
Old vs. New GRE: What's the Difference?

The GRE changed on Aug. 1. Which version is better? Here's the scoop on the changes.

The Good

You can go back to the hard questions

The new GRE allows you to go back and forth through the questions (in each section). This means that if you get stuck on a hard question—skip it! Then go back and work it last. On the old GRE, if you get a hard question, you only have that one chance to answer, which means you risk using up all your time.

No analogy or antonym questions

About half of the verbal questions on the old GRE are analogies and antonyms, which means the main way to prepare is to cram vocab. The new GRE has none of these questions. Vocab is still important, but there are other good strategies to boost your score.

You get a calculator

This will only help you work the numbers. You still need to know your math concepts, and you still need to be able to piece together the puzzles that make up the GRE math questions.



The Bad

The new GRE is longer

With 100 questions divided into five sections, the new GRE lasts about four hours. One of these sections is unscored, and you don't know which one it is. The old GRE, with 58 questions divided into two sections, takes less than three hours. Both tests start with two essays.

The questions can be trickier to answer

Each question on the old GRE (other than the essays) is multiple-choice with exactly one answer. The new GRE looks at that and laughs. It features multiple-choice questions with one, two, or three correct answers, and no partial credit. Also, some of the math questions are fill-in-the-blank.

The Takeaway

I like the new one

Going back to the hard questions is a dream, and the absence of analogy and antonym questions makes all the difference. Also, the reading comp passages are shorter, which is nice.

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