

The Analytical Writing Assessment section of the GMAT is quite different from the other sections in that there are only 2 questions and they both require more in depth concentration and analysis. Both questions have 30 minutes reserved for them. The scale used to assess your responses varies from 1-6, 6 being the highest score available meaning that you have fully understood the issue at hand and analysed it comprehensively, objectively and in detail.

Analysis of an Issue

In this section you must analyse an issue given to you or an opinion and you are then expected to explain your point of view on the subject. You should cite relevant reasons and use examples drawn from your own experience, from what you have read or observations you have made yourself.

Analysis of an Argument

In this section you are expected to read an argument and then analyse the reasoning behind it. You are not expected to write your own opinion about the topic but instead you are expected to criticise the argument made. You can for example question the assumptions made, explore alternative explanations or counterexamples. You can also discuss evidence that might weaken or strengthen the initial argument made.

Analytical Writing Assessment Test Taking Strategies

Generally speaking you should always read the question carefully and think about it for some time before you start writing. Spending a few minutes outlining your answer is always clever and you can jot down on a piece of paper bullet points and briefly outline your answer before starting to write your proper response.

Analysis of an Issue Test Taking Strategies

Think before taking a position. Although in many cases you are expected to take a position, in these types of questions it is even more important that you are critical and that you have analysed the issue from various angles and discussed the complexities of the issue. You are expected to consider the issue from different perspectives and infuse your own experiences if suitable and possible. You should arrive to your position after a logical discussion in other words and not just state what your position is from the outset and sticking to it.

If you are using examples, avoid listing down as many examples as possible since a few well-thought examples are better than a long list. After all examples are there to show an example just as their name suggests. You don't need 10 examples to prove one point.

Analysis of an Argument Test Taking Strategies

As the heading above says you are expected to analyse and criticise an argument presented to you. In order to do this you should consider what alternative explanations might be useful, what assumptions might have been used to reach the original argument, are there any counterexamples, is there any additional evidence that could be used to support or refute the argument made.

Remember that it is important that you develop your answer fully and do not just list again a long list of examples. Make sure you discuss counterexamples and alternative explanations. This shows that you are analysing the argument from various angles and can look at issues from a wider perspective. Again also make sure that the answer you write makes sense and is well written and thought.