

Dr. Beverly Hearn's GRE Analytical Writing Tips

All parts of the GRE can be practiced by using the [Tennessee Electronic library](#). Using the internet, access this library, then choose Learning Express, choose the tab, College Students, click on Graduate Entrance exams, and finally select GRE.

We strongly encourage you to practice all of the tests. The tests on this site are free; they are interactive, they are timed; and they will be scored for you so that you can receive immediate feedback on whether or not you would be able to pass the test. You are encouraged to explore all the options on this site.

However, **MAKE SURE to practice the writing tests**. These tests are not scored on the site because hand scoring is required on the actual GRE writing test, but after you answer the sample questions, you will compare your answer to a top scoring 6.0 essay. By using this comparison, you can determine what parts of the essay need further development and more examples in order to make the required grade.

Here are a few hints for scoring high on the writing portion of the GRE exam.

- Take only 3 to 5 minutes to gather your thoughts.
- Make a few notes to use as a guide.
- Write an introductory paragraph which gives an overview of your 3 points.
- Write one paragraph about each of three points.
- Explain each point as well as possible and give examples.
- In the concluding paragraph, try if you can make an overarching statement or use a metaphor that brings it all together:
 - "Fiction and non-fiction are two parts of a well-balanced reading diet. Both are necessary for growth."
- When you are presented an argument to analyze, find three points where the argument is lacking, has no evidence, or makes an assumption.
- Hit one gap in the evidence in each of 3 paragraphs.
- Explain what further information or data is needed to substantiate each inadequate argument.
- Be sure to tell how the argument would be strengthened with that new data.
- Again, bring it all together in the last paragraph.
- Watch the timer and take 3 minutes at the end to make corrections in grammar and punctuation.
- You will not have time to make any big changes so stick to the point and go paragraph by paragraph

If you practice the two versions of the writing test, you will have a much better chance of passing the GRE writing with a 4 or higher (3.5 is required for admission to UT Martin's education graduate program). Be sure to use all GRE resources on the Tennessee Electronic Library site. **We emphasize that practicing the writing portion of the test using this site is essential for almost all applicants in order to score a 3.5 or higher.**

GRE Writing Outline

The following outline is derived from a propositional analysis graphic organizer. This outline can help examinees to organize their written responses to questions which require thoughtful analysis and critical thinking.

After carefully reading the proposed problem/solution, decide whether the argument is valid or not valid. Then write a response of 10-15 sentences examining the following:

- 1. Stated Facts**
Are they real facts or just glowing generalities? Remember source of the information may definitely be questioned.
- 2. Statistical Data**
Were any survey questions or polls supplied in support of the proposition actually directly related to the subsequent conclusions? Question the link or connection if it is not clear and strong. Is data from the sample group generalizable? Was the sample taken from a group similar to the group for whom the conclusion is made? Was the sample random? Was the whole group sampled or a small portion? Which important groups were excluded? In light of the sampling techniques and results, is the conclusion valid?
- 3. Expert Authority**
Were the experts who were quoted actual experts, or simply individuals voicing their own opinions? Do you yourself know any prior information from expert sources such as books, websites, organizations, or other authorities which would confirm or refute the conclusion? Do you know any quotes with the attributable source either in support or in opposition to the proposition?
- 4. Examples**
Were the given examples directly linked or only slightly related to the conclusion? Are there examples from your own life and experience, from courses you have taken, from the news, or from other countries and/or situations that confirm or invalidate the conclusion?
- 5. Logic and Reasoning**
Remember to examine any assumptions, stated or unstated. What is not said; what can be inferred?
- 6. Conclusion**
Recap the reasons why you believe the conclusion is valid, invalid. Briefly summarize the evidence. Finally, restate your agreement or disagreement with the conclusion.

Follow as many of these lines of analysis and criticism as you are able and keep track of time. When 3-5 minutes are left, write the conclusion and look over your work for small edits in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. Hopefully no organizational revisions will be necessary if the outline is followed.