

THE LSAT & LAW SCHOOL GUIDE

A Realistic Guide From One Student to Another



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Author	2
Before We Start	3
Part 1: Figuring out when you want to take the LSAT	5
About the curve	5
Part 2: Research Schools First	7
Part 3: Portfolio Building	8
LSAT.....	8
Personal Statement.....	8
Reference Letters.....	9
Transcripts.....	9
Resume/CV	10
Discretionary Categories.....	10
Interviews	10
Part 4: Now, where do we start?	12
Diagnostic.....	12
Studying	12
My study advice	13
Study schedule	13
Question types	14
Another asset: The Loophole by Ellen Cassidy.....	15
Part 5: Final Thoughts.....	17

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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BEFORE WE START

First of all, congratulations on starting this journey. It's a long haul but it is **very** worth it! Think of the LSAT as your ticket to a cheaper law school. It's not "can you do well," it's "how well can you do to get scholarships?" **Don't doubt yourself.**

I made this guide because when I first started looking into law school and the LSAT, I felt completely overwhelmed. It felt like everyone around me already knew what they were doing, what schools they wanted, how to study, when to apply, and I was just trying to figure out where to even begin. We live in a very digital age, and with that being said, there is so much information online about law school that it can become exhausting trying to sort through all of it, especially when every person seems to have completely different advice. This guide is not meant to be perfect or professional, and I am definitely not pretending to know everything. I just wanted to put together the things I genuinely wish someone had told me earlier.

A lot of this process is trial and error. Some things will work for you and some things won't, and that's completely normal. Law school applications and the LSAT can feel intimidating at first, but once you break everything down piece by piece, it becomes much more manageable. So, take what helps you, leave what doesn't, and most importantly, trust yourself a little more than you probably are right now.

A Mental Note

I want to start by addressing something that gets talked about a lot regarding law school, but weirdly not during the LSAT process itself.

Your mental health should be one of your **utmost priorities** throughout this process. There are going to be a lot of times where you have to repeatedly say no to your friends and family when they want to spend time with you because you have to study and when it is a beautiful day outside, but you have to stay inside, cooped up in a study room. There will be times when you keep failing certain question types and feel like you're never going to get it. You may even find yourself in a Reddit spiral searching up things about the LSAT and everyone but you seem to understand.

This test comes with a lot of ups and downs, and one thing you need to remember is that **nobody knows what they're doing when they start**. It feels like everyone has it figured out except for you, and that feeling can be really draining. But the truth is, the fact that you're even thinking about taking this test, and have opened up this document already puts you in a **very small percentage** of people willing to even give this a try, and that is something you should be proud of.

Taking mental breaks while also holding yourself accountable is a really difficult balance, however, it is something you are **absolutely capable of**. Keep it up.

PART 1: FIGURING OUT WHEN YOU WANT TO TAKE THE LSAT

This is an important step because *when* you take the test matters. The LSAT is graded on a curve, so use the curve to your advantage.

You can take the test throughout most of the year, but one thing to remember is that law school application deadlines usually range from October to January. Because of that, it's important to plan to take the LSAT well in advance, maybe 3–4 months earlier than you think you need to. That way, if you don't score how you hoped, you still have time to take it again while still meeting application deadlines.

And don't worry, most of us have taken the LSAT more than once. I basically used my first LSAT as practice and took the second one the most seriously!

ABOUT THE CURVE

When I say, “use the curve to your advantage,” I mean be honest with yourself about where you're at when it comes time to register.

Since most law school applications are due between October and January, the people scoring in the **90th percentile** are usually taking the LSAT much earlier so they can apply as soon as applications open up. That means the earlier LSATs, like June and July, can be filled with people who are extremely prepared and ahead of the game.



Because of that, later LSATs like November and January *may* have more people scoring lower taking them. Do with that information what you will, but it's something worth keeping in mind. **Think strategically.**

PART 2: RESEARCH SCHOOLS FIRST

I know it's common for people to want to get the LSAT, personal statements, and everything else out of the way before thinking about schools, but honestly, I think that's backwards.

Picking a law school is a **huge** decision, and you don't want to just fire off applications anywhere, especially when applications are usually \$100+ each. Every law school values different things. Some specialize in Indigenous law, criminal law, environmental law, business law, etc. You don't want to end up in a law school that specializes in something you don't care about just so that you can be in law school. Some schools feed heavily into big law firms where recruitment happens directly on campus, while others are more intimate schools that feed into smaller firms and community-based work.

Some schools are super hands-on and heavy in moots, mock trials, and practical learning, while others focus more on academic measures. The point is: schools are **very different** from each other, and it's important to look into them before you even fully begin your law school journey. You'll probably end up discovering things about yourself and your future career that you didn't even realize mattered to you before.

On top of that, every law school has slightly different application expectations. This includes different personal statement prompts, different optional essays, different focuses, and so on. It's really important that you tailor your application to the individual school. It's not like a resume where you can hand out the exact same one everywhere. Law schools appreciate when they can tell you've actually done your research, and it shows how serious and dedicated you are as an applicant.

PART 3: PORTFOLIO BUILDING

One of the biggest misconceptions about law school applications is that you only need an LSAT score and a personal statement. That is **so not true**. Each applicant has an entire portfolio. You are essentially selling yourself, which honestly is a good thing because you want them to accept you for exactly who you are. Let's make a list of the things you will need with some details.

LSAT

The LSAT is a four-section multiple choice test with 35 minutes per section and a 10-minute break in the middle. Only three of the four sections count toward your score, but you don't know which section is experimental, so you have to treat all of them seriously.

(We'll talk more later about how to actually practice for the test itself.)

To register for the LSAT, see testing dates, view scores, and manage your account, you'll use [LSAC](#) (hyperlinked).

PERSONAL STATEMENT

The personal statement will usually be a short paper or response to prompts given by the school. Every school has different questions or themes they want you to address. This is where you make them **remember you**. I can't really tell you *how* to write your personal statement because, well, it's personal. But as long as you're honest and genuinely yourself, it will probably be great.

REFERENCE LETTERS

Most schools require two reference letters. Usually, one should come from an employer and the other from someone academic, most commonly a professor.

This is another reason why your portfolio matters so much. You can start building strong relationships with people long before you actually apply to law school. You can really tell when someone writes a reference letter just because they agreed to, versus when they genuinely believe you belong in law school.

For me personally, I worked in administration at a law firm and built really strong relationships there, so that became my employer reference. I also worked closely with one of my professors helping students learn about the law school admissions process, and that is who became my academic reference. Going out of your way to learn, help people, and be a **strong voice** not only strengthens your application, but also helps you become a more well-rounded person.

Also, PS: it is **extremely cool** to have a strong voice and ask questions. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise.

TRANSCRIPTS

This one is pretty self-explanatory, but yes, you'll need your transcripts. Whether or not you've finished your undergrad, you can still submit them.

You'll usually send transcripts directly from your school using the website MyCreds. It's honestly pretty easy to use once your school grants you access. Usually, it costs around \$15 each time you send transcripts to a school ([MyCreds](#)).

RESUME/CV

Whether you use a resume or a CV, you'll only need one for applications. If you have both, compare them honestly or ask someone you trust to look over them and tell you which one is stronger.

Make sure it's updated and somewhat tailored toward law school. It does **not** need to only include law-related experiences. Schools want to see who you are, where you come from, and what you've done. Don't erase parts of yourself just to seem "more academic."

DISCRETIONARY CATEGORIES

Many law schools allow applicants to apply through discretionary categories such as a Black applicant streams, Indigenous applicant streams, LGBTQ+ categories, and more. If this applies to you and is something you want to pursue, it can be **incredibly beneficial** when done thoughtfully. Usually there are additional essays or prompts involved.

Just like your personal statement, it's important to genuinely be yourself in these. Show why your experiences, perspective, and identity would positively contribute to the school and the legal profession as a whole. Show what you can bring, and why the things that shaped you, will contribute to what you can do for them.

INTERVIEWS

Some schools may invite you to an in-person or virtual interview after reviewing your application. Usually, it's low-pressure and scheduled around your availability. It'll likely just be two or three admissions committee members asking questions to get a better



sense of who you are and whether you're a good fit for their school. Prepare for this in the same way you would for a job interview, thoughtful and to the point.

Again, being yourself is your **best asset** here. Don't overthink it.

PART 4: NOW, WHERE DO WE START?

DIAGNOSTIC

Now for the part everyone wants to jump to: where do you actually begin? The very first thing you need to do is figure out your starting point. Take a practice LSAT completely cold. Don't study beforehand. Don't stress yourself out. Just sit down and take one. And I mean **actually** take it. Do it under real testing conditions. Don't pause halfway through to go on your phone. Don't check answers while writing. Don't cheat. You're only hurting yourself if you don't get an accurate idea of where you're starting from. You need a **real baseline score** to know how to move forward.

Sign up for free to [LawHub](#). This is where you'll eventually take the real LSAT, so make sure you remember your login information. They offer free practice tests where you can see your score and review what you got right and wrong.

And seriously, don't just do a section or a handful of questions. Sit down for the full thing. Ask people around you for quiet, give yourself a couple hours, and do the test properly. Also, don't be scared of a "bad" diagnostic score. Almost everybody starts rough. It only goes **uphill from here**.

STUDYING

Now that you know where you stand, start looking into different study methods. My biggest piece of advice is to pick one main resource and stick with it consistently. The most common resources are:

- 1) [LawHub](#)
- 2) [7Sage](#)
- 3) [Khan Academy](#)
- 4) [Kaplan Test Prep](#)
- 5) [LSAT Demon](#)

MY STUDY ADVICE

For me personally, LSAT Demon was one of the **best decisions** I made. I found their explanations really clear and helpful, especially when it came to understanding *why* answers were right or wrong instead of just memorizing things.

That being said, do your own research. Every person learns differently. Most of these platforms offer free trials, so try each one and see which feels the most natural to you. Once you find one you like, **stick with it**.

STUDY SCHEDULE

This is where accountability comes in. You need to create a schedule that realistically works for **you**. Maybe that's an hour a day. Maybe it's two hours. Choose whatever you can consistently maintain without burning yourself out or quitting entirely.

Consistency matters way more than doing ten-hour study days and then crashing for a week afterward. And when you aren't studying, try to actually disconnect from the LSAT. Go outside. Spend time with people. Rest your brain. A completely drained brain does **not** learn well, no matter how badly you want it to.

QUESTION TYPES

The LSAT mainly consists of two section types: Reading Comprehension and Logical Reasoning. Start by getting familiar with each section and the different question types within them. This is where “drilling” comes into play. Drilling basically means practicing the same types of questions repeatedly until you start recognizing patterns naturally. For both Reading Comprehension and Logical Reasoning, practice each question type separately. I know that probably sounds confusing right now, but once you actually start studying, it’ll make a lot more sense.

I could give endless advice about improving at questions, but a lot of it comes naturally through repetition and practice. Over time, you’ll start noticing your own patterns, strengths, and weaknesses. And honestly, recognizing what you struggle with is a **strength in itself**. Don’t get discouraged when you get questions wrong. Every mistake is literally showing you exactly what you need to work on next.

The questions will seem very confusing and worded by a wizard who speaks an unknown language. Just know that the questions are meant to make you think they don’t make sense, but you are a future lawyer, so you can make sense of anything.

The key is to know what the question is actually looking for. Let’s look at one example:

Question:

All of the books on the top shelf are mystery novels.

Some mystery novels are signed by their authors.

Which of the following **must** be true?

- A. Some books on the top shelf are signed by their authors.
- B. No books on the top shelf are signed by their authors.
- C. Some signed books are mystery novels.
- D. All signed books are mystery novels.

At first glance it feels like a riddle, but again, the key is to know what you are being asked. “What must be true” about that question? That’s it. This feels like you need to connect the top shelf to the signed books, but you actually don’t. The second sentence literally tells you that **some mystery novels are signed by their authors**, which is exactly what answer C says. The entire first sentence about the top shelf is a distraction. That’s the kind of thing the LSAT loves to do, give you information that looks important but doesn’t actually matter to the question.

You’ll get more comfortable with the idea of weeding out what doesn’t matter, it just comes with time and drilling.

ANOTHER ASSET: THE LOOPHOLE BY ELLEN CASSIDY

One book I really recommend is *The Loophole* by Ellen Cassidy. What I liked most about it is that it actually feels like she’s talking to you like a normal human being, not like a textbook or a computer trying to explain something in a super robotic way. It made such a difference for me because as we know, the LSAT already feels overwhelming enough, and her tone and the way she explained things made it way easier to stay engaged and actually understand what she was saying. She is also funny and witty so that was awesome. She goes through the specific question types that I was referring to earlier and explains them so that it actually makes sense, rather than just offering



memorizing strategies. And on top of all of that, honestly, it just felt really refreshing to learn LSAT information by just reading and understanding, instead of constantly jumping straight into drilling questions all the time.

Book Available Here: [The Loophole in LSAT Logical Reasoning : Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca)

PART 5: FINAL THOUGHTS

The bottom line is that you will figure it out as you go. You just have to get over that feeling where you think you've done so much that you can't do any more. That feeling shows up a lot in this process, but it's not real. There is always more you can do, even if it's small steps.

The LSAT does give you some skills you'll use in law school, but it's more about the fact that it weeds out the people who quit or give up when things get hard. And that's exactly why you want to do well. Not just for the score itself, but to prove to yourself that you are not someone who walks away when things get difficult.

You don't need to be perfect at this. You just need to keep going when it gets uncomfortable, when it feels repetitive, or when you start doubting yourself. That's really what this whole process is testing more than anything else.

And remember, no one even really knows what they're doing. Everyone is just figuring it out as they go, even if it looks like they aren't. So don't doubt yourself. If you've even made it to this point in this document, then you've already got what it takes.

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