

BARRON'S ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR THE GRE

SECOND EDITION

Philip Goe, Ed. M.

**Your Vocabulary for Success
on the GRE General Test**



انتشارات راه
RAH PUBLICATIONS

تخصصی ترین مرکز نشر کتب زبان در ایران

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عنوان و نام پدیدآور: Barron's essential words for the GRE your vocabulary for success on the GRE general test/Philip Geer.

مشخصات نشر: تهران: راه، ۱۳۹۱، ۲۰۱۲ م.

مشخصات ظاهری: ۴۰ ص.

وضعیت فهرست نویسی: ف.پ.ا.

یادداشت: انگلیسی.

یادداشت: افست از روی چاپ دهه ۲۰.

آوانویسی عنوان: بارون ز اسنشیال وردز فاست جی. آر. ای...

موضوع: آزمون دوره های تحصیلات عالی - مطالعه

موضوع: زبان انگلیسی - اصطلاح ها و واژه ها

موضوع: زبان انگلیسی - واژگان - مسائل - تمرین ها - آزمون

رده بندی کنگره: ۲۱۳۹۱ ب ۹۹/۴/۲۳۶۷ L B

رده بندی دیویی: ۳۷۸/۱۶۶۲

شماره کتابشناسی ملی: ۳۰۶۹۱۳۷

نام کتاب: ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR THE GRE

مؤلف: Philip Geer.Ed.M.

ناشر: راه

لیتو گرافی، صحافی، چاپخانه: مجموعه انتشارات راه

ناصر فنی چاپ: زهره محمدی

طراحی و صفحه آرایی: دپارتمان طراحی انتشارات راه

سال نشر: ۱۳۹۲

نوبت چاپ: اول

شمارگان: ۱۰۰۰

شابک: ۹۷۸-۶۰۰-۲۷۲-۲۱۴-۰

شماره تلفن های بخش فروش و پذیرش نمایندگی:

دپارتمان پیام نور: ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۲۸۹۰۰ ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۲۸۹۰۰

دپارتمان زبان، حقوق، ارشد، دکتری: ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۲۸۹۰۰ ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۲۸۹۰۰

دپارتمان پایه تا دانشگاه (دبیرستان): ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۲۸۹۰۰ ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۲۸۹۰۰

فروشگاه شماره (۱) انتشارات راه: میدان انقلاب، خ ۱۲ فروردین، نبش خ شهدای ژاندارمری، پلاک ۲۷۷

تلفن فروشگاه: ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۰۰۱۴۷ ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۰۰۱۴۷ ۰۲۱-۲۶۶۰۰۰۸۴

صندوق پستی: ۱۴۱۸۵-۱۳۶

ایمیل: info@rahpub.com

فروشگاه اینترنتی: www.rahpub.com

پیامک: ۳۰۰۸۸۱۲۲۲۲۲

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Susan Geer for her invaluable assistance in the preparation of this book.

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Philip Geer is an educator who has been teaching English language and literature in many years in high schools and junior colleges in the United States and abroad. He is also the author of several textbooks and test preparation books, including *Forrest!*, *Picture These SAT Words!*, and *Simon's Saga for the SAT*, and is the founder of Mentours, an education consultancy that prepares students for various standardized tests of verbal reasoning skills. You can contact Philip Geer at director@mentours.com and visit the Mentours Web site at www.mentours.com to learn more about building your verbal reasoning skills.

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Reprint 2012

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All inquiries should be addressed to:

Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

250 Wireless Boulevard

Hauppauge, NY 11788

www.barronseduc.com

ISBN-13: 978-0-7641-4478-3

ISBN-10: 0-7641-4478-2

Library of Congress Catalog Card No.: 2009039837

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Geer, Philip.

Essential words for the GRE / Philip Geer. — 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7641-4478-3

ISBN-10: 0-7641-4478-2

1. Graduate Record Examination—Study guides. 2. English language—Glossaries, vocabularies, etc. 3. Vocabulary—Problems, exercises, etc. I. Title.

LB2367.4.G43 2010

378.1'662—dc22

2009039837

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

9 8 7 6 5 4 3

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Introduction: Mastering Advanced Vocabulary for the GRE

As a student preparing for the verbal section of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), you have to practice the skills of analyzing information in a passage, understanding the relationships among parts of a sentence, and comprehending relationships between words and concepts in context. To do this, you should work through the skills section and practice tests in a reputable GRE General Test guidebook, such as Barron's GRE. You also need to read widely, thinking critically about what you read. You should read good periodicals, such as *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *The Economist*, and *Scientific American*. In addition to reading these types of periodicals, you should read books that develop more extended arguments, such as *Consilience, the Unity of Knowledge* by the eminent scientist Edward O. Wilson and *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* by the influential modern thinker B. F. Skinner. Reading such material will increase your knowledge in important areas. It will also improve your ability to understand complex sentence structure and follow a sophisticated line of reasoning. If, as you read, you look up unfamiliar words in a good dictionary, your vocabulary will also improve.

Speaking of vocabulary, is it important to have a good knowledge of advanced words to do well on the GRE? The answer is "Yes, definitely." The test places considerable emphasis on advanced vocabulary, especially in the antonym, analogy, and sentence completion questions. Let's take a look at some of these types of questions to see how important vocabulary is on the GRE.

ANTONYM QUESTIONS

In the antonym questions below, you must choose the answer that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the capitalized word.

ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR THE GRE

DISINGENUOUS:

- (A) laconic
- (B) desultory
- (C) guileless
- (D) irascible
- (E) solicitous

You may know the meaning of *disingenuous* from your knowledge of SAT-level words. If you know that it means "not candid, crafty," you will know that you have to look for a word meaning "candid, not crafty." You may be able to eliminate (A) *laconic* using your knowledge of SAT-level words, but unless you know the meanings of the other words, which are all GRE-level words, you will have difficulty arriving at the correct answer (C) *guileless* meaning "free of cunning or deceit."

MENDACITY:

- (A) refulgence
- (B) perfidy
- (C) veracity
- (D) fractiousness
- (E) salacity

To answer this question with confidence, you must know the meaning of *mendacity*, a GRE-level word. If you don't know that it means "untruthfulness," you will have difficulty selecting the correct answer (C) *veracity*, even if you know the meaning of this SAT-level word. Also, without a good knowledge of GRE-level vocabulary, it will be difficult to eliminate choice (E) *salacity*.

ANALOGY QUESTIONS

In the analogy questions below, a related pair of capitalized words linked by a colon appears. You must choose the answer that gives the pair of words whose relationship is most like the relationship expressed in the original pair.

MOUNTEBANK : CHARLATAN ::

- (A) necromancer : spirit
- (B) critic : reprobate
- (C) profligate : skinflint
- (D) mendicant : benefactor
- (E) prevaricator : equivocator