

GRE Verbal Reasoning

Sample Paper 10

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 professor's writing was often criticized for being _____; although his theories were brilliant, they were frequently buried under such dense and archaic language that even his colleagues struggled to decipher his meaning.

- A. Pellucid
- B. Recondite
- C. Succinct
- D. Prolix

Q2. Despite his reputation for being _____, the diplomat's recent decision to ignore the warnings of his staff and proceed with the high-stakes negotiation was surprisingly impulsive.

- A. Prudent
- B. Capricious
- C. Impetuous
- D. Reckless

Q3. The director's latest film was (i) _____; while it attempted to tackle profound themes of human mortality, the execution was so (ii) _____ that it felt more like a collection of exhausted clichés than a serious work of art.

- A. (i) Ambitious; (ii) Derivative
- B. (i) Mundane; (ii) Innovative
- C. (i) Ambitious; (ii) Provocative
- D. (i) Subtle; (ii) Derivative

Q4. In the field of theoretical physics, the most (i) _____ theories are often those that appear most (ii) _____ to common sense, yet they are ultimately supported by rigorous mathematical proofs and empirical data.

- A. (i) Robust; (ii) Counterintuitive
- B. (i) Flawed; (ii) Evident
- C. (i) Robust; (ii) Analogous
- D. (i) Obscure; (ii) Intuitive

The concept of "rewilding" — the large-scale restoration of ecosystems to a point where they can sustain themselves without human intervention — has gained significant traction among conservationists. Proponents argue that by reintroducing apex predators, such as wolves or lynx, we can trigger "trophic cascades" that revitalize biodiversity. For instance, the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park led to a decrease in elk populations, which allowed overgrazed willow and aspen groves to recover, subsequently providing habitat for birds and beavers. However, critics caution that rewilding projects often ignore the socio-economic realities of the modern world. In densely populated regions of Europe, the presence of large carnivores can lead to human-wildlife conflict, particularly with livestock farmers. Moreover, some ecologists argue that "wilderness" is a subjective human construct, and that focusing on a prehistoric baseline ignores the irreversible changes already wrought by climate change.

Q5. According to the passage, the reintroduction of wolves in Yellowstone is an example of:

- A. A failed attempt at rewilding due to human-wildlife conflict.
- B. A trophic cascade that led to broader ecological recovery.
- C. The primary cause of a permanent decline in bird populations.
- D. A project that focused solely on prehistoric baselines.

Q6. The author mentions the "socio-economic realities of the modern world" primarily to:

- A. Support the argument that rewilding is the most cost-effective conservation method.
- B. Suggest that rewilding is only possible in uninhabited regions like North America.
- C. Highlight a potential limitation or challenge to the implementation of rewilding.

D. Argue that farmers should be the primary decision-makers in conservation projects.

Q7. Which of the following best describes the author's tone toward the critics of rewilding?

- A. Dismissive and overly critical.
- B. Objective and neutral.
- C. Enthusiastic and supportive.
- D. Sarcastic and mocking.

Q8. The archaeologist's conclusions remained _____ until the team discovered a series of clay tablets that provided a definitive timeline for the civilization's collapse.

- A. Conclusive
- B. Tentative
- C. Speculative
- D. Irrefutable
- E. Provisional
- F. Categorical

Q9. The witness's testimony was remarkably _____, providing a wealth of unnecessary details about the weather and the layout of the room while failing to address the actual events of the crime.

- A. Laconic
- B. Garrulous
- C. Reticent
- D. Loquacious
- E. Succinct
- F. Taciturn

Q10. A city council observes that residents in neighborhoods with more public parks have significantly lower rates of chronic stress-related illnesses. The council concludes that building more parks will directly improve the mental health of the entire city. Which of the following, if true, most weakens the council's conclusion?

- A. Residents in neighborhoods with many parks also have higher average incomes, allowing better access to private therapy.
- B. The city has recently seen a slight increase in the number of people participating in outdoor sports.

- C. Some parks in the city are not well-maintained and are rarely used by residents.
- D. High levels of stress can often lead people to seek out quiet, green spaces for relaxation.

Q11. The candidate's _____ behavior during the debate, marked by sudden outbursts and frequent changes in position, alienated many of her long-term supporters.

- A. Steadfast
- B. Capricious
- C. Mercurial
- D. Stoic
- E. Resolute
- F. Imperturbable

Q12. The initial response to the new tax policy was _____, as most citizens were neither strongly in favor of the changes nor particularly opposed to them.

- A. Enthusiastic
- B. Lukewarm
- C. Tepid
- D. Hostile
- E. Fervent
- F. Antagonistic

SECTION II: VERBAL REASONING

Q1. The historian's lecture was notably (i) _____, jumping between the fall of Rome, the industrial revolution, and modern digital privacy concerns without any (ii) _____ framework, leaving the audience feeling (iii) _____ rather than enlightened.

- A. (i) Disjointed; (ii) Cohesive; (iii) Confused
- B. (i) Concise; (ii) Theoretical; (iii) Inspired
- C. (i) Disjointed; (ii) Cohesive; (iii) Reassured
- D. (i) Erudite; (ii) Simplistic; (iii) Confused

Q2. The startup's claims about its new AI were (i) _____; while the marketing materials promised a revolution in medical diagnostics, internal audits revealed that the software's accuracy was (ii) _____ at best.

- A. (i) Hyperbolic; (ii) Mediocre
- B. (i) Understated; (ii) Exemplary
- C. (i) Hyperbolic; (ii) Unsurpassed
- D. (i) Modest; (ii) Mediocre

Q3. Although the judge was known for her (i) _____ demeanor in the courtroom, her private letters revealed a woman of (ii) _____ passion and strong personal convictions.

- A. (i) Austere; (ii) Intense
- B. (i) Flamboyant; (ii) Muted
- C. (i) Austere; (ii) Negligible
- D. (i) Jovial; (ii) Intense

Q4. The research team found the data (i) _____; despite running the experiment multiple times, the results were so (ii) _____ that no clear pattern could be established.

- A. (i) Perplexing; (ii) Inconsistent
- B. (i) Lucid; (ii) Uniform
- C. (i) Perplexing; (ii) Predictable
- D. (i) Straightforward; (ii) Inconsistent

Q5. The senator's reputation for _____ was well-deserved; he consistently refused to compromise on even the smallest legislative details, even when it meant risking a government shutdown.

- A. Intransigence
- B. Pliability
- C. Deference
- D. Alacrity

Q6. The scientist's theory was dismissed by his peers as _____ because it relied on anecdotal evidence rather than the double-blind trials required by modern research standards.

- A. Empirical
- B. Spurious

- C. Rigorous
- D. Veritable

The "Linguistic Relativity" hypothesis, often known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, suggests that the structure of a language influences its speakers' cognition and world-view. In its "strong" form (linguistic determinism), the theory argues that language determines thought, meaning that if a concept does not exist in a language, its speakers cannot conceive of it. This version has been largely discredited by modern cognitive science, which points to the ability of humans to learn new concepts and the existence of "mentalese" — a universal non-linguistic mental language. However, the "weak" form of the hypothesis continues to find support. Researchers have found that speakers of languages that use cardinal directions (north, south, east, west) to describe spatial relationships have a significantly better sense of absolute orientation than speakers of languages that use relative terms (left, right). Similarly, the way different languages categorize colors or gender can influence the speed at which speakers process visual stimuli. These findings suggest that while language does not act as a prison for thought, it certainly acts as a lens, subtly shaping the focus of our attention.

Q7. The primary purpose of the passage is to:

- A. Prove that linguistic determinism is the most accurate model of human cognition.
- B. Contrast the "strong" and "weak" versions of a linguistic theory and discuss current scientific views.
- C. Argue that all humans think in the same way regardless of the language they speak.
- D. Criticize researchers who use cardinal directions to study spatial orientation.

Q8. According to the passage, "mentalese" is used as evidence to:

- A. Support the idea that language determines all human thought.
- B. Explain why some languages have more words for colors than others.
- C. Challenge the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.
- D. Demonstrate that spatial orientation is a learned skill.

Q9. The author uses the metaphor of a "lens" (final line) to suggest that language:

- A. Distorts our perception of reality in a harmful way.
- B. Provides a clear and objective view of the world.
- C. Influences what we notice and how we process information without restricting our ability to think.
- D. Completely blocks our ability to perceive certain concepts.

Q10. The passage suggests that speakers of languages using "absolute" spatial terms:

- A. Are unable to understand the concepts of "left" and "right."
- B. Have a superior biological capacity for navigation compared to other humans.
- C. Perform better on tasks requiring a sense of direction due to the requirements of their language.
- D. Are more likely to categorize colors according to gender.

Q11. The investigation into the financial scandal was _____, examining every transaction and communication over a five-year period to ensure no detail was missed.

- A. Cursory
- B. Exhaustive
- C. Meticulous
- D. Superficial
- E. Perfunctory
- F. Lax

Q12. The author's tone in the final chapter was unexpectedly _____, a sharp contrast to the biting sarcasm and cynical outlook that characterized the rest of the book.

- A. Acerbic
- B. Benign
- C. Caustic
- D. Gentle
- E. Vitriolic
- F. Sardonic

Q13. After years of conflict, the two nations finally reached a _____ agreement, though both sides remained skeptical of the other's long-term commitment to peace.

- A. Durable
- B. Tenuous
- C. Robust
- D. Fragile
- E. Permanent
- F. Unshakeable

Q14. The professor's explanation of the complex economic model was _____; even the students with no prior background in the subject were able to follow his logic.

- A. Obscure
- B. Lucid
- C. Perspicuous
- D. Opaque
- E. Abstruse
- F. Recondite

Q15. Despite the _____ evidence of the defendant's involvement, the jury found him not guilty, a verdict that stunned the legal community.

- A. Scant
- B. Compelling
- C. Cogent
- D. Flimsy
- E. Trivial
- F. Inconsequential

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% drop. To weaken this, we need an alternative cause. If a “nationwide public awareness campaign” happened in the same year, the health improvement might be due to the campaign rather than the ban.
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% of the population—a profoundly unequal and catastrophic exchange.
 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. (B, C) The text describes an investigation so thorough it covered every transaction over five years. **Exhaustive** and **Meticulous** are synonyms capturing this thorough, detail-oriented approach.
 12. (B, D) The final chapter is described as a contrast to “biting sarcasm and cynical outlook.” **Benign** and **Gentle** are synonyms for mild and kind in tone.
 13. (B, D) Both sides remained skeptical, so the agreement was fragile. **Tenuous** and **Fragile** are synonyms for something weak or easily broken.
 14. (B, C) If even students with no background could follow the logic, the explanation was very clear. **Lucid** and **Perspicuous** are synonyms for clear and easy to understand.
 15. (B, C) The verdict stunned the legal community, implying the evidence was strong. **Compelling** and **Cogent** are synonyms for convincing and persuasive evidence.
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