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Argument Task Directions

Below are

- directions for the "Argument Task" section from the Analytical Writing section of the GRE General Test.
- one sample argument topic.

Directions for the Argument Task

Analysis of an Argument

30 minutes

You will have 30 minutes to plan and write a critique of an argument presented in the form of a short passage. A critique of any other argument will receive a score of zero.

Analyze the line of reasoning in the argument. Be sure to consider what, if any, questionable assumptions underlie the thinking and, if evidence is cited, how well it supports the conclusion.

You can also discuss what sort of evidence would strengthen or refute the argument, what changes in the argument would make it more logically sound, and what additional information might help you better evaluate its conclusion. *Note that you are NOT being asked to present your views on the subject.*

GRE readers who are college and university faculty will read your critique and evaluate its overall quality, based on how well you

- identify and analyze important features of the argument
- organize, develop, and express your critique of the argument
- support your critique with relevant reasons and examples
- control the elements of standard written English.

Before you begin writing, you may want to take a few minutes to evaluate the argument and to plan a response. Be sure to develop your ideas fully and organize them coherently, but leave time to read what you have written and make any revisions that you think are necessary.

Argument Topic Selection



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Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument.

The following appeared in a memo from the director of a large group of hospitals.

"In a laboratory study of liquid antibacterial hand soaps, a concentrated solution of Nadasept killed 40 percent more bacteria than the liquid hand soaps currently used in our hospitals. During a subsequent test of Nadasept at our hospital in Saluda, that hospital reported significantly fewer cases of patient infection than did any of the other hospitals in our group. Therefore, to prevent serious patient infections, we should supply Nadasept at all hand washing stations throughout our hospital system."