

# Preparing for the GRE



## Verbal Section

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## GRE structure

- Analysis of an Issue Essay (30 min)
- Analysis of an Argument Essay (30)
- Verbal Reasoning section (30)
- Quantitative Reasoning (35)
- Verbal Reasoning (30)
- Quantitative Reasoning (35)
- Possible research section (30 or 35)



## New GRE – changes

- Adaptive by SECTION (not by question)
- Longer (3 h, 40 m vs. 2 h 30 m)
- On-screen calculator
- New question types for V and Q
- New scale (130-170 vs. 200-800)
- Analogies and antonyms eliminated
- Return to questions allowed/  
encouraged



# Geography of the Verbal Section

- 30 minutes
- ~20 questions (generally in this order)
  - **Text Completion**
  - **Reading Comprehension**
  - **Sentence Equivalence**
  - **Reading Comprehension**
- Antonyms and analogies are gone!
  - (less explicit emphasis on vocabulary)
- 2 Sections



# Basic strategies

- Scratch paper
- Personal order of difficulty
  - First pass, second pass
- Process of elimination (POE)
- Vocabulary review
- Learn question types and techniques
- Practice, practice, practice!



# Text completions ("fill in the blanks")

- Anticipate the word(s) in the blank(s)
- Find the clue that restricts the meaning
- Look for trigger words (although, but)
  - A fair AND \_\_\_\_\_ judge
  - A fair BUT \_\_\_\_\_ judge
- Positive or negative?



# Text Completions

- Cover the answers
- Find the clue
- Create your own answer
- Use POE (process of elimination)
- When you don't know the words
  - Positive/Negative
  - Trigger Words (parallel or opposite?)
    - “straight-ahead vs. detour road signs” (Kaplan)



## TC – 2 and 3 blanks!

- Cover the answers
- 2 (or 3) columns on scratch paper
  - Create and use shorthand system
- Create your own answers
- X out answers in each column that don't work
- Relationship between the blanks
  - Trigger words (i and ii opposite or parallel?)





## Text completions – positive/negative

- A wind-chill warning is issued when the temperature is projected to reach minus 25 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, the point at which the cold has \_\_\_\_\_ effects on living creatures.
- Is the blank “positive or negative”?



## Text completions – Triggers and Clues

- Words that could change direction of the sentence.
- Although many cultures view the toad as a symbol of ugliness and clumsiness, the Chinese revere the toad as a \_\_\_\_\_ symbol.
- Stock analysts often use holiday sales to gauge future stock prices; thus, retail performance can be an important \_\_\_\_\_ of market trends.



## TC – 2 and 3 blanks

- Positive/negative paired with clues/triggers
- The sparring of the two lawyers appeared (i) \_\_\_\_\_; however, it is well known that, outside the courtroom, the friendship between the two is (ii) \_\_\_\_\_.



# Sentence Equivalence

- Select TWO correct answer choices!
- Set up scratch paper
- Find the Story
  - Use triggers, clues
- Speak for Yourself
- Use POE



## SE Positive/Negative

- Despite the implications of their noble status, many aristocrats were virtually penniless and lived in a state of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Trigger word?
- Clue?
- Your word \_\_\_\_\_
- Positive/Negative?
  - indigence
  - opulence
  - eminence
  - penury
  - depravity
  - complacency



## SE POE (elimination)

- Because mercury has a variety of innocuous uses, including in thermometers and dental fillings, few people realize that it is one of the most \_\_\_\_\_ substances on the planet.
- Negative/positive?
- Your word \_\_\_\_\_
- Which choices do not have parallels?
  - acidic
  - irritating
  - mundane
  - deleterious
  - disagreeable
  - pernicious



# Reading Comprehension Tips

- Read quickly; main ideas, topic sentence
- Locate trigger words (*although, but, however, yet*)
- Use general knowledge & common sense
- Avoid answers that have:
  - Disputable choices
  - Direct quotes and repetitions



## RC – Question Formats

- Single Answer (5 MC answers)
- Multiple Answers (somewhat like sentence equivalence)
- Text Selection
  - Highlighted portion of the text
  - Click on a portion of the text





# RC – Question Types

- “Fetch” Questions
  - Find some information in the reading
- “Reasoning” Questions
  - Inferences from the passage
  - Conclusions, premises, assumptions



# RC Techniques

- Eliminate “extreme” answers
  - Always, never vs. often, many
- Was it mentioned in the passage?
- Half Right = All Wrong
  - Answers that have two “parts”
- Read “five up and five down”
- Caution: Beyond the information given
- Don’t answer from memory!



## RC – Critical Reasoning Qs

- Break down an argument
- Conclusion – the main point
- Premise – fact cited in support of the conclusion
- Assumption – links the premise and conclusion



## Final reminders:

- Learn question types
- Develop effective techniques
- Do many practice questions
- Practice on the computer