



GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATIONS®

Introducing the GRE® Revised General Test:  
Overview of the Paper-based (including  
alternate formats) GRE® revised General Test



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# Introducing the GRE® Revised General Test:

## Overview of the Paper-based (including alternate formats) GRE® revised General Test

### Information for screenreader users:

This document has been created to be accessible to individuals who use screen readers. You may wish to consult the manual or help system for your screen reader to learn how best to take advantage of the features implemented in this document. In particular, numerous hyperlinks have been added to assist in moving easily between explanations of questions and the parts of the question referenced by the explanation. Please consult the separate document, GRE Screen Reader Instructions.doc, for additional important details.

The revised General Test measures verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and analytical writing skills, skills that have been identified as critical for success in graduate and business school.

This publication provides a comprehensive overview of each measure of the test to help you get ready for test day. It is designed to help you:

- understand what is being tested
- gain familiarity with the various question types
- review test-taking strategies
- become familiar with the calculator that will be distributed on test day
- review scored Analytical Writing responses and reader commentary
- understand scoring
- practice taking the test

If you are planning to take the computer-based GRE® revised General Test, please visit <http://www.ets.org/gre/revised/prepare> for test preparation materials for the computer-based test. If you have a disability and need accommodations, visit <http://www.ets.org/gre/disabilities> or contact E T S Disability Services for test preparation materials in accessible formats. E T S Disability Services can be reached Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. New York time, at 1-609-771-7780, 1-866-387-8602 (toll-free for test-takers in the United States, U.S. Territories, and Canada), or via e-mail at [stasds@ets.org](mailto:stasds@ets.org).

## ***Test Structure***

The paper-based GRE revised General Test contains two Analytical Writing tasks, two Verbal Reasoning sections, and two Quantitative Reasoning sections.

The total standard testing time is approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes. All references to timing and breaks in this document assume standard testing conditions. Testing accommodations approved by Educational Testing Service may include additional testing time and/or additional break time. The directions at the beginning of each section specify the total number of questions in the section and the standard time allowed for the section. Analytical Writing tasks are always presented first.

### **Typical Paper-based GRE revised General Test**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Number of Questions</b>	<b>Standard Time</b>
Analytical Writing	1 Analyze an Issue task and 1 Analyze an Argument task	30 minutes per task
Verbal Reasoning (2 sections)	25 questions per section	35 minutes per section
Quantitative Reasoning (2 sections)	25 questions per section	40 minutes per section

Unlike the previous paper-based GRE General Test and the GRE Subject Tests, which use separate answer sheets, the paper-based GRE revised General Test is self-

contained: all responses for the Analytical Writing tasks and the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections must be entered in the test book itself.

## *Preparing for the GRE revised General Test*

Preparation for the test will depend on the amount of time you have available and your personal preferences for how to prepare. At a minimum, before you take the paper-based GRE revised General Test, you should know what to expect from the test, including the administrative procedures, types of questions and directions, number of questions and amount of time for each section.

The administrative procedures include registration and appointment scheduling, date, time, test center location, cost, score-reporting procedures, and availability of alternative testing arrangements. You can find out about the administrative procedures for the revised General Test in the [GRE Information and Registration Bulletin](#). Information is also available online at <http://www.ets.org/gre> or by contacting ETS at 1-609-771-7670 or 1-866-473-4373 (toll-free for test-takers in the U.S., American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada). Test takers seeking accommodations should contact E T S Disability Services. Contact information is at the beginning of this document. Information for those requesting disability accommodations is also available at <http://www.ets.org/gre/disabilities>.

Before taking the practice revised General Test, it is important to become familiar with the content of each of the measures. In this publication, you will find information specific to each measure of the test. You can use this information to understand the type of material on which you will be tested and the question types within each measure. Determine which strategies work best for you. Remember—you can do very well on the test without answering every question in each section correctly.

## *Test-taking Strategies*

### Analytical Writing Measure

Everyone—even the most practiced and confident of writers—should spend some time preparing for the Analytical Writing measure before arriving at the test center. It is important to understand the skills measured and how the tasks are scored. It is also useful to review the scoring guides, sample topics, scored sample essay responses, and reader commentary for each task.

The tasks in the Analytical Writing measure relate to a broad range of subjects—from the fine arts and humanities to the social and physical sciences—but no task requires specific content knowledge. In fact, each task has been tested by actual GRE test takers to ensure that it possesses several important characteristics, including the following:

- GRE test takers, regardless of their field of study or special interests, understood the task and could easily respond to it.
- The task elicited the kinds of complex thinking and persuasive writing that university faculty consider important for success in graduate school.
- The responses were varied in content and in the way the writers developed their ideas.

To help you prepare for the Analytical Writing measure, the GRE Program has published the entire pool of tasks from which your test tasks will be selected. You might find it helpful to review the Issue and Argument pools. You can view the published pools at <http://www.ets.org/gre/revised/prepare>.

Before taking the Analytical Writing measure, review the strategies, sample topics, essay responses, and reader commentary for each task contained in this document. Also, review the scoring guides for each task. This will give you a deeper understanding of how readers evaluate essays and the elements they're looking for in an essay.

In the paper-based revised General Test, the topics in the Analytical Writing measure will be presented in the test book, and you will handwrite your essay responses in the test book in the space provided. (Different response modes, such as the use of a scribe, may be approved as accommodations.)

It is important to budget your time. Within the 30-minute time limit for the Issue task, you will need to allow sufficient time to consider the issue and the specific instructions, plan a response, and compose your essay. Within the 30-minute time limit for the Argument task, you will need to allow sufficient time to consider the argument and the specific instructions, plan a response, and compose your essay. Although the GRE readers who score your essays understand the time constraints under which you write and will consider your response a first draft, you still want it to

be the best possible example of your writing that you can produce under the testing conditions.

Save a few minutes at the end of each timed task to check for obvious errors. Although an occasional spelling or grammatical error will not affect your score, severe and persistent errors will detract from the overall effectiveness of your writing and lower your score accordingly.

During the actual administration of the revised General Test, you may work only on the particular writing task the test center supervisor designates, and only for the time allowed. You may not go back to an earlier section of the test after the supervisor announces, “Please stop work” for that task. The supervisor is authorized to dismiss you from the center for doing so.

Following the second Analytical Writing section, you will have an opportunity to take a 10-minute break.

### **Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning Measures**

The questions in the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning measures have a variety of formats. Some require you to select a single answer choice; others require you to select one or more answer choices, and yet others require you to enter a numeric answer. Make sure when answering a question that you understand what response is required. Complete instructions for answering each question type are included in the practice test after the two Analytical Writing tasks.

When taking a Verbal Reasoning or Quantitative Reasoning section, you are free, within that section, to skip questions that you might have difficulty answering and come back to them later during the time provided to work on that section. Also during that time, you may change the answer to any question in that section by erasing it completely and filling in an alternative answer. Be careful not to leave any stray marks in the answer area, as they may be interpreted as incorrect responses. You can, however, safely make notes or perform calculations on other parts of the page. No additional scratch paper will be provided, except as an approved accommodation.

Your Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores will be determined by the number of questions for which you select or provide the best answer. Questions for which you mark no answer or more or fewer than the requested number of answers are

not counted in the scoring. Nothing is subtracted from a score if you answer a question incorrectly. Therefore, to maximize your scores on the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning measures of the paper-based test, it is best to answer every question.

Work as rapidly as you can without being careless. Since no question carries greater weight than any other, do not waste time pondering individual questions you find extremely difficult or unfamiliar.

You may want to go through a section rapidly at first, stopping only to answer those questions you can answer with certainty. Then go back and answer the questions that require greater thought, concluding with the difficult questions if you have time.

During the actual administration of the revised General Test, you may work only on the section the test center supervisor designates and only for the time allowed. You may not go back to an earlier section of the test after the supervisor announces, “Please stop work” for that section. The supervisor is authorized to dismiss you from the center for doing so. All answers must be recorded in the test book.

## *Scoring and Score Reporting*

### **Analytical Writing Measure**

For the Analytical Writing measure, each essay receives a score from two readers using a six-point holistic scale. In holistic scoring, readers are trained to assign scores based on the overall quality of an essay in response to the assigned task. If the two scores differ by more than one point on the scale, the discrepancy is adjudicated by a third GRE reader.

Otherwise, the two scores on each essay are averaged. The final scores on the two essays are then averaged and rounded up to the nearest half-point interval. A single score is reported for the Analytical Writing measure.

The primary emphasis in scoring the Analytical Writing measure is on your critical thinking and analytical writing skills rather than on grammar and mechanics. Scoring guides for the Issue and Argument prompts are included in the separate document, “Overview of the Analytical Writing Measure,” available in accessible formats at <http://www.ets.org/gre/disabilities> or through E T S Disability Services. The scoring guide is also available at <http://www.ets.org/gre/revised/scoreguides>.

### **Independent Intellectual Activity**

During the scoring process for the GRE revised General Test, your essay responses on the Analytical Writing measure will be reviewed by E T S essay-similarity-detection software and by experienced raters. In light of the high value placed on independent intellectual activity within graduate schools and universities, E T S reserves the right to cancel the scores of any test taker when there is substantial evidence that an essay response includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- text that is substantially similar to that found in one or more other test essay responses
- quoting or paraphrasing, without attribution, a language that appears in published or unpublished sources
- unacknowledged use of work that has been produced through collaboration with others without citation of the contribution of others
- essays that are submitted as work of the examinee when the words have, in fact, been borrowed from elsewhere or prepared by another person

When one or more of the above discrepancies occurs, E T S scoring guidelines indicate that your essay text does not reflect the independent intellectual activity this test seeks to measure. Therefore, E T S must cancel the Analytical Writing score as invalid and cannot report the GRE General Test scores of which the Analytical Writing score is an indispensable part.

### **Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning Measures**

Scoring of the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning measures is essentially a two-step process. First, a raw score is computed for each measure. The raw score for



each measure is the number of questions for which the best answer was given in the two sections for that measure.

The Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning raw scores are then converted to scaled scores through a process known as equating. The equating process accounts for minor variations in difficulty among the different test editions. Thus, a given scaled score for a particular measure reflects the same level of performance regardless of which edition of the test that was taken.

## **Score Reporting**

The scores for the GRE revised General Test include:

- a Verbal Reasoning score reported on a new 130–170 score scale, in one-point increments
- a Quantitative Reasoning score reported on a new 130–170 score scale, in one-point increments
- an Analytical Writing score reported on a 0–6 score scale, in half-point increments

If no questions are answered for a specific measure (e.g., Verbal Reasoning), then you will receive a No Score (NS) for that measure.

Descriptions of the analytical writing abilities characteristic of particular score levels are available in the last section, entitled “Score Level Descriptors,” of “Overview of the Analytical Writing Measure.”

## **Score-Reporting Timeframes**

Scores on the paper-based GRE revised General Test are reported approximately six weeks after the test date. For specific information on score reporting dates for paper-based administrations, visit <http://www.ets.org/gre/revised/scoredates>.

Score reporting is cumulative. Scores are reportable for five testing years following the testing year in which you test. All scores earned during this time will be reported to the institutions you designate.