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Scott A. Hatch, JD

Lisa Zimmer Hatch, MA

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# LSAT<sup>®</sup>

3rd Edition  
with Online Practice

by Lisa Zimmer Hatch, MA,  
and Scott A. Hatch, JD

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
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## **LSAT® For Dummies® with Online Practice, 3rd Edition**

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# LSAT® For Dummies® with Online Practice

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# Introduction

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Welcome to *LSAT For Dummies*, 3rd Edition! This book contains updates to familiarize you with the LSAT's Digital format so that you're comfortable with taking the test on a tablet. Even though the delivery is modern, the content of the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) hasn't changed. You may have heard horror stories about the LSAT, especially about the infamous "logic games." Yes, the LSAT is no walk in the park, but it's not the hardest test in the universe. It doesn't require you to brush off your math and science texts from high school, and it doesn't expect you to remember anything from your history classes. It really just expects you to be able to read and analyze. If you can read carefully and quickly and then apply what you've read, you already have the skills you need to succeed on the LSAT.

This book helps you refine those skills and apply them to the particular tasks on the LSAT. If you go through this book and work through a healthy number of practice questions, you should have a good idea of what awaits you on test day.

## ***About This Book***

First, allow us to tell you what this book *can* do: This book introduces you to the LSAT and helps you get a handle on how to take it. It describes the three types of multiple-choice sections — analytical reasoning, logical reasoning, and reading comprehension — and provides guidance on how to handle them, with plenty of practice questions and explanations. It also touches on the writing sample, which is unscored but still merits a bit of attention. The first three chapters discuss some basics of

law school admissions, test-taking strategy, and other logistical entertainment.

On to what the book *can't* do: This book doesn't give you a bunch of tricks to help you "crack" the LSAT. The LSAT isn't a nut; it's a test, and to do well on it you have to apply your natural intelligence and experience. We give you plenty of advice on how to approach each question type to maximize your talents and train your mind to think in the most effective way.

Included in this book are three full-length practice tests, which you can use to try out the tips and techniques we provide throughout the chapters. The difficulty levels and thought patterns on the practice tests are similar to those on real LSATs. Actual LSAT test-prep instructors and LSAT-takers assisted us by massaging and tweaking the questions to make sure that they're equivalent to the real LSAT questions. You can get real and valuable practice by using the questions in this book. But the fact is, no one makes real LSAT questions but the real Law School Admission Council (LSAC). If you want real LSAT questions, get yourself some LSAT PrepTests, which are real LSATs administered in previous years. That's the most authentic practice you can find, and we highly recommend it. (You can order these official tests in text or digital form from the LSAC website: [www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org). They come with answers but [in most cases] not explanations, so they're great practice, but to figure out why your answers are right or wrong, you should work through this book first to get a sense of how the questions work.)

To help, we italicize any new LSAT-related terms that you're likely to be unfamiliar with the first time we use it.

Because this book is a test-prep, you probably want to read most everything here. Besides, we worked really

hard on this book! However, if you're pressed for time or just have a short attention span, you can skip the sidebars and any text marked with a Technical Stuff icon without missing out on too much.

## ***Foolish Assumptions***

We make a few assumptions about you, the reader (we hope you don't mind):

- » Call us crazy, but we're guessing you've signed up to take the LSAT or you're at least seriously considering taking the LSAT.
- » We know, of course, that you're not a dummy. You've likely received or are in the process of receiving an undergraduate degree and are no stranger to thinking analytically. You simply need guidance regarding how to apply your already sharp skills to the unfamiliar question types on the LSAT.
- » Our third and final assumption is that you've chosen this book for one of several reasons — the fabulous *For Dummies* reputation for providing information in an easily accessible format, the price, or the attention-grabbing yellow-and-black cover — but mainly because you think you want to go to law school, and the LSAT is the primary way to that destination.

## ***Icons Used in This Book***

This book, like all *For Dummies* books, uses icons to help you spot important tidbits of information and break up the monotony of otherwise plain and ordinary pages. Here are the icons you'll encounter in this book:



TIP

This icon marks useful bits of information that may come in handy when you study for or take the LSAT.



REMEMBER

This icon reminds you of valuable strategies to keep in mind as you work through the test content.



WARNING

This icon marks stuff to avoid, potential mistakes, and traps for the unwary.



EXAMPLE

This icon identifies practice questions that demonstrate how to apply specific techniques.



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

This icon highlights extra tidbits of info that enhance your reading but aren't essential to preparing for the LSAT.

## ***Beyond the Book***

By now we're hoping that you're impressed with the wealth of content contained in this book. But to quote your favorite infomercials: Wait! There's more!

In addition to what you're reading right now, this book comes with a free access-anywhere Cheat Sheet that includes tips to help you prepare for the LSAT. To get this

Cheat Sheet, simply go to [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) and type “LSAT For Dummies Cheat Sheet” in the Search box.

You also get access to four full-length online practice tests and approximately 500 flashcards. To gain access to the online practice, all you have to do is register. Just follow these simple steps:

1. **Register your book or ebook at Dummies.com to get your PIN. Go to [www.dummies.com/go/getaccess](http://www.dummies.com/go/getaccess).**
2. **Select your product from the dropdown list on that page.**
3. **Follow the prompts to validate your product, and then check your email for a confirmation message that includes your PIN and instructions for logging in.**

If you don't receive this email within two hours, please check your spam folder before contacting us through our Technical Support website at <http://support.wiley.com> or by phone at 877-762-2974.

Now you're ready to go! You can come back to the practice material as often as you want — simply log on with the username and password you created during your initial login. No need to enter the access code a second time.

Your registration is good for one year from the day you activate your PIN.

## ***Where to Go from Here***

If you bought this book, you must have some plan — definite or tentative — to take the LSAT. But just buying the book alone won't help you much. To get the full

benefit, you have to open it up, read it, and work the problems.

There are two approaches you can take:

- » Read all the explanatory materials, work your way through all the practice problems, and then take the practice tests at the end and see how you did.
- » Take one of the full-length tests to see how well you do. Score your test. Then study the sections that give you the most trouble, concentrating on the questions you find difficult.

It's up to you. You're the one taking the test, and you're the one who has to decide what you need to study and how much time you want to allocate to the process.

## **Part 1**

# **Getting Started with the LSAT**

## **IN THIS PART ...**

Gain insight into the minds that create the LSAT.

Discover tips for managing the LSAT and each of its question types.

Be prepared for exam day by knowing exactly what and what not to bring to the testing site.

Discover other important considerations for getting into your top-choice law school.

# Chapter 1

## The L Team: The LSAT and Its Administrators

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### IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Exploring the various sections of the LSAT
  - » Understanding the LSAT scoring system
  - » Knowing how and when to register for the LSAT
  - » Studying for the LSAT
  - » Meeting the LSAC
- 

If you want to go to law school, you'll likely take the *Law School Admission Test*, also known as the LSAT. The more than 200 law schools that belong to the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) require the LSAT (see the later section "[What Have You Done for Me Lately? The LSAC](#)" for info about the LSAC). Some schools may allow you to substitute a GRE score for the LSAT. Law schools that don't require either the LSAT or GRE for admission may not be approved by the American Bar Association (ABA), which in turn may not qualify you for admission to a state bar, so be careful about choosing a school that doesn't require the LSAT.

The LSAT, annoying though it can be, provides a significant metric for law schools to evaluate their applicants on the same playing field. Colleges are different, backgrounds are different, and cultures are different, but the LSAT is the same for everyone. The LSAT is carefully designed so that the testing experience

of test-takers is virtually identical. Each LSAT test is crafted so that test-takers have a 90 percent chance of scoring the same on a different version. So, law schools feel confident that the LSAT is an objective measure of student ability.

Grade point averages, unlike the LSAT, are highly subjective; they vary depending on the difficulty of a school, the difficulty of particular courses, and other random and unpredictable factors (like the grading policies of individual professors). Law school applications include other information like personal statements that can give schools an idea of a student's abilities, but the schools still can't know for sure that they're getting the real goods — plenty of students get help writing those essays. That leaves the LSAT as one of the most reliable and objective means to compare candidates.

In this chapter, you get an introduction to the LSAT and its various parts and learn all about registering and preparing for the big day. You also get a peek at the organization behind all this madness, the LSAC.



**WARNING** If you're going to be a lawyer, you have to get used to disclaimers, and here's ours for this chapter. The technical information we offer about fees and procedures is subject to change, so refer to the official website ([www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)) to verify the facts and figures for yourself.

## *Getting to Know the Enemy*

If you want to get a decent score on the LSAT, you need to know the test. You can't expect to walk into a test center cold, never having encountered an LSAT in your life, and just ace the questions.

You don't necessarily have to study for a long time. If you're good at standardized tests, you may be able to flip through one or two sample tests, work a few of the problems, get the idea, and score in the 95th percentile. Some people can. If, on the other hand, you find standardized tests generally challenging, and the LSAT difficult in particular, you probably need to devote yourself to more practice time to master the proven strategies provided by this book. Whatever your situation, keep motivated and prepare with the certainty that you can and will improve with dedicated practice.

The LSAT is offered digitally and consists of four different question types:

- » Analytical reasoning questions
- » Logical reasoning questions
- » Reading comprehension questions
- » Writing sample

The analytical reasoning, logical reasoning, and reading comprehension sections consist of multiple-choice questions. You take these questions at a testing center in a format called the Digital LSAT, which delivers these questions via an electronic tablet rather than a paper booklet. The tablet format is similar to a paper test, but instead of marking answers with a No. 2 pencil, you mark and eliminate answers and highlight portions of the questions with a stylus. The testing center supplies you with scratch paper and a pen to work through problems; you can also bring in your own pencils and eraser.

The Digital LSAT consists of five separate test sections presented in no particular order:

- » Two scored sections of logical reasoning
- » One scored analytical reasoning section
- » One scored reading comprehension section
- » One unscored section that can be another section of any of the three multiple-choice question types

You don't know which section is unscored, and the unscored section looks just like any other LSAT test section. Every section lasts 35 minutes.



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The unscored section that you take is a collection of questions that the LSAC is considering using on a future LSAT. The LSAC wants to see how well these new questions work when presented to actual LSAT-takers. This section can be analytical reasoning, logical reasoning, or reading comprehension; you don't know which section is unscored.

## **GOING WITH THE FLOW: LSAT FLEX**

In the spring of 2020, the LSAT responded to the social distancing limitations imposed by COVID-19 by implementing the LSAT Flex, a digital version of the test that prospective law students can take at home. A remote proctor monitors your every move while you work through the same question types that appear on any other version of the test. To decrease the testing time and keep the proctors from falling asleep, the LSAT decreased the number of sections in the test and, consequently, the amount of time you spend answering the questions. Instead of the traditional five sections (four scored and one unscored), the LSAT Flex has three sections:

- One 35-minute reading comprehension section
- One 35-minute analytical reasoning section

- One 35-minute logical reasoning section (instead of two)

The scoring scale is the same, and scores are available about three weeks after the test. Whatever the circumstances, the LSAT has you covered.

The writing sample isn't offered at the test center. You prepare an essay on your own computer at home (or some other secluded place free of interruptions) in response to a specific prompt. The scheduled writing session is timed and remotely proctored. You must complete at least one writing sample before the LSAC will report your LSAT scores to law schools, but you don't need to complete a writing sample every time you take the Digital LSAT.



TIP

The quickest way to get your hands on an actual LSAT is to take the free sample tests available at the LSAC website ([www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)). Completing the samples is a good way to familiarize yourself with the test and its digital format.

## ***Taking a Quick Look at the Types of Questions***

The LSAT has three different kinds of multiple-choice questions and an unscored written essay. Each questions type has its own virtues and vices, and you'll come to know and love them all (though we won't blame you if you pick a favorite).

***Analytical reasoning — playing games with your head***

The analytical reasoning section consists of four logic problems — the infamous “logic games” — each of which is followed by between five and eight questions. These games involve a group of players (or game pieces) that you need to arrange or assign and the rules that govern how you go about it.

You may get something like: “Five college students — B, C, D, E, and F — must share three rooms in a house. B can’t stay with D. E must stay with F.” This fact pattern is followed by several questions that allow you to explore your understanding of the relationships between the students and the dorm rooms. One question may propose five possible roommate arrangements and ask you to choose which one is the only one that could work.

This kind of puzzle commonly appears on IQ tests or in books of games to amuse travelers on airplanes. What they have to do with law school is a mystery to many people. The LSAC PrepTest booklets say that these types of problems “simulate the kinds of detailed analyses of relationships that a law student must perform in solving legal problems.” And it’s true that the skills the analytical reasoning section tests are important in law school. To answer these questions correctly, you must read carefully and accurately. You have to apply rules to a system, which is similar to applying statutes or case law to a problem. You have to restrict your analysis to what’s directly stated or to what can be logically inferred. So the analytical reasoning section is fairly useful at predicting who might succeed in law school.

The analytical reasoning section is worth about 25 percent of your LSAT score. See [Chapters 4](#) through [6](#) for more on analytical reasoning.

## ***Logical reasoning — putting your arguing skills to good use***

The logical reasoning section consists of about 25 short (for example, three or four sentences) passages about various topics. Each of them is followed by one question. The questions ask you to identify the point of an argument, to make deductions about what the author is assuming, to draw conclusions, to identify principles or argument structures, to spot logical errors, and so forth.

Most of these questions involve informal or casual logic, the kind you use to make everyday decisions. All you have to do is read carefully (and quickly) and think clearly. Sometimes the wording is tricky, and you have to concentrate to avoid getting confused. Jotting down some notes or paraphrasing the passage in your own words can help you focus.

Every LSAT has two logical reasoning sections. Together, they're worth about 50 percent of your LSAT score.

[Chapters 7](#) through [10](#) are full of information about logical reasoning.



TIP

Because the logical reasoning section is worth a considerable percentage of your total LSAT score, work hard on your technique for these problems. You get twice the benefit if you do well on this section!

## ***Reading comprehension — concentrating and remembering what you read***

In the reading comprehension section, you read three fairly long and one pair of shorter passages on particular

topics and answer several questions about them. The questions ask about the author's conclusion, the author's tone, the meaning of words, how the passage is organized, and other points designed to test your ability to understand what you read. The good news: The LSAT uses a limited pool of question types over and over again. Because you can predict the types of questions being asked, you can practice reading to answer the questions you know you'll see.

Topics range from humanities and science and social science disciplines to law-related writing. You don't need any expertise in any particular area; in fact, if you have expertise in the subject of a passage, try to forget your outside knowledge. You want to answer all the questions from the information given to you in the passage. Outside knowledge may actually distract you!

This section tests your ability to read and understand a fairly long reading passage. Reading and understanding a long passage is applicable to law school because most law classes consist of reading long, densely worded passages on obscure topics and then answering questions about them.

The reading comprehension section accounts for about 25 percent of your LSAT score. See [Chapters 11](#) and [12](#) for the lowdown.

## ***The writing sample — jumping the final hurdle***

The other part of the LSAT is the digital writing sample. You get 35 minutes to write your essay on your own computer. The essay topic lets you exhibit your skills at using a set of facts to defend one course of action over another.

For example, your question may ask you to decide which dog a widow should buy: a German shepherd, which would be a good guard dog but not very affectionate, or a Pekingese, which would make a good companion but be utterly useless for home defense. (You can explore this question further in [Chapter 13](#).)

Your selection doesn't matter. There's no right or wrong answer. All you have to do is pick a side and justify your decision. [Chapters 13](#) and [14](#) go over this process in detail.

You don't get a score on the writing sample, but the Credential Assembly Service (CAS) sends a copy of your essay to every law school that receives your LSAT score.



**REMEMBER** Some folks wonder why they should prepare for the writing sample section if it's unscored. Law schools often read essays in deciding borderline cases or comparing similar applicants. If your profile is substantially similar to hundreds of others, law schools often look at the essays to compare like candidates.

## ***You Gotta Score!***

The LSAT is scored on a scale from 120 to 180; every year a few people attain the Everest-like peak of 180, and they can pretty much write their own tickets to law school. Although percentile charts vary slightly among test administrations, the average LSAT score is around 152. Any score higher than 160 is quite good and puts you in the top 20 percent of test-takers (80th percentile). A score of around 164 puts you around the 90th

percentile, and a score of 173 or above is where the top 1 percent of test-takers usually reside.

To get a 160, you need to answer about 75 percent of the answers correctly. To get a 150, you need to answer correctly about 55 percent. If you get 95 percent or more right, your score will be up in the stratosphere, around a 175. The LSAT scoring is straightforward. Your raw score is the number of questions you get right; no points are deducted for wrong answers. You plug that raw score into the score chart to determine what your LSAT score would be. So if, say, your test has 100 questions on it, and you get 75 of them right, your raw score is 75 and your LSAT score may be 161. If you get 44 right, you'd get more like a 144. The raw score to scaled score conversion changes very slightly from test to test to account for the minor differences in difficulty of each test.



TECHNICAL  
STUFF

The LSAT-writers work hard to ensure that the test is reliable. That means that the same test-taker should get scores in a similar range on two or three different tests and that luck in getting an easy test shouldn't be a factor in scores. In practice, luck is always something of a factor, but it shouldn't be a major one.

Still, you've probably taken a metric ton of tests by now, and you know that everyone has good days and bad days, good tests and bad tests (hey, even good hair days and bad hair days!). The combination of a bad test and a bad mood (say, for instance, despite our advice to the contrary, you pull an all-nighter before exam day) can lead to a misleadingly bad score. If that happens, you

can cancel your score and try again (see more about doing this in [Chapter 2](#)). On the other hand, you may be in the test-taking zone on test day, and every question seems laughably easy to you. It can happen that way. If you have a good day, thank your lucky stars because that'll probably result in a good LSAT score and law school admission.



**TIP** What if you get a 160 and your friend gets a 163? Does that mean your friend is a better law school prospect than you? Probably not. Small differences among test-takers aren't usually due to actual differences of ability. Your score will be in the range of scores you're capable of, but if you take the LSAT several times within a short period of time, you probably won't get the same score every time. It may go up or down slightly, but it should be within 3 points up or down of your original score (though your mileage may vary).

## ***Registering for the LSAT***

The LSAT typically happens eight times a year: one Saturday every month except for March, May, September, and December. If you want to enter law school the next fall, you should take the LSAT by the prior December, or February at the latest, though we recommend taking it earlier. August, October, and November are the most popular test dates because some law schools start taking applications in the fall and begin accepting applicants early in the winter; the earlier you apply, the better your odds of acceptance.