

Kaplan's Test Prep: 7 Tips for a Perfect GRE Essay

modified from <https://www.kaptest.com/study/gre/7-tips-for-a-perfect-gre-issue-essay/>

If you get a perfect score on the GRE's Issue Essay (a 6), it can really boost your graduate school admissions chances. The best schools want not only students with good Verbal and Quantitative scores but also students who are clear, competent writers. Many students have excellent transcripts and are good at taking tests, but not everyone can demonstrate impressive analytical writing skills.

Here are seven tips to take your analytical essay to that perfect 6 [the highest score on the GRE Analytic Writing Assessment].

DON'T WAFFLE.

Choose only one side of the issue only; don't try to have it both ways. Even if you don't believe in the side you choose, you'll only have time to argue one side effectively. If you take a middle-of-the-road approach you won't sound as confident or clear. Remember, according to Educational Testing Service, "[graders] are evaluating the skill with which you address the specific instructions and articulate and develop an argument to support your evaluation of the issue." What exactly you say (what side you choose to defend) is less important than how you defend it.

CHOOSE SPECIFIC REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES.

Don't be general. Every reader would like to see more specific examples: Mitt Romney, the War of 1812, Keynesian economic theory, the mating rituals of octopi, an anecdote about your Uncle Ralph the compulsive gambler, etc. You can have some fun with it, and your examples don't have to be the most scholarly. What are *you* an expert on?

MAKE SURE YOUR EXAMPLES ARE RELEVANT TO THE TOPIC.

You can choose examples from a wide range of subjects: personal experience, pop culture, history, sports, literature, current events, politics, etc. But make sure you explain HOW your example clearly supports your thesis.

AVOID SAYING "I THINK" OR "I BELIEVE."

You are the person writing this essay; therefore, everything that you write should be something you think or believe. Therefore, it's unnecessary to say "I think" or "I believe." Your essay is filled with your thoughts and your beliefs. Readers (and graders) will know that your statements are what you think and you believe.

REFUTE THE OPPOSING VIEW IN YOUR CONCLUSION.

Many GRE students wonder what to do in their conclusion. Try introducing the opposing viewpoint, showing that you recognize that in fact some people do not support your position. Then refute their argument in one or two sentences and reinforce the validity of your own thesis.