same measure.

**Section-adaptive test**

A test design where the difficulty of subsequent sections adjusts based on a test-taker's performance in preceding sections.

**Section-level adaptivity**

The GRE's scoring mechanism where performance on the first section of a measure (Verbal or Quant) determines the difficulty and potential score range of the second section for that same measure.

**Sentence equivalence**

A Verbal Reasoning question type where you select two words from six choices that can both complete a sentence meaningfully and produce sentences with similar meanings.

**Sentence equivalence (se)**

A GRE Verbal Reasoning question type where you select two words that, when inserted into a blank, produce sentences with equivalent meanings.

**Spaced repetition**

A learning technique where review of material is repeated at increasing intervals to improve long-term memory retention.

**Successive percentage change**

Multiple percentage changes applied one after another to an original value, where each subsequent change is based on the new, adjusted value.

**Synonyms**

Words that have the same or very similar meanings. In Sentence Equivalence, they must be synonymous in the context of the given sentence.

**Text completion**

A Verbal Reasoning question type where you fill in one, two, or three blanks in a sentence or short passage using provided word choices.

**Text completion (tc)**

A GRE Verbal Reasoning question type where you fill one, two, or three blanks in a passage with the best-fitting words to create a coherent text.

**Thesis statement**

The central argument or main point of your essay, typically stated in the introduction.

**Variable**

A symbol, often a letter like K, used to represent an unknown quantity or value in a mathematical expression or equation.

**Verbal reasoning**

One of the two scored sections of the GRE, assessing reading comprehension, text completion, and sentence equivalence skills.

**Vocabulary**

The body of words used by a person or group. A strong vocabulary is crucial for understanding and answering GRE Verbal Reasoning questions.

## REFERENCE

# Answer Key

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## Chapter 1: Test Strategies and Mindset

### 1. How does the GRE's section-adaptive structure work, and what does it imply for test-takers?

The GRE is section-adaptive, meaning your performance on the first Verbal Reasoning section determines the difficulty of your second Verbal section, and similarly for Quantitative Reasoning. This implies that if you perform well on the first section, the second will be harder, but it also means you are performing at a higher level. Test takers should not be discouraged if a later section feels more challenging.

### 2. What does it mean for a GRE score to be "good," and how should you determine your target score?

A "good" GRE score is relative and depends entirely on the specific graduate programs and schools you are applying to. To determine your target score, research the average GRE scores of admitted students for your desired programs. Aim for a score at or above these averages to enhance your application's competitiveness.

### 3. Describe three essential study tips for effective GRE preparation.

Three essential study tips include being consistent with your study schedule, even for short daily sessions. You should also actively target your weaknesses by dedicating more time to challenging topics identified through practice. Finally, thoroughly review all your mistakes to understand the underlying reasons for errors, rather than just noting the correct answer.

### 4. Why is it advisable to skip difficult questions on the GRE, and what should you do instead?

It is advisable to skip difficult questions to manage time effectively, as all questions carry equal weight. There is no penalty for wrong answers, so guessing is always beneficial. Instead of getting stuck, make a quick assessment, mark challenging questions, move on to easier ones, and return to the marked questions if time permits.

### 5. Explain the importance of percentiles in interpreting your GRE score.

Percentiles provide crucial context to your raw GRE score by showing how your performance compares to other test takers. A percentile indicates the percentage of test takers who scored below you. This helps you understand your standing relative to the broader applicant pool, which is often more informative than the raw score alone.

### 6. What are two critical actions to take the day before and the morning of your GRE test?

The day before the test, ensure you get a full night's sleep and avoid intense last-minute studying. On the morning of the test, eat a balanced, familiar meal and arrive early at the test center with all required identification. These actions help ensure you are well-rested, nourished, and calm, ready to focus on the exam.

## Chapter 2: Test Strategies and Mindset

**1. Describe two effective Verbal Reasoning study tips mentioned in this chapter and explain how they enhance learning.**

Two effective Verbal Reasoning study tips are active recall and spaced repetition. Active recall enhances learning by forcing you to retrieve information from memory, strengthening neural connections. Spaced repetition improves long-term retention by revisiting material at optimal, increasing intervals, preventing you from forgetting it.

**2. What are two primary reasons the GRE is considered a challenging exam?**

The GRE is challenging due to its section-adaptive nature, where performance on early sections impacts later difficulty. It also features significant time pressure, demanding efficient problem-solving under strict limits. Also, the test uses advanced vocabulary and dense reading passages.

**3. How should a student approach studying low-frequency math topics for the GRE?**

Students should prioritize mastering high-frequency math topics first. For low-frequency topics, aim for a conceptual understanding and familiarity with basic formulas rather than exhaustive mastery. This ensures you have a fundamental approach if such a question appears without over-allocating study time.

**4. A rectangle has an area of 48 square units. If a parallelogram with a base of 8 units has the same area, what is its height?**

Since the parallelogram has the same area as the rectangle, its area is 48 square units. Using the formula  $\text{Area} = \text{base} * \text{height}$ , we have  $48 = 8 * \text{height}$ . Dividing 48 by 8, the height of the parallelogram is 6 units.

**5. Name two official free GRE resources provided by ETS and explain their utility.**

Two official free GRE resources from ETS are PowerPrep Online and the ETS website. PowerPrep Online offers two full-length practice tests that simulate the actual GRE, providing valuable diagnostic and practice experience. The ETS website provides detailed information about the test structure, registration, and additional free practice questions directly from the test maker.

**6. Outline two key differences between the GRE and the SAT.**

One key difference is their purpose: the GRE is for graduate school admissions, while the SAT is for undergraduate college admissions. Another difference is their adaptive nature; the GRE is section-adaptive, adjusting difficulty based on performance, whereas the SAT has a fixed difficulty per section.

## Chapter 3: Verbal Reasoning Strategies: Part 1

**1. What are the three core components of a GRE argument, and why is identifying them important?**

The three core components are premises, conclusion, and unstated assumptions. Identifying premises helps you understand the evidence. The conclusion is the main point. Assumptions are crucial because they are unstated beliefs that must be true for the argument to hold, and they are often targeted in strengthen or weaken questions.

## **2. Explain the key difference between Sentence Equivalence and Text Completion questions.**

Sentence Equivalence questions require you to select two words from six choices that create equivalent sentences when placed in a single blank. Text Completion questions require you to select one best word for each blank (one, two, or three blanks) from three choices per blank, aiming for overall passage coherence.

## **3. When tackling a Text Completion question, what is the first step you should take, and why?**

The first step is to read the entire passage with the blanks to grasp its overall meaning and tone. This helps you understand the context without being distracted by individual answer choices, allowing you to form an initial prediction for the missing words based on the passage's flow.

## **4. How do contrast words like 'however' or 'despite' assist you in solving Verbal Reasoning questions?**

Contrast words are vital context clues. They signal a shift in meaning or an opposing idea within a sentence or passage. Recognizing them helps you predict whether a blank requires a word that supports or contradicts a previously stated idea, guiding your selection of appropriate vocabulary.

## **5. Although 'solve for K' problems are quantitative, how do verbal reasoning skills still play a role?**

Even in quantitative problems like 'solve for K', verbal reasoning skills are essential for the initial interpretation of the problem. You must accurately read and understand the word problem to correctly translate its language into the appropriate mathematical equations or expressions before you can begin the algebraic solution process.

## **Chapter 4: Mastering GRE Sentence Equivalence**

### **1. What are the two main requirements for correctly answering a Sentence Equivalence question?**

For a Sentence Equivalence question to be answered correctly, you must select two words. Both of these words must independently make sense when placed in the blank. Also, the two selected words must be synonyms of each other within the specific context of the sentence.

### **2. Why is it important to predict a word for the blank before looking at the answer choices?**

Predicting a word for the blank helps you actively engage with the sentence's meaning and context. This creates a mental filter, allowing you to evaluate answer choices against your understanding rather than being swayed by misleading options. It reduces the chance of selecting words that sound good but do not fit the sentence's precise requirements.

### **3. How should you approach answer choices that are synonyms but do not fit the sentence context?**

If a pair of words are synonyms but do not fit the sentence's context, you should eliminate them. The context of the sentence is paramount. Words must not only be synonyms but also make logical and grammatical sense within the specific sentence provided. General synonymy is not enough.

**4. Describe a common mistake students make when selecting words for Sentence Equivalence.**

A common mistake is selecting two words that fit the blank individually but are not synonyms of each other. Another error is choosing a pair of words that are general synonyms but whose specific meanings do not align with the context of the sentence. Both conditions, fit and synonymy, must be met.

**5. What is the final step to verify your answer in a Sentence Equivalence question?**

The final step is to reread the sentence with each of your two chosen words inserted into the blank. Ensure that both resulting sentences convey the same meaning. This verification confirms that the words are indeed equivalent in context and that your selection is accurate.

## **Chapter 5: Quantitative Reasoning Fundamentals**

**1. What are the divisibility rules for 3 and 9, and why are they similar?**

A number is divisible by 3 if the sum of its digits is divisible by 3. Similarly, a number is divisible by 9 if the sum of its digits is divisible by 9. They are similar because 9 is a multiple of 3, meaning any number divisible by 9 must also be divisible by 3.

**2. Describe the conditions under which backsolving is an effective strategy.**

Backsolving is effective for multiple-choice questions where the answer choices are specific numerical values. The problem should allow you to plug these values back into the question statement to check if they satisfy all given conditions. It helps avoid complex algebraic setups.

**3. When using backsolving, which answer choice is generally a good starting point and why?**

It is generally effective to start with answer choice B or D (if the choices are sorted numerically). This is because starting with a middle value allows you to quickly determine if the correct answer is higher or lower, potentially eliminating multiple choices with a single test.

**4. What are the four possible answer choices in a Quantitative Comparison question, and what does choice D signify?**

The four choices are: (A) Quantity A is greater, (B) Quantity B is greater, (C) The two quantities are equal, and (D) The relationship cannot be determined from the information given. Choice D signifies that the relationship between Quantity A and Quantity B varies depending on the specific values chosen for any variables involved.

**5. Explain a key strategy for Quantitative Comparison questions involving variables.**

A key strategy for Quantitative Comparison questions with variables is to test different types of numbers. Try positive integers, negative integers, zero, and fractions between 0 and 1. If different valid inputs lead to different relationships between Quantity A and Quantity B, then the answer is D.

## **Chapter 6: Quantitative Reasoning: Number Properties and Calculator Use**

**1. How can you quickly determine if a number is divisible by 6?**

A number is divisible by 6 if it is divisible by both 2 and 3. This means its last digit must be even, and

the sum of its digits must be divisible by 3. For example, 432 is divisible by 2 (last digit 2 is even) and by 3 ( $4+3+2=9$ , which is divisible by 3), so 432 is divisible by 6.

**2. What is prime factorization, and why is it useful on the GRE?**

Prime factorization is breaking down a composite number into its prime number components. It is useful for finding the Greatest Common Factor (GCF) and Least Common Multiple (LCM) of numbers, as well as determining the total number of factors a number has. This skill simplifies complex number theory problems.

**3. Find the prime factorization of 90.**

To find the prime factorization of 90, we can use a factor tree. 90 can be broken down into  $2 * 45$ . Then, 45 can be broken down into  $3 * 15$ , and 15 into  $3 * 5$ . So, the prime factorization of 90 is  $2 * 3 * 3 * 5$ , or  $2 * 3^2 * 5$ .

**4. When should you generally avoid using the GRE's on-screen calculator?**

You should avoid using the calculator for simple arithmetic that can be done mentally, for algebraic simplification where terms can be canceled, or when estimation is sufficient to solve the problem. Relying too much on the calculator for basic operations can waste time and lead to input errors.

**5. Explain the importance of parentheses when using the GRE calculator.**

Parentheses are crucial for ensuring the calculator performs operations in the correct order, according to the order of operations (PEMDAS/BODMAS). Without parentheses, the calculator might prioritize multiplication/division over addition/subtraction, leading to an incorrect result. For example,  $(2+3)4$  is 20, but  $2+34$  is 14.

## **Chapter 7: Quantitative Reasoning: Percentages and Quantitative Comparison**

**1. A jacket originally priced at \$120 is on sale for 25% off. What is the sale price of the jacket?**

To find the sale price, calculate 25% of \$120, which is  $0.25 * 120 = \$30$ . Then subtract this discount from the original price:  $120 - 30 = \$90$ . The sale price is \$90.

**2. If a quantity increases by 20% and then decreases by 20%, will the final quantity be greater than, less than, or equal to the original quantity? Explain.**

The final quantity will be less than the original quantity. For example, if the original quantity is 100, a 20% increase makes it 120. A 20% decrease from 120 is  $0.20 * 120 = 24$ , so the new quantity is  $120 - 24 = 96$ . This demonstrates that successive percentage changes are not additive and do not cancel each other out.

**3. In a Quantitative Comparison problem, if you test  $x = 1$  and find Column A > Column B, and then test  $x = -1$  and find Column B > Column A, what is the correct answer choice?**

The correct answer choice is (D) The relationship cannot be determined. This is because you have found two different scenarios where the relationship between Column A and Column B changes, meaning there is no single, consistent relationship.

**4. Describe two key strategies for solving Quantitative Comparison problems effectively.**

Two key strategies are simplifying both columns and performing identical operations. Simplifying

involves reducing expressions to their simplest forms. Performing identical operations means adding, subtracting, multiplying, or dividing both columns by the same non-zero value, which helps maintain the relationship while making the comparison easier.

**5. What types of numbers should you specifically test when a Quantitative Comparison problem involves variables?**

When variables are present, you should test a variety of numbers to fully understand the relationship. These include positive integers, negative integers, zero, and fractions (both between 0 and 1, and negative fractions). This helps reveal if the relationship changes under different conditions.

## **Chapter 8: Quantitative Reasoning: Number Properties and Order of Operations**

**1. Is zero considered a positive number, a negative number, or neither?**

Zero is considered neither a positive nor a negative number. It acts as the boundary between positive and negative numbers on the number line.

**2. Is zero an even number, an odd number, or neither? Explain your reasoning.**

Zero is an even number. An even number is any integer divisible by 2 without a remainder. When 0 is divided by 2, the result is 0, which is an integer.

**3. What does PEMDAS stand for, and why is the order of 'Multiplication and Division' important to remember?**

PEMDAS stands for Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction. It is important to remember that Multiplication and Division have equal precedence and must be performed from left to right, not simply all multiplication then all division.

**4. Evaluate the expression:  $18 - 6 / 2 + 3 * (4 - 1)$**

First, solve inside parentheses:  $(4 - 1) = 3$ . The expression becomes  $18 - 6 / 2 + 3 * 3$ . Next, perform division and multiplication from left to right:  $6 / 2 = 3$  and  $3 * 3 = 9$ . The expression is now  $18 - 3 + 9$ . Finally, perform addition and subtraction from left to right:  $18 - 3 = 15$ , then  $15 + 9 = 24$ . The answer is 24.

**5. Explain the common mistake students make regarding the order of multiplication and division.**

A common mistake is to perform all multiplication operations before any division operations, regardless of their order in the expression. The correct approach is to perform multiplication and division operations as they appear from left to right, as they have equal precedence.

## **Chapter 9: Analytical Writing**

**1. What are the two types of essays you must write in the GRE AWA section, and how much time is allotted for each?**

The two essay types are "Analyze an Issue" and "Analyze an Argument." You are allotted 30 minutes for each essay, totaling 60 minutes for the AWA section.

**2. How is the AWA section scored, and why is this score important for graduate school applications?**

The AWA section is scored on a scale of 0 to 6, in half-point increments, and is reported separately from your Verbal and Quant scores. This score is important because many graduate programs use it to assess a candidate's critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication skills.

**3. Name two of the key scoring components for AWA essays and explain what each involves.**

Two key scoring components are Content and Development, and Organization and Coherence. Content and Development refers to how well you address the task, present a clear perspective, and support your claims with relevant reasons and examples. Organization and Coherence refers to the logical structure of your essay, with ideas flowing smoothly and clear transitions between paragraphs.

**4. What is the primary goal of the "Analyze an Issue" essay, and what should you do during the brainstorming phase for this task?**

The primary goal of the "Analyze an Issue" essay is to present your position on a given statement and support it with a well-reasoned argument, exploring the issue's complexities. During brainstorming, you should deconstruct the prompt, take a clear stance, generate two to three supporting points with specific examples, and consider a counterargument.

**5. Why is timed practice crucial for AWA preparation, and what should you do after writing a practice essay?**

Timed practice is crucial because it helps you develop pacing and learn to manage your time effectively under pressure, ensuring you can complete all stages of essay writing within the 30-minute limit. After writing a practice essay, you should self-assess it against the scoring criteria, identify weak areas, and then revise or rewrite to improve specific aspects.

## **Chapter 10: GRE Orientation**

**1. Describe the current structure and length of the GRE General Test.**

The GRE General Test now runs for approximately one hour and 58 minutes. It consists of one Analytical Writing essay, followed by two Verbal Reasoning sections and two Quantitative Reasoning sections. There are no experimental sections.

**2. Explain how section-level adaptivity works on the GRE and its practical consequence.**

Section-level adaptivity means your performance on the first Verbal section determines the difficulty of your second Verbal section, and similarly for Quant. A key practical consequence is that performing well on the first section of each measure is crucial, as it is the only way to access the harder questions necessary for top scores.

**3. What is the core strategy for Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions?**

The core strategy is to predict your own word or words for the blank(s) before you look at the answer choices. This helps you avoid traps set by attractive but incorrect options. Then, you match your prediction to the best available choice.

**4. How should a student use the two free POWERPREP Online tests?**

A student should use the first POWERPREP test as a diagnostic on Day 1 of their study plan to establish a baseline. The second POWERPREP test should be saved for approximately ten days before the actual test date, taken under exact test conditions, to simulate the real experience.

**5. What are the three categories for an error log, and what does each category indicate?**

The three categories are content gap, method chosen badly, and careless slip. A content gap indicates a lack of knowledge in a specific area. A method chosen badly means an incorrect strategy was applied. A careless slip points to an error in calculation or reading the question.

**Chapter 11: Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals**

**1. What is the primary purpose of taking the Final Assessment: GRE Fundamentals?**

The primary purpose is to diagnose your current understanding of the GRE fundamentals and strategies taught in the course. It helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses across Verbal and Quantitative reasoning, guiding your future study efforts.

**2. How should you approach the quiz to maximize its benefit for your GRE preparation?**

You should approach the quiz as a timed, mini-GRE section. Actively apply the strategies learned for each question type. This includes predicting answers, using process of elimination, and managing your time effectively, just as you would on the actual test.

**3. Name two common mistakes students make on GRE practice quizzes and how to avoid them.**

Two common mistakes are rushing through questions and getting stuck on one difficult problem. To avoid rushing, take time to carefully read each question and all answer choices. To avoid getting stuck, practice making an educated guess and moving on, returning to the question later if time permits.

**4. After completing the assessment, what is the most important next step for effective learning?**

The most important next step is to thoroughly review all questions, both correct and incorrect. Analyze why you got answers right or wrong. This helps distinguish between content gaps, strategic errors, or careless mistakes, informing your targeted study plan.

**5. How can you differentiate between a content gap and a strategy error when reviewing your assessment results?**

A content gap means you lacked the necessary knowledge to solve the problem, such as a math formula or vocabulary word. A strategy error means you knew the content but failed to apply the most efficient or correct method to solve the problem, perhaps by using algebra when testing numbers would have been faster.

## CLOSING

## Where to Go Next

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Upon completing the "GRE Complete Class," your next step is to consolidate the skills you have learned through consistent practice. The GRE is a test of both knowledge and endurance. Regular practice with official GRE materials will help you apply strategies under timed conditions.

Focus on identifying your remaining areas of weakness. Review the relevant modules and lessons in this course. Work through additional practice problems, paying close attention to question types where you consistently struggle. Analyzing your mistakes is a powerful way to improve.

Consider taking full-length practice tests to simulate the actual exam experience. This will help you manage your time effectively and build stamina. Continue to refine your strategies for each section, ensuring you are prepared for the adaptive nature of the GRE.



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