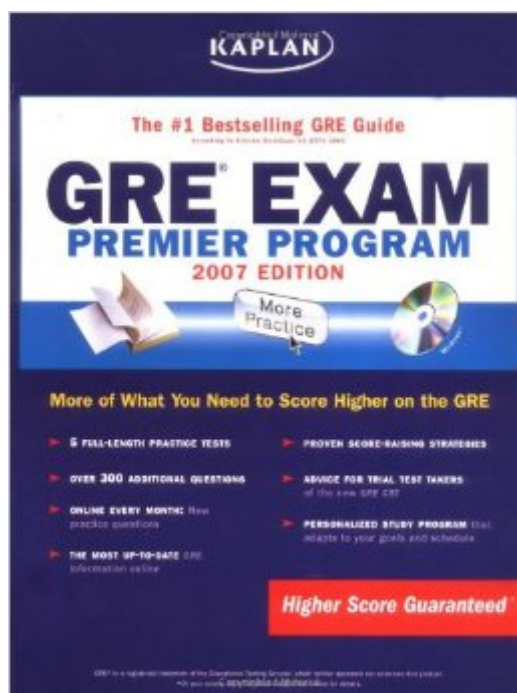


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Kaplan GRE Exam, 2007 Edition: Premier Program (Kaplan GRE Premier Program (W/CD))



Synopsis

978-1-4195-4191-9 SUSAN KAPLAN & MATT FIDLER 2007 EDITION KAPLAN PUBLISHING 2006
410 PAGES

Book Information

Series: Kaplan GRE Premier Program (W/CD)

Paperback: 432 pages

Publisher: Kaplan Education; Pap/Cdr edition (June 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1419541919

ISBN-13: 978-1419541919

Product Dimensions: 8.4 x 0.8 x 10.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (27 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,470,662 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #75 in [Books > Education & Teaching > Higher & Continuing Education > Test Preparation > Graduate School > Graduate Preparation](#) #448 in [Books > Education & Teaching > Higher & Continuing Education > Test Preparation > Graduate School > GRE](#) #8232 in [Books > Education & Teaching > Studying & Workbooks > Study Guides](#)

Customer Reviews

I, like many people, bought this book along with a plethora of other GRE prep books (Barrons, Arco, ETS) hoping that a combination of all these books would help me attain the high score I wanted. I figured if one book did a poor job covering one aspect, the others would pick up the slack. Kaplan's GRE prep book was poor in all aspects of covering the material on the exam. First of all, this book essentially gives few to no facts, just tips and tricks on how to approach problems. Trust me, without reviewing the material, tips and tricks will get you nowhere fast. Kaplan also does a poor job preparing you on the verbal section, in particular. Whereas Barrons contains an extremely useful 3000 word list, Kaplans has a pathetic 300 word list contained at the end of the book, most of which aren't even that difficult. Truthfully, if you want to do well on the verbal, you need to beef up your vocabulary. Its that simple. Barrons succeeds wonderfully here, as there is no shortcut to doing well on the verbal but hard work and memorization. The math prep. section was somewhat useful (at least there were some facts), but it was ultimately lacking when compared to the far more comprehensive Barrons mathematics review. My biggest gripe of all with this book is the scant

amount of practice problems! If you're a serious studier, you need to practice the math and verbal problems. Most prep books offer a ton of problems, but Kaplan only has a few per question type. It seems Kaplan missed the point here. I don't want more tricks, I need more practice! The one saving grace for this book is its software. Sure, it isn't great (it's actually very cheesy - seems directed at middle school kids rather than adults) but there are 3 practice tests and some practice problems. The tests are great nor are they accurate (if you need a computer practice test, download the powerprep software on the gre website), but at least its practice. It's actually a terrible indication of what your actual score will be (I scored a 520 on the math section on one of their practice exams, even though I got a 730 on the real test.) My advice: save your money on this one and pass. Despite having bought so many GRE prep books (about 8), I really only used Barrons because it was the most comprehensive. Go for Barrons instead, you won't be disappointed.

This book stood out to me for my students because it offered online tools in addition to a CD-ROM with quizzes and practice tests. I've invested in actual Kaplan courses before for students, however, and think that I had my hopes up very high about what was available online. The online diagnostic was disappointing in that the analysis it provided was only correct/incorrect answers and the amount of time spent on each question; clearly not enough to let a student know where they stand in strengths and weaknesses. Otherwise, the text is full of great strategies (one has to break his old habits first) and the practice tests online and on the CD-ROM are great for getting used to the CAT as compared to paper tests. GRE test preparation books are certainly great for structured studying so I don't think that people should expect anything more from them.

I bought this book as I prepared to take the GRE again. I have yet to take it, and so I don't know how helpful this book will be, but so far it does not seem to be as thorough or polished as the Barrons Guide. The Barrons Guide gives you a much longer list of vocabulary, goes over all of the math (including the more difficult questions) in full detail, and I think it is a bit more difficult. The GRE Kaplan CD pales next to its much better LSAT CD which had a much more friendly user interface. This CD merely directs you to select quizzes from a drop down menu... couldn't you at least have created a simple GUI for this program? Still, if you want some additional prep, this book seems to be alright. But I would definitely go for the Barrons Guide first, mainly for its wonderful vocabulary list (3000 words I believe).

Overall I enthusiastically endorse the Kaplan book/CD. It must be supplemented with other sources

though. My story: I studied intensely for about 5 1/2 weeks. Ideally, I would have had a full 8 weeks to study (preferably at a less intense pace). I lost 3 whole weekends to studying, and if I had a more demanding job that prevented me from studying at work I would've been screwed. So plan on 2 months to study. For materials, I went with Kaplan's 2007 'Premier Program w/CD', Kaplan's 500-word Vocab Flipbook, Barron's 2007 GRE book (no CD), and ETS' GRE PowerPrep Software. I recommend both Kaplan resources - the full program and CD are good and feature superior answer explanation. The 500-page vocab flipbook is INDISPENSIBLE!!! This book makes studying words very easy anywhere (forget loose flashcards or making them). I had many words from this book on the test. Strategy: when you study words, go through 20-25 at a time. Repeat the same set 3-5 times in one sitting. Next time, do this with a new set... you'll memorize easier this way. I successfully memorized ~375 words, but with 2 months you could get all 500 in. Whatever you do, make sure that you AT LEAST know the 100 'Top GRE Words' listed in the back of the Kaplan Premier Program (these are a subset of the 500 in the flip-book). Lots of people like the Barron's book. I didn't - first off, the pages are made of very cheap paper that is hard to look at (text bleeds through, is a nasty brownish color). Text & figures are all crammed very closely into dense columns. The Kaplan book features premium stark-white paper that does not bleed through, and the pages are manageable - not too much info staring back at you like Barron's. The math section of Barron's is rough - far too comprehensive. People like the 3,500 vocab list - but c'mon, you're not going to need to study that many words unless you're an English major. The book is cheap (like \$15 on) so buy it yourself if you're curious and want a 2nd source. I did use some of the practice math problems and a few verbal problems, but in the end I abandoned Barron's because it was altogether too much. The CD that comes with Kaplan is decent - contains 6 timed practice quantitative sets, 6 timed proactive verbal sets, and 3 full CAT's. The practice sets are good to use - but they do rush you (only give you 30 mins for 30 problems). On the real GRE, you get 45 mins for 28 problems. Kaplan does this to teach you pacing, but while I was always able to always finish a timed verbal practice set I was never able to finish a timed math practice set on the Kaplan CD. The CAT is timed like the real GRE. In addition to Kaplan CD, you *MUST* download and use ETS' GRE Powerprep software. The interface looks 99% like the GRE (only the colors are different) and the questions are the same dry questions you'll get on the GRE. There are many untimed practice sets - take them ALL. There are also 2 CAT's - I took both. Also in the software is an ETS "Math Review", which you can print out and put into a binder. Definitely use this - it will familiarize you with ETS's style greatly and highly compliment Kaplan's math review.[...] Scores: In the beginning, I got a '61%' on Kaplan's 'Diagnostic Test'. A week later I got a mediocre CAT score on Kaplan's CD: 560 V, 460 Q. This taught me I

needed to focus heavily on math, which I did. 3 weeks later I took an ETS CAT: 530 V, 590 Q. This was encouraging, and it told me that ETS scored easier on the math than Kaplan. The day before the test I took the 2nd ETS CAT (although I read NOT to study the day before, I couldn't help myself!). I got 500 V, 620 Q. The increased math score was really encouraging. My flagging verbal led me to focus on vocab for my remaining hours. I didn't study too much/too hard during the last 24 hrs though (you want to relax a bit). I scheduled my test at 1pm because I am NOT a morning person! Final real GRE score: 550 V, 640 Q. I was elated!! This was much higher than I expected, and placed me in the correct league for the program I am applying for. I know if I had another 3 weeks I could've broken into the 1300's, but oh well. Note - I completed the essays in my 1st two practice CAT's, but just drew up an outline on the last test. I still don't know my essay scores, but I anticipate at least a 4.5 (maybe 5?). Check out ETS's sample essays/explanations in Powerprep, as well as Kaplan's sample essays. Assuming you're a good writer, just practice making keen observations about GRE argument topics and effectively/quicky brainstorming ideas for the issues topic. As long as you can draw up a good outline that includes logical points you're all set. Good luck! I wrote such a long-winded account as I plan to re-post this on other GRE forums I lurked on prior to my D-Day!

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