

Workshops on GRE, LSAT, and MCAT Preparation
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Lesson 1: What is the GRE?

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to define what the GRE is. Anyone who has looked into applying to graduate school has probably heard of the GRE. GRE stands for Graduate Record Examination and is very similar to the SAT and ACT. There are two types of this examination: the GRE General Test and the GRE Subject Tests. The GRE is offered as a computer-based test and the Subject GRE is offered on paper.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites are required to start this lesson.

(**Note:** Examples of GRE test questions may be found at the end of Part 1: The General Test.)

Part 1: The General Test

The purpose of this section is to discuss the different sections of the GRE General Exam. The General test has three different sections: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Critical Thinking.

Verbal Reasoning

The Verbal Reasoning portion has two sections and each section is 30 minutes long for computer based, and 35 minutes for the written. Each section has 20 questions per section, and they are made up of three types of questions.

Reading comprehension

Multiple-choice — Select One Answer Choice

Description: These are traditional multiple-choice questions with five answer choices, of which you must select one.

Multiple-choice — Select One or More Answer Choices

Description: These questions provide three answer choices and ask you to select all that are correct; one, two or all three of the answer choices may be correct. To gain credit for these questions, you must select all the correct answers, and only those; there is no credit for partially correct answers.

Select-in-Passage

Description: These questions ask you to click on the sentence in the passage that meets a certain description. To answer the question, choose one of the sentences and click on it; clicking anywhere on a sentence will highlight it. In longer passages, the question will usually apply to only one or two specified paragraphs, marked by an arrow (Right facing arrow); clicking on a sentence elsewhere in the passage will not highlight it.

Text completion

Question Structure Consists of:

- Passage composed of one to five sentences
- One to three blanks
- Three answer choices per blank (five answer choices in the case of a single blank)
- The answer choices for different blanks function independently; i.e., selecting one answer choice for one blank does not affect what answer choices you can select for another blank
- Single correct answer, consisting of one choice for each blank; no credit for partially correct answers

Sentence equivalence

Question Structure Consists of:

- a single sentence
- one blank
- six answer choices

Requires you to select two of the answer choices; no credit for partially correct answers.

Quantitative Reasoning

The Quantitative Reasoning portion has two sections each is 35 minutes long for computer based, and 40 minutes for the written. There are 20 questions per section. It is similar to the math portions of the SAT and ACT. You do not need to know calculus or trigonometry.

There are four forms of questions:

- Quantitative comparison - where you compare one side of an equation to another
- Numeric entry questions - where you solve problems for a numeral
- Multiple choice with one answer
- Multiple choice with more than one answer.

Analytical Writing

This portion consists of two timed essays, 30 minutes long each for computer based and written. They will be typed using a simple word processing program on the computer.

1. The "issue" essay

- a. You will be asked to choose one of the 2 topics, and then are given 30 minutes to write an essay on your own view of the issue.
 - b. Be sure to provide support and examples for your statements.
2. The “argument” essay
 - a. You will be shown a paragraph that argues a certain point and you will be given 30 minutes to assess the argument’s logic.

Examples

Verbal Reasoning

Policymakers must confront the dilemma that fossil fuels continue to be an indispensable source of energy even though burning them produces atmospheric accumulations of carbon dioxide that increase the likelihood of potentially disastrous global climate change. Currently, technology that would capture carbon dioxide emitted by power plants and sequester it harmlessly underground or undersea instead of releasing it into the atmosphere might double the cost of generating electricity. But because sequestration does not affect the cost of electricity transmission and distribution, delivered prices will rise less, by no more than 50 percent. Research into better technologies for capturing carbon dioxide will undoubtedly lead to lowered costs.

Sample Multiple-choice Question — Select One Answer Choice

1. The passage implies which of the following about the current cost of generating electricity?
 - a. It is higher than it would be if better technologies for capturing carbon dioxide were available.
 - b. It is somewhat less than the cost of electricity transmission and distribution.
 - c. It constitutes at most half of the delivered price of electricity.
 - d. It is dwelt on by policymakers to the exclusion of other costs associated with electricity delivery.
 - e. It is not fully recovered by the prices charged directly to electricity consumers.

Answer: C

Sample Multiple-choice Question — Select One or More Answer Choices

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

1. The passage suggests that extensive use of sequestration would, over time, have which of the following consequences?

- a. The burning of fossil fuels would eventually cease to produce atmospheric accumulations of carbon dioxide.
- b. The proportion of the delivered price of electricity due to generation would rise and then decline.
- c. Power plants would consume progressively lower quantities of fossil fuels.

Answer: B

Sample Select-in-Passage Question

1. Select the sentence that explains why an outcome of sequestration that might have been expected would not occur.

Answer: "But because sequestration does not affect the cost of electricity transmission and distribution, delivered prices will rise less, by no more than 50 percent."

Analytical Writing

Sample Analyze an Issue Tasks

1. As people rely more and more on technology to solve problems, the ability of humans to think for themselves will surely deteriorate.

Write a response in which you discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider ways in which the statement might or might not hold true and explain how these considerations shape your position.

Sample Analyze an Argument Tasks

1. In surveys Mason City residents rank water sports (swimming, boating, and fishing) among their favorite recreational activities. The Mason River flowing through the city is rarely used for these pursuits, however, and the city park department devotes little of its budget to maintaining riverside recreational facilities. For years there have been complaints from residents about the quality of the river's water and the river's smell. In response, the state has recently announced plans to clean up Mason River. Use of the river for water sports is, therefore, sure to increase. The city government should for that reason devote more money in this year's budget to riverside recreational facilities.

Write a response in which you examine the stated and/or unstated assumptions of the argument. Be sure to explain how the argument depends on the assumptions and what the implications are if the assumptions prove unwarranted.

Part 2: The Subject Tests

The subject tests cover 7 specific disciplines: Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry, English Literature, Mathematics, Physics, and Psychology. It is paper-based. Not all graduate programs

require that you take the Subject GRE. For every program that you apply to please check the admission requirements for that specific program.

Psychology Subject Test

1. Approximately 205 multiple-choice
2. Questions may require recalling factual information, analyzing relationships, applying principles, drawing conclusions from data, evaluating a research design, and/or identifying a psychologist who has contributed a theory or significant research.
3. It has 3 content categories.
 - a. Experimental or natural science orientated
 - i. About 40% of questions
 - ii. Includes learning, language, memory, thinking, sensation and perception, and physiological psychology.
 - b. Social or social science orientated
 - i. About 43% of questions
 - ii. Distributed among, clinical and abnormal, developmental, personality and social psychology.
 - c. General
 - i. 17% of questions
 - ii. Includes the history of psychology, applied psychology, measurement, research designs, and stats.

Part 3: Taking the Actual Test

Test Design Features

The GRE revised General Test design features advanced technology that allows you to freely move forward and backward throughout an entire section. Specific features include:

- Preview and review capabilities within a section
- "Mark" and "Review" features to tag questions, so you can skip them and return later if you have time remaining in the section
- The ability to change/edit answers within a section
- An on-screen calculator for the Quantitative Reasoning section

To experience the test design features of the computer-based test, download POWERPREP® II software.

Part 4: Studying for GRE

The key is to PRACTICE. Do not cram all of your studying into a week before you are scheduled to take the exam.

There are many resources you can use to get materials to study for the GRE. There are few books that you can check out in the lab. When you sign up to take the exam, they send you study materials for the exam.

The website <http://www.number2.com> is a wonderful site to help you prepare for the GRE. You can sign up for free and practice. It has an e-mail tutor that sends you e-mails as a reminder to practice. It also has a vocabulary builder. It is absolutely free. Some other resources are provided under the section “Additional Resources and References”.

Kaplan also offers courses that you can take to prepare for the GRE. Of course, these courses cost money.

Part 5: How to Register

Registering for the GRE

1. You can register to take the GRE at <http://www.ets.org/gre>. You can also download resources, study tips, and get free software to help you prepare for the GRE test.

GRE Testing Centers

1. You will take the GRE at a testing center. In Las Vegas, there is only one testing center:
 - a. Thomson Prometric Testing Center
6625 Valley View Blvd. Suite 414
Las Vegas, NV 89118
Phone: (702) 889-4132

GRE Fee

1. It costs \$185 dollars to take the exam.

Part 6: Additional Resources and References

The following section includes some online resources that may be helpful in preparing for the GRE:

1. <http://www.sparknotes.com/testprep/books/gre>
2. http://www.gre.org/practice_test

3. <http://www.kaplan.com/gre>

Lesson 2: What is the LSAT?

Purpose

The LSAT (Law School Admission Test) is an academic assessment that students who wish to attend law school often need to take, and it is given four times per year. The purpose of this lesson is to discuss the general format of the LSAT, its main components, how to register for the test, and how to study for the test.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites are required to start this lesson.

(**Note:** Examples of LSAT test questions and corresponding answers may be found at the end of Part 1: General Format.)

Part 1: General Format

The LSAT includes four multiple-choice sections that are scored, one multiple-choice section that is not scored (known as “the variable section”), and one essay section that is not scored but will be sent to law schools. For each multiple-choice section, there are three different types of questions that may appear. Each section is 35 minutes long. There is no penalty for answering questions incorrectly. The following is a brief outline of the sections and types of multiple choice questions that will be asked on the LSAT:

1. Four Multiple-Choice Sections
 - a. Logical Reasoning
 - b. Logical Reasoning
 - c. Reading Comprehension
 - d. Analytical Reasoning
2. Writing Sample Section
3. Variable Section

Logical Reasoning Section

There are two sections on the test that contain only Logical Reasoning questions. Each Logical Reasoning section includes the following:

1. Brief paragraphs
 - a. One question for each paragraph (Approximately 24-26 total questions for the section)

- b. The Law School Admission Council's website (2009a) states the following about Logical Reasoning test items: "These questions are designed to evaluate your ability to understand, analyze, criticize, and complete a variety of arguments. Each logical reasoning question requires you to read and comprehend a short passage, then answer one question about it. The questions test a variety of abilities involved in reasoning logically and thinking critically."

Reading Comprehension Section

There is one section on the test that contains only Reading Comprehension questions. The Reading Comprehension section includes the following:

1. Four subsections that contain reading passages and corresponding questions
2. Word length of each passage is approximately 450 words
3. Comparative Reading subsection
 - a. One of the four subsections will include two separate passages (labeled "Passage A" and "Passage B"). The two passages will be smaller in word length, but their total word length will be approximately 450 words. Some of the questions for this subsection will ask you to examine the connection between the passages.
4. Typically includes one subsection that relates to each of the following fields: the law, natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.
5. Often five-eight questions for each subsection (Approximately 26-27 total questions for the section)
 - a. The types of questions that may be asked include identifying the perspective of the author and the purpose of the passage.
6. The Law School Admission Council's website (2009a) states the following about Reading Comprehension test items: "These questions measure your ability to read, with understanding and insight, examples of lengthy and complex materials similar to those commonly encountered in law school work. The reading comprehension section contains ... questions that test reading and reasoning abilities."

Analytical Reasoning Section

There is one section on the test that contains only Analytical Reasoning questions. The Analytical Reasoning section is also informally known as "Logic Games" and includes the following (Goodman, 2007, p.116):

1. Four games
 - a. A game includes an introductory scenario with various statements that must be followed

- b. Often five-six questions for each game (Approximately 22-24 total questions for the section)
- c. Creating an visual aid (e.g., chart or graph) may be helpful
- d. The Law School Admission Council’s website (2009a) states the following about Analytical Reasoning test items: “These questions are designed to measure your ability to understand a structure of relationships and to draw logical conclusions about that structure. You are asked to make deductions from a set of statements, rules, or conditions that describe relationships among entities such as persons, places, things, or events. They simulate the kinds of detailed analyses of relationships that a law student must perform in solving legal problems.”

Writing Sample Section

There is one section on the test that asks test takers to write a brief essay. This writing sample is not graded and is not part of your score, but transcripts of it will be sent to the law schools to which you wish to send your LSAT score. It includes the following:

1. A description of a scenario and two choices relating to the scenario.
 - a. You select one of the choices and defend it by explaining your line of reasoning.
 - b. There is no correct or incorrect choice. You will not be graded on the selection of your choice.
 - c. The main objective of this section is to determine whether you can write rationally and convincingly. The quality of your argument is more important than word length.

Variable Section

The Variable section is a multiple-choice section that may consist of one of the following three types of questions: Logical Reasoning, Reading Comprehension, or Analytical Reasoning. It will be used by the LSAC for research purposes and will not affect the test taker’s score.

Examples

The following questions and answers are copied verbatim from the official June 2007 LSAT Sample PrepTest from the Law School Admission Council, which may be found at the following online document: <http://lsac.org/pdfs/SamplePTJune.pdf>

Example 1: Logical Reasoning Section (Page 6)

Economist: Every business strives to increase its productivity, for this increases profits for the owners and the likelihood that the business will survive. But not all efforts to increase productivity are beneficial to the business as a whole. Often, attempts to

increase productivity decrease the number of employees, which clearly harms the dismissed employees as well as the sense of security of the retained employees.

1. Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the economist's argument?
 - a. If an action taken to secure the survival of a business fails to enhance the welfare of the business's employees, that action cannot be good for the business as a whole.
 - b. Some measures taken by a business to increase productivity fail to be beneficial to the business as a whole.
 - c. Only if the employees of a business are also its owners will the interests of the employees and owners coincide, enabling measures that will be beneficial to the business as a whole.
 - d. There is no business that does not make efforts to increase its productivity.
 - e. Decreasing the number of employees in a business undermines the sense of security of retained employees.

Answer: B (Page 37)

Example 2: Reading Comprehension Section (Page 22)

For decades, there has been a deep rift between poetry and fiction in the United States, especially in academic settings; graduate writing programs in universities, for example, train students as poets or as (5) writers of fiction, but almost never as both. Both poets and writers of fiction have tended to support this separation, in large part because the current conventional wisdom holds that poetry should be elliptical and lyrical, reflecting inner states and (10) processes of thought or feeling, whereas character and narrative events are the stock-in-trade of fiction.

Certainly it is true that poetry and fiction are distinct genres, but why have specialized education

and literary territoriality resulted from this distinction?

(15) The answer lies perhaps in a widespread attitude in U.S. culture, which often casts a suspicious eye on the generalist. Those with knowledge and expertise in multiple areas risk charges of dilettantism, as if ability in one field is diluted or compromised by

(20) accomplishment in another.

Fortunately, there are signs that the bias against writers who cross generic boundaries is diminishing; several recent writers are known and respected for their work in both genres. One important example of (25) this trend is Rita Dove, an African American writer highly acclaimed for both her poetry and her fiction. A few years ago, speaking at a conference entitled "Poets Who Write Fiction," Dove expressed gentle incredulity about the habit of segregating the genres.

(30) She had grown up reading and loving both fiction and poetry, she said, unaware of any purported danger lurking in attempts to mix the two. She also studied for some time in Germany, where, she observes, "Poets write plays, novelists compose libretti, playwrights (35) write novels—they would not understand our restrictiveness."

It makes little sense, Dove believes, to persist in the restrictive approach to poetry and fiction prevalent in the U.S., because each genre shares in the nature of (40) the other. Indeed, her poetry offers example after

example of what can only be properly regarded as lyric narrative. Her use of language in these poems is undeniably lyrical—that is, it evokes emotion and inner states without requiring the reader to organize (45) ideas or events in a particular linear structure. Yet this lyric expression simultaneously presents the elements of a plot in such a way that the reader is led repeatedly to take account of clusters of narrative details within the lyric flow. Thus while the language is lyrical, it (50) often comes to constitute, cumulatively, a work of narrative fiction. Similarly, many passages in her fiction, though undeniably prose, achieve the status of lyric narrative through the use of poetic rhythms and elliptical expression. In short, Dove bridges the gap (55) between poetry and fiction not only by writing in both genres, but also by fusing the two genres within individual works.

1. Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the passage?
 - a. Rita Dove's work has been widely acclaimed primarily because of the lyrical elements she has introduced into her fiction.
 - b. Rita Dove's lyric narratives present clusters of narrative detail in order to create a cumulative narrative without requiring the reader to interpret it in a linear manner.
 - c. Working against a bias that has long been dominant in the U.S., recent writers like Rita Dove have shown that the lyrical use of language can effectively enhance narrative fiction.
 - d. Unlike many of her U.S. contemporaries, Rita Dove writes without relying on the traditional techniques associated with poetry and fiction.

- e. Rita Dove’s successful blending of poetry and fiction exemplifies the recent trend away from the rigid separation of the two genres

Answer: E (Page 37)

Example 3: Analytical Reasoning Section (Page 2)

A company employee generates a series of five-digit product codes in accordance with the following rules:

The codes use the digits 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, and no others.

Each digit occurs exactly once in any code.

The second digit has a value exactly twice that of the first digit.

The value of the third digit is less than the value of the fifth digit.

1. If the last digit of an acceptable product code is 1, it must be true that the
 - a. first digit is 2
 - b. second digit is 0
 - c. third digit is 3
 - d. fourth digit is 4
 - e. fourth digit is 0

Answer: A (Page 37)

Part 2: Studying for the LSAT

The key to studying is to practice. Do not try to cram all your studying and reviewing the week before you are scheduled to take the test.

Many companies offer LSAT studying material, practice tests, study tips, and vocabulary builders. Some of these resources are provided under the section “Additional Resources and References”.

Some companies, such as Princeton Review, SparkNotes, and Kaplan, may have LSAT preparation classes and LSAT Prep workbooks that are available at most bookstores.

Part 3: How to Register

Registering for the LSAT

1. You may take the LSAT up to three times per every two years. In order to take the LSAT, you will need to register for it. To register to take the LSAT, visit the following website: <http://www.lsac.org/>. You can register online, through the mail, or via telephone.

LSAT Testing Centers

1. You will take the LSAT at a testing center. Las Vegas has two testing centers:
 - a. Community College of Southern Nevada
West Charleston Campus
6375 W. Charleston Blvd.
Las Vegas, NV 89146
Phone: (702) 651-5000
 - b. University of Nevada, Las Vegas
4505 S. Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89154
Phone: (702) 895-3011

LSAT Fee

1. The fee for taking the LSAT is \$132.

Part 4: Additional Resources and References

The following section includes some online resources that may be helpful in preparing for the LSAT:

1. <http://www.lsac.org/LSAT/lsat-prep-materials.asp>
2. <http://www.law.uchicago.edu/prospective/thelsat.html>
3. <http://www.sparknotes.com/testprep/lsat>
4. <http://www.princetonreview.com/law/free-lsat-practice-test.aspx>
5. <http://www.kaptest.com/LSAT/Home/index.html>

All of the information from this lesson (“Lesson 2: What is the LSAT?”) was acquired directly from the following resources and may be helpful in preparing for the LSAT:

Law School Admission Council (LSAC). (2007). *The official LSAT sample preptest*. Retrieved May 16,

2009, from <http://www.lsac.org/pdfs/SamplePTJune.pdf>

Law School Admission Council (LSAC). (2009a). *About the LSAT*. Retrieved May 16, 2009, from <http://lsac.org/LSAT/about-the-lsat.asp>

Law School Admission Council (LSAC). (2009b). *Frequently asked questions: LSAT*. Retrieved May 16, 2009, from <http://www.lsac.org/aboutlsac/faqs-and-support-lsat.asp>

Goodman, E. C. (2007). *SparkNotes guide to the new LSAT*. New York: Spark Publishing.

Lesson 3: What is the MCAT?

Purpose

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is an examination required by medical schools to evaluate medical school applicants. It is offered twice a year, and it is recommended that it be taken in the spring of junior year (or 18 months before applying to medical school).

Prerequisites

No prerequisites are required to start this lesson.

(**Note:** Examples of MCAT test questions and corresponding answers may be found at the end of Part 1: General Format.)

Part 1: General Format

There are four sections on the exam: Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, Writing Sample, and Biological Sciences. You will be seated for a total of 5 hours and twenty minutes in order to complete the exam.

Verbal Reasoning:

The Verbal Reasoning section is designed to evaluate your ability to understand and apply information and arguments presented in prose texts. You will be given several passages (500 to 600 words a piece) taken from the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences (areas not covered by the MCAT Physical and Biological Sciences). You will then answer five to ten questions about each passage. There is no specific information that you will need to know, but a general knowledge is covered.

The questions in the Verbal Reasoning portion of the exam are presented from easiest to hardest. Each section of questions contains both easier and more difficult questions.

There are a total of forty questions to be completed in sixty minutes.

Physical Sciences:

The Physical Sciences portion of the exam allows you 100 minutes to answer 7 sets of passage based questions. Each passage is usually about 250 words, and is followed by four to eight multiple choice questions. There are approximately thirteen additional questions which are not related to additional passages, for a total of approximately 52 questions. It covers a range of chemistry and physics topics.

The physical sciences section tests your knowledge of the following areas of general chemistry:

1. Electronic structure and periodic table
2. Bonding
3. Phases and phase equilibria

4. Stoichiometry
5. Thermodynamics and thermochemistry
6. Rate processes in chemical reactions (kinetics and equilibrium)
7. Solution chemistry
8. Acids and bases
9. Electrochemistry

The exam also tests your knowledge of the following physics areas:

1. Translational motion
2. Gravitational force and motion
3. Equilibrium and momentum
4. Work and energy
5. Waves and periodic motion
6. Sound
7. Fluids and solids
8. Electrostatics and electromagnetism
9. Electronic circuit elements
10. Light and geometrical optics
11. Atomic and nuclear structure
12. Basic concepts and general techniques of physics, including metric units, graphing techniques, and error analysis

Writing Sample:

In the writing sample exercise, you are expected to compose a short, reasoned discussion based on a statement of opinion, philosophy, or policy. The MCAT Writing Sample consists of two 30-minute essays. The Writing Sample section calls for a combination of expository writing and argumentative writing.

The Writing Sample is designed to assess skill in the following areas:

1. Developing a central idea
2. Synthesizing concepts and ideas
3. Presenting ideas cohesively and logically

4. Writing clearly, following accepted practices of grammar, syntax, and punctuation, consistent with timed, first-draft composition

To score well on the Writing Sample, you should develop a central idea for your response and express your ideas in an organized, coherent prose. Your essay should be an integrated response to the topic that contains fully developed, logically constructed paragraphs.

The better essays thoroughly explore the meaning of the given statement. Complex terms appearing in the statement are defined. Generalizations are supported with illustrative examples. Word choice and sentence construction accurately convey the intended meaning.

Although Writing Sample assignments do not require that you state whether or not you agree with the statement (or its opposition), you may include your opinion as part of your response if you wish. Essays are not scored on the basis of what position the writer takes, but on how effectively that position is articulated and supported. If you choose to take a position disagreeing with either the statement or its opposition, your response should demonstrate that you have considered the complexity of the issue including the opposing point of view.

Keep the time limit in mind as you write and try to bring your essay to a conclusion. Remember that the quality of the response is more important than its length.

Since there is no answer key for the Writing Sample to let you know how you are doing, you should ask yourself some of the following questions:

1. Does the essay have a clear direction that is established early and that leads logically to a clearly defined conclusion?
2. Does the essay have three separate parts corresponding to the three tasks or does it hold together as a whole?
3. Are the parts linked?
4. Does the paper have a consistent point of view?
5. Are generalizations supported?
6. Have the standard rules of grammar, syntax, and punctuation been observed?
7. Are the sentences and paragraphs typical of a high school writer, or do they reflect the vocabulary and complexity of thinking expected of a collegiate writer?

Biological Sciences:

The Biological Sciences section is the last section on the MCAT test. It consists of fifty-two multiple choice questions, to be taken in 70 minutes. A range of subjects in biology and organic chemistry will be tested.

Biology

1. Circulatory system, nervous system
2. Viruses, enzymes
3. Respiratory system, lymphatic system
4. Cell division
5. Muscular and skeletal system

Organic Chemistry

1. Hydrocarbons, amino acids and proteins
2. Hydrolysis and dehydration
3. Nomenclature
4. Stereochemistry, spectroscopy

Examples

The following questions and answers are copied verbatim from the following website:

<http://www.studyguidezone.com/mcattest.htm>

Example 1: Verbal Reasoning Section

The United States under the Articles of Confederation

Before the United States was governed by the Constitution, it was governed by the Articles of Confederation. The Articles of Confederation were largely ineffective, because they gave too much power to the states and too little to a central government. Many historians now say that the best thing about the Articles were that they showed the authors of the Constitution what to avoid. Part of the Articles was the Land Ordinance of 1785, a plan created by Jefferson for dividing the Western land into organized townships. The sale of land in these territories helped generate money for the new government. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 divided the land above the Ohio River into five territories, which would soon become states. This ordinance would become the model for how all future states would be formed.

Both the Americans and the British violated the terms of the Treaty of Paris, which had ended the Revolutionary War in 1783. The British, for instance, never fully abandoned their lucrative fur trade in the Ohio Valley . Americans, on the other hand, never paid back their pre-war debts. Meanwhile, the Spanish (who controlled Louisiana and Florida) openly challenged American borders in the South, at times encouraging Native Americans to make war on the fledgling nation. Americans sought the right of deposit on the Mississippi ; that is, the right to load material from a boat to a dock. The Spanish were not quick to grant this right. Meanwhile, American ships were forced to pay tribute to the Barbary states in order to trade in the Mediterranean .

After the Revolutionary War, the United States found itself in a massive and troubling debt. Meanwhile, Congress was having a hard time passing any legislation, because in order to be made into law a bill had to receive 9 of 13 votes, and there were often fewer than 10 representatives present. The government had no chief executive, and so law enforcement was left up to the states. Another major problem was that the lack of a central court system made it hard to resolve disputes between citizens from different states, or between the states themselves. Congress did not have the power to tax the people directly, and could only request funds. Furthermore, although Congress could issue currency, it had no authority to keep the states from issuing currency of their own, so wild inflation and depreciation was common.

Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress did not have the power to raise an army directly; it could only ask for troops from the states. The problems with this arrangement were amply demonstrated by Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786 and 1787. This rebellion was in part a response to the economic uncertainty by competing currencies. Under the Articles, Congress did not have the power to regulate inter-state or foreign commerce. Each state in the confederation had different tariffs and trade regulations, and no foreign countries would enter into trade agreements with a nation so disorganized. In short, the Articles of Confederation left America unable to maintain order at home, unable to gain respect abroad, and unable to improve its economy.

1. Based on the passage, what was one problem faced by the federal government?
 - a. It had very little money.
 - b. It could raise an army quickly.
 - c. The executive branch had too much power.
 - d. It attacked other countries too often.

Answer: A

Example 2: Physical Sciences Section

1. Identify the statement that correctly explains Boyle's Law:
 - a. The volume of a certain amount of gas is directly proportional to the temperature of that gas in any situation.
 - b. The volume of a certain amount of gas is directly proportional to the temperature of that gas as long as the pressure remains constant.
 - c. The pressure exerted by a certain amount of gas is inversely proportional to the volume of that gas as long as the temperature remains constant.
 - d. The pressure exerted by a certain amount of gas is directly proportional to the volume of that gas as long as the temperature remains constant.

Answer: C

Example 3: Biological Sciences Section

1. Which of the following does not help to make up the cytoskeleton?
 - a. microfilaments
 - b. microtubules
 - c. intermediate fibers
 - d. ribosomes

Answer: D

Part 2: Studying for the MCAT

The key to studying is to practice. Do not try to cram all your studying and reviewing the week before you are scheduled to take the test.

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Some companies, such as Princeton Review, SparkNotes, and Kaplan, may have MCAT preparation classes and MCAT Prep workbooks that are available at most bookstores.

Part 3: How to Register

Registering for the MCAT

1. You may take the MCAT up to three times in one calendar year, but only register for one exam at a time. Regular Registration for the test may occur up to fourteen days prior to the exam. In order to take the MCAT, you will need to register for it. To register to take the MCAT, visit the following website: <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/>.

MCAT Testing Centers

1. You will take the MCAT at a testing center. Las Vegas has one testing center:
 - a. Thomson Prometric Testing Center
6625 Valley View Blvd. Suite 414
Las Vegas, NV 89118
Phone: (702) 889-4132

MCAT Fee

1. The fee for taking the MCAT is \$225.

Part 4: Additional Resources and References

The following section includes some online resources that may be helpful in preparing for the LSAT:

1. <http://www.studyguidezone.com/mcattest.htm>
2. <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/preparing/orderingpracticetests.htm>
3. <http://www.princetonreview.com/medical/free-mcat-practice-test.aspx>
4. <http://www.kaptest.com/Pre-Med/MCAT/Practice-the-MCAT>