

# GRE Verbal Reasoning

## Sample Paper 05

**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.

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### SECTION I: VERBAL REASONING

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**Q1.** The novelist's magnum opus was surprisingly \_\_\_\_\_; despite a career built on dense, labyrinthine narratives, this final work was spare and direct, stripped of all ornamentation.

- A. Prolix
- B. Austere
- C. Grandiloquent
- D. Diffuse

**Q2.** Although confronted with irrefutable evidence that her original projections were incorrect, the economist remained \_\_\_\_\_, insisting that the data would eventually vindicate her model.

- A. Equivocal
- B. Tractable
- C. Obdurate
- D. Sanguine

**Q3.** The newly appointed arbitrator was lauded for his (i) \_\_\_\_\_ approach to the trade dispute; he demonstrated a rare ability to (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ even the most entrenched opponents through patient, evidence-based dialogue.

- A. (i) Antagonistic; (ii) Inflamm
- B. (i) Impartial; (ii) Reconcile
- C. (i) Impartial; (ii) Antagonise
- D. (i) Partisan; (ii) Reconcile

**Q4.** While the documentary series was undeniably (i) \_\_\_\_\_, shedding light on centuries of overlooked history, its cinematography was so (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ that even engaged viewers found their concentration wandering.

- A. (i) Revelatory; (ii) Torpid
- B. (i) Superficial; (ii) Dynamic
- C. (i) Revelatory; (ii) Riveting
- D. (i) Banal; (ii) Torpid

*For much of the twentieth century, the dominant view in genetics held that an organism's inherited traits were determined solely by the sequence of nucleotides in its DNA — a fixed, immutable blueprint passed unchanged from parent to offspring. The emerging field of epigenetics has fundamentally revised this picture. Epigenetic mechanisms, such as DNA methylation and histone modification, regulate which genes are expressed without altering the underlying DNA sequence itself. Crucially, some of these modifications can be influenced by environmental factors — including diet, stress, and exposure to toxins — and certain modifications have been shown to be heritable across generations. This discovery carries profound implications: it suggests that an individual's lived experiences may shape the biology of their descendants, challenging the strict boundary between nature and nurture that classical genetics had drawn.*

**Q5.** The passage implies that the classical view of genetics was:

- A. Entirely without scientific merit.
- B. Incomplete because it failed to account for how environmental factors can influence heritable traits.
- C. Correct in its assertion that DNA sequences are influenced by diet and stress.
- D. Applicable only to organisms that reproduce sexually.

**Q6.** According to the passage, epigenetic modifications differ from standard genetic mutations primarily because:

- A. Epigenetic modifications always improve an organism's survival chances.
- B. They alter gene expression without changing the actual DNA sequence.
- C. They are triggered exclusively by exposure to toxic substances.
- D. Standard genetic mutations can be inherited, while epigenetic modifications cannot.

**Q7.** The author mentions 'diet, stress, and exposure to toxins' primarily to:

- A. Provide examples of harmful lifestyle choices that damage DNA.
- B. Illustrate the range of environmental factors that can influence epigenetic modifications.
- C. Argue that stress is the most significant driver of heritable change.
- D. Demonstrate that epigenetic research is limited to studies of human subjects.

**Q8.** The retiring professor's final lecture was received with \_\_\_\_\_ by students and faculty alike; many were visibly moved, and several colleagues offered heartfelt tributes from the floor.

- A. Approbation and Acclaim
- B. Derision and Contempt
- C. Indifference
- D. Skepticism

**Q9.** The investigative journalist's report on municipal corruption was considered \_\_\_\_\_ by those in power, as it challenged assumptions that had gone unquestioned for decades.

- A. Inoffensive and Anodyne
- B. Incendiary and Provocative
- C. Redundant
- D. Conciliatory

**Q10.** A public health authority argues that banning smoking in restaurants reduced hospital admissions for heart attacks by 20% in the first year. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens this argument?

- A. Many restaurant owners initially opposed the ban.
- B. A nationwide public awareness campaign about heart disease was launched in the same year the ban took effect.
- C. Smokers reported finding it easier to reduce their consumption after the ban.
- D. The ban was welcomed by a majority of non-smoking diners.

**Q11.** Choose the sentence in which the pronoun reference is unambiguous and grammatically correct:

- A. After the judge reviewed the lawyer's brief, he concluded it was inadmissible.
- B. The committee informed the applicants that they would announce their decision by Friday.

- C. When Maya told her supervisor about the error, she was not surprised.
- D. The director asked the producer to revise the script, and she did so immediately.

**Q12.** In the phrase 'the parsimony of the foundation's grant-making,' the word 'parsimony' most nearly means:

- A. Generosity
- B. Transparency
- C. Excessive unwillingness to spend
- D. Bureaucratic complexity

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## SECTION II: VERBAL REASONING

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**Q1.** The prime minister's budget speech was frequently (i) \_\_\_\_\_, veering from fiscal projections to historical anecdotes without any (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ link between them, leaving financial analysts (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ about the government's actual priorities.

- A. (i) Rambling; (ii) Logical; (iii) Perplexed
- B. (i) Focused; (ii) Jarring; (iii) Reassured
- C. (i) Concise; (ii) Logical; (iii) Encouraged
- D. (i) Rambling; (ii) Discernible; (iii) Perplexed

**Q2.** The peace accord was designed to be (i) \_\_\_\_\_, ending the dispute once and for all; however, the (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ language of its key provisions left both nations with irreconcilable interpretations.

- A. (i) Definitive; (ii) Equivocal
- B. (i) Provisional; (ii) Unambiguous
- C. (i) Provocative; (ii) Precise
- D. (i) Definitive; (ii) Lucid

**Q3.** To outside observers, the veteran general's decision to seek a ceasefire appeared (i) \_\_\_\_\_, but those familiar with his depleted supply lines recognized it as a deeply (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ move to preserve his remaining forces.

- A. (i) Pusillanimous; (ii) Pragmatic
- B. (i) Courageous; (ii) Reckless

- C. (i) Inevitable; (ii) Altruistic
- D. (i) Pusillanimous; (ii) Impetuous

**Q4.** The apprentice found the meticulous restoration of antique furniture (i) \_\_\_\_\_, but the (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ salary she earned upon certification made the years of painstaking training worthwhile.

- A. (i) Tedious; (ii) Substantial
- B. (i) Exhilarating; (ii) Negligible
- C. (i) Varied; (ii) Substantial
- D. (i) Tedious; (ii) Negligible

**Q5.** The auditor's reputation for \_\_\_\_\_ was unimpeachable; every figure in her reports was verified against primary source documents before publication.

- A. Mendacity
- B. Exactitude
- C. Chicanery
- D. Laxity

**Q6.** The terms of the merger agreement were so \_\_\_\_\_ that the company's own legal team required three weeks to produce a plain-language summary for shareholders.

- A. Labyrinthine
- B. Pellucid
- C. Succinct
- D. Manifest

*The Columbian Exchange — the widespread transfer of plants, animals, culture, and diseases between the Americas and the Old World following Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage — fundamentally restructured global agriculture and demography. Crops native to the Americas, such as the potato, maize, and tomato, were introduced to Europe, Africa, and Asia, where they eventually became dietary staples and contributed to significant population growth. Conversely, Old World livestock such as horses, cattle, and pigs were brought to the Americas, transforming indigenous economies and ecologies. The exchange, however, carried a devastating asymmetry: European diseases, including smallpox and measles, to which indigenous American populations had no prior immunity, caused mortality rates estimated by some historians at up to ninety percent in certain communities. This catastrophic demographic collapse reshaped the political and economic landscape of the Americas for centuries to come.*

**Q7.** According to the passage, which of the following was a direct consequence of crops from the Americas being introduced to the Old World?

- A. A decline in the use of Old World livestock in agricultural production.
- B. Population growth in Europe, Africa, and Asia due to new dietary staples.
- C. The eradication of diseases such as smallpox from the American continent.
- D. A reduction in trade between the Americas and the Old World.

**Q8.** The author describes the exchange as having a 'devastating asymmetry' primarily to highlight that:

- A. European nations benefited economically while American nations suffered politically.
- B. The introduction of crops and livestock caused equal harm on both sides.
- C. The consequences of the exchange were profoundly unequal, with indigenous Americans bearing catastrophic losses through disease.
- D. The horses and cattle brought to the Americas caused greater damage than European diseases.

**Q9.** Which of the following best captures the central argument of the passage?

- A. The Columbian Exchange was a deliberate policy of European governments to weaken indigenous American societies.
- B. While the Columbian Exchange produced agricultural benefits globally, it simultaneously caused irreversible harm to indigenous American populations.
- C. The introduction of American crops to the Old World was the single most important event in the history of global agriculture.
- D. Old World livestock caused more lasting damage to the Americas than did European diseases.

**Q10.** An urban planning report argues that cities that invested in dedicated cycling infrastructure saw a 25% reduction in road traffic accidents. Which of the following, if true, most effectively weakens this argument?

- A. Cycling is a popular leisure activity in cities with mild climates.
- B. The cities studied also introduced stricter speed limit enforcement and mandatory driver re-training programs during the same period.
- C. Residents of those cities reported higher satisfaction with their daily commutes.
- D. The cost of building cycling infrastructure was offset by savings in road maintenance.

**Q11.** The biographer's account of the reclusive poet was so \_\_\_\_\_ that readers felt they could anticipate her private thoughts, so richly was her inner life rendered on the page.

- A. Intimate and Searching
- B. Detached and Clinical
- C. Perfunctory
- D. Cursory

**Q12.** The auditor's report on the charity's finances was seen as \_\_\_\_\_ by the board, as it undermined the organization's credibility at a time when public trust was already fragile.

- A. Constructive and Salutary
- B. Damaging and Deleterious
- C. Inconsequential
- D. Laudatory

**Q13.** The professor's treatment of post-colonial literature in her survey course was \_\_\_\_\_, touching on dozens of authors and movements with equal depth and rigor.

- A. Selective and Partial
- B. Sweeping and Wide-ranging
- C. Superficial
- D. Parochial

**Q14.** Despite the \_\_\_\_\_ forecast that had threatened to cancel the outdoor ceremony, the sky cleared by midday and the event proceeded without interruption.

- A. Favorable and Propitious
- B. Forbidding and Ominous
- C. Uncertain
- D. Auspicious

**Q15.** The think-tank's policy recommendations were praised for being \_\_\_\_\_, drawing on expertise in economics, sociology, public health, and urban planning simultaneously.

- A. Narrow and Parochial
- B. Interdisciplinary and Integrative
- C. Dogmatic
- D. Reductive

## Solutions - Section I

1. **(B)** The sentence uses the contrast word "despite" to compare the novelist's previous "dense, labyrinthine" work with this final book. The work is described as "spare and direct, stripped of all ornamentation." "Austere" is the correct choice, as it refers to a style that is simple and without luxury or decoration.
2. **(C)** The context describes an economist who refuses to change her mind or accept that her projections were wrong, even when faced with "irrefutable evidence." "Obdurate" means stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or course of action, which perfectly fits the scenario.
3. **(B)** For blank (i), "Impartial" is correct as an arbitrator is expected to be neutral. For blank (ii), "Reconcile" means to restore friendly relations or make consistent. Through patient dialogue, the arbitrator was able to bring opponents together.
4. **(A)** For blank (i), "Revelatory" fits because the documentary is "shedding light" on overlooked history. For blank (ii), "Torpid" means lethargic or mentally inactive. If the cinematography is dull or "torpid," it explains why even engaged viewers lost concentration.
5. **(B)** The passage states that classical genetics viewed DNA as a "fixed, immutable blueprint." Epigenetics "revised this picture" by showing that environment (nature vs. nurture) influences trait inheritance. Thus, the classical view was incomplete because it missed environmental factors.
6. **(B)** The text explicitly states that epigenetic mechanisms "regulate which genes are expressed without altering the underlying DNA sequence itself," whereas standard mutations involve changes to the sequence.
7. **(B)** These three items are listed immediately following the mention of "environmental factors." The author uses them as specific examples of the types of external influences that can trigger epigenetic changes.
8. **(A)** In Sentence Equivalence, the description "visibly moved" and "heartfelt tributes" indicates a highly positive reception. "Approbation" and "Acclaim" both refer to warm approval or praise.
9. **(B)** A report that "challenged assumptions that had gone unquestioned for decades" would be seen as provocative by those in power. "Incendiary" and "Provocative" both describe something intended to stir up strong emotion or conflict.
10. **(B)** The authority argues the smoking ban caused the 20
11. **(D)** Pronoun ambiguity occurs when "he," "she," or "they" could refer to multiple people. In A, B, and C, the pronouns could refer to either of the two people/groups mentioned. In D, while "she" could technically refer to both, the logical structure of a director asking a producer to do something and the producer doing it makes it the most clear and standard construction for this type of grammar question.
12. **(C)** "Parsimony" refers to extreme unwillingness to spend money or use resources. In the context of grant-making, it describes a foundation that is being very stingy with its funds.



## Solutions - Section II

1. (A) A speech that "veers" between unrelated topics like "fiscal projections" and "historical anecdotes" is "Rambling" (i). The lack of a "Discernible" (ii) (visible or clear) link would leave analysts "Perplexed" (iii) or confused about priorities.
2. (A) The intent was to end the dispute "once and for all," making the goal "Definitive" (i). However, the result was "irreconcilable interpretations," meaning the actual language used was "Equivocal" (ii) (vague or open to multiple meanings).
3. (A) To "outside observers," seeking a ceasefire might look like a lack of courage or being "Pusillanimous" (i). However, the second blank clarifies it was a "Pragmatic" (ii) (sensible/realistic) move to save his remaining troops.
4. (A) Meticulous work is often very slow and "Tedious" (i). However, the word "but" indicates a positive outcome: the "Substantial" (ii) salary made the effort feel worthwhile.
5. (B) A reputation for checking every figure against "primary source documents" is a description of "Exactitude" (the quality of being very accurate or precise).
6. (A) If a legal team needs three weeks just to write a "plain-language summary," the original terms must have been incredibly complex and "Labyrinthine" (like a maze).
7. (B) The passage explicitly states that American crops (potato, maize, tomato) were introduced to the Old World and "contributed to significant population growth."
8. (C) The author uses "asymmetry" to point out that while the Old World got food, the Americas got diseases that killed up to 90
9. (B) The passage balances the "agricultural benefits globally" (crops to the Old World) with the "irreversible harm" (demographic collapse due to disease in the Americas).
10. (B) The report claims cycling infrastructure reduced accidents. To weaken this, option B points to alternative causes: "stricter speed limit enforcement" and "mandatory driver re-training" happening at the same time.
11. (A) The text describes an inner life rendered so richly that readers could see her thoughts. "Intimate" and "Searching" are the only two synonyms that capture this deep, personal, and thorough rendering.
12. (B) Something that "undermined the organization's credibility" is harmful. "Damaging" and "Deleterious" are synonyms for causing harm or damage.
13. (B) Touching on "dozens of authors and movements" with "depth and rigor" is a broad and thorough approach. "Sweeping" and "Wide-ranging" are the synonyms that describe this extensive scope.

14. **(B)** The forecast "threatened to cancel" the event, implying it was bad weather. "Forbidding" and "Ominous" are synonyms for something that suggests something bad (like a storm) is coming.
  15. **(B)** Drawing on "economics, sociology, public health, and urban planning simultaneously" is the definition of "Interdisciplinary" and "Integrative" (combining different fields of study).
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