

GRE® - Graduate Record Examinations®

To those looking to go into Graduate School after an undergraduate education, chances are you've heard of the GRE. There are two types of this exam: the General Test and the Subject Tests. The **GRE® (Graduate Record Examination) General Test** measures verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and analytical writing skills that have been acquired over a long period of time and that are not related to any specific field of study. The **GRE® Subject Tests** gauge undergraduate achievement in eight specific fields of study and is often required for admission into a master's degree program. You are likely to take the *computer*-based General Test, versus the *paper*-based General Test.

The General Test

The General Test is made up of three different sections:

- Verbal Reasoning
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Critical Thinking

Verbal Reasoning

The verbal section is 30 minutes long and is made up of four question types:

- sentence completions
 - About 6 questions
 - The heart of the sentence completions is not grammar or vocabulary, but rather your ability to recognize the author's intent.
- analogies
 - about 8 questions
 - You determine the relationship between pairs of words and choose the pair of words from the answer choices that has the same relationship.
 - Luckily the same types of *relationships* show up on the GRE over and over again.
- antonyms
 - about 9 questions
 - These questions mainly test your vocabulary skills
- reading comprehension.
 - 2 or 3 reading comprehension passages (approx. 200-300 words each) with 2-4 questions based on each.

Quantitative Reasoning

The Quantitative Reasoning section is a 45 minute section containing 28 questions. The math on the GRE is similar to that of the math on the SAT or ACT. You do not need to know trigonometry nor calculus. About half of the questions will be in the Quantitative Comparison format and the remaining questions will be in the Problem Solving format. Here is the breakdown of this section:

- Arithmetic- about 1/3
- Algebra- about 1/6
- Geometry- about 1/3
- Graphs- about 1/6

*About a quarter of all questions are presented in the form of word problems.

Testing on the computer-

You choose answers on the GRE by clicking with a mouse. You won't use the keyboard for this exam. Each test is preceded by a short tutorial that will show you how to answer and move through the test. You will be given a piece of scrap paper.

Analytical Writing

The Analytical Writing portion of the exam consists of two timed essays and they will be typed using a simple word processing program on the computer. The writing assessment consists of two timed essay sections:

- The "issue" essay
 - You'll be asked to choose one of the two topics, and then are given 45 minutes to write an essay on your own view of that issue.
 - What matters is that you back up your view with relevant examples and statements!
- The "argument" essay
 - You will be shown a paragraph that argues a certain point and you will be give 30 minutes to assess the argument's logic.

The Subject Tests

The GRE Subject Tests cover 8 disciplines: Biochemistry (Cell and Molecular Biology), Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Literature in English, Mathematics, Physics, and Psychology. Not all graduate programs require a GRE Subject Test even if there is one available for that particular field. For every graduate school that you apply to, please check their admissions requirements to see if a GRE Subject Test is required.

The Subject Tests are given at paper-based test centers worldwide three times a year in:

- November
- December
- April

Registration for the Subject Tests are located in the same website as the General Test.

Since this is a psychology lab, here is a brief summary of what the Psychology Subject Test will be like:

- Most editions consist of approximately 205 multiple-choice questions.
- The questions are drawn from courses of study most commonly offered in the field of psychology.
- Questions may require recalling factual information, analyzing relationships, applying principals, drawing conclusions from data, evaluating a research design, and/or identifying a psychologist who has made a theoretical or research contribution to the field.
- There are 3 content categories (the content covered on the exam):
 - Experimental or natural science oriented
 - About 40% of questions
 - Includes learning, language, memory, thinking, sensation and perception, physiological psychology, ethology, and comparative psychology.
 - Social or social science oriented
 - About 43% of questions
 - The questions are distributed among the fields of clinical and abnormal, developmental, personality, and social psychology.
 - General
 - About 17% of questions
 - Includes the history of psychology, applied psychology, measurement, research designs, and statistics.

Taking the Computerized Test- How it works

You will see only one question at a time. Instead of having a predetermined mixture of basic, medium, and hard questions, the computer will select questions for you based on how well you are doing.

The first question will be of medium difficulty. If you get it right, the second question will be selected from a large pool of questions that are a little harder; if you get the first question wrong, the second will be a little more basic.

If you keep getting questions right, the test will get harder and harder; if you slip and make some mistakes, the test will adjust and start giving you easier problems, but if you answer them correctly, it will go back to the hard ones. After the first problem, every problem that you see is based on how you answered the prior problem. That means you cannot return to a question once you've answered it, because that would throw off the sequence. Once you answer a question, it's part of your score, for better or worse.

Also, in this version, the hard problems count more than easy ones. This way it finds out what level you reliably get about half the questions right; that's your scoring level. So this means that you definitely want to get to the hard questions if you can because that means your score will be higher.

How to Register

The GRE is administered at many special computerized testing centers six days a week during regular business hours. To register to take the GRE, go to www.gre.org. Here you can also download GRE resources, study tips, and receive free software to help you with your studying.

Las Vegas has only one testing center:

Thomson Prometric Testing Center
6625 S. Valley View Blvd., Suite 414
Las Vegas, Nevada 89118
UNITED STATES
Phone: (702) 889-4132

GRE Fee = \$40

Studying for the GRE

The key is to PRACTICE! Do NOT try to cram all your studying and reviewing the week before you are scheduled to take the test.

There are plenty of companies that offer GRE studying material, practice tests, study tips, vocabulary builders, etc. Some of the websites for these resources are below under the section "References."

Also remember that you can retake the GRE! The chances are the more times you take it, the more your score will increase. The GRE Scheduling Policy states: "The General Test may be taken on computer only once per calendar month and no more than five times within any 12-month period."

Also, companies like Princeton Review, Kaplan, and Peterson have GRE preparation classes as well as GRE Prep workbooks available at most bookstores.

Reference List

- www.gre.org -- This is where you register, contains free software, practice brochures, etc.
- <http://www.princetonreview.com/> -- free practice test
- <http://www.800score.com/gre-download.html> --free math practice test
- http://www.gre.org/practice_test/ --the official ETS site, save these for last, they're the most test-like.
- www.kaplan.com/gre -- good free practice test
- <http://www.petersons.com/>