Achievable

GRE DUMP SHEET

Analytical Writing

One task: "Analyze an Issue"

- **Always first, 30 minutes:** a claim on an issue of general interest, plus **specific instructions**; take a position and support it with reasons and examples
- One topic from ETS's **published pool** of about 160. Typed in a basic word processor: **no spellchecker or grammar checker**
- **There is no right position:** raters score how well you follow the instructions and develop your case

Six instruction sets: answer the one you get

The prompt gives	Take your position, and also
A **statement**	Consider ways it **might or might not hold true**, and how they shape your position
A **recommendation**	Describe **circumstances** where adopting it **would or would not be advantageous**
A **claim**	Address the **most compelling reasons or examples** that could challenge your position
Two views	Say which is closer to your own, and **address both**
A **claim and its reason**	Respond to **both** the claim and the reason it rests on
A **policy**	Consider the **consequences** of implementing it, and how they shape your position

Scoring

- **0—6, in half points**; one score for the measure
- **Holistic:** trained raters judge the essay's overall quality; ETS's **e-rater** engine scores it too
- An occasional slip won't cost you; **serious, persistent errors** lower the score
- **0:** off topic, copies the topic, or not in English; **NS:** blank

What a 6 does

- States a **clear, insightful position** that follows the instructions
- Develops it fully with **compelling reasons and persuasive examples**
- Stays **focused and organized**, connecting ideas logically
- Uses **precise vocabulary** and **sentence variety**, with only **minor errors**

Habits of high-scoring essays

- **Length:** 800+ words; body paragraphs 150+, introduction and conclusion 100+ each
- Use the **prompt's keywords** throughout, above all in the thesis
- Vary sentence length, leaning long; **no spelling errors**
- **Evidence you can stand behind:** a wrong fact or untraceable study weakens the case

Plan with a pro/con table

- List points **for and against** the claim; take the side you can **defend best**
- Keep its **two strongest points** and **one opposing point** you can answer
- Stuck? Write **one opening sentence per paragraph**, then fill them in

The five-paragraph template

- **Introduction:** your position and a preview of your reasons
- **Argument 1:** your strongest reason, in detail
- **Argument 2:** your second-strongest reason
- **Counterpoint with dispute:** the best opposing view, what's fair in it, and why your side still wins
- **Conclusion:** restate the position and tie the reasons together

Reuse the **structure** on every topic and swap in examples. Raters look for no set form, and ETS can cancel an essay **unusually similar** to others: never memorized text.

Time split

- **About 6 minutes:** read the claim and instructions, fill the pro/con table, choose a side
- **About 20 minutes:** write all five paragraphs
- **The last few minutes:** check spelling and obvious errors