

## GMAT experiences of GMATClub Members (For Motivation & Learning Purpose)

### Honghu →780(Q51, V49)

Got 780, believe it or not. 😊

I have been hoping for above 700, but didn't think that I could achieve that good of a score. Considering that I only had one and half month to prepare for the test, that I'm working at the same time, and that both of my little boys had been sick in the last two weeks, I have to say I did pretty well.

My experience may not be applicable for many of you since I imagine most of you guys are still students and have more times to prepare, but I'll still write a little just in case I could be any help to anybody in any way. I would be happy to share more if any of you have any more questions. 😊

#### Preparation

I did not have a lot of time to cover a lot of materials, so I chose to concentrate on one set of books (two Chinese GMAT reviewing books in my case, math and grammar) to get the basic principles. I have not spend time to specifically prepare for reading comprehension and critical reasoning. Once I feel I have got the basic understanding about the math and grammar principles, I did the first PowerPrep test, and started to study [the Official Guide](#). In the mean time, I have chosen to actively participate in this forum, doing almost all questions that are posted in this forum, and try to write down my reasonings and solutions for each question. The forum served a very important role in my preparation for the test. In addition to learning additional methods of solving a math problem and increasing my understanding toward confusing grammatical usages, I have also used it as a daily practise venue. I always tried to form my own answers before I looked at the others' answers. This way I can see where my weakness is and I remember the correct ways of solving a problem better. The most important experience that I have on preparing for the test, is to try to use your own brain everytime you see a question, not only guess a choice, but actually think. Having to write down a post helped with this goal.

#### Test Day

I've been having five hours of sleeps in average in the last month, so that I could actually have some time to study. But yesterday, I decided that I will not gain too much more by several hours' studying. So I went to bed with the kids at 9 o'clock, and I woke up at 7:30am this morning and I felt very relaxed. I did not set a very high target for myself. I was thinking as long as I score over 680 I'll feel ok. Considering that my second PP test was 710 even when I didn't do well in the verbal part, I was pretty confident that I wouldn't do too much worse than 680, so I wasn't feeling nervous at all.

I finished the two essays just in time. Didn't even have time to re-read my second essay. I

took the break, letting my mind prepare for the math part that is coming. Math was relatively easy, I didn't have time to worry if that means that I didn't do well or something, I just kept doing the questions, only breaking to check my pace several times, and to remind myself to be careful not to overlook any traps for the DS questions. I finished the math part 10 minutes earlier. I took about one minute before I clicked on "proceed". It may be better if I could take the 10 minutes to rest a little, but I didn't feel like I would have a good rest with an unfinished section. I did take the 5 minute break again, before I start the verbal sections. The questions in the beginning felt at the right level, not too easy, not too hard. Then when I approach the middle part, the reading comprehension passages became longer (from 40 lines to 70 or 80 lines), and the critical reasoning became harder. I got a couple bold face questions too. I reminded myself to concentrate on the questions off hand, and in one RC question that I didn't understand in the first read, I took the time to re-read it. I was a little worried if I wouldn't have enough time, but I still tried to make sure I do not rush any questions. In the last 8 questions or so I had to remind myself multiple times to calm down and concentrate. In the end I actually finished the section with several minutes left.

My mind had been in a state of being excited since the beginning of the test and I only start to feel tired two hours after the test was over.

Anyways I'm glad that this is over and I didn't do too badly. There are still so much to do. I need to prepare the other materials before 1/3, the deadline of UR's PhD program.

Whatever result I would get in the end of this endeavor, I would never forget this forum and its many participants. I have learnt so much from here and got so much encouragement from the people here. I will try to give back whatever I received in the future days to come.

Good luck to all of you that will take your test later!

Unlike math and grammar, I believe RC and CR depends more heavily on ones accumulated skills over a long period. One gets better with these things naturally when you use the language more often. Read different materials, write out your own opinions, participate in forum debate, all of these will help you getting the sense of the language.

However, most of us are preparing to take the test within several month, so long term strategy may not work. To get immediate short term improvement, I would suggest you focus your reading and practise on GMAT materials. (In other words, don't go read a novel or magazine etc.) I personally believe that the passages that were used in previous GMAT tests, such as those included in the OG, would be what I'd be focusing on.

I still remember a long long time ago, when I was in high school, my teacher asked me to read a part of a fiction to my class. I didn't like descriptions of environments at the time. When I read a book I would usually skip all those about how sun was coming up and trees were green and stuff, and jump to the interactions among people. I read the passages word by word, and my heart went into it when I read it. I enjoyed reading it, and the story made my classmates laugh at several occasions. When I finished it, my teacher said that I

didn't read the first paragraph well where the author described smokes rising from a river and such. That was when I first realized the difference between reading a passage word by word and reading a passage using my heart.

The reason I went to such length to talk about reading is that I truly believe that it is very important. In a test it is very likely that you'd read the words, without taking them in. Then you'd go look at the questions, and try to come back to find your answer. But your time is tight, so you don't have time to re-read the passage, therefore you have to find something that sounds close, and choose it. Often, it would be the wrong answer.

What you should do, is to really read the passage, using your heart. Practise this, you'll know what I mean. You'll feel the difference yourself. When you read it, you'll truly understand what the author is saying. When you look at the questions, you can almost answer it already, without having to go back to the passage. You only need to go back to it to get a confirmation, or get the details that you omitted when you read it.

Critical reasoning is the same thing. You must truly understand what the author is arguing. Then you'll see his logic, and be able to find his assumptions and missing links, and what would weaken and strengthen his arguments. I'm not a native speaker so I'm not very good at grammar, but I feel that trying to understand the sentence is as important as learning all the grammatical rules and idiomatic usages in helping me to find the correct answer.

Sorry that I have rambled so long. Hope this could be of a little help to you. It came to me rather naturally, actually. I like to read and write, in Chinese, initially. When I first came to the US, I tried to read some English books, but I couldn't finish the first five pages. I had to look up so many words from the dictionary that it wasn't fun any more. But I didn't have any pressure, so I basically dropped it. Two years later I picked up some books again, (starting from Agatha Christie's novels, one of my favorite readings) and I decided not to bother taking out the dictionary and just read. And that has done the trick for me. Later I read more things on different subjects. Another thing that might have helped is that I started reading online a lot the recent two years. Online news, forums, etc. This made me more comfortable with the CAT style of GMAT, I think.

For you, I think reading WallStreet Journal is definitely a good thing. However, GMAT reading materials cover a much broader range. The hardest ones are in the areas of law and medicine, for me at least. The trick there for me is not to care about details, and just try to understand what is the entire paragraph about. So if I was asked about a passage after I read it once, I would tell you something like this: "There was this case about American Indian's right for water. There had been some provisions about water rights for them in the law, but this case expanded their rights in certain specific circumstances, etc." I wouldn't remember the name of the case, nor the time of the case. I don't know if this is what they called skimming. But I can say that only reading the starting sentence and concluding sentence is NOT going to work for a lot of passages. Skimming for me, doesn't mean not reading some parts. It's just to focus on getting the main idea without paying too much attention to the details.

Regarding reading materials for you, remember what I said is to read as many passages as possible, but to limit the range of the materials to GMAT type readings. Also since there are only this many OG passages, you don't want to waste them for your initial practise. Re-reading something is definitely going to feel differently from reading it fresh. You need to use them at the most crucial time and use them for the maximum impact.

CR is different from RC. In RC you can skim the passage as long as you understand the general idea. For CR you have to read each and every sentence very very carefully. You need to be able to repeat the author's line of reasoning by yourself before you pick the answers. Try this for the forum CR questions, see if that'll help you.

Thanks guys! I was very happy myself. Couldn't wait to come back here and tell you guys. I only did two PP tests, didn't have time to do the others. I did my first PP test prior to my studying of the OG, and got 730. The second test I only got 710, with 7 wrong answers for reading comprehension. That was a good caution for me for I have been very confident about my RC ability and didn't even prepare for it. It made me more conscious of the level of concentration that is needed for the test.

Overall, I felt that the SC part of the test is about the same level of the OG, if not a little harder. I haven't done OG RC myself, but my feeling is that out of the four RC questions (I think) I got in the real test, the first two are fairly straight forward, and the last two are longer and harder to understand; whereas in the two PP tests all RCs except one are not very hard.

**Sonibubu →780 (Q50, V47):**

Hey everyone,

I finally took my GMAT this morning and scored a 780. I was looking for 750 or higher, so suffice to say I've hit my goal. I'm at work right now but I'll write a full debrief either later today or sometime over the weekend.

Also wanted to thanks everyone here at GMATClub for answering questions on the forums and especially for the [GMATClub tests](#) -- I'll provide details of why the tests were so helpful in my debrief.

[EDIT] Here's my debrief:

I was hoping to get a 750 or higher and ended up with a 780. Here's a summary of my study/practice strategy and my experience.

**Classes and Practice Tests**

I took Manhattan GMAT's online course over the fall, from September til December (9 courses). Overall, I think it was pretty good. MGMAT's strenghts are Number Properties, Word Translations, and Sentence Correction. I didn't like their RC and CR methods -- I'll explain my reasoning behind this later in the post.

The MGMAT tests are probably the closest to the real thing (compared to Princeton, Kaplan, etc). I think the verbal on the practice tests is too difficult and the quant difficulty

is about the same...except MGMAT emphasizes probability and combinatorics too much on their tests. The real GMAT puts emphasis on number properties, geometry, and good old algebra.

For the last 3 weeks I used GMATClub's tests (<http://gmatclub.com/wiki/Tests>). The importance of these tests was that they taught me to PAY ATTENTION. For example, "if  $n$  is a positive integer..." --- DON'T TRY  $n=0$  or  $n=-1/2$  when trying to solve the problem! PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS OF THE GIVEN INFORMATION!!! This is where the GMAT catches a lot of people, that's why I double and triple checked everything.

Practice test scores:

GMATPrep1: 700 (Q46, V40)

MGMAT1: 640

MGMAT2: 660

MGMAT3: 730

GMATPrep1 retake: 720 (Q49, V40)

GMATPrep2: 720 (Q49, V40)

GMATPrep1 re-retake: 770 (Q49, V47)

GMATPrep2 retake: 760 (Q50, V45)

GMATPrep2 re-retake: 780 (Q50, V47)

Real GMAT: 780 (Q50, V47)

As you can see, I took each GMATPrep 3 times. Some people only take each test once for practice. I think this is a mistake. The GMATPrep database is pretty big and it's a CAT -- e.g. I didn't see any questions in common between the first take and second. I saw some common questions between the 2nd and 3rd take, but it's still AWESOME practice. The real GMAT has the exact same interface, so there's an extra level of comfort when you've seen the GMATPrep more than a couple times.

## **Quant**

As an engineer by profession, I've always been strong in and had an affinity for math. That being said, I did need help with number properties and Manhattan GMAT was a great help there. Geometry and algebra are my strengths.

One aspect of quant that I believe is overblown is combinatorics. These are pretty rare, and I only saw one on my exam. It wasn't even that hard, I worked it out on paper and didn't use any of the factorial formulas. There was also some probability but it was a medium level question earlier in the test.

## **Verbal**

I always knew that verbal would give me the hardest time. The biggest help for me in this area was [Manhattan GMAT's Sentence Correction guide](#). There is a reason this book is called the "Bible of SC." This is where I learned the real intricacies of the English language such as comparisons, modifiers, pronoun placement, and the like. I read through this book twice during my prep time and I think it was a huge help.

As for the RC and CR, MGMAT encourages taking notes for both. I ended up taking notes only for LONG RC passages and none for the CR. MGMAT's CR passages in their books and practice tests are wayyyy too long compared to real GMAT passages. The short passages on the real test are easy to follow, so I didn't need notes there.

The [Critical Reasoning book](#) was helpful in that it tackles different CR questions that can show up on the GMAT -- i.e. "find the assumption", "strengthen the argument", etc. While the idea is right here, again, their passages are way too complex compared to real GMAT passages.

### **Exam Day**

I woke up at 6:30 am for my 8am test. Took a quick shower, ate breakfast, and headed out to Pearson Vue. I put everything in my locker, had my picture taken, was fingerprinted, and sat down at my computer by 8am. This place had more security measures than a maximum security prison!

The AWA went fairly smoothly. The second essay gave me some trouble as I couldn't think of 3 solid examples to back up my opinion of the author's statement. I finished the 2nd essay with about 2 minutes to go. I took advantage of my 10 minute break for 5 minutes. I hit the water fountain and ate my Kudos bar for energy.

I was very confident in the quant section. I think I got the first 7 or 8 right and then ran into some tough geometry, number property, and algebra questions (including mixtures). From there it just got tougher and tougher. The problem here is that I didn't know which questions counted and which ones were experimental (I've heard ~10 are experimental). I may have spent too much time on some of the experimental, as I finished quant with about 20 second left. The last question was of medium difficulty so I think I got #35/36 wrong. I also remember some hard DS questions that I couldn't figure out -- these turn out to be A,B, or D more often than C or E. So I think I made some good educated guesses.

Took another break, drank my overpriced Starbucks Frappuccino in a bottle for caffeine. Verbal was easier than I thought it would be. Thanks to my expertise (haha) in SC, I averaged under a minute for SC questions. Good thing, because I took forever on the RC passages. I took a few notes on RC, nothing on CR. I do remember drawing a graph for one CR to help me explain what was happening -- The GMAT loves to take simple info and turn it in to rocket science.

I finished the verbal with about 3 minutes left. I verified my information and clicked that I wanted to see my score. I was expecting a score in the 730-750 range and was pleasantly surprised when a 780 popped up. I raised my hand, the proctor came over and said it was only the 2nd 780 she had ever seen. Makes me wonder how rare this really is.

### **Final Tips**

-Study quant basics to death. Don't practice difficult combinatorics and probability

questions unless you are 100% confident in your basic quant abilities. Things like number properties (even/odd, prime factors) and geometry (inscribed triangles, areas, perimeter) are way more common than combs/perms.

-Don't take too much time. Don't be afraid to guess when the quant question is beyond your abilities. This is probably one area where I hurt myself, as I forgot some experimental questions are thrown in and spent way too much time on some questions. This probably hurt me later on in the test as I was rushing towards the end.

-Bring food. This is important. The GMAT is a 4-hour test and you will need the energy. Take your breaks and get some water.

-For verbal, learn SC. It's the only thing that has somewhat of a formulaic approach. Use the [MGMAT SC](#) guide or something else to help you learn the intricacies of the language. CR includes some logic, RC requires good concentration and the ability to read fairly quickly. So practice, practice, practice all three.

-Finally, take each GMATPrep test at least twice, preferably 3 times. This will help you get comfortable with the format of the exam, and more importantly, will get you some practice with actual GMAT level questions. Just uninstall and reinstall the software after you've taken both tests. Make sure to go back and study the problems you get wrong so you can learn from your mistakes.

## **Member=Hello212 →760 (Q51 V44)**

I just got my official score this afternoon and wanted to share the experience and strategies I used on the test. I've been mostly a lurker here but the tips on this board really helped out (especially in finding out which practice tests were good predictors of your score and which ones over/underestimated).

So I wanted to give back. I've listed my own test taking and prep experience below. I got a **760 (99%), 51Q (99%), 44V (97%), and 6.0/6.0 AWA (90%)** by taking a very systematic approach to each of the sections. Of course, the validity of these tips will depend on your own studying style and goals. But this is what I did and it worked for me, so it might work for some of you too. I have it formatted and broken down by section for ease of readability.

## **ANALYTICAL WRITING ASSESSMENT**

### ***1. Analysis of an Argument***

This question will give you a short paragraph, typically about a business-oriented subject (like business operations, pay, profit, etc.), and will ask you (a) whether you think it's a good argument, (b) why or why not, and (c) anything that could be added to make it stronger.

I will answer (a) right now: **it's not a good argument**. In fact, it's an extremely poorly constructed argument. You can probably find 4-5 egregious, damaging flaws in the paragraph that make its conclusion pretty much wholly invalid. My suggestion is pick

your favorite 3 flaws and run with them. If you're the kind of person who likes to rain on people's parades, you'll like this question a lot. I know I did.

Treat this like a critical reasoning *weaken* question. I'll get more into this in the third section, but normally when I go through multiple choice verbal questions I try to answer the prompt even before reading the answers. If you have enough practice doing that, you'll find yourself answering this question pretty comfortably.

I followed a very simple template for answering this question. I listed numbers 1-3 on my scratch paper, and under each number I had the following sub-bullets:

- Succinct description of the flaw (e.g. "Confuses profits with sales")
- Counter example that would make his conclusion invalid (e.g. "High costs would yield very low profit, despite high sales")
- A way to make the argument better (e.g. "Had he discussed costs in his statement then his argument would have been more sound")

Devote a sentence or two to each of those bullet points, and that's it, you have three body paragraphs! Just slap on a short introduction at the top and a conclusion at the bottom and you're good to go. These don't have to be artistic or well constructed or anything like that. In fact, I think my intro was something like "This argument is flawed because it relies on three important assumptions. Any loosening of the assumptions would make his argument less sound". I didn't even specifically discuss the prompt in my intro.

In the conclusion, state your three reasons succinctly.

## 2. *Analysis of an Issue*

In this section, you're asked to discuss your opinion on some polemical or grey-area issue, like "Teachers should instill moral and ethical values in children, in order to ensure that they are well-prepared, productive members of the national community." (I made that up just now, so don't treat that like a real question).

I want to dispel a very popular rumor that's been floating around the GMAT Club forums for a while. Other AOI tip pages often say something like "You need to take one side or the other, don't ever argue for both sides because there's not enough time, etc." I want to qualify that statement by saying that **you can take a side in the middle, but it has to be well-defined**. You can't just say it's sometimes one or sometimes the other; you need to have a distinct and systematic reason for taking a non-polarized stance. Being distinct and systematic is far more important than taking a polarized stance, so if you had to choose between the two, go with distinct and systematic. That's what I did (mostly just to see what would happen), and it worked out for me.

For example, my question was very similar to (but not exactly) something like "The government has the right to intervene in X." My question did not involve the government,

but it was close. Anyway, if you took an extreme stance here, you would say something like "The government does not have the right to intervene in X" and list examples showing why it would be inappropriate for the government to do that. Or you may do the opposite and say it always has the right, and list examples supporting that.

I did something a little different. I said "The government has the right to intervene in X, but has to consider personal rights of the individual as stated in the constitution." I then listed two examples that showed when it was appropriate for the government to intervene, and one example showing what would happen if the government violated personal rights.

Notice that this is not quite one side or the other. Nor is it in support of one side with a sidebar comment like "But the other side has merits too" and then randomly discussing the opposing opinion with no framework in mind. Instead, I consider this an example of a successful essay that is both firm and non-polarized.

Anyway, I wrote about this because I want to encourage you to write *strong* arguments, not stubborn ones. Now, if you think that your strongest argument is one-sided, then go to town with it. For many people, this will probably be the best route. But during the test, when I finished reading my essay prompt, I sort of panicked because I couldn't think of three supporting reasons for just one individual side. I had 15 minutes left and nothing written so I just said "screw this" and wrote out my thoughts. So don't be afraid to write on a qualified stance, but make sure you have a tangible, analytical framework if you do.

As far as execution goes, here's essentially what I did:

- Intro: 2-3 sentences that clearly state your opinion
- Three body paragraphs, with 3-4 sentences in each paragraph
- Conclusion: 2-3 sentences that basically restate your intro but in different words

## **QUANTITATIVE REASONING**

I was an engineering major in college and picked up an 800 in the SAT math section, so I didn't have all that much trouble with the math concepts in these problems. But I was struggling with the trickiness of the questions. I've listed three important things I learned while prepping for this section and how it got me a 51Q.

- **TAKE YOUR TIME.** Back in high school, I was that kid who could finish a 2-hour calculus exam in 20 minutes and then sleep for the rest of the time. The exam would come back with like a 92 or 93 because I made stupid mistakes, but I didn't care because an A was an A. This is not the case for the GMAT. You should go slowly, in order to (a) make sure you read the question properly, and (b) make sure you didn't miss a negative sign or something like that when solving the problem. This helped me tremendously, and because of it I did a lot better than I would have.

- **Read the whole question three times (twice before you start solving the problem, and once before you finalize your answer).** I can't tell you how many problems I missed in my practice because the question asked about *positive* integers or *even* numbers or *isosceles* triangles. I also can't tell you how many times my ass was saved during the real thing by reading the question one last time before I clicked "confirm", and then realizing that I was about to select a "trick" answer choice. These are mistakes that you can easily avoid by paying close attention to the prompt.
- **You don't have to solve the data sufficiency questions, but if you have time, it helps.** This one is a trickier one, since a lot of tip pages will say that you should try not to solve the actual problem if you can avoid it. Solving the problem wastes time, it may throw you off, etc. What I did was slightly different. First, I tried answering the question without solving the problem, and then I solved the problem with the statements that I selected. This is extremely important, as it helps you confirm your answer and be confident in it. But if you're pressed for time, then I don't suggest this. But consider the following data sufficiency question I just now made up:

**Quote:**

What is x?

(1)  $3x + 6y = 9$

(2)  $x = 3 - 2y$

If you don't think carefully about this question, you'll think that you have two equations and two unknowns so you have enough to solve for x. But upon further inspection, you'll notice that the two equations are actually equivalent to each other, so you don't have enough information. Thinking carefully about it may not require you to actually solve the problem, but for probably most people (including myself), it helps a lot.

## **VERBAL REASONING**

Like with the quant section, I didn't need too much help understanding the concepts, but I had a lot of trouble with timing. During practice, I always found myself scrambling toward the end. Below I've listed some tips, broken down by section that helped me earn a 97th %ile verbal score.

### **1. Sentence Corrections**

- The biggest topics covered on this test are parallelism, subject/verb agreement, singular/plural usage, and idioms. In any sentence there can be any combination of these appearing at once. Learn these well, especially if you're not a native speaker. I've heard a lot about MGMAT's sentence correction book. I didn't use it personally, but it seems like it's very much worth it.

- When you read the sentence, spend 10-15 seconds pre-thinking the possible flaw or flaws in the sentence. If the answer isn't "A", then there will likely be more than one flaw.
- Read each of the 5 answer choices. Look for what I like to call "3-2 splits" (though I'm sure other people call it that too). For example, if the first word of 3 of the answer choices is "was" and the other two say "were", then you know that you can eliminate a good number of choices right away. There were several questions in each practice exam (and on the real thing) where I was able to 3-2 split my way to the correct answer without even thinking too hard about the sentence.

## 2. *Critical Reasoning*

- I don't know if I'd recommend reading [LSAT logical reasoning](#) questions to assist your studying of GMAT critical reasoning questions. Granted, LSAT questions are much harder so you might think that it helps you break 700 or something like that. However, the scope of the GMAT CR questions is much narrower than that of LSAT LR questions. Specifically, LSAT LR goes over questions such as (in ascending order of difficulty) find the conclusion, strengthen, weaken, assumption, formal logic, and parallelism. On the GMAT, CR is really just made up of conclusion, strengthen, weaken, and assumption. So the GMAT actually goes over an easier subset of questions and you'd be better off just studying GMAT practice tests.
- Pre-think the flaws to the question before you even look at the answer choices. This will help you determine the right answer choice much more quickly. Read the other answer choices to make sure there isn't an answer that better matches the answer you pre-thought. I never got a CR question wrong in my practice tests and started to breeze through them when I employed this method.

## 3. *Reading Comprehension*

- **READ THE ENTIRE PASSAGE.** Way too many test prep companies (including ones that I've taught for) think that you can read the question and then simply scan the passage for the line that has the answer in it. This is such a bad way to approach the reading comp section, for a number of reasons. First, there's no way you can get the global questions confidently right unless you really read the whole thing to understand the point. The main point may not be in the first paragraph or the last, but might be buried in the supporting paragraphs. Additionally, when reading an "EXCEPT" question, people tend to eliminate answer choices simply because the words from the answer choice are in the passage. This is dangerous, as these types of answer choices need to be highly contextualized. And the best way to contextualize is just to bite the bullet and read the whole god damn passage.

- In almost every situation, the correct answer will be explicitly stated or strongly implied in the passage. Watch out for answer choices that make value-based statements, unless the statement is directly implied from the passage. This one is difficult for a lot of people, especially those who like to read in between the lines. But let me tell you, 99 times out of 100, you are not going to be reading in between the lines on this section; you will be reading directly on the lines. Too many of these questions are answered incorrectly because people insert their own inferences and don't just analyze the passage's inferences.

So take these suggestions with a grain of salt, but I do think some of these suggestions are quite underestimated, though they may be echoed by a lot of people in these forums.

**Member=shkusira →770(O51, V44)**

Hi guys,  
The scores are in:  
**Quant: 50**  
**Verbal: 44**

**Score: 770**

I still cant digest it! Just about 8 hours ago, I was reading the debriefs online and imagining what kind of debrief I would have to contribute. Will it be the one warning people of my flaws during the exam or one that provides advice and tips. I literally froze when I saw the score. The highest that I had managed whilst practicing at home was 750 and that too, I took a day long break between the quant and verbal sections! But it did happen, so the very first lesson:

GMAT is very learnable!  
You do not have to be a native speaker or a BSc in Mathematics to crack this test. Avid practice is your passport to an awesome GMAT score.

I started my preparation 2 months ago and being in banking... That does not mean a lot of time. But quality studying is what matters most. I started off taking a GMAT prep test. Scored 650...didnt get de-motivated because 700+ is what I was aiming for. Then got hold of the following resources:

[OG 11](#)

[OG 10 SC](#)

Sets—The online series with lots and lots of tests.

[Manhattan SC](#)

Manhattan tests

Princeton online free test

[Kaplan 800](#) (The collection of only the hard questions)

SC, RC, CR 1000

Before I delve into my personal strategies..

#### Notes about my actual exam:

- I paced throughout the quant and verbal sections: Did 22 questions in quant when I had 45 mins remaining and completed 25 questions in verbal with 40 mins remaining. However, I became complacent and towards the end of it, I guessed (not educated) the last two questions of each of the sections. I am sure I must have gotten a couple right by luck or else I wouldn't have made the score. It is important to note that you are always under a time crisis in the gmat. Even if you feel you are pacing the test and have saved a lot of time, when you sum up the time it may not be so large after all. This is how the brain works: 'I did a question I had to do in 1 min in 20 secs. So that is like I didn't waste any time for this question. So I have double the time for my next question'. Well well..if you keep thinking this, you'll realize the fallacy of your calculations towards the end when you are under a severe time crisis! At least I did!
- Verbal was easier compared to gmat prep. The passages were very comprehensible and there were almost no hard inference questions. SC were tricky but short. When they are short, you have the time to re-read them and pull out the flaws.
- Took 5 minutes off during each of the optional 10 minutes break. Took advice from someone in this forum and stuffed myself with almonds. Did miracles!

Now about prep:

#### Verbal

Tear apart the sentences of the official guides and gmat prep and use them in conjunction with the Manhattan guide. What you could do:

- Solve the question of [OG 11](#) topic by topic as classified by MGMAT: This will teach you how to attack questions for which you know what topic is being tested
- Solve the Gmat prep, manhattan, [OG 10](#) questions without the guide. This should give you enough practice to identify the topics on your own and then attacking them.

#### Quant

The key is practice. I did the Sets which are perfect to gauge a LOT of important concepts. Once you do the sets, you can always check your answers online as most of the questions have been solved previously. Even if you got the question right, it pays to have a look at the forums as almost all the time they tell you some new and quick way to go about them or perhaps, you could contribute. While on this, I'd like to thank **Ian Stewart**. His posts for certain Math questions are like gems! Sometimes by reading just one of his posts, I felt I did my share of preparation for that day!

#### Writing

Practiced one of each 2 weeks before the exam. Compared it to the one in Official guide and felt I was doing well. Left it at that and just re-read what I had written the day before the exam. I am quite confident about this section as well. I finished 2 minutes before the time for each. I had a fourth important point to mention in the issue section that would have taken a paragraph but when I saw that I didn't have time, I decided to stop. I think it

is better not to mention a point that you cannot develop. Or if you really want to show the reader that you know about this aspect, you could mention it in the passing in your final paragraph.

**Member →Avernusaur →770(Q47, V39)**

## **Unimportant Introduction**

I took the GMAT for the first time in November 2008 and scored 700 (Q47, V39). At the time, I thought I had made the mark. After all, I had hit the magical 700 barrier that everyone talks about. It didn't take long for me to realize that 700 was technically below average all of the top 10 schools. Although I had studied for 3 months prior to hitting the 700 mark, I knew I could do better, so I decided to retake the exam. This time I'd be shooting for 750.

In January 2009, I decided that I would use the [GMAT Club Tests](#) and the [MGMAT SC](#) guide to improve my quant and verbal scores. I finished 2 chapters of the [MGMAT SC](#) guide and quickly realized that this plan sucked. I was still worn out from my first attempt and I didn't have any motivation to study on my own. To top it all off, the economy was getting worse and a lot of people were nervous about the impact on b-school job opportunities. I put the GMAT on the backburner and began to research March Madness strategies to ensure that I would get last place in the GMAT Club March Madness fantasy league.

By the time March Madness was done and I had succeeded in taking last place, [Knewton](#) was offering their course for \$699. It seemed like a reasonable price and the program looked promising, so I paid for the program and chose the session that would run from June – July. So now that you know how I got back into studying the GMAT, here's how it all went down...

I took my [Knewton](#) diagnostic test and got a dismal 640 (Q46, V32). I was pretty pissed off because I only missed 2 questions on the quantitative portion. I couldn't help but wonder if this program was just a marketing scam. Did they sandbag my performance on the first test just to make their 50 point guarantee easier to back? I called [Knewton](#) support and they said they'd look into my results and send me an email. I never got an email.

I went forward with the course and most of it was actually pretty good. As most people will tell you, the instructors are great. The practice material is also really good. Most of their practice problems are official questions that have been rewritten. I actually liked this approach, because it gets you in the habit of looking for the pattern. Rather than seeing a random question, you see the concepts that are being tested. It's also really helpful to practice with questions that are representative of the real exam. I was mostly disappointed with the CATs, which I thought was funny because they're so quick to brag about having the original creators of the GMAT scoring algorithm on staff. The scoring on the [Knewton](#) CATs sucks, but I'm not sure if it's an issue with the algorithm or simply a lack of difficult questions. It was also a little annoying that there wasn't a good library of

information to reference. The concept library was great for seeking explanations to problems you had missed, but there wasn't a clearly organized method for reading material before you're tested on it. This led me to seek resources outside of [Knewton](#).

## The Recommendations

### Quant

For quant, I used Jeff Sackmann's Total GMAT Math, as well as his Extreme Challenge Questions Set. Total GMAT Math is by far the most thorough quant book available for the GMAT. It starts with the assumption that you know nothing about the GMAT and ends with the most difficult subjects, such as combinations, permutations, probability, and symbolism. Total GMAT Math contains every concept that you will need on the GMAT, but it won't expose you to every combination of concepts. This is where the Extreme Challenge set comes in. The question set contains 100 questions that are all 720+ difficulty level. What I liked most about this question set is that it requires you to solve difficult questions by combining concepts. Consider the following question:

*"How many ways can you select 4 people from 5 married couples if no two people from the same couple can be selected?"*

You know that order doesn't matter, but you can't really solve this question with the combinations approach either. What's the solution? You use the permutation approach and divide out the number of ways they can be ordered.

$$(10 \times 8 \times 6 \times 4) / (4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1) = 80$$

Jeff Sackmann's explanations are outstanding and all of these questions appear to be based on official questions.

### Verbal

#### SC

[MGMAT SC](#) is an absolute must. This book will teach you everything you need to know about GMAT Sentence Correction. If you're serious about getting V40+ on the GMAT and you're not already an SC wizard, you have to buy this book. I learned a couple odds & ends from [Knewton](#) as well.

#### CR & RC

I didn't use any books for these sections, because [Knewton](#) is actually really good with these subjects. I didn't use [Knewton](#)'s approach to reading RC passages, but their explanation of question types was really helpful. I'm probably going against what most test prep companies will tell you, but I don't use any tricks for CR or RC. I read the passage and answer the question. For me, it was really helpful to understand the types of wrong answer choices (too extreme, out of scope, etc).

As you can see, I didn't mention [GMAT Club Tests](#) or the Brutal SC document. I've tried to use these resources, but they're just too demoralizing for me. A lot of people really like these resources, so don't be swayed by my opinion, but just know that they aren't the

only resources that will take you to Q50 or V40+.

## **The Test Scores**

[Knewton](#) #1 640 (Q46, V32)

[Knewton](#) #2 730 (Q46, V45)

[Knewton](#) #3 750 (Q48, V45)

[Knewton](#) #4 730 (Q48, V41)

\*I lost faith in the [Knewton](#) CATs and never took the last one.

MGMAT #4 730 (Q49, V41)

GMATPrep #1 750 (Q49, V42)

-9 Quant errors, 6 Verbal errors (1RC, 2CR, 3SC)

GMATPrep #1 RT 780 (Q51, V47)

-3 Quant errors, 2 Verbal errors (1SC, 1CR)

GMATPrep #2 750 (Q49, V44)

-10 Quant errors (timing issues), 5 Verbal errors (3SC, 2CR)

GMATPrep #2 RT 770 (Q50, V47)

-6 Quant errors (finished early), 2 Verbal errors (1SC, 1RC) (finished early)

**Official GMAT: 770 (Q50, V44)**

## **The Ratings**

[Knewton Course](#) 3.5/5 Stars - \$699?

[Total GMAT Math](#) 5/5 Stars - \$50

[Extreme Challenge Set](#) 5/5 Stars - \$25

[Manhattan GMAT SC](#) 5/5 Stars - \$18

## **Incognito →750 (Q50, V40)**

Scored a 740 (97 percentile) 5.5 AWA on my GMAT earlier today. While this is a good score, I'm not sure if it'll do for some of the top 10 colleges that I'm looking to apply (given my competitive applicant pool)

Most of my preparation was over the last 4-5 weeks, though I've been lurking around this forum for a few months now. Hats off to everyone who has contributed so much to this forum. Special thanks to walker and maratikus -- check out some of their quant posts -- their insight into some of the harder math problems is brilliant.

### **Resources used**

[OG11](#), [MGMAT SC](#) guide, GMATClub [math challenges](#)

### **Practice scores**

GMATPrep1 (1) 670 (no prep - sometime in march - breakdown probably around Q48, V34?)

MGMAT CAT1 700 (Q49, V36)

MGMAT CAT2 710 (Q48, V39)

MGMAT CAT3 720 (Q50, V37)

MGMAT CAT4 720 (Q51, V37)

MGMAT CAT5 730 (Q50, V39)

Kaplan Free Online CAT 700 (Q: 35/37; V: 33/41)

GMATPrep1 (2) 740 (Q49, V41)

GMATPrep2 (1) 730 (Q50, V38)

GMATPrep2 (2) 760 (Q50, V42)

GMATPrep1 (3) 760 (Q50, V41)

***Actual GMAT 740 (Q50, V40, AWA 5.5)***

**GMAT Club challenges** (<http://www.gmatclub.com/wiki/tests>)

**Test Correct Total % Correct Percentile**

m01 29 37 78.4% 84.3%

m02 36 37 97.3% 100.0%

m03 34 37 91.9% 97.0%

m04 29 37 78.4% 77.6%

m05 31 37 83.8% 94.7%

m06 29 36 80.6% 89.7%

m07 31 37 83.8% 90.5%

m08 28 37 75.7% 86.4%

### **Math**

I didn't spend a lot of time preparing for Math. Most of my practise was through CATs and GmatClub [math challenges](#). On D-Day, once the quant section was over, I knew I was hitting a 50 or 51. I found it to be much easier than GMATPrep.

I highly recommend the [GMATClub challenges](#). Along with GMATPrep, this is very representative of harder questions on the GMAT. The challenges' questions test your basics to the core, and often combine multiple concepts (difficulty level around 49-51 on the real test). The authors have also done an excellent job of explaining solutions succinctly.

On the other hand, the math in MGMAT CATs is not representative at all. Their answer explanations are good though -- so definitely read them.

I feel a good portion of the math questions in [OG11](#) are in the 600-700 bucket. The ones towards the end are definitely a notch harder.

For a list of in-scope topics, refer [OG11](#). Only got 1 problem on combinations, so wouldn't recommend spending a lot of time on it. Number theory, however, is a must.

This includes problems around prime numbers, inequalities, mean/median (IMO the most important topics), fractions (for instance, understand properties of  $x$ ,  $x^2$ ,  $x^3$  etc for positive and negative fractions). Also understand the concept of slopes (as well as  $x$  and  $y$  intercepts) and triangles in geometry.

### **Verbal**

**SC** -- It doesn't get any better than Manhattan GMAT's SC guide. Read this a few times over. Also solve all questions from their online question bank, and be sure to read and understand solutions for the ones you missed. I find their explanations to be very well written. For all difficult [OG11](#) questions (last 50 or so), read their solutions and understand them thoroughly.

**RC** -- Most questions fall under 2 buckets -- "According to the passage" and "Inferred". The former generally states things directly from the passage. Be sure not to fall for GMAC's common traps (quoting something VERY similar, or "half truths", from the passage). "Inferred" questions require a greater understanding of the passage. Scan the passage for the overall meaning, and paraphrase each paragraph. While reading, look to answer basic questions around the tone of the passage (whether the author is mildly skeptical, supportive, critical, neutral etc), the logical structure of the passage (contrasting multiple viewpoints vs providing supporting arguments for a single viewpoint) etc.

**CR** -- Understand the different question types (weaken, strengthen, draw a conclusion etc). Also read up definitions on the different constituents of CR - assumption, consideration, inference, conclusion, premise, evidence etc. These are especially helpful for boldface questions. If you're weak in this section, I would recommend the PowerScore logical reasoning bible. A lot of people swear by it.

**AWA** -- Bookmark awa templates by Chineseburned at [1-t64327](#). Write out the outline during the tutorial. Spend about 5 minutes thinking through your key points. Treat the argument essay like an elaborate CR problem where you have to come up with potential answers. Approach it from different perspectives ("how can I break this argument?") and consolidate your responses in a draft using the AWA template.

### **Random Tips**

- 1) If you're starting out, read all explanations from [OG11](#) -- including those for wrong choices.
- 2) Process of elimination is critical, especially for harder questions
- 3) If you're a foreign national, don't forget to take your passport to the center.
- 4) [OG11](#) is good for verbal, and just about decent for math.
- 5) I had also heard a lot about kaplan800 so decided to check it out. Definitely good, but

didn't blow me away. Scanned through it and thought their CR strategies were decent. Some of their SC problems were good too. A lot of people find their math review section helpful - so check that out.

6) Timing strategy - I like to divide the exam into 5 segments of 15 minutes each. Consequently in verbal, I look to complete 8 questions every 15 minutes (75 -> 60 -> 45 -> 30 -> 15 -> 0). In math its roundabout the same. There may be a little trade-off due to large RC passages, but after a while, its best to re-adjust and move on rather than getting stuck on a particular question. I finished Math with about 10 minutes remaining and Verbal with about 4 (and I am rather slow on verbal)

7) Do both GMATPreps at least twice. This is absolutely the closest to the real thing.

Well, that's about it. I'll be glad to answer questions.

**Member →mohater →710(Q48, V38)**

Thanks for the well wishes.

To prep for verbal: When speaking, always try to be aware of what you are saying. You will often catch saying things that are unidiomatic or using plural pronouns for singular nouns (among other things). Also, make a habit of reading a publication that you know is scrutinized from an editing standpoint. My major struggle on verbal was sentence correction (SC). Main points I used as a reference base:

***Figure out what the sentence is saying***

***Make sure singular/plural agree***

***Make sure pronoun antecedents are clear***

***Make sure you understand the order of events.***

**Quant: read read read read read.** You need to memorize certain things (area/volume/surface area equations), and for data sufficiency (DS) problems, you need to reduce the question quickly to eliminate the obvious incorrect answers.

SC and DS have similar structure - in one min or less, you can usually eliminate two/three obvious incorrect answers. This will help your guessing on the more difficult (700-800) problems. What I did for SC: I used the official GMAT verbal guide (provided with my MGMAT materials) and went through the problem in blocks of 10, and went through as many blocks as I could in any given day. For the ones I got wrong, I mark them on the paper. I would also mark the ones I guessed on (using a different marking). After finishing all the SC problems, I would go through the ones I got wrong and the ones I guessed on. By waiting until I finished all of the problems, I would not recall the problem nor what I marked the first time around. I feel this helped me the most.

Let me know if I can provide any other details.

I decided to post a full write up based on reading others' posts here.

My main struggle was sentence correction. When you reach the 600-700 and 700-800

sentence correction problems on the GMAT, and can narrow it down to two choices and get stuck, it's almost always an idiom problem. If you're well versed in proper English literature (something I've been out of contact with for some time), it should be fairly easy to pick the right one. I also had a bit of trouble on quant. Mainly because I would solve for the unknowns of the problem and not actually answer the question asked (the the test writers always have an unknown as one of the answer choices).

Key points for those with similar issues: SLOW DOWN when reading the problem. On the exam, it's a good idea to allocate ~2 minutes per problem on both sections. Some problems will take a bit longer, and some a bit shorter, but DO NOT let yourself get stuck for too long. Missing easy questions and not answering questions at all hurts your score a lot more than missing hard questions. Practice setting up quant problems (data sufficiency or otherwise) and always make sure you're answering the question asked.

Honestly, the best advice I can offer is make sure you give prepping for the exam its due time. There is not secret recipe here. **Focus on the weaknesses.**

### **My experience on the GMAT:**

**Try 1 (Dec 2007):** Practice exams were maxing at 640, and based on what I read on forums and based on what people told me, you usually score higher than your practice. I slept well that night, woke up, and made my way to the testing center (nearest one was 50 miles away). Finished both sections and I felt "well" overall. Clicked to receive my score, 610. Not terrible, but not good enough for top tier programs. Never mind that, I applied anyway, but as expected no dice.

After speaking to people on list serves I'm a member of on the topic and reading online reviews about the various prep programs, I decided to sign up for the Manhattan GMAT (MGMAT) online course. It's less expensive than the Kaplan or Princeton online programs and one particular person I was speaking to started in the same boat as me (560 on first practice) and broke 700 after the MGMAT program. The class itself is like any other class room (albeit online). The instructors engage students to chime in and answer questions, and also answer questions during and after class. The out of class work (homework if you will) is VERY demanding. You will need to allocate ~10 hours/week outside of the class to finish all the material. Given my work schedule at that time demanded quite a bit of travel, the out of classwork was put on hold for ~5 months. My online account was set to expire, but I emailed the MGMAT group to see if my access could be extended for a bit, as I could not give the program its due time when I was enrolled and there is a lot of information online (problem sets, labs, practice exams, etc.). MGMAT was kind enough to extend my access for six months (MGMAT offers that for a fee, but it was given to me for free).

Finally, after my last trip for work (March 09, but I'll probably start traveling again soon), I buckled down and studied. From March-May I was finish the online content, while taking the last couple practice exams (MGMAT gives you six practice exams, and you can reset them (by request). The problem is problems might repeat after the reset

(MGMAT assures no question repeats between the six exams). Then May-June I buckled down where I was still struggling the most. I then took the two GMAC practice exams. Practice exams began in the 550-640 (inconsistent scores) when I finished the MGMA program I was in the 670-680 range (consistent scores).

**Try 2 (June 2009):** Felt good the day before the exam. Went over maybe 15-20 problems that day (problems I had already done and wanted to ensure I understood how to approach them/why I got them wrong). Other than that, did no studying and just relaxed. Tried to sleep that night, and did not sleep *at all*. Ended up rolling out of bed at 4:30. Did the normal routine an hour later (morning prayer, breakfast, etc.) and then made my way to the testing center. Felt terrible as the food in my stomach was not sitting too well. Exam started at 8am. Went through both essay sections without too much trouble. Quant: Got stuck on some easy problems I REFUSED to guess on. Thankfully, I made up time on other problems and finished with more than 30 seconds to spare. Got stuck on a couple sentence correction problems on the verbal section, but still finished with more than 30 seconds to spare. Note: I had a much WORSE feeling the second time about my score.

Thankfully, on try 2, I broke the 700 mark. I think I was more stressed this time as I was answering harder questions overall (due to the adaptive nature of the exam). Not sleeping probably didn't help either. I scored both the highest I've ever score on the individual parts and the highest overall score (between both the real and the practice exam). I wrote a review between the two prep programs I tried (it's posted in that section). Here I'll post how I got there (excluding the essay sections).

### **Quant:**

I've always been pretty strong in quant. type problems/classes. My biggest issue on standardized tests is the question doesn't always ask you to solve for the unknown. It wants you to take the unknown and extrapolate out some other value. Knowing people will short read the problem, the answer to the unknown is often one of the answers (this is only true for concrete answers, not variables in solutions). To resolve this - SLOW DOWN. Try to budget an average of 2 mins per question (using the time provided here). Some questions you will use more time and some you will use less. The goal is to make sure you don't get \*stuck\* for too long and MAKE sure you answer what the question is asking.

You can solve all the math problems with Algebra, if you want to spend a lot of time on the problems. Rehashing number properties (probability, exponents, etc.), geometry, simply trig, will help you get through tough problems in a reasonable amount of time. I made sure I memorized the following:

*General rules for quadrilaterals*

*General rule for other polygons*

*Rules for right triangle (especially the special ones)*

*Squares through 15*

(and maybe a few other things I'm not recalling right now. I'll edit this post if anything changes).

### **Data Sufficiency:**

The problem can usually be reduced to something simpler.

i.e. If the question is asking "if X and Y are both integers, is  $x-y-5 > x+y+3$ ?"

You might look at the problem and say "ok, I have two variables so I either need two equations or two variables." The problem is you can reduce the inequality as follows:

Subtract X from both sides ----->  
 $(-x)+x-y-5 > (-x)+x+y+3 = y-5 > y+3$   
Add Y to both sides ----->  
 $(+y)-y-5 > (+y)+y+3 = -5 > 2y+3$   
Add 5 to both sides ----->  
 $(+5)-5 > (+5)+2y+3 = 0 > 2y+8$

You now have "if X and Y are both integers, is  $0 > 2y+8$ ?"

X is irrelevant now. All you need to know is y and you can solve for the inequality.

Reducing the equation lets you know "what do I really need to solve this"

Also, problems can always be set up in this fashion

***AD / or / BD***

***BCE / ACE***

If the answer is not A, it cannot be D (or if you start with b and if not B, it can not be D). Then, go through the elimination process to eliminate the remaining choices among ACE or BCE. This will improve your chances of guessing on the more difficult questions you get stuck on.

### **Verbal:**

I was pretty strong on reading comprehension and critical reasoning to begin with. One of my biggest obvious problems on verbal was I could not be captain obvious. If I found a problem where the solution was essential verbatim of what was in the passage/argument, I would rule it out as being "too obvious". Often, I was wrong on those. Please note: the solution **MUST** be verbatim for this to be the case. Some solutions change slight wording (sometimes/always/never/etc.) and is **NOT** a verbatim rehash of what was in the passage or argument.

My main weakness verbal was sentence correct. I am Ralph Wiggum from the Simpsons

(cartoon here in the US ("Me fail English, that's impossible")). The following strategy worked for me:

- *Ensure pronouns have clear antecedents (must BE very clear, and some pronouns, like "which" have very specific rules).*
- *Ensure the number agree (i.e. singular subject, singular verb)*
- *Make sure the sentence makes sense (order of operation, things listed, present perfect, past participle, etc.)*

Also, a similar strategy exists between both Data Sufficiency and Sentence Correction: You can usually knock off 2-3 wrong answers very quickly (within one minute). This, again, will help your chances with the high level (700-800) problems when you need to guess.

For critical reasoning:

I would list out the options (A,B,C,D,E) and use some to make's relationship to that statement/argument (i.e. "a +" if it strengthens the argument, or "a -" if it weakens the argument). Again, on the very difficult problems, you could quickly reduce two or three options and increase your chances on the upper level problems).

Hope this helps, please post any questions.

-Muhammad

### **Member →guptaji →750 (Q49, V42)**

#### **Background**

I'm an Engineer from India. Graduated in 2005 and worked with a Global Manufacturing giant for 1.5 years. Joined a startup in the Building Materials industry and have been working with their Operations team for the past 3 years.

Decided to give my GMAT in 2007.

GMAT attempt 1- Nov 2007: 680 (Q49, V34)

GMAT attempt 2- Oct 2009: 750 (Q49, V42)

Decided to retake the GMAT 'cos neither was 680 reflective enough of my capabilities, nor was it good enough. I knew I had to work a lot on my verbal to improve my score. I restarted preparing around about feb or mar in 2009.

This is a list of material that I used most extensively:

#### **Verbal:**

1. [Manhattan Sentence Correction](#) Guide 4th edition
2. [Official Guide 10](#), 11 & 12
3. [Verbal Review for Official Guide](#) 1st & 2nd Edition
4. Manhattan GMAT online forums
5. [Kaplan 800](#)

#### **Quants:**

1. Official Guides
2. CAT (Indian MBA entrance test) material
3. [GMAT Club Tests](#)

#### **Test Resources:**

1. GMAT prep (latest version)
2. GMAT prep (older version)
3. Powerprep
4. Manhattan GMAT tests (MGMATs)
5. [GMAT Club tests](#)

#### **Sentence Correction**

SC was my weakest section and one that scared me the most. Going into the GMAT it was my strongest section..!!

**[Manhattan SC](#) guide is a must have** for anyone looking to do well in SC. Buy the latest edition if you do not have it already; you'll get access to the 6 MGMATs as well. Do [OG10](#) and [OG12](#). You can skip [OG11](#) if you like. Go thru' the explanations given in the OGs; they are invaluable. And please **do the OGs at least twice.** [Verbal Review for Official Guide 2nd editions](#) is also highly recommended.

Stay away from 1000SC if you are just starting your preparations. They contain a lot of non-standard questions and some of the answers in the guide are wrong. You can use it later on in your prep, when you are more confident with SC. Also, [thousandsc.blogspot.com](#) is a great resource for answers and explanations.

Start referring the **Manhattan GMAT online forums**. The teaching staff is very active on these forums and always offer great solutions and explanations. Stay away from other online forums for SC and their typical "SC question of the day" and "SC discussion" type of threads. The reason is that none of the posters in these threads are experts (except maybe a few) and often endorse the wrong answer and explanation with all the confidence in the world. You'll only end up getting confused. Also, a lot of the questions posted in these threads are non-standard questions and not reflective of the GMAT.

#### **Practice, Practice and more Practice..!!**

This is the only way to improve your SC performance. With enough practice you'll be solving SC questions in less than a minute's time. Most SC questions have the **3-2 split**. You'll start noticing it as you practice more and more. Eliminate bad choices immediately. Typically you will end with 2 close choices with even the toughest of SC questions.

#### **Critical Reasoning**

This was always one of my stronger sections. But yet, I found it to be the toughest on the GMAT. The difficulty level of CR questions on the GMAT was definitely tougher than what I had come across during my preps.

OGs and the Verbal Review are the best resource yet again. Do as many questions as possible. With enough practice you'll start seeing certain patterns. Strong language and assertions are normally never right when it comes to evaluating an argument or determining assumptions.

There aren't a lot of rules that one can use for CR and there is not much you can do to improve your accuracy other than practicing as many questions as possible.

[PowerScore CR](#) bible: I never read it cos it was a huge document, but I hear great things about it. Do it if you have the time and feel it is necessary

[Manhattan CR](#) guide: It's a short guide and pretty concise. Go thru' it once or twice.

### **Reading Comprehension**

Another problem area for many. I was scared of passages on feminism, labor reforms, civil rights etc earlier, But by the time I took my GMAT I was getting every RC question right on my [GMATprep tests](#) and wouldn't be surprised if I got them all right even on my GMAT.

The key here is to understand the passage clearly instead of looking at the questions and searching for the answers in the passage. During your preparation, **take your time to understand the passage before attempting the question. It's ok if it takes multiple reads before you understand what the passage is trying to say.** With practice your speed and accuracy will definitely improve.

Again, there are no rules or tricks for RC. You have to figure out which strategy works best for you. What works for one may not work another.

Start reading quality editorials and articles online. Suggested resources: articles and editorials in New York Times and WSJ (these should you help you with your grammar and general diction as well).

### **Quants**

Having taken my CAT (an Indian MBA entrance test) multiple times, I was pretty comfortable with PS. But DS is the real kicker here. I screwed up my quants royally on the GMAT. Ended up with a mere 49 when I should've scored at least 50..!! Reason: lack of practice and speed. **Do not take Quants lightly.** If you think you are good, then aim for 51..!!

DS is very very different from the questions you see in CAT. And tough DS questions are what will decide your Quants score.

Except for a handful of good questions, OG's are crap when it comes to Quants. I would suggest the [GMAT Club tests](#) and MGMATs (**Manhattan GMAT**) for better and tougher questions. **Number systems** is the most important topic in DS on the GMAT, so be thorough with your basics. Please go thru' the Quants theory in the OG to understand

the scope of what is tested. Do not waste your time on learning things that will never be tested on the GMAT.

GMAC offers **GMAT Focus** for \$25 on their website. This is supposed to be pretty good. Never tried it though. I did not go thru' the 1000PS and 1000DS documents, so can't comment on them.

### Tests

Good quality tests can make a big difference between a good score and a great score.

**GMATprep:** What you score on the GMATprep before your GMAT will be within 10-20 points of your actual GMAT score.

Not many people know this, but **There are two versions of the GMATprep software:** one is the latest version on mba.com and the other was released a couple of years back, in 2007. Download both for extra practice.

Attaching the links for both the GMATprep versions:

**Old GMATprep Version:**

[http://www.2shared.com/file/2404941/b43 ... Setup.html](http://www.2shared.com/file/2404941/b43...Setup.html)

**New GMATprep Version**

[http://www.mba.com/mba/thegmat/download ... onsoftware](http://www.mba.com/mba/thegmat/download...onsoftware)

**PowerPrep (this is a really old version)**

<http://ftp.muw.edu/Utilities/GMAT/ppgmat30.exe>

The GMATprep exams can be taken at least twice without seeing too many repeat questions. Please make sure you take at least 2 GMATprep exams right before your GMAT at the same time as your GMAT appointment.

My GMATprep scores during my preparation:

1. GMAT prep 1 (2007) -770 (Q50, V47)

2. GMAT prep 2 (2007) -750

3. GMAT prep 1 (2009) – 750 (Q50, V41)

4. GMAT prep 2 (2009) – 750 (Q49, V42)

Before my GMAT

5. (9 oct) GMAT prep 1 (2007) – 770 (Q50, V45)

6. (10 oct) GMAT prep 2 (2007)– 760 (Q50, V42)

7. (12 oct) GMAT prep 1 (2009) – 770 (Q50, V45)

8. (13 oct) GMAT prep 2 (2009)– 750 (Q50, V40)

9. (14 oct) GMAT prep 2(repeat) (2009) – 780 (Q51, V47)

### **MGMATs**

They are great for Quants practice and good for verbal. They are CAT in nature and the scoring algorithm is pretty accurate.

My average score over 6 MGMATs: 730 (don't have the breakup)

### **KAPLAN tests**

**Please stay away from these.** They are just bad practice material. They not CATs and have very poor questions.

### **PowerPrep**

These tests are excellent during the initial stages of your preparation. The scoring algorithm is the same as that on the GMAT. But the questions you see on PowerPrep will be easier than those on GMATprep. Also, most of those questions are now in the OGs

### **My G-Day experience:**

I had scheduled my GMAT for 15-OCT at 9.00 AM. Not my preferred slot but this was all that was available.

Starting 10-Oct, I started taking full length GMATprep exams , including both the AWA essays, at the same time as GMAT slot, 9.00AM. Even though, I saw some repeat questions, I was a seeing a lot of new questions.

I wanted to sleep for at least 8 hours before my GMAT, but could manage only 6 as I couldn't finish my revisions and was pretty nervous. Nevertheless, woke up, got ready, had a really light breakfast (just some fresh fruits..!!) and was off to the test center. Had a RED BULL on my way. Reached the test center about 20 mins before my appointment and completed the test center verification formalities. Started my exam around 9.15am with a racing heart!

**AWA** section was as expected; the argument was full of loopholes and assumptions and was easily attackable on multiple grounds. And I had already decided to structure the argument based on my template that I had prepared during the course of my preps. The analysis of an issue was not too tough either, and I was able to squeeze in 3 points/examples in favor of my stand on the issue. Finished both the essays a minute too late maybe.

Break 1: 1 Red Bull + 1 chocolate + Slow breathing for a minute

**Quants section:** I wanted to do well in quants, scoring at least 50, if not 51. And I knew it wouldn't be easy. Based on the questions in GMATprep, I knew I was gonna get some tricky questions which would require both time and speed. And speed was not my forte..!! Anyways, I really got stuck in a 2 or 3 DS questions and I have a feeling I got them wrong, resulting in a score of only 49..!! I Didn't manage my time in the section very well; I managed to confirm the answer for the last question with just 3 secs left..!! Speed and lack of time management cost me dearly in Quants.

Break 2: 1 Red Bull + 1 chocolate + Slow breathing for a minute

**Verbal:** I knew my Quants performance was not up to the mark, but I just told myself that you have done better than you think and you are gonna make up for lost ground in the verbal section. Didn't let a single negative thought pop into my head. Started off with

a couple of SC's, followed by a couple of close SC's and CR's. My strongest point in Verbal was my RC. I was getting all my RC questions right on all my GMATprep exams and had been feeling very comfortable with RC's on such tough subjects as feminism, civil war movements in America, socialism etc. I wouldn't be surprised if I got all my RC questions correct on my GMAT. I was really quick with all the SC questions, and was feeling very comfortable with whatever the GMAT threw at me. There were a couple of really close questions in SC, but I think I got them right. CR turned out to be my nemesis. Long passages with 2-3 very close options. I wasted a lot of time on some questions and still wasn't sure of my answers in some cases. In spite of a very good pace thru' my SC and RC questions, I had rush thru' my verbal section towards the end. Had to finish 12 questions within a mere 12-13 minutes. I knew I had one RC left, and was sure it wouldn't be a tough one. I decided to guess on the CR questions and breezed thru' my remaining RC and 4-5 SC questions. The strategy paid off well as I had enough time to finish my verbal section. Said "Yes" to the final question in the section and heaved a huge sigh of relief .. !!

Was given some survey questions to fill out and I was in no mood of doing anything other than looking at my score..!! I was zoned out and had no patience to sit thru' a bunch of boring questions. Decided to leave them unanswered and went to the report scores screen.

The moments the software takes to show you your results were excruciatingly painful..!!

When I saw my score, I was over the moon literally. Punched my fist in the air a few times and kept saying "YES.. YES.." to myself. I got exactly how much I wanted..!!

Came out, called my folks and some friends..

### **My tips for the G-day:**

- 1. Get ample sleep.** GMAT can be very fatiguing, both mentally and physically. (On your way to the test center, listen to your favorite music, music you can sing along with, to calm nerves or whatever that helps..!!)
- 2. Take it easy on the day before your GMAT.** Just take a GMATprep and do some basic revisions. Don't study anything new. It's not worth it. Trust your preps and sleep early.
- 3. Take your favorite energy drinks and chocolates with you.** These things give you instant energy and are digested very quickly. Munch something light in the breaks even if you are not feeling hungry.
- 4. Take full length GMATprep exams in the days leading up to your GMAT, including AWA essays, timed breaks et al.** It will condition your mind and body to sit thru' the actual GMAT. (it's easy to neglect the AWA section when taking mock tests, but, trust me, that's a bad strategy. The two essays can be mentally fatiguing and can leave you tired and stressed out for Quants and Verbal, if you haven't had enough practice).
- 5. Prepare yourself mentally before every section.** Even if you are not doing well in the first few questions of a particular section, you CAN make up for lost ground by getting a

string a correct answers. **Whatever it is DO NOT THINK about the previous question. IT IS A BIG BIG mistake.**

**6.** Do not try to judge the difficulty of the questions you are getting. Even if you get the first 15 questions right, you will see a few really easy questions, 'cos that's how the GMAT is designed. And remember, more often than not, you are doing much better than you think you are.

**7. If you have had a bad section, forget about it and move on to the next.** Don't screw up your next section thinking about the previous one. A lot of people make that mistake and end up with scores much lower than what they deserve.

**8. WHATEVER** you do, manage your time and answer all the questions in the section. Leaving a question unanswered will affect your score adversely. Guess the last few questions if you have to, 'cos chances are the GMAT has already determined your score, but leave nothing unanswered.

I'm sorry for posting such a long post, but I do hope that at least some of you can benefit from my experience.

Thanks for reading and All the Best. Would be more than happy to answer any queries any of you might have.

**Member Audio →750(Q49, V42)**

Just wanted to share my GMAT experience. I just took the exam today, and I got 750.

My prep material was:

- Manhattan verbal books. I didn't open the RC and CR ones though. As a non-English native (although I have a very good grasp of English), [Sentence Correction Book](#) was essential. It really helped me improve my verbal skills.

- [Math challenges](#). Great practice for maths. I recommend this to everybody, especially considering the price, best value for money I've seen. <http://gmatclub.com/wiki/Tests>

- [OG ed.11. Good basic practice exercises](#).

- 1000 tests.

Background: I studied business in uni, with a strong emphasis on maths, chemistry and physics in the first years (commercial engineer, for those of you who understand what it means). So I've always been comfortable with figures and speed tests (did CFA 1st level too). I lived in several English-speaking countries, so I'm quite comfortable with the language, but I'm not perfectly bilingual. Some idioms were a bit tricky for example.

I'll split my explanations in maths and verbal.

**Math**

I did almost all the challenges, and did the difficult exercises in the OG. Maths was always going to be easier for me than verbal. I did have to polish my math theory, because I forgot a lot.

My recommendation would be the following for those of you who are not poor in maths (sorry if this sounds like I'm bragging): the OG math theory is sufficient to revise most of the principles you need to know. What really helped though were the "tricks", for example in order to add several consecutive integers, take the middle figure and multiply it by the number of figures, etc. This could sound like basic stuff for the math gurus, but I forgot most of this, and it's VERY VERY useful in a test where speed is essential. Anything that can make you save time is good, you'll definitely need it. Surf on the [math forum](#) to check for this.

Also, knowing that you can use several methods to find answers was very useful - this might sound very stupid, but before going on the forum I never thought of replacing figures in the different results, etc. Try to identify the easiest method for each question. I still made that mistake in the exam, trying to solve a complicated problem without replacing, cost me 1.5 minutes, which was ridiculous.

Also, you HAVE to know the basic stuff inside out: 1 is not prime, 0 is even and isn't negative or positive, etc. The corollary of this is: read the question CAREFULLY. If we speak about a POSITIVE INTEGER, you can forget about -0.5. Inversely, an integer can also be  $\sqrt{2}$ . NEVER forget to test special figures such as 1 and 0 in the DS questions.

The best practice I found were the challenges, that are - I reckon - quite similar to what you are going to get on the GMAT. CONgrats to the people who contributed to their creation btw, you guys are spot on. Well done. 79\$ for that kind of practice is

ridiculously low (especially with the very high euro      ), don't hesitate and get it!

This is all I used for maths, and it was enough. I don't think I could increase my 49 without practicing like a nutter - not worth it. I think that was my limit.

## **Verbal**

I'm not very good in verbal. Like all the international students, I struggled with SC. I practiced RC and CR with the 1000 tests (did 120 of each), and that was enough for me. I studied SC with the Manhattan book. I would like to stress here that this book was a BIBLE for me. SC was much clearer to me after that, as well as understanding the  $\frac{3}{2}$  concept. I would recommend all the international students to get this book.

Last remark: I also don't believe in studying 6 months before the exam. Regular studying + 2 weeks intensive before the exam should do it (I took 2.5 weeks off, where I wrote a couple of essays and studied).

Anyway, if you have questions, please don't hesitate!

## **MBAgirl2010 →710 (Q47 V41)**

Hi everyone,  
after soaking in a lot of strategies from this forum and covering most 700-800 targeted material out there, I crossed the great barrier score. First, I want to say a big thank you to all of you. Second, here is what I found out:

My initial experimental tests (no prep) ranged between 550 (81 percentile on Kaplan) and 650. I was looking to get into a bracket higher than that so I researched 700-800 score materials and got these, reading them in the following order:

**Kaplan 800** (fast read, easy questions, neat quick fix strategies but no theoretical substance).

**Veritas Prep on Demand**(I promise it was cheaper when I got it)

[http://www.veritasprep.com/GMAT\\_store/item-details/46/](http://www.veritasprep.com/GMAT_store/item-details/46/) - This gave me the three books from **OG11**, a magic yellow paper + pen combination that followed me through my entire prep process, 15 tests that I didn't do (did one, but most were from other places (800Score, Arco, 5-6 **Veritas** tests) and the one I did seemed easy), 16 or so online lectures and the **Veritas** books. The **Veritas** books were precisely the same as the lectures but also had a ton of Exercises. So If you have the books, don't bother getting the lectures. **Veritas** has much less theoretical content than ManhattanGMAT (bellow) but had much much more exercises that were focused specifically on the material. They had several tricks different from Manhattan, but I found most of those hidden in the linked pages bellow on this forum. One thing really helped - the Probability and Combinatorics section of **Veritas**. They actually separated Permutations, Combinations and Probability into separate sections in one book with separate exercises on each and then combined questions for the rest of the book (100+ questions). Unlike the Manhattan Probability material, the **Veritas** one + the **Veritas** exercises actually stuck with me. The only two sections in **Veritas** I would recommend are the Arguments and the Probability/Combinatory books. For the rest - get ManhattanGMAT and read this forum.

**Manhattan GMAT** all 8 books which come with test banks and 6 kick-ass full CAT tests. Those 8 are best possible theory books you can get if you have the patience to go through the full material. I did and it took a 12 day vacation + several weekends to complete them. I also did all exercises after each section, because brains can't be trusted to apply everything they read weeks after they read it. Here is how the MGMAT helped:

- Practice turned the valuable concepts into intuition for me -so I highly recommend practicing the concepts without delay after reading them.
- The Manhattan Q-banks are small and targeted to each book, but they will still kick your butt.
- The Manhattan CATs have tougher Math and fairly tricky Verbal. The math always took more time than was allotted so they made for excellent timing practice. I kept getting 47-49 on my Math after reading everything I could read about the GMAT math section.
- Manhattan Verbal was OK and I had no issues with timing in it (always finished 5 minutes early) except I could not get over V37 for 5 tests in a row. I felt like I had

platted. At this moment of great frustration came the GMATClub and saved the day. Just a couple of days of reading everything linked here:

[everything-you-need-to-prepare-for-the-gmat-revised-77983.html](http://everything-you-need-to-prepare-for-the-gmat-revised-77983.html)

and here:

[new-to-the-verbal-forum-please-read-this-first-77546.html](http://new-to-the-verbal-forum-please-read-this-first-77546.html)

I was scoring 45 on the Manhattan CAT verbal during the last week before my exam.

**Original Guides 11ed** -needless to say, those were a must read. Though because some questions repeat between the OG and the GMATPREP software I think I got a deceptively high Score on my GMATPreps.

Here is my order and scores on tests:

GMATPrep1: 740 (first attempt - right after I read the [Veritas](#) and Manhattan guides)

MGMAT1: 700

MGMAT2: 690

MGMAT3: 680

MGMAT4: 680 (imagine the frustration piling at this point)

GMATPrep2: 710 (first attempt - checking my sanity after the negative progression in scores )

GMATClub strategy days

MGMAT4: 720 (q:44 v:45) (things were looking up, though I did miss 3-4 math questions because of timing)

Actual GMAT: 710 (q:47 v:41) AWA:5.5 - slowed down on two verbal questions and that made me rush through 4 in the end though I do think I got 2 of those (non-sequentially) right.

Oh and I did do 1000 of all the OG questions in the books (started with the harder questions, in case I ran out of time for the earlier numbers, and I did run out of time) and I did do those at 60 per day for a few days + 1 day when I did 300 questions. My scoring average was 85-92% right on most questions (85% on the hardest 20 questions of each section)

Word of Warning - some of the strategies on the verbal side that I learned on this forum slowed my reading a bit for a better score, but also made me have to catch up in time for the first time in my verbal testing experience. So more practice on my side would have been good, but it didn't help that I found the strategies during my last week before the test. The links are above, make sure to read those early in your testing practice

Here are the strategies that helped the most during test day that I learned from this forum:

1. I memorized the 15 minute interval table and wrote it down on my pad before each section:

Time left | Q#: Quant | Q#: Verbal

75 | 1 | 1

60 | 7-8 | 8-10  
45 | 14-15 | 16-18  
30 | 21-22 | 24-26  
15 | 28-29 | 32-34

That really helped keep my time in check, except for the two questions in the verbal section that I slowed down on after only 15 minutes were left (that was on my hour # 6 of being under stress so I was getting tired).

2. I had also followed the Ursula's prep advice and jotted down all of my errors and reasons for the errors (careless, slow, unsure, etc) throughout my entire test preparation

3. I had read all of the Sentence Correction notes shared by people on the forum and spotted the because/in that and a couple of other tricks during the test.

4. During one of the Strategy discussions here I learned that messing up several questions in a row affects your score far worse than having right/wrong/right/wrong/right. So any time I was running out of time, I made it a point to do the remaining questions in this pattern until I caught up with my timing: guess a question / do a question / guess a question / do a question .

What happened on test day:

- Got up at 5am for a test at 8am (drive, food, dog-walking, and freak-out time was budgeted in). By 11:00 - 11:30am the words were blurring on my monitor and I was running low on brain 'RAM memory' (for non-computer folks, its the ability to remember content long enough to answer questions without re-reading). Though I did wake up at the same time and did the same ammount of work at the same time for 4 days in a row before the test.

- Did some questions in each section before going to the test center - several I inevitably got wrong but that was the purpose of doing the testing - it helped my brain ramp up to a its standard level safely without messing up important test scores.

- Took numerous "breathing" and "hands over eyes" breaks to reduce stress both before and during test breaks.

- Took every single minute the test gave me for a break. **BY THE WAY: GMAT HAS CHANGED TIMING ON ITS BREAKS - BREAKS BETWEEN SECTIONS ARE NOW 8 MINITES LONG.**

- The questions in the Math section all looked easy, in comparison to the Manhattan CATs. And they were not too layered. I didn't get a single probability or combinatorics question, which was not necessarily disappointing. Mostly number properties, inequalities and equations. With a few rate and time questions.

- The verbal was ok, though I did get a couple of questions that took me longer than usual  
- on SC, one CR. The passages were medium length with mostly 3-4 questions per passage. The shorter the passage, the nastier the questions, as usual.

### **The AWA:**

I have done some blogging in the past, and I did the AWA part to each sample CAT I have taken before the real test. The most useful AWA prep for me was a tiny book called ARCO - "Answers to the real essay questions." The 30-40 or so pages of strategies in the beginning of that book were worth their weight in gold. After scanning through 2-3 of their essay questions and following their strategy I did two random Essays from the real AWA Q bank and did beautifully with time to spare. In two hours, on the day before the test I felt ready for my AWAs. During the test, I used the same strategies and I think I did well. The tests questions were not the easiest, so I'm glad I took a few hours to prepare.

### **TIPS FROM ME:**

Study theory before you starting to do tests for 4 reasons:

1. When you start doing tests, the reasons for your mistakes may get blurry and the stress and pressure will make it less obvious to spot what you don't know.
2. Practice makes good strategies intuitive, and stress will wipe out anything that is non-intuitive during the first few minutes of each section of the actual test.
3. When you start doing tests, you want to do more tests to beat your own scores thus studying gets very boring and harder to do.
4. No matter how many tricks you know, the GMAT tests knowledge of the concepts. So learn the theory behind the math and verbal. There will always be more tricks, but that's because they reflect the attempt that GMAC is making at going around the tricks GMATters are sharing online.

Reading the material on this forum will most certainly speed up your study process.

### **Sterny → [gmatclub.com](http://gmatclub.com): 750 (Q49, V44)**

Just gave the test today and got a 750 (Q49, V44). While overall I am definitely happy and relieved I must admit I am a little dissapointed with the quant score. Never scored less than 50, but some stupid decisions I made during the test cost me a 50+ quant score.

Here were my test scores:

GMATPrep1: 760

GMATPrep2: 760  
MGMAT 1: 760  
MGMAT2: 750  
MGMAT3:750  
MGMAT4: 730  
MGMAT5: 760  
MGMAT6: 770

GMATPrep2 (retake): 790

Preparation:

OG - First of all I personally do NOT believe that the OG is the bible. OG is just the first step and by no means will it prepare you for a 720+ score. 80% of the OG is way easier than Gmatprep and the actual test so keep that in mind. Do not built false confidence by doing well in OG. OG should be the FIRST thing you do and thats it, after that you must move on to more difficult sources.

MGMAT - The best CATs by far. I would highly recommend them

SCs - [Manhattan SC](#). A lot of people swear by this as the SC bible, but once again I beg to differ. I think it is a stepping stone, but by no means is it the be all and end all of everything to do with SC. In fact the book doesnt cover a lot of the ground for the really tough SCs in GMAT, such as Ellipsis. However, this MUST be the starting point for all study in SC.

The best source for SC in the last 2 weeks of prep is the GMATPrep document on this website that covers ALL of the problems posted in GmatPrep. Once you go through that you will realize that for the most difficult questions, simple parallelism, pronoun rules don't suffice. Learning about these problems is the single most important thing you can do for SC prep.

CR/RC - Practice, Practice, Practice. No material to learn here, the more you practice the better you become.

Finally during your practice tests, whenever you get something wrong, don't brush past it, but understand why you went wrong. Search for the problem on this forum or the Manhattan forums (highly recommended)

Now onto quant.

Now during the test, I felt like I was doing well in the first 15 qns of quant and got some tough DS's, but then I got a nasty DS that stuck with me through the test. I should have guessed and moved forward, but I refused to let go. I wasted about 7 mins on this and paid for it at the end by guessing the last 3-4 qns semi-blindly. Pick the battles you want to fight.

The [Gmatclub challenges](#) and the GmatFocus tests are the best prep for quant. I also think the MGMAT Quant is of a very high quality. if you an score 49+ in those, you are definitely good.

I did get a couple of Ellipsis on the actual test. There is a [beatthegmat.com](#) document (on their verbal resources page) that explains what an Ellipsis is highly recommended.

Note about the attached document, these will be of no use to you if you don't research EVERY mistake you make. Make sure you **Google** the answer stem you have got wrong, the Manhattan forums and their instructors usually answer the question with great explanation, so make sure you understand those.

Hope it helps!

*Attached docs were GPSC & GPOA (GMATPrep SC & OA)*

I felt the verbal considerably easier than anything I had done. Every SC seemed to be water-tight and apart from a few CRs towards the end and a nasty RC at the very end, I was in control throughout.

So there you go, I am done with it.. Feel free to ask me any questions.

**Pathfinder →gmatclub.com: 720 (Q48, V41)**

Score: 720 (Q48 V41)

### **Introduction:**

Maybe subject should state: "from 580 to 720" since my first attempt was in October 2005. When I scored 580 (Q36 V33). After that I totally forgot about GMAT until I started new round of "preparation" in August 2007. For the exam scheduled in October 2007.

At that time I was not active user of any forum. The only book I had was [Kaplan premier](#) from 2001. And, couple of weeks before exam friend of mine brought me Kaplan800. I thought that should be enough for 700 - 750 score. Fluent in English, have some black spots in math, but, hey I have Kaplan800 - why should I worry. After some 4-5 weeks of preparation I took exam again and bang: 610 (Q42 V31). WHAAAATT? Lower verbal than that in my first attempt. Not should even mention that I was really mad and then I decided to retake and to start some serious learning.

### **Preparation**

First of all, joined Gmatclub and Beatthegmat forums. One of the first things I have noticed on these forums was that words "**Kaplan**" and "**decrease in verbal score**" seem

to be inseparable. Lurking throughout these forums I gathered the list of literature that should be used and I stick to that to the last day of my study:

1) **OG11 with Q and V reviews**. No argue about that, no one can master GMAT without these books.

2) **Manhattan GMAT**. I used all five quant guides and sentence correction book. As I said, math used to be my weak area, but I managed to increase my score substantially by using these books. [Manhattan SC](#) guide has a legendary reputation and I wouldn't add anything here. Simply, must have. I didn't use their RC and CR guides since I firmly believe that only thing that should be used for these areas is OG.

3) Various notes and sheets developed by members of this and other forums (Spidy's notes, Prachi SC blog, TOEFL books...),

4) For math I used some old encyclopedias as Larousse and some old formula notes from 1984.(!). You wouldn't believe how many useful stuff I found in these funny looking dusty books of my parents. Also, for math I bought electronic book from **4GMAT** Company from India. I did that on recommendation of some member of this forum and I loved that book.

OK, what is the point of my funny literature list stated above? Use whatever you want and whatever you can find for Math and for SC. **DONT USE** anything but OG for RC and CR. For RC you may use some magazines such as Economist, although I didn't, you may even use LSAT readings, but if you use LSAT (probably from 1000RC source) use it just for practice of speed reading. This is good source to practice reading a passage less than 3 minutes since their readings are extremely boring and tedious. However, don't try to answer their questions because their assumptions are much deeper and they often tend to get out of scope.

Another useful tool was **GMATprep**. This is by far the most valuable source that one can get free of charge. That resource is a true gold mine; I can only say "GMAC, thank you". Do these as many as you can. This is tool for practice and, although it can be used as a reliable predictor of your test day performance, what is the point of that you realize 3 days before exam that you are going to score 670? Who cares! 3 days before actual exam I don't want to know nothing about my future performance. What can I alter? In the end of the day, you are taking that awful exam in order to gauge your abilities. Let the real exam care about measurements, GMATprep is a preparation tool and should be used for that purpose. And, yes, this is the only CAT besides Powerprep I found useful. Although I adore MGMAT's guides I really hate their CAT's. Manhattan CAT's are awfully tedious and can only lead you to the heart attack. The point of the hard math question is that it should be hard because you have problem to ANSWER it less than 2 minutes not because you can't READ it less than 2 minutes! And that is the problem with MGMAT, their questions are so geeky difficult that something like that will never, and i mean never, appear on the real thing.

### **Test day:**

**The level of actual questions** was very similar to those from GMATprep, even for a

click less time consuming and maybe I even could say little less difficult. Maybe... Anyway, they are on par with GP - both math and verbal.

**On the test day**, I did what I do every morning: ate same damn sandwich I eat every day, drank same coffee I drink every day, read same newspapers... Don't bother too much with "**carb-hydrates-cereals-caffeine-aurine-Huey-Dewey-and-Louie**" stuff! If you drink **Taurine** drinks such as Red Bull regularly (as I do) drink it in the pause. If you don't - drink water or something else you like. Point is: don't make the rocket science of your test day; it's too late for that then. You need a lot of rocket science work before that.

On the test day, go in the test center with all the confidence of this world and destroy the damn thing! Good luck to you all, people!

**Peacevall →gmaclub.com: 760 (O49, V44)**

Boy am i surprised and i'm so happy to get my life back (at least until i start the app process).

Had a 4pm exam in the US  
760 99th percentile  
q49 89th percentile  
v44 97th percentile  
awa 6.0 87th percentile

this score is a shocker. my previous scores:

19 Mar: MGMAT 650 q44/v33  
10 Apr: MGMAT 600 q40/v33  
11 May: MGMAT 620 q35/v39  
7 Jun: MGMAT 670 q40/v41  
14 Jun: GMATPrep 710 q46/v41  
15 Jun: GMATPrep 710 q46/v41  
17 Jun: MGMAT 650 q40/v39  
26 Jun: MGMAT 680 q37/v45 (i knew i bombed the math on this one because i took my sweet time after getting stuck on a few problems)

how i got a 760 blows my mind. i'm one of those folks who always had to work hard to get good grades. i hate math and hate writing, but have decent grammar. i took a MGMAT class to provide discipline to my studies. i had tried studying on my own before and just couldn't get into it, so laying down some cash got me motivated. additionally, work was fairly light while i was taking the class, whereas in the past, i couldn't stick to a study regimen because i'd get home late every night.

also, 3 weeks before the exam, i had basically a month hiatus from studying because i had 3 weekend trips in a row that couldn't be avoided. and i then ended up scheduling the exam with less than 3 weeks before the exam date because work suddenly picked up and i knew i'd be working long hours with a few trips throughout the summer. so i basically

crammed in in a lot of studying and practice tests two weeks before the exam and i think things clicked for me during this time. that's why you'll see so many practice exams taken so close together. [i do not recommend this type of studying. however, i do think it's important to compress your studying so that you can remember everything you're learning.](#) over time, this info will seep away (i'm sure i'll forget everything right away), so you don't want to keep having to remember all those random math or verbal rules just so you can do well on the GMAT.

### **study materials**

- MGMAT class and books
- MGMAT question bank
- [OG11](#) - all 3 books
- Princeton Review & Kaplan to get acquainted, but didn't use those too much
- chineseburned AWA guide - [1-t64327](#)
- testmagic.com
- gmatclub challenge problems - i only did like 3 because i bought them about two weeks ago on an impulse because i started freaking out since i had signed up for an exam 2 weeks away.

i didn't end up using these forums too much for practice questions, except when i had specific questions. i just didn't have time with the class and all the homework. but whenever i found a thread posted on a question i had, i found it super helpful. i also didn't use the additional SC 1000 and other files floating around. those could be risky, especially if they have wrong answers. i'd stick with [OG11](#). if you need more practice, purchase MGMAT's question banks or gmatclub's challenge problems.

[i highly recommend MGMAT materials.](#) in my view, the math is much harder than what's on the GMAT and MGMAT teaches you concepts rather than just strategies. while i took a live class, i'd highly recommend the online or the self-study plan. they also have a separate test bank you can purchase if you choose not to take the class. one thing that is super helpful you get with the class is an excel spreadsheet that categorizes every question type and the amount of time you took to answer the question. there are tables that show average time, % correct, % payoff if you took longer than 2 minutes to complete, etc. so you can really diagnose your strong and weakpoints, determine which areas you should cut bait, and which areas you should work to improve.

### **now, as far as my tips:**

[i wish i had taken a GMATPrep test at the very beginning of my studying to get a baseline of how much i needed to improve.](#) the MGMAT stuff is hard and i didn't realize how much harder it is until months later when i took a GMATPrep test and was pleasantly surprised when i got above a 700. the whole time i was using MGMAT, my scores were variable (as you can see above) and never made it beyond 700. as a result, i never felt good about how i was going to do. taking a GMATPrep in the beginning would have given me a better understanding of how much i really did need to study. you may be

worried that you only have 2 tests with GMATPrep and you'll start to repeat questions if you take it more than 2 times. who cares. the first test you take is a baseline and i doubt that the next time you take it, you'll remember all the answers, especially if it's a while later. i didn't take many practice tests while studying. i took one at the beginning to get a baseline, then focused on learning concepts and getting my timing down. i think it's much more important to understand where you stand versus worrying about seeing repeat questions later on.

### **now on to specifics:**

#### **Verbal**

CR and RC were definitely weak points in the beginning. [MGMAT's strategy of taking notes while reading helped me a lot](#). it takes getting used to at first since it can take longer, but once i had it down i took notes fast and only needed to read the passage once, whereas before i'd need to read it multiple times. i also learned that you are not supposed to do any interpretation at all in answering the questions. the questions are black and white and when it asks for a conclusion, it's based purely on the info provided. not what could be a conclusion given your personal knowledge or other random facts, but only what is written right there in the passage. it's all very literal.

SC is an area i never felt too bad about. MGMAT helped to reinforce everything so i that improved my ability to recognize right vs wrong and the specific areas that GMAT tests for. the area that i don't like is idioms and i don't think there's a way around that except to learn them.

#### **Quant**

quant is definitely a weakness for me, particularly DS. if you're good at quant, then you shouldn't have too many problems with the GMAT. but i've never liked math, so i had to spend time studying here. the best book i used was MGMAT's number properties. there's a lot of useful info in there, particularly about consecutive numbers, prime factors, and exponent rules.

in prepping for the test, understand your number properties, cartesian coordinate system, geometry, exponent rules, etc. [don't worry about combination problems because those will only show up if you're kicking a\\*\\*](#), so if you're just trying to get quant down, don't waste your time there.

in reading questions, don't jump to solving the problem right away. if you're taking over 2:30 minutes to solve a problem, you're probably crunching straight through instead of realizing there's a shortcut to solving the problem (and you really should move on). in studying, i would often read the question and try to solve it. however, reading it, taking a step back, and looking at the answer choices helps a lot. you might realize there's a shortcut you can use (based on number properties) or that the answer choices are so far apart you can estimate the answer.

DS - one thing that helped is writing out the chart AD/BCE or BD/ACE. the other is noting whether you're looking for Y/N versus an actual value. that tripped me up a lot in the beginning.

### **AWA**

i only started studying for this with 2 weeks before the exam date. with MGMAT, they offer to review 2 essays, score them and provide comments. i did it 2 weeks ago, got 3.0s on both and that really shocked me because i thought you basically had to be illiterate if you've got a good grasp of english to get 3.0s. either i'm wrong, or MGMAT grades much harder (or both) but that got me worried so then i searched around for templates and did several practice essays until i knew how i would approach the two essays.

[studying for the analysis of the argument actually helped with CR.](#) the point of the argument essay is to find all the flaws because of the faulty assumptions in the argument. this is exactly what you need to do in many of the CR questions. i'm pretty sure that taking an argument and listing out all it's flaws improved my ability to do CR, so [i'd actually suggest that you study the argument essay somewhat in the beginning of your efforts, instead of waiting til the end when you're about to take the exam.](#)

for the issue essay, just pick a side and don't think twice about it. come up with 3 reasons why support or do not support.

[for the essays, once you've come up with your reasoning, just write.](#) 30 minutes passes by quick. spend 5 minutes coming up with the points you'll make, 20 minutes writing, and 5 minutes reviewing. you need to keep to this time or else you'll spend too much time thinking about what to write and that's about the worse thing you can do. you need your thoughts down and if you don't have them, then your essay will suffer.

for the templates, i basically used chineseburned in conjunction with the examples given in [OG11](#). nothing complicated. learn the structure of the essays so you don't have to spend time during the actual exam thinking about how you're going to structure them.

### **Test Day**

my exam was at 4:15pm so i was really concerned about being alert so late in the day. i didn't get great sleep, probably because of nerves. i think reading too much about people's debriefs the night before the exam got me more nervous. i don't think i felt the best because i had a headache in the morning and actually didn't eat that much prior to, but somehow it all worked out. [make sure you bring snacks to have between breaks. the concentration that you put in really does drain your energy, more so than the practice tests.](#)

to ensure i didn't fall asleep, i drank a bunch of coffee beforehand (something i normally do) and tried not to eat too much food to prevent getting food coma.

i got to the exam early and they let me take it early. i had actually scoped out the location the week before. good thing because it took me 30 minutes to find it. i also wanted to make sure i knew what the parking situation would be like.

during the beginning of the exam, there's a tutorial for 5 or 10 minutes (i forget). you can use that time to take any notes about the essays and test out the keyboard. i wouldn't recommend taking notes about math or verbal since you'll probably want to get a fresh pad after writing the essays, since math is next and requires tons more writing than any other section. i didn't take any notes, but instead typed out my essay templates to get my brain flowing and also to warm up my fingers to type fast. of course your templates go away when you leave the tutorial, so if you want them on paper, use the pad.

after the essays were done, i took a break. i came back with about 10 seconds to spare, after getting checked back in. however, i did not really think about the logistics it took to get me physically logged back in to the computer. (each time you leave, you're logged out of the computer and need to be logged back in by the administrator. you also need to be fingerprinted again and get a new pad if you so choose. this takes about 2 minutes, so try to take a 5-8 minute break instead) my test administrator mistyped his password the first time, so i lost 15 seconds in quant - not a great start since i need every second i can get for quant.

one thing to note is that when you reach the end a section and are about to take a break, the computer prompts you with Y/N whether or not you want a break. **DO NOT CLICK ANYTHING.** get the administrator's attention and wait until s/he comes to you. as soon as you click Yes, the timer starts and if it takes the admin 2 minutes to come, you've just lost 2 minutes of your break. my admin explained this to me in the beginning, so this wasn't an issue. but do get back with about 1-2 minutes left so you can get fingerprinted and the admin can type his/her password.

another thing to note: during the test if you need a new pad, there's no good way to really do it. your admin is most likely not watching the test takers the whole time and could be doing other stuff, such as chatting or cleaning used tablets. therefore, it'll probably take a minute before the admin realizes you need a new pad. you can either raise your whole pad, so that when s/he sees you, s/he may understand you need a new pad and bring one to you right away (though this may not happen). or, you can raise your hand so you can still keep working on the problem, but when the admin comes, s/he will take away your pad and then you're left staring at the screen until a new one comes. either way, you'll lose time so you'll just have to be prepared for that.

in quant, i started with a rate question and i hate those. i ended up guessing because i was a bit flustered after losing 15 seconds and couldn't fully concentrate. i actually thought the quant questions were harder than GMATPrep. i felt like the first few were harder than the first few i got in GMATPrep practice tests. also, the questions just seemed different than what i'd seen in practice. i must have guessed about 5 times in the quant section. i suppose i made some good guesses since i got a decent quant score. lesson is, **don't spend**

too much time on any problem because you want to get it right. you'll more than likely run out of time and who knows, that could be an experimental question. know your weaknesses and when to cut bait. you should practice under timed conditions so you can get a sense of when you're spending too long on any 1 question.

during this next break, i made sure to get back with several minutes to spare so i wouldn't run in to the issue of starting late to no fault of my own.

in verbal, i just whizzed through the whole section. i dunno what happened, but by the time i was down to the last 5 or so questions, i had like 20 minutes left. that has never happened before in any of my practicing. at the end i took about 5 minutes a question since i had so much time left. the last couple were really tricky SCs so that was somewhat helpful to just sit and think. but i still ended up guessing. i felt much more confident about verbal than math since i felt i was getting pretty much every question right, and only had a few i was unsure about.

when you get to the end, more questions appear asking for your name, ethnicity, job, etc. just skip all that junk - it's not required. click through several pages, and voila - you get your score.

good luck everyone! i'm just a regular jane and definitely was expecting to take this 2x. i'm confident that you can beat the gmat! 🍀

If you have specific questions, just ask. I'm glad to help.

### **The Doberman: 780 (Q50, V49)**

After reading everyone else's story over the past few months – I wanted to share my own in case people can take anything away from it. Yes, it's long...

Prep Materials:

[Kaplan GMAT 2010](#) – It was the first book I saw so I bought it. Not bad, but it's lacking good math and language refreshers (later found in [the Official Guide](#)). The test taking strategies were helpful and I stuck with them all the way through to the test. When I was done with the book, I knew I wasn't ready and needed to seek out more sources.

[Official Guide 12](#) – Wish I had started with this one. The lessons (or whatever you call the chapters that give a review of what can be tested) were great. I think the PS examples were a good base, but not difficult enough to really get a workout. I supplemented the tutorials with some basic math textbooks I took out from the library (great for exponents, factoring, geometry, etc.) which gave me plenty of questions to get back to basics.

[GMAT Club Tests](#) – After going through the OG, I knew I wasn't ready for the math and had run out of problems. Came across these on the website and gave them a try. These questions are certainly tougher and being able to use the timer was a good help to get

used to pacing. I used them here and there, sometimes doing a full timed section, sometimes just doing a few questions for practice. Got through about 10 of the 25 tests before I'd had enough. Didn't touch the verbal ones.

The Prep:

When I started my studying, I found the math concepts to be very frustrating – I knew I “should” be able to figure out the answers but couldn't. I realized I wasn't going to be able to just breeze through on common sense and got to work learning the basics (number properties, geometry rules, etc) all over again. The turning point in my studying (which came later than it should have) was when I stopped trying to solve problems by brute force and started to try and figure out what the questions were really asking and what they were giving me. This really helped because eventually I started to see the short cuts in questions which saves time and often makes the math you have to crank out much, much easier. My advice - don't just memorize how to do certain questions even though it's easier and makes you feel better, try to learn why and how you're supposed to solve them (if that makes sense??). With so many possible questions, it is highly unlikely you'd see a question you've memorized how to answer mechanically– but you will see the same concepts and ideas over and over again.

For the verbal, I was pretty lucky. From the start of my studying, I could usually get an idea of what the answer ‘should look like’ and then find it in the options. I used the verbal practice questions to develop a routine for how to approach the different question types so that when it came to the test, I would be comfortable with how to systematically answer the questions. I spent far less prep time here than I did for the quants. I did keep an [error log](#) which was helpful.

I would usually do problems in sets of 20 or so, review the answers and put any mistakes in the [error log](#). I would read the log over from time to time and read it the morning of the exam as well as a last minute reminder not to make the dumb mistakes I had been making.

The only practice exams I took were the official GMAT practice tests which I took twice (once about 4 weeks in, once about 6). Data sufficiency questions were an absolute disaster and overall I was just being careless and rushing through too many answers. When I reviewed the tests, most of my errors were stupid mistakes, not a lack of understanding – I had to slow down and read the questions better. I didn't keep track of the splits, but the quants were around the mid-40s and the verbal a bit higher). The results of those were:

***Test 1 – 710 and 720***

***Test 2 – 720 and 740***

At this point I'd been studying for about a month and a half. I thought I was ready and any score in the 700s would have been good enough for me but when I tried to book a time, I couldn't find a convenient open space for another couple of weeks. I was deflated because I didn't think I could keep motivated until then, in my mind I needed to write it

RIGHT THEN, but I had no other option but to put it off. I took a couple of days off from the books and just attacked it again for the final push. I found I was seeing things better (as in the tricks and traps) and think the little break really helped.

### **The Test Day**

Morning of: I did do some light “practice” in the morning, more just to warm up the brain – some long division, multiplication (no GMAT questions though) and read a couple of RC passages from my prep book (didn’t answer the questions). Read my notes and [error log](#) one last time while trying to stay relaxed. Ate well, got to the centre early (no surprises, the administrators were very nice and helpful) and started about 15 minutes early. For a 6-seat room with a full time supervisor, the sign in and sign out procedures were a little intense, but I digress...

### **AWA**

Nothing surprising here. A flawed argument and an issue you could address from either side. Stuck to a basic structure, put my thoughts, suggestions and examples down. I was very tight for time on both and had to rush the review for spelling and grammar – looking back, I think I tried to put down 1 too many ideas each time which made the essays read like a mess. Disappointed but I wasn’t too worried (it wasn’t a complete disaster), the real test was to come. Took the optional break even though I was tempted to just plow on – I figured clearing the mind would be of more use than getting my score 5 minutes earlier at the end. Good choice – take the break.

### **Quants**

People talk about the first 10 questions being important (they’re all important), but I just tried to get through the first 5. I knew that once I got through 5, my rhythm would get back to normal and the nerves should be gone. It was harder than I thought to just treat every question as a stand-alone rather than trying to figure out what they were telling me about how I was scoring. Before the test, I didn’t understand what people meant when they said that you shouldn’t assume a question is experimental but during the exam I saw what they meant. A couple of times I felt things were out of place – really hard, really easy or just something I wasn’t expecting. You’ll never know for sure what’s going on in the back of the computer, so just stay focused – question by question. Finished just in time, but I was watching the clock very carefully throughout to stay on pace. Took the break again (protein bar, water and washroom this time).

### **Verbal**

The only thing I can offer up here is that I ended just in time even though in my practice exams I finished with 15 or 20 minutes to spare, very surprising. Thinking about it afterwards - for the practice exams, I would answer the question if I was 95% sure and move on but in the real exam I had to make sure I was 100% certain - this ate up all the extra time and made it a dash to the finish. A couple of times I even submitted an answer and clicked ‘No’ when prompted if I wanted to confirm – neither time did I change my answer after going back to read again, I should have just moved on.

Results: Skipped through the optional questions, I needed the number! As it churned

away, I was thinking the number could be anything and was hoping for something similar to my practice scores. At the risk of sounding like the annoying person who says "I think I failed" every time and gets straight 'A's, I just didn't know how I did and felt very uncomfortable. When 780 came up, I just smiled. This test is baffling.

So there it is, my GMAT story. I think I peaked at the right time and the extra push after initially thinking I was ready to go took my score higher than it would have been if I had just gotten it over with. I do not have a math background, nor anything that would make me good at grammar – but I just stuck to learning exactly what they could test and stayed calm. I'm also happy to be an outlier on the "score predictors" based on the practice exams. There surely was some luck involved, but however it happened, my study plan helped me get there. Glad to be over it, but there is still much left to do. All the best to everyone yet to write...

**Wiredo: 710 to 770 (Q51, V44):**

Hi all,

I wanted to share my GMAT experience and, more importantly, the lessons I learnt from the first take, with the GMAT club community.

What I did the first time:

- \* Gathered material based on the books suggested by GMATclub
- \* Reviewed the general guides first - [Kaplan Premier](#)
- \* Worked on the individual guides next - [Manhattan GMAT SC](#), CR, RC
- \* Followed up with gmatclub math tests
- \* Practiced essays
- \* Took several practice tests - Manhattan GMAT and GMATPrep
- \* Studied intensively over the final four weeks leading up to the exam (total prep time equaled 2 months)

***The result:***

***710 (92%ile) - Q50 (93%ile), V37 (80%ile), AWA 5.5***

What went wrong:

I should probably start with why I was dissatisfied with a 710. The average of my final four practice tests, before I took the real thing, was a 760. Against some advice I received, I decided to retake the exam after I saw my score report. To be fair, the 710 will probably not have significant negative impact on my application all else being the same, but I just couldn't sleep knowing that I underachieved by 50 points.

But I digress - ok, back to what I believe I did wrong. I reviewed a lot of things that a lot of people did around the test - take coffee before/during the exam, splash water on the face during breaks, eat chocolate/energy bars/energy drinks, create a grid on the answer sheet using POE for each question, write down a lot of info for each RC....I could go on. In any case, I tried very hard to incorporate all of these into my strategy... and it didn't work for me! I realized I was running seriously short of time after about the 15th

question. I concentrated so much on everything **AROUND** the exam that I failed to focus **ON** the exam, specifically the verbal portion.

What I did differently next:

- \* After much debate, I decided to retake the exam and re-registered
- \* I figured I'd already covered all the material the first time, so I mostly took it easy the first few weeks
- \* Knowing what I did wrong the first time, I took the last few practice exams I hadn't taken yet, applying the new "relaxed" strategy in which I noted down very little in the verbal section and let my brain process more. I did quite well, averaging scores between V41 and V45, and was finishing each of the Verbal and Quant sections with over five minutes left.
- \* I followed the same strategy in the real thing earlier this morning, and had about as much time left again in each section.

***The result:***

***770 (99%ile) - Q51 (98%ile), V44 (97%ile), AWA ???***

Key takeaway:

Read about what has worked for others, but only pick out what works for you. Practice what works for you. Try to finish early in even the practice exams. All of this might seem very obvious (hey, it was for me too!), but I'm a living example of what might go wrong if you try to do too much.

Please post any questions you may have. I'm happy to help.

**River: 740 (Q50, V40)**

I've been reading the gmatclub forum for quite some time and through it I found lots of interesting material, so now it's my turn to give back to the community.

I started my study using Princeton Review. The book is ok, but does not go that much in depth. Possibly it's good to get the overall picture, but it cannot take you to high scores. My first practice test was the Princeton Review online one, after I finished the book. I got 610 (Q48 V26), which seemed normal, because I had an 800/800 at GRE math (quite a few years ago) and I am not a native English speaker.

So, my first priority was to fix my verbal:

- a) SC: The [Manhattan GMAT SC](#) guide rocks! Immediately after finishing it, my SC went way up. I also read the Powerprep SC bible and it was quite good, however the material is also covered in the MGMAT guide.
- b) CR: The Powerprep CR bible rocks! Again, after reading it my CR went up.
- c) RC: I think that the only way to boost RC is by reading Wall Street Journal or Businessweek or something similar. Generally, RC was my weak point in verbal.

After finishing with all the above I used the OG 11th edition + [OG11](#) Verbal + [OG11](#) Math for practice. I did all the verbal exercises twice and my scores were 80-90% in each section.

After finishing with my preparation in verbal, I got around 720-730 in practice tests, so it was time for Math. I bought all the MGMAT math books (5 of them). The ones that helped me were the Word Translation (I've read in quite a few places that this boosts you from 48 to 50-51 and this is definitely true) and the geometry one. I did all the exercises from the 5 books, as well as the [OG11](#) + [OG11](#) Math exercises that were mentioned in the [MGMAT guides](#) (I didn't do any other exercises from [OG11](#) apart from the ones mentioned in the MGMAT books). After this, I purchased the [gmatclub Tests](#). I scored around 80%-95% in the first 5-6 ones, but then the stats changed (because the last year's test takers were added to the calculation) and I fell to ~60-70%. At that point they mostly became a psychological handicap, so I stopped using them 😊 Anyway, at that point I had managed to get unstuck from 48 in math and even reach 51 in some practise tests.

After that in the MGMAT and the GmatPrep practice tests I scored a steady 740-760.

So, my target was 750 and I scored a 740. I think that if I had little more stamina in verbal I would have had a higher score there. Especially towards the end, I was getting pretty tired.

Now, I'm waiting for AWA. Hopefully I'll get a 5/6 and I'll be done with GMAT 😊

The last few practice tests that I gave:

MGMAT CAT 5 (3/1): 740 (Q50 V41)

GMATPREP 1 (3/10): 760 (Q49 V46)

GMATPREP 2 (3/11): 740 (Q50 V40)

MGMAT CAT 6 (3/12): 750 (Q51 V41)

GMATPREP 1 Retake (3/13): 770 (Q51 V43) - There were many questions that I had seen before, but it was a good confidence booster.

I also tried a couple of the Princeton Review practice tests, but they didn't correlate with the GmatPrep ones. Also, I have bought the Kaplan books and CDs, but I didn't look at them.

I think that there are 2 major things that should NOT be done:

1) I see many people, who become focused in having a perfect score in one of the 2 sections (more often this happens in Math, where people are after Q51), but they neglect the other section. So, in the end they have a huge difference between the 2 sections and they ask for instructions on how to increase their overall score. I think that the answer is obvious: after a specific level in math or verbal, you get insignificant results for lots of effort. For example, there is no point trying to go from Q49 to Q51, if you have V30, because the increase V30->V32 is both easier to do and more effective than Q49 -> Q51.

2) From my personal experience, I think that it is easy to get burned, if you study GMAT for a long time. After 2 months of study, we go into diminishing returns (and possibly even negative returns). The exercises become boring, studying becomes careless and it seems useless to start reading another book from the beginning, because you already

know 90-95% of the material anyway (but you still want to read 300 or 500 pages, in order to cover the last details). Therefore, in my opinion, there should be either a set date (e.g. register for GMAT 2 months after you start studying) or a set target (e.g. set a target score, when you start studying and after you hit it for 2-3 times in practice tests, register to give the GMAT in the next week). If there is no target (either score or date), it's really easy to get burned.

I took 2 PR CATs. The first one was 610 (Q48 V26) and it was before I had studied anything. Anyway, that score seemed normal at the time (I had just started studying and I had nothing to compare it to). So, after that I finished the PR book, did some of the verbal from [OG11](#) and I gave a MGMAT CAT, which was 680. After that I studied a few more days (during which among other things, I finished the [MGMAT SC](#) book, which boosted my SC quite a bit) and decided to give another PR test, but I was frustrated to end up with a 650. Immediately after finishing that test, I gave a GMATPrep test, which gave me 690 (even though I was so tired after giving 2 tests one after the other). From that point on, I decided not to give another PR CAT. I don't know, if it was coincidence or not, but my performance at the time felt higher than 650 (and both MGMAT and GMATPrep seemed to agree with that). Also, generally I saw a huge correlation between MGMAT and GMATPrep, so I didn't see any reason to try other tests. My suggestion is that you have 6 MGMAT tests + 2 GMATPrep + 2 PowerPrep (this is the previous version of GMATPrep and you can still find it in the internet) CATs = 10 CATs that have a good correlation with each other. There is no reason to try other CATs, unless you finish all 10 of them and you have additional time, so you want to prepare more. And even, if you're done with them, you can always look at the [gmatclub tests](#), which are excellent for math (the new percentages might crush your psychology; however you'll learn how to recognize all sorts of traps).

### **Prude sb: 750(Q50, V42)**

I took my GMAT today and scored 750 ! I'm soooo relieved to be done with GMAT.

Got my AWA report today... got 5.0

### **GMAT Preparation**

I had quite a bit of old 2003 material (CDs) from my friend - Kaplan, Princeton, ARCO. But, I used Kaplan (a 2003 version), [OG 10](#) and GMATPREP. I did take 1 test each on MGMAT(free test), ARCO and Princeton

#### **Math:**

I had some CAT study material (IIM prep material, not computer adaptive ...) from my friend that I used to brush up concepts. I then tried 30% of the problems in OG (more towards the end of the PS & DS sections). Beyond that my main prep material for math was the Challenges. Being an engineer, I have always been comfortable with math and wanted to concentrate on (1) the more difficult types of questions encountered on GMAT (2) making sure that I do not fall into traps and/or make silly mistakes. For both these challenges were perfect. These challenges are amazing and sensitize you to the right stuff

.. things that the GMAT test catches you on ! .... (For Ex: if the question says positive integers ... do not try -1 or 1/2 ... considering special cases like 0, 1, -1 etc ... silly stuff that we kick ourselves about when we review the results). I actually did almost all challenges other than 14 and 23.

### Verbal

I went through most of OG RCs, CRs and SCs. I used Kaplan to learn some of the concepts and the strategies. I also did a little bit of the 1000 SCs and The Brutal SCs. I felt that SC is really one area that can be easily improved and concentrated mostly on that.

However, RC was what really scared me. Especially because my % correct was lower than desired on Kaplan, but when I started doing GMATPREP I felt lot more comfortable with their RCs and I did not worry much about it. OG, Kaplan (with the right expectation that I wont get all correct) and GMATPREP were really sufficient.

I did not really do much for CR. I seemed to do ok on CRs and so no special prep

### Test Prep:

I first started with Kaplan. I went through the diag, then their practice question sets and then took all 4 tests. Here are my scores

Diagnostic: 670 (first month of prep)

Kap1: 600 (first month of prep)

Kap2: 640 (2nd month of prep)

Kap3: 640 (last 3 wks)

Kap4: 620 (last 2wks, before I started the test, the s/w put up a msg saying that there are not enough q's in the pool and that i should use this test as practice only)

ONE IMPORTANT POINT TO NOTE: DO NOT BE DISHEARTENED BY KAPLAN TEST SCORES !!! These tests are not truly representative of GMAT. They are not only more difficult, their scoring seems to be a little off as well. For the same Q and V score i think Kaplan give atleast 30 points less on the overall gmat score (this is only my observation).

Princeton: I just took one test and got a 730. I took another test but it had literally the same RC passages ... so I aborted the test. This really lowered my expectations for princeton and I stopped using it for any practice tests. I just tried a few SCs practice exercises in the last week of my prep

ARCO: 700-740

I took one test. ARCO really gives a range and not a specific score. This was during the second month of my preparation. This is the range I got for 0 mistakes in math and 11 mistakes in verbal.

MGMAT: 660. Q43, V37 (took on 5th aug)

I took the free test after seeing a post in gmatclub. I was extremely disappointed with my math performance. I took more challenges and brushed up my concepts again following the test.

GMAT CLUB CHALLENGES: These were the most useful for math and my one and only real prep w.r.t math for GMAT. There are many posts that are kinda along the lines of just do the challenges you'll be ok and I could'nt agree more (as long as you brush up your fundamentals prior to starting with the challenges). My scores in challenges were

m01 28 36 78% 119.5278 sec 1250 67%  
m02 29 37 78% 104.3412 sec 1250 61%  
m03 31 37 84% 121.5260 sec 1250 85%  
m04 29 37 78% 120.9915 sec 1250 68%  
m05 28 36 78% 121.4850 sec 1250 76%  
m06 28 37 76% 121.4144 sec 1250 78%  
m07 26 37 70% 121.5160 sec 1250 52%  
m08 20 37 54% 121.4284 sec 1250 39%  
m09 29 37 78% 100.9768 sec 1250 76%  
m10 34 37 92% 119.7262 sec 1250 96%  
m11 29 37 78% 114.7740 sec 1250 65%  
m12 30 37 81% 115.6222 sec 1250 81%  
m13 32 37 86% 108.3051 sec 1250 90%  
m14 10 17 59% 181.4161 sec 1250 1% (did'nt really do this one .. just practice a few qs)  
m15 22 34 65% 132.1935 sec 1250 37%  
m16 28 37 76% 119.6520 sec 1250 70%  
m17 27 37 73% 121.6343 sec 1250 47%  
m18 30 37 81% 118.5166 sec 1250 73%  
m19 32 37 86% 120.4382 sec 1250 79%  
m20 28 36 78% 124.9567 sec 1250 34%  
m21 25 37 68% 121.5905 sec 1250 49%  
m22 32 37 86% 96.9826 sec 1250 77%  
m24 31 37 84% 114.3811 sec 1250 79%  
m25 33 37 89% 94.9273 sec 1250 93%

GMATPREP: This is by far the MOST RELIABLE indicator of where you stand w.r.t GMAT. I tried both the tests multiple times. I had saved these tests for the last 3 weeks.

Here are the details

Test 1: 720 Q48, V40 (aug 7) ... 14 mistakes in math and 8 mistakes in verbal ...

Test 1-2: 770 Q51, V44 (aug 9) ... 2 mistakes in math and 5 mistakes in verbal ... 3 repeat q's in math and 3 repeat q's in verbal

Test 2: 730 Q51, V37 (aug 13) ... 2 mistakes in math and 9 mistakes in verbal

Test 2-2: 730 Q50, V39 (aug14) ... 8 mistakes in math and 11 mistakes in verbal ... many repeats in both math & verbal

Test 1-3: 750 Q50, V41 (aug 14) .... there were some repeats ... interestingly less number of repeats than test 2 first retake.

As you can see, I took both test 1 and 2 at least twice. I also just skipped the quant section and just tried the SCs & CRs (RCs repeated the passages) in verbal section of [GMATPREP tests](#) during the last 2 days ... this helped see the different varieties of these questions and I found it useful. I strongly recommend that you milk this cow as much as possible ... it is well worth it .... one deterrent might be that the explanations are not there but whenever I had doubts about why the OA is correct, I just googled the first sentence of the question and I was almost always able to find the answer. There are multiple forums discussing these questions.

### **Test day**

I was looking for details in other members posts last night and felt that the detailed posts were very valuable. So I'm actually going to be a verbose here.

I had my test at 11am ... but i went to the test center early ... i was there at 10:15 ... the receptionist asked me to go through some rules etc for GMAT ... then she took a photograph of me (i carried a light jacket since i felt the a/c was cranked up a bit when i check out the center a week back and she was quite particular about taking my photograph in the exact dress i was going to wear ... i told her that i was not planing to use the jacket since it is not too cold today .. but she still let me take the jacket in). She then took a palm vein picture ... and then I went to the area near the test room. There was another lady who thoroughly checked all pockets of my jacket. She then took another palm vein picture (she actually took a picture every time I entered and left the room, during breaks). She then logged me in and I was able to start my test at 10:30 !

The AWA was pretty cool first one was an Analysis of Argument where the argument was similar to one I had practiced so it was easy to come up with similar examples. I had'nt practiced essays much ... i had tried writing 2 AA and 2 AI essays before ... and had an issue completing the essays on time ... but I was able to complete the the AA essay well on time. With about 7 mins to spare ... I completed the essay ... checked the flow etc and made minor corrections ... I then submitted the essay with a couple of mins to spare.

The Analysis of Issue essay was ok as well ... topic was similar to the ones in OG ... i was deliberating a little bit before I took a stand ... cos it depended on the strength of the examples for both sides of the issue ... i was finally able to write an essay (i thought it turned out ok ) and finish with 2 mins to spare ... the rest of the 1 min 45 secs went in doing a quick check and I clicked on submit ... Overall I was satisfied with the essays ...

I then took the break ... raised my hand and the lady signaled me to come out ... I went to my locker ... got some water and used the restroom ... I then came back right away and completed my palm vein picture so I could get in ... i had used up only 3.5 mins and asked if I could use up remaining minutes while waiting in front of the computer ( i just

wanted to relax a bit and remind myself of the common mistakes I had done while taking practice tests ... read the question properly .. positive integer does not include zero etc) ... but the lady mentioned that they are not allowed let anyone in the test room while the test is not running so she logged in and the timed screen started ... I jumped into quant right away ... it was easy initially and about q9 or 11 i got a difficult geometry problem ... that I had no clue about how to proceed even after spending 1.5 mins ... i just guessed and went on ... there were a few difficult questions which were manageable ... I remember getting a difficult question on surds that I did not know how to solve ... i kinda did some approximations and some brutal arithmetic and picked an answer ... towards the end the questions seemed a bit easier ... but overall math was certainly more difficult than what I was used to from GMATPREP. Towards the end I had like 11 minutes and about 7 questions ... in the last few GMATPREP takes I was always able to finish with some time to spare ... so I felt a bit under pressure ... but fortunately the DS questions I got subsequently did not involve many calculations and I was able to finish on dot ... with 30 secs to spare ...

I took the next break ... same routine ... but I had my frappuccino and waited outside a lil bit to cool down from the math session .. i came in with 2 mins left in my break and started the verbal section

My GMATPREP verbal sections usually had a pattern .... they start with a couple of SCs then CRs then 1 short RC ... CRs & SCs ... 1 short RC ... CRs and SCs .. 1 long RC ... then CRs and SCs ... 1 short RC after Q30 ... and always ended with the last before question being a CR and the last question being an SC ... my GMAT test followed the same pattern so it was good that the flow that I was used to was maintained ... I remember that there were a few difficult SCs (4 or so) ... really none of the options were optimal ... but I had to pick really the least ugly ... i went on ... my timing on verbal was quite alright .. since i did not get any of those nebulous passages with extremely long sentences that takes some time to figure out what it really means ... i had 4 mins for my last SC ... so I finished with about 3 mins to spare ...

then finished the background check thing etc ... then reported score ... and waited for THE SCORE ... praying 750 or above ... and there it was ... 750 - 98%, 50-93%, 42-95% ... i was a lil disappointed with quant cos I usually got 51 in GMATPREP ... but verbal was better than I usually did ... so overall HAPPY !

oh and one more thing ... the sharpie (this is as sharp as a pencil tip) and the laminated work sheets they gave were not too bad at all ... i practiced with paper an pen throughout and had no problems with the sharpie and laminated sheets ... i didn't even use up all the sheets they gave me ...

### **GMAT CLUB**

I actually joined the gmat club in 2006 when I initially started preparing for GMAT ( i kinda lost momentum and took a break for about 2 yrs ... i just picked it up this june or so). This club has been sooo useful for me just to keep myself motivated to just prepare

for this test. Looking at those long RCs is not really the thing that I most enjoy after a stressful day at work. But, seeing the other members go through the same on a regular basis helped me take this journey along with every one. I know that many forums exist for GMAT preparation, but this forum is by far the best. This forum is very well moderated. The answers to questions are both prompt and well informed. Also, there are many super smart and ambitious people with the right attitude here in this forum. It just feels great to be a part of this club!