

HI!

- me: I'm so excited you're finally here. This is going to be awesome.
- you: Hi. You're excited I'm reading an LSAT prep book? I have an unnerving mix of fear and anxiety.
- me: No, really I am so excited! There is not one thing I wish I could be doing other than helping you with the LSAT. I could have done a ton of other things; I'm helping you with the LSAT because I freaking love it.
- you: You love the LSAT? But that's like physically impossible. Who *are* you?
- me: Well, first, my name is Ellen Cassidy, and I was kind of crafted in a lab to teach the LSAT. I studied language at Stanford University and Oxford University. At 23, I was one of the youngest lecturers in the history of the Rutgers University English Department. I love two things: words and teaching, mostly teaching about words. I even spent a few years as an actor and creative writer, so I can write stuff that's (hopefully) fun to read.
- you: How'd you end up taking the LSAT then?
- me: I decided to take the LSAT super randomly. My friend dragged me to a party where I heard a funny story about being a public defender. I was so deep in my quarter-life crisis that I started researching LSAT prep methodologies on my phone before I even left the party. As soon as I started prepping, I felt more mentally alive than I had in my entire life. I loved working with the test for those two months; it felt like someone was finally speaking to me in my native language. As I got into the car after taking the LSAT, I literally said out loud, "I wish I could just do the LSAT forever."
- you: Did you end up going to law school?
- me: After I got the score, I figured, "This is a pretty awesome score. I guess I might as well apply to law school?" (This is not a good reason to apply to law school.) I was admitted to Harvard Law School and deferred three times before turning them down. I taught my first LSAT class shortly after I was admitted to Harvard, and I immediately knew I loved helping people learn to reason far more than I could ever love being a lawyer.
- you: Dangggggg. That's crazy. But wait, this is a standardized test, not something actually fun. Seriously, what's so great about the LSAT?
- me: What *isn't* great about the LSAT? But since this is a Logical Reasoning book, let's start there first. I love the skills that Logical Reasoning tests, and I believe our world would be better off if more people had those skills regardless of whether they go to law school.
- you: What skills does Logical Reasoning test?
- me: Logical Reasoning tests your ability to do two things:
- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Read intently | You have to pay attention to every word. If you don't <i>really</i> understand what you're reading, you can't answer the question. The LSAT is the incorruptible skimming police. |
| Question authority | You have to question the claims the author makes in Logical Reasoning. Many students just say, "Sounds good..." after they're done reading because the LSAT is intimidating. Don't be such a pushover! Get critical. Get mean. Get your nitpick on. |

Those two skills are the core of Logical Reasoning. And they're the two things you're going to be rocking out on by the end of this book.

you: What's different about this book versus all the other LSAT prep solutions out there? There are a lot of choices and I just want whatever's going to get me the highest score.

me: I want you to get the highest score possible too. That's why I spent five years perfecting the new techniques outlined in this book.

Experts do Logical Reasoning entirely differently than what's typically taught in courses and written in books. We do the questions intuitively. This is a book designed to lead you — from wherever you happen to be starting — into doing Logical Reasoning like an expert, like the mythical “naturals.” Some people are lucky enough to come into LSAT preparation with the critical intuition the expert has — the inclination toward skepticism, side eye, and Loopholes. I'm one of those people. We're naturally judgmental.

you: So I have to be more judgmental to do better in Logical Reasoning?

me: Yes, and this book contains a system designed to help you do just that. The methods in this book are based on the critical intuition experts use to complete Logical Reasoning questions quickly. But to teach critical intuition, you have to break it down into concrete steps so students know exactly what to do. Once students practice these steps enough, they fade into the background and one fluid, subconscious process takes the steps' place. That process is critical intuition. For years, I have tested this system with many students at many different levels to verify that it *will* build that intuition in students at all levels. It does.

you: How does it work?

me: Chapters 1-3 teach you how to read and understand arguments. This section culminates in the Basic Translation Drill, which is responsible for more student improvement than anything else I've ever created.

Chapters 4-8 lay the foundation for the skeptical stance with arguments. You'll learn what's wrong with arguments and put that knowledge into practice with the CLIR Drill at the end of Chapter 8. This is where you learn to predict the answer to the majority of Logical Reasoning questions without even knowing the question type.

Chapters 9-12 focus on the question types and answer choices. You'll learn about the Powerful-Provable Spectrum, which massively simplifies answer choice selection. This section caps off with two real Logical Reasoning practice sections.

Basically, we lay the foundation together in each chapter, and then put it into practice at the end of each section. The same principle applies to the book as a whole: Chapters 1-8 lay the foundation that is applied in Chapters 9-12.

you: Woah, that's a lot of stuff.

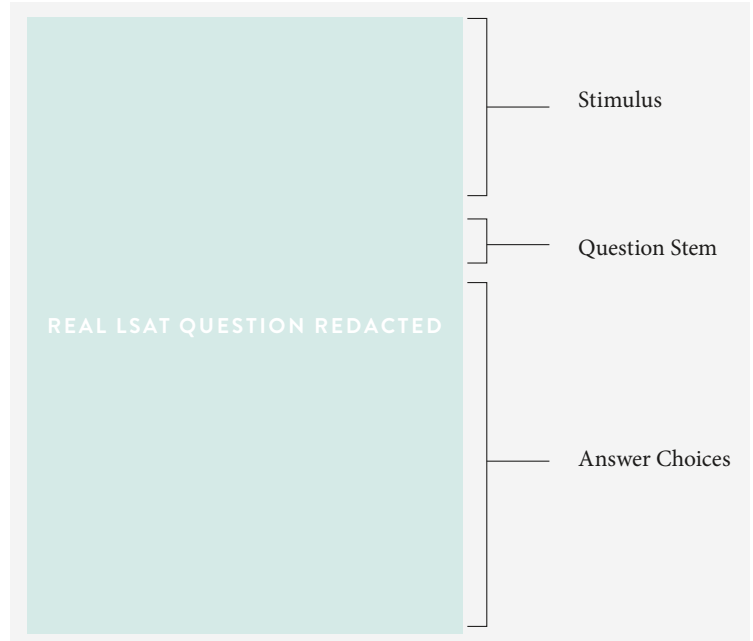
me: YES. It is a lot of stuff. Treat it like a textbook even though it's friendlier than that. Read slower than you feel like you have to. Take active notes, highlight, actually write in answers to the drills instead of “doing them in your head.” You *can* get significantly better at Logical Reasoning. I know it. I've seen it. I believe in you, reader.



Don't worry if you don't know what terms like CLIR and Powerful-Provable mean right now. You'll learn what they mean soon.

The Anatomy of a Logical Reasoning Question

Every Logical Reasoning (LR) question consists of the same three parts: the stimulus, the question stem, and the answer choices. We'll tackle each of these parts one at a time throughout this book.



THE STIMULUS

First, we'll focus on the stimulus, the most important part of an LR question. **The answer to the question isn't in the answer choices; it's in the stimulus.**

Stimuli come in four flavors: Arguments, Premise Sets, Debates, and Paradoxes. Arguments are the most common stimulus type, so the bulk of your

Logical Reasoning score will depend on your ability to analyze arguments. The beginning of this book will help you build the analytical foundation to do this like a boss. We'll examine each of these stimulus types in detail soon.

THE QUESTION STEM

Next, we'll take our stimulus-based strategy and apply it to the question types. You'll learn what each question wants from its correct answer. Spoiler: Every correct answer on the LSAT is either powerful or provable, so we split our question types according to whether they're seeking a powerful correct answer or a provable correct answer.

The question stem lets you know which of the question types you're dealing with. It's the most predictable part of an LR question; there are only so many question types and they all have reliable indicators. It's crucial to know your question types, so you can make the task of the question simple and predictable.

THE ANSWER CHOICES

Finally, we'll head to the answer choices, by far the trickiest part of an LR question. But we can break the answer choices down into powerful and provable types too! It's simplicity in the chaos.

The answer choices are crafted to seduce and destroy you. They play to the most common errors in reasoning; they play you. This is why you need to know what you want before you start reading the answer choices. That confidence inoculates you against temptation. This is also why you have to read all the answer choices all the way through. The LSAT is too good at crafting deceptive wrong answers for it to be safe to move on without reading *every* word of *every* answer.



Always read the stimulus first. Always read the whole stimulus.



Once you're familiar with the question types, you'll see that the tasks they ask you to perform are pretty simple.

How to Study

Read the chapters of this book in order.

This book is crafted to be read in order and if you don't read the beginning, you will not be as well served as you could be. Obviously, you bought the book and you can use it however you want: It can be a coaster, a doorstop, or even kindling (yeah, I know what people do with LSAT books after they're done studying). But it's literally my job to tell people how to study, so here's my advice: **Don't skip ahead.**

Let's think through a situation where you might be tempted to skip ahead. Say you know you struggle with Necessary Assumption questions. It seems efficient to jump to the Provable Questions Chapter, read only the Necessary Assumption section, and close the book, assuming there's nothing else to help you. But this would not be the best way to get better at Necessary Assumption questions. Like did you know there's a whole chapter just on Assumptions & The Loophole? And a couple chapters preceding that chapter to prepare you for the work that's going on there? And a chapter before that on how to read the difficult language on the LSAT (which is another reason you could be getting that question type wrong)? There's more to LR than the question types and these foundational chapters fill in the gaps you don't know are there.

I get that your time is limited and you want to get as much improvement as you can as quickly as possible. But **your time is better spent reading the foundational chapters of this book (1-8) than skipping to the chapters that look more like other Logical Reasoning books.**

THE WRONG ANSWER JOURNAL

Keep track of your wrong answers in a Wrong Answer Journal.

Your wrong answers are your greatest asset. They are the evidence you need to get a higher score. Each wrong answer implies at least one error in your reasoning that needs to be remedied in order to get a similar question right in the future. Your wrong answers show you your weaknesses, which is great! Your weaknesses are what you have to address to get a higher score. **The time you spend reviewing your wrong answers is the most productive time in your entire prep process.** Your Wrong Answer Journal will keep all your wrong answers in one neat, organized place.

To all the skimmers out there:

You may feel like you can skim this book because it reads like a distant cousin of a BuzzFeed article. You may not even know you're skimming! But fight the urge. Read it methodically. I know you want to be done as fast as possible, but if you skim this book, you will have to read it twice to increase your score. It is much more content-dense than it feels.

One of my favorite students, Anna, is a consummate skimmer or "fast reader." She's also brilliant, so this isn't some diss against skimmers. She "read" this book once, but she could tell me almost nothing about it. She improved slightly after "reading" the book, but she still missed 7 or 8 per LR section. She stagnated for months at that level, thinking she was stuck. She read the book for real after another student convinced her she left a lot of content on the page. After that, she missed 0-1 per section. She got a 178 on her real LSAT. All she did was delay her progress by making a half-hearted attempt at "reading" this thing.



Have questions like "How is the LSAT scored?" or "When is the LSAT given?" Check out the Meet the LSAT FAQ at elementalprep.com/bonus



A blank Wrong Answer Journal is waiting for you at the back of this book! Start recording your progress on page 456.



Never check your answers in the middle of practice sections.



There are a limited number of real LSAT questions to practice with. You'll only ever do a given question for the first time once. If you don't analyze your performance on a question fully, you're essentially wasting a non-renewable resource.

Here's an example of how Nicole, a real student, filled in her Wrong Answer Journal.

TEST.SECTION.#	STIMULUS TYPE	QUESTION TYPE	REASON MISSED	SOLUTION
62.4.24	PS → I	Fill In	Didn't understand stimulus, went into answers blind	Translate stimulus, break it down. What is it saying and what does that mean?

To create your own Wrong Answer Journal, ask the following two questions:

QUESTIONS

1. "Why did I choose the wrong answer?"

The answer to this question goes in the **Reason Missed** column of your Wrong Answer Journal. You have to go deep on what motivated you in analyzing these mistakes.

2. "What can I do in the future to not make this same mistake again?"

The answer to this question goes in the **Solution** column of your Wrong Answer Journal. Write in precise, concrete changes.

EXAMPLE RESPONSES

BAD RESPONSE

I messed up.

Yeah, but how did you mess up? What exactly did you do?

GOOD RESPONSE

I misread the answer choice.

This is great! It's concrete and specific.

BAD RESPONSE

Don't misread.

Yeah, but how are you not going to misread? Come up with a plan, man.

GOOD RESPONSE

Don't rush the answer choices. I'll tap each word with my pencil to force myself to read every word.

This is awesome because you can keep this in mind on future sections. You'll know whether you did it or not. It's a real plan.

Review your Wrong Answer Journal before you start studying each day to make sure that you're in the right mindset to remedy your persistent errors. **Getting a question wrong isn't a failure and ignoring your wrong answers doesn't make you stronger.** Dive deep into your wrong answers. That's how you'll improve.

Before you start any LR prep, **take a blind diagnostic now.** We're going to use both of the Logical Reasoning sections from the June 2007 exam in the Basic Translation Drill, CLIR Drill, and practice sections. **If you would like to use the June 2007 test as a full practice test, take that test now as your blind diagnostic.** You can reuse the LR questions for all the drills in this book, even if you've seen them before. It's seriously no worries. You'll be using the questions entirely differently in the drills.



Once you start doing sections, be sure to check out Camouflage Review at elementalprep.com/camo.

Camouflage Review is an awesome new way to check your sections without spoiling the correct answer, maximizing your ability to learn from every single question.