

Top 101 High Frequency GRE Words



When you think about the GRE verbal section, what comes to mind? Obscure vocabulary, right?

Fortunately though, the new GRE is definitely less dependent on vocabulary than the old GRE. But that doesn't mean it doesn't depend on vocabulary at all. To score well on the verbal section, you should have a sound knowledge of vocabulary and must know how and when to use words. Hence, knowing the contextual usage of words is the key to score well on the verbal section.

Preparing for the GRE verbal section can be cumbersome, especially when the time required to build a strong vocabulary is considered. There are various GRE word lists out there which have words anywhere from 333 to 3500. To score well, should you learn all the 3500 words in those lists? Fortunately, the questions on the new GRE rely often on the same words, and these frequently reappearing words provide you with a smaller subset of words to study.

Hands down, the most concise high frequency GRE word list!

There are countless GRE word lists and flashcards out there already. Why did we create one?

Simple! A lot of students have asked us if we could send them a concise list of important GRE words that they can learn in a week or two. That's when we realized how big a problem this is for many students who are running short of prep time.

You should accept the fact that you cannot master the 1000+ words GRE word list in this time frame. But does this mean you should skip learning vocabulary altogether? Not an option! So what can you do?

We have an ultimate list of high frequency words that appear on the GRE. And unlike every other list you will see, there aren't 1000 words on the list; just about 100. Knowing these 101 most common words can improve your chance of scoring high on test day. On the other hand, not knowing these words will only hurt your chances.

This list is a one-size-fits-all solution. It can be used by anyone and everyone. It doesn't matter if you are taking your GRE test within the next couple of weeks, or if your exam is a few months away. If you are not sure about

your vocabulary, and like several thousands of international students who are a bit concerned about the verbal section, you should start off with this list. Learn every word perfectly, along with its contextual usage, and then do some practice questions, and trust me, you will be off to a great start.

101 High Frequency GRE Words

Laconic (adj.) – brief and to the point; effectively cut short

Jessica is so talkative that her sister thought the situation warranted conciseness, and her being laconic.

Insipid (adj.) – lacking taste or flavor

Too much sugar tends to make this otherwise delightful fruit pie insipid.

Pragmatic (adj.) – concerned with practical matters

After five years of war, both sides have found pragmatic ways to make peace with one another, as the bloodshed has grown viscous and brutal.

Iconoclast (noun) – someone who attacks cherished beliefs or institutions

Irrespective of his actuating motives, his deeds as an iconoclast will be treated harshly and is answerable in court.

Arduous (adj.) – difficult to accomplish, hard to endure

James and Mathew are planning to leave for the states next week for their masters, following months of arduous GRE preparation.

Profligate (adj.) – recklessly extravagant or wasteful in the use of resources

The senate is particularly perturbed over our profligate use of natural resources such as forest, oil, water, energy, land and minerals.

Prosaic (adj.) – not challenging; dull and lacking excitement

The project was full of prosaic ideas, such as using sand and stone to raise natural walls around monuments built in honor of the late president.

Ameliorate (v.) – make, become better

Increase in penalties and effective awareness programs would ameliorate the growing pollution levels and there by global warming it may have generated.

Obsequious (adj.) – obedient or attentive to an excessive degree

It was evident that the manager was flattering – from his obsequious manner in receiving his boss.

Capricious (adj.) – given to sudden behavior change

The recent recession is yet another example of how making rules without forethought and acting without taking the arbitrary and capricious effects these changes in policies have on our economy.

Fortuitous (adj.) – happening by accident or chance

The alignment timing proved to be scientifically fortuitous for planetary astronomers, who already have a orbital satellite stationed around the moon.

Orthodox (adj.) – Conforming to all the traditional beliefs, and religious practices

Alice describes her childhood in a conservative Orthodox community in Iraq, keeping to traditional religious beliefs.

Alacrity (noun) – lively and cheerful readiness

After marriage, Jenny rushed off with excitement to visit her parents, but her father did not accept their marriage with equal alacrity.

Pellucid (adj.) – translucently clear

The river water was so pellucid that Mary could see clearly that it swarmed with countless small fishes and loaves.

Corroborate (v.) – confirm or give support to

The police officials said, allegations of misconduct by the officer have been corroborated by video from closed circuit cameras.

Magnanimous (adj.) – very generous or forgiving

Jaqueline's magnanimous generosity and limitless loyalty towards her nation and its people is heart touching and is appreciated beyond words.

Scrupulous (adj.) – diligent, thorough, and extremely careful

The health inspector during his usual visit found pests in the restaurant's kitchen and hence ordered the owner to observe scrupulous hygiene to stop spreading illness or would issue a immediate closure notice.

Prolific (adj.) – fruitful, present in large number

Ryan is furiously prolific, releasing albums on Maple, Mr. Siebel's label, as well as his own metallic label, Metalloid.

Dogmatic (adj.) – dictatorial, opinionated

Most Americans have less dogmatic, more open-ended views and would ignore such a request but Mr. John didn't hesitate and removed his coat immediately.

Placate (v.) – make (someone) less angry or hostile

Sam has to double stock divided last quarter and started working at an unsustainable pace in order to placate the company investors and shareholders.

Mercurial (adj.) – subject to sudden or unpredictable changes of mood, temperamental

The mercurial senator, who retained office for more than 25 years, has frequently gone back and forth on his resignation.

Exacerbate (v.) – infuriate, make worse

Hummingbird declines have been connected to a lack of appropriate habitat so increasing the number of Washington's hives could exacerbate the issue.

Redundant (adj.) – redundant, superfluous

At first, taking a standardized test may seem redundant to existing skill metrics such as GPA, certifications, but the GRE is necessary for the college admissions to sort applicants.

Hackneyed (adj.) – unoriginal and trite

Girls dreaming their way to a wonderland to marry a prince and live happily ever after was already a hackneyed notion by the time Alice in the Wonderland was written.

Prudent (adj.) – acting with or showing care and thought

When the food manufacturer discovered toxins in a product sample case of one of its containers, it made a prudent decision to destroy all the boxes from the shipment.

Belie (v.) – disguise or contradict

Joe's cheerful tone belies the grim nature of life in the Indian Countryside and her desperate desire to escape those suffocating circumstances.

Esoteric (adj.) – mysterious, obscure

A couple of months ago, Mr. Niobe submitted a thesis with his analysis and computations — a fairly esoteric mathematical dissent about how best to gather rational generalizations on the origin of the universe theory.

Cacophony (noun) - a harsh, discordant mixture of sounds

The cacophony surrounding the multi-billion dollar buyout of leading messaging service by a social networking company shook the whole tech industry.

Impetuous (adj.) – acting or done quickly and without thought or care

Michael is methodical, barely the impetuous kind, and he has had ample time to come to a consolidated opinion of the university he wishes to apply for.

Idiosyncrasy (noun) – a way of thought peculiar to an individual

Modern technologies are a lot more expensive than their existing alternatives and each has its own idiosyncrasies that be conquered.

Extant (adj.) – in existence; surviving

Several works produced by Shakespeare during his later years are yet extant at Rome; and far surpassing the rest is his tale of two young lovers, Romeo and Juliet.

Obscure (adj.) – not discovered or known about; uncertain

Apple maps give such obscure directions that even after roaming around for hours, Derek couldn't reach the new church that opened in the town.

Didactic (adj.) – intended to teach, educational

Though more didactic, Rama's story of the triumph over evil and of a king's dharma and nobility is quite powerful and enchanting.

Pithy (adj.) – brief, to the point

The professor was not known for talking much, but what he did say was always pithy.

Copious (adj.) – abundant in supply or quantity

Mathew insisted that Sophie track all her household expenditures, including every penny spent for hair clips, in copious account books.

Ostentation (adj.) – pretentious and vulgar display intended to impress, show off

The movie celebrity is not having a good day because he got another ticket for speeding only two over and driving ostentatiously in his new, cherry-red sports car.

Adulterate (verb) alter or debase, often for profit

Of all teas, I love green tea the most and would never adulterate it with sweeteners; even a pinch of sugar would be a desecration.

Vociferous (adj.) – loud and clamorous

The protestors were vociferous in their demands as they screamed outside of the mayor's house.

Taciturn (adj.) – reserved or uncommunicative in speech

Over the past 50 years, as a recruiter, Yuri has come across different types of candidates, some of them speak a lot while some stay taciturn.

Obdurate (adj.) – refuse to change one's opinion; stubborn

The teacher couldn't stand the obdurate student as he yelled at anyone who dared to disagree with his opinions during the debate.

Garrulous (adj.) – excessively talkative

Though not garrulous by nature, Ryan seems to be comfortable with the diverse audiences at the education conference and managed to have conversations with several of them.

Misanthrope (noun) – person who hates others

People thought the old woman was a misanthrope since she wouldn't talk to any of her neighbors let alone help them but they realized how much she loved them when she put a huge bag of candy out at Halloween.

Lionize (verb) – treat someone as a celebrity

The retired lieutenant is being lionized as a paragon of integrity for standing up against corruption.

Imminent (adj.) – about to happen

Some people thought it was outrageous when the media predicted the imminent death of the drug-addicted actress.

Frivolous (adj) – trivial, silly

Ram was passionate and serious about collecting coins but his friends thought it was a frivolous activity.

Benign (adj.) – gentle, kindly

Even though the advertisements claim the energy drink is benign, customers may experience some unwanted side effects after consuming.

Dissonance (noun) – lack of harmony, disagreement

There is a great deal of dissonance between the conflicting evidences produced by both the parties and hence the judge had to close the case on account of lack of sufficient evidence.

Inculpate (verb) – accuse or blame

Although the killer successfully disposed of the murder weapon, his friends provided evidence that could actually inculpate both the killer and the people who tried to cover up the killing.

Docile (adj.) – compliant, submissive

Although a trained lion appears docile during the circus acts, it is really a fierce animal when not controlled by a trainer.

Sporadic (adj.) – occurring at irregular intervals; scattered or isolated

The doctors are finding it difficult to identify the cause of Tom's heartaches because of his sporadic heartbeat.

Prevaricate (verb) – deceive; stretch the truth

Aria does not take bad news well and hence her brother always prevaricates when telling her something she does not want to hear.

Chicanery (noun) – deception, trickery

The judge has plenty of reason to suspect chicanery because the lawyer has a reputation of aggressively defending his clients and of getting verdicts of innocence on guilty Policemen.

Gainsay (verb) – deny or contradict

Some of the officers were about to reject the project, but it had come from them, they could not well gainsay it.

Eulogy (noun) – praise, exclamation

Public officials and her friends joined in a chorus of eulogy and remembrances for many days afterward as Michelle signs on the human rights doctrine.

Belligerent (adj.) – hostile and aggressive

Russia's public statement has been belligerent, menacing military action against the United States.

Dispassionate (adj.) – unfeeling, impartial

The heart of the ruthless monarch seems dispassionate to the plight of those people suffering in his kingdom.

Providential (adj.) – lucky, occurring at a favorable time; opportune

Sam's dangerous and providential escape, made her tremble; and so pale did he still look, that she could scarcely believe he was uninjured.

Diffidence (noun) – hesitancy; lack of confidence

A lot of sportsmen attain prominence before they know what to do with it; others put across a diffidence to fame while secretly craving it; and some just don't treasure their moments in the spotlight.

Fractious (adj.) – irritable and quarrelsome

Third world powers are hesitant about sending arms to aid the war, partially due to the fractious politics of the hostile political group abroad.

Malign (adj.) – hurtful, injurious

Often, people suffering psychological disorders are considered by their families to be under the influence of malign spirits, or showing sign of a physical affliction.

Disparate (adj.) – essentially different in kind, not allowing comparison

Chief Puritan and songwriter James Rhodes has led his band through six very disparate albums united by their subtle indifference for listener accessibility.

Plausible (adj.) – seeming reasonable or probable

Astronomers received data from the unexplored planet which indicates that the possibility of life, at least in the ancient past, is at least plausible.

Sanguine (adj.) – optimistic or positive

Among those who remain sanguine about the nation's economic revival, there is always the lively topic of tax reduction policies, the remedy to deflationary recession in the United States.

Venerate (v.) – regard with great respect

In a nod to the religious customs of the Vatican, which popes here venerate, there are plans for a cathedral between the St. Peter's Square and Mount Street.

Trite (adj.) silly, commonplace

Of these athletes, only Mr. Johnson delivered movements with any firmness; and even he was moving with such a professional awe that rendered everything trite.

Succinct (adj.) brief, to the point

Perhaps the most succinct equations of wave theory come closest in mathematics to defining probability, but chemistry can fairly lay claim to these equations.

Ingenious (adj.) – clever, original, and inventive

No matter how ingenious a thesis or an analysis may be, it will be quickly invalidated if appropriate field experts haven't been engaged in the process for feedback.

Meticulous (adj.) – very careful and precise

Queen Cleopatra did beautiful architectural drawings on monuments built around the pyramids, the result of years of obsessive and meticulous hard work by numerous artists and builders.

Erudite (adj.) – well-educated, cultured

Consuming the books her father supplied, Miss. Jane, who grew up in near poverty, became an erudite, self-educated woman and loves sharing her knowledge with others.

Bolster (v.) – support or strengthen

Students having trouble paying college tuition fee may be relieved to hear that the Academic Council has launched new policies that will bolster borrower protections for student education loans.

Anachronism (noun) – error in time placement

With the rate of economic growth in the western countries at its lowest rate in nearly a century, the power wielded by the United Nations can seem like an anachronism.

Trivial (adj.) – of little value or importance

Evidently, \$10 was a trivial amount for the wealthy business man, but no one wants to be embarrassed in front of his or her fellow associates.

Advocate (noun) – person supporting an idea or cause publicly

Mr. Sam who is a leading GRE test prep expert advocates strong basics and ample practice to be the key to succeed on the exam.

Conspicuous (adj.) – obvious, easily seen

Taxes on the corporates encourage investment and growth, instead of conspicuous consumption. The rich will always be wealthy. It's the middle class that needs help.

Innocuous (adj.) – harmless and inoffensive

Companies that track their visitor's online behavior have long claimed that the data they collect is anonymous, and therefore innocuous. But the interpretation of the word "anonymous" has changed over time in the online world.

Audacious (adj.) – reckless, daring

Jim is known for his adventurous style and audacious nature for when he is inside the ring, his audiences would jump off their seats to watch him play with the lion.

Tumultuous (adj.) – confused, or disorderly

During the recent riots, the crowd was tumultuous and went berserk as the police arrest their leader, washing away all that impeded it.

Reticent (adj.) – secretive, quiet

The usually reticent Swiss bank acknowledged the policy quandary at an International Monetary Fund meeting in New York this month.

Fervid (adj.) – intensely enthusiastic or passionate

During political debates, the candidates hurl fervid accusations at each other while justifying their positions on national issues.

Enervate (verb) – weaken, wear out

The blazing heat in mid-June caused dehydration and enervated the shipwrecked crew, leaving them almost too weak to hail the passing vessel.

Prodigal (adj.) – wastefully extravagant

Scott had been prodigal of all his energy, money and resources and innovative stratagems and loving kindness.

Auspicious (adj.) – conducive to success; favorable

The Australian skipper considered the sunny forecast to be an auspicious sign that his team would win tomorrow's cricket match.

Soporific (adj.) – tending to induce drowsiness or sleep

The reality shows aired on TV tend towards the soporific; by contrast, the coverage of soccer game in newspapers is more fun because the pictures counted for everything.

Engender (verb) – cause or give rise to

The new technology has engendered great hope for the potential development of preventive methods for lethal genetic and severe chronic diseases such as glaucoma and cancer.

Loquacious (adj.) – tending to talk a great deal; talkative

Julie and Katie were not being loquacious with the other guests because they were too busy making long conversations with their other friends.

Equivocate (verb) – to avoid giving a clear or direct answer to a question

When I asked Rachel if the suit looks good on me, she equivocated a response, avoiding the question by saying she needed it to be somewhere else.

Inimical (adj.) – tending to obstruct or harm

Though Sarah's husband is an inimical person who often beats her for trivial reasons, she has always tried to be nice to him.

Superfluous (adj.) – extra, unnecessary

Massive marketing budgets may seem superfluous when revenues are hard to come by, but it's indispensable to have them in place in order to get substantial funding and to stay capital efficient.

Fastidious (adj.) – very careful and attentive

After the party, Jenny and her brother were fastidious in their efforts to clean up the mess because they knew their parents were on their way home.

Recalcitrant (adj) – disobedient, uncontrollable

Recalcitrant politicians, in interviews on TV and newspaper, raised their concerns over the party's national policies publicly and were consequently punished for their disobedience.

Ephemeral (adj.) – momentary, passing

Sophie always knew the relationship with Haden would be ephemeral; she just didn't expect they would breakup so soon.

Pusillanimous (adj.) – lacking courage, fearful

Despite the opportunity for heroism, the captain led his soldiers into a pusillanimous retreat and since then the man has been rated as a coward.

Vacillate (verb) – go back and forth, be indecisive

Since his term exams were round the corner, Adam vacillated between going on the family vacation and staying back at home to study.

Ambivalent (adj.) – having mixed feelings, conflicting

My feelings about Shelly are ambivalent because on one hand she is a loyal friend, but on the other, she is a cruel and vicious thief.

Enigma (adj.) – difficult to interpret or understand; mysterious

Bruce Wayne was an enigmatic businessman; no one could ever guess what goes through the master tactician's mind.

Euphoric (adj.) – intense excitement and happiness

The Australian cricket players were all euphoric when the Government declared a bonus pay to each of them as bring the world cup home.

Pedant (noun) – a person who overemphasizes rules or minor details

The senior professor was obviously a pedant since she persistently focuses on mediocre details and keeps interrupting me to point out my imperfect pronunciation and grammar usage without letting me make my argument.

Profound (adj.) – very great or intense; thoughtful

The realities are forcing a profound reassessment of how the Nile, Africa's only major river, can continue to slake the thirst of one of the continent's fastest-growing regions.

Inchoate (adj.) – undeveloped, beginning

Just after the big bang explosion, before the universe expanded to the gigantic distances, it was an inchoate assemblage of elemental matter.

Lethargic (adj.) – lazy, sluggish

In Asia, data on Tuesday showed that Japan's economy contracted in the three months to September, as exports and domestic consumer spending remain lethargic

Deride (adj.) – make fun of; insult

When United States briefly considered withdrawing their forces completely out of Iraq in 2009, several patriots in public conversations derided the idea as a big mistake.

That's About It.

So, those are the most frequent vocab words you will see on the GRE. I hope you got some value from these 101 most important GRE words. If you want to learn them regularly, save them in a doc, or print them and stick them somewhere in your study room.

Also, don't forget to come back to this list in a few days, and quiz yourself to see how many of these 101 high frequency GRE words you can recall. Remember, unless you revise on newly learned material, you are likely to forget it sooner than you think.

We created this list with a lot of care and effort so that students who are short on time don't have to skip learning vocabulary entirely and I really hope this serves as a reference point to you.

Also, I want you to remember that the GRE doesn't rely on any word lists. The words can come from anywhere. From yesterday's newspaper, online journals, history articles etc.

By the way, 80% of your problems can be solved by smart preparation. Solving the other 20% just requires good practice. We cannot help you with the latter, but we can help you with smart preparation. [Learn more about how you can get the most out of your prep time.](#)