

GRE® Revised General Test: Verbal Reasoning Question Types

The GRE Verbal Reasoning section of the GRE revised General Test contains three types of questions:

- Reading Comprehension
- Text Completion
- Sentence Equivalence

Reading Comprehension questions appear in sets; Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence questions are independent.

Reading Comprehension Questions

There are three types of Reading Comprehension questions:

Multiple-choice Questions—Select One Answer Choice: These are the traditional multiple-choice questions with five answer choices of which you must select one.

Multiple-choice Questions—Select One or More Answer Choices: These provide three answer choices and ask you to select all that are correct; one, two, or all three of the answer choices may be correct. To gain credit for these questions, you must select all the correct answers, and only those; there is no credit for partially correct answers.

Select-in-Passage: The question asks you to click on the sentence in the passage that meets a certain description. To answer the question, you choose one of the sentences and click on it; clicking anywhere on a sentence will highlight it.

Reading comprehension passages are drawn from the physical sciences, the biological sciences, the social sciences, the arts and humanities, and everyday topics, and are based on material found in books and periodicals, both academic and nonacademic. The passages range in length from one paragraph to four or five paragraphs.

Sample questions 1 to 3 below are based on this passage:

Policymakers must confront the dilemma that fossil fuels continue to be an indispensable source of energy even though burning them produces atmospheric accumulations of carbon dioxide that increase the likelihood of potentially disastrous global climate change. Currently, technology that would capture carbon dioxide emitted by power plants and sequester it harmlessly underground or undersea instead of releasing it into the atmosphere might double the cost of generating electricity. But because sequestration does not affect the cost of electricity transmission and distribution, delivered prices will rise less, by no more than 50 percent. Research into better technologies for capturing carbon dioxide will undoubtedly lead to lowered costs.

Sample Multiple-choice Question—Select One Answer Choice

1. The passage implies which of the following about the current cost of generating electricity?
 - A. It is higher than it would be if better technologies for capturing carbon dioxide were available.
 - B. It is somewhat less than the cost of electricity transmission and distribution.
 - C. It constitutes at most half of the delivered price of electricity.
 - D. It is dwelt on by policymakers to the exclusion of other costs associated with electricity delivery.
 - E. It is not fully recovered by the prices charged directly to electricity consumers.

Answer: C. It constitutes at most half of the delivered price of electricity.

Sample Multiple-choice Question—Select One or More Answer Choices

Consider each of the three choices separately and select all that apply.

2. The passage suggests that extensive use of sequestration would, over time, have which of the following consequences?
 - A. The burning of fossil fuels would eventually cease to produce atmospheric accumulations of carbon dioxide.
 - B. The proportion of the delivered price of electricity due to generation would rise and then decline.
 - C. Power plants would consume progressively lower quantities of fossil fuels.

Answer: B. The proportion of the delivered price of electricity due to generation would rise and then decline.

Sample Select-in-Passage Question

3. Select the sentence that explains why an outcome of sequestration that might have been expected would not occur.

Answer: “But because sequestration does not affect the cost of electricity transmission and distribution, delivered prices will rise less, by no more than 50 percent.”

Sample questions 4 to 6 below are based on this passage:

Reviving the practice of using elements of popular music in classical composition, an approach that had been in hibernation in the United States during the 1960's, composer Philip Glass (born 1937) embraced the ethos of popular music without imitating it. Glass based two symphonies on music by rock musicians David Bowie and Brian Eno, but the symphonies' sound is distinctively his. Popular elements do not appear out of place in Glass's classical music, which from its early days has shared certain harmonies and rhythms with rock music. Yet this use of popular elements has not made Glass a composer of popular music. His music is not a version of popular music packaged to attract classical listeners; it is high art for listeners steeped in rock rather than the classics.

Sample Multiple-choice Question—Select One **Answer Choice**

4. The passage addresses which of the following issues related to Glass's use of popular elements in his classical compositions?
- A. How it is regarded by listeners who prefer rock to the classics
 - B. How it has affected the commercial success of Glass's music
 - C. Whether it has contributed to a revival of interest among other composers in using popular elements in their compositions
 - D. Whether it has had a detrimental effect on Glass's reputation as a composer of classical music
 - E. Whether it has caused certain of Glass's works to be derivative in quality

Answer: E. Whether it has caused certain of Glass's works to be derivative in quality

Sample Multiple-Choice Question—Select One or More Answer Choices

Consider each of the three choices separately and select all that apply.

5. The passage suggests that Glass's work displays which of the following qualities?
- A. A return to the use of popular music in classical compositions
 - B. An attempt to elevate rock music to an artistic status more closely approximating that of classical music
 - C. A long-standing tendency to incorporate elements from two apparently disparate musical styles

Answer: A (A return to the use of popular music in classical compositions) and C (A long-standing tendency to incorporate elements from two apparently disparate musical styles)

Sample Select-in-Passage Question

6. Select the sentence that distinguishes two ways of integrating rock and classical music.

Answer: "His music is not a version of popular music packaged to attract classical listeners; it is high art for listeners steeped in rock rather than the classics."

Text Completion Questions

Text Completion questions include a passage composed of one to five sentences with one to three blanks. There are three answer choices per blank, or five answer choices if there is a single blank. There is a single correct answer, consisting of one choice for each blank. The examinee receives no credit for partially correct answers.

Sample Text Completion Questions

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

Text Completion Question 1.

It is refreshing to read a book about our planet by an author who does not allow facts to be **BLANK** by politics: well aware of the political disputes about the effects of human activities on climate and biodiversity, this author does not permit them to **BLANK** his comprehensive description of what we know about our biosphere. He emphasizes the enormous gaps in our knowledge, the sparseness of our observations, and the **BLANK**, calling attention to the many aspects of planetary evolution that must be better understood before we can accurately diagnose the condition of our planet.

Answer choices for question 1.

| Blank 1 | Blank 2 | Blank 3 |
|--------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| overshadowed | enhance | plausibility of our hypotheses |
| invalidated | obscure | certainty of our entitlement |
| illuminated | underscore | superficiality of our theories |

Answer: overshadowed, obscure, and superficiality of our theories

Answer to Question 1 in Context:

It is refreshing to read a book about our planet by an author who does not allow facts to be **overshadowed** by politics: well aware of the political disputes about the effects of human activities on climate and biodiversity, this author does not permit them to **obscure** his comprehensive description of what we know about our biosphere. He emphasizes the enormous gaps in our knowledge, the sparseness of our observations, and the **superficiality of our theories**, calling attention to the many aspects of planetary evolution that must be better understood before we can accurately diagnose the condition of our planet.

Text Completion Question 2.

Vain and prone to violence, Caravaggio could not handle success: the more his **BLANK** as an artist increased, the more **BLANK** his life became.

Answer choices for question 2.

Blank 1

Blank 2

| | |
|------------|---------------|
| temperance | tumultuous |
| notoriety | providential |
| eminence | dispassionate |

Answer: eminence and tumultuous

Answer to Question 2 in Context:

Vain and prone to violence, Caravaggio could not handle success: the more his **eminence** as an artist increased, the more **tumultuous** his life became.

Text Completion Question 3.

The author's **BLANK** style renders a fascinating subject, the role played by luck in everyday life, extraordinarily **BLANK**.

Answer choices for question 3.

Blank 1

Blank 2

| | |
|------------|----------|
| soporific | pedantic |
| lucid | tedious |
| colloquial | opaque |

Answer: soporific and tedious

Answer to Question 3 in Context:

The author's **soporific** style renders a fascinating subject, the role played by luck in everyday life, extraordinarily **tedious**.

Text Completion Question 4.

From the outset, the concept of freedom of the seas from the proprietary claims of nations was challenged by a contrary notion—that of the **BLANK** of the oceans for reasons of national security and profit.

- A. promotion
- B. exploration
- C. surveying
- D. conservation
- E. appropriation

Answer: E. appropriation

Answer to Question 4 in Context:

From the outset, the concept of freedom of the seas from the proprietary claims of nations was challenged by a contrary notion—that of the **appropriation** of the oceans for reasons of national security and profit.

Sentence Equivalence Questions

Sentence Equivalence questions consist of a single sentence, one blank, and six answer choices. These questions require the examinee to select two of the answer choices. The examinee receives no credit for partially correct answers.

Sample Sentence Equivalence Questions

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.

1. Although it does contain some pioneering ideas, one would hardly characterize the work as **BLANK**.

- A. orthodox
- B. eccentric
- C. original
- D. trifling
- E. conventional
- F. innovative

Answer: C (original) and F (innovative)

2. The corporation expects only **BLANK** increases in sales next year despite a yearlong effort to revive its retailing business.

- A. dynamic
- B. predictable
- C. expanding
- D. modest
- E. slight
- F. volatile

Answer: D (modest) and E (slight)