

ANALYTICAL WRITING: ARGUMENTATION ESSAY

GRE Scoring Guide: “Analyze an Argument”

Each “Analyze an Argument” essay will be scored on a 6-point holistic scale according to the criteria below. Although the GRE Analytical Writing Measure contains two discrete analytical writing tasks, a single combined score is reported because it is more reliable than either task score alone. The score reported will represent the average of the scores for the two tasks. You will have 30 minutes to write this essay. See the GRE.org web site for samples of essays that have merited each of the scores below.

Score of 6

A 6 paper presents a cogent, well-articulated critique of the argument and conveys meaning skillfully. A typical paper in this category

- clearly identifies important features of the argument and analyzes them insightfully;
- develops ideas cogently, organizes them logically, and connects them with clear transitions;
- effectively supports the main points of the critique;
- demonstrates control of language, including appropriate word choice and sentence variety;
- demonstrates facility with the conventions (i.e., grammar, usage, and mechanics) of standard written English but may have minor errors.

Score of 5

A 5 paper presents a generally thoughtful, well-developed critique of the argument and conveys meaning clearly. A typical paper in this category

- clearly identifies important features of the argument and analyzes them in a generally perceptive way;
- develops ideas clearly, organizes them logically, and connects them with appropriate transitions;
- sensibly supports the main points of the critique;
- demonstrates control of language, including appropriate word choice and sentence variety;
- demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor errors.

Score of 4

A 4 paper presents a competent critique of the argument and conveys meaning adequately. A typical paper in this category

- identifies and analyzes important features of the argument;
- develops and organizes ideas satisfactorily but may not connect them with transitions;
- supports the main points of the critique;
- demonstrates sufficient control of language to express ideas with reasonable clarity;
- generally demonstrates control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some errors.

Score of 3

A 3 paper demonstrates some competence in its critique of the argument and in conveying meaning but is obviously flawed. A typical paper in this category exhibits **one or more** of the following characteristics. A 3 paper

- does not identify or analyze most of the important features of the argument, although some analysis of the argument is present;
- mainly analyzes tangential or irrelevant matters, or reasons poorly;
- is limited in the logical development and organization of ideas;
- offers support of little relevance and value for points of the critique;
- lacks clarity in expressing ideas;
- contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that can interfere with meaning.

Score of 2

A 2 paper demonstrates serious weaknesses in analytical writing. A typical paper in this category exhibits **one or more** of the following characteristics. A 2 paper

- does not present a critique based on logical analysis, but may instead present the writer's own views on the subject;
- does not develop ideas, or is disorganized and illogical;
- provides little, if any, relevant or reasonable support;
- has serious problems in the use of language and in sentence structure that frequently interfere with meaning;
- contains serious errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that frequently obscure meaning.

Score of 1

A 1 paper demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing. A typical paper in this category exhibits **more than one** of the following characteristics. A 1 paper

- provides little or no evidence of the ability to understand and analyze the argument;
- provides little or no evidence of the ability to develop an organized response;
- has severe problems in language and sentence structure that persistently interfere with meaning;
- contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that result in incoherence.

Score of 0

- Off topic (i.e., provides no evidence of an attempt to respond to the assigned topic), in a foreign language, merely copies the topic, consists of only keystroke characters, or is illegible, or nonverbal.

Score of NS: The essay is blank.

Information from the GRE.org web site.

Summer 2008

STUDENT LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER (SLAC)

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