



**VERBAL AND  
ANALYTICAL REVIEW**

**FOR THE  
GRADUATE  
RECORD EXAMINATION**

**by Ezra W. Black**



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**Books for Professionals  
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# What This Book Can Do For You

This book is a comprehensive guide to preparing for the verbal and analytical sections of the GRE. Here is what it can do for you:

**Raise Your GRE Score.** This book can raise your GRE score in these four important ways:

1. It gives you a *method*—a systematic, step-by-step approach to each type of GRE verbal and analytical question. This method has been extensively field-tested by the author over an eight-year period with thousands of students, both in formal courses and in individual study. *It has helped these students improve their scores significantly—often dramatically. This method works.*
2. This book contains a unique *GRE vocabulary section*. Here the words you need to know are grouped by topic. Each word is fully discussed, giving you several different ways of remembering it.
3. The following pages present hundreds of *practice examples*, along with full-length GRE-type verbal and analytical sections, with detailed explanatory answers.
4. The *directed practice* this book offers is recognized by testing experts as an excellent way to improve test scores. So no matter how much time you have left before the GRE—10 weeks or 1 day—*this book can raise your score.*

**Save You Money.** The materials in this book are the same as those used by the author in courses costing \$150 to \$250. You will not have to pay course fees like those because this book is *self-instructional*. Step-by-step procedures teach you the skills you will need, and carefully explained answers reinforce this knowledge.

**Save You Time.** This book will organize your GRE study time for you. You will find study plans to use if you have six weeks, three weeks, one week, or even just one day left before the test. Also, since this book is a practice workshop, vocabulary tutor, and reading-skills refresher in one, you will not need to spend time looking for other aids.

## How To Use This Book

You can use this book in a variety of ways, depending upon how much time you have left until you take the GRE.

**If you have 10 weeks left:** Read Part 1, including its advice on test-taking strategy. Next, proceed slowly and thoughtfully through the

verbal and analytical aptitude sections. Then work all the verbal and analytical practice tests. Before you attempt the full-length GRE-type tests, spend a good deal of time reading and rereading the articles in the GRE vocabulary section. Then take the full-length tests. Finally, read the concluding section on test-taking skills. About a week before you take the GRE, intensively review the vocabulary section by rereading each article at least once.

**If you have 6 weeks left:** Use the procedure above, but take only the first two practice tests of each type, both full-length verbal tests, and one full-length analytical test. Also, read the first nine vocabulary articles only.

**If you have 3 weeks left:** Read through Part 1, including its advice on test-taking strategy; then study the verbal and analytical aptitude sections and the first six vocabulary articles. Work the first two practice tests of each type, one complete verbal test, and one complete analytical test. Finally, read the concluding section on test-taking skills.

**If you have 1 week left:** Read Part 1, including its advice on test-taking strategy. Memorize the steps presented for solving each problem type in the verbal and analytical aptitude sections. Read through the first three vocabulary articles. Take only the first practice test of each type, and only the first complete verbal test. Finally, read the concluding section on test-taking skills.

**If you have 3 days left:** Read Part 1, including its advice on test-taking strategy. Memorize the steps presented for solving each problem type in the verbal and analytical aptitude sections. Take the first complete verbal test. Read the concluding section on test-taking skills.

**If you have only 1 day or less left:** Read the test-taking strategy sections at the beginning and end of this book. Learn the directions for each of the problem types discussed in the aptitude sections. Do as much as you can of the first complete verbal test, referring frequently to the explanatory answers.

Mark all your answers right in this book. In the practice tests there is an answer line next to each question where you can mark your choice by blackening one of five spaces. The complete GRE-type tests are accompanied by standard answer sheets very much like the one provided with the actual examination. You will mark your answers on these sheets also by blackening one of five spaces provided for each question. You may find it convenient to cut these sheets out of this book so that you can use them more easily.

PART 1  
Test Format and  
Test-Taking Strategy

# Format of the GRE Verbal and Analytical Sections

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) consists of seven sections, each of which lasts 30 minutes. Once the time allotted for a part has elapsed, you may not look back at that part.

Section I and Section II are verbal aptitude sections; Section III and Section IV are quantitative sections. Section V and Section VI are analytical aptitude sections, and Section VII is a "wild card"—either verbal, quantitative, or analytical. This book is concerned, of course, with the verbal and analytical sections only.

Each of the two verbal sections contains 38 questions. These are divided as follows: one group each of sentence completion, analogy, and antonym questions with 7 to 12 questions per group, plus a group of 10 to 15 reading comprehension questions based on a varying number of reading passages. The analytical sections contain 25 questions each. These questions are of two types: logical and analytical reasoning.

Here is a chart of the verbal and analytical sections:

Section of Test	Number of Questions	Time Allowed
Section I: Verbal	38 Questions, <i>of which</i> : 7–12 Sentence Completions 7–12 Antonyms 10–15 Reading Comprehension Items 7–12 Analogies	30 minutes
Section II: Verbal	38 Questions, <i>of which</i> : 7–12 Sentence Completions 7–12 Antonyms 10–15 Reading Comprehension Items 7–12 Analogies	30 minutes
Section V: Analytical	25 Questions, <i>divided among</i> : Logical Reasoning and Analytical Reasoning Items	30 minutes
Section VI: Analytical	25 Questions, <i>divided among</i> : Logical Reasoning and Analytical Reasoning Items	30 minutes

# Test-Taking Strategy

## USE THIS ACTION PLAN

- A. *Answer Easy Items First.* When you start a new section, scan through the entire section first, rapidly answering the easiest questions as you go. Be extremely careful to mark the correct spaces on the answer sheet.
- B. *Schedule Your Work on the Remaining Items.* Once you have answered the easy items, plan how you will use the time remaining to you. Make yourself a schedule. Write the actual time you expect to finish each group of problems in the margin of the test booklet, next to the last question of that group. Schedule a few minutes at the very end for checking.
- C. *Answer the Remaining Items.* Now start solving the remaining items as rapidly as possible. As you go, mark the items to which you will return later at checking time. Two kinds of questions will require special checking: first, those for which you have no idea at all of the answer; and second, those for which you have found an answer but are not sure of it. It is important that you mark instances of these two cases with different symbols. Use a check mark for the totally incomprehensible items. Use a circle for the ones you have answered but are unsure of. When you find you have time for checking, always return to the latter type first.

## BE SURE OF DIRECTIONS

Familiarize yourself with the rules for each question type before you take the GRE. You will learn these rules by working through this book. Next, be sure of what you are asked to do in individual questions. Any time you reach a question that has a complex sentence structure or that contains more than one negative, slow your pace and make certain you have understood what is being asked. For example, if a reading comprehension question asks you to choose a statement with which the author would most likely *not disagree*, you need time to reflect and realize that you are being asked to find a statement with which the author would *agree*. Reading comprehension and analytical reasoning items both offer such difficulties.

## USE EDUCATED AND RANDOM GUESSING TECHNIQUES

*Educated guessing* is the elimination of possible answers for strategic reasons. For example, if two possible answers mean the same thing,

then both answers must be wrong. **Educated guessing** as it applies to each of the question types is discussed in the verbal and analytical aptitude sections.

*Random guessing* is the guessing you do once you have made as many eliminations as possible via educated guesses. It means following a hunch, going on intuition. The only time you use intuition in test taking is after you have exhausted all educated guessing and other rational strategies. Being a good test-taker has almost nothing to do with being a good intuitive guesser.

On the GRE, there is no penalty for wrong answers, so guessing pays off. Therefore, be sure to mark an answer for each and every question, even if it is only a guess.

**PART 2**  
**The Verbal Aptitude  
Portion of the GRE**

# The Four Verbal Question Types

The verbal aptitude sections of the GRE contain the following four types of questions:

1. sentence completion questions
2. antonym questions
3. analogy questions
4. reading comprehension questions

This section will explain all four types and teach you techniques for solving each one.

## How to Solve Sentence Completion Questions

The GRE sentence completion question consists of a sentence with one or more blank spaces that represent omitted words or expressions. Your task is to choose the option that best completes the sentence.

*Example 1:*

Hopes for an environmentally sound facility have been \_\_\_\_\_ by two promising recent \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) rife . . . events
- (b) abandoned . . . factors
- (c) aided . . . changes
- (d) buttressed . . . aspects
- (e) bolstered . . . decisions

**Answer:** (e)

Here is a four-step method for solving sentence completion test items:

1. **Understand the sentence.** Read the sentence as many times as necessary in order to understand it. Give special attention to words like *although*, *however*, *consequently*, *nonetheless*, and *because*, which signal changes in the flow of thought.
2. **Supply your own answer before looking at the options.** Fill in the blanks with your own words before proceeding to the answers. Either write your words or simply say them to yourself.

*Example 2:*

There can be no beetle population explosion until the number of dead trees increases; then the population \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) falls off precipitously
- (b) increases moderately
- (c) rises exponentially
- (d) experiences some growth
- (e) is optimal and final

Key words in the above example are “explosion,” “until,” and “then.” Once a certain condition exists, then an explosion, not a mere increase, will occur. The term must therefore be “mounts astronomically,” or “zooms,” or the like. Option (c)—“rises exponentially”—is correct.

3. **Substitute each option for the blank space(s) and eliminate obviously wrong answers.** Say the sentence to yourself, substituting each option in turn for the blanks. Eliminate choices that make no sense.
4. **Evaluate options not yet eliminated and make your final choice based on word nuances and sentence readability.** Having eliminated patently wrong options in Step 3, you are ready to make your final choice. This choice should be based on two criteria:
  - A. *The correct choice expresses the most exact shade of meaning.* No two words are totally synonymous; one of the two is more faithful to any given meaning. Concentrate on finding the most appropriate expression for each of the thoughts before you.

*Example 3:*

His manner toward us was wholly without pretense, but yet had a kind of natural dignity, quite sufficient to keep the \_\_\_\_\_ of us from \_\_\_\_\_ him on the shoulder and asking him for a story.

- (a) most amicable . . . striking
- (b) bulk . . . clasping
- (c) temerity . . . tapping
- (d) frowardest . . . balancing
- (e) forwardest . . . clapping

Suppose you have read and comprehended the sentence above and have mentally filled in the blanks with “most brazen” and “slapping.” Now you can locate the answer by weighing word nuances. Take the second blank, for instance. You cannot “balance” someone on her or his own shoulder. It is possible to balance a person on your own shoulder, but this is not what the sentence states. “Tapping” someone on the shoulder is probably not energetic enough for the situation, while “striking” is too forceful. “Clasping” the person on the shoulder would establish the necessary contact, but that is not what we normally do. We

"clap" a person on the back as a token of camaraderie. So far, Choice (e) seems best. To clap a person on the back and ask for a story requires a certain boldness. Turning to the first blank, you see that Choice (b) and Choice (c) have nothing to do with the sentence. "Froward" means disobedient, ungovernable; it is too strong. "Amicable" does not say enough: it is possible to be friendly—"amicable"—but shy. "Forward" expresses the idea we have in mind. It means bold, even impertinent. We select Choice (e), then, because both of its terms express the precise shade of meaning that the context requires.

- B. *The correct choice yields a sensible, worthwhile sentence.* Eliminate options that, however correct they may be in other respects, do not express a logical, sensible, worthwhile thought when read into the sentence.

*Example 4:*

All the buildings in the area were erected by builders who, in spite of some stylistic \_\_\_\_\_, succeeded in creating an appearance of architectural unity.

- (a) difficulties
- (b) awards
- (c) theories
- (d) panegyrics
- (e) diversity

A reading of the sentence convinces us that the missing word must contrast with "unity" because it follows the phrase "in spite of" (Step 1). "Differences" is a possible answer (Step 2). In Step 3 we eliminate choices (b) and (d). "Awards" and "panegyrics" (eulogies) are positive things, and the sentence would have to be facetious to sustain the expression "in spite of awards" or "in spite of panegyrics." We have no reason to assume that the sentence is tongue-in-cheek. Choices (a), (b), and (e) all express different ideas, and there are no improper shades of meaning (Step 4A). We arrive at Step 4B. Choice (c) is wrong because using it would make the final sentence obscure. Why would "stylistic theories" work against the creation of architectural unity? Choice (e) is preferable to Choice (a) because it is more natural for "stylistic diversity" to work against architectural unity than it is for "stylistic difficulties" to do so. Stylistic difficulties would probably simply result in architectural imperfections. Choice (e) is therefore correct.

To recapitulate, there are four steps in solving a sentence completion problem. First, read the sentence as many times as necessary in order to understand it. Second, furnish your own word for each blank

space *before* you examine the options. Third, substitute each option into the sentence, discarding those that are obviously incorrect. Finally, make your ultimate choice using two criteria: shades of meaning and overall sentence readability.

## How to Solve Antonym Questions

In the GRE antonym questions, a capitalized word is followed by five options, one of which is its opposite. You must decide which word is the antonym.

*Example 1:*

UNEXCEPTIONABLE: (a) reprehensible (b) intolerant  
(c) extraordinary (d) tractable (e) intractable

Solution: (a)

In confronting an antonym problem, you either know the capitalized word or you do not know it. The two situations require radically different strategies.

### WHEN YOU DO NOT KNOW THE WORD'S MEANING

This situation may be solved by educated guessing. Often an option is synonymous, antonymous, or associated in some other way with a word that looks or sounds like the capitalized word but is not the capitalized word itself. If you do not know the meaning of the capitalized word but can think of a word that looks or sounds like it, examine the options to see whether any of them is related to the look- or sound-alike word you have in mind. If so, eliminate that option.

*Example 2:*

VORACIOUS: (a) ostensible (b) satiable (c) chimerical  
(d) bogus (e) vaporous

A look-alike term for "voracious" is *veracious*, meaning true or truthful. Choices (a), (c), and (d) are all more or less opposite to *veracious*, so they can be eliminated. The answer is Choice (b).

*Example 3:*

METATHESIS: (a) nonferrous (b) antithesis (c) brightly  
(d) gestation (e) constancy

Choice (a) relates to the look-alike word *metal*; *nonferrous* substances contain no iron. The correct choice is (e), as *metathesis* is a change of condition.

If you cannot use this strategy for a word you do not know, guess randomly—you have nothing to lose. But act quickly; you do not want to waste time.

## WHEN YOU KNOW THE WORD'S MEANING

In this case, a three-step procedure is recommended:

1. **Focus on the exact meaning of the word.** Define the word for your own purposes. Your definition need not be elegant, but it should be exact. If the word has several common meanings, make a mental note of this fact and choose one to start with.
2. **State the antonym of the capitalized word before you look at the options.** Simply defining the word does not produce its opposite. You must concentrate on the phenomenon of oppositeness and come up with the thought, then a word or expression, that is the contrary of the one you are working with. Sometimes there are several possible opposite expressions. In this case, choose one. If it does not appear among the options, you can go back to the others you have thought of.
3. **Look among the options for a word that matches your own hypothesis.** Look for either the exact word you thought of or for one that means the same. This option is the answer.

*Example 4:*

**PROCUMBENT:** (a) declining (b) inclined  
(c) unencumbered (d) incumbent (e) supine

*Procumbent* means prone, lying on the stomach (Step 1). Its antonym would be “lying on the back,” “reclining” (Step 2). Only “supine” (e) means that, so Choice (e) is correct.

*Example 5:*

**STRIDENT:** (a) salubrious (b) congruous (c) curved  
(d) mellifluous (e) pacifistic

*Strident* means shrill, loud-sounding (Step 1); its contrary is “soft,” “pleasant-sounding” (Step 2). “Mellifluous” (d) means sweetly flowing and is the closest answer.

In a number of instances, even after you have followed the preceding steps, there remain two or even three seemingly acceptable options.