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How to Use This Book

WELCOME TO KAPLAN GRE PREP PLUS 2023

Congratulations on your decision to pursue a graduate degree, and thank you for choosing Kaplan for your GRE preparation. You've made the right choice in acquiring this book—you're now armed with a comprehensive GRE program that is the result of decades of researching the GRE and teaching many thousands of students the skills they need to succeed. You have everything you need to score higher, so let's start by walking through what you need to know to take advantage of this book and your online resources.

Your Book

There are two main components to your Kaplan GRE Prep Plus study package: your book and your online resources. This book contains the following:

- Detailed instruction covering the essential Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing concepts
- Time-tested and effective Kaplan Methods and strategies for every question type
- One full-length practice test and chapter-end practice questions with detailed answer explanations

Your Online Resources

Don't make the mistake of viewing your online learning hub as an extra, optional resource for supplemental study. Instead, think of the quizzes, videos, and practice tests available there as being absolutely vital to your GRE success. Because the GRE is a computer-based test, you should prepare for test day by performing as much of your GRE practice as possible on a computer. And the additional video instruction available in your online resources is like having your own personal tutor help you understand the test inside and out. Resources include:

- Five full-length practice tests
- 560-question Qbank you can use to create customized quizzes
- Videos, guided practice, and practice sets to help you master the various GRE question types
- Five Analytical Writing practice sets of two prompts each
- Detailed answer explanations and sample essay responses

GETTING STARTED

1. Register your online resources.
2. Take a GRE practice test to identify your strengths and weaknesses.
3. Create a study plan.
4. Learn and practice using this book and your online resources.

Step 1: Register Your Online Resources

Before you do anything else, take a minute to register your online resources right now. It's easy. Just follow these simple steps:

1. Go to kaptest.com/booksonline.
2. Select GRE from the list of tests, then find GRE Prep Plus 2023 and click Register.

3. Follow the onscreen instructions.

Access to the online resources is limited to the original owner of this book and is nontransferable. Kaplan is not responsible for providing access to the online resources to customers who purchase or borrow used copies of this book. Access to the online resources expires one year after you register.

Step 2: Take a GRE Practice Test

It's essential to take a practice test early on. Doing so will give you the initial feedback and diagnostic information that you need to achieve your maximum score.

Your diagnostic test is Multi-Stage Test (MST) 1, which is found in your online resources. MST 1, like all of Kaplan's online full-length tests, is a multi-stage test, which is the same format as the actual GRE. The multi-stage test format feels different from a paper-based test and is scored differently, so the more you practice with MSTs, the better off you'll be. In addition to MST 1, your online resources include more practice tests. We recommend spacing these throughout your prep calendar, saving at least one for a couple of weeks before your official test date. And, for your convenience, we've also included a printed practice test in this book. The practice test in this book, which includes full-length Analytical Writing, Verbal, and Quantitative sections, will give you a chance to familiarize yourself with the various question types. It will also allow you to gauge the content you know and identify areas for practice and review.

After any practice test that you take, it's important that you fully review the detailed answer explanations to better understand your performance. Look for patterns in the questions you answered correctly and incorrectly. Were you stronger in some areas than others? This thorough analysis will help you target your practice time to specific concepts.

Step 3: Create a Study Plan

Use what you've learned from your practice test to identify areas for closer study. Take time to familiarize yourself with the key components of your book and online resources. Think about how many hours you can consistently devote to GRE study. We have found that most students have success with about three months of committed preparation before Test Day.

Schedule time for study, practice, and review. One of the most frequent mistakes in approaching study is to take practice tests and not review them thoroughly—review time is your best chance to gain points. It works best for many people to block out short, frequent periods of study time throughout the week. Check in with yourself frequently to make sure you're not falling behind your plan or forgetting about any of your resources.

Step 4: Learn and Practice

Your book and online resources come with many opportunities to develop the skills you'll need on Test Day. Read each chapter of this book and complete the practice questions. Depending on how much time you have to study, you can do this work methodically, covering every chapter, or you can focus your study on those question types and content areas that are most challenging for you. You will inevitably need more work in some areas than in others, but know that the more thoroughly you prepare, the better your score will be.

Remember also to take and review the quizzes and practice sets in your online resources in order to practice the skills you are learning. As always, review the explanations closely.

Initially, your practice should focus on mastering the needed skills and not on timing. Add timing to your practice as you improve fundamental proficiency. As soon as you are comfortable with the question types and Kaplan Methods, take and review the additional full-length practice test in your online resources.

Thanks for choosing Kaplan. We wish you the best of luck on your journey to graduate school.

<http://kaptest.com/publishing>

The material in this book is up-to-date at the time of publication. However, the Educational Testing Service may have instituted changes in the test or test registration process after this book was published. Be sure to read carefully the materials you receive when you register for the test.

If there are any important late-breaking developments—or changes or corrections to the Kaplan test preparation materials in this book—we will post that information online at kaptest.com/publishing. Check to see if any information is posted there regarding this book.

Part One

GETTING STARTED

Chapter 1

Introduction to the GRE

If you are reading this book, then you are likely preparing to embark upon an ambitious journey: applying to graduate school. It can feel overwhelming. In fact, right now you might be asking professors for recommendations, hunting down transcripts, and organizing portfolios and writing samples. And then, on top of all of that, you are faced with the prospect of preparing for the GRE. While this journey you are on can be stressful, we have good news -- at least in regards to the GRE. This is a *standardized* test. That means that every GRE repeats the same types of questions, in the same format, assessing the same skills, in the same way... over and over and over again. And because it does that, it's predictable. It's a test you can prepare for. It's a test you can beat.

You've taken a fantastic first step by purchasing this book. Between the information on the pages of this book and the practice tests and quizzes in your online resources, we will prepare you for everything that you are likely to encounter on the GRE. You'll see a tremendous number of individual questions and their explanations. But more than that, we explain the underlying principles behind *all* of the questions on the GRE. We give you the big picture so you can take charge of this test.

You got this.

Understanding the GRE

Let's take a look at how the GRE is constructed. The GRE, or Graduate Record Examination, is a computer-based exam required by many graduate schools for admission to a wide variety of programs. In this section, you will learn about the purposes of the GRE and ways you can learn to be successful on it.

THE PURPOSES OF THE GRE

The ways in which graduate schools use GRE scores vary. Scores are often required as part of the application for entrance into a program, but they also can be used to grant fellowships or financial aid. Each section of the GRE is designed to assess general skills necessary for graduate school. Some of these skills include the ability to read complex informational text and understand high-level vocabulary words in the Verbal Reasoning section, respond to a prompt in written form in the Analytical Writing section, and apply general mathematical concepts to a variety of problem types in the Quantitative Reasoning section. Graduate school admissions officers often view the GRE score as an important indicator of readiness for graduate-level studies. In addition, graduate school admissions officers are comparing hundreds or even thousands of applications, and having a quantitative factor, such as a GRE score, makes the job of comparing so many applicants much easier. Just by having this book and making a commitment to yourself to be as well prepared as possible for this exam, you've already taken the crucial first step toward making your graduate school application as competitive as possible.

THE SECRET CODE

Doing well on the GRE requires breaking down the “secret code” upon which each and every test is constructed. Like all of the tests created by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the GRE is based on psychometrics, the science of creating “standardized” tests. For a test to be standardized, it must successfully do three things. First, the test must be reliable. In other words, a person who takes the GRE should get approximately the same score if she takes the GRE a second time (assuming, of course, that she doesn't study during the intervening period). Second—and this is closely related to the first point—it must test the same concepts on each test. Third, it must create a “bell curve” when a pool of test takers' scores are plotted; in other words, some people will do very well on the test and some will do very poorly, but the great majority will score somewhere in the middle.

What all this boils down to is that to be a standardized test, the GRE has to be predictable. And this is what makes the GRE and other standardized tests coachable. Because ETS has to test the same concepts in each and every test, certain Reading Comprehension question types appear over and over again, as do certain math patterns. Moreover, the GRE has to create some questions that most test takers will get wrong—otherwise, it wouldn't be able to create its bell curve. This means that hard questions will usually contain “traps”—wrong answer choices that will be more appealing than the correct answer to a large percentage of test takers. Fortunately, these traps are predictable, and we can teach you how to recognize and avoid them. The goal of this book is to help you break the code of the test.

ACQUIRING THE SKILLS

If all of that above sounds too good to be true, or if you feel like you are just not a naturally gifted test taker, then take heart: none of the GRE experts who work at Kaplan were born knowing how to ace the GRE. No one is. That's because these tests do not measure innate skills; they measure acquired skills. People who are good at standardized tests aren't necessarily smarter or more clever than anybody else—they've just developed the skills appropriate for the test they are taking. Maybe

they acquired those skills years ago in a math class, or while reading lots of books and academic articles. Or maybe they simply learned how to defeat the test by preparing with a book, a class, or a tutor. If you haven't yet acquired those skills, don't worry. It's simply time to acquire them now.

SAME PROBLEMS—BUT DIFFERENT

As we noted, the testmakers use some of the same problems on every GRE. We know it sounds incredible, but it's true—only the words and numbers change. Here's an example:

$$2x^2 = 32$$

Quantity A

Quantity B

x

4

This is a type of math problem known as a Quantitative Comparison. Your job is to examine the relationship and pick (A) if Quantity A is bigger, (B) if Quantity B is bigger, (C) if they're equal, or (D) if not enough information is given to solve the problem.

Most people answer (C), that the quantities are equal. They divide both sides of the centered equation by 2 and then take the square root of both sides to get $x = 4$. However, this is incorrect because x doesn't have to be 4. It could be 4 or -4 ; that is, the quantities could be equal or Quantity B could be bigger. Both work, so the answer is (D) because the answer cannot be determined from the information given. If you just solve for 4, you'll get this problem—and every one like it—wrong. ETS figures that if you get burned here, you'll get burned again next time. Only next time, it won't be $2x^2 = 32$; it will be $y^2 = 36$ or $s^4 = 81$.

The concepts tested on any particular GRE—right triangles, logical deductions, word relationships, and so forth—are the underlying concepts at the heart of every GRE. The specific numbers might change, and the variables might change, but the types of problems remain consistent from one test to the next.

How the GRE Is Organized

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is administered on computer and is approximately four hours long, including breaks. The exam consists of six sections, with different amounts of time allotted for you to complete each section.

Basics of the GRE	
Exam Length	About 4 hours, including breaks
Scoring Scale	130–170 for Verbal and Quantitative; 0–6 for Analytical Writing
Format	Multi-stage test (MST), a computer-based format that allows students to navigate forward and backward within each section of the test
Number of Test Sections	6 sections, including an experimental or research section
Breaks	One 10-minute break after your third section; 1-minute breaks between all other sections
Analytical Writing	One section with two 30-minute tasks: analyze an issue and analyze an argument
Verbal Reasoning	Two 30-minute sections with approximately 20 questions each
Quantitative Reasoning	Two 35-minute sections with approximately 20 questions each

Your test will also contain an experimental section—an additional Verbal Reasoning or Quantitative Reasoning section that ETS puts on the test so that ETS can norm the new questions it creates for use on future GREs. That means that if you could identify the experimental section, you could doodle for half an hour, guess in a random pattern, or daydream and still get exactly the same score on the GRE. However, the experimental section is disguised to look like a real section—there is no way to identify it. All you will really know on the day of the test is that one of the subject areas will have three sections instead of two. Because it's not possible to determine the experimental section from the scored sections, we urge you to treat all sections as scored unless you are told otherwise.

Lastly, instead of an experimental section, your test could contain a research section. This section is unscored and will be indicated as such. If you have a research section on the test, it will be the last section. Pay careful attention to the directions at the beginning of the section.

Scoring

The Analytical Writing section is scored on a scale of 0–6 in half-point increments. (See [Chapter 20: Introduction to Analytical Writing](#), for details on this scoring rubric.) The Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections each yield a scaled score within a range of 130–170 in one-point increments.

But you don't receive only scaled scores; you also receive a percentile rank, which rates your performance relative to that of a large sample population of other GRE takers. Percentile scores tell graduate schools just what your scaled scores are worth. For instance, even if everyone got very high scaled scores, universities would still be able to differentiate candidates by their percentile scores. The following tables give a cross section of the percentile ranks that correspond with certain scaled scores on each section of the GRE, based on test takers between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2020. For the full percentile-to-score conversion tables, see www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_guide_table1a.pdf.

Verbal Reasoning	
Percentile Ranking	Scaled Score
99	169–170
96	165
88	161
79	158
63	154
49	151
35	148
25	145
10	139

Quantitative Reasoning	
Percentile Ranking	Scaled Score
96	170
91	168
79	163
70	160
57	156
46	153
32	149

18	145
9	141

Analytical Writing	
Percentile Ranking	Score
99	6.0
98	5.5
91	5.0
80	4.5
54	4.0
37	3.5
13	3.0
5	2.5
1	2.0

Universities pay great attention to percentile rank. It's important that you do some research into the programs you're thinking about. Admissions officers from many top graduate school programs consider the GRE the most important factor in graduate school admissions. Some schools have cutoff scores below which they don't even consider applicants. But be careful! If a school tells you it looks for applicants scoring an average of 150 per section, that doesn't mean those scores are good enough for immediate acceptance. Some students will be accepted with scores below that average, and some students may be denied admission even with scores that are higher. Consider the score of 150 per section an initial target score but also be sure the rest of your application is strong. You owe it to yourself to find out what kinds of scores impress the schools you're interested in and to work hard until you get those scores. Every day we see students achieve their target scores. Study diligently and you can be among them.

A final note about percentile rank: the sample population to which you are compared to determine your percentile is not the group of people who take the test on the same day you do. ETS doesn't want to penalize an unlucky candidate who takes the GRE on a date when everyone else happens to be a rocket scientist. Instead, it compares your performance with that of test takers from the past three years. Don't worry about how other people do—strive for your best score. We often tell our students, "Your only competition in this classroom is yourself."

Cancellation and Multiple-Scores Policy

Unlike many things in life, the GRE allows you a second chance. If at the end of the test, you feel that you've definitely not done as well as you could have, you have the option to cancel your score. Although score cancellation is available, the option to use ScoreSelect® means there's rarely a good reason to cancel scores. (See below for a description of the ScoreSelect® feature.) If you cancel, your scores will be disregarded—but you also won't get to see them. Canceling a score means that it won't count; however, you will not receive any refund for your test fee.

Two legitimate reasons to cancel your score are illness and personal circumstances that may have caused you to perform unusually poorly on that particular day.

But keep in mind that test takers historically underestimate their performance, especially immediately following the test. They tend to forget about all of the things that went right and focus on everything that went wrong. So unless your performance has been terribly marred by unforeseen circumstances, don't cancel your score. Even if you do cancel your score, it is possible to reinstate it within 60 days for a fee. (See www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/test_day/policies for details.)

Also, ETS now offers test takers more choices in determining which scores to report to schools. The ScoreSelect® option allows GRE test takers to choose—after viewing their scores on Test Day—to report their scores from only the most recent test they took or from all of the GRE tests they have taken in the past five years. Additionally, if a student sends score reports after Test Day, the student can have full freedom to report scores from any testing administration(s), not just the most recent. However, test takers cannot report only Quantitative Reasoning scores or only Verbal Reasoning scores from a given test—results from any testing administration must be reported in full. For more on the ScoreSelect® option, go to www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/scoreselect.

Requested score reports are sent to schools 10–15 days after the exam. All GRE testing administrations will remain valid (and usable) in your ETS record for five years. If you choose to report multiple scores, many grad schools will consider the highest score you have for each section, but check with the schools to which you plan to apply for their policies on multiple scores.

Lastly, know that schools receiving your scores will have access to photos taken of you at the test center, plus your Analytical Writing essays from each test administration whose scores you choose to report.

Test Registration

The computer-based GRE General Test is offered year-round. To register for and schedule your GRE, visit www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/how where you'll find information on scheduling, pricing, repeat testing, cancellation policies, and more. (If you live outside the United States, Canada, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Puerto Rico, visit www.ets.org/gre for instructions on how to register.)

Registering earlier is strongly recommended because spaces often fill quickly.

As of the writing of this book, the GRE also offers students the ability to take the test at home instead of in a testing center. The computer that you use must meet certain requirements, and the test is administered and monitored by an online proctor. Check www.ets.org/gre/at-home for the most up to date information.

REGISTER ONLINE

You can register online (if you are paying with a credit or debit card) at www.ets.org/gre. Once the registration process is complete, you can print out your voucher immediately (and can reprint it if it is lost). If you register online, you can confirm test center availability in real time.

REGISTER BY PHONE

Call 1-800-GRE-CALL or 1-800-473-2255. Your confirmation number, reporting time, and test center location will be given to you when you call. Payments can be made with an American Express, Discover, JCB, MasterCard, or Visa credit or debit card.

GRE Checklist

BEFORE THE TEST

- Choose a test date.
- Register online at www.ets.org/gre or by phone at 1-800-GRE-CALL.
- Receive your admission voucher in the mail or online.
- If you are taking the GRE at a testing center, visit the location before your official test date.
 - Know the directions to the building and room where you'll be tested.
- Create a test prep calendar to ensure that you're ready by the day of the test.
 - On a calendar, block out the weeks you have to prepare for the test.
 - Based on your strengths and weaknesses, establish a detailed plan of study and select appropriate lessons and practice. (Don't forget to include some days off!)
- Stick to the plan; as with any practice, little is gained if it isn't methodical. Skills can't be "crammed" at the last minute.
- Reevaluate your strengths and weaknesses from time to time and revise your plan accordingly.

THE DAY OF THE TEST

- Make sure you have your GRE admission voucher and acceptable ID.
- If you are taking the test at a center, leave yourself plenty of time to arrive at the test site stress-free.
 - Arrive at the test site at least 30 minutes early for the check-in procedures.
- Don't worry—you're going to do great!

GRE Subject Tests

Subject Tests are designed to test the fundamental knowledge that is most important for successful graduate study in a particular subject area. To do well on a GRE Subject Test, you must have an extensive background in the particular subject area—the sort of background expected of a student who majored in the subject. Subject Tests enable admissions officers to compare students from different colleges with different standards and curricula. Not every graduate school or program requires Subject Tests, so check admissions requirements at those schools in which you're interested.

ORGANIZATION, SCORING, AND TEST DATES

All Subject Tests are administered in paper-based format and consist exclusively of multiple-choice questions that are designed to assess knowledge of the areas of the subject that are included in the typical undergraduate curriculum.

On Subject Tests, you'll earn one point for each multiple-choice question that you answer correctly. Your raw score is then converted into a scaled score, which can range from 200–990. The range varies from test to test.

Some Subject Tests also contain subtests, which provide more specific information about your strengths and weaknesses. The same questions that contribute to your subtest scores also contribute to your overall score. Subtest scores, which range from 20–99, are reported along with the overall score. For further information on scoring, you should consult the relevant Subject Test Descriptive Booklet, available from ETS. Subject Tests are offered three times a year: in April, September, and October. Note that not all of the Subject Tests are offered on every test date; consult www.ets.org/gre for upcoming test dates and registration deadlines.

SUBJECTS

Currently, four Subject Tests are offered.

Chemistry

This test consists of about 130 questions. There are no subscores, and the questions cover the following topics: analytical chemistry, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, and physical chemistry.

Mathematics

This test consists of about 66 questions on the content of various undergraduate courses in mathematics. Most of the test assesses your knowledge of calculus, linear algebra, abstract algebra, and number theory.

Physics

This test consists of approximately 100 questions covering mostly material from the first three years of undergraduate physics. Topics include classical mechanics, electromagnetism, atomic physics, optics and wave phenomena, quantum mechanics, thermodynamics and statistical mechanics, special relativity, and laboratory methods. About 9 percent of the test covers advanced topics, such as nuclear and particle physics, condensed matter physics, and astrophysics.

Psychology

This test consists of approximately 205 questions drawn from courses most commonly included in the undergraduate curriculum. In addition to a total score, there are also six subscores corresponding with these sections: biological, cognitive, social, developmental, clinical, and measurement and methodology.

For more information, consult ETS's Subject Test section at www.ets.org/gre/subject.

Chapter 2

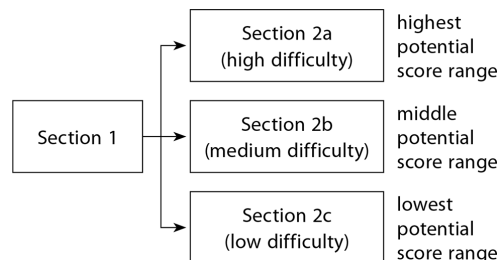
Multi-Stage Test Mechanics

How the MST Works

The multi-stage test, or MST, differs in some critical ways from the typical standardized test. An MST is a computer-based test that you take at a special test center at a time you schedule. Below is a chart that highlights some of the key features of the GRE MST:

MST Features
The test adapts one section at a time, altering the difficulty level of your second Quantitative and Verbal sections based on your performance on the first of each.
You may answer questions in any order within a section and change your answers to previously answered questions within a section.
An onscreen calculator is provided for the Quantitative Reasoning sections.
Mark & Review buttons are available to help you keep track of questions you want to revisit.
The MST lasts about 4 hours, including breaks.

Now that you have a sense of the overall format and structure of the GRE MST, let's look more closely at what the term multi-stage test means, how the MST adapts to your performance, and how these factors determine your score.



The previous chart depicts a simplified version of how adaptivity works on the MST. Depending on your performance on the first Quantitative or Verbal section, you may get channeled into a harder or an easier second Quantitative or Verbal section. The difficulty of the second section determines your score range—roughly speaking, the “ceiling” and “floor” of your potential Quantitative or Verbal scores. Ultimately, your score will be determined by two factors: (1) the difficulty of the questions you receive and (2) the number of questions you answer correctly.

Therefore, it is important to do as well as possible on the first section, since that will put you in the best position to achieve a great score. That said, your performance on the second section is still a crucial determinant of your ultimate score. (Note that the test only adapts within a given subject. In other words, your performance on the Verbal section will not affect the difficulty of a subsequent Quantitative section.)

Understanding the adaptive nature of the MST is interesting and somewhat useful in your prep, but it is actually counterproductive to think too much about it on Test Day. Many test takers try to gauge how they are doing on the exam by

assessing the difficulty of the second section they receive. Doing this on Test Day is, at best, a waste of brainpower. At worst, it can cause you to become distracted by counterproductive thoughts (“These questions are too easy! What am I doing wrong?”). Just focus on solving the questions in front of you and do your best.

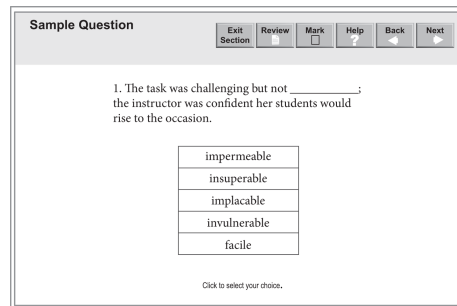
Simply put, the more questions you get right on the first section, the better off you’ll be. The same goes for the second section. Therefore, your goal will be to get as many questions right as possible—not terribly mind-blowing! But how do you do that? Specifically, how can you use the structure of the MST to your advantage as you try to achieve this goal?

Let’s now discuss the best ways to navigate the MST and how you can use these functionalities on Test Day to get as many correct answers as possible.

Navigating the GRE MST Interface

Let's preview the primary computer functions that you will use to move around on the MST. ETS calls them "testing tools." They're basically tabs that you can click with your mouse to navigate through the section. The following screen is typical for a multi-stage test.

Directions: Choose the word or set of words for each blank that best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.



Here's what the various buttons do:

The Time Button (not pictured)

Clicking on this button turns the time display at the top of the screen on or off. When you have five minutes left in a section, the clock will automatically turn on, and the display will change from hours and minutes to hours, minutes, and seconds.

The Quit Test Button (not pictured)

Hitting this button ends the test prematurely. Do not use this button unless you want all of your scores canceled and your test invalidated.

The Exit Section Button

This allows you to exit the section before the time is up. Try not to end the section early—use any extra time to review any problems you flagged or felt concerned about.

The Review Button

This button will allow you to view your progress on all the questions you have looked at so far within the section you're working on. The items you have marked for review will have a check mark next to them. The chart on the screen will also have a column indicating whether or not you have answered a question.

The Mark Button

This button allows you to mark a question for review later. The question will have a check mark next to it in the review section.

The Help Button

This button leads to directions and assistance on how to use the test interface. But beware: the test clock won't pause just because you click on Help.

The Back Button

This button allows you to return to previous questions within the section. Note that you may only go back to questions in the section you're currently working on.

The Next Button

Hit this when you want to move on to the next question. You cannot proceed until you have hit this button.

Calculator (not pictured; Quantitative Reasoning section only)

This button opens the onscreen calculator on Quantitative Reasoning sections. It's a pretty basic calculator, and the questions tend to be conceptual in nature, but the calculator still can help you to avoid simple computational errors. Note that you can click on the "Transfer Display" button on the calculator to transfer your answer into a numeric entry box.

MST Section Management Techniques

Section management is an especially important skill to develop for the GRE. The MST allows you to move around within the section you're working on. This can be a great help if you know how to use this functionality to your advantage, but it can also be a source of uncertainty—with the ability to approach each section in whatever order you wish, where should you start? How can you best use the allotted time to rack up as many points as possible? Here are some principles to follow:

Approach the exam as you would a paper-based one. Since it's impossible (and certainly not a good use of your mental effort) to judge the difficulty level of questions while you're working on them, just focus on doing the best you can on each question—as far as you are concerned, they are all of equal importance to your score. Pace yourself so that you can capitalize on all the questions that you are capable of getting correct.

Don't get bogged down on any one question. If you feel that you are getting stuck, mark the question and go to the next one. Use the Mark and Review buttons to tag questions that you wish to return to later in the section. Sometimes when you take a second look at a question, you'll immediately see how to approach those aspects you previously found challenging.

You can also use the Mark button to indicate that you should come back and review the question if you have time at the end of that section. You can do this whether or not you've answered the question. This way, you can better organize your time by keeping track of which questions you are done with and which ones need a second look. Even if you are marking a question to come back to later, you may want to enter an answer the first time through. If you run out of time, you'll be glad that you at least put in a guess.

Use extra time at the end of a section to check your work. This is a major advantage of the MST. Always check the review screen before you finish a section to ensure you haven't forgotten to answer a question.

You may find that it is beneficial to start with some of the question types that take less time to answer. For example, you may find that you score highest on the Verbal section when you answer the Sentence Equivalence questions first. Use the practice sets in this book and your online MSTs to find the approach that works best for you.

There is no penalty for guessing on the GRE. As far as the MST is concerned, leaving an answer blank is the same as selecting an incorrect answer. Therefore, you should guess on every question so you at least have a chance of getting it right. But you should always guess strategically. This book will provide many tools, such as elimination strategies and estimation, that will make you an excellent strategic guesser.

Finally, the onscreen timer can work to your advantage, but if you find yourself looking at it so frequently that it becomes a distraction, you should turn it off for 10 or 15 minutes and try to refocus your attention on the test. You may be concerned about your pacing, but being distracted by the timer can be just as damaging to your score as running out of time. As with a traditional paper-and-pencil test, you don't want to get hung up on clock management.

MST: The Upside

To sum up, there are many good things about the MST, including the following:

- There will be only a few other test takers in the room with you—it won't be like taking a test in one of those massive lecture halls with distractions everywhere.
- You get a 10-minute break after the third section and a 1-minute break between each of the other sections. The breaks are optional, but you should use them to relax, stretch, and clear your head before the next section.
- You can sign up for the GRE just two days before the test (though we recommend signing up much earlier!), and registration is very easy.
- The MST is convenient to schedule. It's offered at more than 175 centers, up to seven days a week (depending on the center), all year long.
- Perhaps the MST's best feature is that it gives you your unofficial Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores immediately.

MST: The Downside

There are also some less attractive features of the MST:

- The MST is a long test requiring lots of endurance.
- As with any computer-based test, you can't cross off an answer choice to use the process of elimination. Use your scratch paper to avoid reconsidering choices you've already eliminated.
- You have to scroll through Reading Comprehension passages and read them onscreen.
- You'll be given scratch paper to make notes or perform calculations, but if you need more, you'll have to turn in the scratch paper that you've already used before obtaining new paper.
- Many people find that spending considerable time (especially four hours!) in front of a computer screen tires them out and causes eyestrain.
- Having a calculator provided for you on the Quantitative Reasoning sections may seem like a gift, but it comes with a price. The questions on the Quantitative Reasoning section are now more conceptual and less calculation based. Basically, you won't have to worry about doing long division, but the problems will be less straightforward.
- Being able to go back and change your answers may be a plus, but it can lead to pacing issues for some test takers, who will leave questions blank and then either forget to come back to them or run out of time.
- If you wish to take the GRE again, there is a mandatory waiting period: you can only test every 21 calendar days. So if you don't get the scores you need the first time, you'll need to wait three weeks until you can test again. This can be a problem if you're on a tight deadline.

Part Two

VERBAL REASONING

Chapter 3

Introduction to Verbal Reasoning

Overview

The Verbal Reasoning section of the GRE tests complex reasoning skills and your ability to analyze the relationships between words and sentences. Vocabulary will be tested contextually, and the reading passages are both dense and written with a sophisticated level of diction. The goal of the test's content, with its emphasis on analytical skills, is to make the test an accurate indicator of your ability to understand what you're reading and apply reasoning skills to the various question types. These skills will translate directly to study at the graduate level.

In this section of the book, we'll take you through all the types of Verbal Reasoning questions you'll see on the GRE and give you the strategies you'll need to answer them quickly and correctly. Also, the vocabulary words you'll most frequently encounter on the test are included in Appendixes A, B, and C in the "GRE Resources" section at the back of this book. Think of the glossary and word lists there as building blocks for the questions you will see on the test.

Verbal Reasoning Question Types

The GRE contains two Verbal Reasoning sections with approximately 20 questions each. Each section will last 30 minutes and be composed of a consistent, predictable selection of the following question types:

- Text Completion
- Reading Comprehension
- Sentence Equivalence

The Verbal Reasoning portion of the GRE draws heavily upon your vocabulary and assesses your comprehension of written material. Specifically, it evaluates your ability to do the following:

- Analyze sentences and paragraphs
- Derive a word's meaning based on its context
- Detect relationships among words
- Understand the logic of sentences and paragraphs
- Draw inferences
- Recognize major, minor, and irrelevant points
- Summarize ideas
- Understand passage structure
- Recognize an author's tone, purpose, and perspective

Within each section of Verbal Reasoning questions on the GRE, you will see an assortment of question types.

Pacing Strategy

The GRE allows you to move freely backward and forward within each section, which can be a big advantage on Test Day. If you get stuck on a particular question, you can flag it and come back to it later when you have time. You only score points for correct answers, so you don't want to get bogged down on one problem and lose time you could have used to answer several other questions correctly. You also are not penalized for incorrect answers, so never leave a question blank.

You will have 30 minutes to work on each Verbal Reasoning section. The approximately 20 questions in each section will be an assortment of Text Completion, Sentence Equivalence, and Reading Comprehension items. However, these types of questions are not distributed equally. The following chart shows how many questions you can expect of each type, as well as the average amount of time you should spend per question type.

	Text Completion	Sentence Equivalence	Reading Comprehension
Number of Questions	approx. 6	approx. 4	approx. 10
Time per Question	1–1.5 minutes, depending on the number of blanks	1 minute	1–3 minutes, depending on the length, to read the passage and 1 minute to answer each question

Use these timing estimates as you work on practice questions and exams. With repetition, you will become comfortable keeping to the same amounts of time on Test Day. Additionally, you will be prepared to use the Mark and Review buttons to your advantage while taking the actual test.

Navigating the Verbal Reasoning Section of This Book

The next chapter, *Verbal Foundations and Content Review*, will review the classic verbal concepts and topics that you will encounter on the GRE. This section of the book also includes individual chapters on Text Completion, Sentence Equivalence, and Reading Comprehension questions. Each of those chapters includes an introduction and definition of the relevant question types, followed by a review and examples of the strategies to follow to answer those questions quickly and correctly. In addition, you'll find a practice set with answers and explanations for each of the question types you'll encounter on the GRE.

Finally, at the end of this section, you'll find the Verbal Reasoning Practice Sets, which include not only practice questions but also answers and explanations. Use the Verbal Reasoning Practice Sets to test your skills and pinpoint areas for more focused study. When you are finished with this section of the book, you will have prepared for every question type you might encounter on the Verbal Reasoning section of the GRE.

Chapter 4

Verbal Foundations and Content Review

Introduction to Verbal Foundations and Content Review

The GRE Verbal section tests critical thinking skills that are essential to handling graduate-level work. To do well on this section, you will need to grasp how ideas relate to one another in sentences and passages. To measure this skill, the GRE evaluates your mastery of college-level vocabulary and your ability to read dense academic text for meaning. There are many strategies you can use to improve your vocabulary and reading comprehension.

- To improve your vocabulary:
 - Learn words in context
 - Tell stories about words
 - Use flashcards
 - Keep a vocabulary journal
 - Think like a thesaurus—word groups and word roots
 - Use all your senses
 - Use other people
 - Use other languages
 - Use online resources
 - Learn very common GRE words
- To improve your reading comprehension:
 - Attack the passage
 - Change your reading habits

This chapter will cover all of these strategies to improve your GRE vocabulary and reading comprehension, boosting your performance on Text Completion, Sentence Equivalence, and Reading Comprehension questions. In addition, you'll find short practice sets that will introduce you to each of these question types.

The Kaplan Guide to Improving Your Vocabulary

According to the Global Language Monitor, there are over 1,000,000 words in the English language. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, there are “only” about 170,000 words in current use. Either way, that’s a lot of words. Estimates put the vocabulary of most American college graduates at around 20,000 words. If you’ve taken a practice test and thought, “There are so many words I don’t know!” you’re not alone.

Fortunately, you can efficiently build your GRE vocabulary and see a significant increase in your Verbal score. You can do this by choosing a few strategies from the following pages that appeal to you and working with them every day over a number of weeks or months.

Be warned: you won’t feel as though you’re making progress at first. You’ll learn a bunch of new words, then do some practice questions and see a plethora of words you still don’t know. That’s because there are an awful lot of words. You may feel discouraged. But don’t give up! By spending at least 10 minutes a day on vocabulary, using the effective strategies given here, you will reach critical mass so that you can eliminate incorrect answers on Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions and choose the answers that match your predictions. Here are some facts that should help you feel confident about this task:

- The testmaker prefers certain types of words. On the test, you can expect to see the kind of vocabulary that commonly appears in literature and in academic journal articles. Also, you can expect to see a preponderance of words with Latin and Greek roots and prefixes. Thus, it is virtually unthinkable that you would need to know what *gabelle* means (a *gabelle* was a tax on salt in France before the French Revolution, and the word was derived from Arabic). However, a word like *incontrovertible* (from Latin, with *in-* meaning “not” and *controvertible* relating to “controversial,” so “not controversial” or “undoubtedly true”) is a word that the testmaker would expect you to be familiar with or to be able to figure out. After all, in graduate school you may well need to discuss whether an idea is *incontrovertible* or not.
- You often don’t need to know the exact definition of a word to get a question correct. In fact, often just knowing whether a word has a positive or negative connotation is enough. Consider the word *ignominy*. That’s not a word most of us use every day. But think about words you know that start with *igno . . .*, like *ignore* and *ignorant*. It’s not nice to ignore someone, and no one wants to look ignorant in front of other people. If the sentence is “It took her years to overcome the _____ of giving such an important speech when she was completely unprepared,” you can predict “something bad” for the blank and make a good guess that *ignominy* fits. (In fact, *ignominy* means “shame” or “humiliation”—it’s very negative, and it fits the sentence perfectly.)

The following strategies will help you learn the general meaning of the words you’re most likely to see on the GRE.

LEARN WORDS IN CONTEXT

When you’re not studying for the GRE, where do you see words and need to know what they mean? In things you read. Therefore, a good way to expand your vocabulary is through reading. When you read, you see words in a context that will help you remember them.

Your neighborhood or campus library has hard-copy books, magazines, and newspapers that you can read for free, and increasingly libraries can loan out ebooks as well. Check with a library near you to see what’s available. If you don’t want to worry about getting the book back on time, classic literature is generally available for purchase in bookstores or online for low prices. Moreover, a lot of excellent, vocabulary-rich material is available online at no charge. You can have reading material with you, whether in your bag or on your mobile device, all the time, so you can improve your GRE Verbal score throughout the day whenever you have a few minutes!

When you're reading, make sure to have handy (a) a notebook or notes app so you can jot down the words you don't know (see "Keep a Vocabulary Journal" below) and (b) a good dictionary or dictionary app so you can look up the words. (In a lot of e-readers, you can highlight or double-click a word to bring up its definition.) When you look up a word's meaning, also see what the dictionary says about its etymology and synonyms/antonyms and check whether the dictionary shows the word used in a sentence. If it does, compare how the word is used in the sentence you just read with how it's used in the dictionary's example sentence. If it doesn't, then make up your own sentence, using the word in a way that's relevant to you. You might also make flashcards (see "Use Flashcards" later in this chapter) with your new words so you can easily keep practicing them.

Oh, and if you come across any words in this chapter that you're unfamiliar with, write them down and look them up! There's no time like the present to start improving your GRE score.

Here are some ideas for reading where you will encounter a plethora of GRE-type words. As you consider these resources, think about what you like to read. If you try to force yourself to read material you find tedious, you're unlikely to keep up the regular routine your GRE vocabulary growth depends on, so read things you find interesting. Ask yourself these questions:

- Are you a more avid reader of fiction or nonfiction?
- Do you prefer to immerse yourself in books, or does short work better fit your available time or attention span?
- Are there particular topics that interest you?

The lists of resources that follow are far from exhaustive; feel free to explore the library, bookstores, your own bookshelves and those of friends and family, and the Internet for more ideas. And, of course, the Internet is a dynamic entity. So while all URLs provided here work as this book goes to press, we can't guarantee they will work forever.

Magazines

All of the publications listed here are available at newsstands and bookstores and by subscription, and they offer extensive content online at no charge.

- The Atlantic (theatlantic.com) publishes a selection of nonfiction articles and short stories written at a high level. A visit to this publication's website quickly turned up words such as affluent, ensue, and notorious.
- The Economist (economist.com) covers current world events with an international focus. On a visit to this website, we soon encountered putative, sectarian, and opulently.
- National Geographic (nationalgeographic.com) is known in part for the amazing photography that illustrates its stories about the natural environment and human societies. Words found there included riposte, harried, and mesmerizing.
- The New Yorker (newyorker.com) publishes in-depth feature articles on a wide variety of topics as well as short fiction. A visit to the magazine's website quickly turned up words including candid, endemic, and neophyte.
- Scientific American (scientificamerican.com) covers science for a lay audience with topics ranging from dinosaurs to DNA to dreams. This is an excellent resource for readers with a background in the humanities or social sciences to get more comfortable with science reading. A few cool words found here: herbivorous, ravaged, malady.

Again, have you seen any words you don't know? Jot them down and start expanding your GRE vocabulary right now!

Newspapers

By reading newspapers, you will improve not only your vocabulary but also your knowledge of current events, which are often excellent examples to draw from when writing your essays for the Analytical Writing Measure. You will find the following publications a rich source of GRE words.

- The New York Times (nytimes.com) is a daily newspaper of national and international scope. On the website, you can access section front pages and read a certain number of articles a month at no charge. The New York Times is also available in print and digital subscriptions, and single issues are available at many newsstands and bookstores.
- The Wall Street Journal (wsj.com) is published Monday through Friday and focuses on national and international news with implications for the economy and business.
- The Washington Post (washingtonpost.com) is a daily newspaper with substantial reporting on national politics and international news.

Literature

If you enjoy fiction, try acquainting yourself with GRE words by reading novels and short stories from the canon of English literature. It doesn't matter if your tastes run more toward Jane Austen or Alice Walker, Ray Bradbury or Charlotte Brontë, Willa Cather or Arthur Conan Doyle, Ralph Ellison or Ernest Hemingway . . . well, you get the idea. Just read whatever interests you!

Alternatively, grab yourself a smorgasbord of authors in the form of a short-story anthology; collections with titles containing phrases such as “Best Short Stories,” “Great Short Stories,” or “Classic Short Stories” are good bets.

There are over 60,000 titles available online for free through Project Gutenberg via the website at gutenberg.org. Alternatively, the website at americanliterature.com features thousands of classic short stories and novels. The website—which is not actually confined to American literature—has a Short Story of the Day feature; bookmark it and read something different every day.

Nonfiction

Literary nonfiction is a great source of GRE vocabulary as well. Look for collections of classic essays on a range of topics by searching for anthologies with phrases like “Great Essays” or “Best Essays” in the title. Enjoy a particular topic? Search for books with phrases like “Best Science Writing” or “Best Political Writing.”

Another good choice for high-level vocabulary is long-form journalism. You'll find these in-depth pieces in the magazines and newspapers listed above. Online, check out longform.org for current and historical articles covering just about any topic you can think of and easily searched by subject. (Longform.org also features a selection of literary short stories.)

TELL STORIES ABOUT WORDS

The previous section explained how seeing words in context can help you remember their meaning. Appendix C: Common GRE-Level Words in Context actually provides context for you. In addition, when you study words using flashcards or lists of words, such as Appendix A: Kaplan's Word Groups and Appendix B: Kaplan's Root List at the back of this book (see below for more on flashcards, word groups, and word roots), you can make up a meaningful context that will help you remember each word.

Take the word *gregarious* as an example. Do you know someone named Greg who is *gregarious*? (It means “sociable.”) Or maybe your friend Greg isn't *gregarious* at all. Either way, you've got a little story to tell about that word.

Sometimes words look like they mean one thing but actually mean something completely different, and while this may be confusing at first, it can actually be an opportunity to learn the word. Here's how this works. Take the word *noisome* as an example. You might reasonably deduce it means something like “noisy”—but it doesn't. It actually means “offensive” in some way and is especially used to mean “really bad smelling.” Now, if you were given a choice of roommates, whom would you prefer: the noisy one or the *noisome* one? Have you ever had a *noisome* roommate? When you make up a sentence that contrasts the word with its non-meaning, you won't forget what the word really means.

Here's another example. Most people instinctively think the word *pulchritudinous* must have a negative connotation; it just looks and sounds unpleasant. However, it actually means “very beautiful.” Are you surprised when a *pulchritudinous* movie star dates someone who isn't very attractive?

The etymology of a word, or how the word has come to mean what it means, can be a great starting point for storytelling about the word. Take the word *decadence*. It turns out that the root *cadere* is from the Latin for “to fall.” Thus, you might fall hard for that decadent chocolate cake and fall right off your diet. Someone with a *cadaverous* appearance looks very ill, as though she might fall right over dead any minute and become a corpse (a *cadaver*). The past participle of *cadere* in Latin is *cas*, so a *cascade* is a waterfall. You might have heard the expression “a cascade effect,” meaning a series of events that come one after another in a manner similar to a waterfall. Can you imagine going over a cascade with your decadent chocolate cake in hand and becoming a *cadaver*? Or, less dramatically, eating decadent chocolate cake during a picnic by a beautiful cascade

and not becoming a cadaver? Again, by telling these little stories and forming vivid mental images, you'll lock in the meanings of words and won't forget them.

Stories don't have to be based on personal experience or made up. They can come from current events, popular culture, or history. Here's a history lesson with a GRE vocabulary lesson inside it: During World War II, the Germans used the Enigma machine to encrypt messages. However, the Allies figured out how to decrypt these messages, and knowing what the Germans were planning was a great benefit to the Allied side. Enigma means "mystery," so it was a good name for an encryption machine since encrypt means "to put a message into code." As you might imagine, decrypt means the opposite—"to decode." The adjectives enigmatic and cryptic mean "mysterious" and "secret," respectively. You can see that by connecting the words you learn in a story, you can commit their meanings to memory.

Bottom line: Memorizing lists of hundreds of words and their definitions would be very boring. Plus, it can be a futile strategy since you may forget the words soon after you learn them, well before Test Day. Instead, think up a sentence or story that uses the word. If it's funny or weird, or has special personal significance, it will be extra memorable—and the word will stick with you, too.

USE FLASHCARDS

Flashcards are one of the most popular ways of preparing for the GRE Verbal section. You have several options, depending on whether you prefer cards you can hold in your hand or the convenience of a phone app. The purchase of a boxed set of flashcards may include access to a phone app as well, so you may be able to kill two birds with one stone.

If you choose to work with printed cards, you can buy a set of flashcards, such as Kaplan GRE Vocabulary Flashcards. Look for cards that include each word's part of speech. A lot of words mean different things depending on whether they're being used as, for example, a noun or a verb. For instance, a malevolent person seeking vengeance might desert ("abandon") his foe in the desert ("arid area") without leaving her any water. Also, look for cards that include not only the definition of the word but also a sentence using the word. As we said before, learning the word in context is the best way to remember it. Finally, cards that include synonyms for the word are extra helpful because the associations with other words will help you learn this word and you'll learn groups of words at a time (see "Think Like a Thesaurus" later in the chapter).

Another option is to make your own cards. This is certainly more work, but by the time you look up the word and then write out its part of speech, its definition, any synonyms, and a sentence using it, you may know the word pretty well.

Consider color coding your flashcards. Here's one way to do this: If a word has a positive connotation, write it in green or put a green dot next to it; if it has a neutral connotation, write it in black or use a black dot; if it has a negative connotation, write it in red or use a red dot. Then on the test, if you see the word penury and can't quite remember the definition, you might still remember seeing it on the flashcard with a big red dot next to it and know it's negative (penury means "extreme poverty"). As we said at the beginning of this chapter, often just knowing the charge of a word is enough to choose it as a correct answer or eliminate it as incorrect on the GRE.

It's hard to beat the convenience of flashcards on your phone. Waiting in line at the store? Waiting for someone to text you back? Waiting for the bus? Hey, how much of our lives do we spend waiting anyway? Well, wait no more. Instead, whip out your phone and add a few more words to your GRE vocabulary. Look for the same things in a phone app as in hard-copy cards: part of speech, definition, synonyms, and an example sentence.

KEEP A VOCABULARY JOURNAL

Keeping a vocabulary journal may sound like a lot of work, but it's actually an efficient way to capture words so their meanings stick with you. A number of studies have shown that writing out words by hand helps some people learn better. So get a notebook and start keeping that vocabulary journal.

What do you write in a word journal? Pretty much the same things you would put on homemade flashcards: unfamiliar words, their definitions, synonyms and antonyms, and sentences using the words. However, you have more room in a notebook, so you can write more. For example, you could make notes about the etymology of a word, or you could write a

couple of different sentences using the word. Use different colors of ink or highlighters to help remember the positive, negative, or neutral tone of words or to make the word stand out in the example sentences you write. Some students like to illustrate the word by drawing a picture or affixing a picture from a magazine or that they print out from a website. Every couple of pages, you could write a brief story (a few sentences) that uses all the words on those pages and maybe some of their synonyms and antonyms as well.

FILL UP A NOTEBOOK? START ANOTHER ONE!

When you encounter a word you don't know, you may not have time to look it up just then. No problem. Write it down anyway and give it half a page. Later when you're studying, you can fill in some of the information about the word. Then when you review it again in a few days, you can add more information. By Test Day, you will be completely sanguine about your recall of every word in your journal. (Don't know the word sanguine? Make it the first word in your notebook!)

THINK LIKE A THESAURUS—WORD GROUPS AND WORD ROOTS

Learning words one at a time is all well and good, but wouldn't it be better to learn them in bunches? That's where word groups and word roots really help. We've already alluded to these in previous sections of this chapter. For example, if you're using flashcards or a vocabulary journal to study, use them to associate a word with its synonyms—a group of words with similar meanings. That's what we mean by a "word group." And in "Tell Stories About Words," we discussed using a word's root (like *cadere* in *decadent* and *cadaver*) to associate that word with related words.

WORD GROUPS

Remember that to get a Text Completion or Sentence Equivalence question correct, you often only need to know a word's approximate meaning. Here's how you can use word groups to know exactly that. In Kaplan's word groups (the complete list is in Appendix A), you'll find this list:

Investigate
appraise
ascertain
assay
descry
peruse

A good point of entry to this list is the relatively common word *appraise*, which means "to determine the value of something." You may have performance appraisals at work (and if your boss thinks you're doing a good job, then he will praise you). You may also have had or heard of having a home or a piece of art appraised in order to ascertain its worth. *Ascertain* is another word in this list that, if you don't already know it, is easy to learn because it means "to make certain of."

The other words in this group are less commonly used, but you can quickly master them by associating them with the words you do know. *Assay* can mean "to evaluate, analyze, or test." For example, by assaying your strengths and weaknesses on the GRE, you can ascertain what topics you most need to study. Or perhaps you will assay your vocabulary knowledge by asking a friend to test you on the words in this book, because such an appraisal will help you determine which words to study. Then after assaying your current GRE skill by taking a practice test, you will raise your score by perusing ("reading thoroughly") this book. These words are by no means synonyms, but they all relate to a careful study or evaluation of something. By making up a story that associates these words in a personally meaningful way, you can efficiently pick up their general sense.

Now let's say that in the middle of the GRE, you see the word *descry* and you can't remember that it means "to detect by looking carefully." Uh-oh. But you do remember seeing it in that list with *appraise* and *ascertain*, so you know it must relate to a thorough examination. Is it a good fit for the blank in this sentence?

Although the sailor climbed the mast every morning to carefully scan the misty horizon with the ship's telescope, he was unable to _____ even a hint of land.

The word "Although" sets up a contrast between the great effort the sailor is putting forth to search for land and his inability to find it. *Descry* it is!

WORD ROOTS

Word roots work much the same way. By studying words grouped by their roots, you can learn the meanings of handfuls of words at a time. This is an efficient way to study. As we saw above, you can also use word roots as the basis for making up sentences about words that help you remember them.

Remember the words *desert* (verb) and *desert* (noun) from the section on flashcards? These words are what are known as homographs, because they are spelled or written (the root *graph*) the same (*hom*) way. Homophones are words that are pronounced (*phon*) the same way, like *air* and *heir* or *bore* and *boar*. In Appendix B, you'll find Kaplan's list of word roots. Here's what it says about these three roots:

(H)OM: same	GRAM/GRAPH: to write, to draw	PHON: sound
anomaly: deviation from the common rule	diagram: a figure made by drawing lines; an illustration	euphony: the quality of sounding good
homeostasis: a relatively stable state of equilibrium	epigram: a short poem; a pointed statement	megaphone: a device for magnifying the sound of one's voice
homogeneous: of the same or a similar kind of nature; of uniform structure of composition throughout	grammar: a system of language and its rules	phonetics: the study of the sounds used in speech
homonym: one of two or more words spelled and pronounced alike but different in meaning	graph: a diagram used to convey mathematical information	polyphony: the use of simultaneous melodic lines to produce harmonies in musical compositions
homosexual: of, relating to, or exhibiting sexual desire toward a member of one's own sex	graphite: mineral used for writing, as the "lead" in pencils	telephone: a device for transmitting sound at a distance
	photograph: a picture, originally made by exposing chemically treated film to light	

Just as with word groups, you can find a point of entry to a word root by starting with a word you know. You certainly know what *grammar* is because you've studied it in school, and you know what a *photograph* and a *diagram* are, but the word *epigram* is less common. If you don't know what *epigram* means, you can learn it now: Was her terse *epigram* written with good *grammar*? In his presentation, what worked best to get his point across: his *diagram*, his *photograph*, or his *epigram*? An *epigram* is something short written to make a point.

The history of words' meanings provides stories that help with learning them, too. For example, starting with the Ancient Greeks and continuing into early modern times, physicians believed that four humors based on bodily fluids determined health. Today we still have the words sanguine ("optimistic, confident," from old words for "blood"), choleric and bilious ("irritable," from words for "yellow bile"), phlegmatic ("calm, lacking energy," from "phlegm"), and melancholic ("sad, gloomy" from words for "black bile"). So the same medical beliefs that led to draining blood from sick people to make them "better" live on in our language.

Do be careful when studying word roots. Watch out for these potential pitfalls:

- Just because two words look similar does not mean they share the same root. Here's an example. The words aver and avert differ by only one letter. However, aver ("to state or prove as true") comes from the Latin *vērū* ("truth") and shares a root with verity, verify, verdict, veracity, and verisimilitude, while avert ("to turn away, prevent") comes from the Latin *vertere* ("to turn") and is related to convert, subvert, introvert, extrovert, incontrovertible (from the top of the chapter), and vertigo. The two words have no relationship.
- The same root or prefix can have different meanings. Take for example embellish and belligerent. Both have bell as a root, but embellish means "to make prettier" and comes from the Latin *bellus* for "pretty," while belligerent means "at war or eager to fight" and comes from the Latin *bellum* for "war." Confusing? Yes. However, this is yet another opportunity to learn these similar-looking words, because you can tell a story that associates them but makes their different meanings clear. For example, if you accused someone of embellishing his war stories, he might become angry and belligerent. Have you ever pointed out that someone was stretching the truth and seen them get angry? If so, then you've got embellish and belligerent. Next!
- Smaller words inside larger words aren't necessarily a Greek or Latin root. Consider the word adumbrate. It would be easy to see the word dumb ("not intelligent" or "not able to speak") in the middle and think that was the root. In fact, the root is *umbr* ("shadow"), the same root as in umbrella, which shades you from the sun or rain. The prefix *ad-* means "toward," and adumbrate means "to foreshadow," or to give a hint of what's coming, as in "The ticking clock in the first paragraph adumbrates the fact that the protagonist runs out of time at the end of the story."

In addition to Appendix B in the back of this book, there are many print and online resources you can use to learn more about word roots. Most dictionaries provide a short summary of words' origins. In addition, some students have found *Word Power Made Easy*, by Norman Lewis, entertaining as well as chock-full of engaging descriptions of what words mean. A popular website for finding out about the history of words is etymonline.com. The site has search functionality and a bibliography.

USE ALL YOUR SENSES

We've emphasized the importance of reading words in the context of other words, but reading isn't the only way to learn words.

Plus, learning words in other ways can be fun—it can feel like playing charades or Pictionary. Here are some ideas that engage different parts of your brain in learning:

- Say the word aloud. Speaking engages Broca's area of the brain, just above the left ear in most people. Plus, you hear yourself say the word, engaging still more of the brain. While you're at it, say the word's definition and a sentence using the word out loud, too. Want to make the word even more memorable? If you're comfortable doing so, say the word in a funny voice that matches the meaning or "charge" of the word. You'd say *insouciant* ("carefree") in a very different voice than you'd say *moribund* ("near death").
- Make up a song with the words you are learning in it. Singing engages even more of the brain than speaking. If you learned the English alphabet song as a kid, you could probably still sing it, along with a lot of other children's songs. This can be a great way to learn a group of related words.
- Not going to sing, not even in the shower? Write a poem with the word in it. No pressure—you're not trying to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, just learn vocabulary words. Everyone can write haiku (traditionally, a three-line poem with five syllables on the first line, seven on the second, and five on the third). Or maybe you could write silly rhymes like Dr. Seuss.
- Draw a picture representing the word. For instance, you might draw someone wagging her finger and looking disapproving to illustrate *discountenance* ("to disapprove"). Work the word into the picture if you can. Or you can write words in your journal or on flashcards in a font that you design to match their meaning or charge.

- If you're having someone quiz you on GRE words and you find yourself answering with a hand gesture—"Oh, attenuate ... that means, you know [move your hand while bringing your thumb and fingers together]"—go with it! Attenuate means "to become thinner or weaker;" and if you can associate a hand gesture with that definition, then you know the word.
- You don't need to stop with hand gestures. Feel free to move your whole body to act out the meaning or charge of a word. For exalt ("to praise"), maybe you jump up and give an invisible friend a high-five; for commiserate ("to sympathize"), maybe you give your invisible friend a hug.

USE OTHER PEOPLE

You don't need to learn GRE vocabulary on your own. Your friends, family members, and coworkers may be excited to get in on the action. If you carry flashcards around with you, whip out a few and ask someone to quiz you. As they learn the words too, they may think of sentences or little stories that will help you remember them. This can definitely be a group project.

You can also incorporate the words you are learning into your everyday conversation. Did you make a mistake at work? You can tell your coworkers, "I hope our boss merely reproves ("gently criticizes") me instead of castigating ("harshly scolding") me." They may be impressed. More likely they'll be amused, or possibly bemused ("confused"). Maybe they'll even want to get in on the fun. Feel tired after a long day? Tell your friends you are flagging and enervated. They'll say that if you've been using words like that all day, it's no wonder. Then you could say that a promise of ice cream afterward would indubitably galvanize you into wanting to go out to a movie.

USE OTHER LANGUAGES

If you've ever studied (or grew up speaking) a Romance language such as Spanish, French, or Italian, it will help you on the GRE. If you've ever studied Latin, even just for a year a long time ago, it will help a lot. The only language tested on the GRE is English. However, if you've learned a Romance language, you've probably noticed that quite a few words were spelled similarly and had similar meanings in that language and in English. Here are just a few examples:

<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Spanish</u>
affable (friendly)	affable	afable
apprehend (to learn)	apprendre	aprender
extraordinary (exceptional)	extraordinaire	extraordinario
indubitable (undoubted)	indubitable	indudable
liberty (freedom)	liberté	libertad
salutary (healthful)	salutaire	saludable

Overlaps between words in these languages usually indicate a common Latin root, so when you noticed the similarities, you were learning the roots of words. This knowledge will help you recognize other related words in English.

USE ONLINE RESOURCES

Several publishers of dictionaries host websites with not only the ability to search for words' meanings but also a thesaurus feature, quizzes and games, and a word-of-the-day feature. Sign up to get the word of the day and wake up every

morning to a new word on your phone. Then make sure to use the word at least three times during the day! Most online dictionaries are also available via mobile apps. Here are some sites to check out:

- dictionary.com (largely based on the Random House Dictionary)
- macmillandictionary.com (based on the Macmillan English Dictionary)
- merriam-webster.com (based on Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary)
- oxforddictionaries.com (produced by the publishers of the Oxford English Dictionary)

Another site that many GRE students enjoy is freerice.com, which will quiz you on one word after another. The words start out very easy, but as you answer correctly, your level goes up and the words get tougher. For every question you get right, this nonprofit website donates rice to the United Nations' World Food Programme. You'll see bowls filling up with rice as you answer questions correctly. So build your vocabulary and feed hungry people—truly a win-win.

These resources aren't targeted at the kinds of words that show up frequently on the GRE, the way the words in Appendixes A, B, and C of this book are. Nonetheless, these are fun, convenient ways to help you sharpen your vocabulary consciousness every day. By looking at a "word of the day" every morning as you wait for your bread to toast, you're preparing your brain to learn words all day. The same thing happens when you take a break from whatever else you're doing and play a few rounds of a vocabulary game. And did we mention these are fun? There's no rule against having fun while you expand your word knowledge. In fact, approaching your prep in a spirit of play will make it even more effective!

LEARN VERY COMMON GRE-LEVEL WORDS

Maybe you're ready to use some of these strategies to improve your vocabulary and your GRE score, but you're not sure where to start. After all, there are a lot of words. Rest assured, no one knows all the words in the English language, nor will the GRE test them all. Your best bet is to memorize common college-level vocabulary words, such as the ones on this list, because words like these are the most likely to appear on the GRE.

ABSTAIN	ADULTERATE	ANOMALY
APATHY	ASSUAGE	AUDACIOUS
CAPRICIOUS	CORROBORATE	DESICCATE
ENGENDER	ENIGMA	EPHEMERAL
EQUIVOCAL	ERUDITE	FERVID
GULLIBLE	HOMOGENEOUS	LACONIC
LAUDABLE	LOQUACIOUS	LUCID
MITIGATE	OPAQUE	PEDANT
PLACATE	PRAGMATIC	PRECIPITATE
PRODIGAL	PROPRIETY	VACILLATE
VOLATILE	ZEAL	

Start with these, which are listed in Appendix C: Common GRE -Level Words in Context at the end of this book. Then move on to the 150 other very common GRE words in that section. It is very likely that at least a few of these words will appear on your GRE test, and they're an excellent starting point for learning even more words.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

You've been in school a long time, and you've read a lot of words. You may feel as though a lot of GRE vocabulary is new to you, but it almost certainly isn't. At some point, you've seen almost every word you'll see on Test Day, and you understood it well enough in context to understand what you were reading. Those words have left some trace in your brain's neural pathways. Your job in studying words is to activate those connections and strengthen them so the words' meanings are readily available to you during the test.

Not only have you seen most of these words before (even if you don't remember them), but once you start to learn them, you'll begin to see and hear them everywhere—on your favorite television shows, in news stories, even in social media memes. This will be more reinforcement of your learning!

Choose a couple of strategies from this chapter to use every day. When you take the practice test toward the end of this book, make sure to review the explanations for each question thoroughly and use your vocabulary-learning strategies to study every word you weren't sure of. This definitely applies to words in the Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions, but if you encounter words in Reading Comprehension passages that are unfamiliar, make sure to learn those words, too.

To acquaint you with the types of GRE questions that test critical thinking skills along with vocabulary knowledge, here is a short practice set of Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions. See how many words you know and don't know and then, as you read the explanations, think about how you are going to learn the obscure words so they'll be familiar the next time you see them.

Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence Practice Set

Directions:

For each blank, select one entry from the corresponding column of choices. Fill all blanks in the way that best completes the text.

1. All Jon cared about was getting an A, so because the team project did not count toward his grade in the course, he felt _____ the work and did not do his share.

- (A) apathy toward
- (B) zeal for
- (C) loathing for
- (D) cheerful about
- (E) antagonism toward

2. To her friends' (i) _____, because she had never expressed an interest in travel, Lovia decided to teach English in Thailand, (ii) _____ in that country for a year.

Blank (i).

A delight
B astonishment
C dismay

Blank (ii).

D sojourning
E retiring
F persevering

3. The citizens met with their senator to express (i) _____, arguing that if tax rates (ii) _____ any further, taxes would become (iii) _____, allowing hard-working individuals to keep little of their well-earned income.

Blank (i).

A euphoria
B composure
C apprehension

Blank (ii).

D economized
E escalated
F elaborated

Blank (iii).

G congruent
H confiscatory
I consummate

Directions:

Select the two answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole and produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.

4. Our manager holds as a _____ that an employee with a messy desk is irredeemably lazy, and she therefore demands that all members of her staff keep their work areas meticulously organized.

- (A) whim
- (B) dogma
- (C) hypothesis
- (D) fancy
- (E) tenet
- (F) polity

5. Elena liked Joe a great deal, but she soon tired of his friends, pseudointellectuals who propounded inane theories based on _____ interpretations of neo-Marxism and existentialism.

- (A) spurious
- (B) terse
- (C) fallacious
- (D) succinct
- (E) bellicose
- (F) blithe

6. Despite the many pleasures of staying in a hotel, such as a hot shower and clean sheets, many people _____ such comforts in favor of cold water from a nearby stream and a sleeping bag in order to savor a revitalizing proximity to nature.

- (A) extol
- (B) deprecate
- (C) renounce
- (D) spurn
- (E) discountenance
- (F) eulogize

Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence Practice Set Answer Key

1. A
2. B, D
3. C, E, H
4. B, E
5. A, C
6. C, D