

# The GMAT

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## WHAT?

The Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) is a standardized exam required for admission to most business schools' MBA programs. The test is comprised of four different sections:

1. **Verbal Section:** The Verbal section includes questions that assess your ability to comprehend and analyze paragraphs and individual sentences, as well as correct sentences. You will have 65 minutes to answer 36 questions.

There are three types of questions on the Verbal Section:

- **Reading Comprehension:** This section requires reading passages up to 350 words in length. Subsequent questions test your ability to interpret, apply, and infer information from the texts. Specifically, you will be asked to define words and phrases in context, determine the strong and weak parts of an argument, and draw inferences.
  - **Critical Thinking:** . Critical Reading questions are based on very short (two-to-three sentence) arguments. To do well, you must recognize the structure of an argument, including assumptions, evidence, and conclusion; recognize parallels between similar arguments; determine factors that would strengthen or weaken an argument; determine flaws in an argument; and recognize the effectiveness of a plan of action given in an argument.
  - **Sentence Correction:** In this section, you are given single sentences and asked to determine their flaws. The sentences could have problems with grammar or style conventions. To identify errors, check for sound grammar (noun-verb agreement, pronoun use, verb tense) and sentence structure (improper modifiers, expressions that aren't idiomatic, problems with parallel construction). You will also need to make sure that the sentences express ideas clearly and concisely.
2. **Quantitative Section:** The Quantitative section contains questions which measure basic math skills, understanding of mathematical concepts, and the ability to reason quantitatively. The questions cover three basic areas: Arithmetic, Algebra, and Geometry. You will have 62 minutes to answer 31 questions.

There are two types of questions on the Quantitative Section:

- **Problem Solving:** Problem Solving questions assess your basic skills in reasoning and mathematical understanding. Some of the questions are word problems in which you must reason with a common scenario.
  - **Data Sufficiency:** These questions assess your ability to analyze a quantitative problem and determine which information is relevant and sufficient to finding its solution.
3. **Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA):** The AWA measures your ability to think about and communicate ideas in an essay format. You will have 30 minutes to answer one question.
    - Analysis of an Issue. This section will require you to analyze an issue and write an essay explaining your views. The ideas found in this section are on topics of general interest and do not require prior knowledge in any specific subject.
    - Your personal views are not a consideration when this section is graded.
  4. **Integrated Reasoning Section:** The Integrated Reasoning questions assess your ability to analyze information from a variety of sources, develop strategies, and make decisions based on that information. Questions require you to analyze and synthesize data in different formats and from multiple sources. You will have 30 minutes to answer 12 questions.

There are four types of questions on the Quantitative Section:

- Graphics Interpretation. This type of questions asks you to interpret a graph or graphical image and select the option from a drop-down list that makes the answer statements accurate.
- Two-Part Analysis. This section asks you to solve a question with a two-part solution. You will need to choose from a column of possible solutions.
- Table Analysis. This type of question asks you to organize the data in a given table so you can determine whether certain conditions are met. Each question will have statements with opposing answers (e.g., yes/no, true/false, inferable/not inferable); select one answer for each statement.
- Multi-Stage Reasoning. These questions give you various data and ask you to determine which of that data is necessary to answer the given question.

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## WHEN?

- The GMAT is a computer-based adaptive test and may be taken at GMAT testing centers found around the world, upon appointment. Go to [www.mba.com](http://www.mba.com) to register for a test date.
- GMAT scores are good for five years. Thus, it may make sense to take the GMAT when your test taking skills are still sharp (usually shortly after completing undergraduate graduation).

## HOW TO STUDY?

- The GMAT is weighted heavily in the application review process, so it is important that you prepare seriously. Most students plan to study for about 4-6 months, 10-15 hours per week, and take a GMAT preparation class.
- There are brochures for multiple GMAT prep classes in the Preprofessional Advisement Center.

## RE-TAKING THE GMAT

- Repeat test-takers often score slightly higher. Schools will have access to your complete record and will see every test score and cancelled test. While you may take the GMAT up to five times in twelve months, most schools frown upon an applicant taking it multiple times without improvement.

## CANCELLING SCORES

- Students who do not wish to have their score recorded may have their score cancelled. Generally, business schools do not penalize a single GMAT score cancellation. Multiple cancellations will require an explanation.

## SCORES

- The GMA is a computer-based adaptive test. This means that unlike a paper-and-pencil test, the next question is determined on the spot, pulled from a large bank of questions. Based on your previous answers, you will receive either more or less difficult questions, which will have an impact on your score.
- The published GMAT scores you see are only composed of the Verbal and Quantitative sections, and range between 200 and 800. This score is accompanied by a percentile rank. The average score is 500.
- An Analytical Writing Assessment score is provided separately. Either two independent readers, or one reader and a computerized essay-scoring software will score each essay. A third reader is used if the first two scores are too far apart. Each essay is assigned a score between 0 and 6, with 6 being "Outstanding". Some schools do not take this score into consideration; research the approach of the program you plan to attend.
- The Integrated Reasoning section is also scored separately. The scores for this section range from 1 to 8 in single-digit intervals; no partial credit is given. Because the questions are designed to measure how well you integrate data to solve complex problems, you must answer all responses to a question correctly to receive credit. Some schools do not take this score into consideration; research the approach of program you plan to attend.

\*\*\*For more information on the GMAT go to <http://www.mba.com/us>\*\*\*