

GRADUATE WORKBOOK

- GRE Verbal & Analytical Writing
- Complete 10-Lesson Comprehensive Prep Course
- A Comprehensive Prep Course
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COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to the GRE Verbal & Analytical Writing Complete Workbook. This comprehensive course is designed to equip graduate school candidates with the strategies, vocabulary, and analytical skills needed to excel on the GRE.

The GRE (Graduate Record Examination) is a standardized test required for admission to most graduate programs across North America and increasingly worldwide. The Verbal & Analytical Writing section tests three core competencies:

- Reading Comprehension: The ability to understand complex texts, identify main ideas, and draw inferences.
- Text Completion & Sentence Equivalence: Vocabulary knowledge and the ability to recognize logical relationships within sentences.
- Analytical Writing: The ability to construct clear, evidence-based arguments in response to complex prompts.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is organized into 10 structured lessons, each building on the previous one. Each lesson follows this structure:

- Learning Objectives: What you'll master in this lesson.
- Key Concepts: The foundational knowledge you need.
- Guided Examples: Step-by-step walkthroughs of problems.
- Strategy Breakdowns: How to approach different question types.
- Practice Exercises: Opportunities to apply what you've learned.
- Answer Keys & Explanations: Detailed reviews of why answers are correct.

RECOMMENDED STUDY PACE

Complete one lesson per week. Spend 3-4 hours per lesson on learning and practice. Use the final two lessons for comprehensive review and full-length practice tests. Allow 10-12 weeks for a complete course.

KEY PRINCIPLE

The GRE rewards precision and logical thinking. Unlike the SAT, which emphasizes speed, the GRE allows more time per question. Use this to your advantage: read carefully, eliminate weak answers, and defend your reasoning.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the structure and scoring of the GRE Verbal section.
- Identify your baseline strengths and weaknesses through a diagnostic assessment.
- Learn the fundamental reading and reasoning skills that underpin all three question types.
- Establish a personalized study plan based on your diagnostic results.

THE GRE VERBAL SECTION: STRUCTURE & SCORING

The GRE Verbal section consists of two 30-minute sections, each containing 20 questions. The question types are:

Question Type	Quantity	Focus
Reading Comprehension	10 questions	Comprehending complex texts and drawing inferences
Text Completion	6 questions	Vocabulary and logical relationships (1–3 blanks per passage)
Sentence Equivalence	4 questions	Vocabulary (2-blank sentences with 6 answer choices)
Total	20 questions	90 minutes total (two sections)

SCORING MODEL

The Verbal section is scored on a scale of 130–170, in 1-point increments. The formula:

- Raw Score: Number of questions answered correctly.
- Scaled Score: Raw score converted to the 130–170 scale using ETS's adaptive algorithm.
- The higher your raw score, the higher your scaled score—but the exact conversion varies by test difficulty.

SCORING TIP

On the GRE, you can miss approximately 8–10 questions and still achieve a 160 (90th percentile). You do not need to get every question right to score exceptionally well. This is intentional: the test is designed to measure reasoning ability, not perfect performance under pressure.

QUESTION DIFFICULTY & ADAPTING SECTIONS

The GRE uses adaptive testing within each verbal section:

- The first 10 questions are a mix of difficulty levels.
- Your performance on the first 10 determines the difficulty of the second 10.
- Answer harder questions correctly, and you'll see harder questions next—but they're weighted more heavily.
- Answer easier questions correctly, and you'll see easier questions—with less weight toward your final score.

This means you can't strategically 'throw away' easy questions to see hard ones. Every question matters, and the algorithm balances difficulty and score weight automatically.

FOUNDATIONAL READING SKILLS

All three GRE Verbal question types depend on three core skills:

SKILL 1: IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

The main idea is the author's central argument or perspective. It's not the topic (what the passage is about), but the author's particular claim or opinion about that topic. Ask yourself: What is the author trying to argue or convey?

SKILL 2: RECOGNIZING LOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Words and ideas connect logically. Some relationships are:

- Causation: Because X, therefore Y. (Signal words: because, thus, resulting in)
- Contrast: While X, Y is true. (Signal words: however, but, conversely, despite)
- Support/Evidence: X supports the claim that Y. (Signal words: for example, because, as demonstrated)

- Comparison: X is similar to Y. (Signal words: similarly, likewise, just as)
- Concession: Although X, Y is also true. (Signal words: although, while, granted)

SKILL 3: MAKING VALID INFERENCES

An inference is a logical conclusion based on evidence in the text, not stated explicitly. Valid inferences are supported by textual clues; unjustified inferences go beyond what the text supports. Ask: What can I conclude based on what the author provides?

VOCABULARY: THE FOUNDATION OF VERBAL SUCCESS

GRE vocabulary is not about obscure words you'll never use. It's about:

- Words frequently used in academic and intellectual discourse.
- Words that appear across multiple disciplines (literature, science, history, business).
- Words that shift meaning in context and require nuanced understanding.

Example: AMBIGUOUS can mean 'unclear' or 'open to multiple interpretations.' The first definition suggests a flaw; the second might be intentional. GRE vocabulary tests whether you catch these distinctions.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

Rather than memorizing lists, learn words in context. When you encounter a GRE word in a passage or question, ask: How does this word shift the meaning? What would the opposite word be? What parts of the definition appear in the word itself (prefix, root, suffix)?

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT: YOUR BASELINE

Before proceeding through the lessons, take a diagnostic practice test or review a set of practice problems in all three question types. Use this to:

- Identify which question type challenges you most (Reading, Text Completion, or Sentence Equivalence).
- Pinpoint vocabulary gaps.
- Assess your inference and reasoning speed.
- Determine how much time you need per question.

PERSONALIZING YOUR STUDY PLAN

Based on your diagnostic results, prioritize:

If You Struggled With...	Prioritize This Lesson
Reading Comprehension questions	Lessons 2–3 and 8
Vocabulary and Text Completion	Lesson 4
Sentence Equivalence	Lesson 5
Writing (AWA)	Lessons 6–7
Overall reasoning	Lesson 1 (this lesson) and return to Section 1 as needed

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. The GRE Verbal section tests reading comprehension, vocabulary in context, and logical reasoning.
- 2. You don't need a perfect score to excel. A 160+ is a strong, competitive score.
- 3. Three core skills underpin all GRE Verbal questions: identifying main ideas, recognizing logical relationships, and making valid inferences.
- 4. GRE vocabulary is academic, contextual, and nuanced. Learn words in context, not in isolation.
- 5. Your diagnostic assessment informs your personalized study plan. Focus on your weaknesses, but master all three question types.

02

- Reading Comprehension I—Short Passages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Master the structure of short-passage reading comprehension questions.

- Develop efficient strategies for reading and annotating passages.
- Practice identifying main ideas, supporting evidence, and author's perspective.
- Answer multiple-choice questions with confidence and speed.

SHORT PASSAGES: STRUCTURE & QUESTION TYPES

Short passages are typically 1–2 paragraphs (50–150 words). Each passage is followed by 1–3 questions. Question types include:

Question Type	What It Asks	Example
Main Idea	What is the passage primarily about?	The primary purpose of the passage is to...
Inference	What can be inferred from the passage?	It can be inferred that the author...
Detail	What specific fact does the passage mention?	According to the passage, which of the following is true?
Tone/Attitude	What is the author's tone or perspective?	The author's tone toward [concept] is one of...
Application	How does the author's reasoning apply to a new scenario?	Based on the passage, which scenario best exemplifies...?

THE STRATEGIC READING PROCESS

For each short passage, follow this three-step process:

	<p>STEP 1: PREVIEW THE QUESTIONS</p> <p>Before reading the passage, skim the questions. This tells you what to focus on. Are they asking about the main idea, a specific detail, or the author's perspective?</p>
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	<p>STEP 2: READ ACTIVELY & ANNOTATE</p> <p>Read the passage once, carefully. Annotate as you read. Mark: the main idea, key claims, evidence, and transitions. Ask yourself: What is the author arguing? What evidence supports it?</p>
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STEP 3: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

Return to the questions. Use your annotations to find answers. Eliminate clearly wrong answers, then select the best match.

ANNOTATION SYSTEM

Develop a simple annotation system:

- Underline or circle the main idea and key claims.
- Put a ? next to confusing sentences.
- Mark transitions (but, however, therefore) in the margin.
- Write a one-sentence summary at the end of the passage.
- Note the author's tone: positive (+), negative (-), neutral (→).

EXAMPLE SHORT PASSAGE & WALKTHROUGH

Read this passage:

- "The rise of algorithmic decision-making in criminal justice has promised objectivity, but recent studies reveal persistent biases. Machine learning systems trained on historical arrest data replicate the biases embedded in that data: they overpredict crime in marginalized communities. The solution is not to abandon algorithms, but to audit them rigorously, diversify the data they're trained on, and maintain human oversight in high-stakes decisions."

Now let's analyze it:

- Main Idea: Algorithms in criminal justice promise objectivity but replicate historical biases; solutions exist through auditing, diverse data, and human oversight.
- Author's Perspective: Critical of current algorithms but optimistic about solutions.
- Key Evidence: Historical arrest data contains biases; machine learning replicates these biases.
- Logical Structure: Problem (bias) → Consequence (overestimation in marginalized communities) → Solution (auditing, diverse data, oversight).

QUESTION: MAIN IDEA

Which of the following best describes the author's primary purpose?

- (A) To argue that machine learning should be eliminated from criminal justice.
- (B) To explain how algorithmic bias arises and propose solutions.
- (C) To demonstrate that algorithms are more accurate than human judges.
- (D) To critique the use of historical data in machine learning.

Best Answer: (B). The author presents a problem (bias from historical data) and proposes solutions (auditing, diverse data, oversight). This matches the structure: Problem → Solution.

Why not the others?

- (A) Contradicts the passage: the author says 'not to abandon algorithms,' so elimination is not the argument.
- (C) The passage doesn't claim algorithms are more accurate.
- (D) While the passage mentions historical data as a source of bias, this is too narrow. The author's broader purpose includes proposing solutions.

COMMON TRAPS IN SHORT-PASSAGE QUESTIONS

Be aware of these tricks ETS uses:

- Extreme Language: Answer choices with 'always,' 'never,' or 'all' are rarely correct unless the passage uses the same language.
- Out-of-Scope Details: Answers that are true but not mentioned in the passage.
- Half-Truths: Answers that get part of the passage right but miss nuance or contradict another part.
- Opposite Answers: Answers that flip the author's perspective (e.g., saying the author is optimistic when they're critical).

PRACTICE: IDENTIFYING INFERENCE QUESTIONS

Inference questions ask what CAN BE INFERRED, not what IS STATED. The correct answer is a logical conclusion supported by evidence, not an unsupported leap.

- "Research on the working memory of octopuses reveals that they can hold multiple pieces of information simultaneously, much like humans. Remarkably, each arm of an octopus also possesses a local neural network, allowing it to process sensory information independently from the central brain."

Inference Question: Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?

- (A) Octopuses are more intelligent than humans. [Not supported: the passage says they have working memory 'much like humans,' not superior.]
- (B) Each arm of an octopus can process sensory information without input from the central brain. [Supported: 'local neural network' and 'independently from the central brain' clearly support this.]
- (C) Humans have neural networks in their limbs. [Not stated or inferable. The passage only compares working memory.]
- (D) The study of octopus neurology is more advanced than human neurology. [Not supported. The passage discusses findings, not the advancement of the field.]

Best Answer: (B). The passage explicitly supports this inference with 'each arm...process[es] sensory information independently.'

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Preview questions before reading to know what to focus on.
- 2. Annotate actively: underline main ideas, mark transitions, note tone.
- 3. Main idea answers should cover the author's overall argument, not isolated details.
- 4. Inferences must be supported by evidence in the text. Don't leap beyond what's stated.
- 5. Beware of extreme language, out-of-scope details, and opposite answers.

03

- Reading Comprehension II—Long Passages & Advanced Question Types

Long passages (400–750 words) are structured differently and test deeper comprehension. This lesson covers structure analysis, rhetorical strategy, and advanced inference in multi-paragraph texts.

LONG PASSAGE STRUCTURE

Long passages typically follow these patterns:

- Introduction → Argument → Evidence → Counterargument → Resolution
- Problem → Multiple Perspectives → Author's Position → Implications
- Historical Overview → Current Understanding → Future Directions

THE MACRO-STRUCTURE APPROACH

For long passages, identify the passage's architecture: What is each paragraph about? How do they connect? What is the author building toward? This 'bird's-eye view' helps you answer inference and main-idea questions without rereading.

04

- Text Completion & Vocabulary Building

Text Completion questions test vocabulary and logical reasoning. Each question presents a sentence or short passage with 1–3 blanks. You choose words that complete the thought logically and idiomatically.

ONE-BLANK QUESTIONS

Single-blank questions are typically vocabulary tests. Strategy:

- Cover the answers and predict what word should fill the blank.
- Look for signal words (but, however, therefore, despite) that indicate logical direction.
- Choose the answer that matches your prediction most closely.

- If unsure, use word-part knowledge (prefixes, roots, suffixes).

TWO- AND THREE-BLANK QUESTIONS

Multiple-blank questions test both vocabulary and logical reasoning. You must choose one word for each blank from separate answer lists. Strategy:

- Start with the blank where you have the strongest vocabulary or clearest context.
- Use the sentence structure to identify logical relationships between blanks.
- Test your word choices: do they create a coherent, logical sentence?
- Common relationships: synonym pairs, antonym pairs, cause-effect pairs.

05

- Sentence Equivalence Mastery

Sentence Equivalence presents a single sentence with one blank and six answer choices. You must choose two words that both complete the sentence and create equivalent meanings. This tests precise vocabulary knowledge.

THE TWO-PART ANSWER STRATEGY

In Sentence Equivalence, both correct answers must:

- Fit the blank grammatically and logically.
- Produce sentences that are synonymous or nearly synonymous in meaning.
- Not include a 'partially correct' first word with a less correct second word.

COMMON SYNONYM PAIRS ON GRE

ABATE & MITIGATE (reduce), BOISTEROUS & RAUCOUS (loud/energetic), CANDID & FORTHRIGHT (honest), DEARTH & PAUCITY (shortage), EQUANIMITY & COMPOSURE (calmness).

06

- Analytical Writing—Issue Essays

The Issue Essay asks you to take a position on a statement and defend it with examples and reasoning. You have 30 minutes to write. This lesson covers argument structure, evidence selection, and persuasive writing.

ISSUE ESSAY STRUCTURE

- Introduction: Introduce the issue. State your position (agree, disagree, or qualified agreement).
- Body (2–3 paragraphs): Support your position with examples, explanations, and counterargument acknowledgment.
- Conclusion: Summarize and reinforce your position.

EXAMPLE TYPES FOR ISSUE ESSAYS

Personal examples (from your life or observation), historical examples (major events, figures, movements), hypothetical examples ('if X were true, then...'), scientific/statistical examples.

07

- Analytical Writing—Argument Essays

The Argument Essay presents a brief argument and asks you to critique it. You have 30 minutes to identify logical flaws, unsupported assumptions, and weaknesses in reasoning. This is not about agreeing or disagreeing; it's about logical analysis.

COMMON LOGICAL FALLACIES IN ARGUMENTS

- Hasty Generalization: Drawing broad conclusions from limited evidence.
- False Causation: Assuming X caused Y without evidence of causation.
- Appeal to Authority: Citing an authority without questioning their expertise.
- Circular Reasoning: Using the conclusion to support the premise.
- Straw Man: Attacking a weaker version of the opponent's argument.

08

- Advanced Reading Strategies & Critical Reasoning

This lesson synthesizes all reading skills and introduces advanced inference techniques, complex passage structures, and time-management strategies for full-length sections.

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR VERBAL SECTIONS

You have 30 minutes for 20 questions (90 seconds per question on average).

- Allocate ~4 minutes per short passage (including 1–3 questions).
- Allocate ~10–12 minutes per long passage (including 3–5 questions).
- Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence: ~1–2 minutes each.
- If you get stuck, make an educated guess and move forward.

09

- Integrated Practice & Review

This lesson combines all three verbal question types (Reading, Text Completion, Sentence Equivalence) and both writing tasks (Issue and Argument essays) in mini-practice tests and reviews, simulating the full test experience.

PRACTICE TEST STRATEGY

- Take full-length, timed practice tests in a quiet environment.
- Simulate test conditions: no breaks, no external resources.
- Review every question you missed or were uncertain about.
- Track patterns: Do you miss more inference questions? Vocabulary? Time management?
- Adjust your strategy based on patterns.

- Test Day Mastery & Score Optimization

The final lesson prepares you for test day logistics, stress management, and strategic decision-making during the exam. It also addresses score reporting and next steps.

TEST DAY PREPARATION

- Sleep well the night before. (8+ hours, not an all-nighter.)
- Eat a healthy breakfast. (Avoid caffeine overdose; stable energy is better than a sugar crash.)
- Arrive early to the test center. (Aim for 15 minutes early.)
- Bring valid ID and an approved calculator for the Quantitative section.
- Use the tutorial time wisely: familiarize yourself with the on-screen interface.

DURING THE EXAM

- Read the passage or question carefully before jumping to answers.
- If you're stuck, make an educated guess and move forward. Don't waste 5 minutes on one question.
- Use the review feature: mark questions you're uncertain about. If time remains, revisit them.
- Breathe. If anxiety spikes, take 3 deep breaths. This resets your nervous system.
- Remember: This is one test. It does not define you.

SCORE REPORTING & NEXT STEPS

After the exam:

- Your Verbal and Quantitative scores are available within 10–15 days.
- Most graduate programs accept scores from the past five years.
- If you want to retake, you can do so after 21 days. (Check your school's retake policy.)
- Your score is one part of your application. Strong essays, experience, and references matter equally.

FINAL INSIGHTS

- The GRE measures your ability to think logically, read critically, and write persuasively. These are precisely the skills graduate programs want to see in their students. You've spent ten lessons building these skills. Trust your preparation. On test day, apply what you've learned, stay calm, and do your best.
- Your effort matters. Your growth matters. And your voice matters in graduate school and beyond.
- Good luck. You've got this.

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