

POWERPREP

Before you start studying, download the ETS PowerPrep software.

https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/powerprep/install_practice_test_software_screen_reader

The software simulates what the GRE test is really like, including the interface. PowerPrep is made by the same company that makes the GRE itself. Therefore, it is the best practice and simulation you can find. PowerPrep has TWO practice tests. They are full simulations, so each takes about 4.5 hours.

To start off, *take ONE of the practice tests* to assess where your ability is currently, and what areas you'll need to work on to get your score high enough. (save the second one for before you take your real test)

How did you do?

For psychology graduate programs, aim for around the 80th percentile or higher.

Percentile chart: <https://www.ets.org/gre/percentile>

For Quantitative (Math), aim for a 162 or higher

For Qualitative (Verbal), aim for a 159 or higher

Note: Psychology graduate programs expect people's verbal scores to be higher, so ~165 is more typical than ~160.

SCHEDULING A DATE

Once you've assessed how well you're scoring and about how much time you'll need to dedicate to studying, figure out around when you will take the test.

Schedule a test date sooner rather than later. They will get fully booked if you wait till too close to the testing season.

Schedule your GRE test around late August or early September if you can.

https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/

This will give you enough buffer room to take the test a second time if you really need to. You need to wait about a month after your most recent test date to take it another time.

Most graduate school programs have application deadlines around late November, or December 1, or December 15. Some will have January deadlines.

Try to schedule your test for a time of day when you are alert. If you get sleepy in the afternoon, look for earlier timeslots in the day.

STUDYING

Take several practice tests. The best way to train for any event (sports, interviews, etc.) is to practice what you'll actually be doing. So take realistic tests that force you to sit for hours, at a similar time you'd be taking the real test. Take them seriously.

Example: ETS also offers full paper-based tests (like [this one](#)). You can print them out, take them, and score yourself (answers at the end of the document)

Work on building up vocabulary slowly over time. You can do this e.g. with [flashcard websites or apps](#).

To improve your reading comprehension and writing, be sure to read a good amount of challenging literature. This includes theoretical or philosophical pieces, as well as some technical or empirical research articles. This will be useful either way, because literature review is important for research!

Use a test prep book [like this one](#) to try problems and then review the sections which you did not score well on.

When you're done studying, take the SECOND PowerPrep diagnostic test, to get an idea of approximately what score you'll be receiving. It's good to do this before you take the real test to familiarize yourself and mentally prepare for what the real test will be like.

TAKING THE TEST

Before you go into the test, *make sure you have a list of four schools you wish to apply to*. At the end of the test, you'll have the option to send your scores to up to four schools *for free*. If you don't send them right then and there, you'll have to pay ~\$30 per school to send your scores to later on.

Try to get a good night's sleep beforehand. Don't stay up late studying the night before!

When taking the test, make sure to be well hydrated (our brains function optimally when we're not dehydrated).