



TEST PREP SERIES

CONQUER THE
GRE[®]
:
STRESS MANAGEMENT AND
A PERFECT STUDY PLAN

2023

**Updated Information on
the GRE Test**

**Stress Management Tips
and Techniques**

6-Month Study Plan

8-Week Study Plan

GRE Score Scale Parameters

Conquer the GRE® :

Stress Management and a Perfect Study Plan

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Table of Contents

1	Overview of the GRE	1
	Format of the GRE General Test	2
	Outline of the GRE General Test	3
	Registering for the GRE	6
	Frequently Asked Questions	7
2	A Detailed Look at the Sections of the GRE	13
	Overview of the Analytical Writing Section	14
	Overview of the Verbal Reasoning Section	25
	Overview of the Quantitative Reasoning Section	28
3	Students and Stress	33
	Identifying Sources of Stress	34
	The Difference between Good and Bad Stress	36
	Factors that Influence Your Tolerance to Stress	37
4	Stress Management Techniques	39
	Quick Stress Release	40
	The Big Picture	41
	Taking the Test	43
5	6-Month Study Plan for the GRE	45
	Getting started	47
6	8-Week Study Plan for the GRE	53

7	GRE Scores	57
	Verbal Reasoning Concordance Table	58
	Quantitative Reasoning Concordance Table	59
8	Test-Taking Tips	61
	General Strategies for Taking the GRE	62
	Preparing for Test Day	62
	The Test Day	63
9	Conclusion and Last Words	65

Foreword

If you're headed to graduate school, you'll probably have to take the GRE. Many universities have long required this standardized test to process applications, award fellowships and scholarships, etc.

This volume has been created with you in mind. Within it, you'll find valuable information on the GRE itself, as well as tips on how to manage your stress while you prepare for the test. Half of the battle is knowing what you are up against and being familiar with how the test will be presented to you. By reading through this guide, you'll gain insightful information on the test itself. Even the most prepared students may feel nervous or stressed out when presented with the GRE if they don't know what to expect right from the get-go.

In this book, you'll find two complete 6-month study plans as well as practical test-taking tips to help you ensure your success. Going through each step outlined in the study plans will help you review all concepts, knowledge, and skills evaluated in the GRE. There are two types of study plans: a 6-month verbal-focused plan for learners who have good quant skills but are weak when it comes to language, and a 6-month math-focused plan for learners weak in math.

It is also essential to note that the GRE has a unique format and scoring system. Your study material and strategy should be in line with the actual GRE if you want to put your best foot forward on the test day. You'll find valuable information, including a scoring grid on the GRE, in the following chapters.

Success is yours!

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Chapter **1**
Overview of the GRE

The Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) General Test is required for admission to most graduate programs. The most competitive programs tend to require comparatively higher scores. This book is designed to prepare students for the GRE General Test. The GRE revised General Test was renamed in 2016 and is now known as the GRE General Test, but the content and scoring of the test remain the same. Note that some graduate programs require applicants to take specialized GRE Subject Tests which will not be covered in this book. Before preparing to take the GRE, please review the admissions criteria for the programs that you are interested in applying to so that you know whether you need to take subject tests in addition to the GRE General Test. To learn more about subject tests, visit the Subject Tests section at ets.org.

The GRE General Test is not designed to measure your knowledge of specific fields. It does not measure your ability to be successful in your career or even in school. It does, however, give a reasonably accurate indication of your capabilities in certain key areas for graduate-level work, such as your ability to understand complex written material, your understanding of basic mathematics, your ability to interpret data, and your capacity for reasoning and critical thinking. By using the strategies in this book to prepare for the GRE General Test, you will improve your chances of scoring well on the test.

Format of the GRE General Test

The GRE General Test is offered as a computer-delivered test throughout the year. Post-Covid, ETS provides test-takers with the option to take the test from home.

Whether you are taking the GRE General Test at the testing center or at home, the format of the test will essentially be the same. The GRE General Test At Home follows the same format as the computer-delivered version of the GRE General Test. The test consists of three main components: Analytical Writing, Verbal Reasoning, and Quantitative Reasoning. The total time for the test will be about 3 hours 45 minutes.

The first section of the test is always the Analytical Writing component which is broken into two sections. In the first section, you will be asked to write an argumentative essay that takes a position on an issue of general interest. In the second section, you will be asked to analyze an argument for logical validity and soundness. You will be given 30 minutes for each section.

The remainder of the test will be split between sections devoted to Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning. There will be two sections devoted to Verbal Reasoning, and another two devoted to Quantitative Reasoning. You will be given 30 minutes to complete each section of Verbal Reasoning and 35 minutes to complete each section of Quantitative Reasoning. Each section will contain 20 questions. At any point during the test, you may be given an unscored section on either Verbal or Quantitative Reasoning; since this section will not be identified, it is important that you try your best at all times. Also, it is possible that you will be asked to complete a research section that will allow ETS to test the efficacy of new questions. If you are given a research section, it will appear at the end of your General Test. Unscored and research sections may vary in the number of questions and time allotted.

Outline of the GRE General Test

The Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections of the GRE General Test are section-level adaptive. This means that the computer will adapt the test to your performance. Since there are two sections each for Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning, the difficulty of the second section will depend on how well you did in the first section. The overall format of the GRE General Test will be as follows:

Component	Number of Questions	Time Allowed
Analytical Writing (2 sections)	1 Analyze an Issue	30 minutes
	1 Analyze an Argument	30 minutes
Verbal Reasoning (2 sections)	20 questions per section	30 minutes per section
Quantitative Reasoning (2 sections)	20 questions per section	35 minutes per section
Unscored Section	Variable	Variable
Research Section	Variable	Variable
		<i>Total Time: 3 hours 45 minutes</i>

Note that the GRE General Test At Home follows the same format as the computer-delivered version of the GRE General Test.

While taking the GRE General Test, here are some things to remember:

- You can review and preview questions within a section, allowing you to budget your time to deal with the questions that you find most difficult.
- You will be able to mark questions within a section and return to them later. This means that if you find a question especially difficult, you will be able to move on to other questions and return to the one that you had trouble with, provided that you stay within the time limit for the section.
- You will be able to change or edit your answers within a section. This means that if you realize that you made a mistake, you can go back and correct yourself provided you stay within the time limit for the section.
- You will have an on-screen calculator during the Quantitative Reasoning portions of the test, allowing you to quickly complete any necessary computations.

The following section will briefly introduce the three main components of the GRE General Test.

Analytical Writing Assessment

The first section of the GRE General Test is the Analytical Writing Assessment. This component of the GRE is designed to test your ability to use basic logic and critical reasoning to make and assess arguments. The Analytical Writing Assessment is broken into two assignments, each of which must be completed within 30 minutes. In the first assignment, you will be asked to develop a position on an issue of general interest. You will be given an issue and a prompt with some specific instructions on how to approach the assigned issue. You will be expected to take a position on the issue and then write a clear, persuasive, and logically sound essay defending your position in correct English. You will be assessed based on your ability to effectively defend your positions with supporting evidence and valid reasoning, your skill in organizing your thoughts, and your command of English. In the second assignment, you will be presented with a passage in which the author sketches an argument for their position on an issue. Here, you will be expected to write an essay that critically evaluates their argument in terms of the evidence they use and the logical validity of their reasoning. You will be assessed based on your ability to parse the author's argument and effectively point out the strengths and weaknesses of their reasoning using good organization and correct English.

Task	Time Allowed	Answer Format
Analyze an Issue	30 minutes	Short essay on an issue of general interest that clearly and carefully addresses the prompt
Analyze an Argument	30 minutes	Short essay that analyzes another person's argument for validity, soundness, and supporting evidence

The Analytical Writing assessment tests your ability to:

- Coherently develop complex ideas
- Write in a focused, organized manner
- Identify relevant evidence and use it to support your claims
- Critically evaluate another person's argument for clarity and effectiveness
- Command the elements of standard written English

We will take a detailed look at the Analytical Writing Assessment in the following chapter.

Verbal Reasoning

The Verbal Reasoning portion of the GRE assesses your reading comprehension, your ability to draw inferences to fill in missing information, and your vocabulary. You will be given two sections on Verbal Reasoning, each consisting of 20 questions and lasting 30 minutes. Verbal Reasoning questions on the

GRE General Test are mostly multiple-choice and will be drawn from the following three types: Reading Comprehension, Text Completion, and Sentence Equivalence. Reading Comprehension questions will ask you to read a short passage several paragraphs long, and then answer questions about the passage. Text Completion questions will have a short passage with 1-3 blanks which you will need to fill in by choosing the best of several multiple-choice options. The Sentence Equivalence section will ask you to fill in the blank in a passage using the two words that will complete the sentence in such a way that the meaning will be as similar as possible.

Time	Question Type	Answer Format
You will have 30 minutes to complete the entire section, which will include a mixture of different question types	Reading Comprehension	Multiple choice: select one answer choice Multiple choice: select one or more answer choices Highlight a section of text
	Text Completion	Multiple choice: fill in one or more blanks to complete the text
	Sentence Equivalence	Multiple choice: select the two options that produce two sentences with the most similar meanings

The Verbal Reasoning section measures your ability to:

- Comprehend, interpret and analyze complex passages in standard written English
- Apply sophisticated vocabulary in context
- Draw inferences about the meaning and authorial intent based on written material

We will take a detailed look at the Verbal Writing section in the following chapter.

Quantitative Reasoning

The Quantitative Reasoning section of the GRE evaluates your ability to use basic mathematics, read and interpret graphs and figures and engage in basic reasoning involving math and numbers. You will be given two sections on Quantitative Reasoning with 20 questions in each section. You will have 35 minutes to complete each section. There are two basic question types, multiple-choice and numerical entry. For multiple-choice questions, you will be asked to choose the best answer or answers from several possibilities; for numerical entry questions, you will be asked to enter a numerical answer from your own calculations. Some questions will be designed to test your knowledge of basic algebra and geometry; others will be designed to test your ability to read and interpret different presentations of data.

Time	Question Type	Answer Format
You will have 35 minutes to complete the entire section, which will include a mixture of different question types	Multiple Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select one answer choice • Select one or more answer choices
	Numeric Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve the problem through calculation and enter a numeric value
	Quantitative Comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate two quantities to decide whether one is greater than the other, whether they are equal, or whether a relationship cannot be determined
	Data Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice: choose the best answer or answers • Numeric entry: enter a value

The Quantitative Reasoning section tests your ability to:

- Use mathematical tools such as basic arithmetic, geometry, algebra and statistics
- Understand, interpret and analyze quantitative information
- Apply basic mathematical and data interpretation skills to real-world information and problems

We will take a detailed look at the Quantitative Reasoning section in the following chapter.

Registering for the GRE

Before you register to take the GRE, be sure to consider your schedule and any special accommodations that you may need. Be aware that the availability of testing dates may vary according to your location. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to prepare for the GRE and be sure that you know the deadlines for score reporting and application deadlines for all the schools you are applying to. For general information about deadlines and the GRE, visit the GRE section at ets.org. For more information on how to register for the GRE, visit the Register for the GRE section at ets.org. For information on special accommodations for disabled students, visit the Disabilities or Health-related Needs section on ets.org.

If you are taking the GRE General Test At Home, there are certain equipment, environment, and testing space requirements that you need to fulfill before you can start the registration process. For more information on these requirements, read the At Home Testing section on ets.org.

How the GRE General Test is Scored

Scoring for the Analytical Writing Section

In the Analytical Writing section, you will be scored on a scale of 0-6 in increments of 0.5. The Analytical Writing measure emphasizes your ability to engage in reasoning and critical thinking over your facility with the finer points of grammar. The highest scores of 5.5-6.0 are given to work that is generally superior in every respect - sustained analysis of complex issues, coherent argumentation, and excellent command of the English language. The lowest scores of 0.0-0.5 are given to work that is completely off-topic or so poorly composed as to be incoherent. Detailed information on scoring for the Analytical Writing section is provided in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6.

Scoring for the Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning Sections

The Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning sections are scored on a scale of 130-170 in 1-point increments.

Scoring is covered in detail in the 8th chapter.

Frequently Asked Questions

You may have many questions about the GRE besides the general test-taking tips listed in this book; here are answers to a few frequently-asked questions that GRE test-takers often have:

General Questions

What changes have been made to the GRE General Test post Covid-19?

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, test-takers are now able to take the GRE General Test at home. Content and scoring have remained the same. Study materials that reference the GRE General Test are still valid and may be used for test preparation.

Can I take the GRE test at home?

Yes. ETS now provides students with the option to take the test from home. If your local test centers are closed or you prefer a familiar testing environment, you can take the GRE from home. You will have to check the equipment, environment, and testing-space requirements for the at-home test and whether it's an option for you. For detailed information on the requirements for the home test, check the At Home Testing section at ets.org.

Are there any changes in the format and content of the GRE test due to COVID-19?

No. The format and content of the GRE General Test remains the same.

How do I get ready to take the GRE General Test?

To take the GRE General Test, there are several steps you'll need to take:

- ❑ Find out what prospective graduate/professional programs require: Does the program you're interested in require additional testing beyond the GRE General Test? What is the deadline for receipt of scores?
- ❑ Sign up for a test date. You need to sign up for any GRE testing. Act in a timely manner so that you have plenty of time to prepare and are guaranteed that your scores will be sent and received on time. For the in-center test, testing dates are much more restricted, so if you know that you will need to take the GRE General Test at the center, make arrangements well in advance of the application deadline for your program. There are additional requirements if you're taking the test at home, so make sure to check the requirements well in advance.
- ❑ Use resources provided by ETS and Vibrant Publishers to familiarize yourself with the format of the GRE and the types of questions you will face. Even if you are confident about taking the test, it is essential to prepare for the test.

Does the GRE General Test measure my proficiency in specific subject areas?

No. The GRE General Test is designed to measure general proficiency in reading, critical reasoning, and working with data, all abilities that are critical to graduate work. However, you won't be tested on your knowledge of any specific field.

Where can I get additional information on the GRE General Test?

Educational Testing Service (ETS), the organization that administers the GRE, has an informative website entirely devoted to information about the test at the GRE section at ets.org. There, you can find links that further explain how to sign up for testing, fees, score reporting, and much more.

Preparing for the Test

How should I prepare for the test?

The first thing you should do is thoroughly familiarize yourself with the format of the GRE General Test. Read about each section of the test, how many questions are there per section, and the required format for answers. You can find general information about the structure of the test earlier in this chapter.

How do I prepare for the questions I will be asked on the GRE General Test?

There are plenty of resources by Vibrant Publishers that will help you prepare for the questions you will face on the GRE General Test. This book includes a list of the most relevant resources that you might find useful in the 5th chapter. For the most updated list, you may visit the Test Prep Series section on www.vibrantpublishers.com.

How much should I study/practice for the GRE?

Study and practice until you feel comfortable with the test. Practice, practice, and practice some more until you feel confident about test day!

Are there additional materials I can use to get even more practice?

Yes. ETS offers a free full-length practice test that can be downloaded from the GRE section at ets.org. Also, after you have signed up for testing through ETS, you are eligible for some further test preparation materials free of additional charge. We've listed a few resources that you may find helpful in Chapter 5.

Test Content

How long is the GRE General Test?

The overall testing time is about 3 hours and 45 minutes.

What skills does the GRE test?

In general, the GRE is designed to test your proficiency in certain key skills that you will need for graduate-level study. More specifically:

- ❑ **The Analytical Writing section** tests your ability to write about complex ideas in a coherent, focused fashion as well as your ability to command the conventions of standard written English, provide and evaluate relevant evidence, and critique other points of view.
- ❑ **The Verbal Reasoning section** is an assessment of your ability to understand, interpret and analyze complex passages, use reasoning to draw inferences about written material, and use sophisticated vocabulary in context.
- ❑ **The Quantitative Reasoning section** is an assessment of basic, high school-level mathematical skills and knowledge, as well as your ability to analyze and interpret data.

What level of math is required for the Quantitative Reasoning section?

You will be expected to know high school level math - arithmetic, and basic concepts in algebra and geometry. You will also be expected to be able to analyze and interpret data presented in tables and graphs.

Scoring and Score Reporting

How are the sections of the GRE General Test scored?

The GRE General Test is scored as follows:

- ❑ **The scores of the Verbal Reasoning section** are done in 1-point increments on a scale of 130-170.
- ❑ **The scores of the Quantitative Reasoning section** are done in 1-point increments on a scale of 130-170.
- ❑ **The scores of the Analytical Writing section** are done in increments of 0.5 on a scale of 0-6.

When will my score be reported?

It depends on when you decide to take the GRE General Test. In general, scores for the test are reported in 10-15 days. You can find your scores in your official ETS account. An email notification from ETS is sent when the test scores are made available. ETS will also send an official Institution Score Report to the institutions you've chosen to send the test scores to.

Check the GRE section at ets.org for updates on score reporting and deadlines.

How long will my scores be valid?

Your score for the GRE General Test will remain valid for five years.

Other Questions

Do business schools accept the GRE instead of the GMAT?

An increasing number of business schools accept the GRE as a substitute for the more standard test for admission to an MBA program, the GMAT. Before you decide to take the GRE instead of the GMAT, make sure that the programs you are interested in applying to will accept the GRE. You can find a list of business schools that currently accept the GRE in the GRE section at ets.org.

How is the GRE administered?

The GRE is administered continuously year-round at designated testing centers, where you can take the test free from distraction in a secure environment that discourages cheating. The GRE Test At Home is also available for those who are more comfortable in a familiar environment. For information on testing centers in your area and important dates, visit the GRE section at ets.org.

I have a disability that requires me to ask for special accommodation while taking the test - what sort of accommodation is offered?

ETS does accommodate test-takers with disabilities. For information on procedures, visit the GRE Disabilities and Health-related Needs section at ets.org.

Will there be breaks during testing?

Yes. You will be given an optional 10-minute break after the third section of the test and one-minute breaks between the remaining sections.

Will I be given scratch paper?

Yes. The test administrator will provide you with scratch paper to use during the test, which has to be returned to the testing center staff without any pages missing.

For the At Home test, you cannot use regular notepaper. You may use either of the following materials:

- One small desktop whiteboard with an erasable marker.
- A sheet of paper placed inside a transparent sheet protector. You can write on this with an erasable marker.

At the end of the test, you will need to show the proctor that all notes you took during the test have been erased.

Should I bring a calculator to the test?

No. There will be an on-screen calculator for you to use.

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Chapter 2

A Detailed Look at the Sections of the GRE

Overview of the Analytical Writing Section

The Analytical Writing Assessment is intended to assess your ability to think critically and write effectively about a topic while following specific directions. You will not need any specific content knowledge to complete either task in this portion of the test. The purpose of both writing pieces is to determine your readiness to perform appropriately at the graduate level.

During this portion of the test, you will complete two writing tasks that are complementary in nature: Analyze an Issue and Analyze an Argument. For each task, you will have 30 minutes to read the prompt and directions and to plan and execute your response.

During the Analyze an Issue task, you will write persuasively as you express your point of view on the selected topic, which may be in the form of an opinion, a recommendation, a claim and reason, or the presentation of two points of view. It is important to read the directions carefully to ensure that your response is addressing the prompt correctly and to enable you to receive the highest score.

During the Analyze an Argument task, you will evaluate an argument to determine the strength of the facts and assumptions that it presents. You may be asked to evaluate the evidence to determine if the assumptions are correct, formulate questions that will need to be answered before determining if the assumptions are correct, what further evidence is necessary before the argument can be declared correct, or what steps should be completed before accepting a recommended course of action. As in the Analyze an Issue task, in the Analyze an Argument task, reading and following the directions carefully is the best way to ensure that you receive a high score for your efforts.

Strategies for Completing the Analytical Writing Measure

Each portion of the writing measure is 30 minutes long. In that period of time, you must read the statement or brief passage and the directions for creating your response, plan how you want to respond, and write your essay. If you spend too much time taking notes and organizing your thoughts, you may not have enough time to finish writing your essay. On the other hand, completing a prewriting activity sufficiently will help you write your essay more quickly. Budgeting your time is crucial and responding to some of the prompts published on the ETS site, ets.org will help you to do that. Although the GRE readers are aware of the time limit and that your essay is essentially a draft, they will expect you to perform at a high level. Leave a few minutes at the end of each writing section to review your essay for errors in spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

In the next section, we'll take a look at the Issue and Argument tasks in detail.

Analyz an Issue Task

As you complete this task, you will have an opportunity to express your point of view on an issue. Because it is essentially your opinion, there is no “correct” answer. You must, however, support your point of view with sufficient evidence to show the strength of your argument. You may agree completely with the statement about the issue, partially agree with it, or completely disagree with it. Be certain you stay on topic and follow the directions carefully.

For example, you might be presented with a statement similar to the following:

It is always best to look before you leap.

One interpretation of this statement is that one should consider potential consequences before taking any action. The directions may instruct you to 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. If you agree with the statement, you should recall examples from your reading, your studies, or your own experience that support your position. Think about Holden Caulfield’s actions in *The Catcher in the Rye*. His impulsive decision to spend some time alone in New York City before going home after his expulsion from Pencey Prep had unsatisfactory consequences. You may have taken some action in your own life that you regretted afterwards. On the other hand, you may disagree with the statement. Early explorers like Christopher Columbus had little idea about what they would find as they set out in their relatively small sailing vessels. If they had thought only about the dangers of their ventures, the new world would have been discovered much later. You can also take a qualified approach by agreeing with the statement to some extent. Remember, the best approach to a given prompt is the one you can argue the best. The GRE essay readers are trained to evaluate a wide variety of approaches to the issue and evaluate them on their strengths and weaknesses and not on the opinion expressed.

The following is a comprehensive list of the instructions that can accompany the statements in the Analyze an Issue task.

- 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.
- Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the recommendation and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, describe specific circumstances in which adopting the recommendation would or would not be advantageous and explain how these examples shape your position.
- Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the claim. In developing and supporting your position, be sure to address the most compelling reasons and/or examples that could be used to challenge your position.
- Write a response in which you discuss which view more closely aligns with your own position and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should address both of the views presented.

- Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the claim and the reasons upon which that claim is based.
- Write a response in which you discuss your views on the policy and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider the possible consequences of implementing the policy and explain how these consequences shape your position.

You may have had some experience with writing persuasively in high school or college, but you do not need to worry about employing specific rhetorical devices to receive a high score. It is important to stay on topic, present your argument in a coherent and cohesive manner, and to acknowledge counterarguments to strengthen your own. You should also make every attempt to use correct grammar, mechanics, and a variety of sentence structures to improve the fluency of your essay. The scoring guide that follows is reprinted from the Practice Book for the GRE Revised General Test, developed by the Educational Testing Service.

Scoring Guide

Score 6

In addressing the specific task directions, a 6 response presents a cogent, well-articulated analysis of the issue and conveys meaning skillfully.

A typical response in this category:

- articulates a clear and insightful position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
- develops the position fully with compelling reasons and/or persuasive examples
- sustains a well-focused, well-organized analysis, connecting ideas logically
- conveys ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety
- demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage and mechanics), but may have minor errors

Score 5

In addressing the specific task directions, a 5 response presents a generally thoughtful, well-developed analysis of the issue and conveys meaning clearly.

A typical response in this category:

- presents a clear and well-considered position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
- develops the position with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples
- is focused and generally well organized, connecting ideas appropriately

- conveys ideas clearly and well, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety
- demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor errors

Score 4

In addressing the specific task directions, a 4 response presents a competent analysis of the issue and conveys meaning with acceptable clarity.

A typical response in this category:

- presents a clear position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
- develops the position with relevant reasons and/or examples
- is adequately focused and organized
- demonstrates sufficient control of language to express ideas with reasonable clarity
- generally, demonstrates control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some errors

Score 3

A 3 response demonstrates some competence in addressing the specific task directions, in analyzing the issue and in conveying meaning, but is obviously flawed.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- is vague or limited in addressing the specific task directions and/or in presenting or developing a position on the issue
- is weak in the use of relevant reasons or examples or relies largely on unsupported claims
- is poorly focused and/or poorly organized
- has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity
- contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that can interfere with meaning

Score 2

A 2 response largely disregards the specific task directions and/or demonstrates serious weaknesses in analytical writing.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- is unclear or seriously limited in addressing the specific task directions and/or in presenting or developing a position on the issue

- provides few, if any, relevant reasons or examples in support of its claims
- is unfocused and/or disorganized
- has serious problems in language and sentence structure that frequently interfere with meaning
- contains serious errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that frequently obscure meaning

Score 1

A 1 response demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- provides little or no evidence of understanding the issue
- provides little evidence of the ability to develop an organized response (i.e., is extremely disorganized and/or extremely brief)
- has severe problems in language and sentence structure that persistently interfere with meaning
- contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that result in incoherence

Score 0

A typical response in this category is off-topic (i.e., provides no evidence of an attempt to respond to the assigned topic), is in a foreign language, merely copies the topic, consists of only keystroke characters, or is illegible or non-verbal.

The Analyze an Issue task presents you with a statement that expresses a point of view about a topic of general interest. The statement is followed by a set of specific instructions that will determine the manner in which you respond. You may find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with the statement almost immediately. How you feel about the statement is not important, but you will be expected to present a strongly developed case from your own point of view. As you think about your own point of view, consider other perspectives as well. Before you begin to write, read the instructions carefully. Take some brief notes, list some questions that the issue generates, and organize your ideas in a logical manner. This task will assess your ability to think critically and write clearly, using varied and accurate vocabulary, a meaningful variety of sentence structures, and correct grammar, spelling, and usage.

General Strategies

- Restate the issue in a way that makes sense to you.
- You could also determine what question is being answered by the statement. Creating a question may help you determine your position on the issue. If someone were to ask you this question, would you say yes, no, or maybe?

- ❑ Next, create a statement that expresses the opposing viewpoint, using language similar to that of the original statement.
- ❑ Think about alternative viewpoints. Is there another way to look at this issue? Can you qualify the original recommendation in some way? How can you answer all or some of the questions that you generated earlier?
- ❑ From here, you must decide which point of view to address in your essay. Before you decide, carefully consider the following questions. You will have addressed several of them in the exercises you will perform below.
 - i. What, precisely, is the central issue?
 - ii. What precisely are the instructions asking me to do?
 - iii. Do I agree with all or any part of the claim? Why or why not?
 - iv. Does the claim make certain assumptions? If so, are they reasonable?
 - v. Is the claim valid only under certain conditions? If so, what are they?
 - vi. Do I need to explain how I interpret certain terms or concepts used in the claim?
 - vii. If I take a certain position on the issue, what reasons support my position?
 - viii. What examples - either real or hypothetical - could I use to illustrate those reasons and advance my point of view? Which examples are the most compelling?
- ❑ Once you have decided on a position to defend, consider the perspectives of others who might not agree with your position. Ask yourself:
 - i. What reasons might someone use to refute or undermine my position?
 - ii. How should I acknowledge or defend against those views in my essay?

The next step should be listing the main reasons that support your position. Keep in mind that the GRE readers scoring your response are not looking for a “right” answer—in fact, as far as they are concerned, there is no correct position to take. Instead, the readers are evaluating the skill with which you address the specific instructions and articulate and develop an argument to support your evaluation of the issue.

Analyze an Argument task

In the Analyze an Argument task, you will take an approach that differs from that in the Analyze an Issue task. You will not be asked to develop and defend a point of view. You will be asked to analyze an argument and the evidence and assumptions on which it is based. You will be presented with a brief passage that makes an argument either for taking some course of action, following a recommendation, or supporting a prediction. You should read the passage carefully to identify either stated or unstated assumptions or to determine the line of reasoning used by the author of the passage. The directions will instruct you to approach your analysis in any of several ways. You may be asked to state what additional evidence is needed to make the argument sound, what questions will need to be answered before accepting a recommendation, or whether a prediction based on the argument is reasonable.

As in the Analyze an Issue task, there is no “right” answer or approach. It is important to stay on topic, use sound reasoning and examples in your response, and strive to develop a coherent, cohesive, and fluent response. Remember that analysis is the act of breaking something down into its components to see how well they relate to each other. The components of the argument may include facts, statistics or other figures, and both stated and unstated assumptions. For example, the owner of Gemma’s Jewelry store may predict that, based on the past two years’ sales, the store will see an increase of 10% in next year’s sales. One of the unstated assumptions is that the demand for luxury goods will increase despite whatever else may happen to the economy. Gemma’s Jewelry doesn’t say what will account for the increase in sales. Will the store add new lines of merchandise? Will the store increase its advertising? Will the store expand in size? Is a 10% increase significant? If sales were \$40,000 last year, is an additional \$4,000 dollars in sales meaningful?

Following is a list of the specific directions you will be asked to follow as you analyze an argument in your response.

- 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.
- Write a response in which you examine the stated and/or unstated assumptions of the argument. Be sure to explain how the argument depends on these assumptions, and what the implications are for the argument if the assumptions prove unwarranted.
- Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.
- Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the advice and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the advice.
- Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation is likely to have the predicted result. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.

- Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the prediction and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the prediction.
- Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be addressed in order to decide whether the conclusion and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to the questions would help to evaluate the conclusion.
- Write a response in which you discuss one or more alternative explanations that could rival explanation(s) and can plausibly account for the facts presented in the argument.

You will not need knowledge in any specific discipline to analyze an argument. The topics are of general interest and are accessible to anyone regardless of previous course work. The GRE essay readers will be looking for your ability to reason and organize your thoughts in a logical way. The scoring guide that follows is reprinted from the Practice Book for the GRE Revised General Test, developed by the Educational Testing Service.

Scoring Guide

Score 6

In addressing the specific task directions, a 6 response presents a cogent, well-articulated analysis of the issue and conveys meaning skillfully..

A typical response in this category:

- articulates a clear and insightful position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
- develops the position fully with compelling reasons and/or persuasive examples
- sustains a well-focused, well-organized analysis, connecting ideas logically
- conveys ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety
- demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage and mechanics), but may have minor errors

Score 5

In addressing the specific task directions, a 5 response presents a generally thoughtful, well-developed analysis of the issue and conveys meaning clearly.

A typical response in this category:

- presents a clear and well-considered position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task

- develops the position with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples
- is focused and generally well organized, connecting ideas appropriately
- conveys ideas clearly and well, using appropriate vocabulary and sentence variety
- demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor errors

Score 4

In addressing the specific task directions, a 4 response presents a competent analysis of the issue and conveys meaning with acceptable clarity.

A typical response in this category:

- presents a clear position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
- develops the position with relevant reasons and/or examples
- is adequately focused and organized
- demonstrates sufficient control of language to express ideas with reasonable clarity
- generally, demonstrates control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some errors

Score 3

A 3 response demonstrates some competence in addressing the specific task directions, in analyzing the issue and in conveying meaning, but is obviously flawed.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- is vague or limited in addressing the specific task directions and/or in presenting or developing a position on the issue
- is weak in the use of relevant reasons or examples or relies largely on unsupported claims
- is poorly focused and/or poorly organized
- has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity
- contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that can interfere with meaning

Score 2

A 2 response largely disregards the specific task directions and/or demonstrates serious weaknesses in analytical writing.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- is unclear or seriously limited in addressing the specific task directions and/or in presenting or developing a position on the issue
- provides few, if any, relevant reasons or examples in support of its claims
- is unfocused and/or disorganized
- has serious problems in language and sentence structure that frequently interfere with meaning
- contains serious errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that frequently obscure meaning

Score 1

A 1 response demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing.

A typical response in this category exhibits ONE OR MORE of the following characteristics:

- provides little or no evidence of understanding the issue
- provides little evidence of the ability to develop an organized response (i.e., is extremely disorganized and/or extremely brief)
- has severe problems in language and sentence structure that persistently interfere with meaning
- contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage or mechanics that result in incoherence

Score 0

A typical response in this category is off-topic (i.e., provides no evidence of an attempt to respond to the assigned topic), is in a foreign language, merely copies the topic, consists of only keystroke characters or is illegible or nonverbal.

The brief passages and directions in the Analyze an Argument task contain some complexity. In order to achieve a high score, you must understand the terminology. The following list is intended to help you clarify your written evaluation of the argument. Note that trained GRE readers evaluate your response based on how well you organize, develop and express your analysis. They give grades depending on the way you respond to the specific task instructions, identify and analyze key features of the passage, support your position with relevant reasons and/or examples and control the elements of standard English.

General Strategies

Although you do not need to know special analytical techniques and terminology, you should be familiar with the directions for the Argument task and with certain key concepts, including the following:

- Is there an alternative explanation for the events in question that can invalidate, either in whole or in part, the explanation given in the passage?
- How can I break the argument into its component parts to understand how they create the whole argument?
- Can I identify the line of reasoning used to create the argument?
- What does the author of the argument assume to be true for the argument to be true?
- Does the line of reasoning validate the conclusion?
- Can I imagine an example that refutes any or several of the statements in the argument?
- Am I able to evaluate the argument based on the quality of the facts and reasons presented in it?

Regardless of the approach you take, you must present a well-developed evaluation of the argument. You should take brief notes when you identify the argument's claims, assumptions, and conclusion. Jot down as many alternative explanations as you can along with additional evidence that might support or refute the claims in the argument. Finally, list the changes in the argument that would make the reasoning more solid. It is more important to be specific than it is to have a long list of evidence and examples. Use as many or as few paragraphs as you consider appropriate for your argument, but create a new paragraph when you move on to a new idea or example of support for your position. The GRE readers are not looking for a specific number of ideas or paragraphs. Instead, they are reading to determine the level of understanding of the topic and the complexity with which you respond.

You are free to organize and develop your response in any way you think will enable you to effectively communicate your evaluation of the argument. You may recall writing strategies you learned in high school or a writing-intensive course you took in college, but it is not necessary to employ any of those strategies. It is important that your ideas follow a logical progression and display strong critical thinking

Overview of the Verbal Reasoning Section

The Verbal Reasoning component of the GRE is designed to evaluate your skill at reading, interpreting, and analyzing sentences and passages written in standard English. The GRE General Test will have two Verbal Reasoning sections of about 20 questions each. You will have 30 minutes to complete each section. Each section will consist of three distinct types of questions: Reading Comprehension, Text Completion, and Sentence Equivalence. This chapter will provide an overview of the types of questions you will face on the Verbal Reasoning portion of the GRE and list some general techniques and strategies for approaching Verbal Reasoning questions. In addition, it gives a more detailed look at each type of question, providing worked examples with in-depth explanations and strategies.

- ❑ The Verbal Reasoning portion of the GRE features three distinct question types: Reading Comprehension, Text Completion, and Sentence Equivalence.
- ❑ Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence will be in multiple-choice format; Reading Comprehension will consist of some multiple-choice questions and some questions where you will be asked to highlight a section of text.
- ❑ There will be two Verbal Reasoning sections, and you will be given 30 minutes for each section.

Reading Comprehension Questions

For Reading Comprehension questions, you will be asked to read a passage and answer several questions on the passage. Passages may cover topics from the physical, biological, or social sciences, the arts, the humanities, business, or everyday life. Passages will be between one to five paragraphs in length. After reading the passage, you will be asked to answer several questions on the passage. In some cases, the questions will require you to identify key aspects of the passage or draw inferences about the meaning or the author's intent. In others, you will be asked to highlight the section of the passage that addresses a particular consideration or identify components of the passage that point to a given conclusion.

Reading Comprehension Questions will have three formats: multiple-choice in which you choose the single solution that best answers the question, multiple-choice in which you choose one or more solutions that best answer the question, and passage highlighting, in which you highlight the portion of the passage that best addresses a given question. To do well on the Reading Comprehension questions in the Verbal Reasoning component, you will need to be able to quickly read a passage and identify key points and the central themes of the passage.

- ❑ Reading Comprehension questions will be based on a short passage, which could be between one to five paragraphs long.
- ❑ Some questions will be multiple-choice, while others will ask you to highlight an appropriate section of the passage. Multiple-choice questions will either ask you to select a single option or one or more options.

- Reading Comprehension questions test your ability to understand and interpret complex passages and quickly determine key points and details.

Text Completion Questions

Text Completion questions consist of a short passage one to five sentences long with one or more blanks. The passages will cover topics from the physical, biological, or social sciences, the arts, the humanities, business, or everyday life. You will be asked to choose the best option from several to fill in the blank (or blanks) to complete the passage. Text Completion questions have been designed with the aim of testing your vocabulary and your ability to draw plausible inferences about the intended meaning of passages written in standard English.

All Text Completion questions are multiple-choice: the number of options you are given will vary from three (usually for passages with two or more blanks) to five (usually for passages with a single blank). To do well on Text Completion questions, you will need to review vocabulary, be able to draw quick inferences about the intent of a passage and be able to choose the word that completes the passage best given the context.

- Text Completion questions will ask you to fill in one or more blanks in a short passage, usually one to five sentences long.
- All questions will be multiple-choice.
- Text Completion questions test your ability to apply sophisticated vocabulary in context and to draw inferences about the meaning of passages based on incomplete information.

Sentence Equivalence Questions

Sentence Equivalence questions consist of short sentences with a single blank. The sentence will be on a topic from the physical, biological, or social sciences, the arts, the humanities, business, or everyday life. You will be given six possible answer options to fill in the blank. You must choose the two options that (a) complete the sentence grammatically and (b) produce two completed sentences with the most similar meanings. Sentence Equivalence questions test your understanding of correct English grammar and your vocabulary.

All Sentence Equivalence questions are multiple-choice and will ask you to choose the best two options from a total of six. To do well on Sentence Equivalence questions, you will need to review vocabulary and be able to identify words with similar meanings, and you will also need to review basic rules of English grammar.

- Sentence Equivalence questions will ask you to fill in a single blank in a short passage.
- All questions will be multiple-choice; you will be asked to choose the two options out of six that complete the sentence and produce two sentences having the most similar meanings.
- Sentence Equivalence questions test your knowledge of basic rules of grammar, draw correct inferences about the meaning of a passage based on incomplete information, and identify words with similar meanings.

Tips for Verbal Reasoning Component

The Verbal Reasoning portion of the GRE tests your command of certain key areas of written English. Doing everything you can to solidify your vocabulary, your grammar, and your ability to understand complex passages will help you prepare for the Verbal Reasoning Section of the GRE. Below is a list of general strategies that will help you with the verbal portion of the test:

- ❑ Familiarize yourself with the types of questions that will be asked. There are a limited number of possible types of questions; once you know the format, you won't be faced with anything unfamiliar.
- ❑ Read any instructions on the test carefully - always be sure that you are answering the question that you've been asked
- ❑ Brush up on your vocabulary. Using the reference materials suggested in this book, you can get a good sense of the kinds of words you will encounter on the GRE. Be sure that you know what they mean.
- ❑ Work on your critical reading skills. For anything you read while preparing for the GRE, try to ask yourself: what are the key points? What is the author trying to say? What information supports the author's claims?
- ❑ Work on identifying keywords - words like "although", "moreover", and "therefore" - that signal important information or shifts in perspective. Doing this will help you quickly grasp the sense of a passage even if some information is missing
- ❑ Use basic logic and common sense to draw inferences about the passage you are working with
- ❑ If you are unsure of how to answer a multiple-choice question, you can often use the process of elimination. Often by getting rid of answers that are obviously wrong, you can get the right answer, even if you're not sure about some of the options.

Overview of the Quantitative Reasoning Section

The Quantitative Reasoning Section of the GRE® (Graduate Record Examinations) is designed to measure and test the ability to solve problems that require fundamental skills in arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. The section consists of three modules:

- Quantitative Comparison, which involves fewer computations or calculations than the other modules but requires reasoning ability and the skills to describe problems in a logical manner. The module is about 35% of the GRE Quantitative Reasoning Section.
- Math Problem Solving, which tests basic mathematical skills. Problems in this module are usually multiple-choice questions that can be solved fairly quickly.
- The Numeric Entry module requires entering solutions to math problems into an answer box.

Some of the questions in the quantitative reasoning section are based in real-world settings, while others are placed in formal mathematical contexts. Solving these problems requires basic mathematical skills.

Math Concepts Tested on the GRE

In this section, find a list of the Math Concepts that are tested in the Quantitative Reasoning section of the GRE:

Arithmetic

- Integers
- Fractions
- Exponents and Roots
- Decimals
- Real Numbers
- Ratio
- Percent

Algebra

- Algebraic Expressions
- Rules of Exponents

- Solving Linear Equations
- Solving Quadratic Equations
- Solving Linear Inequalities
- Functions
- Applications
- Coordinate Geometry
- Graphs of Functions

Geometry

- Lines and Angles
- Polygons
- Triangles
- Quadrilaterals
- Circles
- Three-Dimensional Figures

Data Analysis

- Methods for Presenting Data
- Numerical Methods for Describing Data
- Counting Methods
- Probability
- Distributions of Data, Random Variables, and Probability Distributions
- Data Interpretation Examples

Question Types

There are four types of questions in the Quantitative Reasoning Section. In general, the questions test your ability to:

- Understand and apply basic mathematical skills
- Understand fundamental mathematical concepts
- Use quantitative methods to logically reason and model practical problems

Quantitative Comparison Questions

The Quantitative Comparison (QC) Questions are a subset of the Quantitative Reasoning Section.

In Quantitative Comparison questions, you will be provided with information on two quantities, such as Quantity A and Quantity B. From the given information, you should compare Quantity A and Quantity B, and select an answer that is based on these choices:

- Quantity A is greater.
- Quantity B is greater.
- Quantities A and B are equal.
- The relationship cannot be determined from the information given.

Hints for answering questions:

- Carefully examine answers (a) through (c), before selecting choice (d).
- Avoid unnecessary and lengthy computations. Sometimes, you need to simplify the results of the computation in order to find the answer in choices (a) through (c).
- Keep in mind that geometric figures may not be drawn to scale.
- If quantities A and B are mathematical expressions, plug your answer into the expressions in order to validate your choice of answer.
- You may need to simplify the mathematical expressions for quantities in order to use them effectively.

Multiple-Choice Select One Answer Questions

The Multiple-Choice Select One Answer Questions form a subset of the Quantitative Reasoning Section. In the MCSO (Multiple-Choice Select One) section, you will be asked to select only one answer to a question from a list of choices.

Hints for answering questions:

- Carefully compute to validate the selected answer.
- Avoid unnecessary and lengthy computations but check your calculations to avoid careless errors.
- Keep in mind that geometric figures may not be drawn to scale.
- If you need to guess the answer, you should perform validation tests (such as plugging the selected answer into the problem).
- The answer is present there; so make use of that fact. Work ‘backward’ by substituting each option in the problem and see if it fits.
- The answer to some questions is in the question itself. Some direct questions specifically ask for a property that you will be able to answer by looking at the choices and the relationships between them.
- You may need to simplify the mathematical expressions for quantities in order to use them effectively.

Multiple-Choice Select Multiple Answers Questions

The Multiple-Choice Select Multiple Answers Section of the GRE is a subset of the Quantitative Reasoning Section. In the MCSM (Multiple-Choice Select Multiple) Section, you will be asked to select one or more answers to a question from a list of choices. Keep in mind that a question may not specify the number of choices that need to be selected.

Hints for answering questions:

- If the question hasn’t specified how many choices need to be selected, you will have to consider each answer carefully and choose all that apply.
- Try to avoid lengthy numerical calculations as far as possible. Look for numerical patterns and make a wise, educated guess.

Numeric Entry Questions

Numeric Entry (NE) questions are one of the four types of questions in the Quantitative Reasoning Section of the GRE. Questions of the NE type require you to answer a question by typing your answer into a box. Your answers may be in the form of integers, decimals, or fractions, and they could be negative quantities.

Because there are no answer choices for an NE question, it is necessary to read the question carefully, and to answer the question in the form that is expected. It is also important to pay attention to units (such as feet, yards, miles/hour, km/hour, and so on), and to give answers that are fractions or percentages, if requested. You may be asked to round up an answer to a certain number of decimal places.

Because NE questions do not allow you to guess at an answer, it is necessary to check your answer carefully after you have expended some time to obtain it.

Hints for answering questions:

- Read the question carefully. Since there are no answer choices to act as a guide, you need to understand what exactly is required.
- Keep aside a larger margin of time for this section, as the computations may take time.
- Make sure that you round up your answer to the exact degree of accuracy specified in the question. If no instructions are given, enter the exact number.

Your answer should be reasonable in terms of the question and what it is asking.

Chapter **3**
Students and Stress

Whether you've already started to prepare yourself for the GRE or are just finishing up your semester, you are probably well acquainted with stress and its terrible (though sometimes beneficial) effects. Students are particularly prone to stress, because on top of having to handle many day-to-day responsibilities, they also have to juggle academic life, which often includes deadlines to be met, intensive studying sessions and difficult teachers.

Studying for the GRE can be even more stressful than studying for a normal test, because your success depends on only one examination. Unlike a normal class, during which you'll take several tests and only study a few chapters at a time, the GRE evaluates you on a wide variety of concepts all at once. Of course, you'll be able to retake it if you don't do as well as you'd hoped, but with enough studying and preparation, you'll do just fine.

Stress may creep up at the most unexpected moment. You might feel confident about giving a speech, or taking a particular exam, up to the moment where you actually have to do it – that's when you become nervous, your palms are sweaty and you think you forgot everything you prepared for this particular event. You could even be studying calmly at your desk when you receive a phone call – one of your friends tells you how stressed he or she is for the GRE and in turn, you start stressing out. Stress could even creep up on you during the exam. The simple fact of being distracted by a noise or the clock ticking away can increase your stress level. This is why you need to know how to handle it, how to calm yourself down and refocus.

To make sure that you are successful while preparing and taking the GRE, you'll have to learn more about stress, how it affects you, and what you can do to control it. Ultimately, you can't get rid of your stress completely – and a certain level of stress is actually beneficial for you to a certain extent – so you need to learn how to manage it and flip the cards to your advantage. Let's start by exploring the causes of stress and how it affects you as a student.

Identifying Sources of Stress

There are many factors that commonly contribute to stress. Maybe you have a test coming up, or you are scared of failing one of your classes for example. Whether it is from the pressure of daily life or academic responsibilities, you need to identify the source of your stress so that you can better understand it.

As an exercise, you can create a list of different things that you feel are contributing to your level of stress.

- Do you have any responsibilities unrelated to your school life that may be pressuring you in some way and distracting you from studying? (Ex. Work, paying rent, car repairs – some college students may even have to care for a family member or have their own family to worry about)
- Do you have enough time to study for the GRE or are you preparing last minute and need to take the test as soon as possible?

- Are you taking the GRE because it is necessary for your graduate school application or are you taking it simply to put your best foot forward?
- Is there a section on the GRE that you feel might be problematic right from the start?

Asking these kinds of questions to yourself can help you establish a list of what may be your sources of stress. You could also create a table and list everything that you may feel is contributing to your level of stress. The example below is a table including some common sources of stress for college students to inspire you to create your own:

Academic sources of stress	Non-academic sources of stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> You put pressure on yourself to obtain the highest score possible. <input type="checkbox"/> You are worrying that you may have to retake the test twice if your score isn't adequate. <input type="checkbox"/> You are afraid that your parents or family members may be disappointed if your score isn't what is expected. <input type="checkbox"/> You do not have the necessary support from teachers or tutors to study. <input type="checkbox"/> You have other homework and exams to prepare for that are not related to the GRE. <input type="checkbox"/> You are comparing yourself to friends who may have an easier time taking tests and studying. On the other hand, one of your friends may have failed the GRE, which is leading you to believe that you'll end up in the same situation. <input type="checkbox"/> You are scared that you may not be able to get into the graduate program of your choice if you don't obtain a high score and do not have a backup plan. <input type="checkbox"/> You only have a few weeks left prior to your test date and don't have enough time to cover all the study material. <input type="checkbox"/> You aren't comfortable writing essays and the writing section of the GRE is scaring you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> You haven't received the financial aid you were hoping for this semester and are counting your pennies to pay for expenses. <input type="checkbox"/> Your boss has mentioned that he needs you for additional hours over the next few months. <input type="checkbox"/> Your car broke down and you need to take transit for a little while, which is doubling your commute to school and work. <input type="checkbox"/> Your parents are asking you to take care of your younger sibling while they go on vacation. <input type="checkbox"/> You are an international student and having issues with your visa, or legal status in the country. <input type="checkbox"/> Someone in your family may have fallen ill and you are concerned for his or her health, as well as left to care for that person and look after him or her. <input type="checkbox"/> You may be having problems with your boyfriend or girlfriend, which could interfere with your daily life.

In some cases, you might end up realizing that your stress doesn't come from your academic life, but from pressures in your own life that interfere with studying. Other students may realize that they are putting tremendous amounts of pressure on themselves to succeed and that they are their own source of stress. Whatever the case may be, knowing where your stress comes from in general is a great starting point in order to better understand your stress and apply the necessary stress management techniques for better results.

The Difference between Good and Bad Stress

It is important to realize that stress isn't always necessarily a bad thing. Stress can be good only up to the point where it doesn't interfere with your tasks. In other words, you could be under good stress, or under bad stress, depending on how this particular stress affects you. For example, if you are stressing out because you're having a hard time with a particular section of the GRE, your stress could do two different things:

- Push you to study harder, be motivated, and be even more prepared for the test
- Interfere with your study sessions by distracting your thoughts and preventing you from focusing on the task at hand

This is why we talk about good stress and bad stress. Stress can have a positive or negative impact on you, depending on how you manage it. While one will serve as a source of motivation (good stress), the other will interfere with the task at hand and distract you from the end goal (bad stress).

You certainly shouldn't worry if you are experiencing good stress, which helps you focus and pushes you to work even harder to achieve your goals. Good stress influences the way you interact with your environment and can give you the leverage you need to perform well in a situation. For example, if you are a music student preparing for an audition, good stress could stimulate your performance. Good stress could push an athlete to train even harder, or a student to study longer. Good stress usually comes in short bursts and will help you get through a particular event – it is usually associated with adrenaline. Think about a midterm exam; even if you've prepared yourself thoroughly for the evaluation, you may still experience a burst of anxiety or stress a few minutes before the exam. However, this quick stress response will help you pull through each and every question successfully. This is what good stress is; it has a positive impact on your life and daily activities and acts as a motivator.

On the other hand, your normal bursts of stress could develop into bad stress, which will interfere with your daily life and will have a negative impact on the outcome of a situation. Bad stress is often associated with helplessness – when you feel as though you have no control. When you are suffering from bad stress, the simplest things often become a challenge. The following symptoms of stress will help you evaluate if your stress is crossing the line from good to bad.

- Being unable to sleep
- Being constantly tired even when well-rested

- Being short-tempered and getting irritated easily
- Being unfocused and forgetful
- Being more emotional than usual
- Having increasingly negative thoughts
- Using poor judgment
- Changing eating habits
- Getting sick more often
- Developing nervous habits such as nail-biting

Depending on your situation, you may experience stress at different moments. For example, you could experience stress before an oral presentation at school, while preparing for an important exam, or while waiting for your school acceptance letter. Stress affects each student in a different way and you'll quickly discover that the most efficient stress management techniques depend on the ways you exhibit stress.

Knowing which stress symptoms you exhibit can also help you to realize when you need to take a step back and refocus your energy on studying rather than being nervous.

Factors that Influence Your Tolerance to Stress

There are a few aspects that can greatly decrease your stress tolerance level:

- Your sense of control:** If you feel as though you have no control of the situation, you are more likely to exhibit stress symptoms. While you are preparing for the GRE, keep in mind that you are the sole individual responsible for your success. It is up to you to prepare yourself and you have full control on the outcome of the situation; understanding this concept will help ease your stress as you will realize that you are not helpless. You have the ability to take charge
- Your attitude:** A negative outlook will automatically translate itself into negative stress. Stay positive throughout your preparation and try to focus on the good things in general. For example, instead of fearing failure, think about the great things that will come with your success; you'll be able to get into the graduate school of your choice, you might be offered a scholarship – think about how proud success will make you. Work towards a positive goal and stay away from any negative thinking, whether related to the GRE or not. This is a life lesson in general and can be applied to all aspects of your life
- Your support network:** If you feel lonely and do not have any friends or family to help you out and share the journey with you, you are more likely to isolate yourself and keep your stress to yourself. However, if you share your thoughts, communicate with loved ones and make sure to have a strong support system

to help you go through certain situations, you'll be more confident and your stress will be reduced. For example, many surgeons refuse to perform a surgery on a patient who doesn't have a good support system during the recovery phase – the people who surround you, the help you can get and the resources that are available to you all contribute to your success and can help you cope with stress and emotions better

- ❑ **Your preparation:** Without adequate preparation and studying, you'll most likely feel stressed out until the moment you get your score. If you work hard, study efficiently and cover all the material needed to pass the GRE, you have no reason to be stressed out or fear a negative outcome. No stress management technique can help you as much as being thoroughly prepared and feeling confident in your abilities can
- ❑ **Your ability to cope:** Not knowing how to handle your emotions and your stress will only make you more anxious. Thankfully, the next chapter will give you great tips on how to manage your stress! This is a great complement to having control over a situation. Knowing how to cope with a particular situation, gaining control over your emotions and being able to refocus your energy positively as demonstrated in the following chapter will help you say “no” to stress

The good news is that you can act on these five factors in order to ensure your success.

Chapter **4**
Stress Management Techniques

Now that you have a better understanding of what causes your stress and what kinds of stress you are experiencing, it is time to learn how to manage and control it. There are various techniques that you can use to get a handle on your emotions and control how you feel towards a particular event (your GRE test date, for example). This chapter will explore a variety of stress management techniques that can help you cope with the stress and be as stress-free as possible on your test date.

Quick Stress Release

Let's start by looking at quick 'stress release' techniques. These can be used at any moment and do not involve much more than relaxing for a few minutes. For example, if you are sitting at your desk studying for the GRE and stress is making it hard to focus, try out one of the following tips to help you refocus immediately:

- ❑ **Take a breath and count to 10.** This is easy and only takes a few seconds. When you're stressed out, you don't breathe as easily as you normally would. Taking a deep breath and counting to 10 will calm your nerves and give you a few seconds to refocus your energy
- ❑ **Visualize your success.** Again, this technique will help you pause for a moment. Sit back and close your eyes; visualize the day of the test. You are well rested, well prepared, and confident. Visualize how happy you will be once you receive your passing score. This will help you change your mindset from negative to positive in no time
- ❑ **Go for a walk.** If you've been studying for hours and are feeling achy and tired, get up and go for a brief but brisk walk. This will help you clear your mind and take a few minutes for yourself
- ❑ **Take a hot shower or a long bath.** For many people, a shower or bath helps to calm the nerves and create the sensation of being rested. If you are studying late at night, this can really help you to bring your stress level down, whether you plan on studying afterwards or going to bed to get some rest
- ❑ **Stand up straight.** If you've been curled over your desk for hours and are slumping over as if the weight of the world were on your shoulders, simply straightening up can give you the feeling of regaining control over the situation
- ❑ **Compose a mantra or use affirmations.** If you are a spiritual person, using a mantra or certain affirmations can help you refocus your energy in a positive way. Repeating a simple sentence such as "I am calm and in control" can greatly help you to actually believe that you are calm and in control, and focus your energy on your work rather than your worries

As you can see, these techniques are very simple and will only take a few minutes of your time. They are ideal when you are feeling stressed while preparing for the GRE and can't seem to focus properly. So, the next time you are sitting at your desk and just feel lost and unable to focus your energy on the task at hand, use any of these six stress release techniques to calm your nerves and help you take a few moments for yourself.

The Big Picture

If, on the other hand, your stress is not only rising during your study sessions, but is constantly manifesting itself throughout the day, you'll need some more drastic techniques to keep you on the right path. Of course, you can certainly still use the above techniques to refocus at any time, but here are some additional steps you can take to ensure that GRE-related stress doesn't start to dominate your entire life:

- ❑ **Get a massage.** Massage therapy is a great way to make sure that your stress is being taken care of. Taking some time to relax and have your muscles rubbed and your knots detangled will ensure that you actually get some time to yourself and slow down every once in a while. Since massages are most often given in a quiet room with limited noise and interruptions, you'll get the opportunity to rest and get a little bit of peace and quiet. It is also a well-known fact that stress often manifests itself physically, so the massage in itself will help you eliminate toxins and release tension in your body. If you have health insurance, you could possibly be eligible for a discount on massage therapy, so be sure to look into this
- ❑ **Learn to meditate.** Research into the effects of meditation has found that it has generally positive impacts on physical ailments caused due to stress-related factors. In a study by Schneider et al (2005)¹, it was found that meditation could help to reduce blood pressure significantly. Meditate in a calm environment, focusing on the moment you are in. Try not to think of the future and what lies ahead; instead, focus on centering your thoughts in the current moment and calming your mind
- ❑ **Talk it out.** Talking to another person about what you're feeling can be a cathartic experience. Confiding in a friend or a close associate can help you 'blow off steam' and give you the much-needed feeling of not being alone with your problem. If you do not have anyone to talk to, write down your feelings in a journal. Simply write to let it out, without trying to come up with a solution: you'll notice that you feel a lot better after putting down your emotions on the page
- ❑ **Improve your diet.** If your diet is not already as healthy as possible, you should try to include healthy foods in all your meals. This will give you energy and help you focus, benefitting you in more ways than one. For example, you could start by cutting down on caffeinated and sugary foods. Limit your intake of coffee to one or two cups in the morning and avoid candy, desserts and other sources of sugar. Stress can alter your food intake and dietary preferences, making you want to consume more junk items, but avoid these as much as possible. Caffeine and sugar will prevent you from being completely focused on the task at hand and will also lower your immunity. Other (Schneider, R. H., Alexander, C. N., Staggers, F., Orme-Johnson, D. W., Rainforth, M., Salerno, J. W. et al. (2005), #)ways of improving your diet can include eating the recommended daily portions of fruits and vegetables, drinking plenty of water and eating 5-6 small meals a day instead of 3 big ones. Following these steps is a great way to take care of your body (and your mind). Stress is less likely to affect you – or will affect you in a milder manner – if your body is in good shape and well-fed. Of course, if you are already eating a healthy diet, keep up the good work!

(1Schneider, R. H., Alexander, C. N., Staggers, F., Orme-Johnson, D. W., Rainforth, M., Salerno, J.W., et al. (2005). A randomized controlled trial of stress reduction in African-Americans treated for hypertension for over one year. *American Journal of Hypertension*, 18, 88–98.)

- ❑ **Take control of your study environment.** Make sure that you are studying in a place that is conducive to studying. Avoid clutter and unnecessary distraction. If you are studying at home, make sure your desk is neatly organized and you aren't watching TV while working on your math problems. If you are studying at the library, on the other hand, make sure that you won't be distracted by the other students coming and going. Having a proper environment to study will help you feel more in control, and will help you focus on studying rather than being stressed out
- ❑ **Socialize.** You probably aren't the only student at your school preparing for the GRE. Talking about the test and your study plans with other students in the same situation can help you feel better about the whole thing. You might also want to talk with people who have already taken the GRE and ask them if they have any tips for you. Making your GRE preparation a social activity will help you realize that you aren't the only one going through this. Socializing can also help you get reassurance that you are on the right track, which can greatly ease your stress. Go for lunch with your group of friends – if any of them are also preparing for the GRE, you might be able to share tips and discuss the test. You might even want to start a study group with other students. Of course, socializing and forgetting about the GRE for a few hours can also help you clear your mind and reduce your stress: take an evening to go out with the girls or the boys and have some fun! Just be sure to not neglect your studying in favor of socializing
- ❑ **Learn to manage your time.** You probably are stressed mostly because you don't think you have enough time to prepare – this is a stress factor for many students. It is also possible that you have other responsibilities outside of your GRE preparation, whether at home or at school. Learning how to manage your time properly will help you feel in control and get a handle on your stress, as you'll be more confident in your ability to obtain a great score. Track your progress in a journal, schedule your study sessions in your day planner or even create a checklist of sections to cover that you can cross off one at a time as you prepare yourself for the test. These are all great ways to make sure that you are keeping track of what you need to do. Set aside some time to study everyday and make sure that you stick to your routine – this will make time management much easier, as you'll know exactly when you'll have time to study and how much time you have. You can then plan your study sessions better and evaluate what you have to do in order to be ready by a certain date
- ❑ **Don't skip study sessions.** If you're stressed out, it can be very easy to go out with your friends or watch a movie instead of spending a few hours studying. Temptations are everywhere, but let's face it—you can't be successful if you don't prepare yourself properly. If you've set up a schedule for yourself or are using a study plan (like the ones proposed within this volume) you'll need to make sure that you are sticking to your plan and not skipping study sessions. Being prepared for the GRE is the only way you'll be able to obtain the highest score possible

Taking the Test

While resting and preparing adequately are great ways to minimize your GRE-related stress, there are also things you can do on the day of the test to ensure your success. Think about the various circumstances that could push you to stress out during an exam.

For example, the classroom could be too cold or too hot, and the extreme temperature could distract you. You could also be hungry, forget the answer to a simple question or feel stressed because you didn't arrive early enough and are now rushed to a computer by the test center staff. To make sure that you can manage your stress properly up until the moment you leave the test center, here are a few things to consider:

- ❑ **Prepare for heating and air conditioning.** Layer up to make sure that you'll be comfortable if it's too hot and that you can bundle up if it's too cold
- ❑ **Eat a light snack** to prevent hunger but don't overdo it as eating too much could make you sleepy
- ❑ **Arrive early enough to the test center.** Make sure that you plan enough time to beat traffic if you live in a big city and that you can arrive early enough to have some time for yourself before the test. This way you'll arrive calm, ready and rested
- ❑ **Don't participate in group paranoia.** This is true especially if you are taking the test at the same time as other people you know. Too many times, students start talking about the exam and things they've heard from other students who have taken the test. This can create more anxiety, so try to distance yourself from conversations related to the GRE right before the test
- ❑ **Focus on the moment.** If you sit down at the computer and realize that you don't know the answer to the first question, you could easily enter panic mode and blame yourself for not studying enough. Focus on what you do know and what you are doing right now. As you progress through the exam, you'll feel better about your aptitudes and might even remember the answer to that pesky question
- ❑ **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** If you need clarification or aren't sure what to do at any moment during the test, ask the proctor for help. This way, you'll avoid building anxiety or stress related to uncertainty
- ❑ **Skip over difficult questions.** Don't waste time on the questions you can't answer right away. Spending too much time on one question could increase your stress level
- ❑ **Breathe and stretch.** If you start feeling tense during the exam, remember to take deep breaths and stretch your arms and legs. This will help activate blood circulation and release tension

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Chapter **5**

6-Month Study Plan for the GRE

The study plans presented in this volume will focus on the GRE General Test. The key to successfully passing the GRE is to ensure that you are well prepared and have enough time to assimilate the concepts you will be evaluated on. Cramming a week before the test certainly is not recommended, so make sure that you are planning enough time to study prior to the exam. It is highly recommended that you plan early and start studying at least 6 months in advance of your test date. This will help you be more prepared and will lower your stress level during your preparation as well as while you are taking the test – since you'll be confident in your abilities and would have had enough time to review all aspects of the exam.

Before we jump into the study plan, here is a list of books that you should get your hands on to study for the GRE. Of course, these are not mandatory, although highly encouraged. If you already have a good math textbook, you may not have to invest in *GRE Quantitative Reasoning: Study Guide With Practice Questions*, for example. So, use your personal judgment to purchase the resources you will need and do not already have – it is also up to you to determine which area of the GRE you are planning on focusing, if any.

Here is a list of resources we recommend:

1. *ETS' Official Guide to the GRE*

Prepared by the Educational Testing Service, this one contains information about the GRE test, including what to expect, how scores are calculated, and practice test questions covering each section - verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing.

2. *GRE Quantitative Reasoning: Study Guide With Practice Questions*

This book acquaints you with all types of Quantitative Reasoning questions, like Quantitative Comparison, Multiple Choice Single Answer, Multiple Choice Multiple Answers, Data Analysis, and Numeric Entry. Dedicated chapters on Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, and Data Analysis cover these topics in depth. 10 Timed Practice Exercises towards the end of the book help you to practice in simulated test conditions.

3. *GRE Verbal Reasoning Supreme: Study Guide with Practice Questions*

This book delivers proven methods to master every question style, plus over 695 GRE prep questions and 3 complete Verbal practice tests. Just like the real GRE Verbal section, questions cover the physical sciences, biological sciences, arts, business, and more. All answers include thorough, supported reasoning so you'll be ready to master the Verbal section of the GRE.

4. *GRE Analytical Writing Supreme: Solutions to the Real Essay Topics*

A whopping 145 essays will not only trigger but also boost your analytical and critical thinking abilities tremendously. Improve your AWA score by going through the solutions to 72 official Issue and 73 official Argument topics and get loads of practice. Learn how to approach and write essays for each of them and get new perspectives on how to write with the help of strategies and sample essays.

5. *GRE Master Wordlist: 1535 Words for Verbal Mastery*

A guide to 1535 common words found in the GRE, with associated meaning (synonyms), part of speech, pronunciation, sentence usage, and antonyms.

6. *Vocabulary Flashcards (optional)*

These flashcards are a useful aid for improving your vocabulary and will help you achieve higher verbal scores on the GRE. Hand-picked by GRE experts, these 1500 flashcards contain words that appear in the GRE. You'll learn the word and its meaning, synonyms, antonyms, and how to use the word in context through example sentences.

7. *6 Practice Tests for the GRE OR Mock GRE Tests*

This book contains six full-length practice tests covering more than 480 realistic practice test questions, as well as answers with elaborate explanations. This book has specific questions asked in the quantitative, verbal reasoning, and analytical writing sections of the GRE, including sample Issue and Argument essay prompts to help you frame your responses. Useful test-taking strategies and tactics will help you ace the GRE with effective practice. Additionally, there are simulated GRE tests available at www.thebigcd.com

8. *ETS' PowerPrep Online*

Two free practice tests that help simulate the test format of the GRE.

Getting started

Because you are preparing yourself well in advance, you don't need to study hard for hours every day – which is great if you have tons of other things going on. You're also at an advantage over last-minute students because you'll get to actually learn rather than rely on memorization, and you don't need any particular background knowledge to get started, as you'll learn everything you need to know in due time.

The right way to approach your study time is not to focus on one section at a time, but rather to study a little bit of everything all at once. This will allow you to make sure that you have enough time for all of the sections, rather than becoming proficient in one area and remaining uncomfortable with others. It's also a great way to ensure that you are not cramming on one particular topic a few weeks prior to the exam and that you have enough time to assimilate all necessary concepts.

Since you have the entirety of six months to prepare yourself, there is no need to set aside a particular amount of time for each section – you can progress at your own pace, as long as at the end of each week or month you can check off each of the items that will be discussed shortly. You need to follow a certain rhythm because Month 6 needs to be reserved for review and practice; you should have all of your studying done before hitting the start of the 30-day countdown to the exam.

Each to-do item is preceded by a dash (-). Use this dash to make a checkmark every time you complete an item.

MONTH 1

The first month of your study plan will be used as a way for you to get more familiar with the GRE. As mentioned before, knowing the format of the GRE and understanding what is expected from you is half the battle – even the smartest individuals may obtain low scores on the GRE if the format and the type of questions asked on the test take them by surprise. During the first month, the objectives are:

- To develop a familiarity with study materials
- To understand the format of the GRE
- To evaluate your existing knowledge

Start by assembling your study material. You can find the resources listed above or other similar resources at your local library or you can purchase our own copies online or at select bookstores. Just make sure that if you are buying used copies, no marks are found inside, as you'll be using the practice tests to test your knowledge – not the knowledge of the person who owned the book before you. Once you have the suggested materials in hand, look through each book to familiarize yourself with its layout and concepts. Insert post-its or page markers to separate the different sections and make it easier for you to find your way through the books.

Once you've done this, it is highly recommended that you look over a practice test. Use the practice test to review the various sections, and read through the questions to get an idea of what will be expected from you when you actually take the GRE. Once you've looked the test over, try to answer the questions. This will be very useful in analyzing which sections you'll need to put more time and effort into studying, and it will give you a clear idea of what your existing knowledge is. Follow the weekly plan as follows:

Week 1

- Assemble required materials.
- Look over the various books and read through any background on the GRE provided within them.
- Take an initial practice test.
- Review your answers using the answer key provided with your practice test. Make sure to read through the explanation given for each answer, whether you got it right or wrong. This is a great way to start your studying. Take notes and make a list of the sections you've struggled with and scored the lowest on. If you prefer to practice your testing skills on the computer, you should use the *Mock GRE Tests* mentioned above to simulate the testing environment as closely as possible!

Weeks 2, 3, and 4

- Use your vocabulary resources to learn new words. Learn 20 to 25 words per day from the *GRE Master Wordlist: 1535 words for Verbal Mastery*. You can make flashcards to help you memorize the words and their definitions or use the printed *Vocabulary Flashcards*.

- ❑ Start your Math Review with Arithmetic. Use the *GRE Quantitative Reasoning: Study Guide With Practice Questions* listed above or any textbook you may already have to review the basic concepts. Do not write anything in your study book, as you may want to go back over some of the harder questions later on.

Keep in mind that Month 1 of the study plan is a bit slower than the other months. It's an introduction to what you'll have to do and allows you to review basic concepts (arithmetic and vocabulary, for example) before moving on to more involved ones.

MONTH 2

The second month of your study plan will introduce you to every aspect of the GRE. During this month, the objectives are:

- ❑ To evaluate your progress with a practice test
- ❑ To develop your vocabulary and other linguistic skills
- ❑ To build upon your existing mathematical knowledge

Start your second month of studying by taking another practice test. See if you notice any improvement – is your score lower or higher? Pay attention to the sections you've already started studying – how did you score on the arithmetic section and the vocabulary questions?

Next, follow the weekly plan below:

Week 1

- ❑ Take a second practice test.
- ❑ Review your answers using the answer key corresponding to your practice test. Make sure to read through the explanation given for each answer, whether you got it right or wrong. It is highly encouraged to use the Mock GRE Tests to practice. The software will also help you keep track of right and wrong answers as you move along.
- ❑ Conduct a general review of all concepts learned in the previous month.

Weeks 2, 3, and 4

- ❑ Use your vocabulary resources to learn new words. Learn 20 to 25 words per day from the *GRE Master Wordlist: 1535 words for Verbal Mastery*. You can create flashcards to help you memorize the words and their definitions or use the printed *Vocabulary Flashcards* listed above. At the end of each week, make sure to review the words learned in previous weeks and not only the new words of the week.

- ❑ Continue studying mathematics by covering the concepts of algebra. Refer to the fourth chapter (Algebra section) of the *GRE Quantitative Reasoning: Study Guide With Practice Questions* to learn or review concepts and then test your knowledge by solving the exercises given at the end of the chapter. Do not forget to set some time aside to review the concepts of arithmetic you've already covered.
- ❑ Work on your reading skills. Pick up interesting books (preferably non-fiction) or academic journals and try to read for 1 hour every week. The only way to work on your reading skills and comprehension is to read more. Test your comprehension skills by writing a short summary of the articles or books you read.
- ❑ Write 3 essays on paper or use your own computer to write your essays. You might want to first read through our sample essays book (*GRE Analytical Writing Supreme: Solutions to the Real Essay Topics*) to gain a better understanding of what is expected from you in your essays. It is always a good idea to ask a trusted friend, a teacher, or even other students from GRE prep forums to look over your essays and give comments.
- ❑ If you're having a hard time finding the time to study, set aside a predetermined amount of time at the same time each day for your GRE preparation. Setting a study routine will help you stay consistent. The following months will be very similar to Month 2, in the sense that you will build upon the concepts previously learned in order to develop your knowledge a bit more every day.

MONTH 3

The third month of your study plan will help you build upon your existing knowledge. During this month, the objectives are:

- ❑ To evaluate your progress through a practice test
- ❑ To develop your vocabulary and other linguistic skills
- ❑ To build upon your existing mathematical knowledge

Start your third month of studying by taking another practice test. See if you notice any improvement – is your score lower or higher? Pay attention to the sections you've already started studying – it should start to become a bit easier as you continue to study.

Then, follow the weekly plan below:

Week 1

- ❑ Take a third practice test. You can take a test from *6 Practice Tests for the GRE or Mock GRE Tests*. Alternatively, you can also use *ETS' PowerPrep Online Tests*.
- ❑ Review your answers using the answer key corresponding to your practice test. Make sure to read through the explanation given for each answer, whether you got it right or wrong.

- ❑ Conduct a general review of all concepts learned in the previous months.

Weeks 2, 3, and 4

- ❑ Use your vocabulary resources to learn new words. Learn 20 to 25 words per day from the *GRE Master Wordlist: 1535 words for Verbal Mastery*. You can create flashcards to help you memorize the words and their definitions or use the printed *Vocabulary Flashcards* mentioned above. At the end of each week, make sure to review the words learned in previous months and not only the new words of the week.
- ❑ Continue studying mathematics by covering the concepts of geometry. Use *GRE Quantitative Reasoning: Study Guide With Practice Questions* to test your knowledge and review concepts. Do not forget to take some time aside to review the concepts of arithmetic and algebra you've already covered.
- ❑ Work on your reading skills. Pick up interesting books (preferably non-fiction) or academic journals and try to read for a few hours every week. The only way to work on your reading skills and comprehension is to read more. Test your comprehension skills by writing a short summary of the articles or books you read.
- ❑ Write 3 essays. It is always a good idea to ask a trusted friend, a teacher, or even other students from GRE prep forums to look over your essays and give comments. You can also read essays – go through more than a few of them in the *GRE Analytical Writing Supreme: Solutions to the Real Essay Topics* and use the book to develop your writing skills and better understand what is expected of your writing.

MONTH 4

The fourth month of your study plan will help you build upon your existing knowledge. During this month, the objectives are:

- ❑ To evaluate your progress through a practice test
- ❑ To develop your vocabulary and other linguistic skills
- ❑ To build upon your existing mathematical knowledge
- ❑ To reproduce GRE conditions to evaluate your progress

Start your fourth month of studying by taking another practice test. See if you notice any improvement – is your score lower or higher? Pay attention to the sections you've already started studying – it should start to become a bit easier as you continue to study.

Then, follow the weekly plan below:

Week 1

- ❑ Take a practice test. You can take a test from *6 Practice Tests for the GRE* or *Mock GRE Tests*. Alternatively, you can also use *ETS' PowerPrep Online Tests*.

- ❑ Review your answers using the answer key corresponding to your practice test. Make sure to read through the explanation given for each answer, whether you got it right or wrong.
- ❑ Conduct a general review of all concepts learned in the previous month.

Weeks 2, 3, and 4

- ❑ Use a vocabulary resource to learn new words. Learn 20 to 25 words per day from the *GRE Master Wordlist: 1535 words for Verbal Mastery*. You can make flashcards to help you memorize the words and their definitions or use the printed *Vocabulary Flashcards*. At the end of each week, make sure to review the words learned in previous months and not only the new words of the week.
- ❑ Continue studying mathematics by covering the concepts of data analysis. Use the mathematics guide suggested testing your knowledge and reviewing concepts. Do not forget to set some time aside to review the concepts of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry you've already covered.
- ❑ Work on your reading skills. Pick up interesting books (preferably non-fiction) or academic journals and try to read for a few hours every week. The only way to work on your reading skills and comprehension is to read more. Test your comprehension skills by writing a short summary of the articles or books you read.
- ❑ Write 3 essays. It is always a good idea to ask a trusted friend, a teacher, or even other students from GRE prep forums to look over your essays and give comments. You might also want to check out *GRE Analytical Writing Supreme: Solutions to the Real Essay Topics* to help you develop writing strategies.
- ❑ At the end of Month 4, take another practice test using *6 Practice Tests for the GRE* or *Mock GRE Tests*. Alternatively, you can also use *ETS' PowerPrep Online Tests*. This time, try to simulate the real GRE conditions and environment. Isolate yourself in a room where you won't be disturbed, and set a timer for each section according to the guidelines set by ETS. You might want to use online or computer-based tests to truly simulate the same environment you'll be in on the day of the test. The *Mock GRE tests* will help you with that, so take advantage of everything this software has to offer! See how high you score and how well you can handle your stress in these conditions.
- ❑ At this point, you've covered all four major concepts of the Quantitative Reasoning section and should be able to answer all questions in this section with a certain level of confidence. You've also learned more than 1500 new words and have spent much time reading and writing.

For Months 5 and 6 of your study plan, please refer to the next chapter (8-week Study Plan for the GRE).

Chapter **6**

8-Week Study Plan for the GRE

This 8-week Study Plan for the GRE can be used in two different ways:

Stand-alone preparation: If you've waited until the last minute to start studying for the GRE or have just discovered that you will have to take the GRE for your graduate school application, you can use this comprehensive 8-week plan to get yourself ready for the big day.

A follow-up to the 6-month Plan: If you've started studying with the previous chapter, the 8-week Study Plan will act as Months 5 and 6 of your 6-month Plan.

This 8-week Plan focuses on reviewing concepts quickly but efficiently, as well as integrating practice tests to evaluate your skills and readiness to take the GRE.

If you are using this study plan as a stand-alone preparation, please refer to the suggested material section of the 6-month study plan. You'll also want to start by preparing flashcards for new vocabulary words taken from your vocabulary resource (*GRE Master Wordlist: 1535 Words for Verbal Mastery*).

At this point in your preparation, you should be setting aside at least 2 hours every day for studying, if not more. This is crunch time, and you need to review as many items as possible in a matter of weeks. Again, use the dashes (-) to make checkmarks next to all completed items.

Week 1

- Take a practice test. You can use the 6 *Practice Tests for the GRE* or *Mock GRE Tests* for this. Try to simulate real GRE conditions to evaluate your readiness to take the actual test.
- Review 100 vocabulary words with the help of the *Vocabulary Flashcards*.
- Review all concepts of arithmetic needed for the GRE. You can also use the exercises found at the end of the *GRE Quantitative Reasoning: Study Guide With Practice Questions* to sharpen your skills.
- Read academic journals and/or non-fiction books. Aim for 30 minutes of reading at least 5 times a week. You might want to take a look at *GRE Reading Comprehension: Detailed Solutions to 325 Questions* which includes around 100+ passages to practice your reading comprehension.
- Write a short essay at least 5 times a week.

Week 2

- Review 100 vocabulary words with the help of the *Vocabulary Flashcards*. Do not neglect the words reviewed during the previous week – integrate them as well.
- Review all concepts of algebra needed for the GRE. Review arithmetic as needed.
- Read academic journals and/or non-fiction books. Aim for 30 minutes of reading at least 5 times a week.

- Write a short essay at least 5 times a week. You are encouraged to use *GRE Analytical Writing Supreme: Solutions to the Real Essay Topics* to help you develop writing strategies.

Week 3

- Review 100 vocabulary words with the help of the *Vocabulary Flashcards*. Do not neglect the words reviewed during the previous weeks — integrate them as well.
- Review all geometry concepts needed for the GRE. Review arithmetic and algebra as needed, using the *GRE Quantitative Reasoning: Study Guide With Practice Questions*.
- Read academic journals and/or non-fiction books. Aim for 30 minutes of reading at least 5 times a week.
- Write a short essay at least 5 times a week.

Week 4

- Take a practice test. You can use the *6 Practice Tests for the GRE* or *Mock GRE Tests* for this. Try to simulate real GRE conditions to evaluate your readiness to take the actual test.
- Review 100 vocabulary words with the help of the *Vocabulary Flashcards*. Do not neglect the words reviewed during the previous weeks — integrate them as well.
- Review all concepts of data analysis needed for the GRE. Review arithmetic, algebra, and geometry as needed.
- Read academic journals and/or non-fiction books. Aim for 30 minutes of reading at least 5 times a week.
- Write a short essay at least 5 times a week.

Week 5

- Take a practice test. You can use the *6 Practice Tests for the GRE* or *Mock GRE Tests* for this. Try to simulate real GRE conditions to evaluate your readiness to take the actual test. How's your score? Compare it to the first practice test you took — it should be much higher.
- Review all answers to your practice test and take good note of the sections that were problematic.
- Take this week to review the concepts you find the most difficult.

Week 6

- Take a practice test. You can use the *6 Practice Tests for the GRE* or *Mock GRE Tests* for this. Try to simulate real GRE conditions to evaluate your readiness to take the actual test.

- Review all of the vocabularies you've previously worked on.
- Review concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. Spend more time on the most difficult sections.
- Read academic journals or non-fiction books. Aim for 30 minutes of reading at least 5 times a week.
- Have someone knowledgeable look over your essay answers from the practice test, and then rewrite them according to their comments, if needed.

Week 7

- Take a practice test. Try to simulate real GRE conditions to evaluate your readiness to take the actual test.
- Review all of the vocabularies you've previously worked on.
- Review concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. Spend more time on the most difficult sections.
- Read academic journals and/or non-fiction books. Aim for 30 minutes of reading at least 5 times a week.
- Have someone knowledgeable look over your essay answers from the practice test, and then rewrite them according to their comments, if needed.

Week 8

- Take as many practice tests as you can. Retake some of the practice tests that you found more difficult if you have to. The last week prior to the GRE should be used to boost your confidence and review any sections that may still need a bit of work.

Chapter **7**
GRE Scores

The grading scale for the GRE can be rather confusing, so hopefully, this chapter will help you demystify the calculations involved in tallying your final score. First, let's take a look at how the scores are reported for individual sections.

The GRE is scored as follows:

- ❑ **Verbal Reasoning:** 130-170, in 1-point increments
- ❑ **Quantitative Reasoning:** 130-170, in 1-point increments
- ❑ **Analytical Writing:** 0-6, in half-point increments

Please note that if you leave an entire section blank, you'll receive the mentioned NS (no score) for that particular section.

According to your score in each section of the GRE, you'll also be assigned a percentile ranking. The following table illustrates the % associated with each score for two sections of the GRE:

Verbal Reasoning Concordance Table

GRE Score	Rank in %
170	99
169	99
168	98
167	98
166	97
165	96
164	94
163	92
162	90
161	88
160	85
159	82
158	79
157	75
156	72
155	67
154	63
153	59
152	53

GRE Score	Rank in %
151	49
150	44
149	39
148	35
147	31
146	28
145	25
144	22
143	19
142	16
141	14
140	12
139	10
138	8
137	7
136	5
135	4
134	3
133	2
132	2
131	1
130	

Quantitative Reasoning Concordance Table

GRE Score	Rank in %
170	96
169	94
168	91
167	89
166	86
164	81
163	79
161	74
160	70

GRE Score	Rank in %
159	67
158	64
157	61
156	57
155	54
154	50
153	46
152	43
151	39
150	35
149	32
148	28
147	25
146	21
145	18
144	15
143	13
142	11
141	9
140	7
139	6
138	4
137	3
136	2
135	2
134	1
133	1
132	1
131	
130	

You'll also need to make sure that you check with your university what the required GRE scores are for the program of study you are considering applying for. These can vary greatly from one university to another and even from one program of study to another. You'll also want to ask around to figure out what the preferred GRE score for your program of study is. Of course, you'll need to score what is required, but you are much better off getting a higher score if the department you are applying to is known to prefer a higher range than what is normally required.

Chapter **8**
Test-Taking Tips

While being prepared for the GRE is certainly a very important part of being successful on the test, it is also important to realize that even when you've studied for countless hours, your work isn't done. You've studied everything you need to know to pass the test with a high score – however, you still need to take the test. Many people complain that they aren't good test takers and often struggle with the pressure of answering a set of questions within a certain frame. Think about it: how many times have you studied hard for an exam and felt confident about your ability and understanding of all the concepts, but still managed to get a disappointing grade? Test-taking is an art in itself. It takes more to get a good grade on a test than simply understanding the concepts at hand.

This is especially true with the GRE, which is a long test and takes more than just a few minutes to complete. You'll need to manage your time, develop strategies, etc. Here are various test-taking tips that can help you survive the actual test and come out of it victorious.

General Strategies for Taking the GRE

The following is a list of strategies that will help to improve your chances of performing well on the GRE:

- Review basic concepts in math, logic, and writing.
- Work through the test-taking strategies offered in this book.
- Work through mock GRE tests until you feel thoroughly comfortable with the types of questions you will see.
- As you are studying for the GRE, focus your energy on the types of questions that give you the most difficulty.
- Learn to guess wisely. Especially for questions that you find difficult, you should hone your ability to dismiss the options that are clearly wrong and make an educated guess about which one is right.
- Answer every question. You won't lose any points for choosing the wrong answer, so even a wild guess that might or might not be right is better than no answer at all.

Preparing for Test Day

- In the time leading up to your test, practice, then practice some more. Practice until you are confident with the material.
- Know when your test is, and when you need to be at the testing center or in front of your computer at home.

- ❑ Make a “practice run” to your testing center, so that you can anticipate how much time you will need to allow to get there. For the At Home test, make sure to sign in at least 15 minutes before the test.
- ❑ Understand the timing and guidelines for the test and plan accordingly. Remember that you are not allowed to eat or drink while taking the GRE, although you will be allowed to snack or drink during some of the short breaks during testing. Plan accordingly.
- ❑ Know exactly what documentation you will need to bring with you to the testing center. If you are testing at home, you will have to provide a valid government-issued identification document as well.
- ❑ Relax, especially on the day or night before your test. If you have studied and practiced wisely, you will be well prepared for the test. You may want to briefly glance over some test preparation materials but cramming the night before will not be productive.
- ❑ Eat well and get a good night’s sleep. You will want to be well-rested for the test.

The Test Day

- ❑ Read the question properly - This is a no-brainer, but most students will end up losing valuable points because they misread a few questions in an attempt to save some time. If you’ve taken one of the GRE practice tests, you already know that some questions are single-answer questions, while others may require you to select more than one answer. Make sure that you know what is required and check that your answer reflects the instructions provided in the question.
- ❑ Do not waste your time on questions that are too difficult - Answer everything that you actually know off the top of your head, since no question carries greater weight than any other. You can always go back at the end to answer the more difficult questions if you have time left. However, you want to make sure that you maximize your score by answering everything you are familiar with and certain of before the time expires.
- ❑ Budget your time properly - You’ll have to answer different kinds of questions, including questions requiring you to write sentence-based answers. Make sure that you plan enough time for each section, including a few minutes to review obvious spelling and grammar mistakes in the analytical section. The more familiar you are with the format of the GRE, the easier it will be to do so, as you will already know what to expect.
- ❑ Use your scratch paper - Many students tend to fly through the exam without using their pile of scratch paper. Make sure that you verify all your answers and use additional scratch paper if needed. You won’t have much time to go back and review uncertain answers at the end of the test, so you will want to make sure that the answer you enter on the computer - on your first try is the right one.
- ❑ If you are answering multiple-choice questions, use the elimination process to help ensure that the answer you select is the right one. The elimination process will force you to reason and justify why you are eliminating each answer, giving you a better chance of scoring a correct answer.

- ❑ For mathematics questions, verify your answer with the reverse equation. Remember that multiple-choice questions always have a couple of answers that will seem to fit if you make a common mistake in your calculations – by using the reversed equation to test out your answer, you'll make sure that you have the correct one.
- ❑ For the verbal sections, you'll want to read the questions attentively and make sure that you understand all wordings before attempting to answer. For the reading comprehension questions, only rely on information that is provided to you in the prompt.

By following these simple tips, you'll have a better chance of being successful and will feel more confident as you progress through the test.

You also want to make sure that you are taking control of outside circumstances. As it was mentioned in previous chapters, wear comfortable clothing on the day of the test. Uncomfortable clothing will distract you and influence your state of mind while answering questions. Comfortable clothing, on the other hand, will put you at ease. Get plenty of rest the night before – cramming is an ineffective way to prepare, so if you feel unprepared the night before, there's not much you'll be able to do about it. Go to bed early and make sure that you get enough sleep and have enough energy to carry yourself through the test. Don't eat too heavily prior to the exam as this can make you drowsy – however, make sure that you eat a light but sustaining snack to prevent hunger. Lastly, stay calm and avoid panic. If you've prepared yourself properly and included practice tests in your study plan, you will do just fine.

Chapter **9**
Conclusion and Last Words

If you've read this guide thoroughly and have gone through each step outlined in the study plans, you are probably well on your way to obtaining a high score on your GRE. You now know everything there is to know about the test, what's on the test, how to take the test, and how to manage your stress, both during your preparation and while taking the test. Keep in mind that even though you have thoroughly prepared yourself months ahead of time, you'll still have to be fully focused when the day of the exam comes, to make sure that your studying efforts pay off as much as possible.

Here's a quick review of everything you've learned through this guide:

- ❑ The GRE is a standardized test required by most graduate schools to be successfully admitted to selected programs of study
- ❑ There are two types of GRE: the General Test and the GRE Subject Test
- ❑ You can take the general GRE year-round, at any testing location or at home, while the subject tests are only available on predetermined dates and at specific locations
- ❑ There are three main sections on the general GRE test: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing
- ❑ Most students experience some kind of stress during their academic career. Stress can greatly impact your performance and ability to properly focus and assimilate concepts
- ❑ You may experience good stress and bad stress. While good stress serves as a motivator, bad stress can impact your exam, and your life as a whole, in negative ways
- ❑ Knowing what causes your stress and how it affects your daily life is the first step to managing it
- ❑ There are many small steps you can take on a daily basis to refocus your energy during long study sessions. For example, you can go for a walk, use visualization, or even repeat a mantra
- ❑ Other stress management techniques may include getting a massage, changing your diet, and more. Thorough preparation for the GRE will also help you fight stress and remain calm
- ❑ Whether you choose to prepare yourself well in advance (with the 6-month study plan) or need to get ready for the GRE in a shorter period of time, remember that working through practice tests and studying all sections at once rather than focusing on only one section at a time will yield better results
- ❑ During the test, plan your time properly and answer all the easy questions first – use all other test-taking tips while taking the test to ensure the best results
- ❑ You will receive a score for each of the three sections. Please inquire at the admissions office of your university to make sure that you know what the score requirements are for your particular program of study, if any

You should take all the time you need to prepare yourself for the test, but you also need to trust your skills and abilities. If you've prepared for a few months and checked all the tasks in the study plans presented in this volume, you are ready to take the test, and you have all the knowledge necessary to be successful in doing so. Don't let your doubt get the best of you, and have confidence in your ability to succeed.

Happy Testing!