



Test Ninjas

VOCABULARY STUDY SERIES

GMAT VOCABULARY

GMAT Vocabulary: Logic & Decisions

50 focused words in Logic & Decisions

50

UNIQUE WORDS

1

CATEGORIES

GMAT

EXAM FOCUS



About this study guide

This vocabulary guide was prepared and published by Test Ninjas as an independent study resource. It is designed to help students build the precise word knowledge needed for demanding academic reading and reasoning.

How to use this guide

Study in short, repeated sessions. Read each definition, say the word aloud, and use the example to understand how the word functions in context. Return to unfamiliar words until you can explain them without looking at the definition.

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001 anomaly *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Something that deviates from what is standard, normal, or expected

The star's unusual brightness was dismissed as an **anomaly** until a second telescope confirmed the observation.

MEMORY CUE: One red apple in a perfect row of green apples is an anomaly: it breaks the expected pattern.

002 arbitrary *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Based on random choice or personal whim, rather than reason or system

The grading system appeared **arbitrary**, with identical essays receiving wildly different marks from different reviewers.

MEMORY CUE: A blindfolded dart chooses the answer arbitrarily: by chance rather than reason.

003 arcane *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Understood by few; mysterious or secret

The professor's lectures on **arcane** mathematical theories attracted only the most dedicated students.

MEMORY CUE: An arcane book is locked in a secret room and understood by only a few.

004 attribution *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

The act of ascribing a work or remark to a particular author or source

The painting's **attribution** to Rembrandt has been questioned by several art historians who point to inconsistencies in technique.

MEMORY CUE: Attribution attaches a quotation or artwork to its claimed source.

005 caveat *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A warning or proviso; a qualification or limitation

The study's authors included an important **caveat**: the results may not generalize to populations outside the sample.

MEMORY CUE: A caveat is a yellow warning sign attached to a claim.

006 conjecture *noun/verb*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

An opinion formed on the basis of incomplete information; to form such an opinion

Without hard evidence, any explanation at this point is merely **conjecture**.

MEMORY CUE: Conjecture sketches a conclusion in pencil because the evidence is incomplete.

007 conundrum *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A confusing and difficult problem or question

The energy crisis presents a **conundrum** : how to maintain growth while reducing emissions.

MEMORY CUE: A conundrum locks a difficult question inside a confusing puzzle box.

008 correlation *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A mutual relationship or connection between two or more things, especially a statistical one

The study found a strong **correlation** between childhood reading habits and academic performance in college.

MEMORY CUE: Correlation ties two changing measures together without proving one caused another.

009 definitive *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Done or reached decisively and with authority; providing a final, authoritative answer

Her biography of the composer is widely regarded as the **definitive** account of his life and work.

MEMORY CUE: A definitive answer stamps the question FINAL with decisive authority.

010 diagnose *verb*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

To identify the nature of a problem or condition through examination

Early efforts to **diagnose** the disease were hampered by the similarity of its symptoms to several common infections.

MEMORY CUE: To diagnose a malfunction, examine symptoms and identify its true nature.

011 dichotomy *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A division or contrast between two things represented as being opposed or entirely different

The **dichotomy** between rural and urban values has long shaped political discourse.

MEMORY CUE: A dichotomy draws one dividing line between two supposedly opposed sides.

012 discern *verb*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Perceive or recognize clearly; distinguish with difficulty

Only a trained eye can **discern** the subtle differences between the genuine artifact and the forgery.

MEMORY CUE: Use a magnifying glass in fog to discern the faint shape with effort.

013 discerning *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Having or showing good judgment; perceptive

The **discerning** reader will notice subtle allusions to classical mythology throughout the novel.

MEMORY CUE: A discerning judge separates the excellent choice from nearly identical alternatives.

014 discrepancy *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A lack of agreement or consistency between facts or claims

The **discrepancy** between the official statistics and the independent survey raised questions about data collection methods.

MEMORY CUE: A discrepancy appears when two supposedly matching facts fail to line up.

015 efficacy *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

The ability to produce a desired or intended result; effectiveness

Clinical trials are required to demonstrate the **efficacy** of a new drug before it can be approved.

MEMORY CUE: Efficacy asks one practical question: did it produce the intended result?

016 empirical *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Based on observation or experience rather than theory or pure logic

The hypothesis, however elegant, must be supported by **empirical** evidence before it can be accepted as theory.

MEMORY CUE: Empirical knowledge wears muddy field boots because it comes from observation and experience, not theory alone.

017 equivalence *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

The condition of being equal or interchangeable in value, function, or meaning

The mathematician proved the **equivalence** of the two theorems, showing that each could be derived from the other.

MEMORY CUE: Equivalence places two things on equal, interchangeable sides of a balance.

018 erroneous *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Wrong; incorrect; based on error

The map was based on **erroneous** survey data, placing the mountain range nearly fifty miles from its actual location.

MEMORY CUE: An erroneous answer grows from an error and is therefore wrong.

019 esoteric *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Intended for or understood by only a small number of people with specialized knowledge

The journal publishes articles on topics so **esoteric** that its readership numbers in the low hundreds.

MEMORY CUE: An esoteric book opens only for the few people holding its specialized key.

020 experiential *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Based on or derived from experience rather than theory

The program emphasizes **experiential** learning, placing students in real-world settings rather than traditional classrooms.

MEMORY CUE: Experiential knowledge comes from doing and experiencing, not merely theorizing.

021 fathom *verb*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

To understand (a difficult problem or enigmatic person) after much thought

Economists still struggle to **fathom** how the obscure financial instrument triggered a worldwide recession.

MEMORY CUE: Lower a thinking line into a deep idea until its meaning is fully fathomed.

022 heed *verb*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

To pay attention to; to take notice of

Investors who failed to **heed** the economist's warnings about the housing bubble suffered catastrophic losses.

MEMORY CUE: To heed a warning, pay attention and act on its message.

023 hypotheses *noun (plural)*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Proposed explanations or assumptions made on the basis of limited evidence, to be tested further

Several competing **hypotheses** have been proposed to explain the sudden disappearance of the Mayan civilization.

MEMORY CUE: Hypotheses are provisional explanations waiting for evidence to test them.

024 hypothetical *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Supposed but not necessarily true; based on or serving as a hypothesis

The philosopher posed a **hypothetical** scenario involving a runaway trolley to illustrate competing ethical frameworks.

MEMORY CUE: A hypothetical situation floats inside an IF thought bubble rather than reality.

025 illuminate *verb*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

To light up; to clarify or make understandable

The newly translated documents **illuminate** aspects of medieval life that were previously understood only through speculation.

MEMORY CUE: A lamp can illuminate a room; an explanation can illuminate an idea.

026 illuminated *verb (past participle)*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

To clarify, explain, or shed light on a subject

The discovery of the private diaries **illuminated** the writer's creative process in ways her published work never could.

MEMORY CUE: The evidence illuminated the mystery by casting clarifying light on it.

027 in retrospect *adverbial phrase*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

When looking back on a past event or situation; with hindsight

In retrospect, the warning signs of the financial crisis were abundant, but few analysts connected the dots at the time.

MEMORY CUE: In retrospect, turn around mentally and inspect the past with hindsight.

028 inconclusive *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Not leading to a firm conclusion; not decisive

The autopsy results were **inconclusive**, leaving investigators without a definitive cause of death.

MEMORY CUE: Inconclusive evidence ends with a question mark instead of a final verdict.

029 innate *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Inborn; natural; existing from birth rather than acquired

The debate over whether musical ability is **innate** or acquired has persisted for centuries without a definitive answer.

MEMORY CUE: An innate ability arrives at birth rather than through later training.

030 instinctive *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Relating to or prompted by instinct; done without conscious thought; innate

The goalkeeper's **instinctive** dive to the left saved what would have been the winning goal.

MEMORY CUE: An instinctive reaction fires before conscious thought can begin.

031 intuition *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Knowledge or insight gained without conscious reasoning; instinctive understanding

The detective's **intuition** told her something was wrong with the alibi, long before the evidence confirmed it.

MEMORY CUE: Intuition reaches an insight without showing the steps of conscious reasoning.

032 meta-analyses *noun (plural)*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Statistical analyses that combine the results of multiple scientific studies

Several **meta-analyses** combining data from hundreds of studies have confirmed the treatment's effectiveness.

MEMORY CUE: Meta-analyses gather many studies and statistically combine their results.

033 misconception *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A view or opinion that is incorrect because it is based on faulty thinking or understanding

A common **misconception** about evolution is that it implies a progression from 'lower' to 'higher' organisms.

MEMORY CUE: A misconception is understanding aimed in the wrong direction.

034 nuances *noun (plural)*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Subtle differences or distinctions in meaning, expression, or tone

The translator captured not just the words but the cultural **nuances** that gave the original text its richness.

MEMORY CUE: Nuances are fine shades of difference visible only through close attention.

035 paired *verb (past participle)*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Placed together; associated with

The exhibit **paired** each historical photograph with a contemporary image of the same location, revealing dramatic changes.

MEMORY CUE: Paired objects are joined as a deliberate set of two.

036 paradigm *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A typical example or pattern of something; a model or framework

The discovery forced scientists to adopt an entirely new **paradigm** for understanding the phenomenon.

MEMORY CUE: A paradigm is the model pattern through which others understand a field.

037 **paradox** *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A seemingly contradictory or absurd statement or situation that may nonetheless be true

The **paradox** of thrift—that saving more individually can harm the economy collectively—puzzled economists for decades.

MEMORY CUE: A paradox looks self-contradictory yet may conceal a genuine truth.

038 **pertaining** *verb (present participle)*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Relating to; having relevance to

All documents **pertaining** to the acquisition must be submitted to the regulatory agency within thirty days.

MEMORY CUE: A fact pertaining to the case directly relates to it.

039 **phenomena** *noun (plural)*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Observable events or occurrences, especially ones whose causes are in question

The aurora borealis is one of nature's most spectacular **phenomena**, produced by charged particles striking the atmosphere.

MEMORY CUE: Phenomena are observable events waiting for explanation.

040 **premise** *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A proposition from which another is inferred or follows as a conclusion; the basis of an argument

The entire argument rests on a **premise** that the author never actually defends—that human nature is fundamentally selfish.

MEMORY CUE: A premise is the starting platform from which an argument's conclusion rises.

041 **presumption** *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A belief accepted as true without proof; an assumption

The legal system operates on the **presumption** that a defendant is innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

MEMORY CUE: A presumption takes a belief as true before proof arrives.

042 **prophetic** *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Accurately predicting or foretelling the future

The ecologist's warnings about deforestation, dismissed as alarmist in the 1970s, now seem grimly **prophetic**.

MEMORY CUE: A prophetic statement accurately sees an event before the future arrives.

043 reconcile *verb*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

To make compatible; to bring into harmony; to settle or resolve

The historian struggled to **reconcile** the conflicting eyewitness accounts of the battle into a single coherent narrative.

MEMORY CUE: Reconcile two former rivals by repairing their broken handshake.

044 redundant *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Not or no longer needed or useful; superfluous

The editor removed several **redundant** paragraphs that restated points already made more effectively earlier in the essay.

MEMORY CUE: A redundant piece remains after the puzzle is complete, extra and no longer useful.

045 refute *verb*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

To prove a statement or theory to be wrong or false

The archaeologist presented compelling evidence to **refute** the long-standing claim that the site was a ceremonial center.

MEMORY CUE: Refute a false claim by striking it with decisive contrary evidence.

046 retrospective *adjective/noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Looking back on or dealing with past events; an exhibition showing an artist's lifetime work

The museum's **retrospective** of the painter's work revealed an artistic evolution that spanned six distinct periods.

MEMORY CUE: A retrospective turns its gallery lights backward onto past work or events.

047 speculative *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Based on conjecture or theory rather than firm evidence; tentative

The final chapter ventures into **speculative** territory, imagining how the technology might evolve over the next century.

MEMORY CUE: A speculative claim is penciled in because evidence remains uncertain.

048 superstition *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

A widely held but irrational belief in supernatural influences

The scientist's mission was to replace **superstition** with evidence-based understanding in public health practices.

MEMORY CUE: Superstition treats an irrational supernatural belief as a rule of reality.

049 synthesis *noun*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

The combination of separate elements into a coherent whole

The book is a masterful **synthesis** of economics, sociology, and political science applied to the problem of inequality.

MEMORY CUE: Synthesis weaves separate strands into one coherent fabric.

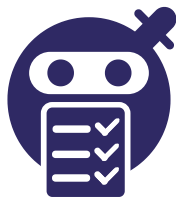
050 untenable *adjective*

LOGIC & DECISIONS

Not able to be maintained or defended against attack or objection

New evidence rendered the prosecution's theory **untenable**.

MEMORY CUE: An untenable position cannot be defended when objections attack.



GMAT VOCABULARY

Keep building your edge.

Vocabulary grows through repeated exposure and deliberate use.
Revisit this list, write with the words, and practice recognizing their
meaning in context.

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