

MiM-Essay

GRE Analytical Writing Practice Paper 2026

A free practice set for students searching for GRE Analytical Writing question papers: 10 original Analyze an Issue prompts with a model-response guide for every prompt.

10 Issue Prompts

30 Minutes Each

Model Response Guide

Scoring Criteria Included

Important: This is an unofficial practice resource created by MiM-Essay. It is not an ETS publication and does not reproduce copyrighted GRE prompts. The prompts are original and are designed only to resemble the reasoning and writing skills tested by the Analytical Writing measure of the current GRE General Test.

Updated: August 2026

How to Use This Practice PDF

The current GRE General Test contains one Analytical Writing task: Analyze an Issue. You have 30 minutes to plan and write a response, and the essay is scored on a 0–6 scale in half-point increments.

Element	Current GRE Analytical Writing format	This PDF
Task	One Analyze an Issue task per test	10 original Issue prompts
Time	30 minutes for the single task	30 minutes per prompt
Score	0–6 scale, half-point increments	Model-response guide per prompt

Suggested approach: Spend 5 minutes planning, 22 minutes writing, and 3 minutes revising. Do not attempt all ten prompts in one sitting — write two or three under timed conditions, then compare each against the model-response guide before moving on.

Before You Start

- Clearly state your position on the issue in the introduction; a hedged, position-free essay caps your score.
- Develop your argument with specific reasons and examples rather than repeated general claims.
- Consider possible counterarguments and address them where appropriate — this is where mid-range essays gain points.
- Support your ideas with relevant evidence or illustrations, and leave time to check sentence-level control.

Current exam structure verified against ets.org (GRE General Test), August 2026.

Section 1: Analyze an Issue Prompts

Prompts 1–10. Write an essay in response to each issue prompt. Recommended GRE writing time: 30 minutes per essay.

Issue Prompt 1

Universities should require every student to take courses outside their major field of study because exposure to different academic areas helps students become better thinkers and professionals.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider circumstances in which adopting the recommendation would or would not be advantageous.

Issue Prompt 2

Governments should prioritize funding scientific research that has immediate practical applications rather than research that explores theoretical ideas with no obvious short-term benefits.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider possible outcomes of following this recommendation.

Issue Prompt 3

The best way for leaders to improve an organization is to listen carefully to the opinions of the people who work within that organization.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider situations in which listening to employees may or may not lead to better decisions.

Issue Prompt 4

A society should measure its progress primarily by improvements in citizens' quality of life rather than by economic growth.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider specific examples and evidence that support your position.

Issue Prompt 5

Schools should focus more on teaching students how to solve problems creatively than on teaching them information that can easily be found online.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider the possible consequences of emphasizing one type of education over the other.

Analyze an Issue Prompts – Continued

Issue Prompt 6

The most successful people are those who are willing to take risks and challenge traditional ways of doing things.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider examples of individuals or situations where risk-taking has or has not resulted in success.

Issue Prompt 7

Public officials should make decisions based primarily on expert advice rather than on public opinion.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider the advantages and disadvantages of relying on experts instead of public preferences.

Issue Prompt 8

The ability to adapt to change is more important for success than having specialized knowledge or expertise.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider situations where adaptability or expertise may be more valuable.

Issue Prompt 9

Companies should prioritize long-term social and environmental responsibility over maximizing short-term profits.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider the potential effects of adopting this approach.

Issue Prompt 10

The primary purpose of education should be to prepare individuals for successful careers rather than to develop their understanding of the world.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for your position. In developing your response, consider the consequences of emphasizing career preparation over broader intellectual development.

Model Response Guide – Prompts 1 to 3

These are not full sample essays. Each entry gives the position a high-scoring response could defend, the arguments and examples that support it, and the counterargument a strong essay must answer.

Issue Prompt 1 – Interdisciplinary course requirements

Suggested position: Agree (with qualification)

Students should study subjects outside their major because interdisciplinary knowledge improves creativity, communication, and problem-solving. However, universities should balance this requirement with enough flexibility for students to develop expertise in their chosen field.

What the prompt tests: your ability to evaluate the value of specialization versus broad education.

Strong argument 1: Exposure to multiple fields helps students approach problems from different perspectives.

Example: A computer science student who studies psychology may better understand user behaviour and design more effective technology products.

Strong argument 2: Employers increasingly value professionals who can communicate across disciplines.

Example: Modern business leaders often need knowledge of technology, economics, communication, and human behaviour.

Counterargument: Some argue that additional courses reduce time available for specialized training.

Response: This concern is valid, especially in highly technical fields. Therefore, universities should require limited interdisciplinary study rather than replacing major-specific education.

High-scoring direction: Acknowledge both sides and argue for a balanced curriculum.

Issue Prompt 2 – Funding practical versus theoretical research

Suggested position: Disagree

Governments should support both practical and theoretical research because many important discoveries originate from curiosity-driven research.

What the prompt tests: whether you understand the relationship between short-term benefits and long-term innovation.

Strong argument 1: Basic research often creates technologies that were impossible to predict. *Example:*

Research in physics and mathematics that initially appeared theoretical contributed to later developments in computing and communication.

Strong argument 2: Focusing only on immediate applications may limit scientific progress. *Example:* Medical breakthroughs often require years of foundational research before practical treatments are developed.

Counterargument: Governments have limited budgets and should prioritize urgent problems.

Response: Immediate challenges matter, but eliminating fundamental research risks preventing future solutions.

High-scoring direction: Argue that practical research solves current problems while theoretical research creates future possibilities.

Issue Prompt 3 – Leaders listening to employees

Suggested position: Agree (with qualification)

Employee opinions are valuable because workers understand daily operations, but leaders must combine this feedback with strategic judgment.

What the prompt tests: leadership, decision-making, and the importance of employee involvement.

Strong argument 1: Employees often identify operational problems that executives may overlook. *Example:* A customer-service employee may recognise repeated customer complaints before senior managers notice a trend.

Strong argument 2: Listening improves employee motivation and trust. Workers are more likely to support decisions when they believe their opinions matter.

Counterargument: Employees may focus only on immediate concerns rather than long-term goals.

Response: Leaders should consider employee feedback but must evaluate it alongside broader organizational objectives.

High-scoring direction: Support employee participation but reject the idea that it should be the only decision-making factor.

MiM-Essay
PRACTICE PAPER

Model Response Guide – Prompts 4 to 6

Issue Prompt 4 – Measuring social progress

Suggested position: Agree

Economic growth is important, but it is meaningful only when it improves people's overall well-being.

What the prompt tests: your understanding of how societies evaluate success.

Strong argument 1: GDP growth alone does not guarantee better living conditions. *Example:* A country may experience economic expansion while inequality and healthcare problems remain unresolved.

Strong argument 2: Quality-of-life indicators provide a more complete picture. Factors such as education, healthcare, safety, and environmental conditions reflect citizens' actual experiences.

Counterargument: Economic growth provides resources needed for social development.

Response: Growth is a tool, not the final goal. Its success should be judged by whether citizens benefit from it.

High-scoring direction: Argue that economic indicators should support, not replace, human-centred measurements.

Issue Prompt 5 – Creative problem-solving versus factual teaching

Suggested position: Agree (with qualification)

Education should emphasize critical thinking and creativity, but foundational knowledge remains necessary.

What the prompt tests: your view on modern education and technology.

Strong argument 1: Memorization alone does not prepare students for complex problems. *Example:* Professionals must analyse situations and create solutions rather than simply recall facts.

Strong argument 2: Creative thinking allows students to apply information effectively. Knowing facts is useful only when students understand how to use them.

Counterargument: Students cannot think critically without basic knowledge.

Response: Creative problem-solving should complement, not replace, factual learning.

High-scoring direction: Advocate for a balanced education model.

Issue Prompt 6 – Risk-taking and success

Suggested position: Agree (with qualification)

Risk-taking contributes to success, but successful individuals take calculated risks rather than reckless ones.

What the prompt tests: your understanding of innovation and achievement.

Strong argument 1: Many breakthroughs happen because individuals challenge existing methods. *Example:* Entrepreneurs often succeed by creating products that change established markets.

Strong argument 2: Avoiding all risks prevents growth. People who never leave familiar approaches may miss valuable opportunities.

Counterargument: Risk-taking can also lead to failure.

Response: Success comes from informed experimentation, preparation, and learning from mistakes.

High-scoring direction: Distinguish between intelligent risk and careless decisions.

MiM-Essay
PRACTICE PAPER

Model Response Guide – Prompts 7 to 8

Issue Prompt 7 – Expert advice versus public opinion

Suggested position: Agree (with qualification)

Experts provide essential knowledge, but public concerns must also be considered in democratic decision-making.

What the prompt tests: the balance between expertise and democracy.

Strong argument 1: Complex issues require specialized knowledge. *Example:* Public health policies require scientific expertise that ordinary citizens may not possess.

Strong argument 2: Expert advice improves evidence-based decisions. Policies based on research are often more effective.

Counterargument: Ignoring public opinion can reduce trust in institutions.

Response: Officials should explain expert recommendations clearly while considering public needs.

High-scoring direction: Support expert influence but reject complete exclusion of citizens.

Issue Prompt 8 – Adaptability versus specialized expertise

Suggested position: Agree (with qualification)

Adaptability is increasingly important, but expertise remains valuable when combined with the ability to evolve.

What the prompt tests: your ability to compare two important qualities.

Strong argument 1: Industries change rapidly, requiring people to learn continuously. *Example:* Technology professionals must regularly update their skills because tools and systems evolve.

Strong argument 2: Adaptable people can respond effectively to unexpected situations.

Counterargument: Expert knowledge creates valuable contributions.

Response: Expertise provides a foundation, but adaptability allows expertise to remain relevant.

High-scoring direction: Argue that adaptability determines whether knowledge remains useful.

Model Response Guide – Prompts 9 to 10

Issue Prompt 9 – Responsibility versus short-term profit

Suggested position: Agree

Businesses should consider long-term sustainability because irresponsible practices can damage reputation, customers, and future growth.

What the prompt tests: business ethics and strategic thinking.

Strong argument 1: Sustainable practices create long-term advantages. *Example:* Companies investing in efficient technologies may reduce costs over time.

Strong argument 2: Consumers increasingly consider ethical behaviour when choosing brands.

Counterargument: Companies must generate profits to survive.

Response: Profit remains necessary, but responsible strategies often support sustainable profitability.

High-scoring direction: Argue that responsibility and profitability can work together.

Issue Prompt 10 – The purpose of education

Suggested position: Disagree

Education should prepare students for careers but must also develop critical thinking, awareness, and citizenship.

What the prompt tests: the broader purpose of education.

Strong argument 1: Education develops skills needed beyond employment. *Example:* Understanding history, ethics, and society helps individuals make informed decisions.

Strong argument 2: Career-focused education may become outdated. Job requirements change, but analytical abilities remain valuable.

Counterargument: Employment preparation is an important responsibility of education.

Response: Career readiness should be one goal, not the only goal.

High-scoring direction: Present education as a tool for both professional success and personal development.

How to Review Your Essays

Essays written

___/10

Written under 30 min

___/10

Self-scored 4.5+

___/10

This practice set is not designed to predict an official Analytical Writing score. Instead, use it to find the specific habit that is costing you points.

If your essay...	What to review next
Never commits to a position	Thesis construction — state agreement or disagreement explicitly in the opening paragraph
Repeats the same claim	Body-paragraph development — one reason per paragraph, each with a concrete example
Ignores the opposing view	Counterargument handling — name the objection, then answer it rather than dismissing it
Uses only abstract examples	Evidence selection — specific situations, professions, or scenarios beat general assertions
Runs out of time	Timing discipline — 5 minutes planning, 22 writing, 3 revising

Analytical Writing Scoring Criteria

A score 6 essay would clearly address the issue, present a nuanced argument, use relevant examples, maintain logical organization, and demonstrate strong language control.

Best next step: After using this PDF, practice with the official POWERPREP tools on ets.org. ETS publishes the full Analytical Writing scoring guide and a pool of real Issue topics.

Source and Accuracy Note

Exam structure and task descriptions were checked against official GRE information on ets.org in August 2026. This MiM-Essay PDF contains original practice prompts only. GRE is a registered trademark of Educational Testing Service (ETS), which does not sponsor or endorse this resource.

Suggested Page Link Text

Download Free GRE Analytical Writing Practice Paper 2026 PDF – 10 Issue Prompts with Model Answers