

GRE Verbal



Words, Words, Words!

The Graduate Record Exam

- Three sections are on the exam
 - Verbal ability
 - Quantitative ability
 - Analytical writing

In this workshop, we will cover mostly verbal skills and some analytical writing briefly

Types of Verbal Questions

- 6-8 Analogies
- 8-10 Antonyms
- 5-8 Sentence Completion
- 6-10 Reading Comprehension
- Two Writing Tasks: Argumentative & Issue-Based

Analogies

- These are perhaps the most notorious questions, and they range in complexity
- If you understand the nature of the possible word relationships, you will perform much better

Analogies Cont...

- Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Is blank more or less than blank?
 - Does blank make blank?
 - Does blank complete blank?
 - Does blank come from blank?
 - Does blank cause blank?
 - Does blank use blank?
 - Is blank like blank?

Analogies Practice

- Let's look at a sample question
color : spectrum
- A. tone : scale
- B. sound : waves
- C. verse : poem
- D. dimension : space
- E. cell : organism

Analogies Practice

- Let's try to determine the relationship between color and spectrum...
- Any ideas? (Look at slide five questions again)

Analogies, Cont...

- The relationship between color and spectrum is not just a part of a whole (i.e. colors make up a spectrum). While it is true that colors make up a spectrum, that relationship is not precise enough given the answer choices. If it were precise enough, one could defend answers E and C.

Analogies, Cont...

- A spectrum is made up of a progressive, graduated series of colors just as a scale is made up of a progressive, graduated series of tones
- So the correct answer is A.

Antonyms

- ❑ Antonym questions are typically easier than analogies given you know what the words mean
- ❑ If you don't know the meaning of the word(s), try using the word in a sentence to give it context. Or,
- ❑ Look for familiar word parts in the root, prefix or suffix

Antonyms, Cont...

- ❑ Generally, antonyms are confined to nouns, verbs and adjectives
- ❑ Antonym relationships test your vocabulary knowledge most directly in that you will probably need to know both general knowledge and fine distinctions
- ❑ Remember you are looking for the word that is most closely the opposite

Antonyms, Cont...

- ❑ Many words do not have a precise opposite, so you have to look for an answer choice that provides a word that expresses a concept that is most nearly opposite
- ❑ Use the words in the sentence you made up for the word you're looking to define from its opposite and listen for a contrast in meaning or tone

Antonyms Example

- Let's look at an example...
 - DIFFUSE:
 - A. contend
 - B. concentrate
 - C. imply
 - D. pretend
 - E. rebel

Antonyms Example, cont...

- ❑ The best answer is (A), contend (to strive against rivals or differences)
- ❑ Diffuse means to permit or cause to spread out; only (B) presents an idea that is in any way opposite to diffuse

Sentence Completion

- ❑ The main concerns in this section are standard usage and “flow” of sentence structure
- ❑ Attempting to discover the tone & “flow” of the sentence in this section will help you understand the overall meaning of the sentence, which will, in turn, help you select the correct response.

Sentence Completion, Cont...

- ❑ Look for logically satisfying completion allowing the sentence to be a stylistically integrated whole
- ❑ Read the sentence in its entirety without reading the answers provided and try to fill in the blank with your own word(s); then, look for parallels to your response in the given responses
- ❑ Try to understand the ideas expressed and identify the tone (humor, sarcasm, etc...)

Sentence Completion, Cont...

- ❑ Look for structural clues in the sentence: nevertheless and however, for example, predict opposite or contrary statements are coming; moreover predicts intensification or elaboration of a point
- ❑ If there are two blanks to fill in, be sure both answers fit logically into the sentence
- ❑ Re-read the sentence after you select your answers to be sure the sentence makes sense.

Sentence Completion Example

- Early_____ of hearing loss is _____ by the fact that other senses are able to compensate for moderate amounts of loss, so that people frequently do not know that their hearing is imperfect.
 - A. discovery...indicated
 - B. development...prevented
 - C. detection...complicated
 - D. treatment...facilitated
 - E. incidence...corrected

Sentence Completion Example, Cont...

- The statement that the other senses compensate for partial loss of hearing indicates that the hearing loss is not *prevented* or *corrected*; therefore, choices (B) and (E) can be eliminated. Furthermore, the ability to compensate for hearing loss certainly does not facilitate its early *treatment* (D) or early *discovery* (A). It is reasonable, however, that early *detection* of hearing loss is *complicated* by the ability to compensate for it. The best answer is (C).

Reading Comprehension

- ❑ Focuses on main idea recognition and supporting details
- ❑ Passage is presented on the left hand side of the computer screen; you will be able to scroll up and down the passage while looking at the question on the on the right hand side of the computer screen.

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- ❑ Reading comprehension questions measure your ability to read with understanding, insight and discrimination
- ❑ This type of question explores your ability to analyze a written passage from several perspectives including your ability to recognize both explicitly stated elements in the passage and assumptions underlying statements or arguments in the passage as well as the implications of those statements or arguments.

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- Pay attention to the following as you review the passage:
 - The function of a word in relation to a larger segment of the passage
 - The relationships among the various ideas in the passage
 - The relationship of the author to the topic or to the audience.

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- You will find five types of reading comprehension questions to answer:
 - The main point of the passage
 - Information explicitly stated in the passage
 - Information or ideas implied or suggested by the author
 - Possible applications of the author's ideas to other situations, including the identification of situations or processes analogous to those described in the passage
 - The author's logic, reasoning, or persuasive techniques

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- ▣ In each edition of the General Test, there are three or more reading comprehension passages, each providing the basis for answering two or more questions. The passages are drawn from different subject matter areas, including the humanities, the social sciences, the biological sciences, and the physical sciences.

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- ❑ You do not need outside information to answer the questions, so do not panic if you encounter material you are not familiar with.
- ❑ Look for clues that will help you understand less explicit aspects of the passage. Try to separate main ideas from supporting ideas or evidence. Try also to separate the author's own ideas or attitudes from information he or she is presenting.

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- ❑ Note transitions from one idea to the next, and examine the relationships among the different ideas or parts of the passage. For example, are they contrasting? Are they complementary? Consider the points the author makes, the conclusions drawn, and how and why those points are made or conclusions are drawn.
- ❑ Read each question carefully and be certain that you understand exactly what is being asked.

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- ❑ *Always* read all the answer choices before selecting the best answer.
- ❑ The best answer is the one that most accurately and most completely answers the questions being posed. Be careful not to pick an answer choice simply because it is a true statement. Be careful also not to be misled by answer choices that are only partially true or only partially satisfy the problem posed in the question.

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- Answer the questions on the basis of the information provided in the passage. Do not rely on outside knowledge. Your own views or opinions may sometimes conflict with the views expressed or the information provided in the passage. Be sure that you work within the context of the passage. You should not expect to agree with everything you encounter in reading passages.

Reading Comprehension, Cont...

- ❑ There is not enough room or time to practice for the reading comprehension section, but visit the test publisher's website <ets.org > for many useful practice passages, questions and explanations.
- ❑ Most of the material for this workshop came directly from ETS's website, but there are many more examples available

Writing

□ Issue Task

- You will be asked to analyze an issue
- You will have 45 minutes to plan, organize, and write

□ Argument Task

- You will be asked to analyze an argument in a short passage
- You will have 30 minutes to plan, organize, and write

Writing Task: Evaluation

- GRE readers who are college and university faculty will read your response and evaluate its overall quality, based on how well you do the following
 - Consider the complexities and implications of the issue
 - Organize, develop, and express your ideas on the issue
 - Support your ideas with relevant reasons and examples
 - Control the elements of standard written English.

Issue Task: Sample Topics

□ **TOPIC 1:**

- Both the development of technological tools and the uses to which humanity has put them have created modern civilizations in which loneliness is ever increasing.

□ **TOPIC 2:**

- Our declining environment may bring the people of the world together as no politician, philosopher, or war ever could. Environmental problems are global in scope and respect no nation's boundaries. Therefore, people are faced with the choice of unity and cooperation on the one hand or disunity and a common tragedy on the other.

Issue Task, Cont...

- The directions for responding to an issue task are:
 - Present your perspective on **one** of the issues below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views.

Argument Task Example

- Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument.
- The following appeared in a memo from the director of a large group of hospitals.

Argument Task Example, Cont...

- "In a laboratory study of liquid antibacterial hand soaps, a concentrated solution of Nadasept killed 40 percent more bacteria than the liquid hand soaps currently used in our hospitals. During a subsequent test of Nadasept at our hospital in Saluda, that hospital reported significantly fewer cases of patient infection than did any of the other hospitals in our group. Therefore, to prevent serious patient infections, we should supply Nadasept at all hand washing stations throughout our hospital system."

Some final words on words...

- ❑ We have covered a lot of material in a very brief time, but if you come up with a study plan, you can practice many of the strategies laid out in this presentation
- ❑ The most important part of studying for the GRE is TIME! Take time to read and grapple with complex material. Study root words, prefixes, suffixes and their meanings.

Thank you!

- ❑ Most of the material in this presentation came from free websites: ets.org and greprepinfo.com
- ❑ Please note the material is not original to the CTL or its representatives
- ❑ Thanks so much for participating in our GRE Verbal Online Workshop