

## You Can Do It! Tips for a successful GMAT

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"Breathe right, eat nutritious food, keep your nerve." These might well be instructions for a professional athlete at the scratch line. But the tips published on the Internet by Sayantan Chattopadhyay are addressed to prospective business students who, in addition to good academic performance and an interesting résumé, basically need one thing: the GMAT. And this is nothing you just do in passing.

"When I started preparing for the GMAT half a year ago, I was astounded how difficult it was for a 41-year-old academic to intensively deal with tenses, attributes or set theory," Chattopadhyay writes on gmclub.com. The student from India, who graduated from university over 15 years ago, worked as a mechanical engineer in the industry obtaining a high degree of experience. But then he realized that he was not going anywhere on the career ladder. Something was missing - the MBA.

No GMAT, no MBA

If you want to apply for an MBA program or a Management Master's degree at a business school of repute, there is no way around taking the GMAT. The test is to show if the candidates really qualify for a place in the program. Despite the wide range of offers for courses, there are still significantly more applicants than places. Moreover, previous academic performance is difficult to compare. Therefore, the global standardized GMAT makes sense. It does not only check for professional abilities but also if this knowledge can be accessed at the push of a button. There is no time for mulling over the question. And it requires a lot of discipline.

No TV, no free time, no friends - good preparation is key

"No matter if you have to attend another meeting, accompany your wife on a shopping trip or pick up your daughter from dance practice, do not deviate from your study plan," writes Sayantan Chattopadhyay. He prepared himself weekly and monthly study plans and stuck to them rigorously. No TV, no free time, no friends. Chattopadhyay took the test seriously. "Practice as if your life depended on the GMAT, then you'll make it," says the 42-year-old today.

Mareike Köhler took the month before the test off. "To me, it was important that I would not be distracted by other tasks such as lectures or tests," says the 24-year-old who was completing her Bachelor's degree in Jena at the time. She locked herself in at home and focused on the tasks - firstly, the study videos provided by the Lecturio online platform. This provided her with a good overview of the structure, question types and strategies to complete the GMAT. Preparing for the TOEFL language test also helped Köhler. It is another precondition for entering numerous universities using English as their instructional language. She memorized vocabulary which helped her when the words reappeared on the GMAT.

She later used the book "Kaplan GMAT Premier 2015". "It offers not only a very extensive review of the test topics in Mathematics and English but also access to online platforms with questions and trial GMATs," says Mareike Köhler. The selection of textbooks is broad. Particularly the "Official Review" books by GMAC are an absolute must as they contain original questions from older GMATs. Franz von Consbruch bought an additional book published by Manhattan GMAT. They contain codes which he can use to complete sample tests on the ManhattanPrep website.

A lot of content, strong nerves - this is how the GMAT works

"I had eight granola bars, two bananas and half a liter of Gatorade for breakfast. I ate another two granola bars in each break and drank another half a bottle of Gatorade even when I was not hungry," Sayantan Chattopadhyay remembers. The brain needs nutrition - something not only professional athletes but also business students know.

In essence, the test consists of four parts: an essay section (Analytical Writing Assessment), an argumentation part testing the ability to interpret data from different sources (Integrated Reasoning Section), a mathematical part with arithmetic, algebra and geometry (Quantitative Section) and a language part (Verbal Section), testing analytical skills, grammar and reading comprehension. You have about four hours to complete all parts.

The applicants' personal preferences pay off in the process. Mareike Köhler, for instance, found the mathematical section easier than the verbal one. "The mathematical questions are mainly based on knowledge from lower secondary school," she says. Nonetheless, time was of the essence: two minutes per question, no calculator.

The student found the verbal part trickier as she had to let go of her usual feeling for the language and strictly follow syntax rules. Köhler also explains that it is rather important to take your time for the first questions of every question cluster. Moreover, no question should be left unanswered. Wrong answers will lead to a lower score and the final result gets worse. If it does not work the first time, it is not the end of the world. 26-year old applicant Franz von Consbruch found some of the tasks to be so difficult that he could not solve them in such a short amount of time.

Ask the experts!

There is enough help when preparing for the test. Successful GMAT alumni and GMAT trainers offer workshops and tell you about the best ways to pass the test. Claus Huber holds a degree in Physics and completed an MBA program at the University of St. Gallen. He founded GMAT-Workshop.de and has been counseling GMAT candidates for years. "How well people do on the test also depends on their own personal aptitude. However, everyone should allow at least four to six weeks for preparation, depending on the time available and their personal target score," says Huber.

For the mathematical sections, he recommends revising divisibility rules and prime numbers. For instance, you should be able to decompose a large number into its prime factors. Prime factorization also helps to reduce and solve fractions with large numbers much more quickly. For the language section, Huber recommends practicing reading and understanding English texts quickly. In the critical reasoning part, it is crucial to understand the logics and structure of various types of questions exactly. Do the candidates have to support a thesis or find the gist of the text - there are various techniques for everything. More than anything, the expert swears by keeping an error log with every question that was answered incorrectly and the solution approach. The reason: "The number of mathematical methods and concepts tested in the GMAT is limited and therefore, the blank spots in your GMAT knowledge will disappear with every mistake you analyze and learn from," says Claus Huber.

What is the procedure for the GMAT?

First of all, interested parties must register on the official GMAT website. The applicants choose a date and test center - anywhere in the world. The tests are conducted in rooms with video surveillance. Candidates usually may only leave the room for a short break between the individual parts. Applicants

may retake the test after a one-month wait until they achieve the score they were hoping for. However, the universities can check who needed five attempts and who succeeded the first time.

High score, high flier

For the universities, the GMAT is of great importance. The students' results are published and incorporated into the national and international rankings of MBA schools. Renowned German business schools like HHL require a GMAT score of a minimum of 600 points. For the leading U.S. business schools such as Harvard or Stanford, applicants require an even higher score to obtain a coveted spot in one of the programs. Maïke Köhler, Franz von Consbruch and Sayantan Chattopadhyay made it. With 650, 700 and 780 points each, they obtained excellent results and are enrolled at renowned HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management now. The motto "Practice as if your life depended on the GMAT" has really paid off for them. While Köhler is striving for a career in the industry and von Consbruch wants to start company, Chattopadhyay wants to complete a doctoral degree in finance. His family will then follow him over from India.

Links:

<http://www.mba.com>

<http://www.manhattanprep.com>

<http://www.gmatclub.com>

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HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management

Die HHL ist eine universitäre Einrichtung und zählt zu den führenden internationalen Business Schools. Ziel der ältesten betriebswirtschaftlichen Hochschule im deutschsprachigen Raum ist die Ausbildung leistungsfähiger, verantwortungsbewusster und unternehmerisch denkender Führungspersönlichkeiten. Neben der internationalen Ausrichtung spielt die Verknüpfung von Theorie und Praxis eine herausragende Rolle. Die HHL zeichnet sich aus durch exzellente Lehre, klare Forschungsorientierung und praxisnahen Transfer sowie hervorragenden Service für ihre Studierenden.  
[www.hhl.de](http://www.hhl.de)

## 6 tips for a successful GMAT

- 1. Allow enough time** – experts recommend four to six weeks.
- 2. Prepare your own study plan** and never deviate from it!
- 3. Read, read and read some more.** The bible of the GMAT: Official Guide for GMAT Review.
- 4. Test, test and test some more.** Using special software such as GMATPrep you can simulate the test under pressure and understand it better.
- 5. Practice** as if your life depended on it.
- 6. Keep an error log**, of course, with the corrections as the GMAT question methods are limited.



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