GRE: ANALOGIES TIPS

You will have around 7 analogy questions on the CAT. The more questions you answer correctly, the harder the questions become.

In order to maximize your time, it is important that you memorize the directions for the analogies sections. They are as follows:

**Directions:** In each of the following questions, a related pair of words or phrases is followed by five lettered pairs of words or phrases. Select the pair that best expresses a relationship that exists between a word and its dictionary definition.

- The only kind of relationship between words in GRE analogies is a clear and necessary one. This is a tight, solid, logical relationship based on the meaning of the words. It is the kind of relationship that exists between a word and its dictionary definition.

Many types of relationships are possible in GRE analogies. The stem words may be related by:

- Degree (ADMIRE:IDOLIZE)
- Cause and effect (DRUG:CURE)
- Category and example (FRUIT:ORANGE)
- Part and whole (CHAPTER:BOOK)
- Agent and action (BRAIN:THINKING)
- “To be is not to have” (POOR:MONEY)
- Component-product (BUTTER:CAKE)

- To find the relationship between the stem words (the words in capital letters), form a simple sentence that links the two words and illustrates their meaning. Then plug in the choices.
- Try for the shortest, most succinct sentence you can, but don’t waste a lot of time honing a masterpiece.
- You should always plug in all the choices on GRE analogies, even if you’re sure you’ve already found ETS’s answer. You may be surprised.
- If more than one choice fits your sentence, go back and make your sentence more specific or look for a nuance that you missed.
- You can automatically eliminate any answer choice containing a triangular nonrelationship. In a triangular nonrelationship, the two words are related to a third word, but not directly to each other. For example:
  
  WEIGHT:AGE  
  SALT:PEPPER  
  IRRIGATIONS:FERTILIZER  
  LEMON:ORANGE

In each word pair, both are related to something, but not to each other.
• You can automatically eliminate any answer choice containing words that are not related in a clear and necessary way.

• Don’t be too clever in looking for relationships between words. You’ll get no points for creativity on the GRE.

• Never initially eliminate a choice if you are uncertain of the meaning of either word in it. You can’t be positive that two words are unrelated if you have no idea what one of the words means.

• When you don’t know the meaning of one of the words in the stem, work backwards from the choices.

• You can improve the effectiveness of working backward by using information in the problem to decode the unknown word in the stem.

• If you know both words in the stem, you can sometimes eliminate a choice even if you don’t know one of the words, by determining whether any word could create a relationship like the stem relationship.

Some basic traps to avoid:

• Do not misread the words. Unfortunately, people tend to read the first word, then predict the second word. For example, if the first word is “man” many people think the second word must be “woman.” They play word association games, rather than reading the question. Take the time to do a careful reading.

• Do not choose an answer with a reversed relationship. This is perhaps the most common error in the section. If the question is BOY: MAN, the answer cannot be WOMAN: GIRL. The relationship would be one of progression; a boy grows into a man. A woman does not grow into a girl; the relationship is reversed.

• Do not choose answers based on the meanings of the words. If the questions are about computers, the answers may very easily be about chocolate cake. The meanings themselves are irrelevant; you are only concerned with the relationships between the pairs of words.

• Practice these techniques on real GREs to make them automatic.

• When all else fails and you know you are on a hard question, eliminate what you can and pick the choice containing the hardest words.