

GRE Verbal Reasoning

Sample Paper 02

A) Subject: Verbal Reasoning

B) Total Questions: 27 Questions (Section I: 12 — Section II: 15)

C) Marking Scheme & Rules:

- **Correct Answer:** +1 Point
- **Incorrect/Unattempted:** 0 Points (No Negative Marking)
- **Partial Credit:** None. For multi-blank questions, all parts must be correct.
- **Equivalence Questions:** Both synonymous words must be selected.

SECTION I: VERBAL REASONING

Q1. The historian's account of the war was remarkably _____; unlike most accounts that glorify battles, this one focused on the suffering endured by ordinary civilians.

- A. Bellicose
- B. Polemical
- C. Dispassionate
- D. Harrowing

Q2. Although the chairperson had the final say, she was never _____; she consistently sought the opinions of every committee member before announcing a decision.

- A. Autocratic
- B. Indecisive
- C. Collaborative
- D. Mercurial

Q3. The critic's review of the debut novel was (i) _____, heaping praise upon the young author's prose, yet simultaneously acknowledging that the plot was (ii) _____ and failed to hold the reader's attention.

- A. (i) Scathing; (ii) Riveting

- B. (i) Effusive; (ii) Meandering
- C. (i) Effusive; (ii) Compelling
- D. (i) Measured; (ii) Meandering

Q4. The scientist's findings were met with (i) _____ by her peers because her methodology was considered (ii) _____, lacking the rigorous controls expected in modern research.

- A. (i) Acclaim; (ii) Meticulous
- B. (i) Skepticism; (ii) Flawed
- C. (i) Skepticism; (ii) Innovative
- D. (i) Indifference; (ii) Meticulous

For centuries, it was assumed that memory functioned much like a video recording — a faithful, unchanging archive of past experiences. However, contemporary neuroscience has fundamentally challenged this view. Research now indicates that memory is a reconstructive process, not a reproductive one. Each time an individual recalls an event, the brain does not simply play back a stored file but actively rebuilds the memory, incorporating subsequent experiences, emotions, and even suggestions from others. This malleability has profound implications for fields such as law, where eyewitness testimony has historically been treated as among the most reliable forms of evidence. Studies by cognitive psychologist Elizabeth Loftus demonstrated that introducing misleading information after an event — a phenomenon termed the 'misinformation effect' — could cause subjects to recall details that never occurred. Consequently, legal systems around the world are being urged to reassess the weight given to eyewitness accounts.

Q5. The passage's primary purpose is to:

- A. Argue that eyewitness testimony should be entirely eliminated from courtrooms.
- B. Explain how a shift in scientific understanding has implications for legal practice.
- C. Praise the contributions of Elizabeth Loftus to cognitive psychology.
- D. Compare the reliability of video recordings with that of human memory.

Q6. According to the passage, memory differs from a video recording primarily because:

- A. Video recordings can be erased, while memories are permanent.
- B. Memories are actively rebuilt each time they are recalled, making them susceptible to change.
- C. The brain stores memories in multiple locations, unlike a single recording device.
- D. Emotional experiences are not captured on video recordings.

Q7. The author mentions "Elizabeth Loftus" primarily to:

- A. Introduce a scientist whose findings contradict the reconstructive memory theory.
- B. Provide empirical support for the claim that memories can be altered by external information.
- C. Explain why the legal system has always been cautious about eyewitness testimony.
- D. Argue that psychologists should have a role in courtroom proceedings.

Q8. The ambassador's speech, though brief, was extraordinarily _____; every sentence conveyed a depth of meaning that lesser diplomats would have required paragraphs to express.

- A. Pithy and Succinct
- B. Verbose and Wordy
- C. Cryptic
- D. Bombastic

Q9. The general's strategy was widely admired for being _____; it accounted for every possible contingency and left nothing to chance.

- A. Haphazard and Improvised
- B. Methodical and Systematic
- C. Audacious
- D. Reckless

Q10. A city council claims that installing CCTV cameras in public parks reduced crime by 30% last year. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens this claim?

- A. The cameras were visible and acted as a deterrent.
- B. A simultaneous increase in police patrols occurred in the same parks during the same period.
- C. Residents reported feeling safer after the cameras were installed.
- D. The cost of maintaining the cameras was within the city's budget.

Q11. Choose the sentence that correctly uses the word 'comprise':

- A. The anthology is comprised of poems from the 19th century.
- B. The anthology comprises poems from the 19th century.
- C. The anthology is comprising of poems from the 19th century.
- D. Poems from the 19th century are comprised into the anthology.

Q12. In the phrase "the obfuscation of public records," the word "obfuscation" most nearly means:

- A. Preservation
 - B. Deliberate concealment or confusion
 - C. Systematic organisation
 - D. Unauthorized duplication
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SECTION II: VERBAL REASONING

Q1. The CEO's management style was frequently described as (i) _____, as she would often (ii) _____ her initial decisions when presented with new data, a trait her board found both (iii) _____ and unsettling.

- A. (i) Pragmatic; (ii) Revise; (iii) Admirable
- B. (i) Rigid; (ii) Abandon; (iii) Reassuring
- C. (i) Capricious; (ii) Revise; (iii) Disconcerting
- D. (i) Pragmatic; (ii) Abandon; (iii) Disconcerting

Q2. The philosopher's argument, though (i) _____ in its conclusion, rested on premises so (ii) _____ that few readers could follow the chain of reasoning without significant effort.

- A. (i) Counterintuitive; (ii) Arcane
- B. (i) Obvious; (ii) Lucid
- C. (i) Counterintuitive; (ii) Straightforward
- D. (i) Groundbreaking; (ii) Simplistic

Q3. Though the artist had spent decades in (i) _____, her sudden retrospective exhibition drew enormous crowds, transforming her overnight from an overlooked figure into a (ii) _____ icon.

- A. (i) Obscurity; (ii) Celebrated
- B. (i) Prominence; (ii) Forgotten
- C. (i) Obscurity; (ii) Controversial
- D. (i) Retirement; (ii) Polarising

Q4. The lawyer's cross-examination was (i) _____, targeting the witness's inconsistencies with such precision that the opposing counsel appeared (ii) _____ and unable to mount an effective objection.

- A. (i) Perfunctory; (ii) Formidable
- B. (i) Incisive; (ii) Flustered
- C. (i) Rambling; (ii) Triumphant
- D. (i) Incisive; (ii) Composed

Q5. The new director's leadership was marked by _____; she promoted only those employees whose performance records were impeccable, regardless of personal relationships.

- A. Nepotism
- B. Impartiality
- C. Volatility
- D. Laxity

Q6. The legislative bill was so _____ in its scope that legal experts spent months debating which industries it actually covered.

- A. Sweeping
- B. Narrow
- C. Transparent
- D. Ambiguous

The concept of 'cognitive load' was introduced by educational psychologist John Sweller in the late 1980s to describe the mental effort required to process information in working memory. Sweller identified three types: intrinsic load, determined by the inherent complexity of the material itself; extraneous load, caused by poor instructional design; and germane load, which relates to the effort devoted to forming long-term memories. Crucially, working memory has a finite capacity, and when its limits are exceeded — a state known as cognitive overload — learning is significantly impaired. Educators have since applied this theory to argue that instructional materials should minimize extraneous load so that available mental resources can be directed toward genuine understanding. Critics, however, caution that overly simplified materials may deprive learners of the productive struggle necessary for deep comprehension.

Q7. According to the passage, which type of cognitive load is most directly within an educator's control?

- A. Intrinsic load, because it is determined by the subject matter
- B. Extraneous load, because it arises from instructional design choices
- C. Germane load, because it depends on the learner's motivation
- D. Cognitive overload, because it can be prevented through testing

Q8. The author describes the critics' position primarily to:

- A. Refute Sweller's theory of cognitive load entirely.
- B. Suggest that minimising extraneous load alone may not be sufficient for deep learning.

- C. Argue that productive struggle is harmful to novice learners.
- D. Demonstrate that working memory has no practical limits.

Q9. Which of the following best illustrates the concept of 'germane load' as described in the passage?

- A. A student feels confused by a poorly organised lecture.
- B. A student struggles with calculus because the subject itself is mathematically complex.
- C. A student consciously connects a new concept to prior knowledge to build a mental schema.
- D. A student's attention is divided between a diagram and a lengthy caption.

Q10. A nutritionist argues that people who eat breakfast daily have better academic performance than those who skip it. A large study, however, finds that breakfast-eaters also tend to come from higher-income households. Which of the following best weakens the nutritionist's argument?

- A. Higher-income students have access to better schools and tutoring resources.
- B. Many high-performing students report eating breakfast every day.
- C. The study was conducted across multiple countries with varied diets.
- D. Nutritionists recommend a balanced breakfast for all age groups.

Q11. The mountaineer's account of the summit attempt was so _____ that readers felt as though they themselves were battling the biting cold and thin air.

- A. Vivid and Evocative
- B. Subdued and Understated
- C. Pedantic
- D. Ambiguous

Q12. The council's decision to overrule the mayor was seen as a deeply _____ act, one that struck at the very foundations of the established power structure.

- A. Ceremonial and Ritualistic
- B. Subversive and Insurgent
- C. Benign
- D. Pragmatic

Q13. The financial report was _____ in its analysis, examining every revenue stream and expenditure with microscopic attention to detail.

- A. Cursory and Superficial
- B. Exhaustive and Comprehensive
- C. Selective
- D. Derivative

Q14. Despite having access to abundant resources, the start-up's progress was _____; months passed with little visible advancement toward its stated goals.

- A. Meteoric and Rapid
- B. Sluggish and Torpid
- C. Erratic
- D. Commendable

Q15. The senator's rhetoric, rather than unifying her constituents, proved _____; it deepened existing divisions and provoked fierce opposition from moderates.

- A. Conciliatory and Soothing
- B. Inflammatory and Incendiary
- C. Measured
- D. Edifying

Solutions - Section I

1. **(D)** The contrast is between "glorifying battles" and focusing on "suffering." While a bellicose account would favor war, a "harrowing" account focuses on the distressing and disturbing reality of civilian suffering.
2. **(A)** The sentence states she "consistently sought the opinions of every committee member." Therefore, she was never "autocratic" (taking absolute control without considering others), even though she held the final authority.
3. **(B)** For blank (i), "effusive" matches "heaping praise." For blank (ii), "meandering" explains why the plot "failed to hold the reader's attention," as it suggests a wandering, unfocused narrative.
4. **(B)** Because the methodology "lacked rigorous controls," her peers would naturally react with "skepticism" (i). A methodology lacking controls is considered "flawed" (ii) in modern research.
5. **(B)** The passage discusses the shift from the "video recording" view of memory to the "reconstructive" view and notes that this shift has "profound implications" for legal systems regarding eyewitness testimony.

6. **(B)** The text explicitly states that unlike a recording, the brain "actively rebuilds the memory" each time it is recalled, making it subject to change based on emotions and new information.
 7. **(B)** Elizabeth Loftus is cited to provide "studies" that "demonstrated" how misleading information can alter memory (the 'misinformation effect'), which provides empirical evidence for the reconstructive theory.
 8. **(A)** In Sentence Equivalence, we need synonyms. "Pithy" and "Succinct" both describe language that is brief yet full of meaning, contrasting with the "paragraphs" required by lesser diplomats.
 9. **(B)** "Methodical" and "Systematic" are synonyms describing a strategy that is orderly and accounts for every contingency, leaving "nothing to chance."
 10. **(B)** The claim is that cameras caused the crime reduction. If police patrols increased at the same time, the reduction might be due to the police, not the cameras. This "alternative cause" weakens the original claim.
 11. **(B)** "Comprise" means "to consist of" or "to contain." The whole (the anthology) comprises the parts (the poems). Choice (A) is a common error; "comprised of" is generally considered incorrect in formal writing.
 12. **(B)** "Obfuscation" refers to the act of making something obscure, unclear, or unintelligible. In the context of records, it refers to "deliberate concealment or confusion."
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Solutions - Section II

1. **(D)** The CEO changes decisions based on "new data," which is "pragmatic" (i). She "abandons" (ii) previous choices. However, constantly changing decisions is "disconcerting" (iii) to a board that likely prefers stability.
2. **(A)** If few readers could follow the reasoning "without significant effort," the premises were "arcane" (ii) (understood by few). This matches a "counterintuitive" (i) conclusion that goes against common sense.
3. **(A)** The contrast is between "decades in obscurity" (i) (being unknown) and becoming a "celebrated" (ii) icon overnight.
4. **(B)** "Targeting inconsistencies with such precision" defines an "incisive" (i) cross-examination. This would leave the opposing counsel "flustered" (ii) (agitated and confused).
5. **(B)** Promoting employees based solely on "impeccable" records regardless of "personal relationships" is the definition of "impartiality."
6. **(D)** If experts spent months "debating which industries it actually covered," the scope of the bill was "ambiguous" (unclear or open to multiple interpretations).

7. **(B)** The passage states extraneous load is "caused by poor instructional design," which is a factor directly controlled by the educator.
 8. **(B)** Critics caution that avoiding all struggle (minimizing extraneous load) might deprive learners of the "productive struggle necessary for deep comprehension," suggesting that simple design isn't enough for deep learning.
 9. **(C)** Germane load relates to "forming long-term memories." A student "consciously connecting" new concepts to prior knowledge to build a "mental schema" is the best example of this constructive mental effort.
 10. **(A)** The argument is that breakfast causes performance. If breakfast-eaters have higher incomes, and higher-income students have better "schools and tutoring," those resources (not breakfast) might be the cause of the performance.
 11. **(A)** "Vivid" and "Evocative" both describe an account that produces powerful, clear images in the mind, making the reader feel as though they were there.
 12. **(B)** An act that strikes at the "foundations of the established power structure" is described as "subversive" or "insurgent."
 13. **(B)** "Exhaustive" and "Comprehensive" both describe a report that is thorough and examines every detail "microscopically."
 14. **(B)** "Sluggish" and "Torpido" are synonyms meaning slow-moving or lacking energy, which fits the description of "little visible advancement" over many months.
 15. **(B)** Rhetoric that "deepened existing divisions" and provoked "fierce opposition" is described as "inflammatory" or "incendiary" (tending to stir up conflict).
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