

## GRE Practice Paper

### GRE Verbal Practice Paper 4

#### Section 1 Verbal Reasoning 25 Questions

**Question 1 is based on the following reading passage.**

Centuries ago, the Maya of Central America produced elaborate, deeply cut carvings in stone. The carvings would have required a cutting tool of hard stone or metal. Iron-ore deposits exist throughout Central America, but apparently the Maya never developed the technology to use them and the metals the Maya are known to have used, copper and gold, would not have been hard enough. Therefore, the Maya must have used stone tools to make these carvings.

1. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?

A In various parts of the world, civilizations that could not make iron from ore fashioned tools out of fragments of iron from meteorites.

B All the metallic Mayan artifacts that have been found by archaeologists are made of metals that are too soft for carving stone.

C The stone out of which these carvings were made is harder than the stone used by other Central American peoples.

D The technique that the Maya used to smelt gold and some other metals could not have been easily applied to the task of extracting iron from iron ore.

E Archaeologists disagree about how certain stone tools that

have been found among Mayan ruins were used.

**Questions 2 and 3 are based on the following reading passage. (A word is boldfaced and underlined for reference in answering question 3.)**

In early-twentieth-century England, it was fashionable to claim that only a completely new style of writing could address a world undergoing unprecedented transformation—just as one literary critic recently claimed that only the new “aesthetic of exploratory excess” can address a world undergoing . . . well, you know. Yet in early-twentieth-century England, T. S. Eliot, a man fascinated by the “presence” of the past, wrote the most innovative poetry of his time. The lesson for today’s literary community seems obvious: a reorientation toward tradition would benefit writers no less than 10 readers. But if our writers and critics indeed respect the novel’s rich tradition (as they claim to), then why do they disdain the urge to tell an exciting story?

2. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

The author of the passage suggests that present-day readers would particularly benefit from which of the following changes on the part of present-day writers and critics?

- A An increased focus on the importance of engaging the audience in a narrative
- B Modernization of the traditional novelistic elements already familiar to readers
- C Embracing aspects of fiction that are generally peripheral to the interest of readers
- D A greater recognition of how the tradition of the novel has changed over time
- E A better understanding of how certain poets such as Eliot have influenced fiction of the present time

3. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

The word “address” appears underlined and in boldface twice in the first sentence of the passage (lines 2-5). In the context of the passage as a whole, “address” is closest in meaning to

- A reveal
- B belie
- C speak to
- D direct attention toward
- E attempt to remediate

**Question 4 is based on the following reading passage.**

Electric washing machines, first introduced in the United States in 1925, significantly reduced the amount of time spent washing a given amount of clothes, yet the average amount of time households spent washing clothes increased after 1925. This increase is partially accounted for by the fact that many urban households had previously sent their clothes to professional laundries. But the average amount of time spent washing clothes also increased for rural households with no access to professional laundries.

4. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain why the time spent washing clothes increased in rural areas?

A People with access to an electric washing machine typically wore their clothes many fewer times before washing them than did people without access to electric washing machines.

B Households that had sent their clothes to professional laundries before 1925 were more likely than other households to purchase an electric washing machine when they became available.

C People living in urban households that had previously sent

their clothes to professional laundries typically owned more clothes than did people living in rural households.

D The earliest electric washing machines required the user to spend much more time beside the machine than do modern electric washing machines.

E In the 1920s and 1930s the proportion of rural households with electricity was smaller than the proportion of urban households with electricity.

**Directions for questions 5 through 7:**

Each of the following questions includes a short text with a blank, indicating that something has been omitted. Select the entry that best completes the text.

5. In the 1950s, the country's inhabitants were \_\_\_\_\_: most of them knew very little about foreign countries.

- A partisan
- B erudite
- C insular
- D cosmopolitan
- E imperturbable

6. Since she believed him to be both candid and trustworthy, she refused to consider the possibility that his statement had been \_\_\_\_\_.

- A irrelevant
- B facetious
- C mistaken
- D critical
- E insincere

7. It is his dubious distinction to have proved what nobody would think of denying, that Romero at the age of sixty-four writes with all the characteristics of \_\_\_\_\_.

- A maturity
- B fiction
- C inventiveness
- D art
- E brilliance

**Questions 8 through 11 are based on the following reading passage.**

In the 1970s, two debates engaged many scholars of early United States history. One focused on the status of women, primarily White women. Turning on the so-called golden age theory, which posited that during the eighteenth-century colonial 5 era, American women enjoyed a brief period of high status relative to their English contemporaries and to nineteenth-century American women, this debate pitted scholars who believed women's lives deteriorated after 1800 against those who thought women's lives had been no better before 1800. At issue were the causes of 10 women's subordination: were these causes already in place when the English first settled North America or did they emerge with the rise of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism? The second debate, the so-called origins debate, concerned the emergence of racial slavery in the southern colonies: was slavery the inevitable result 15 of the deep-rooted racial prejudice of early British colonists or did racial prejudice arise only after these planters instituted slave labor? Although these debates are parallel in some respects, key differences distinguished them. Whereas the debate over women's status revolved around implicit comparisons of colonial women to 20 their counterparts in the antebellum period (1800-1860), thus inviting comment from scholars of both historical periods, the origins debate was primarily confined to a discussion about slavery in colonial America. Second, in contrast to the newness of the debate over women's status and its continued currency throughout 25 the early 1980s, the debate over race and slavery, begun in the 1950s, had lost some of its urgency with the publication of Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975), widely

regarded as the last word on the subject.

Each debate also assumed a different relationship to the groups whose histories it concerned. In its heyday, the origins debate focused mainly on White attitudes toward Africans rather than on Africans themselves. With few exceptions, such as Wood's *Black Majority* (1974) and Mullin's *Flight and Rebellion* (1972), which were centrally concerned with enslaved African men, most works pertaining to the origins debate focused on the White architects, mostly male, of racial slavery. In contrast, although women's historians were interested in the institutions and ideologies contributing to women's subordination, they were equally concerned with documenting women's experiences. As in the origins debate, however, early scholarship on colonial women defined its historical constituency narrowly, women's historians focusing mainly on affluent White women.

Over time, however, some initial differences between the approaches taken by scholars in the two fields faded. In the 1980s, historians of race and slavery in colonial America shifted their attention to enslaved people; interest in African American culture grew, thereby bringing enslaved women more prominently into view. Historians of early American women moved in similar directions during the decade and began to consider the effect of racial difference on women's experience.

**8. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:**

The passage is primarily concerned with

A showing how historians who were engaged in a particular debate influenced historians engaged in another debate

B explaining why two initially parallel scholarly debates diverged in the 1980s

C comparing two scholarly debates and discussing their histories

D contrasting the narrow focus of one scholarly debate with the somewhat broader focus of another

E evaluating the relative merits of the approaches used by historians engaged in two overlapping scholarly debates

9. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

It can be inferred that the author of the passage mentions American Slavery, American Freedom in the second paragraph (line 27) primarily in order to

A substantiate a point about the methodology that came to be prevalent among scholars engaged in the origins debate

B cite a major influence on those scholars who claimed that racial prejudice preceded the institution of slavery in colonial America

C show that some scholars who were engaged in the origins debate prior to the 1980s were interested in the experiences of enslaved people

D identify a reason for a certain difference in the late 1970s between the origins debate and the debate over American women's status

E contrast the kind of work produced by scholars engaged in the origins debate with the kind produced by scholars engaged in the debate over American women's status

10. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

The passage suggests which of the following about the women's historians mentioned in the third paragraph?

A They disputed certain claims regarding the status of eighteenth-century American women relative to women in England during the same period.

B Their approach to the study of women's subordination had been partly influenced by earlier studies published by some scholars engaged in the origins debate.

C Their work focused on the experiences of both White and African American women.

D Their approach resembled the approach taken in studies by Wood and by Mullin in that they were interested in the experiences of people subjected to a system of subordination.

E To some extent, they concurred with Wood and with Mullin about the origins of racism in colonial America.

11. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

According to the passage, historical studies of race and slavery in early America that were produced during the 1980s differed from studies of that subject produced prior to the 1980s in that the studies produced during the 1980s

A gave more attention to the experiences of enslaved women

B gave less attention to the cultures of enslaved people

C were read by more scholars in other fields

D were more concerned with the institutions and ideologies that perpetuated racial prejudice in postcolonial America

E made direct comparisons between the subordination of White women and the subordination of African American people

**Directions for questions 12 through 17:**

Each of the following questions includes a short text with two or three blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Select one entry for each blank from the corresponding column of choices. Fill all blanks in the way that best completes the text.

12. The narratives that vanquished peoples have created of their defeat have, according to Schivelbusch, fallen into several identifiable types. In one of these, the vanquished manage to (i) \_\_\_\_\_ the victor's triumph as the result of some spurious advantage, the victors being truly inferior where it counts. Often the winners (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ this interpretation,

worrying about the cultural or moral costs of their triumph and so giving some credence to the losers' story.

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Blank (i)</b> | <b>Blank (ii)</b> |
| A construe       | D take issue with |
| B anoint         | E disregard       |
| C acknowledge    | F collude in      |

13. I've long anticipated this retrospective of the artist's work, hoping that it would make (i) \_\_\_\_\_ judgments about him possible, but greater familiarity with his paintings highlights their inherent (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ and actually makes one's assessment (iii) \_\_\_\_\_.

- |                  |                   |                       |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Blank (i)</b> | <b>Blank (ii)</b> | <b>Blank (iii)</b>    |
| A modish         | D gloom           | G similarly equivocal |
| B settled        | E ambiguity       | H less sanguine       |
| C detached       | F delicacy        | I more cynical        |

14. Stories are a haunted genre; hardly (i) \_\_\_\_\_ kind of story, the ghost story is almost the paradigm of the form, and (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ was undoubtedly one effect that Poe had in mind when he wrote about how stories work.

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Blank (i)</b> | <b>Blank (ii)</b> |
| A a debased      | D pessimism       |
| B a normative    | E goosebumps      |
| C a meticulous   | F curiosity       |

15. Given how (i) \_\_\_\_\_ the shortcomings of the standard economic model are in its portrayal of human behavior, the failure of many economists to respond to them is astonishing. They continue to fill the journals with yet more proofs of yet more (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ theorems. Others, by contrast, accept the criticisms as a challenge, seeking to expand the basic

model to embrace a wider range of things people do.

- | <b>Blank (i)</b> | <b>Blank (ii)</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|
| A overlooked     | D comprehensive   |
| B occasional     | E improbable      |
| C patent         | F pervasive       |

16. The playwright's approach is (i) \_\_\_\_\_ in that her works (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ the theatrical devices normally used to create drama on the stage.

- | <b>Blank (i)</b> | <b>Blank (ii)</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|
| A pedestrian     | D jettison        |
| B startling      | E experiment with |
| C celebrated     | F distill         |

17. Scientists are not the only persons who examine the world about them by the use of rational processes, although they sometimes (i) \_\_\_\_\_ this impression by extending the definition of "scientist" to include anyone who is (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ in his or her investigational practices.

- | <b>Blank (i)</b> | <b>Blank (ii)</b> |
|------------------|-------------------|
| A conceal        | D intuitive       |
| B create         | E haphazard       |
| C undermine      | F logical         |

**Questions 18 and 19 are based on the following reading passage.**

(A part of one sentence is shown underlined and in boldface for reference in answering question 18, and a word is shown underlined and in boldface for reference in answering question 19.)

The most plausible justification for higher taxes on automobile fuel is that fuel consumption harms the environment and thus adds

to the costs of traffic congestion. But the fact that burning fuel creates these “negative externalities” does not imply that no tax on 5 fuel could ever be too high. Economics is precise about the tax that should, in principle, be levied to deal with negative externalities: **the tax on a liter of fuel should be equal to the harm caused by using a liter of fuel.** If the tax is more than that, its costs (including the inconvenience to those who would rather have used their cars) 10 will **exceed** its benefits (including any reduction in congestion and pollution).

18. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

Which of the following best characterizes the function of the underlined and boldfaced partial sentence in lines 7-8 of the passage?

- A It restates a point made earlier in the passage.
- B It provides the evidence on which a theory is based.
- C It presents a specific application of a general principle.
- D It summarizes a justification with which the author disagrees.
- E It suggests that the benefits of a particular strategy have been overestimated.

19. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

The word “exceed” appears underlined and boldfaced in line 10 of the passage. In the context in which it appears, “exceed” most nearly means

- A outstrip
- B magnify
- C delimit
- D offset
- E supplant

**Questions 20 and 21 are based on the following reading passage.**

(A two-word phrase is shown underlined and in boldface for reference in answering question 21.)

Objectively, of course, the various ecosystems that sustain life on the planet proceed independently of human agency, just as they operated before the hectic ascendancy of Homo sapiens. But it is also true that it is difficult to think of a single such system that has not, for better or worse, been substantially modified by human culture. Nor is this simply the work of the industrial centuries. It has been happening since the days of ancient Mesopotamia. It is **coeval with** the origins of writing, and has occurred throughout our social existence. And it is this irreversibly modified world, from the polar caps to the equatorial forests, that is all the nature we have.

**20. Consider each of the three choices separately and select all that apply.**

It can be inferred from the passage that the author would agree with which of the following statements?

A Over time, the impact of human culture on the natural world has been largely benign.

B It is a mistake to think that the natural world contains many areas of pristine wilderness.

C The only substantial effects that human agency has had on ecosystems have been inadvertent.

**21. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:**

The phrase “coeval with” appears underlined and in boldface in lines 7-8 of the passage. In the context in which it appears, “coeval with” most nearly means

A influenced by

B older than

C coincident with

D unimpeded by

E similar to

**Directions for questions 22 through 25:**

Each of the following questions includes a sentence with a blank indicating that something has been omitted. Following the sentence will be a list of six words or phrases, each of which could be used to complete the sentence. Select the two answer choices that, when substituted for the blank, fit the context and produce the two sentences most nearly alike in meaning.

**22. Dreams are \_\_\_\_\_ in and of themselves, but, when combined with other data, they can tell us much about the dreamer.**

- A astonishing
- B disordered
- C harmless
- D inscrutable
- E revealing
- F uninformative

**23. Linguistic science confirms what experienced users of ASL—American Sign Language—have always implicitly known: ASL is a grammatically \_\_\_\_\_ language, as capable of expressing a full range of syntactic relations as any natural spoken language.**

- A complete
- B economical
- C redundant
- D spare
- E unique
- F unlimited

**24. The macromolecule RNA is common to all living beings, and DNA, which is found in all organisms except some bacteria,**

**is almost as \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A comprehensive
- B fundamental
- C inclusive
- D universal
- E significant
- F ubiquitous

**25. Early critics of Emily Dickinson's poetry mistook for simplemindedness the surface of artlessness that in fact she constructed with such \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A astonishment
- B craft
- C cunning
- D innocence
- E naïveté
- F vexation