Interpreting Your GRE® Scores

This publication can be downloaded at ets.org/gre/stupubs.

This publication is intended to assist you in interpreting your Graduate Record Examinations® (GRE®) test scores. These data are revised annually and published in the *GRE Guide to the Use of Scores*, which can be downloaded at **ets.org/gre/stupubs**. Guidelines for the use of GRE scores, which are included in the *Guide*, encourage institutions to use the scores appropriately.

General Test Score Interpretive Information

- The range of scores for the Verbal and Quantitative measures is 200 to 800, in 10-point increments. The range of scores for the Analytical Writing measure is 0 to 6, in half-point increments. If no answers are given for a measure, an NS (no score) will be reported for that measure.
- Scores from the different General Test measures should not be compared because each measure is scaled separately.
- Research indicates that scores obtained from the computer-based General Test are comparable to scores from the paper-based General Test. Thus, the mode of testing is not indicated on score reports sent to institutions.

- For the multiple-choice sections of the paper-based General Test, your score is derived from the number of questions you answered correctly. For the multiple-choice sections of the computer-based General Test, your score reflects the number of questions you answered, as well as your performance on those questions. The factors that influence which questions you will be presented include (1) the statistical characteristics of those questions already answered (including the difficulty level), (2) question types, and (3) appropriate content coverage.
- For the Analytical Writing measure, each essay is given two independent ratings. The scoring procedure requires identical or adjacent scores from the two readers; any other score combination is adjudicated by a third reader. The Analytical Writing score is the average of the ratings given to the two essays.

General Test Statistical Tables

Table 1 presents General Test mean scores based on the scores of all examinees who took the General Test between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2007. (Definitions of the statistical terms are presented in the glossary on the back page.) The percentile ranks for your General Test scores are printed on your score report. Note: Although a given score represents the same level of ability, regardless of when the score was earned, its percentile rank may vary, depending on the scores of the group with which it is compared. Table 2 presents mean scores for the seven broad intended graduate major fields.

Table 1: General Test Mean Scores

(Based on the performance of all examinees who tested between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2007)

	Number of Examinees[1]	Mean	Standard Deviation
Verbal Reasoning	1,314,159	462	119
Quantitative Reasoning	1,313,671	584	151
Analytical Writing	1,304,999	4.0	0.9

[1] Examinees who earned no score on a measure are not included in the number of examinees for that measure.

Table 2: General Test Mean Scores Classified by Broad Intended Graduate Major Field

(Based on the performance of seniors and nonenrolled college graduates[1] who tested between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2007)

Broad Intended Graduate Major Field	Verbal Reasoning	Quantitative Reasoning	Analytical Writing
Life Sciences	457	575	4.2
Physical Sciences	484	692	4.2
Engineering	468	717	4.1
Social Sciences	488	560	4.4
Humanities	545	561	4.6
Education	449	530	4.2
Business	441	594	4.0

[1] Limited to those who earned their college degrees up to two years prior to the test date. Note that this table does not include summary information on examinees whose response was invalid (misgrids, blanks, etc.) or "undecided." The standard deviations (not reported in this table) of the score distributions generally range between 90 and 125 for Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning. In addition, standard deviations for Analytical Writing range between 0.8 and 0.9.

Computer-Based General Test Examinees: Visit the GRE Diagnostic Service (free Basic Service), at **grediagnostic.ets.org**, to view information about your performance on the test you took.

Subject Test Score Interpretive Information

- The range of scores for each Subject Test is from 200 to 990, although the actual range for any particular Subject Test is usually smaller. The possible range of subscores is from 20 to 99.
- The Subject Test score is derived from the number of correct answers minus one-fourth the number of incorrect answers.
- Because scores are calculated independently for each test, GRE Subject Test scores should be compared only with other scores on the same GRE Subject Test. A score of 680 on the Computer Science Test, for example, is not equivalent to a 680 on the Physics Test.
- Scores on the same Subject Test generally are directly comparable across years. A Chemistry Test score of 650 in 2008, for example, should be considered equivalent to a Chemistry Test score of 650 earned in 2007.

Subject Test Statistical Tables

Table 3 shows Subject Test mean scores for the total test and for subscores, where available. These data are based on the scores of all examinees who took a Subject Test between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2007. Percentile rank information for your Subject Test total score and subscores, if available, is printed on your score report. Note that although a given score represents the same level of ability regardless of when the score was earned, its percentile rank may vary, depending on the scores of the group with which it is compared.

Subscores indicate relative strengths and weaknesses of preparation in subfield areas. Subscore percentile ranks may be used for diagnostic interpretation of the total score. For example, an examinee who obtains a score of 600 on the GRE Biology Test is likely to have subscores of 60, assuming the examinee is similarly able in the content areas measured by each subscore. For that examinee, scores much above or below 60 on a subscore would indicate strength or weakness in the content area associated with that subscore. Note that these strengths or weaknesses may reflect the amount of training that was targeted toward specific content areas.

Table 3: Subject Test Mean Scores
(Based on the performance of all examinees who tested between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2007)

Subject Test	Number of Examinees	Mean	Standard Deviation
Biochemistry, Cell & Molecular Biology	6,252	521	97
1. Biochemistry		52	10
2. Cell Biology		52	9
3. Molecular Biology & Genetics		52	9
Biology	12,405	650	120
1. Cellular & Molecular Biology		65	12
2. Organismal Biology		65	12
3. Ecology & Evolution		65	12
Chemistry	8,392	689	115
Computer Science	5,612	715	91
Literature in English	10,920	542	98
Mathematics	9,848	636	130
Physics	12,962	686	155
Psychology	25,693	600	101
1. Experimental Psychology		60	10
2. Social Psychology		60	10

Glossary of Statistical Terms

Mean—an average obtained by adding all the scores from a group of examinees and dividing the sum by the number of examinees in the group.

Percentile rank—the percent of examinees in a group or subgroup who obtained scores on a particular test lower than a specified score.

Standard deviation—a measure of the extent to which examinees' scores on a test generally differ from one another.