2015 - 2016
PREPARING FOR THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST
PREPARATION TIPS |
PLAN INSIGHTS |
RESOURCES

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW
College of Law admissions staff members are often asked for recommendations about how to prepare for the Law School Admission Test. We recently solicited information from members of our incoming class who achieved a 158 or higher on the LSAT. This guide includes insights regarding their LSAT prep methods and strategies, as well as a list of resources to use as a reference for building test preparation plans.

Prospective applicants should thoroughly prepare for the LSAT using methods that best meet their individual learning styles, budgets, and personal circumstances. An effective plan can include self-study, a commercial preparation course, or a combination of both methods. Given the weight that most law schools assign to the LSAT when making admission and scholarship decisions, it's critically important for you to devote significant time and energy to achieving your strongest possible score.

Best wishes as you prepare for the LSAT and plan for law school.

Sincerely

Charles W. Roboski
Assistant Dean for Admissions and Financial Aid
Top Tips from Three SUCCESSFUL LSAT TAKERS

Jennifer Elizabeth Adeleji
University of Southern California, English

Take practice tests. Yes, more than one. They’re an excellent gauge of your progress and problem areas and can help guide your study patterns. In fact, begin with a practice test in simulated test conditions to develop a baseline and chart improvement from there.

On the day of the test, don’t panic. Even if a section seems particularly challenging, general test-taking strategies are still in play. Keep a cool head and you’ll answer more questions with more accuracy than you would if you let nerves take hold.

Minimize stress and distractions. Get a good night of sleep the day before the test. Eat a good breakfast. Have your materials in order. Make sure you’re comfortable in your seat — you’ll be there for a while! Maximizing your physical and mental readiness means maximizing your score.

Walk before you run. LSAT skills are like muscles that need to be trained and conditioned, and that takes time. Build up to understanding how the LSAT works, and how you can conquer it. Getting a not-so-stellar score on your first couple LSAT prep tests isn’t as stressful when you give yourself enough time to pick up the No. 2 pencil again and try more tests.

Understand how YOU learn. Taking advice from former LSAT-test takers is great. But you might learn differently. Don’t hesitate to test out multiple study methods until you find the one that works best for YOU.

Anticipate test-like conditions. Try to completely simulate what test day is going to be like — with a few added distractions. Test anxiety can be the hardest thing to overcome when it comes to the LSAT. But anticipating what test day will be like will help you feel more in control of the situation, minimizing test-day jitters.

Know what method of studying works best for you. If you are easily distracted and cannot focus studying on your own, spend the money and take a prep class. On the other hand, don’t think that you have to take a prep course if you are confident you can make the time and can successfully study on your own.

Give yourself ample time to prepare for the LSAT. There is no set time that will guarantee success on the test. I needed a couple months to feel confident in my abilities but everyone has their own pace.

Do not rush yourself on the LSAT. On my first practice LSAT I went through the problems as fast as I could thinking I would have time to go back through my answers. My result was awful. Go at a pace that will be fast enough to get through the whole test, yet is comfortable enough to feel confident.

Donna Musolli
Wayne State University, Journalism

Jack Stout
Bradley University, Business Management
LSAT PREP AND APPLICATION

TIMELINE

MARCH:
Begin preparing for the LSAT exam

JUNE:
Take the LSAT exam

JUNE - JULY:
Begin preliminary research on law schools

JULY:
Receive LSAT scores from June exam

JULY - OCT:
Narrow focus to 8-10 law schools; if necessary, retake the LSAT

OCT - JAN:
Submit applications

THIS CHART REPRESENTS how your LSAT prep schedule fits within the timeline of law school applications.

IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED with your June LSAT results, this schedule allows you time to retake the LSAT exam in October. If you retake, you can either wait to apply to schools until your new LSAT scores are released, or (the school's guidelines permit it) apply and request that review of your application be held until your new score is available.
SAMPLE LSAT STUDY TIMELINE

WEEK 0:
Prior to studying, take an initial practice exam. The results will give you a baseline score to determine your starting point.

WEEK 1:
Develop a study schedule (e.g. 2-8 hours a week, twice a week). Make it easy to follow so you will not fall behind.

WEEK 4:
Take another practice exam under testing conditions. Analyze the results to determine your strengths and weaknesses.

WEEK 5:
Adjust your study schedule according to the practice exam results.

WEEK 8:
Take another practice exam under testing conditions, and analyze the results.

WEEK 9:
Adjust your study schedule according to the practice exam results. As Week 12 approaches, focus on practice questions and applying your LSAT techniques.

THE ABOVE SUGGESTED SCHEDULE for LSAT preparation is based on twelve weeks of studying. You should tailor the above to your own studying habits, time allotments, and potential involvement in commercial prep courses.
Law School Admission Test

PREPARATION TIPS

The following suggestions are provided by Michigan State University College of Law students who achieved a score of 158 or higher on the LSAT.

GENERAL ADVICE

+ You can learn the LSAT. At first it seems very intimidating, but once you find the patterns and know what to look for, it becomes easier and easier. The only way to learn the test is to set aside time to do it.
+ Be realistic! Some people are not able to get a 175+. After one or two pretests, set an achievable goal for yourself.
+ Put the time in. Acceptance to law school and many scholarships rely heavily on the LSAT and undergraduate GPA. You spent four years building a GPA, so put proportionate effort into preparing for the LSAT.

WHEN TO TAKE THE LSAT

+ Take the test in June, especially if you are still in undergrad. You'll still be in the mindset of studying and doing academic work. Also, you won't have to try to schedule time to study for the test and for your other courses as you might with the October test. Lastly, it'll give you plenty of time to retake the test if you need to.
+ Don't take the LSAT in the winter if you live in a northern climate. I ended up driving in an ice storm to take mine—it was very stressful and took me some time to get focused on the test.

STUDY METHODS

+ Don't assume that an expensive commercial prep course is a requirement for doing well on the LSAT. If you have the self-discipline to study on your own, you can create your own individual prep plan.
+ If you learn best from classroom study, enroll in a commercial prep course. They are expensive, but your LSAT score will determine your scholarship amount. A higher score can save you thousands.
+ I recommend having a study partner. It kept me on track and we were able to bounce ideas off of each other when we came across a difficult problem. My partner also gave me feedback on why I was getting questions wrong.
+ Ignore what other people are doing to prepare. One of my friends took a practice exam a month before the LSAT, while I took three practice exams over the two months before the test, and we got the same score. There will always be someone working harder than you; don't let that person cause you to doubt yourself.

PREPARATION SUGGESTIONS

+ Start by learning about the test itself—the structure, different sections, and timing.
+ Work on both strengths and weaknesses. Strengths are where you should expect to gain points, so maximize your score on those questions.
+ Learn diagramming strategies for solving the logic games questions from a commercial test guide.
+ Practice in a higher-stress and higher-distraction environment than the actual test; you do better on the test when you're relaxed.
+ Take as many full-length, timed practice tests as you can.
+ Take your results with a grain of salt. Don't assume you're prepared enough just because you have one great practice test—do it consistently.
+ Don't let a low score on a practice test deflate you; use it as an opportunity to see specific problems you're having and spend your time correcting them.
TIME MANAGEMENT

+ Long tests are like marathons. It takes time to build stamina.
+ Practicing for a relatively short amount of time on a regular basis beats spending large amounts of time studying for a month or less.
+ Working smart is more important than working fast; the speed will come later. Focus on mastering the material first.
+ Move quickly, but do not neglect to double check answers and make sure any notes or information you write on your scrap paper is transcribed correctly.
+ Take a quick breather after every five questions or so.

WEEKS BEFORE THE EXAM

+ Make sure you understand the policies for actually taking the exam. The second time I took the exam, they enforced the rule of not being able to wear anything with a hood, and I was freezing the whole time, which proved to be very distracting. Small things can end up being important.
+ Take care of all administrative work well before the test date. Worrying about where to find the test site, what classroom the test is given in, or if your ticket is printed are all things that add unnecessary stress on test day.

DAYS BEFORE THE EXAM

+ Take a day or two off of work before the test. I was working two jobs when I was studying and that was a mistake.
+ Relax on the day before the LSAT. By that time you have already put in a lot of hard work, and your performance on the LSAT will not improve by cramming the night before.
+ The night before the exam, take a hot bath, watch a movie, and leave the study guides behind. Get plenty of sleep!

ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM

+ Do a logic game the morning of the test—it really helps to “wake up” your brain and get your mind into thinking mode.
+ Bring water and a snack to the testing center for the break period.
+ Dress in layers—testing environments can be unpredictable and you don’t want to be distracted by temperature discomfort.
+ Don’t put life-or-death pressure on yourself on test day. If you do poorly, you can always retake it. Just work to answer each question the best you can.
+ CALM DOWN. Life will go on after the LSAT. My first score reflected how nervous I was going into the exam. Take a deep breath before you go into the examining room and remind yourself that there are much more important things in life than the LSAT!

DURING THE EXAM

+ Don’t pay attention to the people next to you. They have a different exam. It doesn’t matter how far others are in comparison to you. Pace yourself. How you are doing is the only thing that matters.
+ Read everything on the exam very carefully. Details are incredibly important.
+ Be confident in your own preparation and don’t get distracted during the test. There will always be someone tapping their pencil and the proctors moving about the room. It is important to stay focused on the task at hand and to not waste any time on distractions during the test.
CANCELING YOUR EXAM

+ It's normal to feel like you performed poorly when leaving the testing center. Take the night off before thinking about cancelling your score.
+ Many law students retake the LSAT. Almost all law schools will look at your highest score. Only cancel your exam if you're sure something went wrong during the exam (like getting ill or realizing that you mis-bubbled an entire section).

RETAking THE EXAM

Plan to take the LSAT early enough so you can take it again if necessary. MSU Law students who decided to take the LSAT at least twice were able to improve their scores by:

+ Taking more timed official LSAT prep tests. With each prep test, I connected the similarities in the questions that I did not understand, which allowed me to decode particular language or question structures that were difficult.
+ Changing test sites. I had to drive 4 hours to take the first test. The second time, I prepared extensively and the test was at my undergraduate institution.
+ Practicing less and just relaxing. I didn't stress out when I got to the actual exam.
+ Putting way less pressure on myself. The second time I took the test I felt much less nervous on test day.
+ Working less in the weeks immediately leading to the test day. I also did at least two logic game problems a day just to stay sharp on the different kinds of games.

Law School Admission Test

PREPARATION PLAN INSIGHTS

MSU Law students who earned a 158 or higher have relied on many prep methods to prepare for the LSAT. The following chart provides insights into how these 42 students prepared: how much time they devoted to studying, and how much money they invested in LSAT prep.

| Amount of Time and Money Respondents Committed to LSAT Preparation |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| **Weeks of LSAT Prep**  | **# of Respondents** | **Time Devoted to LSAT Preparation** | **# of Respondents** | **Money Spent on LSAT Preparation** | **# of Respondents** |
| 0-4 weeks               | 2              | 0 to 49 hours   | 7              | 0 to $49         | 9              |
| 5-6 weeks               | 5              | 50 to 99 hours  | 13             | $50 to $99       | 4              |
| 7-8 weeks               | 12             | 100 to 149 hours| 12             | $100 to $499     | 20             |
| 9-12 weeks              | 14             | 150 to 199 hours| 4              | $500 to $999     | 4              |
| 13+ weeks               | 9              | 200 or more hours| 6            | $1,000 or more   | 5              |
Law School Admission Test

PREPARATION

RESOURCES

An effective plan can include self-study using free or low-cost materials, a commercial preparation course, or a combination of both methods. The following list of resources may serve as a helpful guide for prospective law school applicants as they develop an effective LSAT study plan.

While our students have successfully relied on the resources listed below, Michigan State University College of Law Office of Admissions does not endorse any one resource other than those provided by LSAC.

LSAT PREPARATION MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COUNCIL (LSAC)

+ Free LSAT prep materials are available at www.lsac.org/JD/LSAT/lsat-prep-materials
+ The following materials and others may be purchased at https://oa.lsac.org/Release/Shop/Publications.aspx:
  » The Official LSAT Handbook™
  » The Official LSAT SuperPrep®
  » 10 Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests™ Series
  » LSAT ItemWise™ (online LSAT familiarization tool)
  » Official LSAT PrepTests™
  » The Whole Test Prep Packages™

ADDITIONAL LSAT PRINT PREPARATION MATERIALS

+ *Barron’s LSAT* (Jay B. Cutts, M.A): Explains the LSAT’s format, details a three-month study plan, and contains three model LSAT tests
+ *Kaplan LSAT Premier 2015*: Provides practice problems, as well as a CD of materials with virtual learning options
+ *LSAT For Dummies* (Amy Hackney Blackwell): Gives readers the reasoning behind many of the logic puzzles and helps test-takers develop their LSAT strategies
+ *LSAT Logical Reasoning Bible* (David M. Killoran): Focuses on the logical reasoning portions of the LSAT, and provides clues into every currently tested question type
+ *Master the LSAT Prep Course Series* (Jeff Kolby): Includes LSAT problems with solutions, as well as a free online course and two official LSAT tests
+ *LSAT Logic Games Bible* (David M. Killoran): Features a detailed methodology focusing on the logic games portion of the LSAT, and covers diagramming and inferring correct answers in length
+ *The LSAT Trainer: A Remarkable Self-Study Guide for the Self-Driven Student* (Mike Kim): Provides in-depth technique and strategy analysis for all sections of the LSAT
# Commercial LSAT Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vendor, Courses</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blueprint</strong></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.blueprintprep.com">www.blueprintprep.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>$1,499</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>• 16 lessons, 3 workshops, 3 clinics, 6 proctored exams</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• 1,800 pages of study materials</td>
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<td>Online</td>
<td>$850</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>• 5 textbooks with 7,000+ test questions</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• High-quality streaming videos</td>
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<td>• Unlimited access to e-mail support</td>
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<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>$150/hr</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>• Exceptional tutoring staff</td>
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<td>• Completely customizable</td>
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<td>• Flexible and convenient to student needs</td>
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<td><strong>Kaplan</strong></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.kaptest.com/LSAT">www.kaptest.com/LSAT</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Starting at $1,399</td>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>• Live, classroom instruction</td>
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<td>• 4 full-length practice exams</td>
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<td>• Personal attention in a group setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Starting at $799</td>
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<td>• Online video instruction</td>
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<td>• Available anywhere, at any time</td>
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<td>• Taught by certified Kaplan instructors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom/Online</td>
<td>Starting at $1,199</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>• Mix of online and live instruction hours</td>
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<td>• 4 full-length practice exams</td>
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<td>• Personal attention in a group setting</td>
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<td>Tutoring</td>
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<td>Varies</td>
<td>• Available in 15, 25, and 35 hour packages</td>
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<td>• One-on-one instruction</td>
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<td>• Completely customizable to your study needs</td>
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<td><strong>NextStep</strong></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.nextstepprep.com/tests/lsat-tutors">www.nextstepprep.com/tests/lsat-tutors</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>$1,400 to $3,299</td>
<td>16 to 24</td>
<td>• Exclusively focuses on tutoring individual students</td>
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<td>• Expert instructors with experience teaching the LSAT</td>
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<td>• Instruction that is tightly customized to the individual student</td>
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<td><strong>PowerScore</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>$1,295</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>• Instructors who have scored in the 99th percentile</td>
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<td>• Thousands of pages of material</td>
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<td>• Free LSAT homework hotline</td>
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<td>Online</td>
<td>$995</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>• 36 hours of live, online instruction</td>
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<td>• Instant access to recorded archive of lessons</td>
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<td>• Free headset for real-time communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>• Supplemental Advanced Logic Games Course</td>
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<td>• Supplemental Advanced Reasoning Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td>$395</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>• Available both in class or virtual</td>
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<td>• Free e-mail assistance</td>
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<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>$150/hr</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>• Available in person, online, or telephonically</td>
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<td>• Completely customizable to your study needs</td>
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</table>
| **The Princeton Review** | $1,249         | 84              | - Instructors who have scored in the 98th percentile  
- 6 full-length proctored LSATs  
- 1,800 pages of study materials |
| **7sage**           | $179 to $549   | 50+             | - Personalized study schedule to organize prep time  
- LSAT Analytics to prep more effectively  
- Real LSAT questions as printable problem sets  
- Thousands of real LSAT questions individually explained in HD |
| **TestMasters**     | $1,550         | 80              | - 100 locations in the U.S.  
- High-scoring instructors in a group setting  
- Personal set of 7,000 LSAT questions |
| **Manhattan Prep**  | $1,199 to $1,499 | 66              | - Online or in person  
- 50+ video lessons  
- Books  
- Online resources |
| **Online**          | $799           | 55              | - Focused, customized learning  
- Drills and homework assignments based on class  
- Complete review of all LSAT subjects |
| **Tutoring**        | $115/hr        | Varies          | - Exceptional tutoring staff  
- Completely customizable  
- Flexible and convenient to student needs |
| **Online**          | $450           | 16              | - 16 hours of live, classroom instruction  
- 10 full-length diagnostic tests  
- Over 1,300 real LSAT questions |
| **In-Person Tutoring** | $150/hour     | Varies          | - Available in 10-hour, 25-hour, and full-length courses  
- One-on-one instruction  
- Completely customizable to your study needs |
| **Telephone or Online Tutoring** | $100/hour | Varies          | - Available in 10-hour, 25-hour, and full-length courses  
- One-on-one instruction  
- Completely customizable to your study needs |