



THE POWERSCORE LSAT SELF-STUDY GUIDE



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57 Hasell Street
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Author: David M. Killoran
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THE POWERSCORE LSAT SELF-STUDY GUIDE

Okay, you’ve made the decision to prepare for the LSAT on your own. Good call! This guide will help you get started, help identify the materials you need, and provide you with a comprehensive self-study plan.

Let’s quickly outline the basic steps you need to take, and if you have already completed any of these steps, just skip ahead to the next item on the list.

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1. Take a Practice LSAT

Your first step should be to take an actual, released LSAT and establish a baseline score. Taking an actual LSAT will give you several benefits:

- A. You will become familiar with the types of questions presented on the exam, and the language patterns the test makers use.
- B. You will get a sense of the endurance and concentration required to complete the exam.
- C. You will get a starting score and a snapshot of where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

Fortunately, you can get started with this process immediately, and for free! LSAC (the company that administers the LSAT) makes a real LSAT available on their site for free download:

The June 2007 LSAT:

<http://www.lsac.org/jd/pdfs/sampleptjune.pdf>

To take the exam, follow these guidelines:

According to LSAC, the four section tests should be taken back-to-back, which will require approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes. A scoresheet is included the test download file so that you can record your answers.

Per LSAC protocol, here are the directions for taking a four-section test under timed conditions:

Section I.....35 minutes

Section II.....35 minutes

Section III.....35 minutes

Section IV.....35 minutes



During the test you are allowed to work only on the section being timed. You cannot go back or forward to work on any other section of the test.

You may not use any scratch paper while working on the test; only the test pages themselves are available for your use.

Please use a number 2 pencil for your answer sheet. You may use an eraser and a highlighter, if needed.

You may not eat or drink during a timed section.

You can also use our [Free Virtual LSAT Proctor](#) module we have in our [Free LSAT Help Area](#). The Virtual LSAT Proctor can time your exam and provide you the verbal warnings given during the actual LSAT (just hit the “play” button in the lower left-hand corner of the screen when the page opens).



Regardless of what proctoring method you use, follow the guidelines rigidly, and put in your best effort! The more realistic your results, the better decisions you can make later when setting up a study plan.

Finally, no matter what your result, do not overemphasize the score you receive. You take an initial practice LSAT in order to establish a baseline and to learn a little bit about how the test works, and you should expect to significantly improve over this first performance.

2. Analyze Your Results

Once you complete your practice LSAT, visit our [free Self-Study Help Area](#), and create a free student account. With your account, you can score every LSAT you take and receive a free statistical analysis of your performance. The breakdown is invaluable to helping you identify your areas of strength and weakness.

What each person considers a “good” LSAT performance is to some degree relative to the range of schools one is considering. If you are considering schools like Harvard, Berkeley, Michigan, or Georgetown, a good LSAT performance is in the upper 160s and 170s, and you have to go all-out for the highest possible score you can achieve (every point counts, especially at the ultra-competitive top schools). This is also an excellent general strategy for any student, because sometimes a student who starts with a fairly modest target law school discovers that their LSAT score opens up many new, attractive possibilities.

On the other hand, if you have a particular school or set of schools in mind, you may be able to determine that a certain score will be sufficient to gain admission. For example, for New York Law School, a good score is somewhere in the 150s, and with a 3.0 GPA, a score of 155 would probably guarantee admission. While we believe that every student should shoot for 180 (because even if you fall short, you still do extremely well), it may be that you do not need to put in the time required to get a score in the upper range. Only you can set your scoring goal, and you should do that early in the process, and after seriously considering the types of schools you are interested in attending.



Once you have a general idea in mind for a target score, it is time to look carefully at your baseline LSAT results. Take a look at the following areas, and ask the following questions:

- A. Your overall score. How far away are you from your target?
- B. Your score on each individual section. What’s your best section? Your weakest section? Identifying your weakest section will give you a starting point for your studies.
- C. Within each section, what question types or game types gave you the most difficulty? Again, this information can be used to focus your studies when using up your study plan.

3. Collect Relevant Study Materials

There are a variety of LSAT books available to students, and they fall into three categories:

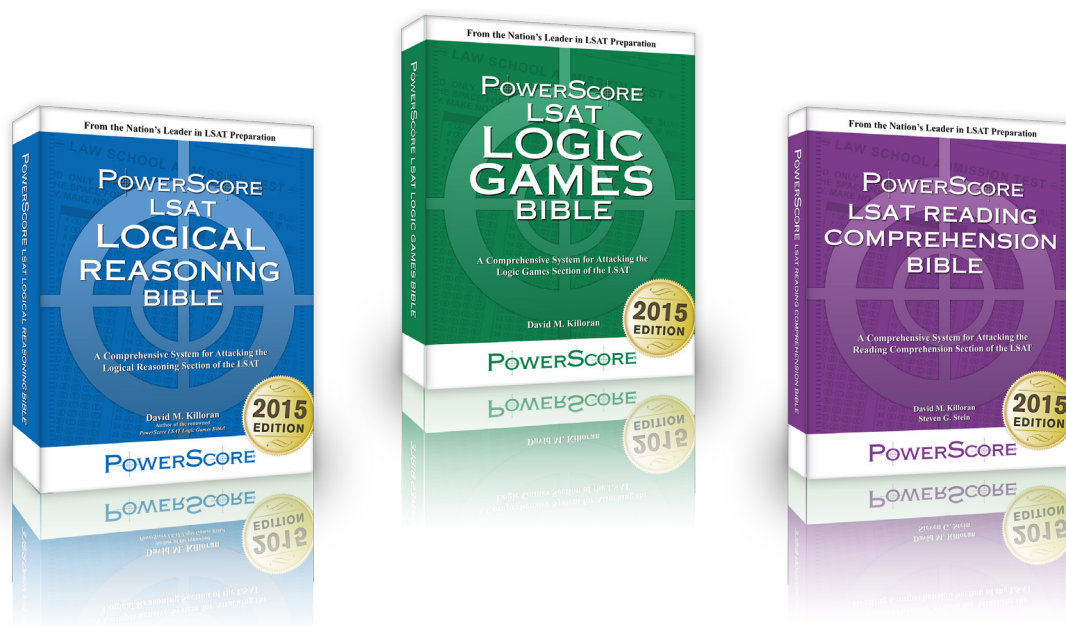
- A. LSAT preparation guides containing strategies and techniques
- B. Collections of complete LSATs or individual questions
- C. Question explanation books

To successfully self-prepare for the exam, books from all three categories can be helpful. Let's discuss some of the available options.

LSAT Preparation Guides

Quality LSAT study guides typically focus on individual sections of the LSAT, and depending on your performance above, you should select guides for each area giving you difficulty. For example, if Logic Games was your weakest section, look to buy guides that specialize in Logic Games. As far as individual books, we are of course partial to our well-known [PowerScore LSAT Bibles](#) (but don't take our word for it—we urge you to visit Amazon or any LSAT discussion forum and see what others have to say).

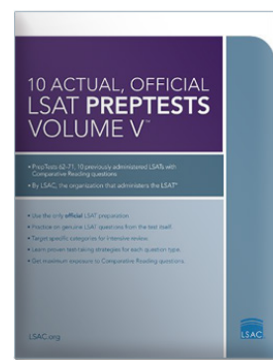
There are some book options where you can buy a book that attempts to explain all three sections of the test. We tend to be less impressed with these books because they usually cover each section very superficially. The LSAT is not an easy or superficial test, and a book that covers the entire LSAT in 400 pages or so cannot go into each section very deeply.



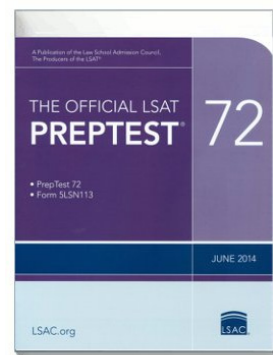
LSAT Question Collections

As you learn LSAT tips and techniques, you will need to practice with them extensively. The best source for practice materials are the LSAT PrepTests released by LSAC, the administrators of the LSAT. LSAT PrepTests are authentic, previously administered LSATs, and they provide the closest approximation to the exam you will ultimately take. These are the best collections of LSATs, with notes on each:

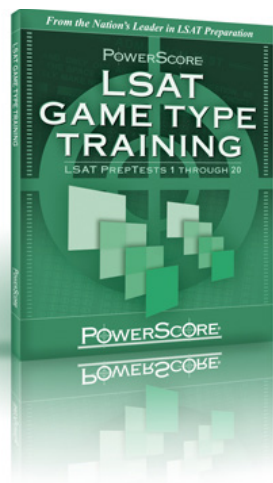
- A. *10 Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests Volume V, 10 New Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests, The Next 10 Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests, 10 More Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests, and 10 Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests*. These are collections of 10 LSATs each, and they are the cheapest way to get a lot of LSATs. They are listed in order of recency, so if you only buy one or two, get the first books on this list.



- B. Individual LSAT PrepTests. There are a large number of individual LSATs available (such as *The Official LSAT PrepTest 74, The December 2014 LSAT*). Buying individual tests is currently the only way to get the most recent exams. The downside is that the individual exams cost more per test than the collections of 10 LSATs above. At the least, get the three most recent exams.



- C. Individual Question Type Collections. In order to directly attack specific weaknesses, some students buy books focused just on certain question types. For example, PowerScore publishes *LSAT Game Type Training*, which allows students to work just on certain types of Logic Games.



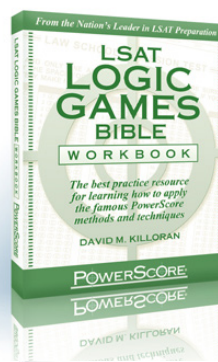
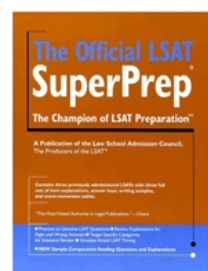
The books above are available from LSAC directly at www.lsac.org, [Powerscore](http://Powerscore.com), or [Amazon](http://Amazon.com).

Question Explanation Books

Although any good study guide will explain the questions contained in the text, no study guide explains questions not in the book. For that, you need to purchase books that contain questions and/or corresponding explanations. These are the best out there:

- A. *The Official LSAT SuperPrep*. This book contains three previously unreleased LSATs, with complete explanations for each question from LSAC. Although they don't always provide explanations that clearly explain the correct strategy for attacking a question (think about it: do they really want you to know exactly what they are thinking?), reading the explanations gives you a sense of how they think about the questions. And, because understanding their mindset is critical to LSAT success, this is a book you should have in your collection.
- B. *The PowerScore LSAT Workbook Series*. This series presents drills and questions for each section type, and then provides complete explanations for each problem. These are great tools if you want to practice with the techniques from each *LSAT Bible*, and study how those strategies are applied to a variety of questions.
- C. *The PowerScore LSATs Deconstructed series*. These books contain complete LSATs, followed by comprehensive explanations of every question. The explanations show how to solve each question, and how and when the PowerScore techniques can be used in the most efficient manner. The *Deconstructed*s are an essential tool for reviewing your test results.
- D. *The PowerScore LSAT Encyclopedia Series*. With expansive discussions of 60 full LSAT game sections (for a total of 240 Logic Games explained) from LSAT PrepTests 1 – 60, the Setups Encyclopedia Trilogy provides the most complete and effective solutions available. These books include complete game setups and detailed analyses of the rules and inferences for each game. Every single question is clearly explained.

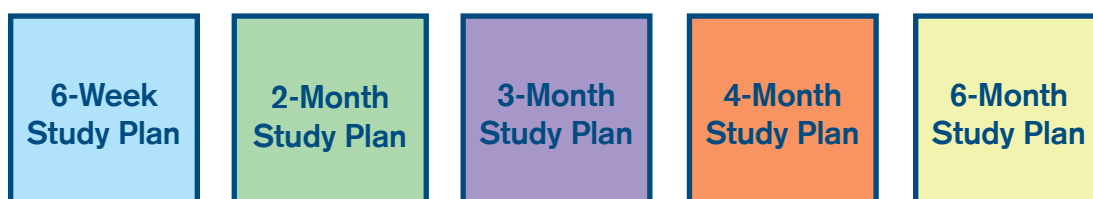
Finally, aside from the books above, you will need a good timer and a healthy set of pencils. The timer—a standard kitchen timer, watch, stopwatch, or [test timer](#) will do—is an important tool in helping you become comfortable with the time constraints of the LSAT. More on this in the next section.



4. Set Up a Study Plan

Once you have completed the first few steps above, it is time to select a study plan. To a great extent, your plan is affected by how much time you have until you take the LSAT (see [When to Take the LSAT](#) for more information). Because the LSAT is not a test that lends itself well to cramming, the basic rule is this: the more time you have to prepare, the better off you will be. So, if possible, start early!

To make your LSAT preparation easier, we have created a set of free self-study plans that are based on our LSAT Bibles. These detailed plans can be found on the [PowerScore Self-Study Site](#). You can select from the following options:



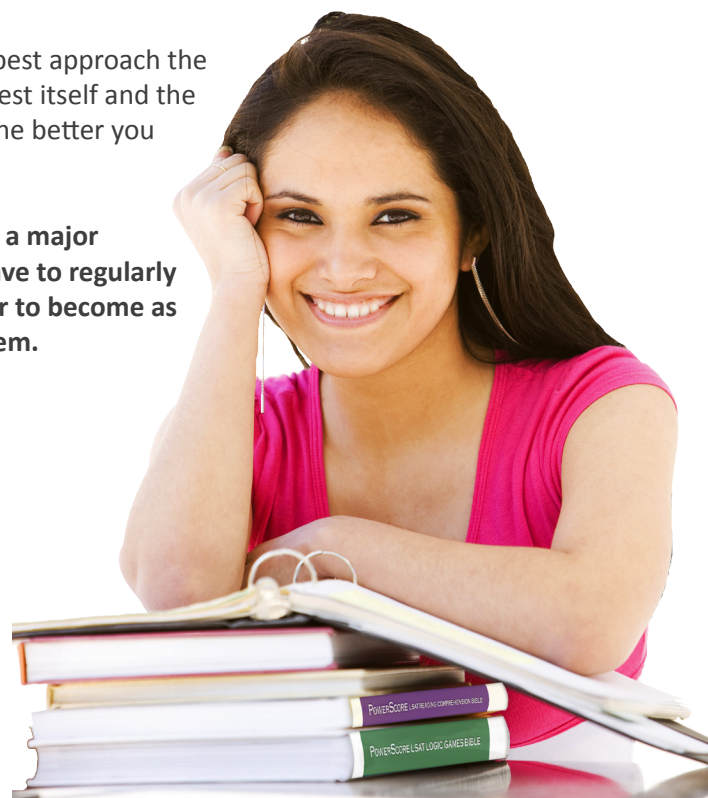
Each plan is extremely comprehensive, and details the steps you need to take to achieve the best possible LSAT score. Simply select the plan that is closest to the amount of time until you take the LSAT, and then start preparing!

As an overview, each study plan uses the following pedagogical principles:

- A. **The plans start by having you learn the fundamentals of the LSAT, and focus on strategies and techniques.**

The goal here is to first learn how to best approach the LSAT. The more you know about the test itself and the best methods for solving questions, the better you can score.

- B. **Practice on specific question types is a major feature of each plan, because you have to regularly apply the methods you learn in order to become as fast and efficient as possible with them.**



- C. **At designated intervals you are directed to take full practice tests. Taking full LSATs is critical to becoming as comfortable as possible on test day.**

One of the major problems for all LSAT takers is fatigue during the exam. The LSAT is a long, draining test, and by frequently taking full practice exams, you become acclimated to the rigors of test day.

- D. **Thorough reviews of your practice sessions and test results are built in so you can track improvement and identify areas of difficulty.**

This portion of your preparation is critical. You must closely examine every question on each test you take—both the questions you answered correctly (could you have been faster or more certain?) and the questions you answered incorrectly (to see where you went wrong and to learn how to avoid those issues next time).

- E. **Your practice test results can be used to revise your general study plan to account for changes and improvements.**

As you progress through your course of study, you will improve in some areas and find other areas that still need more work. Use your practice test results to identify these areas. For example, if you keep running into difficulty with Logic Games, you can slant your study time to allow you to do more games and review more material about games. The old saying that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link applies to your testing as well. If you have a weakness, find it and work relentlessly to eliminate it!



One question that frequently comes up concerns timing and using a timer while studying. Timing, while always important on the LSAT, should *not* be a primary concern for you when you begin your studies (and the further out you begin preparing, the less that timing should concern you). As you go through more material, however, you should begin to make timing a regular part of your preparation. For example, when you begin your studies you should keep an eye on the amount of time you take to complete each question, but you should not obsess over it. If you are taking longer than desired, make note of that fact, but focus more on understanding the concepts in the questions and the methods to solve them. Practice is not about starting at full speed; it is about understanding the fundamental steps and slowly working your way up to full speed.

To keep things interesting while studying, you can use different timing strategies, such as timing yourself on a set of two or three questions, and then reviewing your performance. Or you could time yourself on a set of five or ten questions, and then go back and review each question carefully after you complete the set. The goal of timing yourself is for you to gain a clear understanding of how fast you can move through questions, as well as to develop an internal clock that gives you a general idea of your pacing. The farther you progress in your studies, the more frequently you should time yourself. But remember, when you encounter a new concept—especially one that you find difficult—set aside the timer until you are comfortable with the idea itself. Then start timing and tracking your performance again.



5. Stick to Your Study Plan

Getting the materials together and selecting a study plan are the easy parts. Sticking to the plan is much more difficult!

When you set your schedule, do not generalize. For example, don't say, "I want to study a lot this week" or "I want to take a practice test sometime." Instead, be specific. Say, "I want to study every day except Monday and Friday for at least 2 hours a day" or "I'm going to complete every item on the study plan this week by Friday." Creating specific goals will help you stick to the schedule more easily, and it will give you an ironclad guide for knowing whether or not you are following your plan.

6. Review Your Progress and Make Changes as Needed

In war, the battle plan sometimes changes and adjustments have to be made as the campaign continues. The same holds true for your LSAT preparation (that's right, it's war!). At the outset, you may draw certain conclusions about your test performance or your study schedule that subsequently change over time. Constantly revisit your progress and use your practice test results to revise your estimations of needed study time and your areas of strength and weakness.

What happens if you find yourself in trouble or if you can't keep up with your schedule? If so, you have a few options:

- A. Postpone your LSAT date. Depending on when you are sitting for the LSAT, you may have the option of delaying your test [while still not losing out on the current application cycle](#).
- B. Seek professional assistance. No, we don't mean psychological help! We mean professional LSAT help. If you feel that self-studying isn't giving you the results you want, or if you simply need a jump-start to your studies, you can avail yourself of several different options. For example, you can work with an LSAT tutor for a few hours, attend a Weekend LSAT Course, or sign up for a Live Online LSAT Course.

7. Take the LSAT and Destroy It!

This is your ultimate goal, and if you are dedicated and diligent you can achieve it! Study hard and good luck!

