Analytical Writing: Analyze an Issue

Original classroom teaching; not an official form or score predictor

GRE Analytical Writing: Analyze an Issue

- Take a position on a claim, often a **qualification 限定条件** of it rather than full agreement or disagreement.
- Follow the specific instruction printed under the claim.
- Support your view with reasons and explained examples.
- Answer a serious **objection 反对意见** to your view.

Read the instruction

- Every Issue prompt has a claim and an instruction, such as "discuss the extent to which you agree", or "address the most compelling reasons against your position".
- The instruction decides what you must discuss. Underline it.
- Only the Issue task is part of the current standard test; older books may also include a retired "Argument" task.

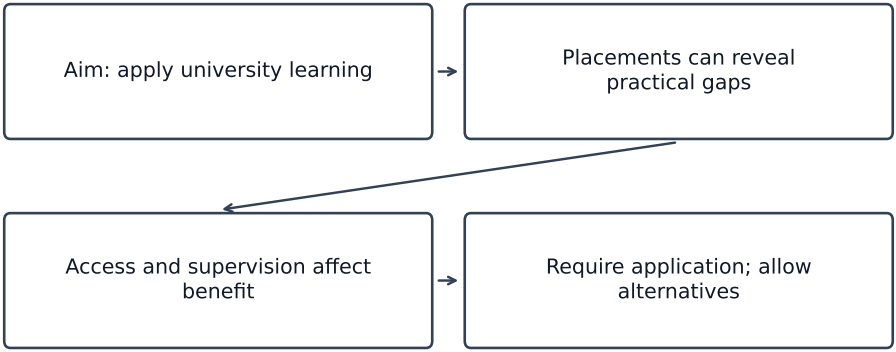
Choose a position with a scope

- You can agree, disagree or qualify: "This is true for X, but not for Y, because...".
- A qualified position is often stronger because it shows when and why the claim holds.
- State it in one or two sentences in the first paragraph.

Develop reasons and examples

- Each body paragraph makes one point and explains how the example supports it.
- An example alone is not enough; explain the mechanism: why does this policy produce that effect?
- Hypothetical examples are acceptable if they are clearly presented as such.

Figure: Develop reasons and examples



- Weigh the aim against access and supervision before recommending placements

exercises.lol exercises.com.cn

Objections and conclusion

- Choose the strongest objection, not a weak one that is easy to dismiss.
- Answer it, or let it change your position, and say how.
- The conclusion restates the position and its limits. Clear organisation matters more than rare vocabulary.

Worked example: planning in five minutes

- Position: support practical application for all students, but not one compulsory form of it.
- Reason 1: in professional subjects, placements reveal the gap between knowing a rule and using it.
- Reason 2: a placement without supervision or relevant work teaches little.
- Objection and answer: unequal access (cost, caring duties) $\rightarrow$ funded local places and an equally demanding alternative project.

Worked example: an original application

- Original Issue prompt: “Universities should require every degree student to complete a work placement.” Discuss how far you agree.
- Explain circumstances in which the recommendation would or would not be useful, using reasons and examples.
- Plan a qualified position before reading the model.
- I support a requirement to connect university study with work, but a single compulsory placement is too narrow for every degree and every student.

Independent transfer

- Without reusing the model's examples, write a paragraph arguing the strongest case for a universal placement requirement.
- Then explain one condition that weakens that case and revise your thesis accordingly.
- This is original classroom practice, not an official scored response.
- A defensible case is that a common minimum prevents departments from offering application only to students already confident enough to seek it.

Common errors

- Ignoring the specific instruction.
- Agreeing or disagreeing without saying why.
- Listing examples without explaining how they support the point.

Common errors (2)

- Raising only a weak objection.
- Spending the time on rare vocabulary instead of clear reasoning.

Key terms

- **qualification**: A limit added to a claim to make it more accurate.
- **objection**: A reason against a position.

Check yourself

- What two parts does every Issue prompt have?
- Is "I partly agree: this works for X but not for Y" an acceptable position?
- What should you do after stating an objection?