

15 Steps for GRE Prep

1. Prepare more; worry less.
2. Maintain a positive attitude about the GRE—successful athletes, especially well-trained ones, don't go into a competition envisioning failure. If you dread the GRE, most likely you will be stuck in the worry-avoid-study-worry-avoid-study feedback loop, thereby fulfilling your fear of poor performance. In contrast, if you welcome the GRE, you will be more motivated to study, which enhances confidence and improves scores.
3. Take the free PowerPrep Practice Exam I at the GRE website.
4. Register to take the GRE at a test center even if it's months away. Setting a test date motivates most people.
5. Familiarize yourself with the study tools available at the GRE website, such as practice exercises, a complete review of all the math you need to know, full-length exams, a computer service that scores your essays, etc.
6. Consider purchasing a membership to Magoosh.com for practice tests and study resources.
7. Consider taking a Test Prep course. Augsburg offers GRE prep each summer; the U of M offers GRE prep several times a year (at a cost); and test prep companies such as Kaplan offer prep continuously (at a considerable cost). Prep courses are particularly helpful for students who might not be motivated on their own to study and who prefer classroom structure.
8. Devise a plan of study based on your practice test scores and the significance of each section in your intended field of study. Most chemistry departments, for example, will scrutinize your math score more than your verbal; the converse holds true for English departments. Again, check with departments to which you are applying to see how they weight individual sections of the GRE.
9. Study. This is not an exam that you want to cram for in a few days or weeks. Spread studying out over several months.
10. Take PowerPrep Practice Exam I again—arguably the best use of three hours of prep time. Practice exams acquaint you with the test format and computer, build endurance, give you practice testing against a clock, letting you know if you have to speed up or slow down in any section.
11. Revise plan of study.
12. Study.
13. Take PowerPrep Exam II
14. Brush up on areas of weakness
15. Take the actual GRE with confidence