

# GRE Prep

Analytical Writing Assessment



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## AWA – Analyze an Issue

- The Analytical Writing measure consists of a **30-minute “Analyze an Issue”** task.
- This task presents an opinion on an issue and instructions on how to respond. You’re required to evaluate the issue, consider its complexities and develop an argument with reasons and examples to support your views.
- It is always the first section of the test.
- It does not assess specific content knowledge.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Analyze an Issue - Sample

We can usually learn much more from people whose views we share than from those whose views contradict our own.

*Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.*



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Instructions

- Each Issue topic consists of an issue statement or statements followed by specific task instructions that tell you how to respond to the issue.
- The wording of some topics in the test might vary slightly from what is presented in the ETS pool of issue topics because there may be multiple versions of some topics with similar or identical wording
- With different task instructions, it is very important to read your test topic and its specific task directions carefully and respond to the wording as it appears in the actual test.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Common Instructions

Each task is accompanied by one of the following sets of instructions:

- *Write a response in which you **discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree** with the statement and explain your **reasoning for the position you take**. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and **explain how these considerations shape your position**.*
- *Write a response in which you **discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree** with the recommendation and explain your **reasoning for the position you take**. In developing and supporting your position, describe specific circumstances in which adopting the recommendation would or would not be advantageous and **explain how these examples shape your position**.*
- *Write a response in which you **discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree** with the claim. In developing and supporting your position, be sure to **address the most compelling reasons and/or examples that could be used to challenge your position**.*



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Score Description

The reported score ranges from 0 to 6 in half-point increments

You are assessed on the following criteria:

1. Articulates a clear and insightful position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
2. Develops the position fully with compelling reasons and/or persuasive examples
3. Sustains a well-focused, well-organized analysis, connecting ideas logically
4. Conveys ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety
5. Demonstrates superior facility with the conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage and mechanics), but may have minor errors



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Sources

- History
- Science
- Personal experience
- Politics
- Arts and Literature
- Business
- Education



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Steps

- 1. Read the prompt and the instructions carefully:** Know exactly what is being asked of you. It's a good idea to dissect the prompt into parts.
- 2. Brainstorm your ideas:** Brainstorming and organizing your ideas will make your life much easier when you go to write your essay. It's a good idea to make a web of your ideas and supporting details.
- 3. Type your Essay:** Type your response promptly but carefully.
- 4. Proofread your Essay:** Read your response carefully to make sure that there are no mistakes and that you didn't miss anything.





# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Structure

Structuring an essay is essential for presenting your ideas in a clear and organized manner. While there are different types of essays (e.g., argumentative, expository, persuasive), the basic structure often includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Here's a general guide on how to structure an essay:

### 1. Introduction

- **Start:** Try to start with a compelling statement, question, quote, or anecdote to grab the reader's attention.
- **Background Information:** Provide some context or background information on the topic to give readers a foundation for understanding.
- **Thesis Statement:** Clearly state the main point or argument of your essay. This is the central idea that your essay will revolve around.



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## Where should I take the examples from?

- History: Martin Luther King Jr, Mandela, Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, etc.
- Science: Discoveries / Inventions by Newton, Einstein, etc.
- Stories: Mythological
- Politics: Politicians, Acts, Laws, etc.
- Literature: Animal Farm, Shakespeare, etc.
- Sports: Famous sports-stars
- Business: Famous business tycoons
- Arts: Documentaries on popular people or topics, etc.



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## 2. Body

- **Topic Sentence:** Begin each paragraph with a clear topic sentence that introduces the main point of the paragraph.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Support your topic sentence with relevant examples, facts, statistics, or quotes. This is where you develop and elaborate on your main ideas.
- **Analysis:** Explain how the evidence supports your thesis. Analyze and interpret the information to show its significance to your overall argument.
- **Transition Sentences:** Use transitional words and phrases to smoothly guide the reader from one point to the next.
- **Counter-arguments (if applicable):** State opposing viewpoints or counter-arguments. Acknowledge them and then refute or counter them with evidence and reasoning.



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## 3. Conclusion

- **Restate Thesis:** Summarize your main points and restate your thesis in a different way.
- **Summary of Key Points:** Provide a brief summary of the main arguments presented in the body paragraphs.
- **Closing Thoughts:** End with a thought-provoking statement, a call to action, or a suggestion for further research or consideration.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Practice Prompt

As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the ability of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate.

*Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.*

In favour	Against
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Sample Issue Response

The statement linking technology negatively with free thinking plays on recent human experience over the past century. Surely there has been no time in history where the lived lives of people have changed more dramatically. A quick reflection on a typical day reveals how technology has revolutionized the world. Most people commute to work in an automobile that runs on an internal combustion engine. During the workday, chances are high that the employee will interact with a computer that processes information on silicon bridges that are .09 microns wide. Upon leaving home, family members will be reached through wireless networks that utilize satellites orbiting the earth. Each of these common occurrences could have been inconceivable at the turn of the 19th century.

The statement attempts to bridge these dramatic changes to a reduction in the ability for humans to think for themselves. The assumption is that an increased reliance on technology negates the need for people to think creatively to solve previous quandaries. Looking back at the introduction, one could argue that without a car, computer, or mobile phone, the hypothetical worker would need to find alternate methods of transport, information processing and communication. Technology short circuits this thinking by making the problems obsolete.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Sample Issue Response

However, this reliance on technology does not necessarily preclude the creativity that marks the human species. The prior examples reveal that technology allows for convenience. The car, computer and phone all release additional time for people to live more efficiently. This efficiency does not preclude the need for humans to think for themselves.

In fact, technology frees humanity to not only tackle new problems, but may itself create new issues that did not exist without technology. For example, the proliferation of automobiles has introduced a need for fuel conservation on a global scale. With increasing energy demands from emerging markets, global warming becomes a concern inconceivable to the horse-and-buggy generation. Likewise, dependence on oil has created nation-states that are not dependent on taxation, allowing ruling parties to oppress minority groups such as women. Solutions to these complex problems require the unfettered imaginations of maverick scientists and politicians.



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## Sample Issue Response

In contrast to the statement, we can even see how technology frees the human imagination. Consider how the digital revolution and the advent of the internet has allowed for an unprecedented exchange of ideas. WebMD, a popular internet portal for medical information, permits patients to self research symptoms for a more informed doctor visit. This exercise opens pathways of thinking that were previously closed off to the medical layman. With increased interdisciplinary interactions, inspiration can arrive from the most surprising corners. Jeffrey Sachs, one of the architects of the UN Millenium Development Goals, based his ideas on emergency care triage techniques. The unlikely marriage of economics and medicine has healed tense, hyperinflation environments from South America to Eastern Europe.

This last example provides the most hope in how technology actually provides hope to the future of humanity. By increasing our reliance on technology, impossible goals can now be achieved. Consider how the late 20th century witnessed the complete elimination of smallpox. This disease had ravaged the human race since prehistorical days, and yet with the technology of vaccines, free thinking humans dared to imagine a world free of smallpox. Using technology, battle plans were drawn out, and smallpox was systematically targeted and eradicated.

Technology will always mark the human experience, from the discovery of fire to the implementation of nanotechnology. Given the history of the human race, there will be no limit to the number of problems, both new and old, for us to tackle. There is no need to retreat to a Luddite attitude to new things, but rather embrace a hopeful posture to the possibilities that technology provides for new avenues of human imagination.





# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Why this essay response is worth Score 6?

- The author of this essay stakes out a clear and insightful position on the issue.
- He follows the specific instructions by presenting reasons to support that position.
- The essay cogently argues that technology does not decrease our ability to think for ourselves, but merely provides "additional time for people to live more efficiently."
- In fact, the problems that have developed alongside the growth of technology (pollution, political unrest in oil-producing nations) actually call for more creative thinking, not less.
- In further examples, the essay shows how technology allows for the linking of ideas that may never have been connected in the past (like medicine and economic models), pushing people to think in new ways.
- Examples are persuasive and fully developed; reasoning is logically sound and well supported.
- Ideas in the essay are connected logically, with effective transitions used both between paragraphs ("However" or "In contrast to the statement") and within paragraphs.
- Sentence structure is varied and complex and the essay clearly demonstrates facility with the "conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage and mechanics)," with only minor errors appearing.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Practice Topics

1. The surest indicator of a great nation is represented not by the achievements of its rulers, artists, or scientists, but by the general welfare of its people.

*Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.*

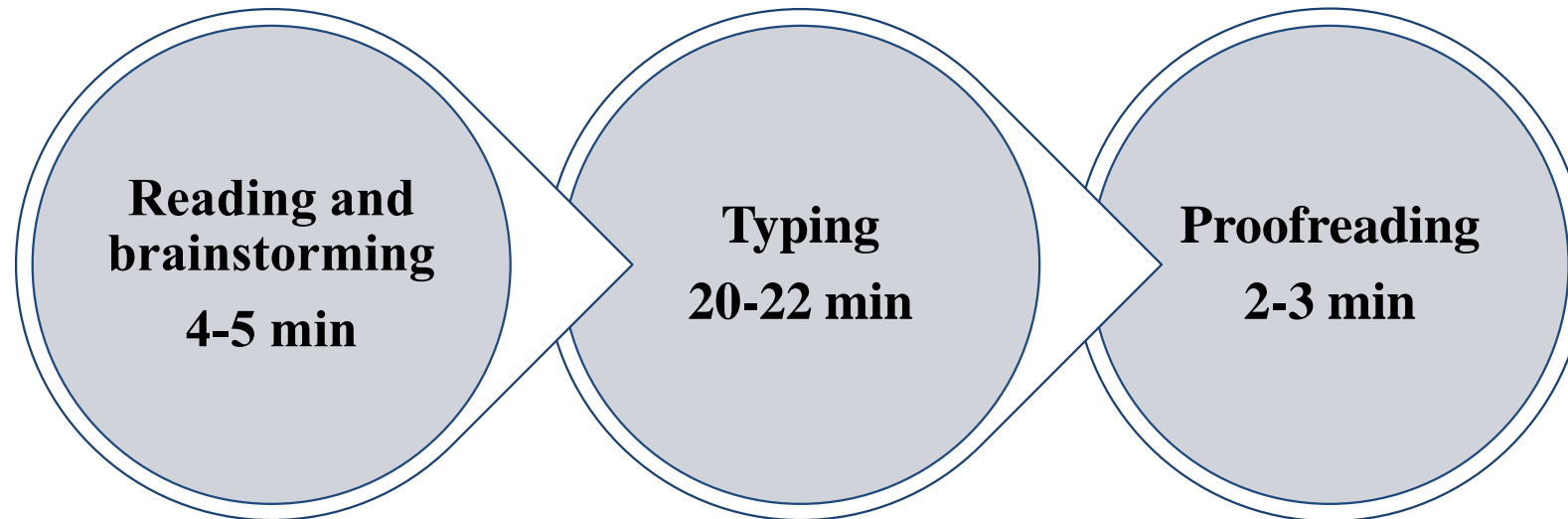
2. Society should make efforts to save endangered species only if the potential extinction of those species is the result of human activities.

*Write a response in which you discuss your views on the policy and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider the possible consequences of implementing the policy and explain how these consequences shape your position.*



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## Allocation of Time



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## Template for the Issue Task

- **First Paragraph: Introduction**

Restate/summarize the issue in 2-3 sentences

End the paragraph with a sentence stating your stand. Examples: I cannot agree more.

I will have to respectfully disagree with the author.

- **Second Paragraph: First reason**

Start with – First, Firstly, To begin with etc.

State the major reason to justify your view and provide a strong example(s) to support the reason.

- **Third Paragraph: Second reason**

Start with – Second, Secondly, Moreover, Additionally, In addition, Also, etc.

State the next major reason to justify your view and provide a strong example(s) to support the reason.



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- **Fourth Paragraph: Third reason**

Start with – Thirdly, Moreover, Finally, In addition, Last but not the least, etc.

State the last (minor) reason to justify your view and provide an example to support the reason.

- **Fifth Paragraph: Counter-points**

State one or two pieces of information or data against your own stand. It expresses moderation instead of absolute agreement / disagreement.

- **Last Paragraph: Conclusion**

Conclude the discussion by reiterating your stand. Use linking words such as “in conclusion”, “to summarize”, “therefore” etc.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Formal Writing Rules

- Write in a formal style
- Write as an impersonal writer
- The essay should neither be too long nor too short. 450-550 words will be enough
- The shift from one paragraph to another should be smooth
- Be politically correct: What seems funny to you may be offensive to someone else. Jokes about religion, sports, political figures, and women may come across as tasteless and should be avoided at all costs
- Avoid spelling mistakes
- Grammar is important: Frame correct sentences with punctuations in place
- If you are not very confident of your writing skills, stick to short and simple sentences



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Formal Writing Rules

- **Vocabulary:** You must use the right vocabulary. It need not be complex or flowery. It needs to be lucid and contextually appropriate.
- **Punctuation:** You must use appropriate punctuation: comma, Dashes and hyphens, exclamation marks, full stop, question mark, colon, semi-colon.
- **Structure:** You must write in sentences. Never write in Bullet points.
- **Grammar:** Follow the basic conventions you learnt in school.
- **The impersonal writer:** It is rare that you would be expected to write in the first person singular (using the word "I"). You should aim to write impersonally.
- **Passive Voice:** Use passive voice only when the goal is to present a set of arguments in an unbiased way. In most cases, use Active Voice.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Formal Writing Rules

- Numbers below one hundred are usually written in full.
- Numbers above one hundred may be presented by digits.
- Dates are usually given in the conventional combinations of numbered day, named month and numbered year. Punctuation is not required: 11 April 2012.
- References to centuries are spelt out, without capitals: twentieth century.
- Decades may be referred to by name or number. The numbered form is not followed by an apostrophe: 1990s.
- **Typing and spelling:** All work for submission should be spell-checked and proofread again.
- **Abbreviations & contractions:** Abbreviations are not used in formal English. They give the impression of a style that is chatty and too informal. "e.g.", "i.e.", "etc.", "can't", "I'm".





# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Formal Writing Rules

- A report or essay is a formal piece of work. **The tone of your work should be formal, and not chatty.** Instead of using “also” or “besides”, use an alternative such as “In addition”. The word “however” is more appropriate than the word “but”.
- **Avoid clichés** : A cliché is an expression that has been so overused that it has lost its force of meaning. Phrases such as “at the touch of a button” and “at their fingertips”.
- **Avoid “journalese”**: Make sure that you have not written work in an exaggerated or sensational style.
- **Avoid jargon**: Use the jargon of your subject area with precision, accuracy, and constraint. Take special care with terms that have specialized meanings in your subject area.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Features on ETS software

- The computer-delivered test will use a basic word processor containing following functionalities:
- Insert text
- Delete text
- Cut-and-paste
- Undo or redo the previous action
- No spell checker or grammar checker

## Remember\*\*\*

The GRE raters scoring your response are not looking for a "right" answer — in fact, as far as they are concerned, there is no correct position to take. Instead, the raters are evaluating the skill with which you address the specific instructions and articulate and develop an argument to support your evaluation of the issue.



# Analytical Writing Assessment

## Next Steps

- Writing one essay every week right from the beginning of your GRE preparation is more than enough. E-mail your essays to your mentors for the review.
- On the day of the GRE exam, do not over-think the essay.
- Remember, it's the first section on your GRE exam. You still have FOUR more sections to go!





*Thank you*