

GRE overview with question examples

OVERVIEW/GENERAL INFORMATION	
Test structure	The GRE allows you to navigate entire sections, skipping and returning to questions and/or changing responses as you need by using a new "mark and review" feature. Performance on one section may affect the questions you see on a subsequent section.
Navigation	Questions can be skipped and returned to at any point within each section
Retaking the test	You can retake the test every 60 days

VERBAL	
Structure	2 sections, 30 minutes each, 20 questions/section
Subject Matter	There is significant focus on "high-level cognitive thinking," which translates to critical reading.
3 Question Types:	
Reading Comprehension	<p>Multiple-choice Questions—Select One Answer Choice: These are the traditional multiple-choice questions with five answer choices of which you must select one.</p> <p>Multiple-choice Questions—Select One or More Answer Choices: These provide three answer choices and ask you to select all that are correct; one, two, or all three of the answer choices may be correct. To gain credit for these questions, you must select all the correct answers, and only those; there is no credit for partially correct answers.</p> <p>Select-in-Passage: The question asks you to click on the sentence in the passage that meets a certain description. To answer the question, you choose one of the sentences and click on it; clicking anywhere on a sentence will highlight it.</p>

Reading
Comprehension
(continued)

EXAMPLE

“Reviving the practice of using elements of popular music in classical composition, an approach that had been in hibernation in the United States during the 1960s, composer Philip Glass (born 1937) embraced the ethos of popular music without imitating it. Glass based two symphonies on music by rock musicians David Bowie and Brian Eno, but the symphonies' sound is distinctively his. Popular elements do not appear out of place in Glass's classical music, which from its early days has shared certain harmonies and rhythms with rock music. Yet this use of popular elements has not made Glass a composer of popular music. His music is not a version of popular music packaged to attract classical listeners; it is high art for listeners steeped in rock rather than the classics.”

Multiple-choice Questions—Select One Answer Choice:

The passage addresses which of the following issues related to Glass's use of popular elements in his classical compositions?

- A. How it is regarded by listeners who prefer rock to the classics
- B. How it has affected the commercial success of Glass's music
- C. Whether it has contributed to a revival of interest among other composers in using popular elements in their compositions
- D. Whether it has had a detrimental effect on Glass's reputation as a composer of classical music
- E. Whether it has caused certain of Glass's works to be derivative in quality**

Multiple-choice Questions—Select One or More Answer Choices:

Consider each of the three choices separately and select all that apply.

The passage suggests that Glass's work displays which of the following qualities?

- A. A return to the use of popular music in classical compositions**
- B. An attempt to elevate rock music to an artistic status more closely approximating that of classical music
- C. A long-standing tendency to incorporate elements from two apparently disparate musical styles**

Select-in-Passage:

Select the sentence that distinguishes two ways of integrating rock and classical music.

Answer: “His music is not a version of popular music packaged to attract classical listeners; it is high art for listeners steeped in rock rather than the classics.”

Text Completion

Includes a passage composed of 1-5 sentences with 1-3 blanks. There are 3 answer choices per blank, or 5 answer choices if there is a single blank. There is a single correct answer, consisting of one choice for each blank. You receive no credit for partially correct answers.

EXAMPLE

Traditional Multiple Choice:

From the outset, the concept of freedom of the seas from the proprietary claims of nations was challenged by a contrary notion—that of the **BLANK** of the oceans for reasons of national security and profit.

- A. promotion
- B. exploration
- C. surveying
- D. conservation
- E. appropriation**

Independent Blanks (One answer given for each blank)

Murray, whose show of recent paintings and drawings is her best in many years, has been eminent hereabouts for a quarter century, although often regarded with (i) _____, but the most (ii) _____ of these paintings (iii) _____ all doubts.

Blank (i)	Blank (ii)	Blank (iii)
partiality	problematic	exculpate
credulity	successful	assuage
ambivalence	disparaged	whet

Click on your choices.

Sentence Equivalence

Consists of a single sentence, one blank, and 6 answer choices. These questions require you to select two of the answer choices. The examinee receives no credit for partially correct answers.

EXAMPLE

Directions: Select the two answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole and produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.

The corporation expects only _____ increases in sales next year despite a yearlong effort to revive its retailing business.

- A. dynamic
- B. predictable
- C. expanding
- D. modest**
- E. slight**
- F. volatile

Scoring

Score range from 130 – 170 for both verbal and quantitative in 1 point increments

QUANTITATIVE	
Structure	2 sections, 35 minutes each, 20 questions/section
Subject matter	Tests your ability to understand the basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, data analysis, statistics, and geometry, reason in a quantitative way, and solve problems involving quantities. Emphasis on data interpretation and real-life problem scenarios.
4 Question Types:	Each question appears either independently as a discrete question or as part of a set of questions called a Data Interpretation set. All of the questions in a Data Interpretation set are based on the same data presented in tables, graphs, or other displays of data. Below are descriptions, directions, and samples of each type of question.
Multiple choice One answer	<p>Select one answer choice from a list of 5 choices</p> <p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>If $5x + 32 = 4 - 2x$, what is the value of x?</p> <p>(A) -4 (B) -3 (C) 4 (D) 7 (E) 12</p>
Multiple choice One or more answers	<p>Select one or more answer choices from a list of 3 to 7 options. Students may or may not be told how many options to choose. Students must identify all correct answers</p> <p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>Each employee of a certain company is in either Department X or Department Y, and there are more than twice as many employees in Department X as in Department Y. The average (arithmetic mean) salary is \$25,000 for the employees in Department X and is \$35,000 for the employees in Department Y. Which of the following amounts could be the average salary for all of the employees in the company?</p> <p>Indicate <u>all</u> such amounts.</p> <p>A. \$26,000 B. \$28,000 C. \$29,000 D. \$30,000 E. \$31,000 F. \$32,000 G. \$34,000</p>

Numeric entry	<p>Students type their own answer in a text box rather than selecting from multiple options</p> <p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>If $x = 10^{-1}$, what is the value of $\left(x + \frac{1}{x}\right)\left(\frac{1}{x}\right)$?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 5px; margin-left: 100px;">101</div>
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Quantitative Comparison	<p>Compare two quantities (Quantity A and Quantity B) and then determine which of four statements describes the comparison.</p> <p>EXAMPLE</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">Quantity A</td> <td style="width: 30%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">Quantity B</td> <td rowspan="2" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>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</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">$x^2 + 1$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">$2x - 1$</td> </tr> </table>	Quantity A	Quantity B	<p>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</p>	$x^2 + 1$	$2x - 1$
Quantity A	Quantity B	<p>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</p>				
$x^2 + 1$	$2x - 1$					

<p>Data Interpretation</p> <p>(Okay, this is a fifth type, but it will be used with one of the four other formats outlined above)</p>	<p>Data interpretation responses can be in any of the previously discussed formats (traditional multiple choice, multiple choice – multiple answers, or numeric entry.)</p> <p>Their distinguishing characteristic is the presentation of the question, which involves tables, graphs, or other displays of data.</p> <p>EXAMPLE</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>These questions refer to the following graphs.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>INCOME OF ORGANIZATION X IN 1990, BY SOURCE (total income = \$43,000,000)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATION X, 1980-1990</p> <p><small>Note: Drawn to scale.</small></p> </div> </div> <p>If income from foundations increased 25 percent from 1989 to 1990, which of the following represents income from foundations in 1989?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> (0.75)(0.11)(\$43,000,000) <input type="radio"/> (1.25)(0.11)(\$43,000,000) <input type="radio"/> $\frac{0.11}{0.25}$ (\$43,000,000) <input type="radio"/> $\frac{0.11}{0.75}$ (\$43,000,000) <input type="radio"/> $\frac{0.11}{1.25}$ (\$43,000,000) </p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Answer:</p> <p>0.11/1.25 (\$43,000,000)</p> </div> </div>
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Calculator	Students will use an on-screen calculator with +, -, x, ÷, and $\sqrt{\quad}$ functions
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Scoring	Score range from 130 – 170 for both quantitative and verbal in 1 point increments
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ANALYTICAL WRITING	
Structure	2 prompts, 30 minutes for each (Issue & Argument)
Subject matter	Each topic will have one prompt.
Question (Issue)	<p>A focused assignment asking students to address both sides of an issue or to address factors that may change their perspectives.</p> <p>EXAMPLE</p> <p>“As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the ability of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate.”</p> <p><i>Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.</i></p>
Question (Argument)	<p>A focused assignment asking students to strengthen or weaken an argument or to address assumptions made in the argument.</p> <p>EXAMPLE</p> <p><i>The following is a memorandum from the business manager of a television station:</i></p> <p>"Over the past year, our late-night news program has devoted increased time to national news and less time to weather and local news. During this time period, most of the complaints received from viewers were concerned with our station's coverage of weather and local news. In addition, local businesses that used to advertise during our late-night news program have just canceled their advertising contracts with us. Therefore, in order to attract more viewers to the program and to avoid losing any further advertising revenues, we should restore the time devoted to weather and local news to its former level."</p> <p><i>Write a response in which you discuss what specific evidence is needed to evaluate the argument and explain how the evidence would weaken or strengthen the argument.</i></p>
Scoring	Essays get a single score between 1 and 6

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If you have questions or comments, please contact us at 236-6606 or
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