THE GMAT MENTOR

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ISBN 979-8-9933074-0-4 (softcover)

Library of Congress Control Number 2025921041

Question review by Jeffrey Lane

Printed in the United States of America

Published by Mentor Press
Los Angeles, CA
Email: mark@thegmatmentor.com

Visit www.thegmatmentor.com

THE GMAT MENTOR

QUANT AND DATA INSIGHTS

MARK GLENN

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You Can Do This

You can succeed on the GMAT, no matter your innate ability. How? By working smart—and working hard.

I've personally taught over 1,000 GMAT students, and thousands more have used the study program I co-authored at Veritas Prep. Among the most successful were those who struggled the most to begin with. Some started with a shaky grasp on core math and logic concepts. Others were solid at math but were unable to translate that skill to the test and thought they were "bad" test-takers. Still others suffered from severe test anxiety.

But all these obstacles can be overcome. My students gained confidence and poise, learned the material, got the scores they wanted, and attended select MBA and other master's programs. Not all of my students, to be sure—but everyone who worked smart and worked hard reached their greatest potential on the test.

Working smart is on me. I've developed a unique program that builds all the GMAT skills from foundation to mastery, with a focus on developing strong habits and mental flexibility. With *The GMAT Mentor* program, you'll avoid the common pitfalls that sink many candidates' chances.

Working hard is on you. You must put in the hours to learn concepts and processes and repeat them until they come naturally. You must take your studying seriously if you want to see serious results.

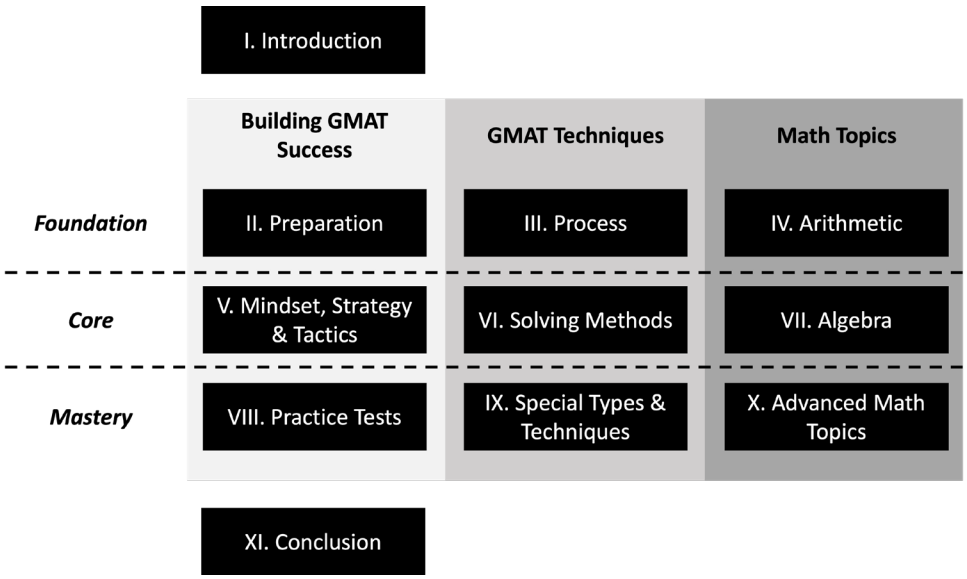
You'll also be learning a way to think about math and logic that is inherently valuable, that will serve you well in your business school classes and beyond. And just maybe you can have a little fun along the way, too.

If you do your part, I'll do mine. Let's dive in!

1

How *The GMAT Mentor* Is Structured

As shown below, this book is structured to be flexible and easy to use:



Aside from the Introduction and Conclusion, the book is divided into three main sections:

1. **Foundation:** The first third of the book is about understanding the key habits, processes, and mathematical properties you need to do well on the GMAT Quantitative (Quant) and Data Insights sections.

2. **Core:** The middle third of the book builds on the Foundation and goes in depth on mindset, strategy, and tactics; GMAT solving techniques; and algebraic and logical operations.

3. **Mastery:** The final third of the book applies the Foundation and Core lessons to test pacing and strategy, special problem types, and advanced topics, preparing you to reach your full potential on the GMAT.

Each chapter in this book, aside from the Introduction and Conclusion, falls under one of three themes:

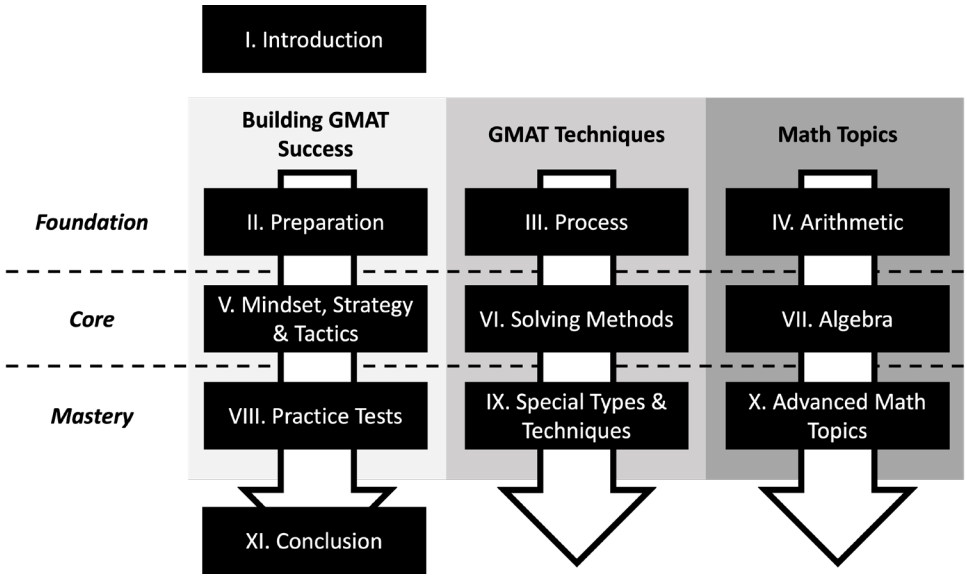
1. **Building GMAT Success:** Here you'll learn the key elements that all successful test-takers bring to the test, as well as specific pacing and guessing strategies. These chapters contain critical insights for your study program—not just in Quant and Data Insights, but across the whole GMAT.

2. **GMAT Techniques:** Here you'll learn the processes and methods you need to solve Quant and Data Insights problems using the test logic unique to the GMAT.

3. **Math Topics:** Here you'll learn all the math you need to know—exponents, statistics, probability, etc.—and how to apply it to the GMAT. These chapters include numerous drills to build your math "muscle memory."

If you need a full program of Quant and Data Insights prep, you'll go sequentially through the book from Foundation through Core to Mastery. That is, after the Introduction, you'll go *horizontally* in the diagram, completing Parts II–IV in Foundation, then Parts V–VII in Core, and then Parts VIII–X in Mastery before wrapping up with the Conclusion.

But if you need specific help in certain areas (or simply want to review), you can instead work *vertically* in one of the themes:



For example, if your math is strong but you struggle with how it applies to the GMAT, you can work through the GMAT Techniques chapters (found in Parts III, VI, and IX). See the black tabs at the edge of the right-hand pages? They reflect the diagram above and can be used to help with vertical navigation.

One other thing: depending on your current math knowledge (e.g., if you haven't actually used any math since Ms. Frumkin's high school algebra class), you may want to download the free Math Fundamentals Supplement from thegmatmentor.com and work through that first. To help you decide if you need the Supplement, I'll give you a diagnostic quiz in a moment.

2 Getting Started

As you get started, there are some things you need to get squared away. In this chapter, I'll first give you the basics on the current GMAT test. Then I'll give you a quiz to test your math fundamentals knowledge and discuss taking your first practice test. (If you're already familiar with the new test and what you need to improve, you can skip through these sections.) Finally, we'll discuss study planning and other resources that will be helpful to you in your studying.

Introduction to the Current GMAT

The Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC) introduced the GMAT Focus Edition in November 2023. Shortly thereafter, the older version of the GMAT (the "GMAT Classic") was phased out.

Like the GMAT Classic, the GMAT Focus Edition is taken on the computer. It consists of three separately timed sections, listed below:

Section	Question Types	What It Measures, According to GMAC	No. of Questions	Time	Onscreen Calculator?
Quantitative Reasoning	• Problem Solving	Your algebraic and arithmetic foundational knowledge and how you apply this knowledge to solve problems.	21	45 min.	
Data Insights	• Graphics Interpretation • Table Analysis • Two-Part Analysis • Multi-Source Reasoning • Data Sufficiency	Your ability to analyze and interpret data and apply it to real-world business scenarios.	20	45 min.	
Verbal Reasoning	• Critical Reasoning • Reading Comprehension	Your ability to read and comprehend written material and to reason and evaluate arguments.	23	45 min.	

You can take the three sections in *any order.* You may take one optional 10-minute break after either the first or second section. (You should always take the break!)

Calculator Use: *You get an onscreen calculator for the Data Insights section, but not for the Quant or Verbal sections. Using the calculator in Data Insights is sometimes helpful, but it can also be a distraction if overused.*

With 45 minutes to answer 20 to 23 questions (depending on the section), you have about 2 minutes per question. However, this is only an average. Some questions you'll be able to solve in as quickly as 30 seconds, while others may take 3–4 minutes. Every so often, you'll want to check the timer to make sure that you aren't falling off the pace. We'll get into more specific timing strategies later.

You must answer each question before proceeding, but you can bookmark questions you want to review. At the end of each section, you can review questions from the section (whether or not you bookmarked them) and change your answers on up to three of them. This ability to review questions and change answers is new to the GMAT Focus Edition (and very welcome!).

Because the GMAT is taken on the computer, it offers some benefits over traditional standardized tests:

- You can self-schedule the test for a time that works for you.
- You have the option to take it at home or at a test center.
- You get your score right away after you finish.

In addition, the test is *adaptive,* meaning that it adapts its questions to the test-taker. I'll go deeper into this aspect of the test in a moment.

Scores

As shown in the table below, the individual sections are scored from 60 to 90 in 1-point increments. Each section has an equal weight in calculating your Total GMAT Score, which ranges from 205 to 805 in 10-point increments.

Score	Scale	Increments
Quantitative Reasoning	60–90	1 point
Data Insights	60–90	1 point
Verbal Reasoning	60–90	1 point
Total	205–805	10 points

For example, if you scored 81 in Quant, 74 in Data Insights, and 79 in Verbal, your Total GMAT Score would be 565.

How Are the Scores Used?

The Total GMAT Score is the most important of the four scores. Schools weigh the Total GMAT Score most heavily in their admissions decisions, and it is the measure that various media use to evaluate and rank the competitiveness of MBA programs.

However, the other scores are still significant. For example, some schools, especially those with a more quantitative focus, want high enough Quant scores to be comfortable that you can handle the curriculum. And if any one score is too low, this may raise a red flag to the admissions committee.

GMAT Focus vs. GMAT Classic Scoring

The GMAT Classic was scored from 200–800 in 10-point increments, making it easy to match a score to its test version: any GMAT score that ends in a 0 is from the GMAT Classic; any GMAT score that ends in a 5 is from the GMAT Focus.

The two scores are *not* directly comparable. Generally speaking, you can add about 35–55 points to a GMAT Focus score to get the equivalent GMAT Classic score. (Full conversion tables are available at mba.com.) MBA admissions committees are fully aware of this discrepancy and will use the conversion tables to get an apples to apples comparison.

In the end, then, the difference in the two scores won't have any impact on your studying. But it's important to be aware of this difference so that you can properly compare scores between the two tests during the application process—for example, when comparing your score to the average scores of students admitted to particular MBA programs.

Adaptive Scoring: A Different Kind of Test

The GMAT is a computer-adaptive test (CAT). On each section, the test *adapts* its questions depending on how well you are answering them. Though the scoring algorithm is complex, broadly speaking this is how it works: As you answer questions correctly, the test raises its estimate of your score and gives you harder questions. As you answer questions incorrectly, the test lowers its estimate of your score and gives you easier questions.

Knowing that better performance on the GMAT leads to generally more difficult questions, test-takers sometimes freak out when they get easy questions on the test. However, in reality, the correlation between the score estimate and question difficulty level is far from perfect. You can answer a question correctly and see an easier question next, or answer a question incorrectly and see a harder question next. Besides, when a question seems easy, be suspicious! It may contain a trap to snare the unwary.

Similarly, the first few questions of a section won't necessarily be of moderate difficulty; they can sometimes be quite difficult. Don't be thrown if you struggle at the beginning of a section. Stick to your strategy and the question difficulty levels will work themselves out.

For more details on the CAT and how adaptive scoring works, see Chapter 19: The Arena (Practice Tests).

Stay Focused:
Don't think about question difficulty level or how well you're doing on the test. Such thoughts will only distract you from the task at hand.

Diagnostics

As you begin studying, you need to answer two questions:

1. **How much review of math fundamentals do you need?**

2. **What is taking the test actually like?**

To answer the first question, you'll take the following diagnostic quiz. To answer the second question, you'll take your first practice test (more on this after the quiz).

Math Fundamentals Diagnostic Quiz

All the math-focused chapters in the book thoroughly review math concepts before you apply them to GMAT problems. But because everything in math is interconnected, every math concept relies on other concepts, and if math was never your thing (or you've forgotten it all), you may need a refresher before you can begin.

Even if you're fairly comfortable with math concepts, I'd recommend taking the quiz to see if you have any gaps that can be addressed by the Math Fundamentals Supplement. The quiz itself also appears in the supplement.

Give yourself up to twenty minutes to take this diagnostic quiz. Don't use a calculator.

Numbers and Digits

1. In the set of numbers $\left\{-2, 0, \frac{3}{4}, \sqrt{2}, 7, 10.5\right\}$, how many are integers?

2. In the number 8,192.635, what is the value of the digit in the hundredths place?

Calculations

3. Calculate $13.7 - 35.6$

4. Calculate -3.2×-7

5. What is the quotient and remainder of $116 \div 9$?

6. Calculate $50.56 \div 0.8$

Arithmetic Shortcuts

7. Calculate 69×6 without doing any written work.

8. Find a rough estimate for 39.1×52.36 without doing any written work.

Fractions and Percents

9. Put $\frac{24}{27}$ in lowest terms.

10. What is 0.3% of 1400?

Expressions

11. What is 3^4?

12. Calculate $|3(2^2 - 5)|$

13. Calculate $\frac{3^2 - 1}{\sqrt{16}}$

14. Simplify $3x^2 + 2x^2 + 2x^2y$

15. Simplify $2x(y + 2z)$

Equations and Inequalities

16. If $2x - 2 = 4$, what is the value of $x^2 + 4x + 6$?

17. Isolate x in the following inequality: $-3x < 9$

18. If John is 3 years older than twice Mary's age, and John is 25 years old, how old is Mary?

19. If Ray has half as many books as Jose, and Jose has 3 times as many books as Gary, Ray has how many times the number of books as Gary?

20. What is the average of 9, 10, and 12?

Math Fundamentals Diagnostic Quiz Solutions

Numbers and Digits

1. In the set of numbers $\left\{-2, 0, \frac{3}{4}, \sqrt{2}, 7, 10.5\right\}$, how many are integers?

Integers are whole numbers (including zero) and negative whole numbers. The integers are –2, 0, and 7 $\Longrightarrow$ 3 integers

2. In the number 8,192.635, what is the value of the digit in the hundredths place?

The hundredths place is two to the right of the decimal point. Here, its value is $3 \times 0.01 \Longrightarrow 0.03$ (or alternatively, $\frac{3}{100}$)

Calculations

3. Calculate 13.7 – 35.6

Here, you're subtracting a larger positive number from a smaller positive number. The result will be negative. To calculate, flip the numbers, line up the decimals, and perform the subtraction, borrowing as needed:

$$\begin{array}{r} {}^{4}\,{}^{16} \\ 35.\cancel{6} \\ -13.7 \\ \hline 21.9 \end{array}$$

Remember to make the result negative $\Longrightarrow$ –21.9

4. Calculate -3.2×-7

Since you're multiplying two negatives, the product will be positive. Set up the problem and multiply, carrying as needed:

$$\begin{array}{r} {}^{1} \\ -3.2 \\ \times\ -7 \\ \hline 224 \end{array}$$

Since there is one decimal place, move the decimal point over one place to $\Longrightarrow$ 22.4

5. What is the quotient and remainder of 116 ÷ 9?

Use long division to solve:

$$\begin{array}{r} 12 \\ 9\overline{)116} \\ -9 \\ \hline 26 \\ -18 \\ \hline 8 \end{array}$$

The quotient is $\Longrightarrow$ 12 with a remainder of 8

6. Calculate 50.56 ÷ 0.8

First, move the decimal point one place to the right in both numbers so that you're dividing by an integer: 505.6 ÷ 8

To calculate, perform the long division:

$$\begin{array}{r} 63.2 \\ 8\overline{)505.6} \\ -48 \\ \hline 25 \\ -24 \\ \hline 16 \\ -16 \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$$

The result is $\Longrightarrow$ 63.2

Arithmetic Shortcuts

7. Calculate 69×6 without doing any written work.

Since 69 is close to 70, calculate $70 \times 6 = 420$ and subtract one 6 → $420 - 6 \Longrightarrow 414$

8. Find a rough estimate for 39.1×52.36 without doing any written work.

Round 39.1 to 40 and round 52.36 to 50.

Then, $40 \times 50 \Longrightarrow 2{,}000$

Fractions and Percents

9. Put $\frac{24}{27}$ in lowest terms.

3 divides evenly into both numerator ($24 \div 3 = 8$) and denominator ($27 \div 3 = 9$), so you can rewrite the fraction as $\Longrightarrow \frac{8}{9}$

10. What is 0.3% of 1400?

0.3% is equivalent to 0.003. Then multiply, carrying as needed:

$$\begin{array}{r} {}^{1} \\ 1400 \\ \times\ 0.003 \\ \hline 4200 \end{array}$$

Then, move the decimal point over three places to give you 4.200 or simply $\Longrightarrow$ 4.2

Expressions

11. What is 3^4?

This is equal to $3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \implies 81$

12. Calculate $|3(2^2 - 5)|$

First, convert 2^2 to 4, giving you: $|3(4 - 5)|$

Then, calculate within the parentheses: $|3(-1)|$

Multiply 3×-1 to get: $|-3|$

The absolute value makes the result positive $\implies 3$

13. Calculate $\frac{3^2 - 1}{\sqrt{16}}$

In the numerator, convert 3^2 to 9, then subtract 1: $\frac{8}{\sqrt{16}}$

In the denominator, take the square root of 16: $\frac{8}{4}$

Divide 8 by 4 $\implies 2$

14. Simplify $3x^2 + 2x^2 + 2x^2y$

Since $3x^2$ and $2x^2$ are like terms, they can be added: $3x^2 + 2x^2 = 5x^2$. But $5x^2$ and $2x^2y$ are not like terms and can't be added $\implies 5x^2 + 2x^2y$

15. Simplify $2x(y + 2z)$

Distribute the $2x$ to both terms in the parentheses: $2x \cdot y + 2x \cdot 2z \implies 2xy + 4xz$

Equations and Inequalities

16. If $2x - 2 = 4$, what is the value of $x^2 + 4x + 6$?

First, solve for x: $2x - 2 = 4 \rightarrow 2x = 6 \rightarrow x = 3$

Then, substitute 3 for x: $(3)^2 + 4(3) + 6 \rightarrow 9 + 12 + 6 \implies 27$

17. Isolate x in the following inequality: $-3x < 9$

Divide both sides by -3 and flip the inequality sign: $\frac{-3x}{-3} > \frac{9}{-3}$ $\implies x > -3$

18. If John is 3 years older than twice Mary's age, and John is 25 years old, how old is Mary?

Translate this as: $j = 2m + 3$ and $j = 25$. Then, substitute 25 for j: $25 = 2m + 3$

Subtract 3 from both sides: $22 = 2m$. Divide both sides by 2, resulting in $\implies m = 11$

19. If Ray has half as many books as Jose, and Jose has 3 times as many books as Gary, Ray has how many times the number of books as Gary?

Translate this as $r = \frac{1}{2}j$ and $j = 3g$. Then substitute $3g$ for j in the first equation: $r = \frac{1}{2}(3g) \rightarrow r = \frac{3}{2}g$ or $r = 1.5g$ $\implies \frac{3}{2}$ or 1.5 times

20. What is the average of 9, 10, and 12?

Calculate $\frac{\text{sum of terms}}{\text{number of terms}}$ to get: $\frac{9+10+12}{3} \implies \frac{31}{3}$ or $10\frac{1}{3}$

How Did You Do?

The sections of the diagnostic (Numbers and Digits, Calculations, Arithmetic Shortcuts, Fractions and Percents, Expressions, and Equations and Inequalities) correspond to sections of the Math Fundamentals Supplement (available for free download from thegmatmentor.com). Depending on how you did, you may need to review some or all sections of the supplement. If you need to review the supplement, make sure you do so before starting Chapter 4:

Number Incorrect	Recommendation
0	If you got every question correct, nicely done! You probably don't need to review the supplement.
1–3	Review the sections in which you missed questions.
4–6	Review the whole supplement. You can skim through sections in which you missed no questions.
7 or more	Review every section of the supplement in detail.

First Practice Test

If you haven't already taken a practice GMAT, you should take a free one from mba.com within the first week or two of studying.

You may not feel ready to take a practice test. That's okay—you still need to do it. Why?

- You need to get a sense of what the actual test is like, including the format and the timing. Since performance on the actual test is the goal, this will help you understand what it takes to improve.
- The practice test will reveal (at a high level) your areas of strength and weakness. This will help guide your studying and where to put your focus.
- The score you receive on your first test will act as a baseline from which you can measure your improvement.

Remember that the test takes about two and a half hours, so try to set aside enough time to complete it in one sitting. While you can pause the practice test if you need to, you should try to make your practice tests as realistic as possible (you can't pause the real test!).

Whatever score you receive, remember that it's no indication of your potential, only where you're at right now. Dramatic score improvements are very achievable—I've witnessed them firsthand with many, many students. By following the principles in *The GMAT Mentor*, you'll be able to reach that potential.

After you take the test, take note of any patterns in terms of areas to improve. As you study those concepts later in the program, make sure you thoroughly understand them so that you'd be able to answer these questions if you got them a second time.

After you take your first practice test, hold off on taking any more until you're further along in your studying. Then you can apply what you've learned.

Organizing for Success

All good study courses put lessons, drills, practice problems, and practice tests together to steadily improve your skills. But no one study course is right for everyone. Some students have limited time before they take the test. Others know that certain sections will give them particular trouble. And still others have already done significant studying and want to focus on certain areas.

That said, this book will reference two main types of programs: the **Full Program** and **Targeted Study**.

1. Full Program

Do the Full Program if you're new to the GMAT or still early in your preparation, or if you've previously tried a more "surface-level" study approach and now realize that you need a comprehensive approach (at least for the Quant and Data Insights sections).

On thegmatmentor.com, you can choose from a range of Full Program options that vary based on how much time you have to study. Each of these study courses goes through

The GMAT Mentor program and is supplemented by the *Official Guide* (published by the makers of the GMAT).

2. Targeted Study of Particular GMAT Topics

Alternatively, you can target your study if you need a refresher or a deep dive on specific Quant or Data Insights topics, or if you need to improve your question-solving processes and strategies.

You may already know which areas you want to focus on, but if you don't:

1. **Look for patterns:** From your practice problems / tests, note any patterns of questions you missed or struggled with—whether by question type, concept, or technique.

2. **Compare your list of patterns with the Table of Contents:** Match the patterns with chapters in the book.

3. **Make a study course:** Adapt one of the study courses from thegmatmentor.com to your needs.

Adjust as Needed

Whichever course you use, remember to be flexible. You can (and probably should) mix things up when needed. When one lesson is particularly difficult, spend extra time on it. When burnout is preventing you from absorbing the material, take a break. Remember that the goal is *learning the material,* not mindlessly doing practice problems. As you study, revisit your overall plan on occasion and make adjustments as circumstances change. But having the plan will give you something to aim for and naturally prime your brain for learning material on a regular basis.

Other Resources

Register Early: *Register for a test date sooner rather than later. Schedule slots fill up quickly, and having a test date will motivate you to put in the work.*

There are a number of physical and online resources to support you in your studying and test-taking, including:

- **thegmatmentor.com:** Source for downloadable study courses, information on upcoming releases, and other resources.

- **mba.com:** The testmaker's official website. You should sign up for a free account and explore, even if you're not yet ready to register for the test. (Don't wait too long—the schedule slots do fill up.) With your account, you have access to a starter kit and two free practice exams, with four more available for purchase.

- **gmatclub.com:** Discussion board for all things GMAT, with threads on many official practice problems.

- ***Official Guide*:** A book of official practice problems published by the testmaker, available from mba.com or online booksellers. While *The GMAT Mentor* contains a comprehensive review of every type of problem that appears on the Quant and Data Insights sections, you'll benefit from additional practice. With purchase of the *Official Guide*, you get a physical book or e-book as well as an online question bank. The questions are organized by type, making them good sources for practice sets. (My sample study courses reference the *Official Guide* for additional problems.)

- **Noteboard booklet:** A dry-erase, spiral-bound notepad with laminated sheets. If you plan to take your test in the testing center, you'll be provided with a noteboard booklet. It's important to take some practice tests with a booklet to get used to it, so you should purchase your own at some point (booklets are available from Amazon, for example).

- **Whiteboard:** If you plan to take your test remotely, you'll need to provide your own dry-erase whiteboard. It's good to take some practice tests with the whiteboard to get used to it, though you don't have to take *every* practice test with it. (If you're not sure whether you'll take the test remotely, you don't need to make this decision just yet.) Here are the official requirements:

  » 1 erasable whiteboard no larger than 12 inches x 20 inches (30 centimeters x 50 centimeters)

  » Up to 2 dry erase markers

  » 1 dry erase whiteboard eraser

Next Steps

I've just given you a lot of information, but don't worry—as you go through the book everything will become clear.

If you haven't done so already, perform the following key steps before moving on:

- Take the Math Fundamentals Diagnostic Quiz to identify areas for review.
- Go to thegmatmentor.com and decide on a study course (or adapt one to your needs).

That's it. Now, get ready to put in the work. Keep at it and you will succeed!