

Math formulas to know for gre

Master the Math: Essential GRE Formulas for Success

Ace the GRE Quantitative Reasoning section with a firm grasp of key math formulas. Learn the most frequently tested concepts, understand their applications, and boost your score with our comprehensive guide. The GRE Quantitative Reasoning section tests your understanding of fundamental math concepts and your ability to apply them in problem-solving scenarios. While the test doesn't require advanced calculus or trigonometry, having a solid foundation in essential formulas is crucial for success. This will break down the most important formulas you should know for the GRE, providing clear explanations, practical examples, and strategies for applying them effectively.

Number Properties and Operations

- *Order of Operations (PEMDAS)*: Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication and Division (from left to right), Addition and Subtraction (from left to right). This is fundamental for any calculation involving multiple operations.
- **Absolute Value**: $|x| = x$ if $x \geq 0$, $|x| = -x$ if $x < 0$. Understanding absolute value is essential for solving equations and inequalities involving distances and

magnitudes. • **Factors and Multiples:** A factor divides evenly into a number, while a multiple is the result of multiplying a number by an integer. Knowing how to find factors and multiples is crucial for number theory problems. • *Prime Numbers:* A prime number is a whole number greater than 1 that has only two divisors: 1 and itself. Recognizing prime numbers helps in factorization and divisibility tests. • **Greatest Common Factor (GCD) and Least Common Multiple (LCM):** GCD is the largest number that divides two or more numbers evenly, while LCM is the smallest number that is a multiple of two or more numbers. GCD and LCM are used in fraction simplification and solving problems involving ratios.

Algebra and Functions

• *Linear Equations:* $y = mx + b$, where m is the slope and b is the y -intercept. Linear equations describe relationships between variables with a constant rate of change. • *Quadratic Equations:* $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$. Quadratic equations are used to model parabolic curves and can be solved using factoring, completing the square, or the quadratic formula. • *Quadratic Formula:* $x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$. This formula provides the solutions to any quadratic equation, regardless of whether it can be factored. • **Systems of Equations:** Multiple equations with multiple unknowns. These systems can be solved using substitution, elimination, or matrices. • **Functions:** A function assigns a unique output value to each input value. Understanding function notation, domain, and range is crucial for interpreting graphs and solving equations involving functions. • **Exponents and Roots:** $x^n = x * x * \dots * x$ (n times), $\sqrt{x}$ = the number that, when multiplied by itself, equals x . Exponents and roots are essential for working with powers, exponential growth, and solving equations.

Geometry

• **Area of a Triangle:** $A = \frac{1}{2} * b * h$, where b is the base and h is the height. • **Area of a Rectangle:** $A = l * w$, where l is the length and w is the width. • **Area of a Circle:** $A = \pi r^2$, where r is the radius. • *Circumference of a Circle:* $C = 2\pi r$. • Volume of a Cube: $V = s^3$, where s is the side length. • *Volume of a Rectangular Prism:* $V = l * w * h$, where l is the length, w is the width, and h is the height. • **Volume of a Cylinder:** $V = \pi r^2 h$, where r is the radius and h is the height. • **Pythagorean Theorem:** $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$, where a and b are the legs of a right triangle, and c is the hypotenuse. • Trigonometry: SOH CAH TOA (Sine = Opposite / Hypotenuse, Cosine = Adjacent / Hypotenuse, Tangent = Opposite / Adjacent). Basic trigonometry helps solve problems involving triangles and angles.

Data Analysis

• **Mean:** Average of a set of numbers. • **Median:** Middle value in a sorted set of numbers. • **Mode:** Most frequent value in a set of numbers. • **Standard Deviation:** Measure of how spread out data is from the mean. • **Probability:** The chance of an event occurring. • **Permutation:** The number of ways to arrange objects in a specific order. • **Combination:** The number of ways to choose objects from a set without regard to order.

Practice is Key

While memorizing these formulas is a good start, it's essential to practice applying them in different contexts. The GRE Quantitative Reasoning section features a variety of question types, including multiple-choice, quantitative comparison, and data interpretation. Practice with official GRE materials and past exams will help you become familiar with the test's format and learn how to apply these

formulas strategically.

Additional Tips for GRE Math Success

- **Focus on Understanding:** Don't just memorize formulas; strive to understand their underlying logic and how they relate to different concepts.
- **Visualize and Draw:** Diagrams and sketches can help you visualize problems and make connections between formulas.
- **Break Down Complex Problems:** Don't be intimidated by lengthy word problems. Break them down into smaller steps, identify the key information, and apply the appropriate formulas.
- **Practice Time Management:** The GRE is a timed exam, so practice solving problems under time pressure.
- **Utilize Calculator Wisely:** The GRE provides an on-screen calculator, but it's not a magic tool. Learn when to use it and when to solve problems manually for efficiency.

Conclusion

Mastering essential math formulas is a crucial step towards acing the GRE Quantitative Reasoning section. By understanding the concepts behind these formulas, practicing their application, and developing effective problem-solving strategies, you can confidently tackle even the most challenging questions.

Advanced FAQs

1. Are there any specific formulas that appear most frequently on the GRE? While the GRE tests a wide range of math concepts, some formulas appear more often than others. These include the quadratic formula, the Pythagorean theorem, and basic area and volume formulas.

2. Should I focus on memorizing all the formulas or on understanding their applications? While memorization is helpful, a deeper understanding of the formulas is essential for

applying them effectively. Focus on understanding the concepts behind the formulas and how they relate to different problem-solving scenarios. **3. How can I practice applying formulas to different problem types?** Practice with official GRE materials and past exams is crucial for familiarizing yourself with the test's format and question types. Pay attention to how different concepts and formulas are integrated in various problems. **4. *What are some common mistakes to avoid when using formulas on the GRE?*** Common mistakes include misinterpreting information, overlooking units, and making careless calculations. Double-check your work and ensure you're applying the correct formulas to the given context. **5. **Is it possible to improve my math skills significantly in a short period of time?**** While a significant improvement in a short time is possible, it requires focused effort and effective study strategies. Start with a clear understanding of fundamental concepts, practice consistently, and identify your weaknesses for targeted improvement.

So, the GRE looms, and you're staring down the barrel of the quantitative section. Don't panic! While the GRE math can seem intimidating, it's really about testing your understanding of fundamental concepts rather than requiring you to be a calculus whiz. The good news? A solid grasp of key math formulas can significantly boost your confidence and your score. This article is your ultimate guide to the essential GRE math formulas you absolutely need to know. We'll break them down by topic, explain why they're important, and even sprinkle in some tips to help you remember and apply them effectively.

Mastering the Building Blocks:

Essential GRE Math Formulas

The GRE quant section covers a range of topics, but they all build upon a foundation of core mathematical principles. Think of these formulas as your toolkit. The more you have, and the better you understand how to use them, the more efficiently you can tackle those challenging problems. We'll start with the absolute essentials.

Arithmetic: The Foundation of Everything

Arithmetic might seem basic, but the GRE loves to test your understanding of these core concepts, often in more complex scenarios. Knowing these formulas and principles is non-negotiable.

Percentages, Ratios, and Proportions

These are ubiquitous on the GRE. You'll see them in word problems, data interpretation, and even geometry. Understanding the relationships between quantities is key.

1. **Percentage Change:** This is crucial for problems involving increases or decreases.

Formula: $(\text{New Value} - \text{Original Value}) / \text{Original Value} * 100\%$

Why it's important: This helps you quickly calculate growth, discounts, or interest rates. For example, if a price goes from \$100 to \$120, the percentage increase is $(\$120 - \$100) / \$100 * 100\% = 20\%$.

2. **Ratio:** A ratio compares two quantities.

Example: A ratio of 2:3 means for every 2 of the first quantity, there are 3 of the second.

Why it's important: Ratios help in comparing parts to whole or parts to parts. You'll often need to find the actual values based on a given ratio and a total sum.

3. **Proportion:** Two ratios are equal.

Formula: $a/b = c/d$, which implies $ad = bc$ (cross-multiplication).

Why it's important: Proportions are handy for solving "if this, then that" scenarios. If you know 3 apples cost \$2, how much do 12 apples cost? You set up a proportion: 3 apples / \$2 = 12 apples / x dollars.

Averages (Arithmetic Mean)

This is another classic GRE topic. Don't just memorize the formula; understand what it represents.

1. **Arithmetic Mean:** The sum of all values divided by the number of values.

Formula: Average = Sum of values / Number of values

Why it's important: This is fundamental for calculating average speed, average price, or the mean of a dataset. A key variation to remember is that Sum of values = Average * Number of values. This is incredibly useful when you know the average and the count, and need to find the total, or when adding/removing a value changes the average.

Exponents and Roots

These are the building blocks for algebraic expressions and can appear in various forms.

1. **Exponent Rules:**

1. $x^a * x^b = x^{(a+b)}$

2. $x^a / x^b = x^{(a-b)}$
3. $(x^a)^b = x^{(ab)}$
4. $(xy)^a = x^a * y^a$
5. $(x/y)^a = x^a / y^a$
6. $x^0 = 1$ (for $x \neq 0$)
7. $x^{-a} = 1 / x^a$

Why it's important: These rules simplify complex expressions and are essential for solving algebraic equations. Practice recognizing when and how to apply them.

2. **Roots:** The inverse of exponents.

1. $\sqrt{x*y} = \sqrt{x} * \sqrt{y}$
2. $\sqrt{x/y} = \sqrt{x} / \sqrt{y}$
3. $\sqrt{x^2} = |x|$ (absolute value of x)

Why it's important: Understanding roots is crucial for solving quadratic equations and in geometry (e.g., Pythagorean theorem).

Algebra: Manipulating Expressions and Solving for the Unknown

Algebra is where you'll spend a good chunk of your time. Mastering these formulas and techniques will allow you to set up and solve equations efficiently.

Linear Equations

The most basic form of algebraic equation.

1. **Solving for x:** Isolating the variable on one side of the equation using inverse operations.

Example: $2x + 5 = 11$. Subtract 5 from both sides: $2x = 6$. Divide

by 2: $x = 3$.

Why it's important: Many GRE problems can be translated into linear equations. Practice translating word problems into algebraic expressions.

Quadratic Equations

Equations of the form $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$.

1. Quadratic Formula:

Formula: $x = [-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}] / 2a$

Why it's important: This formula is a lifesaver when factoring a quadratic equation is difficult or impossible. You absolutely must memorize this.

2. Factoring:

Breaking down a quadratic expression into simpler binomials.

Example: $x^2 + 5x + 6 = (x + 2)(x + 3)$

Why it's important: Factoring is often quicker than the quadratic formula when it's straightforward. It helps in finding the roots (solutions) of the equation.

3. Sum and Product of Roots:

For a quadratic $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$.

1. Sum of roots = $-b/a$
2. Product of roots = c/a

Why it's important: This is a neat shortcut that can save you time when you need to relate the roots of a quadratic without explicitly solving for them.

Inequalities

Similar to equations but involve comparison symbols ($<$, $>$, $\leq$, $\geq$).

1. **Rules for manipulating inequalities:** When you multiply or divide both sides by a negative number, you must reverse the inequality sign.

Example: If $2x > 6$, then $x > 3$. If $-2x > 6$, then $x < -3$.

Why it's important: The GRE often tests your understanding of inequalities, especially in data sufficiency questions where you need to determine if a solution is unique or if there are multiple possibilities.

Geometry: Shapes, Areas, and Volumes

Geometry on the GRE typically focuses on plane geometry (2D shapes) and solid geometry (3D shapes). Memorizing these formulas will give you a significant edge.

Lines and Angles

1. **Angles on a straight line:** Sum to 180 degrees.
2. **Angles around a point:** Sum to 360 degrees.
3. **Vertical angles:** Are equal.
4. **Parallel lines cut by a transversal:** Corresponding angles, alternate interior angles, and alternate exterior angles are equal. Consecutive interior angles are supplementary (sum to 180 degrees).

Why it's important: These concepts are fundamental for solving problems involving triangles, quadrilaterals, and other polygons.

Triangles

1. **Sum of angles in a triangle:** 180 degrees.
2. **Pythagorean Theorem (for right triangles):**

Formula: $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ (where 'a' and 'b' are the lengths of the legs, and 'c' is the length of the hypotenuse).

Why it's important: This is one of the most frequently tested formulas in geometry. You'll see it applied to right triangles, and also indirectly in problems involving distances.

Common Pythagorean Triples: Knowing these can save you time calculating. The most common are 3-4-5, 5-12-13, and 8-15-17.

3. **Area of a triangle:**

Formula: $\text{Area} = \frac{1}{2} * \text{base} * \text{height}$

Why it's important: Essential for calculating the space occupied by a triangle.

4. **Types of Triangles:**

1. **Equilateral Triangle:** All sides and angles are equal (60 degrees).
2. **Isosceles Triangle:** Two sides and two angles are equal.
3. **Scalene Triangle:** No sides or angles are equal.
4. **Right Triangle:** One angle is 90 degrees.

Why it's important: Different types of triangles have specific properties that can be leveraged to solve problems.

Quadrilaterals

1. **Sum of interior angles:** $(n-2) * 180$ degrees, where n is the number of sides. For a quadrilateral ($n=4$), this is $(4-2) * 180 =$

360 degrees.

2. **Area of a rectangle:** Length * Width
3. **Area of a square:** Side * Side (or Side²)
4. **Area of a parallelogram:** Base * Height
5. **Area of a trapezoid:** $\frac{1}{2} * (\text{sum of parallel bases}) * \text{height}$

Why it's important: These formulas allow you to calculate the area of various four-sided shapes.

Circles

1. **Circumference of a circle:**

Formula: $C = 2\pi r$ or $C = \pi d$ (where 'r' is the radius and 'd' is the diameter).

Why it's important: This is the distance around the circle.

2. **Area of a circle:**

Formula: $A = \pi r^2$

Why it's important: This calculates the space enclosed by the circle.

3. **Arc Length:** The portion of the circumference.

Formula: $(\theta/360) * 2\pi r$ (where θ is the central angle in degrees).

4. **Sector Area:** The portion of the circle's area.

Formula: $(\theta/360) * \pi r^2$

Why it's important: These are useful when dealing with parts of a circle.

Solid Geometry (3D Shapes)

These are less common than 2D geometry but still appear.

1. **Volume of a rectangular prism (box):** Length * Width * Height
2. **Volume of a cube:** Side³
3. **Volume of a cylinder:** $\pi r^2 h$ (where 'r' is the radius and 'h' is the height).
4. **Surface Area of a cylinder:** $2\pi rh + 2\pi r^2$ (lateral surface area + area of two bases).

Why it's important: These formulas help you calculate the space occupied by 3D objects and the area of their surfaces.

Data Analysis and Probability: Interpreting Information

The GRE quantitative section often includes data interpretation (charts, graphs) and basic probability. While there aren't as many rigid formulas here, understanding concepts is key.

Probability

1. Basic Probability:

Formula: Probability of an event = (Number of favorable outcomes) / (Total number of possible outcomes)

Why it's important: This is the fundamental principle for calculating the likelihood of an event occurring.

2. **Independent Events:** The outcome of one event does not affect the outcome of another.

Probability of A and B = $P(A) * P(B)$

3. **Mutually Exclusive Events:** Events that cannot happen at the same time.

Probability of A or B = $P(A) + P(B)$

Why it's important: These rules help you combine probabilities for more complex scenarios.

Combinations and Permutations (Less Frequent but Possible)

While not strictly formulas to memorize, understanding the concepts of combinations (order doesn't matter) and permutations (order matters) is beneficial.

1. **Permutations:** $P(n, k) = n! / (n-k)!$
2. **Combinations:** $C(n, k) = n! / [k! * (n-k)!]$

Why it's important: These are used when you need to count the number of ways to select or arrange items, especially in probability problems.

Tips for Mastering GRE Math Formulas

Knowing the formulas is only half the battle. Here's how to make them stick and use them effectively on test day:

1. Understand, Don't Just Memorize

Try to grasp the logic behind each formula. For example, the area of a triangle formula ($1/2 * \text{base} * \text{height}$) makes sense if you visualize a triangle as half of a rectangle with the same base and height.

2. Practice, Practice, Practice!

The more problems you solve using these formulas, the more natural they will become. Use official GRE practice materials and reputable study guides.

3. Create Formula Sheets

As you study, create your own cheat sheets for different topics. Condense the information and keep them handy for review.

4. Focus on Key Formulas

Some formulas, like the Pythagorean theorem, quadratic formula, and circle area/circumference, appear far more often than others. Prioritize these.

5. Understand the Context

The GRE rarely asks for a formula in isolation. You'll need to read word problems carefully to identify which formula is needed and how to apply it to the given information.

6. Learn When NOT to Use a Formula

Sometimes, logical reasoning or estimation can be faster than applying a complex formula. The GRE is also a test of problem-solving skills, not just rote memorization.

7. Don't Forget Basic Operations

While we're focusing on formulas, ensure your basic arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) and fraction

manipulation are sharp. Errors here can invalidate even correct formula usage.

Conclusion

Conquering the GRE quantitative section is entirely achievable with the right preparation. By familiarizing yourself with these essential math formulas and practicing them consistently, you'll build the confidence and competence needed to tackle any problem thrown your way. Remember, understanding and application are key. Good luck with your GRE preparation!

The Essential Math Formulas Every GRE Test-Taker Should Master

The GRE tests your quantitative reasoning not just through word problems, but through a precise set of mathematical concepts and formulas that form the backbone of problem-solving. Familiarity with these formulas is not merely helpful—it's essential to solving questions efficiently and accurately under time pressure. Whether you're tackling algebra, geometry, or data interpretation, knowing the right formulas at your fingertips transforms how you approach every section. These aren't just memorized facts; they are tools that unlock clarity and speed in high-stakes testing environments.

Algebra: The Language of

Relationships

At the heart of GRE math lies algebra, where understanding relationships between variables is key. One of the most frequently used formulas is the quadratic equation: $(ax^2 + bx + c = 0)$, which can be solved using the quadratic formula $(x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a})$. This powerful tool helps decode parabolas and determine roots quickly, even when values are complex. Another foundational concept is linear equations, where knowing how to rearrange $(y = mx + b)$ or solve systems using substitution or elimination saves precious seconds. Recognizing how to manipulate equations—whether isolating variables or simplifying expressions—enables faster and error-free calculations, especially when dealing with word problems that require translating text into mathematical models.

Geometry and Trigonometry: Visualizing Space and Angles

Geometry and trigonometry appear frequently in the GRE, demanding precise knowledge of formulas that describe shapes, areas, and angular relationships. The Pythagorean theorem— $(a^2 + b^2 = c^2)$ —is indispensable for computing distances or verifying right triangles, a cornerstone in many geometry questions. Circle-related formulas, such as the area $(\frac{1}{2} r^2 \theta)$ for sector areas and circumference $(2\pi r)$, allow for rapid analysis of circular figures. Trigonometric identities and ratios—sine, cosine, tangent—are vital not just in trigonometry sections but also in interpreting triangles and angular measurements in applied problems. Mastery of these allows test-takers to visualize and compute geometric relationships without hesitation, turning abstract shapes into solvable equations.

Arithmetic and Data Interpretation: Precision in Numbers and Trends

While the GRE emphasizes complex problem-solving, simple arithmetic and data interpretation remain critical. Formulas for averages— $\text{Mean} = \frac{\text{Sum of values}}{n}$ —and percentages are foundational, especially in real-world data sets. Understanding how to calculate mean, median, and mode quickly helps in analyzing trends and spotting outliers. For questions involving percentages, knowing how to compute increases, decreases, and compound growth (like $A = P(1 + r)^t$) ensures accuracy when evaluating financial or statistical data. These skills are particularly valuable in the quantitative section, where real-world contexts often frame numerical reasoning.

Strategic Advantages and Long-Term Benefits

Beyond immediate test performance, mastering these formulas cultivates a mindset of logical precision and adaptability. The GRE rewards not just knowledge, but the ability to apply formulas flexibly across unfamiliar problems. This fluency reduces mental fatigue and builds confidence, allowing for consistent, calm execution under pressure. Moreover, the logical reasoning practiced through formula application extends far beyond test day—strengthening analytical thinking applicable in academics, science, engineering, and finance. In essence, these formulas are not just GRE tools but lifelong cognitive assets. Looking ahead, as standardized testing evolves toward more adaptive and conceptual assessments, deep formula comprehension remains vital. While AI and machine learning may reshape test delivery, the core need for precise mathematical understanding endures. Test-takers who internalize these formulas

gain not only a competitive edge today but also a robust foundation for future quantitative challenges. To truly excel, practice these formulas not as isolated facts, but as dynamic tools—understand their derivations, recognize their patterns, and apply them instinctively. With disciplined preparation, these mathematical cornerstones become second nature, empowering you to tackle any quantitative challenge on the GRE with clarity, confidence, and speed.

Mastering the GRE Math Section: Essential Formulas and Concepts

The Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) General Test is a significant hurdle for aspiring graduate students. While the Verbal Reasoning and Analytical Writing sections assess critical thinking and communication skills, the Quantitative Reasoning section is designed to evaluate your mathematical aptitude, problem-solving abilities, and familiarity with fundamental mathematical concepts. For many test-takers, mastering the GRE math formulas is a cornerstone of their preparation. This comprehensive guide delves into the essential mathematical formulas and concepts you need to know to excel on the GRE, equipping you with the knowledge to tackle a wide range of quantitative problems.

The GRE Quantitative Reasoning section comprises approximately 40 questions, to be completed within 35 minutes per section. The content covers arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. While the GRE doesn't test advanced calculus or trigonometry, it demands a solid understanding of core mathematical principles and the ability to apply them efficiently. Crucially, the GRE provides a reference sheet with common geometry formulas, but it's imperative to know these by heart and, more importantly,

understand their application. Relying solely on the provided formulas can be a time-consuming and risky strategy. Therefore, a proactive approach to memorizing and practicing with these formulas is paramount for GRE math success.

Arithmetic: The Building Blocks of GRE Math

Arithmetic forms the foundation of many GRE math problems. A strong grasp of basic arithmetic operations, number properties, and ratios is essential. Understanding concepts like divisibility rules, prime factorization, and the order of operations will streamline your problem-solving process.

Fractions, Decimals, and Percentages

These three concepts are often intertwined on the GRE. You should be comfortable converting between them and performing operations with each. Key formulas and concepts include:

1. **Percentage Change:** The formula for percentage change is crucial. It's calculated as:
$$\text{Percentage Change} = ((\text{New Value} - \text{Original Value}) / \text{Original Value}) * 100\%.$$
 This is vital for problems involving increases, decreases, markups, and discounts.
2. **Ratio and Proportion:** Ratios express the relationship between two quantities. Proportions are equations stating that two ratios are equal. Understanding cross-multiplication to solve proportions is a fundamental skill.
3. **Conversions:** Knowing common fraction-to-decimal and fraction-to-percentage equivalents (e.g., $1/2 = 0.5 = 50\%$, $1/4 = 0.25 = 25\%$) can save valuable time.

Number Theory and Properties

Problems involving integers, prime numbers, even and odd numbers, and divisibility are common. Key concepts include:

1. **Prime Numbers:** A prime number is a natural number greater than 1 that has no positive divisors other than 1 and itself (e.g., 2, 3, 5, 7, 11).
2. **Factors and Multiples:** Understanding how to find factors (divisors) and multiples of a number is important for divisibility questions.
3. **Greatest Common Divisor (GCD) and Least Common Multiple (LCM):** While not always requiring explicit formulas, knowing the concepts of GCD and LCM is beneficial for simplifying fractions and solving problems involving cycles or recurring events.

Exponents and Roots

Familiarity with exponent rules is non-negotiable. These rules allow you to simplify expressions and solve equations efficiently.

1. **Product Rule:** $a^m * a^n = a^{m+n}$
2. **Quotient Rule:** $a^m / a^n = a^{m-n}$
3. **Power of a Power Rule:** $(a^m)^n = a^{m*n}$
4. **Zero Exponent:** $a^0 = 1$ (for $a \neq 0$)
5. **Negative Exponent:** $a^{-n} = 1 / a^n$
6. **Roots as Fractional Exponents:** $\sqrt[n]{a} = a^{1/n}$. This allows you to apply exponent rules to roots.

Algebra: Equations, Inequalities, and Functions

Algebra is heavily tested on the GRE, ranging from simple linear

equations to quadratic equations and inequalities. Mastering algebraic manipulation is key to solving these problems quickly and accurately.

Linear Equations and Inequalities

Solving for an unknown variable is a fundamental skill. Remember to apply operations to both sides of the equation or inequality to maintain balance. For inequalities, pay close attention to the direction of the inequality sign when multiplying or dividing by a negative number.

Quadratic Equations

Quadratic equations are in the form $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$. You should be able to solve them using:

1. **Factoring:** If the quadratic can be factored into $(px + q)(rx + s) = 0$, then the solutions are $x = -q/p$ and $x = -s/r$.
2. **Quadratic Formula:** When factoring is difficult, the quadratic formula provides a universal solution:
$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$
Understanding the discriminant ($b^2 - 4ac$) is also useful, as it tells you the nature of the roots (real and distinct, real and equal, or complex).

Systems of Equations

Problems may involve two or more equations with multiple variables. Common methods for solving systems of linear equations include substitution and elimination. Understanding how to interpret the solution (e.g., a unique solution, no solution, infinite solutions) is also important.

Functions and Their Properties

GRE questions often involve functions, particularly linear and

quadratic functions. You should understand function notation (e.g., $f(x)$), how to evaluate functions, and the concept of domain and range.

Exponents and Logarithms (Basic)

While advanced logarithm properties are less common, understanding the definition of a logarithm is important. A logarithm is the inverse of an exponent:

1. **Definition of Logarithm:** $\log_b(a) = c$ is equivalent to $b^c = a$.
2. **Basic Properties:** $\log_b(b) = 1$ and $\log_b(1) = 0$.

Geometry: Visualizing and Calculating Shapes

Geometry questions on the GRE involve basic shapes and their properties. The GRE provides a formula sheet for common shapes, but understanding the underlying principles and how to apply them is critical. Practice is key to visualizing these shapes and their relationships.

Lines and Angles

Key concepts include parallel lines, perpendicular lines, transversals, and the sum of angles in various geometric figures. Understanding angle relationships like alternate interior angles and corresponding angles is crucial.

Triangles

This is a heavily tested area. You must know:

1. **Sum of Angles:** The sum of the interior angles of a triangle is always 180 degrees.

2. **Pythagorean Theorem:** For a right-angled triangle with legs 'a' and 'b' and hypotenuse 'c', $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. This is fundamental for right triangles.
3. **Special Triangles:**
 1. **30-60-90 Triangle:** The sides are in the ratio $x : x\sqrt{3} : 2x$.
 2. **45-45-90 Triangle (Isosceles Right Triangle):** The sides are in the ratio $x : x : x\sqrt{2}$.
4. **Area of a Triangle:** $Area = (1/2) * base * height$.
5. **Perimeter of a Triangle:** $Perimeter = side1 + side2 + side3$.

Quadrilaterals

Focus on the properties of rectangles, squares, parallelograms, and trapezoids. Key formulas include:

1. **Rectangle:**
 1. **Area:** $Area = length * width$
 2. **Perimeter:** $Perimeter = 2 * (length + width)$
2. **Square:** (A special type of rectangle)
 1. **Area:** $Area = side^2$
 2. **Perimeter:** $Perimeter = 4 * side$
3. **Parallelogram:**
 1. **Area:** $Area = base * height$

Circles

Understanding the components of a circle and their relationships is vital.

1. **Radius (r) and Diameter (d):** $d = 2r$
2. **Circumference:** $C = 2\pi r = \pi d$
3. **Area:** $Area = \pi r^2$
4. **Arc Length:** For a sector with central angle θ (in degrees), $Arc Length = (\theta/360) * 2\pi r$. If θ is in radians, $Arc Length = r\theta$.
5. **Area of a Sector:** For a sector with central angle θ (in degrees),

Area = $(\theta/360) * \pi r^2$. If θ is in radians, Area = $(1/2)r^2\theta$.

Polygons

Know the formula for the sum of interior angles of an n-sided polygon: $(n-2) * 180$ degrees. For a regular n-sided polygon, each interior angle is $[(n-2) * 180] / n$ degrees.

Volume and Surface Area

While less common than 2D geometry, understanding basic 3D shapes like cubes, rectangular prisms, cylinders, cones, and spheres is beneficial. Key formulas (often provided on the test) include:

1. Cube:

1. **Volume:** $V = side^3$
2. **Surface Area:** $SA = 6 * side^2$

2. Rectangular Prism:

1. **Volume:** $V = length * width * height$
2. **Surface Area:** $SA = 2(lw + lh + wh)$

3. Cylinder:

1. **Volume:** $V = \pi r^2 h$
2. **Surface Area:** $SA = 2\pi rh + 2\pi r^2$ (lateral surface area + top/bottom areas)

4. Sphere:

1. **Volume:** $V = (4/3)\pi r^3$
2. **Surface Area:** $SA = 4\pi r^2$

Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability

This section tests your ability to interpret graphs, charts, and statistical information. Understanding basic statistical measures and probability concepts is crucial.

Mean, Median, and Mode

These are the most common measures of central tendency.

1. **Mean (Average):** Sum of all values divided by the number of values.
2. **Median:** The middle value in an ordered set of data. If there's an even number of values, it's the average of the two middle values.
3. **Mode:** The value that appears most frequently in a data set.

Range and Standard Deviation (Conceptual)

While you might not need to calculate standard deviation manually, understanding what it represents (spread or variability of data) can be helpful for interpreting graphs and comparing data sets.

Probability

Probability measures the likelihood of an event occurring. The basic formula is:

1. **Probability of an Event:** $P(\text{Event}) = (\text{Number of favorable outcomes}) / (\text{Total number of possible outcomes})$.
2. **Independent Events:** For two independent events A and B, the probability of both occurring is $P(A \text{ and } B) = P(A) * P(B)$.
3. **Mutually Exclusive Events:** For two mutually exclusive events A and B, the probability of either A or B occurring is $P(A \text{ or } B) = P(A) + P(B)$.

Quantitative Comparison Questions

These questions present two quantities, A and B, and ask you to compare them. You'll need to determine if A is greater than B, B is greater than A, A is equal to B, or if the relationship cannot be determined from the information given. Often, a strong understanding of algebraic manipulation and number properties is

more beneficial than plugging in specific values.

Tips for Success and Formula Memorization

Simply knowing the formulas is not enough; you must be able to apply them quickly and accurately under pressure. Here are some strategies:

1. **Consistent Practice:** Work through as many GRE math practice problems as possible. This will help you identify recurring problem types and reinforce formula usage.
2. **Flashcards:** Create flashcards for each formula. Test yourself regularly.
3. **Categorize Formulas:** Group formulas by topic (arithmetic, algebra, geometry) to make them easier to learn and recall.
4. **Understand the Derivation:** For geometry formulas, try to understand how they are derived. This deeper understanding aids retention.
5. **Timed Practice:** Simulate test conditions by completing practice sets under timed constraints. This helps build speed and efficiency.
6. **Focus on High-Yield Topics:** Arithmetic, algebra (especially linear equations and inequalities), and basic geometry (triangles, circles) are frequently tested. Prioritize these areas.
7. **Review the GRE Formula Sheet:** Familiarize yourself with the formulas provided on the GRE to avoid wasting time searching for them during the test.

Preparing for the GRE math section requires a systematic approach. By understanding and internalizing these essential math formulas and concepts, and by engaging in consistent, targeted practice, you can build the confidence and proficiency needed to achieve your

target score and embark on your graduate studies journey.

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Questions & Answers About math

formulas to know for gre

No	Question	Answer
1	What are the absolute must-know math formulas for the GRE, especially for someone who finds math a bit rusty?	For a rusty math brain, focus on core arithmetic (percentages, ratios, fractions), basic algebra (linear equations, inequalities), and geometry fundamentals (area and perimeter of common shapes like rectangles, triangles, circles; volume of basic solids). Memorizing these will cover a significant portion of the Quantitative Reasoning section.
2	I'm struggling with geometry on the GRE. What are the most frequently tested geometry formulas I should prioritize?	Prioritize the area and circumference of circles, and the area, perimeter, and Pythagorean theorem for triangles. Also, get comfortable with the properties of parallel lines intersected by a transversal and the angle sums in polygons, especially quadrilaterals.
3	How important are statistics and probability formulas for the GRE, and what are the key ones to remember?	Statistics and probability are crucial. Key formulas include calculating the mean, median, and mode. For probability, understand the basic formula (favorable outcomes/total outcomes) and how to calculate combinations and permutations, especially for scenarios with 'and' and 'or'.
4	I always get tripped up by word problems on the GRE. What math formulas can help me translate those into solvable equations?	The most helpful formulas are for rates (distance = rate x time), work (work = rate x time, often with multiple workers), and mixture problems (often involving percentages). Setting up these basic relationships with variables is key to solving complex word problems.

5	Beyond basic arithmetic and algebra, what advanced math formulas are surprisingly common on the GRE Quant section?	Don't overlook formulas for exponents and roots (especially rules for combining them), logarithms (basic properties like $\log(ab) = \log a + \log b$), and potentially sequences and series (arithmetic and geometric progressions). Familiarity with these can save significant time.
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