**The Pool of Issue Topics**

This page contains the Issue topics for the analytical writing section of the GRE General Test. When you take the test, you will be presented with two Issue topics from this pool.

The wording of some topics in the test might vary slightly from what is presented here. Therefore, read your test topics carefully and respond to the wording as it appears in the actual test.

**Present your perspective on the issue below, using relevant reasons and/or examples to support your views.**

"Important truths begin as outrageous, or at least uncomfortable, attacks upon the accepted wisdom of the time."

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"Originality does not mean thinking something that was never thought before; it means putting old ideas together in new ways."

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"Laws should not be rigid or fixed. Instead, they should be flexible enough to take account of various circumstances, times, and places."

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"It is always an individual who is the impetus for innovation; the details may be worked out by a team, but true innovation results from the enterprise and unique perception of an individual."

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"The function of science is to reassure; the purpose of art is to upset. Therein lies the value of each."

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"The study of an academic discipline alters the way we perceive the world. After studying the discipline, we see the same world as before, but with different eyes."

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"It is possible to pass laws that control or place limits on people's behavior, but legislation cannot reform human nature. Laws cannot change what is in people's hearts and minds."

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"What most human beings really want to attain is not knowledge, but certainty. Gaining real knowledge requires taking risks and keeping the mind open—but most people prefer to be reassured rather than to learn the complex and often unsettling truth about anything."

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"Many problems of modern society cannot be solved by laws and the legal system because moral behavior cannot be legislated."

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"The way students and scholars interpret the materials they work with in their academic fields is more a matter of personality than of training. Different interpretations come about when people with different personalities look at exactly the same objects, facts, data, or events and see different things."

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"It is dangerous to trust only intelligence."

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"As we acquire more knowledge, things do not become more comprehensible, but more complex and more mysterious."

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"It is a grave mistake to theorize before one has data."

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"Scandals—whether in politics, academia, or other areas—can be useful. They focus our attention on problems in ways that no speaker or reformer ever could."

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"Practicality is now our great idol, which all powers and talents must serve. Anything that is not obviously practical has little value in today's world."

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"It is easy to welcome innovation and accept new ideas. What most people find difficult, however, is accepting the way these new ideas are put into practice."

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"Success, whether academic or professional, involves an ability to survive in a new environment and, eventually, to change it."

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"If people disregard the great works of the past, it is because these works no longer answer the needs of the present."

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"As long as people in a society are hungry or out of work or lack the basic skills needed to survive, the use of public resources to support the arts is inappropriate—and, perhaps, even cruel—when one considers all the potential uses of such money."

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"Education should be equally devoted to enriching the personal lives of students and to training students to be productive workers."

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"Success in any realm of life comes more often from taking chances or risks than from careful and cautious planning."

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"It is not the headline-making political events but the seldom-reported social tranformations that have the most lasting significance."

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"The best preparation for life or a career is not learning to be competitive, but learning to be cooperative."

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"The goal of politics should not be the pursuit of an ideal, but rather the search for common ground and reasonable consensus."

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"Technology creates more problems than it solves, and may threaten or damage the quality of life."

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"The material progress and well-being of one country are necessarily connected to the material progress and well-being of all other countries."

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"Instead of encouraging conformity, society should show greater appreciation of individual differences."

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"Truly innovative ideas do not arise from groups of people, but from individuals. When groups try to be creative, the members force each other to compromise and, as a result, creative ideas tend to be weakened and made more conventional. Most original ideas arise from individuals working alone."

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"The most elusive knowledge is self-knowledge, and it is usually acquired through solitude, rather than through interaction with others."

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"The purpose of education should be to provide students with a value system, a standard, a set of ideas—not to prepare them for a specific job."

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"Unlike great thinkers and great artists, the most effective political leaders must often yield to public opinion and abandon principle for the sake of compromise."

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"The best way to understand the character of a society is to examine the character of the men and women that the society chooses as its heroes or its heroines."

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"We learn through direct experience; to accept a theory without experiencing it is to learn nothing at all."

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"As societies all over the world have more and more access to new information, the effects on life-long learning can only be positive."

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"People are too quick to take action; instead they should stop to think of the possible consequences of what they might do."

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"Rituals and ceremonies help define a culture. Without them, societies or groups of people have a diminished sense of who they are."

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"The way people look, dress, and act reveals their attitudes and interests. You can tell much about a society's ideas and values by observing the appearance and behavior of its people."

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"Progress is best made through discussion among people who have contrasting points of view."

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"Most people choose a career on the basis of such pragmatic considerations as the needs of the economy, the relative ease of finding a job, and the salary they can expect to make. Hardly anyone is free to choose a career based on his or her natural talents or interest in a particular kind of work."

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"Any decision-whether made by government, by a corporation, or by an individual person-must take into account future conditions more than present conditions."

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"If a goal is worthy, then any means taken to attain it is justifiable."

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"Too much emphasis has been placed on the need for students to challenge the assertions of others. In fact, the ability to compromise and work with others—that is, the ability to achieve social harmony—should be a major goal in every school."

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"Society should identify those children who have special talents and abilities and begin training them at an early age so that they can eventually excel in their areas of ability. Otherwise, these talents are likely to remain undeveloped."

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"The bombardment of visual images in contemporary society has the effect of making people less able to focus clearly and extensively on a single issue over a long period of time."

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"Most important discoveries or creations are accidental: it is usually while seeking the answer to one question that we come across the answer to another."

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"In order to produce successful original work, scholars and scientists must first study the successful work of others to learn what contributions remain to be made."

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"In order for any work of art—whether film, literature, sculpture, or a song—to have merit, it must be understandable to most people."

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"Now that computer technology has made possible the rapid