

The GMAT

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.
 - *Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA)*: The AWA measures your ability to think about and communicate ideas in an essay format. The ideas found in this section are on topics of general interest and do not require prior knowledge or expertise in any specific subject.
 - There is one 30-minute writing section, called the *Analysis of an Issue* section. This section will require you to analyze an issue and write an essay explaining your views.
 - This section does not count toward your actual GMAT score, but some schools rely on this writing sample to gauge your analytical writing ability, so you should take it seriously.

Your personal views are not a consideration when this section is graded .
 - *Verbal Section*: The Verbal Section includes three different question types : Reading Comprehension, Critical Reasoning, and Sentence Correction. You will have 75 minutes to answer 41 questions in this section.
 - *Reading Comprehension* 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 Reasoning*. 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 sentence 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.
 - *Quantitative Section*. The Quantitative (Math) section contains questions which measure basic math skills, understanding of elementary concepts, and the ability to reason quantitatively. The questions cover three basic areas: Arithmetic, Algebra, and Geometry. You will have 75 minutes to answer 37 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 assesses your ability to analyze a quantitative problem and determine which information is relevant and sufficient to finding its solution.
 - *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.
 - There are four types of questions on the Integrated Reasoning 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.

When?

- The GMAT is a computer-based adaptive test and is offered year-round at GMAT testing centers throughout the world. Go to www.mba.com to find a nearby testing center and 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 for it seriously.. Most students plan to study for about 4-6 months, 10-15 hours per week, and take a GMAT preparation class.

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 more than twice.
- Canceling ScoresStudents 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 may require an explanation.
- ScoringThe GMAT 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 inside the computer. Based on your previous answers, you will receive either more or less difficult questions, which will have an impact on your score.
- Overall GMAT scores range between 200 and 800. The final score is determined by your performance on the Verbal and Quantitative sections, and 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”, and 0 being “Unscorable”.
- You will also receive a verbal sub-score, ranging from 0 to 60.