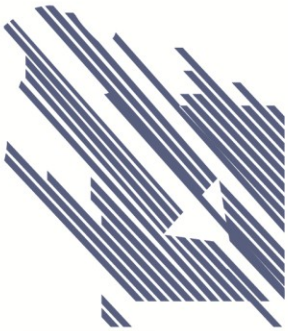
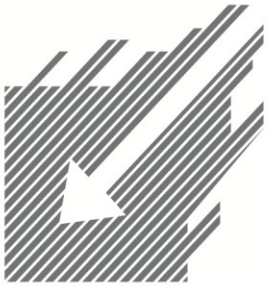
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Strategies & mindset

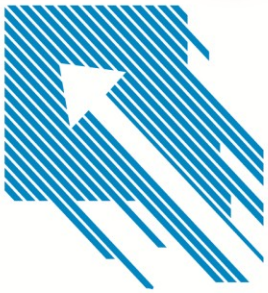
Test day Tips





The GMAT Demystified





Debunks common myths

How to Prepare

Your first Step to Crack the GMAT

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Part-I: Introduction

Welcome to the journey to your dream business school!

As you take the first step in the direction of your success, let us give you the good news first - there are thousands of schools across the world that accept the GMAT, so you have a plethora of options to choose from. The bad news (or the not-so-good news) is that only a fraction of these schools offer you world class education and consequently the competition for getting through to these schools is very fierce.

The admission committees at business schools evaluate candidates on primarily five different parameters:

1. *Undergraduate GPA and institution*
2. *The quantity and quality of work-experience*
3. *Admission essays*
4. *Letters of recommendations and*
5. *The GMAT score.*

Each candidate's application is evaluated holistically to determine how the candidate stacks up vis-à-vis other applicants. Schools look for candidates who are competent enough to survive the rigor of an MBA program and who have performed consistently well in the past. The schools also look for candidates with the right aptitude and the GMAT is one of the best ways for the schools to evaluate whether the candidate possesses the requisite aptitude.

Did you know ?
Approx 260,000 candidates take the GMAT annually!

If you go through any credible rankings of business schools, you will observe that the schools at the top of the pack have the highest GMAT scores and as you come down the rankings the average GMAT scores start decreasing.

So to get into a top business school, you need to target a high GMAT score and the goal of this book is to get you started on that journey. If you are about to start your preparation and don't know how to proceed, this book is for you.

While there many other similar books to get started on your GMAT journey, one common problem with them is that they are written in a monotonous and uninteresting way. Most of them are loaded with facts but none of them provide insights that will help you as progress ahead.

Written in an interesting and conversational style, this book makes for a snappy read and provides insights that will help you start your preparation more confidently. It starts by providing you the necessary details about the GMAT and then continuously tries to show you how you can score better on the exam. Right from discussing the right and the wrong way to prepare for the exam to debunking some common myths, this book will help align your thoughts in a way that will help you score better. By the time you finish this book, you will know exactly how to go about your preparation and what to keep in mind to score well on the GMAT.

Let's get going!

Getting Started

What is the GMAT?

The GMAT stands for Graduate Management Admission Test. It's an exam required for admissions to MBA programs in the US and in other top business schools across the world. It is also required for admission to a few Masters and PhD courses.

How many candidates take the GMAT?

> ***Did you know ?***
> *Did you know that the US, China and India account for 80% of the GMAT test-takers annually.*

Approximately 286,000 candidates took the GMAT in testing year 2012 which is the highest figure ever in the history of the GMAT and is an increase of 11% over the last year's figure of 265,000. Around 41% of these takers were US citizens and the candidates outside the US accounted for 59% of these test-takers. Chinese citizens form the second biggest test-taking group with a record 58,000 taking the GMAT this year, followed by the Indians, a record 30,000 of whom took the GMAT this year.

What does the GMAT consist of?

The GMAT consists of four sections, which appear in the fixed order given below.

Section	Time
Analysis of an Argument Essay	30 minutes
Integrated Reasoning	30 minutes
Quantitative	75 minutes
Verbal	75 minutes

To see sample questions from each of the sections above, click on **this** link.

How am I scored on the GMAT?

The GMAT scores range from 200-800. A score of 200 is the lowest you can get and a score of 800 is the highest. For each section, you get something called a scaled score and there is also a percentile score corresponding to a scaled score. For more details regarding the scaled score to the percentile conversion for the Verbal and the Quant section, download **The GMAT scaled score Conversion Matrix** from the Free Resources section of our website

I heard somebody say that he scored a 720(Q-47, Q-41) on the GMAT? What do 47 and 41 mean here?

Both the Quant and the Verbal sections are scored on a scale of 51 (theoretically it is 60). A score of 51 on Quant gives you a 98th percentile and a score of 46-51 in Verbal gives you a 99th percentile. So in the example of 720(Q-47,V-41), 47 translates to 76th percentile on Quant and 41 translates to 92nd percentile on Verbal and a score of 720 translates to 94th percentile on the GMAT.

I have heard that the GMAT is a Computer Adaptive Test. What does that mean?

This means that the difficulty level of the next question in a section is determined by your performance on the previous questions, so as you progress through the test, the software continuously tries to evaluate your performance and adapts the difficulty level of the next questions based on how you have performed on the previous ones.

Did you know ?
Women account for 2/3rd of the 40,000 strong GMAT test-takers in China

Are there any breaks during the exam?

Yes, there are two 8 minute optional breaks during the GMAT. The first one is after the Integrated Reasoning section and the second one is after the Quantitative section.

Test Dates and Registration

When can I take the GMAT? How many times is it conducted in a year?

The GMAT can be taken at any time of the year. Unlike the SAT in which everyone takes the exam at one time, you can take the GMAT anytime. You sign up to take the exam INDIVIDUALLY, whenever you are free. Yes, that's right. The only thing to consider is whether the date on which you want to take the exam is available at the test centre of your choice. This is important for cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Beijing, New Delhi, etc. where the number of test takers is quite high and you may have to book a slot usually a month or two before your exam date.

How do I register for the GMAT and how much does the GMAT cost?

You can register for the GMAT by logging on to http://www.mba.com/ and then going to the registration page. The fee to take the GMAT is $250.

Can I reschedule/cancel my GMAT appointment?

Yes, you can. To reschedule your appointment in a country other than the one in which you scheduled your original appointment, you need to contact the GMAC by phone. The following is the rescheduling fee:

- 7 calendar days or more before the scheduled test date: $50.00
- Fewer than 7 calendar days before the scheduled test date: $250.00

What do I need to take to the GMAT Test Centre?

When you arrive at the test centre you will be required to present at least one form of GMAC®-approved, government-issued ID. With some restrictions and exceptions as noted below and on http://www.mba.com, the only approved forms of ID are a passport, driver's license, national or military ID card. The name and birth date on your ID must match exactly the name and date of birth you provided when you registered for the exam.

Did you know ?
You can retake the GMAT only after 31 calendar days

If you are testing in Bangladesh, China (including Hong Kong), India, Japan, Pakistan, Singapore or South Korea – you must present your passport as the identification requirement.

Basics of GMAT Preparation

How much time do I need to prepare for the GMAT?

Depends on your aptitude levels. Some people take as much a year to prepare while some just take a couple of weeks. However, for an average candidate we recommend 3-4 months are more than enough to do well on the GMAT. If you extend your prep beyond four months, chances are that you will lose the momentum in between.

Did you know ?
While the average GMAT score at HBS is 730, the lowest GMAT score in the current class is 580

When should I take the GMAT?

We recommend that you take the GMAT at least three months before you plan to submit your applications to schools. This ensures that you don't end up having to submit your applications in a hurry. Also, even if you plan to go to business school two years from now but your current day job is fairly chilled out, you may want to take the GMAT now as this may prove to be a golden opportunity for you to focus on the GMAT and clear this hurdle well on time.

Should I study first for the GMAT and then book the date or vice-versa?

Ideally, you should first study for the GMAT for a couple of weeks and then decide whether you are ready to book your test date. A lot of candidates book their GMAT appointments before starting their preparation but then at a later stage, because of one or the other reason, end up rescheduling their test dates. Some other candidates prepare for the GMAT first and then book their dates a week or two before the exam. The problem with this approach, however, is that you might not be able to maintain the required discipline and motivation. So the best time to book your GMAT date is when you're in the middle of your preparation.

Should I quit my job and prepare for the GMAT?

No. Business schools require you to submit full-time work experience and you should not quit your job to prepare for the GMAT as the gap in your work experience may reflect negatively when you apply.

GMAT and the Admission Process

Do business schools require a minimum GMAT score and what score should I be targeting?

Most business schools do not have any minimum cut-off for the GMAT. How much you target on the GMAT should depend on the average GMAT scores at the schools you are applying to. For example, if the average GMAT score at the Wharton school is 720, your target score should be around 720 to stay competitive.

The average GMAT score at the school I am targeting is 710. Does this mean that if I get something around 640, I don't stand a chance?

The GMAT is one of the many factors that determine the chances of your admission to a business school. The admission committees look for a variety of other factors - essays, recommendations, quality and quantity of work experience, fit with the school, etc. So someone with just a 640 GMAT score and an overall outstanding profile may get through to a school while someone else with a 750 GMAT score maybe rejected.

Did you know ? GMAT scores are valid for 5 years

Which schools have the highest average GMAT scores?

The top two MBA programs in terms of their average GMAT scores are Harvard Business School and Stanford GSB. To see the average GMAT scores for the rest of the top 10 schools, download our US Business School Rankings document 2012-13 from here

Do I need to take the GMAT for part-time MBA programs too?

Yes, the part-time programs at most top schools will also require you to take the GMAT.

Will I have to take any other exam apart from the GMAT to apply to business schools?

In addition to the GMAT score, most business schools require international candidates to submit TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores as well. Some business schools may make an exception but a majority of the schools will require you to submit a TOEFL score.

I have heard that I can take the GRE instead of the GMAT to apply for MBA programs. Is this true?

Yes, you can take the GRE to apply for MBA programs. However, you should take the GRE only if you think that you will not be able to score well on the GMAT on a second attempt. Most candidates enter business school through the GMAT scores so it is easier for the admission committees to compare your score vis-a-vis the other applicants. Also the admission committees may wonder why you did not take or retake the GMAT.

Relevance of the GMAT beyond the admission process

Will my GMAT score have any effect during/after my MBA?

Though in general your GMAT score doesn't have much significance after you enter a business school, it may be an important factor in determining the financial aid that you receive. Your GMAT score may become one of the parameters that will decide whether you or someone else who is as competent as you should get the financial aid. Also a few of the top investment banks may require you to submit your GMAT score when you apply for openings immediately after your MBA.

Why do business schools want the candidates to take the GMAT in the first place?

Business schools want a common element through which they can evaluate candidates. Each year candidates from different professions, countries, and undergraduate institutions apply to business schools and in absence of a common criterion to compare these candidates, it would become nearly impossible for a business school to determine who can do well in their MBA program. Business schools also want candidates who are comfortable working with numbers and can think critically. Each section of the GMAT to a great extent reflects what you will do during your MBA or after it.

For example, the sentence correction section will help you write and speak better English; the critical reasoning section will help you better analyse case studies during you MBA and the real life cases that you will face if you work as a management consultant after your MBA; the reading comprehension section will help you understand how to make sense of dense, complex information, something which you will invariably have to deal with when you work on projects at top consulting firms such as Boston Consulting Group, Bain & Co, Mckinsey & Co etc.

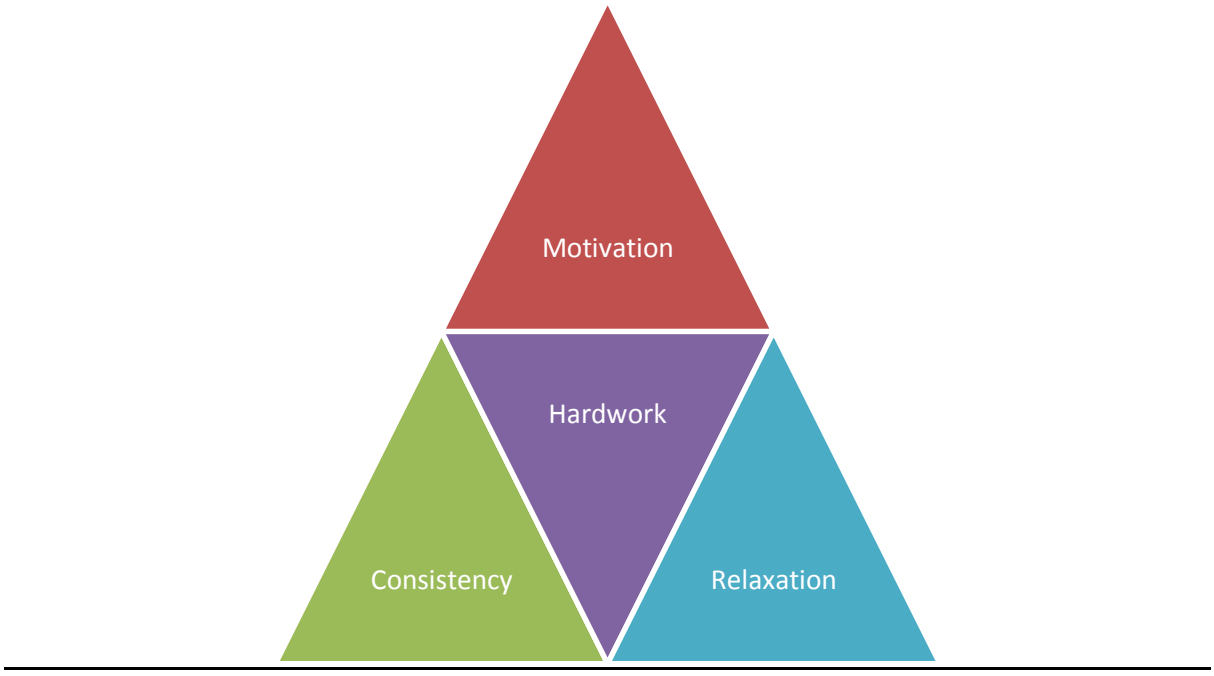
As an investment banker or consultant, you will be required to do a lot of number crunching, something that the quantitative section of the GMAT prepares you for. So

you see everything that is tested on the GMAT actually helps you prepare for the opportunities and challenges that you will face in future and that's why the admission committees want people who have proved their competency by doing well on the GMAT.

Is the GMAT a determiner of my success in life ahead?

Of course not. The GMAT is an exam which determines your ability to solve problems under a given amount of time. However, your GMAT score doesn't necessarily determine how successful you will be on the professional front in your life. What it can determine, though, to a certain extent is how successful you will be in getting through the business school of your choice.

The Pyramid of Success on the GMAT



To succeed on the GMAT, you need to ensure that there's a good mix of all the four components above. Even if one component goes amiss, it negatively affects the other components in the pyramid, making you fall short of your goal. If you lack motivation, for instance, you won't be able to work hard and be consistent. Or if you lack consistency, then even if you work hard towards the end of your preparation, you'll not be able to gain as much as you could have, had you been consistent.

Did you notice an interesting building block of this pyramid - Relaxation**. Taking breaks**

during your preparation is as important as studying. Since your childhood, you'd have heard everyone around you – from your teachers to your parents - telling you to study more and more but for the GMAT it works a little differently. If someone tells you that you need to study for 8-10 hours a day for the GMAT, you need to just ignore their advice. Studying for the GMAT the old way will be not of much help. You need to take time off from your preparation on a consistent basis and ensure that you do not *overstudy*. Read the **"The Right and The Wrong Way to Prepare for the GMAT"** later in this ebook to see how exactly should you study for the GMAT.

Visualizing Success: The Key to Staying Motivated

Staying motivated is the biggest problem you'll face as you prepare for the GMAT. After all, who wants to study Quant and Verbal when there are much more interesting things to do in life? As you saw in the "Pyramid of Success" above, staying motivated is crucial to maintain the momentum of your preparation, and **one of the very helpful ways to keep yourself pepped up is by visualizing success**.

Did you know ?
The GMAT Math tests you on high school level Math concepts.

Keep daydreaming!

Yes, picture yourself studying at the school of your choice. Think about the range of opportunities these schools can open for you. Think about what an incredible experience it would be to be taught by some of the most well renowned teachers in the world and to have some of the brightest students from across the globe as your peers. Think about how impressed would people be in your social and professional circles and think about how great it would be to not remain stuck up in your present job.

Another interesting way to stay motivated is to research about schools and connect with other candidates on various online forums. These forums will go a long way in helping you stay motivated as you will see others like you who are also on the same path.

Flood yourself with positive thoughts and keep the negative thoughts at bay. Remember Rhonda Bryne's famous book "The Secret" in which she says that the mantra to succeed in any aspect of your life is to flood yourself with positive thoughts. It works!

WHAT NOT TO THINK

- × Maths gives me jitters and is a roadblock to my success
- × I am a non-native speaker of English, so it seems like an impossible task for me to do well in Verbal.
- × I'm not fast enough or I have ever been good at standardized tests.

WHAT TO THINK

- ✓ Math is challenging but I think it is an opportunity for me to learn before I go to a business school and face the quant heavy subjects.
- ✓ Yes, I'm not a native speaker of English, but hey GMAT doesn't expect me to understand the works of Shakespeare. I think that I'll be able to manage well if I prepare in a systematic way.
- ✓ Yes, I did not do well on the SAT but that was past. I will not let that baggage pull me down.

Part-II: Tips & Suggestions

THE RIGHT AND THE WRONG WAY TO STUDY FOR THE GMAT

What is the right way to study for the GMAT? Many candidates start preparing for the GMAT earnestly, only to realize later that they are not studying the right way which becomes evident from their stagnant scores. Some learn this the hard way by failing on their first attempt and some unfortunately never realize this (even after taking the GMAT multiple times) that *it was the way they studied* for the GMAT that was wrong.

Let's first discuss what is the wrong way to study for the GMAT:

1. You collect ALL the material available under the sun and focus on just finishing ALL this material within 1-2 months. Your primary goal is to finish all the material, and you feel guilty if you are behind schedule in completing anything.

Did you know ?
Studying for 1-2 hours/day on the weekdays and 8-10 hours on the weekends over 3-4 months is enough to prepare the GMAT!

2. You spend 4-5 hours every day on weekdays and 15-16 hours on weekends just studying for the GMAT. You take a complete break from all your social engagements as the proverb "Hard work leads to success" constantly plays on your mind.

While working hard is good, working hard the right way, what some refer to as "smart work", *is* the definite way to succeed on the GMAT.

If you want to do well on the GMAT, you have to fundamentally change the way you have prepared for any exam so far. *The GMAT is unlike the college exams you have taken.* For college exams, the focus was on memorizing theorems, concepts and definitions. *On the GMAT, the focus is on application* i.e. the GMAT will never ask you something like "what is an adverb?" or "what is a pronoun reference error?"

So by studying a lot what you essentially do is store a lot of data in your head. You will see no dearth of candidates on different forums who say that they had finished almost all the material available for the GMAT yet ended up with bad scores. Why this happens is because these candidates pile up a lot of information/data in their brains rather than develop the ability to connect the data stored in such a way that it can be applied on the questions tested on the GMAT. The ability to form connections among

the different concepts so that you can apply them effectively is the single biggest ability you need to do well on the GMAT.

So how exactly do you develop this ability?

You build this ability primarily through three different methods:

- *When you attempt a question using multiple methods.*
- *When you try to recognize patterns instead of zooming through the questions.*
- *When you DO NOT study. Yes, when you relax.*

The third point is as important as the first two. It is only when you relax and give your mind sufficient time off from studies that your mind is able to form connections and is able to develop insights. If you study more and more, you are not letting your brain "breathe"; rather you are overwhelming it with more and more data.

Candidates who perform poorly on the GMAT do none of the three things mentioned above, which is why even after having practiced 200, 1000, or 5000 questions, they get disappointing results.

So the best way to prepare for the GMAT is to study for 2-3 hours every day during the weekdays and around 8-10 hours over weekends. Take a day off from the GMAT every week. Also ensure that you do each of the three things mentioned above. Once you start doing all of these, you will actually have made good use of your time and will see the result on the actual GMAT.

Debunking Popular GMAT Myths

#1 Taking the GMAT more than once will hamper my chances of admission.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Taking the GMAT twice definitely does not have any negative effect on your application. The Admission committees understand that you might not be well prepared to take the GMAT on your first attempt or you may not have done well because of some other reason. Business schools may also not be much bothered even if you take the GMAT thrice. Beyond that, they will definitely feel concerned that why you did you have to take the GMAT so many times and may view multiple attempts negatively unless you provide a strong reason to justify the multiple attempts.

#2 Business schools look only at your overall GMAT score and are not much concerned with your scores on Quant and Verbal.

Did you know ?
The current average GMAT score is 540.

Top schools want candidates to have balanced overall score and competitive Quant and Verbal scores too. Generally, a minimum of 80th percentile on both the Quantitative and Verbal sections is what you should be targeting at, apart from an overall competitive score.

#3 If I get a 760, then my admission to the top schools is almost guaranteed.

This is the biggest myth that plagues the GMAT world. The GMAT is just one among many components of your application; it isn't the single most important determiner of your admission chances. The other parts of your application, such as your undergraduate GPA and institution, essays, letters of recommendation, the quality and quality of work experience, and the unique qualities that you bring to the class are important determiners of your success during the admission process. Business schools are looking for smart, competent candidates who can enrich classroom discussions and can be groomed further to become leaders of the future. They do not want someone who is brilliant only academically; they instead want someone who has a well rounded personality. So it is entirely possible that a school might take a candidate who has a low GMAT score but has had significant life experiences and reject a candidate with a stellar GMAT score but with an otherwise below average profile.

#4 I need to study 6-8 hours every day to score 700+ on the GMAT.

The GMAT essentially tests you on high school maths and on your ability to read, process, and comprehend professionally written English at a rather fast pace. So even if you don't

study at all, you may score well on the GMAT if your Math and English skills are already good. Even if you are not good at Quant and Verbal, you may not want to stretch yourself too much and study a lot. (Read the "The wrong and the right way to study for the GMAT" to know why). What is more important is that you prepare in a systematic way. Since your preparation will be spread over 2-3 months, you need to ensure that you don't "overstudy"**. The best study schedule is 2-3 hours a day on weekdays and 6-8 hours over weekends over a 3 month period**. Also remember to set a rest day aside during the week in which you would take a complete break from your prep.

#5 I should be able to quote the likes of Shakespeare & Milton to do well on the Verbal section.

Ever paid attention to the fact that the GMAT has "Verbal" and not "English literature" as the name of the "English" section? We bet you would have! The name itself - Verbal Reasoning- makes it clear what the GMAT verbal section is all about. The GMAT doesn't expect you to read the works of Shakespeare and Milton to score well on Verbal. The GMAT just wants to test your ability to think, reason, and make decisions under timed conditions. The GMAT tests whether you can do well when you are pressed for time. In our experience, most English Literature graduates are surprisingly not able to do as well on the verbal section as is expected from them. This is because the foundation of GMAT Verbal is reasoning, something that is not the focus of English literature courses. So irrespective of your undergraduate major, every candidate has to learn the concepts, patterns and strategies specific to the GMAT that will help you arrive at the answer in the shortest possible time.

#6 Reading comprehension cannot be improved because it is a function of how well read you are and it is impossible to improve within 2-3 months.

This is a common belief harboured by candidates from engineering backgrounds. While it does help if you have been a voracious reader, even if you aren't one you simply can't let that become an excuse for not doing well on reading comprehension. Reading comprehension can be improved through intensive practice. Learn the best strategies to read a passage, understand the question types, practice a lot of passages and analyze them well, start reading high quality magazines and newspapers. Use a multi pronged strategy to become good at reading comprehension and you should be able to tackle reading comprehension passages confidently

#7 People who score well on the GMAT don't have daily schedules that are hectic and have a great work-life balance that lets them focus on the GMAT.

Though a good work-life balance definitely helps in preparing well, most of the candidates probably have as hectic lives as yours. It is difficult juggling work, commuting, performing household chores, and studying but that's where the challenge lies - you have to balance all of these in a way so that you don't feel overwhelmed. For example, you may want to go through the concepts while commuting or you may want to wake up early and study for 1-2 hours in the morning - the idea is to create a study schedule that best suits you. An MBA program at a top school can be very taxing and it rather makes sense to inculcate discipline in your daily schedule now itself. In the end, it's all about organizing yourself and your day better. If you plan your schedule wisely without stressing yourself too much, you should be able to crack the exam while going about your life as usual.

Five Incredibly Useful Tips for the GMAT

✓ **GMAT Quick Tip #1:** With the addition of the Integrated Reasoning section that requires a good amount of concentration, building mental stamina has become all the more important on the GMAT. You should have the patience to sit for four hours continuously, something that you will not be used to. And how do you develop this patience and mental stamina? By doing a variety of things - sit with the newspaper and read 7-8 articles continuously; pick up a topic that you don't like reading about and read it for half an hour; study for the GMAT in blocks of 1 hour without getting up or checking your phone and take 8-10 full length CATs before you actually take the GMAT. Doing all these can help you become more patient and focused.

✓ **GMAT Quick Tip #2 :** The amount of time you should spend in analyzing a bunch of practice questions should be thrice the amount of time you take to solve them. For instance, if you take 15 minutes in solving 10 Sentence Correction questions, you should spend at least 45 minutes analyzing those 10 questions.

✓ **GMAT Quick Tip #3:** Parallelism error is the first thing you should look for in a sentence correction question. If you see a list of items or an idiom in a sentence, chances are very good that there will be an error there.

✓ **GMAT Quick Tip #4 :** In Reading comprehension, one of the classic ways in which the test makers try to trap you is that they give partially correct answers. What that means is that the first half of an option will be correct and you'll believe that this is the correct answer but it won't be because the second half will be wrong. So watch out for such options and if you see a long sentence, DO NOT ignore the second half of the option.

✓ **GMAT Quick Tip #5 :** After taking a practice test, have you ever said to yourself "how the hell did I make those silly mistakes?" Most probably you would have! You make silly mistakes mostly because of lack of concentration and high anxiety levels during the test. A quick and highly effective way to lower your anxiety level is to look away from the computer screen for a couple of seconds, take a deep breath, and tell yourself "Relax". The break has to be short, roughly of 5-10 seconds, after every 10-12 questions. You will be stunned to see how helpful this tip will be in bringing down the number of silly mistakes that you make.

Part-III: GETTING READY FOR THE TEST DAY

THREE THINGS TO AVOID BEFORE THE TEST DAY

WHAT	WHY
Overstudying in the last few days	Putting in a lot of hours in the last few days before your GMAT can prove counterproductive.
Telling everyone that you are taking the GMAT	Don't go telling everyone you meet that you have your GMAT coming up! The more people you tell, the more pressure you'll be under, in effect shooting up your anxiety level.
Thinking that your GMAT score defines you	Preparing for a couple of months can build a lot pressure on you and you'll start thinking that your GMAT score will make your break your chances of getting through business schools. Avoid such extreme thoughts.

THREE THINGS TO DO DURING THE TEST

WHAT	WHY
Look away from the computer screen after every 10-12 questions	Helps you relax. Is a highly effective way to lower your anxiety level on the test
Take optional breaks	Although taking breaks during the exam is optional, we insist that you must utilize these breaks. After leaving the testing room, stretch, eat, drink or do whatever is necessary to lift up your mood and to relax
Arrive at the test centre on time	Remember that the GMAT proctors will not allow you to take the exam if you're late for your scheduled slot. You do not want to mess up the exam because of this, so make sure that you arrive at the test centre well before time

THREE THINGS TO AVOID ON THE TEST

WHAT	WHY
Try predicting your score	Don't think about how are performing on the test because that would invariably increase your anxiety level. Even someone who scores an 800 doesn't know during the exam that he'll score an 800. In fact, he is that focused on the exam that he doesn't let his mind play games like predicting the score.
Spend a lot of time on a question	Do not spend a lot of time on a question. Apart from the fact that it will ruin your timing on the rest of the questions, there's a good chance that the question maybe experimental.
Thinking about previous questions	Your mind will try to think about past problems and whether you attempted the previous question correctly. If you find yourself doing that, tell yourself "I can't change what I have already done so I will focus on the current question only".

Part IV: How exactly do test takers differ?

Understanding the difference among 760,700, and 600 scorers

Very often candidates ask what does it take to score a 700? Someone who is already scoring a 700 and is targeting an even higher score asks what he/she can do to secure a 760?

The first thing to understand is that someone who scores a 760 on the GMAT would anyway be fairly strong, both at Verbal and Quant even before starting his/her preparation. He/she would be the type of candidate who reads magazines such as The Economist or other high quality sources regularly and at the same time is comfortable playing with numbers.

In contrast, someone who scores a 600 would be someone who would usually not bother reading newspapers and magazines and may also not be comfortable juggling numbers.

However, there are a lot of other ways in which these candidates differ and if you at least get insights into what the high scorers do, the least you can do is try emulating their study habits. Through this interesting table, you will see how exactly do the three types of candidates differ. Which type of candidate are you?

	760 scorer	700 scorer	600 scorer
Score on the diagnostic test (GMATPREP)	Ranges between 660-700	Ranges between 600-640	Ranges between 400-500
Understanding of concepts	Has an in-depth understanding of concepts and knows how and when to apply them	Understands the concepts but sometimes struggles with application	Does not have a strong understanding of concepts and usually struggles with applications of concepts
Number of ways to solve a questions	Tries to figure out how to solve a question using multiple methods and knows which method to use for which type of questions	Solves questions usually through one method but may sometimes look at alternate methods too	Always solves questions using one method. Thinks that solving a question using multiple methods is a waste of time
Practice tests and analysis	Takes 8-10 practice tests and allots 3-4 hours to analysing each test.	Takes 8-10 practice tests and allots 1-2 hours for the analysis of the test	Takes 3-4 practice tests & superficially analyzes the tests for half an hour

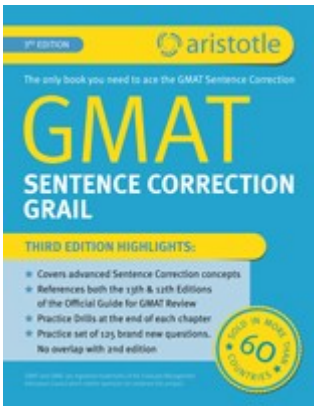
Quality vs. quantity of resources	Follows a few trusted books and uses them judiciously	Uses more than the required number of resources but knows which are good and which are not	Focuses on collecting a lot of material and keeps on hopping from one book to the other
When he practices	Does excruciating analysis of the questions he gets wrong-why he got them wrong, what he learnt from them. Also analyzes questions he gets correct	Analyzes incorrect questions but does not focus much on the questions he gets correct.	Does not analyze either incorrect or correct questions. Focuses on practicing more and more questions as a way to improve his accuracy.
Pattern Recognition	Can recognize patterns easily and knows how the test maker may try to trap him in questions	Knows the patterns but may not be able to recognize them easily.	Does not know anything about pattern recognition. Falls into the same traps again and again

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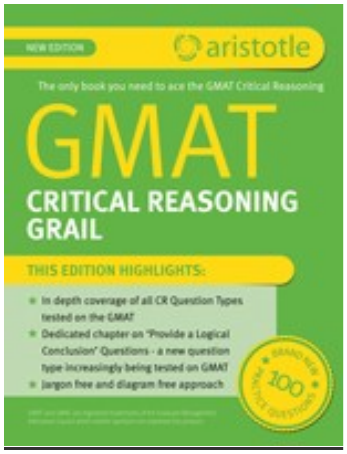
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