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GAMSAT[®]
Study Syllabus:

How to get a great GAMSAT[®] score

GAMSAT® SECTION 1

Overview

Section 1 of the GAMSAT® Exam is also known as “Reasoning in Humanities and Social Sciences”. [ACER](#) uses this multi choice section to assess your interpretation of qualitative information as well as your reading comprehension. Preparing for Section 1 can be challenging for many students, often because unlike in Section 3, there isn’t a comprehensive list of things you need to know.

Section 1 involves

- 62 MCQs
- 100 Minutes (Including 8 minutes reading time)
- ~ 1 min 30 seconds to complete each question



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Preparation checklist

For Section 1 of the GAMSAT® Exam you will be asked questions on a wider array of different media which may include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Literature
- Non-Fiction
- Psychology
- Graphic Comics
- Anthropology

Study tips

Preparing for Section 1 is two-fold:

- Preparing for the content. This involves becoming familiar with the principles underlying Humanities and Social Sciences, or perhaps more accurately, the principles underlying the main mediums through which you'll be assessed
- Developing an MCQ Strategy. Having a MCQ strategy as you familiarise yourself with the style of MCQ is crucial to doing well in the GAMSAT.

Preparing for the content

- Consider the types of media that you might expect to encounter in Section 1, such as poetry, prose and graphics & cartoons.
- Read widely to expose yourself to a wide range of media, such as newspapers, essays, and books.
- Perform some active reading exercises to ensure you retain useful information. This can include pausing to consider character motivations and actions at the end of each chapter.

Section 1 Reading List

Type of Media	Description	Free Resources
Newspapers	Newspapers are perhaps one of the more obvious mediums through which you can read on a wide range of topics and issues. The newspapers listed in here arguably offer some of the least biased and fairest reporting.	The Conversation The Economist The Guardian Al Jazeera Australian Financial Review
Books & Short Stories	It's best to aim for short texts. Aim for excellent writing with a focus on authors who have mastered the short-story modality.	Oscar Wilde Ralph Waldo Emerson Chekhov Noam Chomsky George Orwell
Essays	Again, take advantage of the shorter texts allowing you to read one a day	Humanities Open Access Journal Arts and Letters Daily Australian Humanities Review
Poetry	Poetry is often an area that students tend to dislike, but it's still a medium that you should familiarise yourself with. Poems are generally a lot shorter so they provide you with an opportunity to read one daily.	Poems.org - How to read a poem Poems.org - List of Poems

MCQ Strategy

- Read the question - it will help prime your mind in looking for the correct answer
- Read the answer options - this will give key words and grammatical cues to look for in the stem
- Identify the objective (i.e. what skill is being tested)
- Read the MCQ stem to rule out obvious detractors and increase odds of selecting the right option

GAMSAT® SECTION 2

Overview

Section 2 of the GAMSAT® exam, also known as 'Written Communication', assesses your ability to express your thoughts in a logical and effective manner in response to two sets of stimuli. According to ACER, it is meant to be a reflection of your ability to produce and develop ideas in writing. Students who are strong in science and the other sections of the GAMSAT® exam often struggle with the writing skills and time pressure involved in Section 2.

Section 2 involves:

- Two Essays
- 60 minutes writing time with 5 minutes reading time

In terms of breaking down your time, a common piece of advice is to follow the below:

- 5 Minutes to Plan
- 20 Minutes to Write
- 5 Minutes to Review



Section 2 Themes Checklist

GAMSAT® Section 2 Task A Themes

Task A generally deals with socio-cultural issues and is best suited to an argumentative style of essay.

- ✓ Freedom
- ✓ War
- ✓ Punishment
- ✓ Science
- ✓ Technology
- ✓ Crime
- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ Wealth

GAMSAT® Section 2 Task B Themes

Task B centres around themes targeted at more personal and social issues and allows for students to express themselves through a more creative or reflective essay style.

- ✓ Friendship
- ✓ Love
- ✓ Beauty
- ✓ Youth
- ✓ Ageing
- ✓ Suffering
- ✓ Originality
- ✓ Conformity
- ✓ Humour

GAMSAT® Section 2 Criteria and Marking

Thought and Content	Organisation and Expression
The quality of what is said	The quality of the structure developed and the language used
What is made of and developed from the task	The shape and form of the piece
The kinds of thoughts and feelings offered in response to the task	The effectiveness and fluency of the language

Control of language, i.e. grammatical structure and expression, is not assessed as an isolated criteria but incorporated into the assessment of the overall effectiveness of the response. Your GAMSAT® essays will also be assessed on the depth of the ideas presented rather than their breadth so it is often more effective to take a few concepts and analyse them in depth rather than inundating your essay with different arguments.

Finally, ACER also notes that candidates are not assessed on the 'correctness' of the ideas or attitudes they display - It is not your opinion that matters but the way in which you express it. Each individual essay will be assessed by three independent markers.

GAMSAT® Essay Length

ACER does not provide any guidelines in regards to a minimum word count, or how long your Section 2 essays should be. However, a maxim that holds true even for the GAMSAT® Exam is Quality over Quantity.

The quality of what you write is much more important than the quantity and as such, you should focus on what you write about and your expression and organisation of ideas. A good guideline is to aim for:

- An Introduction
- 3 Body Paragraphs
- A Conclusion

Note however that this example structure is not necessarily applicable to every type of essay. If you were to write a creative piece, the structure of your GAMSAT® Essay could certainly be more flexible. The main factor to take into account is how best to organise your ideas to ensure that your arguments are conveyed logically and coherently.

A common piece of advice is to aim for about 500 words, but the most important point is to focus on the quality of your essay rather than the quantity. If you can express an idea clearly and effectively in less words then do it.

GAMSAT® Essay Study Guide

Step 1: How to plan your GAMSAT® Essay

- Understand the Theme: Read the quote and make sure that you look for the related ideas, not just the main theme.
- Brainstorm Ideas: Use whatever techniques you find the most useful and make the most of the Idea Bank that you've prepared.
- Create a Thesis: What is your main message? Is it clear? Is it communicated regularly?
- Choose a Structure: Consider what is most appropriate for the theme and explore your options.
- Plan Body Paragraphs Thematically: Plan your topic sentences and the main points of your thesis.

Step 2: Write your GAMSAT® Essay

- **Be Clear & Succinct**
Write in logical and well-phrased sentences that can be easily understood by a marker who will be reading your essay at a fast pace because that's the reality of it.
- **Support What You Write**
Each topic sentence needs to have some form of 'evidence' or reasoning to support what you contend. Depending on the form you have chosen to write in (e.g. essay, short story), this may occur in the style of real-life events, personal narrative, creative narrative, experience, or logical reasoning that is theoretical.
- **Always Come Back to the Thesis**
If in doubt, word your paragraph in such a way that the 'supporting evidence' demonstrates the topic sentence AND the thesis. Your aim is to persuade the reader such that they truly believe what you have written.

Step 3: Review your GAMSAT® Essay

Review what you have written and ensure it makes sense. There's not much time to do this, so it's a quick fly-by of your writing to ensure it is logical and communicates what you are actually thinking.

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GAMSAT® Section 2 Study tips

- You need to get feedback on your essays. It is vital that you get your friends, family, tutors and anyone else to read these essays, and be modest and inviting of critique. It is of utmost importance to be criticised and then learn from your mistakes. GradReady has an essay marking service where you can get 10 essays marked by our expert tutors with personal feedback within 72 hours.
- You need to possess a great deal of self-critique. After every essay you write, you must read it out loud to yourself, and listen if it makes sense.
- Don't feel the need to write under time pressure from the word go. It's more important that you develop and improve your essay writing skills before gradually applying realistic time pressure.
- You need to vary the type of essays that you write! You should make sure you try argumentative, personal reflective essays, fictional creative essays, poetry, and any other medium that can work in the GAMSAT® exam. Even though it's recommended you write an argumentative essay, you are able to write in almost any style in the 'reflective' essay segment – this is meant to be a creative endeavour and demonstrate that you can identify, and express emotions of the characters involved.

GAMSAT® SECTION 3

Overview

Section 3 of the GAMSAT® exam, also known as 'Reasoning in Biological and Physical Sciences' is designed to test your reasoning and problem solving skills within a scientific context. It is the only section for which ACER provides clear guidelines on expected prerequisite knowledge, but has recently focused more and more on testing reasoning skills with novel content.

The questions are based on three discipline areas along the following ratios:

- Biology - 40%
- Chemistry - 40%
- Physics - 20%

You are advised to have a level of basic knowledge equivalent to first year university levels of biology and chemistry along with a Year 12 level of physics.



Topics checklist

The below are not comprehensive lists, but contain the topics that carry the most weight in the exam. Remember, when looking at these topics you only want to know the principles underpinning the biology. It is unlikely that you'll be asked any direct recall questions, but the principles and ideas are often incorporated into MCQ Stems.

GAMSAT® Biology Topics

- ✓ Biomolecules & the Cell
- ✓ Enzymes, Cellular metabolism & the Central Dogma
- ✓ Cell Division
- ✓ Nervous System
- ✓ Musculoskeletal System
- ✓ Cardiovascular System
- ✓ Respiratory System
- ✓ Gastrointestinal System
- ✓ Renal System
- ✓ Endocrine System
- ✓ Immune System
- ✓ Genetics & Evolution
- ✓ Reproductive System
- ✓ Experimental Design and Data Analysis

GAMSAT® Chemistry Topics

- ✓ Atoms
- ✓ Arithmetic and Stoichiometry
- ✓ Electronegativity and Bond Polarity
- ✓ Electrons and Chemical Bonds
- ✓ Gases
- ✓ Thermodynamics and Kinetics
- ✓ Acid and Bases
- ✓ Electrochemistry
- ✓ Common and Special Organic Reactions
- ✓ Stereochemistry and Projections
- ✓ Biochemistry
- ✓ Spectroscopies, Spectrometry and Laboratory Techniques

GAMSAT® Physics Topics

- ✓ Motion (1D and 2D motion, acceleration and graphs)
- ✓ Newton's laws (in particular equilibrium) and torque
- ✓ Energy, work and conservation of moment
- ✓ Physics of liquids (especially pressure, Archimedes' principle, buoyant force)
- ✓ Electricity and magnetism (electrostatic and magnetic forces)
- ✓ Electric circuits
- ✓ Optics
- ✓ Radioactive decay and other exponential-type mathematical laws
- ✓ Mathematical operations, fractions and scientific notation

Study tips

- Visualise - If you struggle to understand what an MCQ is saying, create flow charts or diagrams to summarise the stem
- Develop a note-taking style - Section 3, and especially chemistry requires the recognition of patterns. Developing a note-taking style to best utilise the sheets of paper provided to you will help simplify concepts that seem quite complicated
- Understand patterns - Many MCQ's often have similar patterns, such as physics time evolution questions. Learn to identify these and the different ways a question can be asked.



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