

My junior year at UC Irvine, I was forced to confront the LSAT, which I dreaded. I had always felt that I could do well in school if I put in the effort, but that the LSAT tested some sort of natural intelligence that couldn't really be improved, regardless of effort. That's why I was devastated when my first practice test score came out to be 152. I knew I had my work cut out for me.

Rising to the challenge, I gave up partying with my fraternity — turning down illustrious parties like Booze Cruise and Blackout — to focus on studying. Every day, I would sit myself in the library for 4-5 hours to watch Blueprint's video lessons and do the corresponding homework. After slaving away for an entire quarter, I finally got to Practice Test 2.

I held my breath as the ticker slid to the right when I graded the test. It started off quickly, whisking through the 120s and 130s to the 140s. Then I watched in dismay as the ticker lost momentum in the 140s and settled on my score: 152. To call it disappointing would be an understatement. Doubts about being able to improve my score swirled over my head.

The next day, I went straight to my car after class (I was going to take the day off from the LSAT). That's when I got a call from Blueprint's Marlena, who was checking in to see how my studying was going. I told her that juggling schoolwork and the LSAT was rough, and that I hadn't gone up a single point after two months of (what I thought was) rigorous studying. She told me that she herself only went up a single point from her first to second practice test, and encouraged me to read Colin Elzie's post on Practice Test 2. So I got out of my car, went to the library, read Colin's post on Most Strongly Supported, and decided to immerse myself in the LSAT for the remaining 10 weeks before my test.

I printed out all the Logic Games, Logical Reasoning questions, and Reading Comp passages that Blueprint offered online, and made sure to always have a few of each on hand. I figured that doing LR questions and RC passages when I was tired was not a good idea, so I saved them for my peak mental hours. I could do LGs in the early morning and late at night, when I wasn't as mentally sharp. I could also do LG questions even with background noise, so I would do them in lecture whenever I thought the professor was going on a tangent. Every morning, I would do a couple of Logic Games before I went to school. If I got to a class early, or found myself with a few minutes to spare, I would pull out a Logic Game or Logical Reasoning question and try to complete it. My rule was, if I had seven minutes or more, I'd tackle a Logic Game; otherwise, I'd do Logical

Reasoning questions (I hated being interrupted mid-Logic Game). I literally was trying to squeeze in as much LSAT practice as I could in a day.

After class, I would grab coffee and head to the library, where I would watch Blueprint videos, do the homework, and review questions. Most of my time was spent reviewing questions. I forced myself to painstakingly go through every question that I wasn't 180% sure about, even if I had gotten it right. I would try to understand why every incorrect answer choice was wrong, in addition to why every correct answer choice was right. I did this until my hunger got too distracting, at which point I would quickly grab dinner and head back to the library to study until it closed at midnight. After going for a run to clear my head, I would end the day with schoolwork and a few more Logic Games. Then I would do it all again the next day.

Eventually I settled into a rhythm and found that I actually began to enjoy the LSAT. I even wrote a Game of Thrones Logic Game for fun. The highlight of my LSAT experience came when I got to the CD game explanation, and Matt Riley said that it was the game featured in *Legally Blonde*. I watched the relevant clip on YouTube and nerded out.

By test day, I was flying. My last practice test score was 178. The morning of the LSAT, I heard some ridiculous conversations outside the test center. One test-taker was actually explaining to another that there was an experimental section! During the test itself, I took solace in the knowledge of my efforts to prepare for the test, and tried my best. My preparation style did pay off in a direct way: for a couple of questions, I didn't choose the answer because I knew what the right answer was; I made my selection because I recognized common flaws in the other four answer choices.

At work a few weeks later, I received the email from LSAC with my June LSAT score. I saw the 180 when I skimmed for a three-digit number, but figured they were telling me that the LSAT was out of 180 — there was no way I scored perfect. When I didn't see another three-digit number, the most epic realization ever dawned on me. I kept checking to make sure it didn't say 160 in a weird font. It's like a dream come true, and I now have been accepted to some of the country's best law schools. I hope anyone that reads this post walks away with the knowledge that the LSAT is a learnable test that can be fun, and that hard work does pay off. For my part, I will keep the self-confidence and discipline that the LSAT experience strengthened, and apply that to law school and beyond.