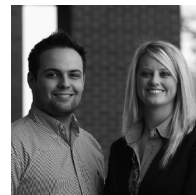


PREPARING FOR THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST

Preparation Tips
Plan Insights
Resources



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LAW

Law School Admission Test:

PREPARATION



Michigan State University College of Law admissions staff often are asked for recommendations about how to prepare for the Law School Admission Test. We recently solicited preparation tips and information through a survey of members of our incoming class who achieved a score of 161 or higher on the test. Select responses are included on the following pages, along with a list of resources that prospective applicants may consider including in their own LSAT preparation plans.

The MSU Law Office of Admissions encourages prospective applicants to 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. Regardless of the methods used, each prospective applicant will be well served by devoting significant time and energy to achieving a score that best reflects his or her readiness for the study of law.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles W. Roboski".

Charles W. Roboski
Assistant Dean for Admissions and Financial Aid

PREPARATION TIPS

The Michigan State University College of Law Office of Admissions staff solicited LSAT preparation tips through a survey of members of our incoming class who achieved a score of 161 or higher on the test. Select responses are included below.

General Advice

- Take the test in June, especially if you are still in undergrad. That way, 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 your other courses as you might with the October test. Lastly, it'll give you plenty of time to retake the test without having to wait for the October or December test scores.
- Put the time in—acceptance to law school and many scholarships rely heavily on the LSAT and undergraduate GPA. If you spent four years building a GPA, it would make sense to put equally proportionate effort in preparing for the LSAT. (If your undergrad GPA isn't as high as you would like, a high LSAT score may be your chance to overcome this weakness.)
- 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 for the LSAT.

General Suggestions for Preparation

- Start by learning about the test itself. Learn the structure, different sections, and the amount of time you will have.
- Take seriously the task of learning how to take the test. You cannot do your best without serious, deliberate preparation.
- Take as many full-length, timed practice tests as you can!
- Take every practice test you can, several times a week until the test. Hopefully your score will improve from the time you begin studying (WELL IN ADVANCE) to the time you take the test.
- Take results of practice tests (especially self-administered ones) with a grain of salt. Don't assume you're prepared enough just because you have a great practice test—do it consistently.
- Take a practice test at least twice when you are preparing—once before you begin, to know where you need the most help, and once in the middle, to track your progress so you don't continuously study the same things.
- Study in similar environments to how you will take the test. I usually studied with background noise, but the absence of noise on my first test ended up being detrimental. After that I only studied in silence in preparation for the second test.
- Make sure that every type of argument is understood. The logic questions are hard when you don't know what is being asked.
- Treat it like a game, or a puzzle to be solved—try to have fun with it!
- If you can, take upper-level Philosophy or English classes. The logic and writing will really help on all aspects of the LSAT.
- Practice arguments and games more than reading comprehension, as I found the most improvements to be in those sections.
- 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.
- Don't get discouraged—improvement is a very slow process with the LSAT, but with continuous preparation, things begin to “click.”
- Practice, practice, practice!

Time Management

- Practicing for a relatively short amount of time on a regular basis always beats spending large amounts of time studying every month or so.
- Long tests are like marathons. It takes time to build stamina.
- Working smart is more important than working fast; the speed will come later.

Just 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, so pay attention.
- Make sure to 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.
- Go to bed early the night before. There is nothing quite as frustrating on a big exam as not being able to think clearly because you are tired.
- Relax the night before the exam: take a hot bath, watch a movie, leave the study guides behind, give your brain a break.

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.
- Don't pay attention to the people next to you. They have a different exam than you. It doesn't matter how far others are in comparison to you. Pace yourself. How you are doing is the only thing that matters, not anyone else. (Also, if a friend is also taking the LSAT, sitting next to him or her may prove even more distracting. At least, I know it was for me.)
- Read everything on the exam very carefully. Details are incredibly important.
- Bring a snack to the testing center (my test went through lunch).
- Be confident in your own preparation and don't get distracted during the test. There will always be that person 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.
- CALM DOWN. Life will go on after the LSAT. My first LSAT 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!



PREPARATION PLAN INSIGHTS

Michigan State University College of Law Office of Admissions staff solicited LSAT preparation information through a survey of members of our incoming class who achieved a score of 161 or higher on the test. Select responses are included below, along with a table that indicates the amount of time and money respondents committed to LSAT preparation.

Amount of Time and Money Respondents Committed to LSAT Preparation

Time Devoted to LSAT Preparation	# of Respondents	Money Spent on LSAT Preparation	# of Respondents
0 to 49 hours	2	0 to \$49	8
50 to 99 hours	7	\$50 to \$99	4
100 to 149 hours	8	\$100 to \$499	5
150 to 199 hours	5	\$500 to \$999	1
200 or more hours	6	\$1,000 or more	10

“I initially took two practice tests to discover my weaker areas, and then focused on those sections until the two weeks prior to the exam in October. Following that, I took weekly practice tests. I found that practice was critical to improving my score on the Logic Games section, while test-taking strategies were more important for Logical Reasoning and Reading Comprehension. I took the LSAT twice and improved from 158 to 164 from the October to December test. I spent very little money on LSAT preparation as I received my prep books as donations from my fraternity.”

— *Canek Acosta (164), University of Florida*

“For the October LSAT, I took a Kaplan online test prep course. I also ordered test prep books from the Law School Admissions Council. I recognized after taking the October test that I did not focus enough on time management. When I took the December LSAT, I studied for the test by timing myself; I would not answer a single question unless it was under a time constraint. I felt much more confident while taking the December LSAT, and I improved my score by 13 points. I spent a total of 250 hours preparing for the two LSATs and spent just under \$1,100.”

— *Diana Marie Basel (162), University of Michigan*

“My preparation for the LSAT was minimal because I was working two jobs and taking 20 credit hours at my undergraduate institution. I consulted the LSAC website to gain an understanding of the basic structure of the LSAT and I then took five practice tests before the actual testing date. One of these was the free online practice test offered by LSAC and the others were from a Barron’s Guide. I spent about 20 hours preparing and \$0 (a friend of mine gave me her LSAT study guide and I used free resources on the LSAC website).”

— *Heidi Bensen (161), Cedarville University*

“I began preparing in June for the October LSAT, devoting one or two hours per week to individual study. In August, I enrolled in a commercial prep course (Kaplan) and spent 8 to 10 hours per week on LSAT prep. For me, it was most helpful to take as many practice tests as possible. In total, I invested about 100 hours of time and about \$1,500.”

— *William Carey (165), Kalamazoo College*

“I took the LSAT four times! The first time, I took the LSAT I took a commercial prep course, but then prepared individually and relied on additional purchased books that focused on one of the three different sections of LSAT (argument, reading comprehension, and games). I spent approximately \$1,000 on LSAT material and courses, and I committed about 250 hours to preparing for the LSAT.”

—*Aida Davari (163), York University*

“I began LSAT preparation by going online and researching the test. Once I understood its composition and other pertinent details about the test, I bought two preparatory books and went through both cover-to-cover over the course of six months. I then traded my preparatory books with my roommate, who also was taking the LSAT. My studying consisted almost entirely of simply going through the books, reading their suggested strategies, and completing the various practice LSATs. I spent between \$60 and \$70 for preparatory books and upwards of 100 hours studying.”

—*James DeMates (162), Michigan State University*

“I enrolled in a Kaplan LSAT prep course. Concurrently, I worked on my sixth semester of undergraduate college and used my classes to improve critical thinking and writing skills, while I ‘learned the test’ from my Kaplan instructors. I began preparing for the June LSAT in March and devoted between 100 and 150 hours to preparation. I spent close to \$1,000 on LSAT prep.”

—*Brian Hanning (161), Colorado State University*

“I begin preparing for the LSAT by familiarizing myself with the different types of questions on the exam. I then focused on improving my ‘weaker’ sections by practicing them over and over. My strategy was to take full-length practice tests every other day, and use the alternating days to review the answers. This gave me a ton of practice with the questions and helped me master timing. The LSAT was a big investment. I spent around 300 hours and \$1,000 dollars to achieve my score.”

—*Sarah Hillegonds (161), University of Michigan*

“I prepared for the LSAT on my own using the Kaplan prep guide. I thought that the explanations were extremely helpful, especially in the logic games section. As I read a section I was sure to complete the practice questions and then to review the ones that I missed. I also found it very helpful to take the full practice LSAT included so that I could see how the time constraints affected my performance. Once I finished the book I went back and re-examined the practice questions at the end of each section while reviewing my answers to see which sections I grasped and which eluded me. I was then able to specifically review the area where I had trouble in the days leading up to the exam. I spent less than \$30 and five hours every weekend for two months preparing for the LSAT.”

—*Lucas Huss (164), Saginaw State Valley University*



“I began LSAT prep in my junior year. I’d study two or three days a week for up to two hours at a time. Beginning in May, I increased prep time to four or five days a week. I also prepared by reading the Logic Games and Logical Reasoning PowerScore LSAT prep books and I completed as many practice LSATs as I could find, focusing on the logic games and logical reasoning sections. I spent approximately \$150.”

—*Thomas Kelly (162), Michigan State University*

“The first time I took the LSAT, I went through a prep book and read each of the section’s basic explanations. I then took a practice test included in the book. After that, I read the detailed explanation of how to approach each of the sections and focused on the logic games section, which for me was my weakest area. To find more problems, I went to the LSAC website and also found some logic games on random

Internet websites. The second time I took the LSAT, I bought a book specifically for LSAT logic games and a non-LSAT related logic-game book. I estimate that I spent 75 hours preparing for the LSAT and \$35 on prep materials.”

—*Megen Miller (163), Grand Valley State University*

“I began my LSAT prep by skimming several different prep guides in order to determine what approach would be best for me. After doing that and speaking with several advisors, I decided to study by taking practice exams. I purchased the Ten Actual LSATs and individual tests from LSAC. Once I got my books, I went to my local library every Monday (since my actual exam was on a Monday) and completed a full test. Once I finished each practice test, I reviewed the results and focused on my incorrect answers. I spent about \$70 and about 10 hours per week for 8 weeks prior to the test.”

— *Rachael Roseman (164), Grand Valley State University*

“I began preparing for the LSAT by purchasing a commercial LSAT prep book. I focused on familiarizing myself with the format of the test and types of questions, and I read the advice given for each question type. I then practiced the problems, one test section at a time, that were provided in the LSAT prep book. As I went on, I found that I had the most trouble with logic games, so I found several practice games on the Internet and did those. I also enlisted my engineer best friend who has a better math mind than I do; she helped me work through some games step by step so I could see how she approached them. I devoted about 80 hours and about \$40 to achieving my LSAT score.”

— *Emily Rucker (162), Central Michigan University*

“I took a class through Knewton to prepare for the LSAT. It was completely online and offered archives of previous classes, as well as practice tests (actual LSATs from former years) and the option to create my own types of quizzes based on the section and question material being dealt with. The class involved question and answer sessions, mandatory practice tests, and problem solving in class, as well as homework to be completed online outside of class hours. I did a few extra full-length practice tests as well as multiple self-created quizzes based on a section I felt weaker in. I devoted 110 to 120 hours and \$750 in prep time and materials to achieving my LSAT score.”

— *Kjirsten Sneed (162), Albion College*

“I purchased Princeton Review’s *Cracking the LSAT* and reviewed all the tips for each section of the test. I also purchased several books that contained prior LSAT tests, including previous LSAT tests from LSAC. I took the practice LSATs under timed conditions several times a week and then reviewed my answers so that I could focus on those areas giving me greatest difficulty. I only took the LSAT once and spent around \$200 on LSAT prep books and 150 to 200 hours of time preparing for the LSAT.”

— *Ingrid Ulander (161), University of Maryland*

“Practice tests were my priority—many, many practice tests. Initially, I completed the tests without a time limit to see what I could score. From there I concentrated on my ‘weak’ sections. I attempted to familiarize myself with the questions that I found most difficult and find ways to identify the correct answers. Once I became content with the scores I received, I began adding stressors, including but not limited to the timer, distracting sounds, etc. As the day of the actual test neared, I had friends become proctors and ‘fellow test takers.’ The proctors were told to cut me off earlier than expected and the ‘test takers’ to be distracting. I even adjusted my surroundings to be as similar as possible to the exam location. In terms of the total amount of time devoted to LSAT prep, I estimate it was about 70 hours. I spent only \$5 because I picked up a used LSAT prep book and was given a great deal of LSAT material from a friend.”

— *Megan Verhalen (161), Drake University*

“The first time I took the LSAT, I studied a couple test prep books about a month before the test for a total of about 15 hours. For the second LSAT, I started studying earlier and used an online class entitled Powerscore. I spent around 100 hours and \$250 in LSAT preparation material—an investment I consider worthwhile considering the weight the test carries in the admissions process and in possible financial aid opportunities.”

— *Michael Zahrt (161), Calvin College*

Law School Admission Test:

PREPARATION RESOURCES

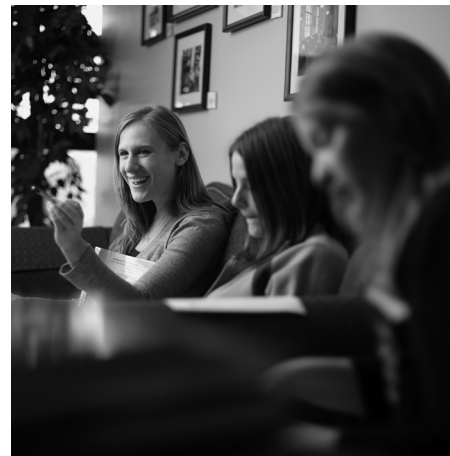
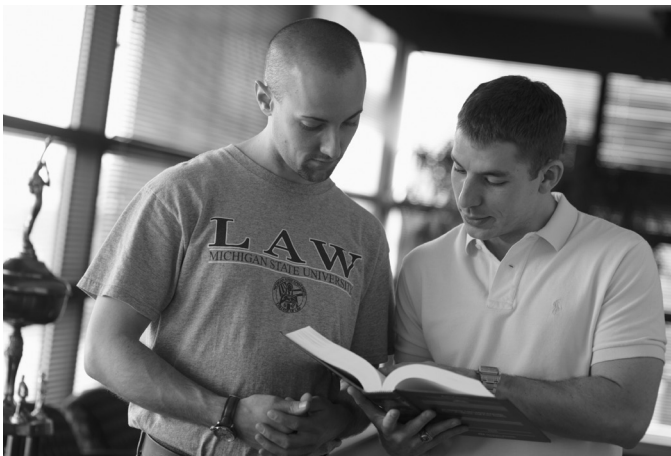
An effective plan can include self-study using free or low-cost materials, a commercial preparation course, or a combination of both methods. The following list of resources may serve as a helpful guide for prospective law school applicants as they develop an effective LSAT study plan. An item's inclusion on this list does not constitute an endorsement by the Michigan State University College of Law Office of Admissions.

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.asp.
- The following materials and others may be purchased at <https://os.lsac.org/Release/Shop/Publications.aspx>:
 - » *The Official LSAT Handbook*™
 - » *The Official LSAT SuperPrep*®
 - » *10 Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests*™
 - » *10 More Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests*™

Additional LSAT Print Preparation Materials

- Barron's *How to Prepare for the LSAT* (Jerry Bobrow, Ph.D.): Features six full-length model LSAT tests with explanations, and includes best analysis techniques and an overview of study tips
- Examkrackers *LSAT Complete Study Package* (David Lynch): Contains full coverage of all sections of the LSAT, as well as 25 short practice exams in the LSAT format
- Kaplan *LSAT 2010–2011 Premier* (Kaplan): Provides practice problems, as well 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



Commercial LSAT Courses

Vendor, Courses	Cost	Hours	Features
blueprint <i>www.blueprintprep.com</i>			
Classroom	\$1,200	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 16 lessons, 3 workshops · 4 practice exams with 3 time trials · 1,800 pages of study materials
Online	\$800	55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 5 textbooks with 6,500+ test questions · High-quality streaming videos · Unlimited access to e-mail support
Tutoring	Varies	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Exceptional tutoring staff · Completely customizable · Flexible and convenient to student needs
Examcrackers <i>www.examcrackers.com/LSAT</i>			
Classroom/Online	\$1,300	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Classes available in select states · Online forum with up-to-date information · Extensive print, audio, and DVD materials
Kaplan <i>www.kaptest.com/LSAT</i>			
Classroom	Starting at \$1,400	100 or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Live, classroom instruction · 4 full-length practice exams · Personal attention in a group setting
Online	Starting at \$550	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Online video instruction · Available anywhere, at any time · Taught by certified Kaplan instructors
Classroom/Online	Starting at \$950	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mix of online and live instruction hours · 4 full-length practice exams · Personal attention in a group setting
Tutoring	Starting at \$2,300	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Available in 15, 25, and 35 hour packages · One-on-one instruction · Completely customizable to your study needs
Knewton <i>www.knewton.com/lSAT</i>			
Online	\$800 to \$900	84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Online instruction from a lead teacher and teaching assistants · Flexible scheduling and starting days · Official LSAT prep tests
NextStep <i>www.nextstestprep.com/tests/lSAT-tutors</i>			
Tutoring	\$1,400 to \$2,000	16 to 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Exclusively focuses on tutoring individual students · Expert instructors with experience teaching the LSAT · Instruction that is tightly customized to the individual student

Vendor, Courses	Cost	Hours	Features
PowerScore <i>www.powerscore.com/lSAT</i>			
Classroom	\$1,295	125	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Instructors who have scored in the 99th percentile · Thousands of pages of material · Free LSAT Homework Hotline
Online	\$995	81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 36 hours of live, online instruction · Instant access to recorded archive of lessons · Free headset for real-time communication
Weekend	\$395	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Available both in class or virtual · Free e-mail assistance
Tutoring	Varies	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Available in person, online, or telephonically · One-on-one instruction · Completely customizable to your study needs
The Princeton Review <i>www.princetonreview.com/law-school.aspx</i>			
Classroom	\$1,500	84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Instructors who have scored in the 98th percentile · 6 full-length proctored LSATs · 1,800 pages of study materials
Small Group Instruction	\$2,400	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Class size limited to 4 students · All LSAC released questions with explanations · 6 full-length practice tests
Online	\$500 to \$1,200	55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Focused, customized learning · Drills and homework assignments based on class · Complete review of all LSAT subjects
Tutoring	\$1,035 to \$6,600	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Exceptional tutoring staff · Completely customizable · Flexible and convenient to student needs
TestMasters <i>www.testmasters.net/Lsat</i>			
Classroom	\$1,450	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 100 locations in the U.S. · High-scoring instructors in a group setting · Personal set of 7,000 LSAT questions
Online	\$950	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Online instructional videos · Full access to written explanations, and diagnostic scoring · 3 hours of telephonic tutoring
Weekend	\$450	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 16 hours of live, classroom instruction · 10 full-length diagnostic tests · Over 1,300 real LSAT questions
Tutoring	\$150/hour to \$8,750 for full course	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Available in 10-hour, 25-hour, and full-length courses · One-on-one instruction · Completely customizable to your study needs

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