

The New GRE^{®*}: Frequently Asked Questions

- Q** When is the GRE changing?
- A** The new GRE launches August 1, 2011. Up until this date, you can only take the current GRE. On this date and then after, you can only take the New GRE.
- Q** What is changing?
- A** Literally every aspect of the test will change in some way. The type of test, the timing, the scoring scale, how often you can test, the question types—all of this will change—much of it dramatically.
- Q** Why is the GRE changing?
- A** ETS, the test maker, is overhauling the GRE to give students a better test experience and more opportunity to show graduate-level readiness.

Additional Kaplan insight:

- **Question Types.** The new test will incorporate more question types that better assess higher-level reasoning skills. These should provide a more accurate predictor of grad school performance. For example, knowing vocabulary out of context (as needed for Antonyms and Analogies) is not something you need to demonstrate in grad school to succeed. That's why the test maker is removing this section. Conversely, knowing how to interpret the meaning of words in context is most definitely something you need to demonstrate in grad school to succeed. That's why the test maker is adding more vocab-in-context questions.
- **Business School.** In recent years, the GRE has successfully convinced many business schools that the GRE can be a viable alternative to the GMAT for admissions. To persuade more business schools to accept the GRE, the test maker is making the GRE more like the GMAT. The test will be longer, assess more high-level reasoning skills, and even have similar question types as the GMAT, including Critical Reasoning strengthening/weakening questions and Data Inference questions drawn from tables and graphs.
- **Scoring.** The current GRE scoring scale doesn't match up well with percentile scores. Currently, you can score a perfect 800 on the math side, and you're only in the 94th percentile. Or you can score a 730 on the verbal side, and you're 99th percentile. We expect that the new scoring scale, (130–170 in 1 point increments) will better align the scaled scores to the percentile scores and show finer breakdowns at the higher end of the scoring scale.

- Q** What type of test will the new GRE be?
- A** The current GRE is a computer-adaptive test—a CAT. The test changes at the question level, and you have to answer the question in front of you before you can view the next question. Answer a question correctly and you get a harder question—and your score goes up. Get a question wrong and you get an easier question—and your score drops.

The new GRE will be a multi-stage test (MST). While the new GRE will adapt, it will do so only after you've answered a section made up of 20 questions. Based on your performance on this section you will see another section of 20 questions that is geared to your ability. If you did really well on the first math section of 20 questions, you'll receive a more challenging second math section of 20 questions—but will also be in the running for a high math score band. If you bomb the first math section you'll be given an easier second math section—but will be eligible for a lower score band. The same holds true for verbal reasoning portions of the test.

Q Will the look and feel of the new GRE be similar to the current GRE?

A The revised GRE will have a brand new look and feel. And new functionality. This will be the first change to the GRE test software in several years. On the current GRE, you must answer a question before you see the next question, and you can't go back and change answers. While this is restrictive, it does force you to dedicate all your mental energy to the question at hand—and allows you to keep better track of the number of questions left to answer and how much time remains to answer them.

The new GRE allows you to skip around freely, to change answers to questions, and to mark off questions you want to come back to later. This flexibility is a definite plus—but with flexibility comes uncertainty. This will also lead to pacing issues for many test takers, who will leave questions blank and then forget to come back to them or run out of time. Also, cognition studies tell us that your first answer is often correct; this new format will have lots of test takers second-guessing themselves.

Q I've heard you can use a calculator on the new GRE. Is that true?

A You cannot bring your own calculator, but there is an on-screen four-function calculator built into the GRE software. However, this isn't a pure win for the test taker. The addition of the calculator most likely means that testable math content will be more complex. Additionally, there are many problems that can be solved using the calculator, but would be solved much quicker and more efficiently without one. Too much reliance on the calculator will slow you down.

Q What's happening to the length of the test?

A The new GRE will be about an hour longer in total testing time than the current GRE is. A couple of changes to highlight:

- For the revised GRE, you will have 30 minutes for the "Analyze an Issue" essay rather than 45 minutes. The essay prompts will also be more focused, making it much harder for test takers to prepare essay content prior to the test.
- There will be 2 Verbal Reasoning sections of 30 minutes each, rather than only 1 verbal section
- There will be 2 Quantitative Reasoning sections of 35 minutes each, rather than only a single 45-minute section.
- You also have the potential to see either/both an unscored section—which will look identical to other math and verbal sections, and a research section where you will be informed that the section will not count towards your score on GRE Test Day.
- All-in, it will be more of a test of endurance: with breaks, the new test will take about 4 hours to complete.

Q Is the scoring scale changing?

A It is. The GRE scoring scale is changing from a 200-800 scale in 10-point increments, to a 130–170 scale in 1-point increments. This is supposed to make small differences in scaled scores look less important to admissions departments and highlight larger differences between scores. The scoring scale should also allow ETS to reset score relationships between scaled scores and percentiles—so that a 150 Quant or Verbal Reasoning scaled score equates with a 50th percentile score, and a 170 Quant or Verbal Reasoning scaled score equates with a 99th percentile score.

Q Will I be able to see my Quantitative and Verbal Reasoning Scores right after the test?

A It depends when you take it. Currently, unofficial scores for the Quant and Verbal section are available immediately after you finish the GRE. Your official scores, including your essay score, are currently available to graduate schools ten to fifteen days from test day.

When the revised GRE takes effect, your scores will not be available right away. In fact, for the first several months from launch, there will be no new scores available for the new test. This will continue until November 2011. This is because the GRE test maker needs a lot of people to take the new test before they can confidently

assign scores. If you have deadlines before November 2011, you'll need to take the current GRE for graduate school.

Q How often can I take the new GRE?

A You can take the new GRE once every 60 days, up to five times per year. So if you're on a tight deadline and you don't get the scores you need the first time, you need to wait two months until you can test again.

You're going to need more foresight in planning to take the new GRE. You need to allow enough time—two to three months before the test to prep thoroughly. If you don't hit your goal score when you test, you'll need to wait two months to retest.

Q Will any of the question types be changing for the new GRE?

A Let's run through the changes coming for GRE question types. These are major changes that will affect how you'll prepare for the new GRE.

Analytical Writing:

- Issue essay timing will be 15 minutes shorter, 30 minutes rather than 45. You'll need to be able to plan, produce and proofread in a smaller time frame.
- The essay prompts will be a lot more focused. This will make it much harder to prepare your essay before the test and just type it in on Test Day.

Verbal Reasoning:

- No more Analogies, Antonyms or Sentence Completions. Vocabulary won't be tested as directly, but it will still be very important.
- Verbal sections will be combination of Reading Comprehension, Text Completion, and Sentence Equivalence. About 50% of the questions will be related to short or long passages. The other 50% of questions will be in the short Verbal question types—Text Completion or Sentence Equivalence.
 - There will be a lot of short reading passages—these are approximately 1 paragraph long and will have 1 or 2 questions associated with them
 - There will be 1–2 long reading passages per test. These will have 3 or more questions associated with them
 - Some reading comprehension questions have 1 correct answer, others have 2 or more correct answers.
 - Text completion questions may have 1, 2, or 3 blanks you will need to fill in. If there is 1 blank, there are 5 choices to pick from. If there are 2 or 3 blanks, each blank has 3 choices to pick from. There is no partial credit.
 - Sentence Equivalence questions ask you to select the 2 answer choices that best complete a sentence *and* provide similar meaning.

Quantitative Reasoning:

- Math sections will be a combination of
 - Quantitative Comparison questions
 - Multiple choice: Problem Solving and Data Interpretation
 - Numeric Entry, where you need to write in the answer—there are no choices to guess from or to use for context.
 - There will be a bit less geometry—but it will still be important.
 - Some Problem Solving questions will ask you to pick multiple correct answers. If you don't select all of the correct answers, you won't get credit.
 - Data Interpretation will test your ability to make sense of charts and graphs and pull out information you need to solve a question.

- The bottom line: So much of the test's content is changing, and it's going to take time for students to prepare for this longer test with more challenging material. If you're going to take the new GRE, it will be important to get comfortable with all of the new content and have expert guidance on test strategies.

Q Is it possible these changes won't happen?

A It's possible. The GRE testmaker planned to launch a revised GRE in 2007 and abandoned their plans a few months from launch date. It seems much more likely that the new GRE will be released this go around, but it is certainly possible that aspects of the new GRE will change between now and August 1, 2012.

Q How do I register for the New GRE?

A You can register on **www.gre.org** on or after March 15, 2011.

Q How much does it cost?

A Right now, in the United States it costs \$160 to register for the GRE. We expect ETS to review their pricing in the near future. Regardless of what the final price comes out to be, here's an interesting savings: if you register to test in August or September 2011, your test fee is 50% off.

Q Can I still use current GRE scores after the new GRE is released?

A Current GRE scores will continue to be accepted after the revision; GRE scores are good for five years from test date, so test takers would be best served by prepping and testing prior to the revision. ETS has also informed us that they will be issuing score concordance tables to all graduate programs so that they can more easily compare current and new GRE scores.

Q So if I am applying to graduate school in the fall of 2011, should I take the current GRE or the new GRE?

A Test takers needing to meet fall 2011 graduate school deadlines will need to take the current GRE as testing in August 2011 and through the fall means that you won't have scores until late November or early December 2011.

Q I'm on the fence. Should I test now or test when the new GRE is released?

A With the uncertainty around the new test, most test takers prefer to prep and take the test that is shorter and is a known entity that hasn't changed for a long time - especially because scores are good for 5 years. But if you're on the fence, we recommend you do a little research and take the test that best suits your strengths. You can take a free practice test for the current GRE on our website: **www.KaplanGRE.com**. You can also take a new GRE practice test from the testmaker: **http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/ and decide which is better for you.**

Q How do I get up to the minute information on the new GRE?

A Go to our Test Change Info Center: **www.KaplanGRE.com/newtest**. Follow the feed for **kaplanGRE.com/blogs**. There is already a great series of blog posts on the new GRE by our expert teachers and advisors; see all blogs at **KaplanGRE.com/blog**. We will continue to post new information on the KaplanGRE blog as it becomes available. Likewise, The GRE Team is constantly Tweeting as new information is released, so follow us at **KaplanGREPrep**.

The website of the test maker, ETS, is also a great resource. Go to **www.gre.org** and review information on the new GRE. The test maker has released a full-length computer-based version of the new GRE, called PowerPrep II. It is available for free download from their website here: **http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/**.

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