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# FOUNDATIONS OF GMAT VERBAL

## Verbal Strategy Guide

This supplemental guide provides in-depth and easy-to-follow explanations of the fundamental verbal skills necessary for a strong performance on the GMAT.

Foundations of GMAT Verbal Strategy Guide

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*This Foundations of GMAT Verbal Guide is a supplement to our*

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May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011

Dear Student,

Thank you for picking up a copy of *Foundations of GMAT Verbal*. This book is aptly titled—it's designed to provide you with the nuts and bolts, the foundational knowledge and skills you'll want to master before tackling tougher verbal concepts in the weeks and months ahead. We hope it ends up being just what you need to get started.

As with most accomplishments, there were many people involved in the creation of the book you're holding. First and foremost is Zeke Vanderhoek, the founder of MG Prep and Manhattan GMAT. Zeke was a lone tutor in New York when he started the Company in 2000. Now, eleven years later, the Company has Instructors and offices nationwide and contributes to the studies and successes of thousands of students each year.

Our Manhattan GMAT Strategy Guides are based on the continuing experiences of our Instructors and students. For this *Foundations of Verbal Guide*, we are particularly indebted to Jennifer Dziura. Jen has logged literally thousands of hours helping students improve their verbal skills—this book is derived from that wealth of experience. Stacey Koprince and Tommy Wallach made significant content contributions as well. Dan McNaney and Cathy Huang provided their formatting expertise to make the books as user-friendly as possible, and Liz Krisher made sure all the moving pieces came together at just the right time. Finally, many thanks to Chris Ryan. Beyond providing content additions and edits for this book, Chris continues to be the driving force behind all of our curriculum and instruction efforts. His leadership is invaluable.

At Manhattan GMAT, we continually aspire to provide the best Instructors and resources possible. We hope that you'll find our commitment manifest in this book. If you have any questions or comments, please email me at [dgonzalez@manhattangmat.com](mailto:dgonzalez@manhattangmat.com). I'll look forward to reading your comments, and I'll be sure to pass them along to our curriculum team.

Thanks again, and best of luck preparing for the GMAT!

Sincerely,

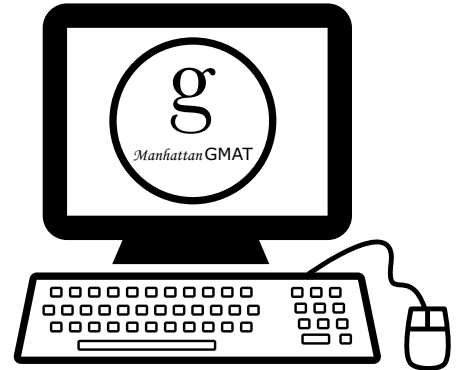
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# YOUR ONLINE RESOURCES

**Your purchase includes ONLINE ACCESS to the following:**

➤ *Foundations of GMAT Verbal* Online Question Bank

The Bonus Online Drill Sets for FOUNDATIONS OF GMAT VERBAL consist of extra practice questions (with detailed explanations) that test the variety of Foundational Verbal concepts and skills covered in this book. These questions provide you with extra practice beyond the problem sets contained in this book. You may use our online timer to practice your pacing by setting time limits for each question in the banks.



➤ Online Updates to the Contents in this Book

The content presented in this book is updated periodically to ensure that it reflects the GMAT's most current trends. You may view all updates, including any known errors or changes, upon registering for online access.

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# **Introduction**

*to*

FOUNDATIONS OF GMAT VERBAL





## INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to Foundations of GMAT Verbal!

This book will improve your English for the rest of your life.

Yes, this is a book about the GMAT. But it is not a book of tricks or quick fixes. It is a book about how sentences work, how arguments are constructed, and how written English is used and understood in the United States.

If English is your first language, 90% of this book will still apply to you. The section on vocabulary in Reading Comprehension is primarily oriented towards English language learners, but the rest is applicable to absolutely anyone struggling with GMAT verbal.

If you are not a native speaker of English, this book will not only help you with the GMAT, but also help you understand written English in various contexts throughout the rest of your life.

Either way, this book will open your eyes:

- You may discover that words you thought you knew can be used in ways you weren't aware of. (Did you know that *qualified* can mean *limited*?)
- You may also discover that passages you thought you understood actually have additional meaning that you missed on a first reading.
- And you may discover that the way even educated native speakers communicate in spoken English is not actually considered correct in written English. (Did you know that *I have done more studying than has he* is correct, and *I enjoy the videos of major dance divas like Beyonce and Shakira* is incorrect? The word *like* should be *such as*.)

If you have been studying for the GMAT and struggling, or if you haven't really begun yet (but decided to start here because you know you will need extra help on verbal), then this book is for you.

This is certainly not the only book you will need in order to succeed on the GMAT. You will also need the **Official Guide for the GMAT, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition**. No one should take the GMAT, ever, without knowing the *Official Guide* inside and out—and at various points in this book, we'll ask you to refer to a particular page in the *Official Guide* and do work out of it. So you might as well acquire a copy as soon as possible.

We also recommend that you "graduate" from this book to the *Manhattan GMAT Strategy Guide Series*, which includes individual guides to Sentence Correction, Critical Reasoning, and Reading Comprehension, as well as five additional books on quantitative topics.

In our experience, most successful GMAT test takers spend between 100 and 200 hours studying. Surely, some people spend less time—and some spend more.

Does that sound a bit depressing? If it does, I'd like to set the record straight—if you really spent that much time just studying for a standardized test, that would be a big waste of the limited time we have here on Earth. However, that's not what we're about to do! What we're about to do is, well...pretty awesome.

There are certain aspects of the GMAT, such as Data Sufficiency questions, that are quite specific, and pertain only to the GMAT. But there are many other aspects of the GMAT—such as manipulating percents or decoding difficult word problems—that are excellent skills for your career and life. You know what other parts of the GMAT fall into that category? *Everything on the entire verbal section.*

Since you are beginning with a foundational book on GMAT verbal and will require even more study after this book, you are going to be spending a lot of time on this. The time you spend now is an investment in your future. It will provide you with a competitive advantage throughout the rest of your career. As a result of the studying you are about to begin:

- You will do better on the GMAT.
- You will be able to communicate better.
- You will be perceived by others as smarter (studies show that people with larger vocabularies are perceived as more intelligent and are paid more).
- You will be better able to understand the idioms and sentence patterns used in speech, business writing, academic writing, and the media.
- You will become a more rigorous thinker. Instead of saying “I just don’t believe that argument,” you will be able to point out, “That argument depends on an unjustified assumption” or “That argument’s second premise doesn’t support its conclusion.”
- You will be able to impress your friends with your fun and fearless use of semicolons; this will make you popular at punctuation parties.

Are you convinced yet?

Let’s get started!

**About the Author**

Jennifer Dziura is a Manhattan GMAT instructor who has taught and tutored well over 2,000 students in over a decade of standardized test teaching. She has achieved a perfect raw score of 51 on the verbal GMAT (and actually, she's also achieved a perfect 51 on quant).

Jennifer is an expert in working with non-native speakers. She has taught in a Korean-American study academy in Queens, is the author of a set of 1,000 vocabulary flashcards, and even took a research trip to India while writing this book.

She majored in philosophy at Dartmouth and has since been a guest speaker at many universities on topics including time management, career advice for young people, and making punctuation fun.

She has contributed to over a dozen educational books, including a logic textbook for which she wrote various exercises involving ninjas.

She believes that everything is learnable.

**Comments from Jennifer's students at Manhattan GMAT:**

*"Jen was VERY engaging and knowledgeable. She was enthusiastic about the material, and I felt that she really wanted us to succeed. She was funny too!"*

*"As a venture capital investor I am often confronted with concepts that are very complex, yet need to be communicated in a way that people from a variety of backgrounds can understand. I have to say that in this area Jen is well above the majority of the people I have encountered."*

*"Jen is very engaging and enthusiastic about the material. She relates the explanations to real life examples, making them easier to decode and understand."*

*"Jen is arguably the best teacher I've ever had, at any level, in any subject."*



# PART I: SENTENCE CORRECTION

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## **Chapter 1** *of*

FOUNDATIONS OF GMAT VERBAL

WORDS &  
SENTENCES

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## In This Chapter . . .

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- What Is Tested
- Listening to Your Ear versus Learning Grammar
- The Answer to the Question

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## SENTENCE CORRECTION

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A GMAT Sentence Correction problem looks something like this:

The hospital adopted a number of cost-saving measures, to eliminate some administrative personnel and raising fees for certain elective services.

- A. to eliminate some administrative personnel and raising
- B. to eliminate some administrative personnel and rising
- C. eliminating some administrative personnel and raising
- D. by eliminating some administrative personnel and the rise of
- E. eliminated some administrative personnel and raising

The answer choices represent possible replacements for the underlined portion of the original sentence. Choice A is simply a repeat of the original.

### What Is Tested

First and foremost, Sentence Correction tests **grammar**. It does not test every little rule—for instance, you are not evaluated directly on comma placement, and no one cares whether you end a sentence with a preposition.

However, you need to know the main rules of English grammar. You don't need the technical names. Rather, you have to know how to apply these rules in context and under exam pressure.

Here's the good news:

**If you can read this simple sentence, you already know a ton of grammar.**

Words play specific roles in sensible sentences. Grammar is what governs those roles, which are as important to comprehension as dictionary definitions.

Here is the same sentence again, with the words in alphabetical order:

a already can grammar. If know of read sentence, simple this ton you you

What incomprehensible gibberish, even though you know the meaning of every word!

Whether English is your first or your fifth language, you are making wonderful sense of the words that you are reading right now. As you read normal grammatical sentences, your brain is doing much more than looking up concepts in your mental dictionary. On the fly, your brain is assembling those concepts into complete thoughts, ones that someone else already had.

That's what grammar does for you—it lets you think someone else's thoughts. Each grammatical sentence that you read or hear represents a thought that jumped from another person's brain into yours.

What is a sentence? **A grammatical sentence is a complete thought.** Grammar is what makes sure that the thought is complete.



Without grammar, there would be no communication—or very little. Society would crumble. At least, we would be pointing a lot and getting very frustrated with each other.

Of course, if everyone's internal grammar genie worked perfectly all the time, Sentence Correction would not exist. The genie can be tricked. In particular, humans are awesome at understanding *spoken* language, but reading ability has been grafted into our heads late in the course of evolution.

So you can be more easily fooled by written text, especially when the text uses constructions that are totally legal but rarely heard.

In addition, you should recognize that you're *too* smart. (Good excuse, right?) You are far better than any computer at figuring out garbled messages. At times you instantly grasp what the writer means—and that makes it even harder to spot subtle grammatical flaws in the actual message.

This is why you should refine your intuitive knowledge of grammar. Work to **articulate the rules explicitly**. They will set you free. Consider this example again:

If you can read this simple sentence, you already know a ton of grammar.

Look at the words one after another. How would you classify each one grammatically?

If you started to think of terms such as “nouns” and “verbs,” you’re on the right track. Here are the words, classified by their **part of speech** in this sentence:

**Noun:** sentence, ton, grammar

**Verb:** can, read, know

**Pronoun:** you

**Adverb:** already

**Adjective:** this, simple, a

**Conjunction:** if

**Preposition:** of

The next few chapters will focus on these seven parts of speech. You will learn their characteristics, as well as commonly associated errors. You will practice spotting these parts of speech and associated errors in simple sentences.

By the way, some languages clearly indicate the part of speech right on the word itself. For instance, the ending *-skii* on a Russian word screams “I’m an adjective!”

English does very little of this sort of thing. What part of speech is *believe*? It's a verb, but you just have to know that. Don't worry, you do. In a pinch, you can make up a simple test sentence, as we'll see later.

It gets trickier to pin down words such as *light* and *sound*, which can easily take on more than one part of speech. The choice depends on context. In other words, it depends on the *other words* in the sentence.

Noun: There's no **light** in here, and I can't hear a **sound**.

Verb: Can you **light** a match? Wait, what does that **sound** like to you?

Adjective: My head feels **light**. I hope we get out of here safe and **sound**.

Even when you know the part of speech of every word in a sentence, there's still more to do. Read the following two sentences, and think about how they paint completely different pictures of reality, even though the parts of speech are the same in both examples.

1) Mary tickled Joe, who sat still and frowned quietly.

2) Joe tickled Mary, who sat still and frowned quietly.

**Word order** matters immensely in English. It tells you who did what to whom.

In example #1, the noun *Mary* is in front of the verb *tickled*, so *Mary* is the **subject** of *tickled*. Who did the tickling? Mary. Meanwhile, *Joe* is the **object** of *tickled*. Who was tickled? Joe. In addition, *Joe* is the effective subject of *sat* and *frowned*. Who sat still and frowned quietly? Joe.

The second sentence reverses the grammatical roles of the nouns *Mary* and *Joe* by swapping their positions. As a result, the real-life roles of Mary and Joe are also reversed. The sentences describe different situations.

Word order is one aspect of **sentence structure**, which is as important to grammar as parts of speech are. In later chapters, you will practice spotting errors related to sentence structure.

In addition to testing grammar, GMAT Sentence Correction also tests your ability to pick an answer choice that makes the most sense. You must ensure that the intended **meaning** comes through clearly. Even grammatically perfect sentences can have unclear or unlikely meanings. Take a step back, and make no assumptions. For example:

The spill has greatly affected the Gulf of Mexico, where thousands of office workers toil despite the pollution.

This perfectly grammatical sentence implies that thousands of office workers work *in* the Gulf of Mexico, which is a body of water! When the original sentence doesn't make sense, pick an answer that fixes the problem. For instance, it is very likely that the office workers work in the *area surrounding the Gulf of Mexico*.

Finally, the GMAT tests **concision**. Can you say the same thing in fewer words? Fewer is better, of course, but beware: many students overfocus on this issue. After all, concision is easy to assess: which answer choice is shorter? That's much simpler to figure out than a tricky pronoun issue.

As a result, students often pick the shortest answer while ignoring far more important grammatical issues. Those "extra words" may not be extra at all—they may well be needed to make the sentence clear and grammatically correct.

In fact, it's probably safest for you to **minimize or even ignore concision** at this stage of the game, so that you won't be tempted to apply the principle inappropriately.

As you solve a Sentence Correction problem, you should prioritize the issues this way:

- 1) **Focus first and foremost on grammatical issues.**
- 2) **If more than one choice is grammatically correct, choose the one that most clearly reveals the author's intended meaning** (whatever you think that is).
- 3) **If you *still* can't decide, bring in concision—carefully!**

**Listening to Your Ear versus Learning Grammar**

Students who just play it by ear on Sentence Correction don't tend to do very well.

The GMAT is very interested in testing things that people say all the time in casual speech, but that are actually incorrect. For instance, according to GMAT rules, the following sentence contains *five* mistakes:

I credited the counselor for the astute observation that each of the students are different than their friends in ways that affect their development.

Your ear might tell you that the above sentence sounds funny, but your ear will probably tell you that the correct version sounds funny, too:

I credited the counselor WITH the astute observation that each of the students IS different FROM HIS OR HER friends in ways that affect HIS OR HER development.

Don't worry about the particular grammatical issues we've hinted at above. Right now, we just want to make the point that playing it by ear is a back-up plan or a last resort.

You will need to learn the rules of grammar. In order to understand and apply the rules, you will need to start with the contents of this book.

**The Answer to the Question**

Did you solve the question at the beginning of the chapter? If not, turn back to it, then return with your answer.

Here is the original sentence again:

The hospital adopted a number of cost-saving measures, to eliminate some administrative personnel and raising fees for certain elective services.

And here is the corrected version:

The hospital adopted a number of cost-saving measures, eliminating some administrative personnel and raising fees for certain elective services.

The word *and* is a conjunction—the most important one. When you see *and*, ask yourself, “What’s in the list?” In the incorrect sentence, we have *to eliminate... and raising...* When you have *X... and Y...*, make *X* and *Y* **parallel**. That is, *X* and *Y* should be comparable in meaning, and they should have the same form.

In the correct version, *eliminating* and *raising* are logically comparable. They tell you more about how the *hospital adopted a number of cost-saving measures*. Specifically, they are two actions that the hospital took to cut costs.

Second, *eliminating* and *raising* have the same form. They are both *-ing* forms of verbs.

The correct answer is C. None of the other choices are properly parallel. Choice B (*to eliminate some administrative personnel and rising fees...*) is only parallel if you claim that the hospital was eliminating rising fees—and that doesn't make sense. The hospital was *raising* fees. Separately, it was *eliminating* some personnel. Those are the parallel actions.

Fear not! In later chapters, we'll go into these issues in more depth. Let's go ahead and get started with nouns, pronouns, and adjectives.