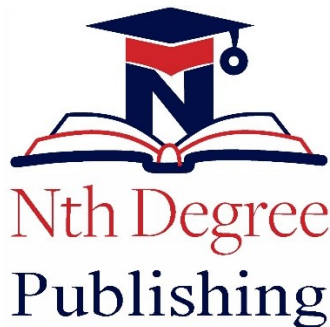


The GRE Course You Want

By Scot Fagerland

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About this Course

You are holding the paperback interface of a special new GRE course. You will study with a combination of books, video lectures, and optional (highly recommended) one-on-one lessons online or in Solano County, CA. I have structured the course this way to maximize your learning, minimize your costs, and make the best use of your time! If you can commit to reading the following three pages, I'll get you ready to launch.

Me

Hi! My name is Scot Fagerland. Nth Degree Tutoring is a one-tutor company founded on my personal skills and experience. Since I am not an agency, I can offer you my services directly and affordably, without exorbitant middle-man markups! (See my qualifications below if interested).

You

Most students who call me have limited time and money. This course is designed to meet those demands. It's "The Course You Want" as opposed to "The Course You Need", which would be lengthier and more expensive. You can complete this course on just about any schedule or budget. Most people who call me are "returning students" who have been out of school for years. They have no GRE experience, and they are usually terrified of the math section. Most of their entrance diagnostic scores fall in the range of 140 – 155 on each section (lower half to upper half, but not upper quarter). This book is aimed at those middle-ground students. If you fall outside that range, I can help you too, but this book might not be the best fit for you.

How the Course Works

In the 2010s, I got a high volume of calls for GRE lessons, so I created an 18-hour group course. Business is much slower in the 2020s. I can't be sure why, but I blame shifting search engine algorithms, increasing competition online, and the strangely long-term impact of COVID-19. With a sparser clientele, my GRE lessons are now one-on-one, and often remote. In 2022, I converted my live group class into this online course for individual study.

I find that almost all students learn better from spoken lectures than from a book. Therefore, you will watch my lectures on video and use this book for written supplements and assignments. Links to my lectures and other resources will be provided by URLs and QR codes for convenient access on your smart phone. You will find a lot of overlap between the written material and the spoken lectures. I did that deliberately so that you can keep a record of the lectures without having to take excessive notes while listening to me.

I recommend that you schedule lessons with me when you need essay feedback or get stuck on homework problems. Please use my appointment calendar at the links below. You may also schedule a free 30-minute consultation before getting started (see "Contact Info" at the end of Lesson 1).

Finally, you will need the *ETS Official Guide to the GRE*. Buy that book separately (I'll link to it in Lesson 1). The ETS is the company that writes and grades the GRE. ETS materials are the only sources of "official" GRE problems. Therefore, I will assign most of my homework from the *Official Guide*.

My Qualifications and History ...

- I have been teaching and tutoring since the 1990s.
- My most recent GRE scores were 170 math (max. score), 166 verbal, and 5.5 writing, placing me high in the top 1% overall.
- I have also scored at the 99th percentile on the SAT, ACT (max. score), LSAT, and GMAT.
- I have been accepted to Berkeley, Brown, Caltech*, Cornell, Harvard, Northwestern, Stanford, the UCLA School of Law*, and UCSD*. (I am now an alumnus of the starred schools).
- I have a 5-star Yelp profile
- My students have been accepted to Berkeley, Columbia, Harvard, Notre Dame Business School, Penn / Wharton, the U of AZ School of Law, the UC Davis School of Law, UCLA, UCSD, USC, Yale, and other individual dream schools!

See my GRE score report:

https://www.nthdegreetutoring.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/My_GRE_Scores_2013_redacted.pdf



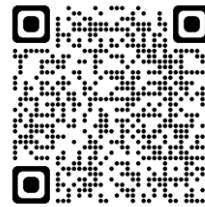
Visit my Yelp profiles:

<https://www.yelp.com/biz/nth-degree-tutoring-and-test-prep-vacaville-vacaville> (Since 2022)

<https://www.yelp.com/biz/nth-degree-tutoring-and-test-prep-los-angeles-5> (2012 - 2022, more reviews)



First location, Los Angeles



Current location, northern CA

Schedule

This course will take you through the following lessons of lectures and activities:

(Note to self: THIS WILL BE REVISED AS THE COURSE PROGRESSES. I'll need to update this page and the corresponding video when the course is finished. Do not number lessons yet, on paper or videos, until numbering is finalized! This means that I either shouldn't use lesson numbers in the videos or I can't compile final drafts of any lesson videos until all numbering is finalized).

1. Introduction to the GRE and this course (we are here now!)
2. Entrance diagnostic
3. Verbal lecture and homework (Will almost certainly expand into at least three lessons)
4. Referral to Khan Academy for basic math content review
5. Introduction to GRE Math: lecture and homework
6. "Proportions and Percents 'til you Puke" lecture and homework
7. Arithmetic "Power Hour" lecture and homework
8. Algebra Power Hour lecture and homework
9. Geometry Power Hour lecture and homework
10. Data Analysis Power Hour lecture and homework
11. Analyze an Argument Essay lecture, demonstration, and homework
12. Analyze an Issue Essay lecture, demonstration, and homework
13. Test logistics, including time management and score reporting
14. Exit diagnostic

The original group course was conducted three hours a week for six weeks (plus homework). When you take this course individually, you will proceed through it at your own pace. I'd expect it to take you around 36 to 72 study-hours. I recommend you devote one to three months to it, but you could pace yourself to do this in a week or a year; it's up to you.

The only materials that you are committed to purchasing are your two books – this one and the ETS Guide. You may then choose to schedule as few or as many live lessons with me as you like. I also offer flash cards for sale, in hardcopy and online formats.

Let's get started!

Click below to finish our Introduction lecture:

Lesson 1 Video lecture:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAKAf9h_ooU11pUyFYPhC0NqVUGRorls



The notes that follow on the next several pages accompany the video lecture.

Introduction to the GRE and this Course

What is the GRE and where does it come from?

- Graduate Record Exam: For all graduate / professional degrees except medical.
- GRE is written and administered by the Educational Testing Service, ETS. No affiliation with any university or test-prep service. www.ETS.org
- Created in 1930's when graduate population was very small and academic, and when standardized tests were mostly used at the upper levels. The flavor of the test reflects its history.

GRE Subjects and Scoring

The Three R's: Readin', 'Ritin', and 'Rithmetic

- Quantitative (Math): Graded from 130 – 170. Curved. The average student has mastery up to 4th grade and then her proficiency steeply declines; almost no recall beyond 8th grade.
- Verbal (Reading): Graded from 130 – 170. Curved around an average mastery of about 12th grade level (objectively much harder!)
- (Composite score): Ranges from 260 – 340
- Most departments want to see an “upper half” composite score (about 300) perhaps with an “upper quarter” score (upper 150's) on one of Math or Verbal. The most selective schools will expect an “upper eighth” composite score (about 320).
- Essays: Graded from 0 – 6. A bar exam (grading rubric).

Improvement Expectations

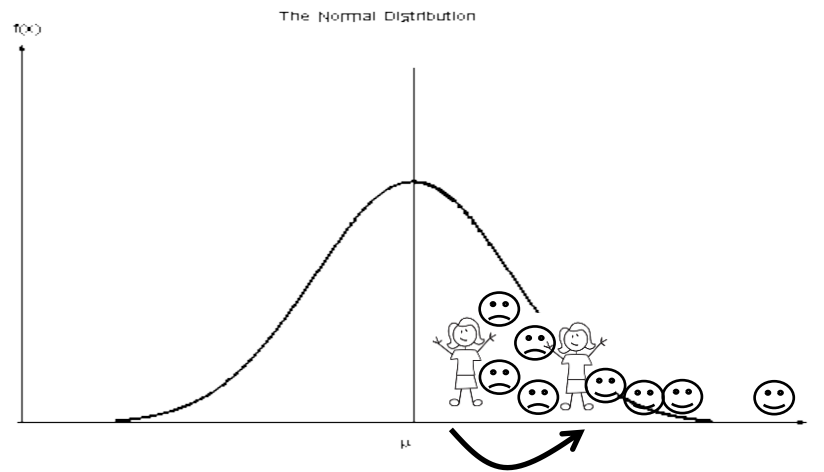
The Nth Degree Improvement Score

My “Improvement Score” measures your improvement in terms of *scarcity*. If you graduate from the course twice as scarce as when you came in, then your improvement score will be 2.

$$I.S. = \frac{100 - P_1}{100 - P_2}$$

In this formula, P_1 is your entrance percentile and P_2 is your exit percentile.

Ex: Stella’s entrance percentile was 60th. Her exit percentile is 80th. What is her improvement score? (Each face represents 5% of her competitors).



$$I.S. = \frac{100 - 60}{100 - 80}$$

$$I.S. = 2$$

- Most students can expect an improvement score of up to 2 with a few months of hard work. Improvement has a strong plateau effect over time; you’ll start improving quickly and then slow down and max out.
- An improvement score of 0 happens sometimes when students work full-time and / or put little effort into the course, or sometimes when math preparedness is extremely low. 😞
- Improvement scores beyond 2 are possible but exceptional.

Improvement Bands*

Assuming an improvement score of 2 (challenging but reasonable), you will move up by exactly one shaded “improvement band” on the chart below. Potentially, your improvement is unlimited. Some students raise their scores by two improvement bands! It’s healthy for you to realize, though, that that kind of improvement is exceptional, especially in a short-term course.

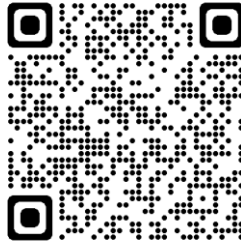
	Percentile	Verbal	Math	Composite	Essay	
Upper 1/16	99	169	170	333	5.5	
	95	165	169	326		
	90	162	166	321	5.0	Upper 1/8
	85	160	164	318		
Upper 1/4	80	158	162	315	4.5	
	75	157	160	312		
	70	155	159	310		
Upper 1/2	65	154	157	308		
	60	153	156	306	4.0	
	55	152	154	304		
	50	151	153	302		
Lower 1/2	45	150	152	301		
	40	149	151	299	3.5	
	35	147	149	297		
	30	146	148	295		
	25	145	147	292		
	20	143	145	290		
	15	141	144	287	3.0	
	10	140	141	284		
	5	137	139	279	2.5	

* Verbal, Math, and Essay data is taken from a 2017 ETS publication. Composite conversions are taken from statistical analysis of 2013 ETS data performed by a Reddit user, assuming some correlation between math and verbal scores.

Contact / Administrative Info

Your initial 30-minute consultation is free. Please schedule it at my online appointment calendar:

www.NthDegreeTutoring.com/appointment-calendar



You will use the same calendar to schedule lessons. All activity on the calendar (scheduling, rescheduling, canceling, and paying) must be completed more than 24 hours before the scheduled time. You may elect to store your credit card information in my payment system as an alternative to prepaying for every lesson.

My email address is scot.tutoring@Gmail.com
Send your completed essays here for review.

My phone number is 707-685-9281. It's a landline. I am old fashioned, and I choose not to have a mobile work number. Reaching me here by chance is hit-and-miss. If you'd like to have a phone call, please schedule a consultation on my calendar. After your initial consultation, subsequent communications are billed hourly. I'll grant you a free 15 minutes / week if you have vaulted your credit card or made a prepayment.

Lesson 1 Homework

1. Prepare to make room for this course in your life. Figure out the best time to take it (reasonably allow 1 – 3 months). Make plans to clear your plate of as much unnecessary work as possible in that time frame. I'd like you to approach this course with the mentality, "I am now a graduate student." It begins now! Start making school your life.
2. Purchase the *Official Guide to the GRE*
<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1259862410/>
(QR code to the right)
My pagination is based on the paperback format.
3. I've provided a little extra optional reading below, which discusses big-picture issues in the GRE and standardized testing.



The Big Picture

Deeper reflections on Test Prep Philosophy for the morbidly curious.

Content vs. Aptitude.

- The GRE is mostly a test of Lifelong Left-brained Learning Aptitudes, LLLA's.
- The math portion has content, though it is by and large a means for testing LLLA's. It's not that you will "use math" in the future. They want to know how you think and learn, and math makes great test material for that purpose:
 - It's universal and standard
 - The exam tests your language / reasoning skills and your ability to handle a large volume of organized information, and math involves all these traits.
- Therefore, merely being *exposed* to math content again is necessary but not sufficient to improve, because the whole point is that you are being tested on *how you learn it*.
- Expect to see *an endless variety of problems that you have never literally seen before*.
- The ideal GRE test-taker is
 - Well-read.
 - Exceptionally good at handling large volumes of organized information.
 - Highly literate at written English.
 - A critical, creative, evidentiary-based thinker.

Bar vs. Curve.

- The Math and Verbal sections are graded on a curve: you against your peers. It is almost impossible to ever "ace" a test like this because:
 - It is designed so that the average tester gets 50% accuracy.
 - Your peers are also studying and improving.
- The ETS is aggressively expanding into new markets, which affects the curve.
 - 2000's decade: Business schools (now accepted by all!)
 - 2010's: Now accepted by Harvard Law School, most other law schools will probably follow!
- The writing section is a "bar" exam graded on a rubric: you against the test.