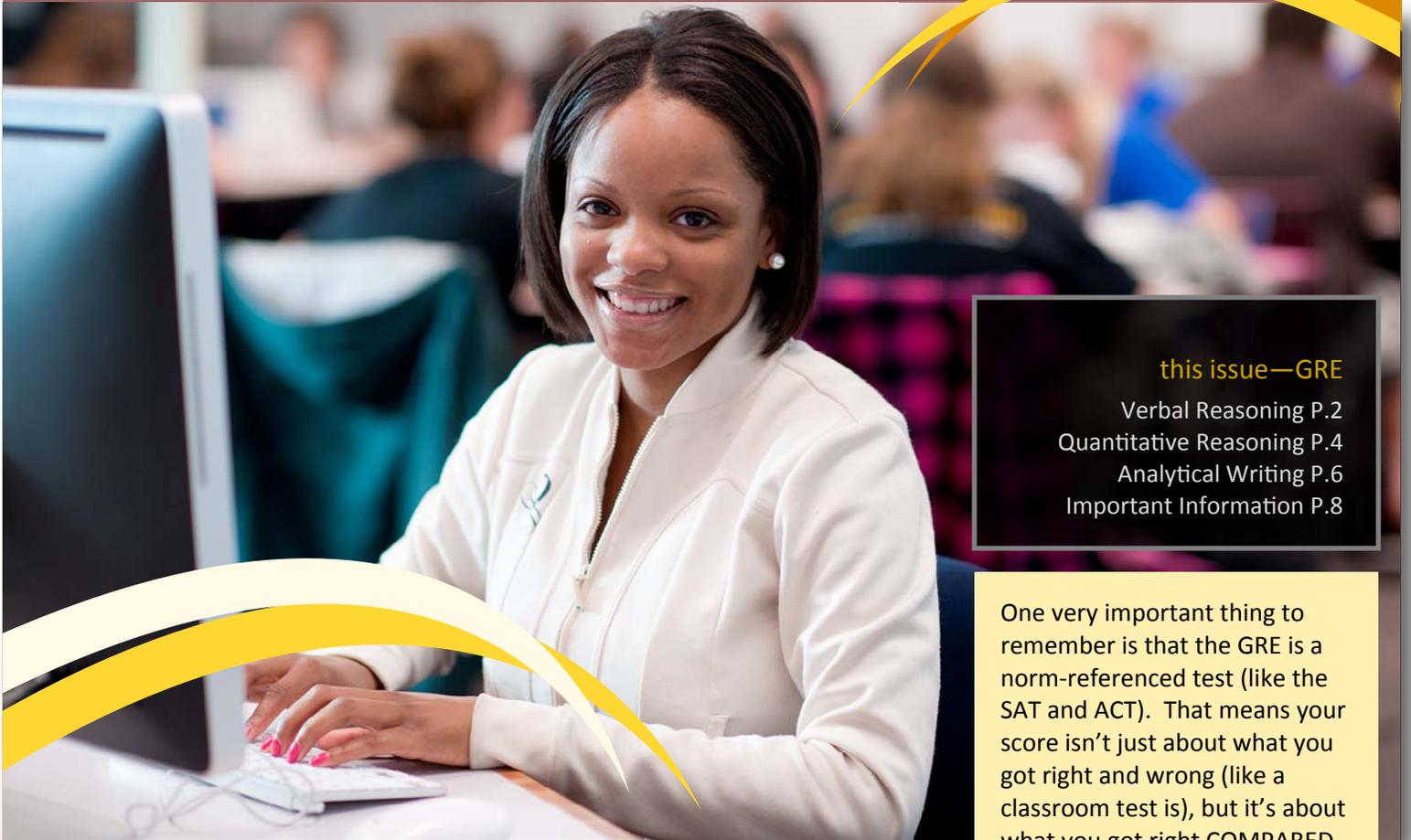


# Psyc E-Newsletter

Winthrop University Psychology Department  
December 2015



## this issue—GRE

Verbal Reasoning P.2  
Quantitative Reasoning P.4  
Analytical Writing P.6  
Important Information P.8

## Graduate Record Examination

In writing “an article” for the newsletter about the GRE, it became apparent that it deserved more time and attention than one article could provide. So we decided to develop an entire edition around it to explain what it is, describe the kinds of questions on it, provide samples of questions, and suggest strategies for preparing for and approaching the questions.

The Graduate Record Examination, better known as the GRE, is a test used for the purpose of entering graduate school. The test takes 3 hours and 45 minutes to take and assesses verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing ability. The verbal and quantitative sections are scored between 130 and 170, in 1 point increments. The analytical writing section is scored between 0 and 6, in .5 point increments.

Just as with colleges and the SAT and ACT, graduate programs can place low, moderate, or high importance on these scores. Whatever their importance, they are usually considered together with your application, college GPA, personal statement, and reference letters.

One very important thing to remember is that the GRE is a norm-referenced test (like the SAT and ACT). That means your score isn’t just about what you got right and wrong (like a classroom test is), but it’s about what you got right COMPARED to what everyone else got right.

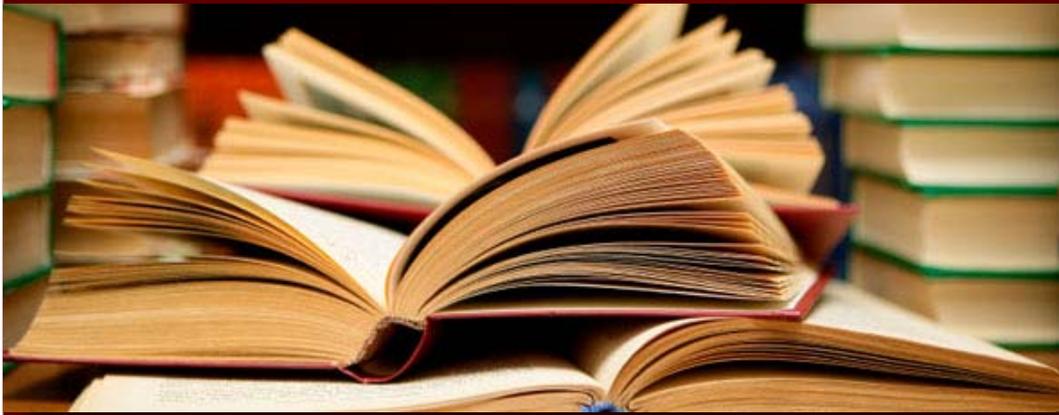
So if there are 100 questions, and you get 50 right, that’s not an F.

Instead, if you get 50 right, and everyone else gets 80 right, then you didn’t do well compared to them, and your score will be low.

If you get 50 right, and everyone else gets 20 right, then you did great compared to them, and your score is high.

If you get 50 right, and everyone else gets 50 right, then you did okay compared to them, and your score is average.





## Sample Reading Comprehension Question

Reviving the practice of using elements of popular music in classical composition, an approach that had been in hibernation in the United States during the 1960s, composer Philip Glass (born 1937) embraced the ethos of popular music in his compositions. Glass based two symphonies on music by rock musicians David Bowie and Brian Eno, but the symphonies' sound is distinctively his. Popular elements do not appear out of place in Glass's classical music, which from its early days has shared certain harmonies and rhythms with rock music. Yet this use of popular elements has not made Glass a composer of popular music. His music is not a version of popular music packaged to attract classical listeners; it is high art for listeners steeped in rock rather than the classics.

### Select only one answer choice.

1. The passage addresses which of the following issues related to Glass's use of popular elements in his classical compositions?
  - a. How it is regarded by listeners who prefer rock to the classics
  - b. How it has affected the commercial success of Glass's music
  - c. Whether it has contributed to a revival of interest among other composers in using popular elements in their compositions
  - d. Whether it has had a detrimental effect on Glass's reputation as a composer of classical music
  - e. Whether it has caused certain of Glass's works to be derivative in quality

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

2. The passage suggests that Glass's work displays which of the following qualities?
  - a. A return to the use of popular music in classical compositions
  - b. An attempt to elevate rock music to an artistic status more closely approximating that of classical music
  - c. A long-standing tendency to incorporate elements from two apparently disparate musical styles
3. Select the sentence that distinguishes two ways of integrating rock and classical music.

## Answers



### Text Completion

- Eminence
- Tumultuous

### Sentence Equivalence

- Original
- Innovative

### Reading Comprehension

- E
- A and C
- The last sentence

### Quantitative Comparison

- A—A is greater

### Multiple Choice—1 Answer

- A— -4

### Multiple Choice—1+ Answers

- C— 12
- D— 18
- F — 36

### Numeric Entry

- \$39.50

### Data Analysis

- \$792,000

Explanations for each answer as well as sample written essays can be found on the GRE website at <http://www.ets.org/gre>



## Sample Quantitative Comparison Question

Quantity A = The least prime number greater than 24

Quantity B = The greatest prime number less than 28

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



## Sample Multiple Choice—Select One Answer Question

If  $5x + 32 = 4 - 2x$ , what is the value of  $x$  ?

- (A) -4
- (B) -3
- (C) 4
- (D) 7
- (E) 12

# Quantitative Reasoning

The Quantitative Reasoning section assesses your

- basic mathematical skills
- understanding of elementary mathematical concepts
- ability to reason quantitatively and to model and solve problems with quantitative methods

The content in these areas includes high school mathematics and statistics at a level that is generally no higher than a second course in algebra; it does not include trigonometry, calculus, or other higher-level mathematics.

Some of the questions are posed in real-life scenarios, while others are posed in purely mathematical settings. Many of the questions are "word problems," which must be translated and modeled mathematically. The skills, concepts and abilities are assessed in four content areas:

- Arithmetic
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Data analysis

There are four types of questions within the quantitative section:

- **Quantitative Comparison Questions**
  - Compare two quantities and determine if
    - Quantity A is greater
    - Quantity B is greater
    - The two quantities are equal
    - The relationship cannot be determined from the information given
- **Multiple-choice Questions — Select One Answer Choice**
  - These questions are multiple-choice questions that ask you to select only one answer choice from a list of five choices.
- **Multiple-choice Questions — Select One or More Answer Choices**
  - These questions are multiple-choice questions that ask you to select one or more answer choices from a list of choices. A question may or may not specify the number of choices to select.
- **Numeric Entry Questions**
  - Questions of this type ask you either to enter your answer as an integer or a decimal in a single answer box or to enter it as a fraction in two separate boxes — one for the numerator and one for the denominator.

Each question appears either independently as a discrete question or as part of a set of questions called a **Data Interpretation set**. All of the questions in a Data Interpretation set are based on the same data presented in tables, graphs or other displays of data.

# Quantitative Reasoning (continued)

## How to Approach Quantitative Reasoning Questions

- **Understand the problem**
  - Read the statement of the problem carefully to make sure you understand the information given and the problem you are being asked to solve.
  - Translate word problems into formulas
  - Make sure you understand any graphs, pictures, or diagrams used in the question
  - Draw your own graph, picture, or diagram to help understand the problem.
- **Solve the problem**
  - Make sure you answer the question that is being asked
  - Be aware that geometric figures are not necessarily drawn to scale; however, graphs and graphical data are drawn to scale.
  - Where you have answer choices, use them to help narrow down your answer
  - Note whether you are being asked to provide one answer or multiple answers. In the section for one or more answers, if the question doesn't specify the number of answers to give, choose all that apply, even if that number is only 1.
  - A basic calculator is provided for you to use, but it does not replace your knowledge of math nor how to set up word problems. Also, some questions can be answered more quickly with reasoning and estimating than with a calculator.
- **Check your answers**
  - Have you answered the question that was asked?
  - Is your answer reasonable in the context of the question?
  - Did you make any careless errors?

## Sample Data Analysis Question

Store	Percent Change from 2006 to 2007	Percent Change from 2007 to 2008
P	10	-10
Q	-20	9
R	5	12
S	-7	-15
T	17	-8

If the dollar amount of sales at Store P was \$800,000 for 2006, what was the dollar amount of sales at that store for 2008?

- (A) \$727,200
- (B) \$792,000
- (C) \$800,000
- (D) \$880,000
- (E) \$968,000



## Sample Multiple Choice—Select One or More Answers Question

Which of the following integers are multiples of both 2 and 3? Indicate all such integers.

- (A) 8
- (B) 9
- (C) 12
- (D) 18
- (E) 21
- (F) 36



## Sample Numeric Entry Question

One pen costs \$0.25 and one marker costs \$0.35. At those prices, what is the total cost of 18 pens and 100 markers?

\$



## Analytical Writing Section

The analytical writing section assesses critical thinking skills (the ability to reason, assemble evidence to develop a position, and communicate complex ideas) along with skilled use of grammar and the mechanics of writing. In this section, you will write two essays in 60 minutes (30 minutes for each essay): one essay will be analyzing an “issue” and the other essay will be analyzing an “argument.” Scores range from 0 to 6.

### Scores 6 and 5.5

Sustains insightful, in-depth analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with logically compelling reasons and/or highly persuasive examples; is well focused and well organized; skillfully uses sentence variety and precise vocabulary to convey meaning effectively; demonstrates superior facility with sentence structure and usage, but may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning.

### Scores 5 and 4.5

Provides generally thoughtful analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples; is generally focused and well organized; uses sentence variety and vocabulary to convey meaning clearly; demonstrates good control of sentence structure and usage, but may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning.



### Scores 4 and 3.5

Provides competent analysis of ideas in addressing specific task directions; develops and supports main points with relevant reasons and/or examples; is adequately organized; conveys meaning with acceptable clarity; demonstrates satisfactory control of sentence structure and usage, but may have some errors that affect clarity.

## Sample “Analyze an Argument” Topic

### Letter to the Editor:

"Commuters complain that increased rush-hour traffic on Blue Highway between the suburbs and the city center has doubled their commuting time. The favored proposal of the motorists' lobby is to widen the highway, adding an additional lane of traffic. But last year's addition of a lane to the nearby Green Highway was followed by a worsening of traffic jams on it. A better alternative is to add a bicycle lane to Blue Highway. Many area residents are keen bicyclists, which would encourage them to use bicycles, reducing rush-hour traffic rather than fostering an increase."

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.

## Sample “Analyze an Issue” Topic

As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the ability of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate.

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.

## Analytical Writing Section (continued)

### Scores 3 and 2.5

Displays some competence in analytical writing and addressing specific task directions, although the writing is flawed in at least one of the following ways: limited analysis or development; weak organization; weak control of sentence structure or usage, with errors that often result in vagueness or a lack of clarity.

### Scores 2 and 1.5

Displays serious weaknesses in analytical writing. The writing is seriously flawed in at least one of the following ways: serious lack of analysis or development; unclear in addressing specific task directions; lack of organization; frequent problems in sentence structure or usage, with errors that obscure meaning.

### Scores 1 and 0.5

Displays fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing. The writing is fundamentally flawed in at least one of the following ways: content that is extremely confusing or mostly irrelevant to the assigned tasks; little or no development; severe and pervasive errors that result in incoherence.

### Score 0

The examinee's analytical writing skills cannot be evaluated because the responses do not address any part of the assigned tasks, are merely attempts to copy the assignments, are in a foreign language or display only indecipherable text.



## How to Prepare

- See the pool of possible “Analyze an Issue” questions—[http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/analytical\\_writing/issue/pool](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing/issue/pool)
- See the pool of possible “Analyze an Argument” questions—[http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/analytical\\_writing/argument/pool](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing/argument/pool)
- Read examples of written responses for “Analyze an Issue” at each score level—[http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/analytical\\_writing/issue/sample\\_responses](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing/issue/sample_responses)
- Read examples of written responses for “Analyze an Argument” at each score level—[http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/analytical\\_writing/argument/sample\\_responses](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing/argument/sample_responses)
- The **ScoreItNow Online Writing Practice Service** allows you to write two practice essays and receive feedback on your writing as well as suggestions for improving your writing.

## Strategies for Developing Strong Essays

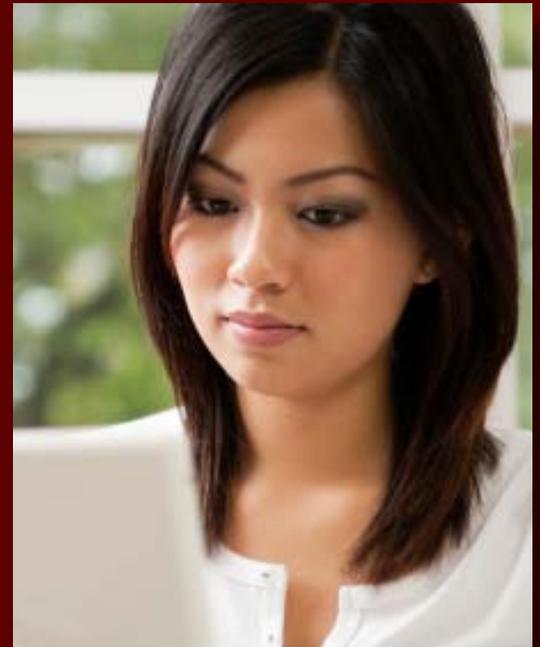


- Read the question thoroughly.
- Make a list of everything asked for in the question.
- Structure your essay around your list. For example, if the question asked for 3 reasons, write a 5-paragraph essay (introduction, reason 1, reason 2, reason 3, and conclusion).
- If the question doesn't indicate how many items you should write about, choose 3 for a solid essay or choose 4-5 for stronger essays. Just make sure you have time to complete all items.
- Each paragraph should have 5-8 strong sentences that say something important rather than just fill up space.
- State your position. Don't use “I think” or “I believe” because they weaken your writing. State it confidently, even if others disagree with you.



## Important Information

- The cost to take the GRE is \$195.
- Go to [http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/register/](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/) for information about registration and the most up-to-date test center information.
- You may send your current score or all scores from the previous 5 years to up to four graduate schools for free on the day of the test. Additional graduate schools or sending them later will incur a fee of \$27 per school. But one option you have afterward that you do not have the day of the test is to send a specific score (e.g., your best score) or any combination of scores (e.g., your best two scores or your best three scores).
- Be sure to schedule your test early enough to meet application deadlines.
- Students can take the GRE computerized version once every 21 days up to 5 times within a 12 month time frame.
- You will be given the option to register for the **FREE GRE Search Service** when you register for a GRE test. Or, you may sign up for the GRE Search Service at any time. Graduate and business school recruiters around the world use this database to find prospective students like you. If you match their recruitment profile, you could receive information about their programs, admission requirements — even scholarships and fellowships to help pay tuition.
- **POWERPREP® II**, is **FREE** software that includes two full-length practice tests. These timed tests simulate the test taking experience, including the test-taker friendly design features like moving back and forth and changing answers within a section, as well as the on-screen calculator.
- The **GRE Diagnostic Service** provides insight into your performance on the test questions in the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections of the GRE revised General Test. This **FREE** service includes a description of the types of questions you answered right and wrong as well as the difficulty level and time spent on each question. Your scores are available approximately 15 days after your test and can be accessed for six months following your test.



First Section					
Arithmetic					
Reference #	Question Type	Setting	Right/Wrong	Difficulty Level	Time Spent
1	Numeric Entry	Pure math	Right	2	02:30
2	Multiple-choice-Select One or More	Real-life	Wrong	2	04:09
3	Quantitative Comparison	Pure math	Right	3	01:10
4	Multiple-choice-Select One	Pure math	Right	4	02:48
Algebra					
Reference #	Question Type	Setting	Right/Wrong	Difficulty Level	Time Spent
1	Quantitative Comparison	Pure math	Right	2	01:00
2	Multiple-choice-Select One	Pure math	Right	3	00:42
3	Quantitative Comparison	Real-life	Right	3	01:16
4	Quantitative Comparison	Pure math	Right	4	01:34
5	Quantitative Comparison	Pure math	Right	4	00:21
Geometry					
Reference #	Question Type	Setting	Right/Wrong	Difficulty Level	Time Spent
1	Quantitative Comparison	Pure math	Right	2	01:20
2	Multiple-choice-Select One	Pure math	Right	3	01:58
3	Multiple-choice-Select One	Pure math	Right	3	01:18
4	Quantitative Comparison	Pure math	Right	3	01:58
Data Analysis					
Reference #	Question Type	Setting	Right/Wrong	Difficulty Level	Time Spent
Discrete Questions					
1	Multiple-choice-Select One	Real-life	Right	3	01:44
2	Quantitative Comparison	Pure math	Right	3	01:33
3	Multiple-choice-Select One	Real-life	Right	3	02:13
4	Numeric Entry	Real-life	Right	4	02:34
Set Members					
5	Multiple-choice-Select One	Real-life	Right	1	02:24
6	Multiple-choice-Select One	Real-life	Right	3	01:06
7	Multiple-choice-Select One	Real-life	Wrong	4	01:13

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