

# GRE<sup>®</sup> STRATEGY SESSION 3

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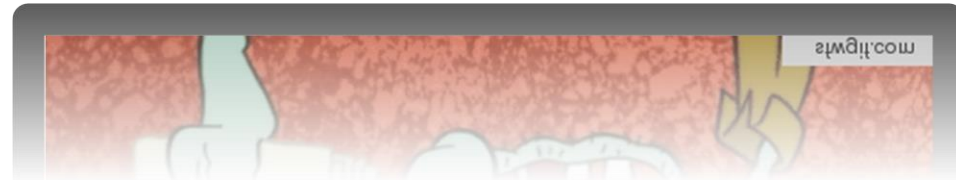
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## The Verbal Section

**Practice & Produce**  
*With Homework Review*  
& *With an Introduction of the Essays*

# Homework Review

Your homework was the ETS Practice Book, Section 3 (Verbal), posted at @america.



# Homework Review

The answers are to the right.

We will go over each individual question.

For a few of the questions I have included visual aids to assist discussion of the method.

Section 3		
Question Number	Correct Answer	P+
1	E	57
2	E	49
3	C	72
4	A, E	43
5	A, D	79
6	C, E	61
7	C, F, G	59
8	A, E, H	69
9	B	58
10	D	76
11	B	53
12	C	60
13	C	80
14	C	36
15	C, F	89
16	A, F	50
17	A, B	77
18	A, B	62
19	B, D	33
20	B	90
21	A	60
22	C	23
23	A, C	81
24	A	20
25	C	19

# Homework Review

*tortuous = winding?*

1. Many find it strange that her writing is thought to be tortuous her recent essays, although longer than most of her earlier essays, are extremely straightforward?

painstaking

tedious

insightful

sophisticated

clear

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# Homework Review

2. Most spacecraft are still at little risk of collision with space debris during their operational lifetimes, but given the numbers of new satellites launched each year, the orbital environment in the future is likely to be less \_\_\_\_\_.

- (A) crowded
- (B) invulnerable
- (C) protected
- (D) polluted
- (E) benign

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# Homework Review

3. The author presents the life of Zane Grey with \_\_\_\_\_ unusual in a biographer: he is not even convinced that Grey was a good writer.

- (A) a zeal
- (B) a deftness
- (C) a detachment
- (D) an eloquence
- (E) an imaginativeness

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# Homework Review

4. The unironic representation of objects from everyday life is (i) \_\_\_\_\_ serious American art of the twentieth century: “high” artists ceded the straightforward depiction of the (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ to illustrators, advertisers, and packaging designers.

Blank (i)

- Ⓐ missing from
- Ⓑ valued in
- Ⓒ crucial to

Blank (ii)

- Ⓓ beautiful
- Ⓔ commonplace
- Ⓕ complex

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# Homework Review

5. A newly published, laudatory biography of George Bernard Shaw fails, like others before it, to capture the essence of his personality: the more he is (i) \_\_\_\_\_, the more his true self seems to (ii) \_\_\_\_\_.

Blank (i)

- (A) discussed
- (B) disparaged
- (C) disregarded

Blank (ii)

- (D) disappear
- (E) emerge
- (F) coalesce

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# Homework Review

6. Although he has long had a reputation for (i) \_\_\_\_\_, his behavior toward his coworkers has always been (ii) \_\_\_\_\_, suggesting he may not be as insolent as people generally think.

Blank (i)

- (A) inscrutability
- (B) venality
- (C) impudence

Blank (ii)

- (D) brazen
- (E) courteous
- (F) predictable

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# Homework Review

7. There is nothing that (i) \_\_\_\_\_ scientists more than having an old problem in their field solved by someone from outside. If you doubt this (ii) \_\_\_\_\_, just think about the (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ reaction of paleontologists to the hypothesis of Luis Alvarez—a physicist—and Walter Alvarez—a geologist—that the extinction of the dinosaurs was caused by the impact of a large meteor on the surface of the planet.

Blank (i)

- (A) amazes
- (B) pleases
- (C) nettles

Blank (ii)

- (D) exposition
- (E) objurgation
- (F) observation

Blank (iii)

- (G) contemptuous
- (H) indifferent
- (I) insincere

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# Homework Review

8. If one could don magic spectacles—with lenses that make the murky depths of the ocean become transparent—and look back several centuries to an age before widespread abuse of the oceans began, even the most (i) \_\_\_\_\_ observer would quickly discover that fish were formerly much more abundant. Likewise, many now-depleted species of marine mammals would appear (ii) \_\_\_\_\_. But without such special glasses, the differences between past and present oceans are indeed hard to (iii) \_\_\_\_\_.

Blank (i)

- (A) casual
- (B) prescient
- (C) clearheaded

Blank (ii)

- (D) threatened
- (E) plentiful
- (F) unfamiliar

Blank (iii)

- (G) ignore
- (H) discern
- (I) dismiss

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Questions 9 to 11 are based on this passage.

Historian E. W. Maitland observed that legal documents are the best for research only—available evidence about the economic and social history of a given period. Why, then, has it taken so long for historians to focus systematically on civil law in early modern (sixteenth- to eighteenth-century) England? Maitland offered one reason: the subject requires researchers to “master” a formal system of pleading and procedure. Yet the complexities that confront those who would study such materials are not wholly surmounted by the history of criminal law in England during the same period. Another possible explanation for historians’ neglect of the history of civil law is that it involves little contact with civil law. If that were so, the history of legal matters would be of little relevance to general historical scholarship. But recent research suggests that civil litigation during the period involved lawyers, clerks, courtiers, and notaries, and was practiced by the educated, male elite. Moreover, the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw an extraordinary explosion in litigation, with the number of lawsuits making a dramatic increase. By the late eighteenth century, England was on a per capita basis.

# Homework Review

9. The history of civil law during that same period in that the history of criminal law

is of more intellectual interest to historians and their readers

has been studied more thoroughly by historians

is more relevant to general social history

involves the study of a larger proportion of the population

does not require the mastery of an extremely formal system of procedures

**A: NO CIVIL LAW RESEARCH**

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Questions 9 to 11 are based on this passage.

Historian F. W. Maitland observed that legal documents are the best—indeed, often the only—available evidence about the economic and social history of a given period. Why, then, has it taken so long for historians to focus systematically on the civil (noncriminal) law of early modern (sixteenth- to eighteenth-century) England? Maitland offered one reason: the subject requires researchers to “master an extremely formal system of pleading and procedure.” Yet the complexities that confront those who would study such materials are not wholly different from those recently surmounted by historians of criminal law in England during the same period. Another possible explanation for historians’ neglect of the subject is their widespread assumption that most people in early modern England had little contact with civil law. If that were so, the history of legal matters would be of little relevance to general historical scholarship. But recent research suggests that civil litigation during the period involved artisans, merchants, professionals, shopkeepers, and farmers, and not merely a narrow, propertied, male elite. Moreover, the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw an extraordinary explosion in civil litigation by both women and men, making this the most litigious era in English history on a per capita basis.

# Homework Review

10. The author of the passage mentions the occupations of those involved in civil litigation in early modern England most likely in order to
- (A) suggest that most historians’ assumptions about the participants in the civil legal system during that period are probably correct
  - (B) support the theory that more people participated in the civil legal system than the criminal legal system in England during that period
  - (C) counter the claim that legal issues reveal more about a country’s ordinary citizens than about its elite
  - (D) illustrate the wide range of people who used the civil legal system in England during that period
  - (E) suggest that recent data on people who participated in early modern England’s legal system may not be correct

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## Homework Review

11. The author of the passage suggests which of the following about the “widespread assumption” (line 15)?
- (A) Because it is true, the history of civil law is of as much interest to historians focusing on general social history as to those specializing in legal history.
  - (B) Because it is inaccurate, the history of civil law in early modern England should enrich the general historical scholarship of that period.
  - (C) It is based on inaccurate data about the propertied male elite of early modern England.
  - (D) It does not provide a plausible explanation for historians’ failure to study the civil law of early modern England.
  - (E) It is based on an analogy with criminal law in early modern England.

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# Homework Review

Questions 12 and 13 are based on this passage.

Geese can often be seen grazing in coastal salt marshes. Unfortunately, their intense grazing removes the grassy covering, exposing marsh sediment; this increases evaporation, which in turn increases salt concentration in marsh sediments. Because of this increased concentration, regrowth of plants is minimal, leading to increased erosion, which leads to a decrease in the fertile topsoil, leading to even less regrowth. In time, the salt marsh becomes a mudflat. This process challenges one of the most widely held beliefs about the dynamics of salt-marsh ecosystems: supposedly, consumers such as geese do not play a large role in controlling the productivity of marsh systems. Rather, the standard view claims, marshes are controlled by bottom-up factors, such as nutrients and physical factors.

2. The author discusses “the standard view” (line 14) most likely in order to identify a view that
- (A) explains the occurrence of the chain of events described in the passage
  - (B) provides a summary of the chain of events described in the passage
  - (C) is called into question by the chain of events described in the passage
  - (D) advocates reassessment of the widely held belief described in the passage
  - (E) is undermined by the widely held belief described in the passage

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13. According to the passage, which of the following is a widely held belief about geese?

- (A) They are not often seen grazing in coastal salt marshes.
- (B) They are not the primary consumers in salt-marsh ecosystems.
- (C) They play only a minor role in the productivity of salt-marsh ecosystems.
- (D) They are the primary determinants of which resources will thrive in coastal salt marshes.
- (E) They control the productivity of salt-marsh ecosystems through a bottom-up process.

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# Homework Review

14. Which of the following, if true, most weakens the editorial's argument?
- (A) Complaints of official corruption in city government have decreased since the anticorruption task force began operating.
  - (B) Former mayor Bixby did not publicly oppose Mayor Stephens' establishment of the anticorruption task force.
  - (C) Almost all of the officials who have served in city government for any length of time are appointees of Mayor Bixby.
  - (D) All of the members of the anticorruption task force had other jobs in city government before the task force was formed.
  - (E) During the last mayoral election campaign, then-Mayor Bixby hotly disputed the current mayor's claim that there was widespread corruption in city government.

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# Homework Review

For each of Questions 15 to 19, select the two answer choices that best complete the sentence, fit the context of the sentence as a whole, or complete the sentence in a way that the two sentences that are alike in meaning.

SENTENCE  
EQUIVALENCE!!

15. The slower-learning monkeys searched \_\_\_\_\_ but unintelligently: although they worked closely together, they checked only the most obvious hiding places.

- competitively
- impulsively
- cooperatively
- deviously
- craftily
- harmoniously

If we're stuck, we know D & E probably go together (but are not necessarily right, just a good guess if you need it).

But we also see that C & F seem to go together!

LOOK - "but unintelligently" implies the blank will be something like the opposite or a contrast with "unintelligently"

ALSO - the stuff after the colon (":") will be more or less definitory of the stuff before the colon, especially with the similar contrast ("although"). "They checked only the ... obvious" seems to jive with "unintelligently" - but take a look at "they worked closely together", which probably jives with the blank!

SO, it should be something like "work[ing] closely together" in contrast with "unintelligently" ...

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# Homework Review

For each of Questions 15 to 19, select the two answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole and produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.

16. By about age eight, children's phonetic capacities are fully developed but still \_\_\_\_\_; thus children at that age can learn to speak a new language with a native speaker's accent.

- A plastic
- B vestigial
- C inarticulate
- D unformed
- E nascent
- F malleable

17. In medieval philosophy every physical phenomenon is presumed to have some determinate cause, leaving no place for \_\_\_\_\_ in the explanation of particular events.

- A happenstance
- B chance
- C error
- D experience
- E context
- F miscalculation

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18. Although the film is rightly judged imperfect by most of today's critics, the films being created today are \_\_\_\_\_ it, since its release in 1940 provoked sufficient critical discussion to enhance the intellectual respectability of cinema considerably.

- (A) beholden to
- (B) indebted to
- (C) derivative of
- (D) based on
- (E) distinguishable from
- (F) biased against

19. The detective's conviction that there were few inept crimes in her district led her to impute some degree of \_\_\_\_\_ to every suspect she studied.

- (A) deceit
- (B) acumen
- (C) duplicity
- (D) shrewdness
- (E) evasiveness
- (F) equivocation

## Section 3

Question Number	Correct Answer	P+
1	E	57
2	E	49
3	C	72
4	A, E	43
5	A, D	79
6	C, E	61
7	C, F, G	59
8	A, E, H	69
9	B	58
10	D	76
11	B	53
12	C	60
13	C	80
14	C	36
15	C, F	89
16	A, F	50
17	A, B	77
18	A, B	62
19	B, D	33
20	B	90
21	A	60
22	C	23
23	A, C	81
24	A	20
25	C	19

Questions 20 to 22 are based on this passage.

The decrease in responsiveness that follows continuous stimulation (adaptation) is common to all sensory systems, including olfaction. With continued exposure to chronically present ambient odors, individuals' perception of odor intensity is greatly reduced. Moreover, these perceptual changes can be profound and durable. It is commonly reported that following extended absences from the odorous environment, reexposure may still fail to elicit perception at the original intensity.

Most research on olfactory adaptation examines relatively transient changes in stimulus detection or perceived intensity—rarely exceeding several hours and often less—but because olfactory adaptation can be produced with relatively short exposures, these durations are sufficient for investigating many parameters of the phenomenon. However, exposures to odors in natural environments often occur over far longer periods, and the resulting adaptations may differ qualitatively from short-term olfactory adaptation. For example, studies show that even brief periods of odorant stimulation produce transient reductions in receptors in the olfactory epithelium, a process termed “receptor fatigue.” Prolonged odor stimulation, however, could produce more long-lasting reductions in response, possibly involving structures higher in the central nervous system pathway.

# Homework Review

For each of Questions 20 to 25, select one answer choice unless otherwise directed.

20. According to the passage, the phenomenon of olfactory adaptation may cause individuals who are reexposed to an odorous environment after an extended absence to
- (A) experience a heightened perception of the odor
  - (B) perceive the odor as being less intense than it was upon first exposure
  - (C) return to their original level of perception of the odor
  - (D) exhibit a decreased tolerance for the odorous environment
  - (E) experience the phenomenon of adaptation in other sensory systems

## Section 3

Question Number	Correct Answer	P+
1	E	57
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# Homework Review

21. The passage asserts which of the following about the exposures involved in the “research on olfactory adaptation” (line 11)?
- (A) The exposures are of long enough duration for researchers to investigate many aspects of olfactory adaptation.
  - (B) The exposures have rarely consisted of reexposures following extended absences from the odorous environment.
  - (C) The exposures are intended to reproduce the relatively transient olfactory changes typical of exposures to odors in natural environments.
  - (D) Those exposures of relatively short duration are often insufficient to produce the phenomenon of receptor fatigue in study subjects.
  - (E) Those exposures lasting several hours produce reductions in receptors in the olfactory epithelium that are similar to the reductions caused by prolonged odor stimulation.

## Section 3

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## Homework Review

22. The author of the passage discusses “receptor fatigue” (line 24) primarily in order to
- (A) explain the physiological process through which long-lasting reductions in response are thought to be produced
  - (B) provide an example of a process that subjects would probably not experience during a prolonged period of odorant stimulation
  - (C) help illustrate how the information gathered from most olfactory research may not be sufficient to describe the effects of extended exposures to odors
  - (D) show how studies of short-term olfactory adaptation have only accounted for the reductions in response that follow relatively brief absences from an odorous environment
  - (E) qualify a statement about the severity and duration of the perceptual changes caused by exposure to chronically present ambient odors

### Section 3

Question Number	Correct Answer	P+
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2	E	49
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# Homework Review

Section 3		
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23	A, C	81
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Questions 23 and 24 are based on this passage.

Among academics involved in the study of Northern Renaissance prints (reproducible graphic artworks), an orthodox position can be said to have emerged. This position regards Renaissance prints as passive representations of their time—documents that reliably record contemporary events, opinions, and beliefs—and therefore as an important means of accessing the popular contemporary consciousness. In contrast, pioneering studies such as those by Scribner and Moxey take a strikingly different approach, according to which Northern Renaissance prints were purposeful, active, and important shaping forces in the communities that produced them. Scribner, for example, contends that religious and political prints of the German Reformation (ca. 1517–1555) functioned as popular propaganda: tools in a vigorous campaign aimed at altering people’s behavior, attitudes, and beliefs.

Consider each of the choices separately and select all that apply.

23. The passage suggests that an adherent to the “orthodox position” (line 3) would agree with which of the following statements?
- A Northern Renaissance prints should be regarded as passive representations of their time.
- B Northern Renaissance prints were part of a campaign aimed at altering contemporary thinking.
- C Northern Renaissance prints provide reliable records of contemporary events, opinions, and beliefs.

# Homework Review

Section 3		
Question Number	Correct Answer	P+
1	E	57
2	E	49
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Line

5

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10

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15

political prints of the German Reformation (ca. 1517–1555) functioned as popular propaganda: tools in a vigorous campaign aimed at altering people’s behavior, attitudes, and beliefs.

# Homework Review

Question 25 is based on this passage.

Recently an unusually high number of dolphins have been found dead of infectious diseases, and most of these had abnormally high tissue concentrations of certain compounds that, even in low concentrations, reduce dolphins' resistance to infection. The only source of these compounds in the dolphins' environment is boat paint. Therefore, since dolphins rid their bodies of the compounds rapidly once exposure ceases, their mortality rate should decline rapidly if such boat paints are banned.

25. Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?
- (A) The levels of the compounds typically used in boat paints today are lower than they were in boat paints manufactured a decade ago.
  - (B) In high concentrations, the compounds are toxic to many types of marine animals.
  - (C) The compounds break down into harmless substances after a few months of exposure to water or air.
  - (D) High tissue levels of the compounds have recently been found in some marine animals, but there is no record of any of those animals dying in unusually large numbers recently.
  - (E) The compounds do not leach out of the boat paint if the paint is applied exactly in accordance with the manufacturer's directions.

Section 3		
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23	A, C	81
24	A	20
25	C	19



# Vocabulary Review

# Vocabulary Review

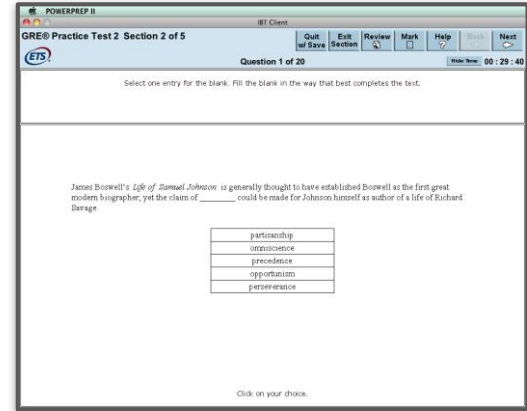
Vocabulary-related questions constitute 50% of the Verbal portion(s) of the GRE. Remember there are two types of vocabulary-related questions on the GRE:

- **Text Completion**

One Answer per Blank; 30% of all Verbal Questions

- **Sentence Equivalence**

Two Answers w/ Equivalent Sentences; 20% of all Verbal Questions



# Vocabulary Review



Each Type of Vocabulary Question is approached similarly:

1. Get a Clue! - Figure out what is going on. Use lexical or grammatical clues that could indicate contrast or similarity.
2. Predict the Answer - Make a solid prediction as to the meaning of the blank, or at least the clause or sentence, so you can later compare with the answer choices.
3. Process of Elimination - Actually compare the answer choices with the prediction(s) you've made.

# Vocabulary Review

How do you prepare for the Vocabulary-related questions on the GRE?

- Study vocabulary words. Focus on using them in context.
- Practice and use the method we studied when practicing and taking the test.
- Practice **Text Completion & Sentence Equivalence** questions religiously.





# Reading Comprehension: More Practice & Strategies

# Reading Comprehension

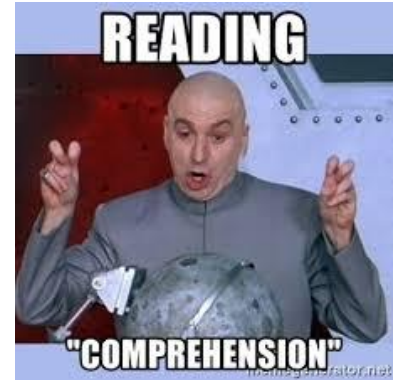
All Reading Comprehension Passages are Argumentative.

There are three types of Reading Comprehension Questions:

- Multiple Choice
- Select All That Apply
- Select a Sentence

Some of these ask about **Details, Structure, Tone, Words-in-Context, or Main Ideas.**

Some of these are intended to test **Critical Reasoning skills**, for example with **Conclusions, Premises, and Assumptions.**



# Reading Comprehension: Multiple Choice

You should be familiar with Multiple Choice. Remember:

1. Work the Passage
2. Understand the Question
3. Find the Information
4. POE

Questions 9 to 11 are based on this passage.

Historian E. W. Maitland observed that legal documents are the best available evidence about the economic and social history of a given period. Why, then, has it taken so long for historians to focus systematically on the history of civil law during that same period in that early modern (sixteenth- to eighteenth-century) England? Maitland offered one reason: the subject requires researchers to master a formal system of pleading and procedure, yet the complexities that confront those who would study such materials are not wholly surmounted by the history of criminal law during the same period. Another possible explanation for historians' reluctance to study civil law is that it involves the study of a larger proportion of the population than does criminal law, which does not require the mastery of an extremely formal system of procedures.

Line 5  
10  
15  
20  
25

legal docs are the best for research  
but no civil law research  
because hard  
but criminal hard too  
or maybe because civil law = rich people  
but civil law = normal people too  
c. 1700 very litigious & women too

## Homework Review

Q: history of criminal law  
DIFFERENT history of civil law  
(early modern England) WHY?

9. The history of civil law during that same period in that early modern (sixteenth- to eighteenth-century) England? Maitland offered one reason: the subject requires researchers to master a formal system of pleading and procedure, yet the complexities that confront those who would study such materials are not wholly surmounted by the history of criminal law during the same period. Another possible explanation for historians' reluctance to study civil law is that it involves the study of a larger proportion of the population than does criminal law, which does not require the mastery of an extremely formal system of procedures.

- is of more intellectual interest to historians and their readers
- has been studied more thoroughly by historians
- is more relevant to general social history
- involves the study of a larger proportion of the population
- does not require the mastery of an extremely formal system of procedures

A: NO CIVIL LAW RESEARCH

Section 3		
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20	B	90
21	A	60
22	C	23
23	A, C	81
24	A	20
25	C	19

# Reading Comprehension: Select All That Apply

Questions 10 and 11 are based on this passage.

What was it about Oscar Wilde's only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, that caused it to create such an uproar when it was published in 1891? While critics attacked the quality of Wilde's formal elements, their denunciation merely masked the true concerns of many nineteenth-century critics. What these critics were actually railing against was the thematic content of Wilde's work, specifically his illustration of a lifestyle devoted to useless beauty. For many a nineteenth-century moralist, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was nothing more than a primer for spiritual depravity. Wilde's ultimate sin was his leniency toward his protagonist, an unabashed hedonist. To the critics, allowing an evil character to escape his just desserts was an unforgivable sin. In their minds, Wilde's work was corrupting the genteel reading public by failing to show the proper consequences of immoral behavior.

19th century critics didn't like because hedonistic protagonist

each of the choices separately and select all that apply.

The author of the passage would probably agree with which of the following statements?

- Most critics of Oscar Wilde's novel objected primarily to the lifestyle of its author.
- If *The Picture of Dorian Gray* were written in the twentieth century, the critical reaction would be less severe.
- Some critics of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* believed that an author of a book had a moral responsibility to the book's audience.

# Reading Comprehension: Select a Sentence

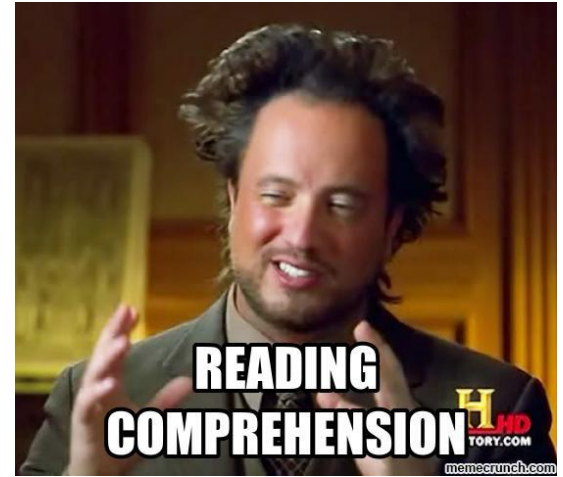
Question 16 is based on this passage.

Called by some the “island that time forgot,” Madagascar is home to a vast array of unique, exotic creatures. One such animal is the aye-aye. First described by western science in 1782, it was initially categorized as a member of the order Rodentia. Further research then revealed that it was more closely related to the lemur, a member of the primate order. Since the aye-aye is so different from its fellow primates, however, it was given its own family: *Daubentonidae*. The aye-aye has been listed as an endangered species and, as a result, the government of Madagascar has designated an island off the northeastern coast of Madagascar as a protected reserve for aye-ayes and other wildlife.

Select the sentence in the passage that most seriously weakens the author’s claim that “this practice may result in the loss of a superb example of life’s variety.”

*Identify the distinct sentences. You will later have to click one. Get the main ideas or gist of each sentence. Check the Question - really understand what they're asking. Then go through and use POE (Process of Elimination) to narrow down the possible sentences.*

# The Basic Approach to Cracking the GRE Reading Comprehension Questions



# Reading Comprehension: Cracking the Question

Locate Two Things in the Question:

- **The Subject of the Question:** what you need to find in the passage
- **The Task of the Question:** what type of information you need to find about the subject of the question

## Homework Review

9. The history of civil law during that same period in that the history of criminal law
- Q: history of criminal law  
DIFFERENT history of civil law (early modern England) WHY?

# Reading Comprehension: Cracking the Answers

It is more effective to use POE (Process of Elimination) to eliminate wrong answers.

Don't get trapped while looking for right answers.

Learn to identify common trap answer choices, and you can often eliminate them with confidence.

Questions 9 to 11 are based on this passage.

Historian E. W. Maitland observed that legal documents are the best for research available evidence about the economic and social history of a given period. Why, then, has it taken so long for historians to focus systematically on but no civil law research early modern (sixteenth- to eighteenth-century) England? Maitland offered one reason: the subject requires researchers to “m because hard formal system of pleading and procedure. Yet the complexities that confront those who would study such materials are not wholly d but criminal hard too England during the same period. Another possible explanation for historians’ or maybe because civil law = rich people contact with civil law. If that were so, the history of legal matters would be of little relevance to general historical scholarship. But recent research suggests that civil litigation during the period involved but civil law = normal people too kept, and elite. Moreover, the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw an extraordinary explosion in making c. 1700 very litigious & women too on a per capita basis.

## Homework Review

9. The history of civil law during that same period in that the history of criminal law

- is of more intellectual interest to historians and their readers
- has been studied more thoroughly by historians
- is more relevant to general social history
- involves the study of a larger proportion of the population
- does not require the mastery of an extremely formal system of procedures

**A: NO CIVIL LAW RESEARCH**



# Reading Comprehension: Cracking the Answers

Be sure to read for context in the passage.

Remember the correct answer is in the text. Do not look for it in the answer choices.

Always refer back to the passage, and always read what you need for context.

Questions 9 to 11 are based on this passage.

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**A: NO CIVIL LAW RESEARCH**

# The Basic Approach

1. **Work the Passage:** have a plan; read actively; find main ideas
2. **Understand the Question:** break the question down
3. **Find the Information:** refer back to the passage; keep the question task(s) in mind; find the "answer"
4. **POE:** compare the "answer" found to the answer choices; eliminate wrong answers

Here are the steps of the Basic Approach:

1. **Work the Passage**

This is where you apply **The Basics of Cracking the Passage**. You must have a plan for reading the passage and you must learn to read actively. As you read, always be on the lookout for how each element of the passage relates to the main idea of the passage. To find the main idea, ask yourself questions such as: What does the author want me to remember or believe about the topic under discussion? What's the author's conclusion? How is that conclusion supported?

2. **Understand the Question**

This is where you apply **The Basics of Cracking the Questions**. Try to break the question down. First, look for the subject of the question. Then, find the words that indicate the task.

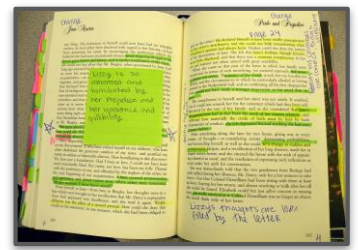
3. **Find the Information in the Passage that Addresses the Task of the Question**

Refer back to the passage. ETS needs to be able to justify its credited responses by referring to specific information mentioned in the passage. When you understand the task of the question, it becomes easier to find this information. Once you locate the information in the passage that addresses the question task, you're ready to look at the answer choices.

4. **Use Process of Elimination**

This is where you use **The Basics of Cracking the Answer Choices**. Approach each answer choice with a healthy level of suspicion. Since there are more incorrect answers than correct answers for most questions, you are more likely to be reading a wrong answer than a right answer. Look for signs that are more likely to make an answer wrong, the most common of which are the signs outlined later in this chapter as tools for POE. Don't be afraid to just pick the answer that remains if you can find good reasons to eliminate the other answer choices. An overview of common trap answer choices can be found later in this chapter.

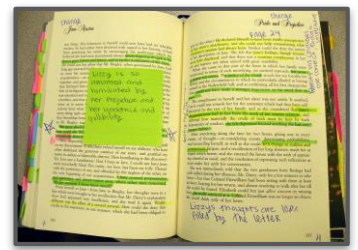
# Step 1: Work the Passage



**Active Reading**: follow the author's argument. Separate the author's claims from the facts and other evidence used to back up those claims.

- **Ask Questions as you Read**: Why did he do that? What tone is he using? What will happen next?
- **Identify Claims versus Evidence**: Passages typically involve the author attempting to convince you of his point of view regarding the topic. This will involve both Claims and Evidence. Claims are opinions without evidence. Evidence is information used to support a Claim.
- **Identify the Structure of the Passage**: Look for a Thesis, Topic Sentences, Evidence, Analysis, Conclusion, etc.

# Step 1: Work the Passage

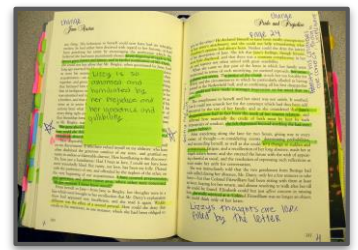


**Main Idea**: what the author wants you to believe about the issue being presented in the passage.

The **Main Idea** is distinct from the **Topic** of the passage. The **Topic** of the passage is what the passage is about.

The **Main Idea** is what the author wants *YOU* to believe about the **Topic**. By identifying the **Main Idea**, you can determine the **Purpose** of the passage.

# Step 1: Work the Passage

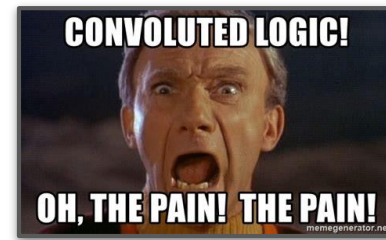


**Mapping the Passage:** use the scratch paper you have to write down notes regarding the passage.

Separate each sentence into one of three categories:

- **Claim:** an opinion expressed in the passage.
- **Evidence/Objection:** *Evidence* is information presented to support a claim; an *Objection* is information presented to call a claim into question.
- **Background:** any information that is generally accepted as fact.

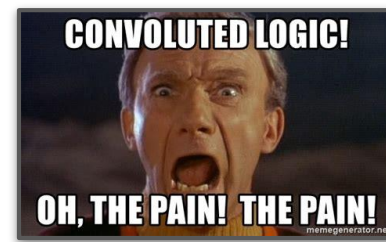
Summarize each sentence, and identify the function of each sentence.



## Step 2: Understand the Question

**Part 1: Identify the Subject** (what you need to find in the passage)

Example: "The author mentions (land management) policy in order to ..."

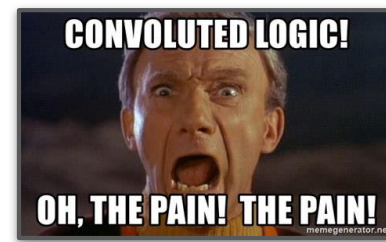


# Step 2: Understand the Question

## Part 2: Understanding the Task

(what type of information you need to find about the subject of the question)

Example: "The author mentions land management policy (in order to ...)"



# Step 2: Understand the Question

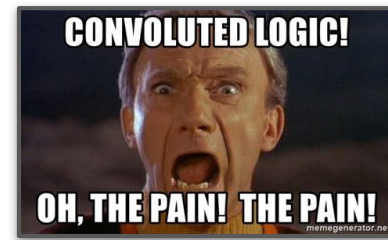
## Part 2: Understanding the Task

(what type of information you need to find about the subject of the question)

There are three types of Tasks:

- **General** (e.g. Main Idea)
- **Specific** (e.g. Retrieval [Where's Waldo?])
- **Complex** (e.g. Weaken/Strengthen Argument)

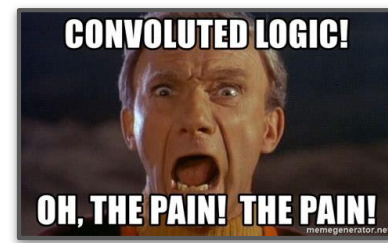




## Step 2: Understand the Question

### General Tasks:

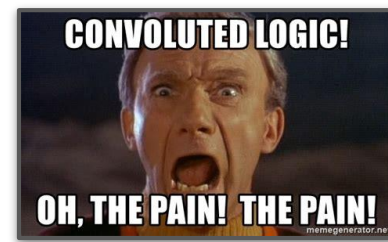
- **Primary Purpose:** Why the author wrote the passage; closely tied to the main idea; e.g., "... primary purpose ...", "... primarily concerned with ...".
- **Main Idea:** What the author wants you to believe; the overall claim or thesis, supported by the evidence and/or sub-claims.
- **Structure:** What the sequence is of the whole passage or a single paragraph; use your *Mapping the Passage* notes from your scratch paper to do POE.
- **Tone:** How the author feels or his attitude; look for word choice that reveals the author's emotions or feelings or attitude.



## Step 2: Understand the Question

### Specific Tasks:

- **Vocabulary-in-Context:** e.g. "... most nearly means ..."; the correct answer must fit the sentence, paragraph, and passage.
- **Retrieval:** Where's Waldo? Find a detail in the passage; typically this is a case of knowing synonyms or synonymous meanings.
- **Inference:** "infer" means only *what must be true*; do NOT read between the lines; the answer will be a paraphrase of something IN THE PASSAGE.
- **Specific Purpose:** why the author included the subject or particular piece of information; find the claim for the piece of evidence.



## Step 2: Understand the Question

### Complex Tasks:

- **Weaken:** *weaken* a claim presented in the passage; correct answers will call the evidence used to support the claim into question.
- **Strengthen:** *strengthen* a claim presented in the passage; correct answers will further support the evidence associated with the claim in the question.

## Step 3: Find the Information in the Passage that Addresses the Task of the Question

After you have Cracked the Question by identifying the Subject and Task, look for the Subject in the passage.

Once you locate the Subject, find the information about the subject that addresses the task of the question. You will always be able to prove the correct answer with something in the passage.

Use Active Reading strategies from Step 1 again.

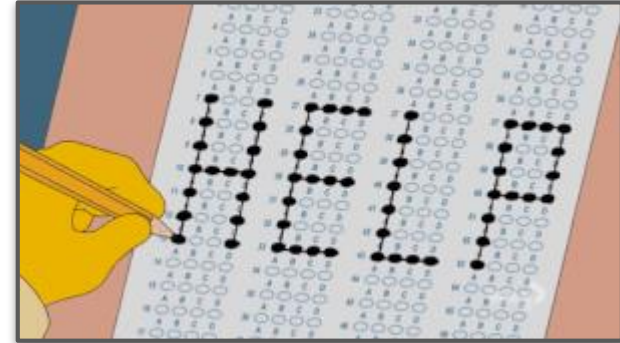
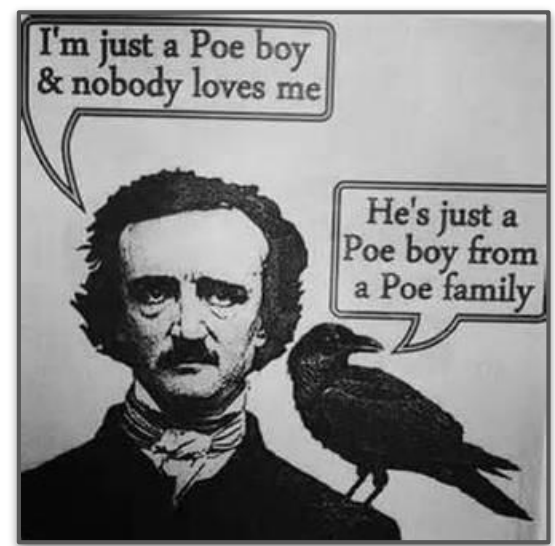


## Step 4: Use POE

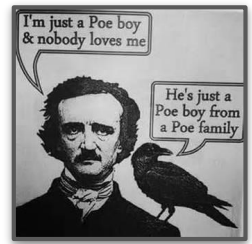
Do not look for the best answer. Look for wrong answers.

These are typical wrong answers:

- **Recycled Language**
- **Extreme Language**
- **No Such Comparison**
- **Reversals**
- **Outside Knowledge**
- **Emotional Appeals**



## Step 4: Use POE - Wrong Answers

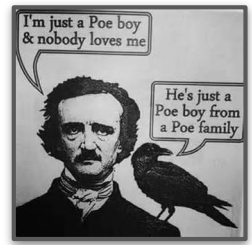


### Recycled Language:

Wrong answers often have memorable words or phrases from the passage.  
Correct answers often are paraphrases or synonyms.

When you see recycled language in an answer choice, check carefully to see if it is false or irrelevant or otherwise can be eliminated.

## Step 4: Use POE - Wrong Answers

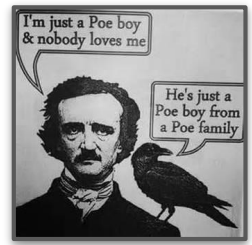


### Extreme Language:

ETS often makes wrong answers by using words like *must*, *always*, *never*, *only*, *best*, and other very strong words, or by using verbs that are overly strong, such as *prove* or *fail*.

When you see extreme language in an answer choice, check carefully to see if it is false because it is too strong or too broad or too something.

## Step 4: Use POE - Wrong Answers



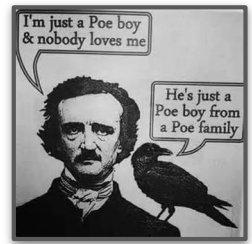
### No Such Comparison:

Comparison words such as *better*, *more than*, or *less than* are used by test writers to make answer choices more appealing by drawing a comparison between two items references in the passage.

If you see comparison words in an answer choice, you should be suspicious of that answer choice. Make sure to reference the information in the answer choice against the information in the passage.



# Step 4: Use POE - Wrong Answers



## Reversals:

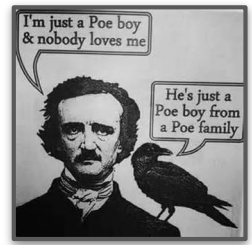
Reversal answer choices seek to confuse you by stating a contradiction of the main idea or a fact from the passage.

These will sound appealing, but then include a minor contradictory detail.

Remember: one word can make it wrong.

If a choice is perfect, except for a contradictory detail, eliminate it as a Reversal.

## Step 4: Use POE - Wrong Answers



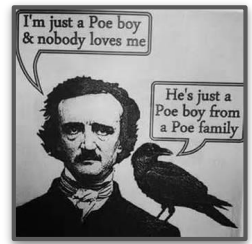
### Outside Knowledge:

Outside Knowledge answer choices will include correct information that is not in the passage. This type of answer choice is rare on the GRE.

Correct answer choices only contain information found in the passage.

Although rare, some wrong answers might include Outside Knowledge not found in the passage. Check carefully to see if it is false (according to the passage; not according to your knowledge) or irrelevant or otherwise can be eliminated.

## Step 4: Use POE - Wrong Answers



### Emotional Appeals:

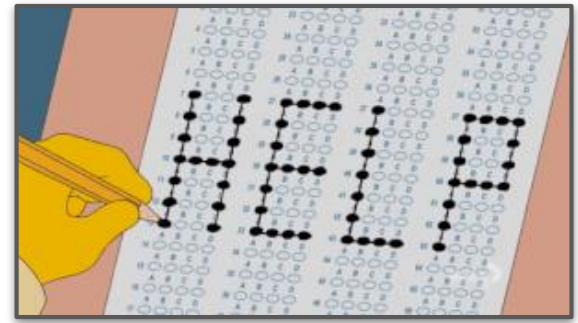
Emotional Appeal answer choices state positions that you believe, but are not discussed in the passage. This type of answer choice is rare on the GRE. This will typically involve a trendy or popular political viewpoint that a test-taker is likely to have.

Again, correct answer choices only contain information found in the passage.

If you see an Emotional Appeal (probably political) not found in the passage, check carefully to see if it is false (according to the passage; not according to your knowledge or beliefs) or irrelevant or otherwise can be eliminated.

## Step 4: Use POE

### Down to 2?



It is pretty common for two answer choices to remain, even after extensive POE.

This situation means that you are probably missing why one of the answer choices is wrong, and should *look carefully at each word in the remaining choices*. One word can make the whole answer wrong. **When in doubt, play the odds:**

1. **Which uses more words from the passage?** Bet on one that doesn't.
2. **Which has stronger language or a stronger claim?** Eliminate the extreme.
3. **Which makes a comparison?** Comparison answers are often incorrect.

# Reading Comprehension Practice

Questions 1 through 4 are based on the following reading passage.

Called by some the “island that time forgot,” Madagascar is home to a vast array of unique, exotic creatures. One such animal is the aye-aye. First described by western science in 1782, it was initially categorized as a member of the order Rodentia. Further research then revealed that it was more closely related to the lemur, a member of the primate order. Since the aye-aye is so different from its fellow primates, however, it was given its own family: *Daubentoniidae*. The aye-aye has been listed as an endangered species and, as a result, the government of Madagascar has designated an island off the northeastern coast of Madagascar as a protected reserve for aye-ayes and other wildlife.

Long before Western science became enthralled with this nocturnal denizen of Madagascar’s jungles, the aye-aye had its own reputation with the local people. The aye-aye is perhaps best known for its large, round eyes and long, extremely thin middle finger. These adaptations are quite sensible, allowing the aye-aye to see well at night and retrieve grubs, which are one of its primary food sources, from deep within hollow branches. However, the aye-aye’s striking appearance may end up causing its extinction. The people of Madagascar believe that the aye-aye is a type of spirit animal, and that its appearance is an omen of death. Whenever one is sighted, it is immediately killed. When combined with the loss of large swaths of jungle habitat, this practice may result in the loss of a superb example of life’s variety.

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*Passage contains info about habitat, classification, status, and physical adaptations. This describes the animal in a broad fashion that includes scientific details, but does not focus on them.*

the aye-aye to see well at night and retrieve grubs, which are one of its primary food sources, from deep within hollow branches. However, the aye-aye's striking appearance may end up causing its extinction. The people of Madagascar believe that the aye-aye is a type of spirit animal, and that its appearance is an omen of death. Whenever one is sighted, it is immediately killed. When combined with the loss of large swaths of jungle habitat, this practice may result in the loss of a superb example of life's variety.

# Reading Comprehension Practice

1 of 10

Based on the information given in the passage, the

SUBJECT: INTENDED AUDIENCE

TASK: INFERENCE

- visitors to a natural science museum
- professors of evolutionary science
- a third-grade science class
- students of comparative religions
- attendees at a world culture symposium

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# Reading Comprehension Practice

2 of 10

The author’s attitude toward the aye-aye, as represented in the highlighted text, could best be described as

- admiring
- mystified
- reverent
- appalled
- lachrymose

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# Reading Comprehension Practice

3 of 10

Select the sentence in the first paragraph that suggests the author’s claim that “this practice may result in the loss of a superb example of life’s variety is unlikely to happen.”



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# Reading Comprehension Practice

4 of 10

For the following question, consider each of the choices separately and select all that apply.

Which of the following statements can be logically inferred from the passage about the aye-aye?

- The aye-aye currently lives only on a protected reserve off the northeastern coast of Madagascar.
- The aye-aye is a nocturnal animal.
- The aye-aye is a prominent part of the religion practiced by the people of Madagascar.

# Reading Comprehension: Critical Reasoning

# Analytical Writing

# Homework (Mandatory)

Similar for your homework for today, see the ETS textbook posted at @america.



Please finish the second Verbal section, "Section 4", on page 60 of the ETS Textbook available from the @america website.

# Homework (Optional)

Similar for your homework for today, see the ETS textbook posted at @america.



Also, optionally, please take a look at both the Analytical Writing prompts in the ETS textbook (Issue & Argumentative). We will go through them next time.

# Questions

