

# Writing Required for Graduate School Exams

**GRE, GMAT, LSAT**

# GRE

## Overview

### 1) Analytical Writing

- a. Analyze an issue
- b. Analyze an argument

### 2) Quantitative Reasoning

This portion of the test covers mathematical skills. (We will not address this section of the exam; this packet focuses only on the portions of graduate school tests that address writing and reading skills.)

### 3) Verbal Reasoning

- a. Reading comprehension
- b. Text completion
- c. Sentence equivalence

### 1) Analytical Writing

- This section of the test measures your critical-thinking ability.
  - You are not scored based on being right or wrong but on arguing logically.
  - This section is divided into two subcategories: analyze an issue and analyze an argument.
- a. Analyze an issue**
- **Time:** 30 minutes
  - **Style:** You are presented with a statement. You have to decide the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement in the context of a standard essay.

## Sample

Scandals are useful because they focus our attention on problems in ways that no speaker or reformer ever could.

[http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/analytical\\_writing/issue/sample\\_task](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing/issue/sample_task)

Considerations for the essay:

- **Determine your position.** Your position can be more nuanced than “I agree” or “I disagree.” You need to explain the *extent* you agree or disagree. You may somewhat agree, agree with an important qualification, or strongly agree, which are all options.
- **Brainstorm and outline before you begin.** Write down both the reasons one may support or attack the assertion. Your argument will be more well-rounded.
- **Consider the strongest objections to your stance.** Allow for opposing arguments before refuting them to reveal a confident, rigorous position.
- **Produce a final product.** Make sure to write a complete essay with a paragraph refuting opposing claims.

### Sample Essay Outline

#### Introduction

- Hook the readers.
- Provide context to explain the statement.
- Write a clear, succinct thesis statement.

#### Body Paragraph #1

- Explain why you think you are right.
- Support your argument with specific examples.
- (Provide more than one body paragraph explaining your argument if you choose to present more than one reason for your stance.)

#### Body Paragraph #2

- Consider the opposition to your argument.
- Explain why someone might think you are wrong.
- Refute the claim(s) of the opposing side.

#### Conclusion

- Rephrase your points.
- Refer back to your thesis.

#### b. Analyze an argument

- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Style:** You are presented with an argument, which you have to prove is flawed in the context of an essay.

## Sample

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.

[http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/analytical\\_writing/argument/sample\\_task](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/analytical_writing/argument/sample_task)

Considerations for the essay:

- **Label explicit and unstated assumptions.** (See the below list for examples of assumptions presented in the sample.)
  - The residents do not just enjoy watching water sports—they engage in watersports.
  - The residents are complaining because they want to use the river.
  - The residents will use the river if it is cleaner.
  - The city's money should be spent on the river; there are no better investments.
- **Decide if you accept the assumptions. Do they lead you to the conclusion?**  
In the case of the sample selection, the assumptions have other explanations, so I am not led to the conclusion.
- **Decide if the conclusion is affected. Explain how so.**
  - Cleaning the river would not necessarily bring people to the river.
  - If funds are allocated toward the river, other needs may be unaddressed.
- **Produce a final product.** Write a complete essay based on why the argument is flawed.

## Sample Essay Outline

### Introduction

- Hook the reader.
- Explain the argument.
- End with a thesis discussing the problems with the argument.

### Body Paragraph #1

- State your first reason regarding why the essay is flawed.
- Provide direct examples, illustrations, and explanations.

### Body Paragraph #2

- State your second reason regarding why the essay is flawed.
- Provide direct examples, illustrations, and explanations.
- (Note that you can decide to include more than two body paragraphs.)

### Conclusion

- Summarize your main points.
- Refer back to your thesis.

## 2) Quantitative Reasoning

The quantitative reasoning section of the GRE tests your mathematical skills. You can find more information about this portion of the test at

[https://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/quantitative\\_reasoning](https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/quantitative_reasoning).

## 3) Verbal Reasoning

### a. Reading comprehension

- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Style:** A passage followed by multiple-choice questions about the passage.

## Sample

Reviving the practice of using elements of popular music in classical composition, an approach that had been in hibernation in the United States during the 1960s, composer Philip Glass (born 1937) embraced the ethos of popular music in his compositions. Glass based two symphonies on music by rock musicians David Bowie and Brian Eno, but the symphonies' sound is distinctively his. Popular elements do not appear out of place in Glass's classical music, which from its early days has shared certain harmonies and rhythms with rock music. Yet this use of popular elements has not made Glass a composer of popular music. His music is not a version of popular music packaged to attract classical listeners; it is high art for listeners steeped in rock rather than the classics.

**Select only one answer choice.**

- 1) The passage addresses which of the following issues related to Glass's use of popular elements in his classical compositions?
  - a. How it is regarded by listeners who prefer rock to the classics
  - b. How it has affected the commercial success of Glass's music
  - c. Whether it has contributed to a revival of interest among other composers in using popular elements in their compositions
  - d. Whether it has had a detrimental effect on Glass's reputation as a composer of classical music
  - e. Whether it has caused certain of Glass's works to be derivative in quality(Answer: Choice “e” is correct.)

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

- 2) The passage suggests that Glass's work displays which of the following qualities?
  - a. A return to the use of popular music in classical compositions
  - b. An attempt to elevate rock music to an artistic status more closely approximating that of classical music
  - c. A long-standing tendency to incorporate elements from two apparently disparate musical styles(Answer: Choices “a” and “c” are correct.)
- 3) Select the sentence that distinguishes two ways of integrating rock and classical music. (Answer: The correct answer is the last sentence of the passage.)

[http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/verbal\\_reasoning/reading\\_comprehension/sample\\_questions](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/verbal_reasoning/reading_comprehension/sample_questions)

## b) Text completion

- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Style:** A passage with blank spaces that need to be filled in from multiple-choice options

### Sample

It is refreshing to read a book about our planet by an author who does not allow facts to be (i)\_\_\_\_\_ by politics: well aware of the political disputes about the effects of human activities on climate and biodiversity, this author does not permit them to (ii)\_\_\_\_\_ his comprehensive description of what we know about our biosphere. He emphasizes the enormous gaps in our knowledge, the sparseness of our observations, and the (iii)\_\_\_\_\_, calling attention to the many aspects of planetary evolution that must be better understood before we can accurately diagnose the condition of our planet.

i. a) overshadowed b) invalidated c) illuminated

(Answer: The word “overshadowed” is correct.)

ii. d) enhance e) obscure f) underscore

(Answer: The word “obscure” is correct.)

iii. h) plausibility of our hypothesis i) certainty of our entitlement j) superficiality of our theories

(Answer: The phrase “superficiality of our theories” is correct.)

Vain and prone to violence, Caravaggio could not handle success: the more his (i)\_\_\_\_\_ as an artist increased, the more (ii)\_\_\_\_\_ his life became.

i. a) temperance b) notoriety c) eminence

(Answer: The word “eminence” is correct.)

ii d) tumultuous e) providential f) dispassionate

(Answer: The word “tumultuous” is correct.)

[http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/verbal\\_reasoning/text\\_completion/](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/verbal_reasoning/text_completion/)

**c) Sentence equivalence**

- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Style:** Sentences with blank spaces. Choose two words from six options.

**Sample**

Select the *two* answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole *and* produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.

Although it does contain some pioneering ideas, one would hardly characterize the work as \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. orthodox
- b. eccentric
- c. original
- d. trifling
- e. conventional
- f. innovative

(Answer: The correct choices are “original” and “innovative.”)

It was her view that the country's problems had been \_\_\_\_\_ by foreign technocrats, so that to ask for such assistance again would be counterproductive.

- a. ameliorated
- b. ascertained
- c. diagnosed
- d. exacerbated
- e. overlooked
- f. worsened

(Answer: The correct choices are “exacerbated” and “worsened.”)

[https://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare/verbal\\_reasoning/sentence\\_equivalence/sample\\_questions](https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/verbal_reasoning/sentence_equivalence/sample_questions)

# GMAT

## Overview

### 1) Analytical Writing Assessment

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### 2) Integrated Reasoning

This section of the GMAT exam asks you to interpret graphics and analyze tables. The purpose is to test your ability to evaluate information presented in different formats and from different sources. (We will not address this section of the exam; this packet focuses only on the portions of graduate school tests that address writing and reading skills.)

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### 3) Verbal Reasoning

- a. critical reasoning
  - b. reading comprehension
  - c. sentence correction
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### 4) Quantitative

This portion of the test covers mathematical skills. (We will not address this section of the exam; this packet focuses only on the portions of graduate school tests that address writing and reading skills.)

### 1) Analytical Writing Assessment

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Style:** You will be asked to analyze an argument. You will have to evaluate that argument in a written essay.

## Sample

"Most companies would agree that as the risk of physical injury occurring on the job increases, the wages paid to employees should also increase. Hence it makes financial sense for employers to make the workplace safer: they could thus reduce their payroll expenses and save money."

<http://www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam/gmat-exam-format-timing/analytical-writing-assessment/analysis-of-argument-question.aspx>

Considerations for the essay:

- **Turn the argument into a syllogism for clarity.**
  - Premise 1: The risk of physical injury on the job leads to increased wages.
  - Premise 2: If employers made the workplace safer, they would save money.
  - Conclusion: Employers should make their workplace safer to save money.
  
- **Consider the unstated assumptions.**
  - All workplaces can improve in terms of becoming safer.
  - The cost of making the workplace safer is cheaper than the cost of raising payroll.
  
- **Assess the argument.**
  - The second assumption was never demonstrated.
  - The cost of making the workplace safer could be *higher* than the cost of paying additional money, so the conclusion is not necessarily true.

<b>Sample Essay Outline</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Explain the argument.</li><li>● End with your thesis on why the argument is invalid.</li></ul>
<b>Body Paragraph #1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Explain one reason why the argument is flawed.</li><li>● Provide direct examples, illustrations, and explanations to help prove your assessment.</li></ul>
<b>Body Paragraph #2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Analyze an additional reason why the argument is flawed.</li><li>● Provide direct examples, illustrations, and explanations to help prove your assessment.</li><li>● (Note that you can decide to include more than two body paragraphs. Figure out how many main points you have to make. However, don't forget to be aware of the limited time that you are given!)</li></ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reiterate your thesis.</li><li>● Explain what the argument needs for the reader to agree with the conclusion.</li></ul>

## 2) Integrated Reasoning

This section of the GMAT exam asks you to interpret graphics and analyze tables. The purpose is to test your ability to evaluate information presented in different formats and from different

sources. For more information visit <http://www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam/gmat-exam-format-timing/integrated-reasoning.aspx>.

### 3) Verbal Reasoning

#### a. Critical Reasoning

**Time:** 75 minutes total, for all three parts of the Verbal Reasoning section

**Style:** You will be given a passage. Questions will be presented about the passage with multiple-choice answers. In answering these questions, you will have to demonstrate your critical reasoning abilities.

#### Sample

On the basis of the Big Bang theory **scientists predicted levels of Helium-3 in the universe that are ten times greater than the levels actually observed**. According to the original model, Helium-3 is produced when low-mass stars burn up hydrogen and become ‘red giants,’ as well as being produced in the Big Bang itself. Researchers have now produced a new model in which the Helium-3 produced by a red giant is pushed to the star’s interior and burnt up. **Hence the Big Bang theory is no longer undermined by Helium-3 data**.

The two portions in boldface are related to each other in which of the following ways?

- A. The first highlights an observation that tends to undermine a particular theory. The second is that theory.
- B. The first is a fact that undermines a theory. The second is context for accepting that theory.
- C. The first points to an inconsistency in a particular model; the second is the author’s main conclusion.
- D. The first is a challenge to a classic theory; the second resolves that challenge.
- E. The first is a position that the author does not accept; the second is the author’s position.

The committee on sexual discrimination in the workplace has highlighted Supremo Company as a chief offender. Of the twenty senior executives in the firm, only one is a woman. And of the forty junior executives, only five are female.

Supremo could best defend itself against the charges by showing that

- A. male and female executives at the same level have the same qualifications.
- B. they pay the same salary to senior men and senior women.
- C. ten times more men than women apply for jobs with the company.
- D. the work pressures and long hours make jobs with the company unattractive to married women.
- E. all job applicants who were rejected had fewer qualifications than those accepted.

[http://www.majortests.com/gmat/critical\\_reasoning.php](http://www.majortests.com/gmat/critical_reasoning.php)

## b. Reading Comprehension

**Time:** 75 minutes total, for all three parts of the Verbal Reasoning section

**Style:** You will be given a passage to read and analyze. Questions will be presented about the passage with multiple-choice answers. You will have to demonstrate your understanding of what you have read.

### Sample

The questions in this group are based on the content of a passage. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question. Answer all questions following the passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage.

#### Question

Schools expect textbooks to be a valuable source of information for students. My research suggests, however, that textbooks that address the place of Native Americans within the history of the United States distort history to suit a particular cultural value system. In some textbooks, for example, settlers are pictured as more humane, complex, skillful, and wise than Native Americans. In essence, textbooks stereotype and depreciate the numerous Native American cultures while reinforcing the attitude that the European conquest of the New World denotes the superiority of European cultures. Although textbooks evaluate Native American architecture, political systems, and homemaking, I contend that they do it from an ethnocentric, European perspective without recognizing that other perspectives are possible.

One argument against my contention asserts that, by nature, textbooks are culturally biased and that I am simply underestimating children's ability to see through these biases. Some researchers even claim that by the time students are in high school, they know they cannot take textbooks literally. Yet substantial evidence exists to the contrary. Two researchers, for example, have conducted studies that suggest that children's attitudes about particular cultures are strongly influenced by the textbooks used in schools. Given this, an ongoing, careful review of how school textbooks depict Native Americans is certainly warranted.

Which of the following would most logically be the topic of the paragraph immediately following the passage?

- A. specific ways to evaluate the biases of United States history textbooks
- B. the centrality of the teacher's role in United States history courses
- C. nontraditional methods of teaching United States history
- D. the contributions of European immigrants to the development of the United States
- E. ways in which parents influence children's political attitudes

**Answer: A**

<http://www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam/gmat-exam-format-timing/verbal/sample-reading-comprehension-question.aspx>

### c. Sentence Correction

**Time:** 75 minutes total, for all three parts of the Verbal Reasoning section

**Style:** Multiple choice

**Content:** In this section of the exam, you are given sentences that may contain errors (in grammar, word choice, or sentence construction). However, some of the given sentences may be correct.

#### Sample

With his sub-four minute mile Bannister broke a psychological barrier, inspiring thousands of others to attempt overcoming seemingly insurmountable hurdles.

- A. inspiring thousands of others to attempt overcoming
- B. inspiring thousands of others to attempt to overcome
- C. inspiring thousands of others to overcome
- D. and inspired thousands of others to attempt to overcome
- E. and inspired thousands of others to attempt overcoming

While larger banks can afford to maintain their own data-processing operations, many smaller regional and community banks are finding that the cost associated with upgrading data-processing equipment and with the development and maintenance of new products and technical staff are prohibitive.

- A. cost associated with
- B. costs associated with
- C. costs arising from
- D. cost of
- E. costs of

[http://www.majortests.com/gmat/critical\\_reasoning.php](http://www.majortests.com/gmat/critical_reasoning.php) and <http://www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam/gmat-exam-format-timing/verbal/sample-sentence-correction-question.aspx>

# LSAT

## Overview

Note that the order of these sections is scrambled on the actual test. However, the essay section will always come last.

**1) Logical Reasoning #1**

**2) Logical Reasoning #2**

**3) Analytical Reasoning**

**4) Reading Comprehension**

**5) Essay**

**1) Logical Reasoning #1**

**Time:** 35 minutes

**Style:** A statement or brief dialogue, followed by multiple-choices questions

## Sample

Laird: Pure research provides us with new technologies that contribute to saving lives. Even more worthwhile than this, however, is its role in expanding our knowledge and providing new, unexplored ideas.

Kim: Your priorities are mistaken. Saving lives is what counts most of all. Without pure research, medicine would not be as advanced as it is.

Laird and Kim disagree on whether pure research

- A. derives its significance in part from its providing new technologies.
- B. expands the boundaries of our knowledge of medicine.
- C. should have the saving of human lives as an important goal.
- D. has its most valuable achievements in medical applications.
- E. has any value apart from its role in providing new technologies to save lives.

(The correct answer is “D.”)

Executive: We recently ran a set of advertisements in the print version of a travel magazine and on that magazine's website. We were unable to get any direct information about

consumer response to the print ads. However, we found that consumer response to the ads on the website was much more limited than is typical for website ads. We concluded that consumer response to the print ads was probably below par as well.

The executive's reasoning does which one of the following?

- A. bases a prediction of the intensity of a phenomenon on information about the intensity of that phenomenon's cause
- B. uses information about the typical frequency of events of a general kind to draw a conclusion about the probability of a particular event of that kind
- C. infers a statistical generalization from claims about a large number of specific instances
- D. uses a case in which direct evidence is available to draw a conclusion about an analogous case in which direct evidence is unavailable
- E. bases a prediction about future events on facts about recent comparable events

(The correct answer is "D.")

During the construction of the Quebec Bridge in 1907, the bridge's designer, Theodore Cooper, received word that the suspended span being built out from the bridge's cantilever was deflecting downward by a fraction of an inch (2.54 centimeters). Before he could telegraph to freeze the project, the whole cantilever arm broke off and plunged, along with seven dozen workers, into the St. Lawrence River. It was the worst bridge construction disaster in history. As a direct result of the inquiry that followed, the engineering "rules of thumb" by which thousands of bridges had been built around the world went down with the Quebec Bridge. Twentieth-century bridge engineers would thereafter depend on far more rigorous applications of mathematical analysis.

Which one of the following statements can be properly inferred from the passage?

- A. Bridges built before about 1907 were built without thorough mathematical analysis and, therefore, were unsafe for the public to use.
- B. Cooper's absence from the Quebec Bridge construction site resulted in the breaking off of the cantilever.
- C. Nineteenth-century bridge engineers relied on their rules of thumb because analytical methods were inadequate to solve their design problems.
- D. Only a more rigorous application of mathematical analysis to the design of the Quebec Bridge could have prevented its collapse.
- E. Prior to 1907 the mathematical analysis incorporated in engineering rules of thumb was insufficient to completely assure the safety of bridges under construction.

(The correct answer is "E.")

<http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/prep/logical-reasoning>

## 2) Logical Reasoning #2

**Time:** 35 minutes

**Style:** A statement or brief dialogue, followed by multiple-choice questions

## 3) Analytical Reading

**Time:** 35 minutes

**Style:** A passage followed by multiple-choice questions

### Sample

A university library budget committee must reduce exactly five of eight areas of expenditure — G, L, M, N, P, R, S, and W — in accordance with the following conditions:

- If both G and S are reduced, W is also reduced.
- If N is reduced, neither R nor S is reduced.
- *If P is reduced, L is not reduced.*
- Of the three areas L, M, and R, exactly two are reduced.

If both M and R are reduced, which one of the following is a pair of areas neither of which could be reduced?

- A. G, L
- B. G, N
- C. *L, N*
- D. L, P
- E. P, S

Seven piano students — T, U, V, W, X, Y, and Z — are to give a recital, and their instructor is deciding the order in which they will perform. Each student will play exactly one piece, a piano solo. In deciding the order of performance, the instructor must observe the following restrictions:

- X cannot play first or second.
- W cannot play until X has played.
- Neither T nor Y can play seventh.
- Either Y or Z must play immediately after W plays.
- V must play either immediately after or immediately before U plays.

If V plays first, which one of the following must be true?

- A. T plays sixth.
- B. X plays third.
- C. *Z plays seventh.*
- D. T plays immediately after Y.
- E. W plays immediately after X.

(Correct answers have been italicized.)

<http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/prep/analytical-reasoning>

## 4) Reading Comprehension

**Time:** 35 minutes

**Style:** Passages with multiple-choice selections

### Sample

The painter Roy Lichtenstein helped to define pop art — the movement that incorporated commonplace objects and commercial-art techniques into paintings — by paraphrasing the style of comic books in his work. His merger of a popular genre with the forms and intentions of fine art generated a complex result: while poking fun at the pretensions of the art world, Lichtenstein's work also managed to convey a seriousness of theme that enabled it to transcend mere parody.

That Lichtenstein's images were fine art was at first difficult to see, because, with their word balloons and highly stylized figures, they looked like nothing more than the comic book panels from which they were copied. Standard art history holds that pop art emerged as an impersonal alternative to the histrionics of abstract expressionism, a movement in which painters conveyed their private attitudes and emotions using non-representational techniques. The truth is that by the time pop art first appeared in the early 1960s, abstract expressionism had already lost much of its force. Pop art painters weren't quarreling with the powerful early abstract expressionist work of the late 1940s but with a second generation of abstract expressionists whose work seemed airy, high-minded, and overly lyrical. Pop art paintings were full of simple black lines and large areas of primary color. Lichtenstein's work was part of a general rebellion against the fading emotional power of abstract expressionism, rather than an aloof attempt to ignore it. But if rebellion against previous art by means of the careful imitation of a popular genre were all that characterized Lichtenstein's work, it would possess only the reflective power that parodies have in relation to their subjects. Beneath its cartoonish methods, his work displayed an impulse toward realism, an urge to say that what was missing from contemporary painting was the depiction of contemporary life. The stilted romances and war stories portrayed in the comic books on which he based his canvases, the stylized automobiles, hot dogs, and table lamps that appeared in his pictures, were reflections of the culture Lichtenstein inhabited. But, in contrast to some pop art, Lichtenstein's work exuded not a jaded cynicism about consumer culture, but a kind of deliberate naivete, intended as a response to the excess of sophistication he observed not only in the later abstract expressionists but in some other pop artists. With the comics — typically the domain of youth and innocence — as his reference point, a nostalgia fills his paintings that gives them, for all their surface bravado, an inner sweetness. His persistent use of comic-art conventions demonstrates a faith in reconciliation, not only between cartoons and fine art, but between parody and true feeling.

#### Question 1

Which one of the following best captures the author's attitude toward Lichtenstein's work?

- A. enthusiasm for its more rebellious aspects
- B. respect for its successful parody of youth and innocence
- C. pleasure in its blatant rejection of abstract expressionism
- D. admiration for its subtle critique of contemporary culture
- E. *appreciation for its ability to incorporate both realism and naiveté*

### Question 2

The author most likely lists some of the themes and objects influencing and appearing in Lichtenstein's paintings (middle of the last paragraph) primarily to

- A. *show that the paintings depict aspects of contemporary life.*
- B. support the claim that Lichtenstein's work was parodic in intent.
- C. contrast Lichtenstein's approach to art with that of abstract expressionism.
- D. suggest the emotions that lie at the heart of Lichtenstein's work.
- E. endorse Lichtenstein's attitude toward consumer culture.

### Question 3

The primary purpose of the passage is most likely to

- A. express curiosity about an artist's work.
- B. *clarify the motivation behind an artist's work.*
- C. contrast two opposing theories about an artist's work.
- D. describe the evolution of an artist's work.
- E. refute a previous overestimation of an artist's work.

<http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/prep/reading-comprehension>

## 5) Writing Sample

**Time:** 35 minutes

**Style:** Presented with a scenario, you need to justify a decision about this scenario in the context of an essay.

### Sample

#### Directions:

The scenario presented below describes two choices, either one of which can be supported on the basis of the information given. Your essay should consider both choices and argue for one over the other, based on the two specified criteria and the facts provided. There is no "right" or "wrong" choice: a reasonable argument can be made for either.

#### Scenario:

Denyse Barnes, a young country music singer who has just released her debut CD, is planning a concert tour to promote it. Her agent has presented her with two options: she can tour as the opening act for Downhome, a famous country band that is mounting a national tour this year, or she can be the solo act in a tour in her home region. Using the facts below, write an essay in which you argue for one option over the other based on the following two criteria:

- Barnes wants to build a large and loyal fan base.
- Barnes wants to begin writing new songs for her next CD.

Downhome is scheduled to perform in over 100 far-flung cities in 8 months, playing in large arenas, including sports stadiums. This ambitious schedule would take Barnes far away from her home recording studio, where she prefers to compose. Downhome's last concert tour was sold out, and the band's latest release is a top seller. Many concertgoers at large arenas skip the opening act. But it is possible that Barnes would be invited by Downhome to play a song or two with them.

The solo tour in her home region would book Barnes in 30 cities over a 4-month period, including community theaters and country-and-blues music clubs, a few of which have reputations for launching new talent. These venues have loyal patrons; most shows are inexpensive and are well-attended, even for new talent. Barnes would have a promotion budget for her solo tour, but it would be far smaller than that for Downhome's tour.

<http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/prep/writing-sample>

Considerations for the essay:

- **Remember that there is no right or wrong answer.** The scenario is ambiguous on purpose. They are not looking for you to say the “right” answer, but rather to show that you can offer a substantiated opinion.
- **Brainstorm.** Think of ways you could justify both decisions, so you can end up building a well-rounded decision.
- **Outline.** Decide what your topic sentences will be before you begin to avoid having a scattered essay.
- **Keep the time limit in mind.** You only have 35 minutes. Many students assume that every essay needs to have three body paragraphs, but this is usually not the case. A manageable essay, given the time constraints, should have two body paragraphs, with an introduction and a conclusion.

### Sample Essay Outline

#### Introduction

- Describe the scenario.
- Present your thesis statement in which you clearly state your selected choice.

#### Body Paragraph #1

- Create a topic sentence.
- Provide direct examples, illustrations, and explanations to help prove your assessment.

#### Body Paragraph #2

- Create a topic sentence.
- Provide direct examples, illustrations, and explanations to help prove your assessment.

**Conclusion**

- Reiterate your thesis.
- Explain why the readers should agree with your choice.