

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

College of Arts & Sciences

Advising & Career Services

Law School Admission Test

Facts about the Law School Admission Test

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a five-section, multiple-choice test, containing a total of about 120-130 questions, separately timed at 35 minutes apiece. There is a brief (usually 10-15 minutes) break between the third and fourth sections. There are three question types:

Reading Comprehension—Approximately 26 to 28 questions, arranged into four sets, each containing a passage followed by six to eight questions.

Analytical Reasoning—Also referred to as Logic Games or the "matrix." Consists of sections of approximately 24 questions, arranged in four sets of analytical problems ("set-ups") with five to seven questions apiece.

Logical Thinking—Typically this section will include around 24-26 questions that are not, for the most part, grouped into sets.

While the four scored sections used for each administration of the LSAT are most likely to be the same for each test at every test center, there are different editions in which the non-scored section is not the same and in which the order in which the scored sections appear will vary. After the five-section, multiple-choice test has been administered, and after a second short break (approximately five minutes,) the writing sample will be administered. The writing sample is not scored; however, copies of your sample will be sent to each law school to which you apply.

Scoring the LSAT

The LSAT score is a three-digit number ranging from 120-180 determined by the number of correct answers on the four scored sections, generally covering a total of about 96-104 questions. LSAT scores are not absolutes: A score of 180 does not necessarily mean that every question was answered correctly (you could have had as many as 2-3 incorrect answers on the four scored sections and still have a score of 180); nor does a score of 120 necessarily mean you answered every question incorrectly. Generally, you will need approximately 15-17 correct answers before your score moves above a 120. Once you reach that "threshold," each additional correct answer will help raise your score with, roughly speaking, about two points gained for every three additional correct answers.

Preparation for the LSAT

The LSAT seeks to measure not what you already know, but rather, how well you might respond to training in law. It tests basic skills and abilities, including critical and accurate reading, dispassionate, flexible, intelligent, inferential thinking, distinguishing fact from opinion and relevant from irrelevant, stability under pressure, tolerance of ambiguity and abstraction, and quick adaptation to unfamiliar procedures & circumstances.

The LSAT consists of a series of demanding and often strange intellectual games, at times having little to do with real life or academic subjects. Preparation consists of learning the game rules, both those set forth in the different sections of the test and those implicit in its construction and scoring method. The rest is practice on specific types of problems, but it must be practice of an analytical, self-teaching nature. The only fully reliable practice material consists of the actual, previously administered LSATs with explanations, which are available from LSAC.

Test Taking Tips

When embarking on mock or real LSATs, prepare to concentrate immediately, intensely, & steadily. Work with the test, not against it. Remember that only one option is correct per question. Never answer from your own knowledge or experience. Similarly read nothing into any problem, and omit nothing from any problem. Take time to understand the directions! Don't misread, don't skim, and don't "speed-read." Keep track of the time but don't be possessed by it. The LSAT is deliberately paced so that you may not have enough time to complete every question. While individual questions do vary in difficulty, each correct answer makes the same contribution to your score regardless of how easy or difficult it may be. Remember to return to those questions you skipped and don't waiver about guessing if necessary. Most importantly: never leave a question unanswered!

Retaking the LSAT

Generally, it is best to sit for the LSAT once. However, if you do find that a retake is necessary, keep in mind that individuals are allowed to take the LSAT a maximum of three times within a period of two years. These allowances include any time that you have sat for the LSAT including instances of you leaving the test early, canceling your score, or if the score is not otherwise reported but the applicant sat for the exam. It is strongly suggested that students not meet this maximum unless absolutely necessary. Additionally, there is a small portion of students who find it necessary to exceed the three LSAT tests allotted per two years. These cases are extremely rare, but if you find yourself in this situation, contact LSAC to request additional test allotments.

Additional Resources

Pre-Law Advising (<http://casadvising.syr.edu>)

LSAC (www.lsac.org)

American Bar Association

(www.americanbar.org)