

## **ANALYTICAL WRITING: ISSUE ESSAYS**

### **GRE Scoring Guide: “Analyze an Issue”**

Each “Analyze an Issue” essay is 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 analysis of the complexities of the issue and conveys meaning skillfully. A typical paper in this category

- articulates a clear and insightful position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
- develops the position fully with compelling reasons and/or persuasive examples
- sustains a well-focused, well-organized analysis, connecting ideas logically
- conveys ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety
- demonstrates superior facility with the conventions of standard written English (i.e., grammar, usage and mechanics), but may have minor errors

#### **Score of 5**

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

- presents a clear and well-considered position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
- develops the position with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples
- is focused and generally well organized, connecting ideas appropriately
- conveys ideas clearly and well, using appropriate vocabulary 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 analysis of the issue and conveys meaning adequately. A typical paper in this category

- presents a clear position on the issue in accordance with the assigned task
- develops the position with relevant reasons and/or examples
- is adequately focused and organized
- demonstrates sufficient control of language to express ideas with acceptable 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 analysis of the issue 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

- is vague or limited in addressing the specific task directions and in presenting or developing a position on the issue or both
- is weak in the use of relevant reasons or examples or relies largely on unsupported claims
- is limited in focus and/or organization
- has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity
- 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

- is unclear or seriously limited in addressing the specific task directions and in presenting or developing a position on the issue or both
- provides few, if any, relevant reasons or examples in support of its claims
- is poorly focused and/or poorly organized
- has serious problems in language and 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 **one or more** of the following characteristics. A 1 paper

- provides little or no evidence of understanding the issue
- provides little or no evidence of the ability to develop an organized response (e.g., is disorganized and/or extremely brief)
- 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 address the assigned topic), is 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.

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**STUDENT LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTER (SLAC)**

Texas State University-San Marcos