



Introduction

This is one of the many notes I prepared while studying for the GMAT test. This note is rough and in its original form without much editing because I want to show you exactly what worked for me. I found it extremely useful to have a notebook with me whenever I was studying to write down things that were difficult. I took these notes to the test center on the day I took the test and they proved to be excellent materials to read right before the test. I suggest you do the same. If you have any questions, feel free to find me at:

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NOTES on GMAT IDIOMS

"due to" vs "because of"

due to - modifies nouns.

Her failure was due to poor study habits.

because of - modifies verbs.

She failed because of poor study habits.

"concur with" a person, "concur in" a decision

I concur with John. I concur in this decision.

A series of... has...

series, string, spate, succession --> all singular.

also: company, committee, group, gang --> all require singular pronouns.

"a number of" = "several" --> always signals a plural subject.

A number of apples were stolen.

"the number of" --> singular

The number of apples stolen was five.

My GMAT Cheat Sheet - GMAT IDIOMS

Spring 2010

from "30 Day GMAT Success" <http://www.30daygmatsuccess.com/>

by Brandon Wu (GMAT Score: 780, 99 percentile)

Neither... nor (noun)... were/was | Either... or (noun)... were/was

were/was depends on the noun following "nor" as it is the subject of the sentence.

Neither you nor John was able to finish the race.

"among" vs "between"

among is used when referring to three or more units, while between is used when referring to two.

It was very difficult for me to choose between coffee and tea.

Among all three choices, tea was the healthiest drink.

watch out for "Because... so..." and "Because... therefore..." --> redundant sentence structure and often incorrect.

... is "credited with (verb-ing)"... --> "with" is correct

...is "credited ~~for~~ (verb-ing)"... --> "for" is incorrect

"just as... so..."

"more than" - I certainly have more confidence now than five years ago.

"the reason... was because..." --> incorrect. Too wordy to be correct on the GMAT

"between... and..." ex. between Los Angeles and San Francisco

"from... to..." ex. from Los Angeles to San Francisco

"... insist that ... (original verb-form) ..."

Airlines insist that each passenger pass through a metal detector.

"require to" - You are required to bow when you accept someone's business card.

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"if... then..."

If you go, then I will go.

"the -er ... the -er ..." - The later it gets, the funnier he becomes.

"To (verb) ... is to (verb)..."

Correct idioms:

There were neither... nor...

There were no... or...

There were no... and no...

There were no... nor were there...

"Just as ... , so ... "

Just as there are fashion trends, so are there food trends.

"decide that" --> correct

"dispute (noun) over" - The dispute over who won the race went on for hours.

"at odds with" --> correct

"at odds... opposing" --> incorrect

"inevitable that ... would ..." --> correct

"inevitable of (someone) to (do something)" --> incorrect

On the GMAT, "it" always points to a noun, NOT to a clause or an action.

"that" is a pronoun used only for things and not people. Use "who" for people instead.

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"seem to" - You seem to be very happy.

"able to" and "ability to"

He was able to finish that plate of rice.

He had the ability to finish that plate of rice.

"opposition to" - The opposition to the ban on certain books in China has been increasing.

"both ... and ..." - He has both a dog and a cat.

"compare to" vs. "compare with"

You can compare her to a monkey on speed.

Compared with her sister, she is not very energetic.

"worry about" - Don't worry about the small stuff and it's all small stuff!

"target at" - The new iPhone ads are targeted at young parents.

"connection between" - There is little connection between her University degree and her job.

"contrast with" - We contrasted the period furniture with a bright wall color.

"debate(noun) over" - The friends had a debate over where to find the best beer in town.

barely, rarely, without, hardly, seldom, scarcely

--> these are all grammatically negative.

related note: watch out for double negatives! It's a No-No in modern English.

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"distinguish from" - I cannot distinguish the twins from each other easily.

"whether" will always beat "if" on the GMAT

"consequence of" - A consequence of losing his job was lowered self-esteem.

"as" vs "like"

like is used to compare nouns while as is used to compare actions and is often followed by a clause.

Life is like a box of chocolates.

Life surprises you everyday, as a box of chocolates often does.

"decide to" - I couldn't decide whether to take the job or not.

"credit with" - The Beatles are often credited with starting the 1960's pop movement.

"double"(verb) vs. "twice"(comparison)

The landlord tried to double the rent on our house.

That would mean paying twice as much as we do now.

A person is irritated. A situation or condition is aggravated.

"each other" (2 things) vs. "one another" (3 or more things) -

The pear and cheese compliment each other.

The pear, cheese and walnuts compliment one another.

"associate with" - People often associate Japan with sushi.

"extent to which" - I was surprised at the extent to which the student's listened to their teacher.

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"considered to be + (noun)" will never be correct on the GMAT. It should be "considered + (noun)"

"fewer" (countable) vs. "less" (uncountable) - I want fewer work hours and less stress.

"continue to" - They can't continue to live like that without serious damage to their health.

"just as.. so too..." - Just as a car needs gas, so too does the body need food.

"forbid to" - We are forbidden to wear high heeled shoes to school.

"from... to" - From her beautiful face to her great sense of humor, I love everything about her.

"There is/are" sentences are often needlessly wordy and therefor wrong.

"in danger of" - If the supermarket opens across the street we are in danger of going out of business.

"-er than" - California's winter is much warmer than Boston's.

"link to" - Overexposure to sun has been linked to skin cancer.

"define as" - A genius is defined as someone with an IQ of over 160".

"not ... but rather/merely ..." - it's not fun but rather tedious pressing the button repeatedly.

"believe ... to be ..." - I believe the bag to be fake.

"distinguish between... and..." - It is hard to distinguish between John and Jack.

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"perceive as" - Can a robot be perceived as a developing creature?

"so as" is never correct on the GMAT

"so... as to be..." however is often correct

"native to" (plants, animals, etc.) vs. "native of" (people's birthplaces) -

The kangaroo is native to Australia.

Pamela Anderson is a native of Canada.

"prohibit from" - Kids are prohibited from entering this venue after midnight.

"either... or..." - I could either go to the movies or finish my homework

"like" vs. "such as"

"such as" is used for examples, while "like" is used to demonstrate similarities.

He loves outdoor sports such as hiking and camping.

This place smells like curry.

"resistance to" - Vitamin C increases one's resistance to catching a cold.

"consider" - I consider him to be the best basketball player on the team.

"range from ... to ..." - The ages of people working in this factory range from twenty to fifty.

"same as" - The book he is holding is the same as the one on that table.

"likely to" - If you study effectively, you are likely to do well.

... is "estimated to be" ... --> "to be" is correct

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... is "estimated ~~as~~" ... --> "as" is incorrect

"estimate to be" - This church is estimated to be over 250 years old.

"attribute to"

His success was often attributed to the help from his family.

People often attribute his success to the help from his family.

"different from" - The house we are living in now is completely different from our previous one.

"so ... as to (verb) ..." - Would you be so kind as to give me a ride?

"so ... that ..." - She was so kind that she didn't charge us for gas.

"not only ... but also ..." - She not only sings well but also dances fantastically.

"superior to" and "inferior to"

The quality of this material is superior to the one we saw yesterday.

The material we saw yesterday was inferior to this new one today.

"regard as" - She was regarded by the general public as a loving mother.

"amount" vs "number"

amount is used to refer to an uncountable quantity, while number is used to refer to countable things.

The amount of soup

The number of participants

"difficult to" - It was incredibly difficult to find the restaurant with these poor directions.

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"not so ... as ..." - He is not so bad as people think.

"not so much ... as ..." - I am not so much worried as I am excited.

"try to" - Why don't you try to do it too?

"model after" - The houses in Boston were modeled after those in England.



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