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LSAT Lunacy: Before and After the "Big Day"

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LSAT LUNACY:
BEFORE AND AFTER THE "BIG DAY"



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For:
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Senior Thesis / UHON 499



HONORS THESIS

Working title of thesis: LSAT Lunacy: Before and After the "Big Day"

Summary of thesis:

My thesis project relates to the LSAT (Law School Aptitude Test). I will be taking this test on February 12, 2000, to qualify for entrance to law school. I will document my research and preparation before the test in a journal format, take the test in February, and follow-up by explaining how I felt about my degree of preparation for the experience. I will also analyze different sections that I should have spent more time on, along with whether my research helped me prepare for the test.

LSAT LUNACY: BEFORE AND AFTER THE "BIG DAY"

My senior thesis project documents the process for preparing for the Law School Admission Test. The purpose of the thesis is to help me track my progress and to serve as a preparation guide for other students interesting in taking the LSAT. I prepared on the dates that follow, took the test, and analyzed the results of my preparation compared to my test results. This paper will give a thorough explanation of all of the aspects of the LSAT. Beginning on January 31, 2000, I began researching the makeup and idea behind this weighty exam.

January 31, 2000

The LSAT is a multiple-choice test that lasts 175 minutes, and includes a thirty-minute section that requires a writing sample. Including the ten to fifteen minute break midway, and other clerical details in the beginning and end, will make the experience last a total of four-and-a-half to five hours. It is an endurance test. Many people could possibly ace the test if they had unlimited time, so you have to think fast and efficiently. The LSAT consists of five multiple-choice sections. These include two Logical Reasoning sections (LR), one Logic Games section (LG), one Reading Comprehension section (RC), and one "Experimental" section, which resembles one of the other multiple-choice sections. The Experimental section will not contribute to your score; but is used to test out questions for use on future tests. Finally, the Writing Sample section requires the test taker to write a short essay (Kaplan, 4-5). The sections break down into the following:

Section	Number of Questions	Minutes
Logical Reasoning	24-26	35
Logical Reasoning	24-26	35
Logic Games	23-24	35

Reading Comprehension	26-28	35
“Experimental”	24-28	35
Writing Sample	n/a	30

One important thing to remember is that the five multiple-choice sections can appear in any order, but the Writing Sample will be last. Also, the ten to fifteen minute break will be between the third and fourth sections of the exam. The bottom line is that you have just a little over a minute per question, not counting reading time for passages or set-up time for the games. You will be answering approximately 125 questions within three hours (excluding the Writing Sample) (Kaplan 5).

Your score on the LSAT is based upon the number of questions answered correctly (your raw score) which is then converted into a scale score. The LSAT scaled scores range from 120 to 180. All questions are worth the same amount, which is one point, and there is no penalty for guessing. This means you should never leave any questions blank (Kaplan 5).

I spent a few hours reading the Kaplan book because I wanted to know as much as possible about the LSAT before working through the sample questions in each section.

February 1, 2000

The LSAT is broken down into five parts appearing in any order, plus a writing sample at the end. I will begin by explaining the Logical Reasoning section, the most important section since it accounts for over 50 percent of your score. LR tests your ability to understand, analyze, evaluate, and manipulate arguments. This skill is important and will carry you through your first year of law school, where much of the work involves analyzing legal cases and the arguments within. The following is a sample question from the Kaplan LSAT Test Preparation 1999-2000 Edition booklet and the directions to the section to give you an idea of what this part of the test is like (Kaplan 8):

Directions: This test is composed of questions that ask you to analyze the logic of statements or short paragraphs. You are to choose as the answer to each question the one choice you consider best on the basis of your common-sense evaluation of the statement and its assumptions. Although a question may seem to have more than one acceptable answer, there is only one best answer, and it is the one that does not entail making any illogical, extraneous, or conflicting assumptions about the question.

1. A study of twenty overweight men revealed that each man experienced significant weight loss after adding SlimDown, an artificial food supplement, to his daily diet. For three months, each man consumed one Slimdown portion every morning after exercising, and then followed his normal diet for the rest of the day. Clearly, anyone who consumes one portion of SlimDown every day for at least three months will lose weight and will look and feel his or her best.

Which one of the following is an assumption on which the argument depends?

- (A) The men in the study will gain back the weight they lost if they discontinue the SlimDown program.
- (B) No other dietary supplement will have the same effect on overweight men.
- (C) The daily exercise regimen was not responsible for the effects noted in the study.
- (D) Women will not experience similar weight reductions if they adhere to the SlimDown program for three months.
- (E) Overweight men will achieve only partial weight loss if they do not remain on the SlimDown program for a full three months."

Choice (C) is correct. A good way to approach this type of question is to preview the question stem before you read the paragraph. The stem in our sample question is “Which one of the following is an assumption on which the argument depends?” This will give you the idea of what you should be looking for as you read (Kaplan 8-9).

After previewing the question stem, read the paragraph critically. The conclusion does not seem logical because it focuses mainly on the supplement and ignores the sentence about exercise. It only states that anyone who consumes the product in the same way will have identical results; not whether anyone who follows the same routine as the twenty men (Kaplan 42). It is a good idea to prephrase your answer before you actually choose one. The idea here is to get an idea of what you are looking for, so you will be able to quickly identify the correct answer from the choices (Kaplan 43).

In preparing for this section, I began working on sample problems from the Kaplan book without timing myself. I wanted to make sure I could actually solve the problems before being challenged with a time limit. This procedure gave me confidence and I felt positive about advancing to a timer. I then timed myself, checked my answers, and went back through the problems I missed in order to learn why I did not choose the correct answers. I also practiced problems from LSAT test preparation books from previous years that had the actual tests that were given. I borrowed these from a friend who is currently attending law school. I spent approximately 3 hours on the problems without being timed, and about 3 hours learning to pace myself with the aid of a timer. I feel I will be able to score well on this section of the LSAT.

February 2, 2000

The next section I will explain is Logic Games, which accounts for close to 25 percent of your score. There are usually four games, with five to seven questions each.

This is the most intimidating section for me. Logic Games require more concentration and organizational skills than the other sections. These games are based on testing how rules create systems of order, and their limitations. The reason this section exists is to test your attention to detail; your understanding of how rules limit and order behavior, which is very much related to law; and your ability to handle many pieces of data simultaneously to solve problems in a short amount of time. Again, what follows is a sample question from the Kaplan Test Preparation booklet, along with the directions.

“Directions: Each group of questions is based on a set of conditions. You may wish to draw a rough sketch to help you answer some of the questions. Choose the best answer for each question and fill in the corresponding space on your answer sheet.

Questions 1-2

Five workers--Mona, Patrick, Renatta, Saffie, and Will--are scheduled to clean apartments on five days of a single week, Monday to Friday. There are three cleaning shifts available each day – a morning shift, an afternoon shift, and an evening shift. No more than one worker cleans on any given shift. Each worker works exactly two cleaning shifts during the week, but no one works more than one cleaning shift in a single day.

Exactly two workers clean on each day of the week.

Mona and Will clean on the same days of the week.

Patrick does not clean on any afternoon or evening shifts during the week.

Will does not clean on any morning or afternoon shifts during the week.

Mona cleans on two consecutive days of the week.

Saffie’s second cleaning shift of the week occurs on an earlier day of the week than Mona’s first cleaning shift.

1. Which of the following must be true?

- (A) Saffie cleans on Tuesday afternoon.
- (B) Patrick cleans on Monday morning.
- (C) Will cleans on Thursday evening.
- (D) Renatta cleans on Friday afternoon.
- (E) Mona cleans on Tuesday morning.

2. If Will does not clean on Friday, which one of the following could be false?

- (A) Renatta cleans on Friday.
- (B) Saffie cleans on Tuesday.
- (C) Mona cleans on Wednesday.
- (D) Saffie cleans on Monday.
- (E) Patrick cleans on Tuesday."

The answer to question 1 is (C); and the answer to question 2 is (E). I will go into an explanation of how I obtained the answer in just a moment. First, I want to give you some helpful hints and things to remember before approaching this type of problem (Kaplan 10-11).

The most important suggestion I can give for any Logic Game problem is to take the time to think about the game's scenario before jumping into its questions. This saves time in the long run. There are basically two possible ways to approach this problem. I believe that thinking about the scenario before jumping into its questions is the best strategy because one is able to set out the facts in advance that will be relevant to check each multiple choice answer. The alternative would be to repeat the same work for every single question. Which

seems more logical when you actually take a moment to think this through? I choose the first approach (Kaplan 58).

The best way I found to approach this problem was to read the problem and think about the type of sketch to make in order to solve it. Here is a sample of a map/sketch from the Kaplan book. Remember that this is only a general map. Customize the sketch to your personal understanding.

	M	Tu	W	Th	F
Morn.					
Aft.					
Eve.					

This table is broken down into three shifts over a five-day period. Only one letter is allowed per box, since no more than one worker cleans in any given shift. Each worker has two shifts to clean per day. The pool of participants can be listed in this way: **MMPPRRSSWW 00000**. This translation means each worker cleans two shifts per day, since each letter is listed twice, and also gives the initial of the workers to choose from (Mona Mona Patrick Patrick Renatta Renatta Saffie Saffie Will Will). The five 0's won't be taken by anyone, but you will need to place each 0 in the table on one empty shift per day (Kaplan 80).

After the map is sketched, go through the rules individually. Rule 1 states that exactly two workers clean on each day of the week. This can be jotted down in a shorthand format, such as "2 a day", as a reminder (Kaplan 81). Rule 2 says that Mona and Will clean on the same days, and that goes for both of the days they clean. One suggested shorthand note for this would be to write MW with a circle around it on your page (Kaplan 81).

Rules 3 and 4 can be handled together since they are similar. Instead of figuring out a shorthand symbol for these questions, work out their implications first and write them down. Rule 3 states that Patrick doesn't clean on any afternoon or evening shifts during the week. This means Patrick must clean mornings. Rule 4 states that Will doesn't clean on any morning or afternoon shifts during the week. This can be translated to say that Will must clean evenings. An important note to remember here is to take the rules as far as they can go, then jot them down on your sketch for later reference (Kaplan 81).

Rule 5 is pretty simple. Mona cleans on two consecutive days of the week. This can be written as "MM" to remember Mona and that the days are together (Kaplan 81).

The last rule, number 6, states Saffie's second cleaning shift of the week occurs on an earlier day of the week than Mona's first cleaning shift. For this problem, you must place both Ss (for Saffie) on earlier days of the week than the two Ms (for Mona). This can be written as (S... S... MM) (Kaplan 81).

After the rules are analyzed separately, the crucial part of this game is to combine the rules. If you notice, Mona appears in three of the six rules. When combining rule 2 and 5, we have two Mona/Will days in a row (Kaplan 82). Also, Will must be scheduled for evening shifts (check your shorthand notes), which means that Mona would take the morning or afternoon shift on these consecutive days (Kaplan 82).

Rule 6 shows two Saffies before two Monas. If Saffie's cleaning shifts are as early as possible during the week, she will clean on Monday and Tuesday. Therefore, the earliest day Mona can clean (and Will – Rule 2) is Wednesday. Here is our first key deduction (Kaplan 82).

Mona and Will cannot clean on Monday and Tuesday. They must clean on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday (Kaplan 82).

If you relate the above deduction back to Rule 5, it is clear that Mona and Will must clean on Wednesday and Thursday, or on Thursday or Friday, which forms another deduction (Kaplan 82). Either way, Mona and Will must clean on Thursday. Due to Rule 4, Will can be slotted in for Thursday evening. Mona will take Thursday morning or afternoon. The other Mona/Will day must be on either Wednesday or Friday, in order to remain consecutive (Kaplan 82). Here's a possible sketch for this problem so far:

	M	Tu	W	Th	F	
Morn.						← P...P
Aft.				M		
Eve.				W		← W...W
	-----S...S-----			M	W	

I did not work through these problems today. I only read through a few for about an hour to see what they were going to be like since I had other homework that needed to be completed.

February 3, 2000

Now it is time to work through the questions. You will see how all of this work done previously will pay off. Question one simply asks what must be true. It doesn't take long to see that choice (C) is correct. It is right on the sketch you made. Just think how long this would have taken to figure out if you went through each choice separately. You should choose choice C and move on so you do not spend more time on any question than is necessary (Kaplan 83).

Question 2 is hypothetical. If Will does not clean on Friday, we must conclude from our sketch that the second Mona/Will cluster must be placed on Wednesday, next to the

Thursday Mona/Will group. This would make Saffie clean on Monday and Tuesday, in order to satisfy Rule 6, even though we don't know the exact shifts she cleans those days (Kaplan 83).

After all of these deductions have been made, we are still left with the question of "Who's left, and where can they go?" Two Ps and two Rs are left; one spot on Monday, one spot on Tuesday, and two spots on Friday are the remaining choices. Well, Friday cannot be both Ps or both Rs; therefore, it will have to get one of each, with P in the morning and R in either the afternoon or evening. The other remaining P and R will join S on Monday or Tuesday, in either order. Whichever P is on, he must be in the morning, but the exact shifts for R and S are open to other possibilities (Kaplan 83-84).

Let's take a look at the diagram now, with all of the deductions this far.

If Will doesn't clean on Friday, then . . .

	M	Tu	W	Th	F	
Morn.					P	← P...P
Aft.			M	M	R	
Eve.			W	W		
	↑ S	↑ S				

The question at hand asks for a statement that could be false – which means that the other four wrong choices will all be things that must be true. Choices (A) through (D) match the situation in this question exactly. Only (E) merely could be true; Patrick's first cleaning shift of the week could possibly be on Tuesday, however, it just as easily could be on Monday. We know his second shift must be on Friday, so (E) is the only choice that could be false (Kaplan 84).

I used the same technique of working through each problem as I did in the previous section without timing myself. I studied the problems in the Kaplan book and the other test

preparation books. The logic games are more complicated for me and took a considerable amount of time to understand them. I do not feel comfortable with them because some of the problems are difficult. When I began working the problems, I had to constantly look at the answer key to learn how to proceed further through each question. I feel that solving all of the information possible in the beginning is the most efficient method for arriving at the correct answer because I tried both ways. When I read each choice without completing the beginning work first, I was unable to choose the correct answer. I spent approximately six hours on this section without timing myself. I am not ready for the time challenge. I will have to spend more time on these problems at a later date.

February 7, 2000

The next section to focus on is Reading Comprehension, which accounts for just over 25 percent of your score. Note: There is no particular order in which to prepare for the test. I believe one should study each section until he/she feels comfortable, then focus on the parts in which one feels their skills are weak. The RC section usually consists of four reading passages (natural sciences, law, humanities, and social sciences), with six to seven questions each. RC tests one's ability to read dense, scholarly material and determine the structure, purpose, and logic. The key skill in this section is to identify the "gist" or main idea of the passage, and does not require outside knowledge; everything you need to know to answer the questions is in the reading. A sample question from the Kaplan Test Preparation Booklet, along with the directions will follow (Kaplan 11).

"Directions: Each selection in this test is followed by several questions. After reading the selection, choose the best response to each question and mark it on your answer sheet. Your replies are to be based on what is stated or implied in the selection.

It has been suggested that post-World War II concepts of environmental liability, as they pertain to hazardous waste, grew out of issues regarding municipal refuse collection and disposal and industrial waste disposal in the period 1880-1940. To a great degree, the remedies available to Americans for dealing with the burgeoning hazardous waste problem were characteristic of the judicial, legislative, and regulatory tools used to confront a whole range of problems in the industrial age. At the same time, these remedies were operating in an era in which the problem of hazardous waste had yet to be recognized. It is understandable that an assessment of liability was narrowly drawn and most often restricted to a clearly identified violator in a specific act of infringement of the property rights of someone else. Legislation, for the most part, focused narrowly on clear threats to the public health and dealt with problems of industrial pollution meekly if at all.

1. The author's primary purpose is to discuss:
 - (A) contrasts in the legislative approaches to environmental liability before and after World War II
 - (B) legislative trends which have been instrumental in the reduction of environmental hazardous wastes
 - (C) the historical and legislative context in which to view post-World War II hazardous waste problems
 - (D) early patterns of industrial abuse and pollution of the American environment
 - (E) the growth of an activist tradition in American jurisprudence"

The answer to this question is (C) (Kaplan 110). I will give an explanation of the result after I have given some helpful suggestions to guide you into choosing the correct answer. These are Kaplan's suggestions, however, I agree with their process. The first priority is to read the first third of the passage carefully because this section usually introduces the author's main idea/primary purpose, the author's tone, and sometimes, structural hints. It is just as important to understand how the author is saying something as the contents of what he/she is saying because the author's tone will guide you to the correct answer. (Kaplan 94-95).

Next, focus on the main idea. Sum up the main idea simply by restating it in your own words. Everything else in the passage is there to support the main theme. Also, get the "gist" of each paragraph. This is the general point the author is trying to make. Ask yourself why the author included this paragraph. In other words, what bearing does this paragraph have on the author's main idea? (Kaplan 97).

I have also learned that you should not obsess over details. You are not reading to memorize. All you need to do is have a good sense of the structure of the passage and the paragraph topics. You can go back to the reading to find specific details. It is also a good idea to read actively. Keep your mind working at all times while reading and try to anticipate where the author is going (Kaplan 100).

I am now going to explain Question 1 that was asked and answered previously. Some additional hints to remember are to actively read the first third of the passage carefully. This is usually where you will find the topic and the direction in which the author is going with the topic. Then read the rest of the passage. Next, do the questions at the end of the passage in an efficient order. This means to scan the questions and answer the easiest ones first and leave the more complicated ones for last (Kaplan 112).

1. "The author's primary purpose is to discuss:
 - (A) contrasts in the legislative approaches to environmental liability before and after World War II
 - (B) legislative trends which have been instrumental in the reduction of environmental hazardous wastes
 - (C) the historical and legislative context in which to view post-World War II hazardous waste problems
 - (D) early patterns of industrial abuse and pollution of the American environment
 - (E) the growth of an activist tradition in American jurisprudence"

Choice (C) represents the author's main idea. You may have thought choice (B) was correct. However, legislative trends were discussed, but not in enough detail to constitute the author's primary purpose. Choice (A) states there is a contrast, which is a misinterpretation of the passage. No contrast was presented. Choices (D) and (E) never attempt to mention the main topic of hazardous wastes (Kaplan 110).

This section is similar to the Reading Comprehension passages and I applied the same procedures for working through the problems. I read the sample questions in the Kaplan book and the other test preparation books. I spent approximately 4 hours reading and answering the questions. I was also able to time myself since I felt confident solving them. I timed myself and continued studying this section for about 2 hours.

February 8, 2000

The Experimental Section can appear in any order, except last. This part of the test is not scored and should look just like the other sections. A note I would like to stress is to try not to guess which section is experimental because the test-taker will not be able to

distinguish this from an actual scored section. Do your best on every segment and do not risk thinking that the section you are working on is experimental and, therefore, guessing or taking it lightly. This can be a huge error in judgment! (Kaplan 12).

February 9, 2000

The final section of the LSAT is the Writing Sample, which tests your ability to write a persuasive argument in a clear and concise form. This section is ungraded, but it is sent with your LSAT score to the law schools to which you applied. The Writing Sample is made up of a scenario, then followed by two courses of action. You will need to choose a specific course of action and defend it by explaining why your decision is superior. Again, I will show you a sample from the Kaplan Test Preparation Booklet in order to give you a feel of what the question is about (Kaplan 13).

“The *Daily Tribune*, a metropolitan newspaper, is considering two candidates for promotion to business editor. Write an argument for one candidate over the other with the following considerations in mind:

- The editor must train new writers and assign stories.
- The editor must be able to edit and rewrite stories under daily deadline pressure.

Laura received a B.A. in English from a large university. She was managing editor of her college newspaper and served as a summer intern at her hometown daily paper. Laura started working at the *Tribune* right out of college and spent three years at the city desk covering the city economy. Eight years ago the paper formed its business section and Laura became part of the new department. After several years covering state business, Laura began writing on the national economy. Three

years ago, Laura was named senior business and finance editor on the national business staff; she is also responsible for supervising seven writers.

Palmer attended an elite private college where he earned both a B.S. in business administration and an M.A. in journalism. After receiving his journalism degree, Palmer worked for three years on a monthly business magazine. He won a prestigious national award for a series of articles on the impact of monetary policy on multinational corporations. Palmer came to the *Tribune* three years ago to fill the newly created position of international business writer. He was the only member of the international staff for two years and wrote on almost a daily basis. He now supervises a staff of four writers. Last year, Palmer developed a bi-monthly business supplement for the *Tribune* that has proved highly popular and has helped increase the paper's circulation."

There is no right or wrong answer to this question. This is purely subjective, but you have to defend your position and explain why you choose one candidate over the other. (Kaplan 14). In the following paragraph I will give an example of a sample essay written to give you an idea of what the law schools are looking for in a Writing Sample.

First, of course, I want to start off with some helpful hints. The test proctors will give you a scrap of paper for this section. Create an outline of the points you want to make because you should already know what you want to say and how you want to say it before you begin to write. The LSAT requirements state your essay can only be the length of one piece of standard length paper and will only consist of a few paragraphs. This means you need to get right to the point. Also, don't worry about which alternative you choose. There is no right or wrong choice. Usually the choices are matched pretty closely. The important point is to support your choice (Kaplan 124-125).

There are different formats that can be used which I will describe. The formats are styles in which to organize your writing sample. Pick one that is simple and clear. One possible format is to choose the winner and state your reasons for your decision in the first paragraph. In the second paragraph, discuss why you did not choose the other candidate. Another possibility is to use the criteria format. The first paragraph would discuss the winner and loser according to the first criterion, and the second paragraph would also discuss each person according to the second criterion (Kaplan 125).

Try to downplay the winner's weaknesses and the loser's strengths when mentioning them. One example of downplaying might be to say, "Even though Henry won a national award..." When you bring up the winner's weaknesses, you are showing that you are recognizing and dealing with this, which makes your argument stronger (Kaplan 125).

Do not merely restate the facts in the scenario. Instead, interpret what the facts mean. When restating the facts, someone may not know if a certain fact is good or bad. Writing well is also important. If your writing is unreadable, the reader may not want to bother with your sample. Writing well involves the correct use of grammar rules, punctuation, and good structure. Kaplan suggests to take about five to seven minutes to read the scenario and jot down an outline on scrap paper. The writing sample should take about twenty minutes, and you will have the last few minutes to proofread and check for errors. Make sure you actually finish this section. If you turn this in unfinished, it may show the admissions officers that you do not have the organizational and planning skills needed for law school. (Kaplan 126-128).

The following is a sample response to the candidate scenario taken from the Kaplan Test Preparation Booklet.

“Both candidates are obviously qualified, but Laura is the better choice. For one thing, Laura has been working at the *Tribune* for eleven years, and has therefore had plenty of opportunity to learn the workings of the paper. For another, her experience has been in national rather than international business, and national business will certainly be the focus of the *Tribune*’s financial coverage. In her current capacity, she is responsible for writing and editing articles while simultaneously overseeing the work of a staff of seven. Clearly, then, Laura can work under deadline pressure and manage a staff, a capability she demonstrated at an early age as the managing director of her college newspaper. Although Laura’s academic credentials may not measure up to Palmer’s, her background in English, her history of steady promotions, and her work as senior national business writer – combined with a solid business knowledge and obvious drive for accomplishment – will certainly spur the department to journalistic excellence.

Palmer’s resume is admirable but is nonetheless inferior to Laura’s. True, Palmer has evidently done a fine job managing the international section, but his staff numbers only four, and the scope of the venture is smaller than Laura’s. True, Palmer’s articles on the impact of monetary policy did win an award in the past, but since he has been working for the *Tribune* no such honors have been forthcoming. Not only does Palmer lack the English literature background that Laura has, but he also lacks her long experience at the *Tribune*. Furthermore, Palmer’s editing experience seems slight, considering the length of his current tenure and the size of his staff, and while he demonstrates competence in the area of international business, he has little experience in the national business area.

In light of these circumstances, the newspaper would meet its stated objectives best by promoting Laura to the position of business editor (Kaplan126-127).”

I did not practice for the writing sample. I instead read through practice samples in the Kaplan and various test preparation booklets. I decided that I will use the format which states the person I chose and the reasons why in the first paragraph, then writing the reasons why I did not choose the other candidate in the second paragraph, followed by a summary for the conclusion. The reason for not practicing for this section is because I feel I will be able to accomplish this task in the allotted time on test day.

Now that I have explained all of the sections that will appear on the LSAT, I will need to continue practicing (see the following dates and activities below). I suggest reading all of the available material possible regarding the LSAT, such as online sources and LSAT practice books from the bookstore, and take timed practice tests. The test is in three days!

February 10, 2000

I chose to take timed practice tests on the Reading Comprehension and Logical Reasoning sections. I spent approximately two hours on each part and checked my answers. I missed a few and went back to the passages that I missed to find out why. I feel I need to spend most of my time practicing the Logic Games section.

February 11, 2000

I practiced the Logic Games section for most of the day and began by working through more sample questions without timing myself. I still do not feel comfortable with the problems. I worked on these for about 4 hours then decided to time myself for the next 3 hours. I did not manage to answer them correctly; therefore, I stopped timing and studied each one thoroughly. Tomorrow is test day and I feel nervous about this section. I hope

the questions are easy, even though I usually do not depend on hope for success in life. I stayed up late studying the logic games and went to bed around midnight.

February 12, 2000

Test Day! The LSAT was more difficult than I expected. The day began at 8:00 with sign-in and then I took the exam the rest of the day. We had a 10-minute break in between the third and fourth sections. The test was over at approximately 1:30 p.m. I was completely drained afterward. I felt confident about my ability in the Reading Comprehension and Logical Reasoning sections, however, I do not think I did well on the Logic Games and the writing sample. The first two sections were logic games, even though I read there was only going to be one logic games section. This makes me wonder if one of the games was experimental.

I had problems in the beginning when I tried putting the information together in a sketch. I did not understand some of the statements. I encountered a few troublesome statements that halted my progress to organize the information to solve each question. I became nervous when I was unable to work through the problems and I felt pressured for time. The actual problems on the test were more difficult than the practice problems I had worked on through the week. I had to guess on most of the questions in these sections, knowing that it would only be to my benefit if I responded to each question since I would not be penalized for incorrect responses. I should have started studying earlier because I now know I was not fully prepared to handle this section with confidence. It is okay to guess about the experimental section now since the test is over and I can only wish this did not count.

The writing sample resembled the practice samples in the Kaplan book. I expended too much time sketching an outline and thinking about how I should write the sample. I

should have practiced this section in order to strengthen my writing skills for this one-page length paper. I could not think of how I wanted to discuss the material in terms of supporting my choice. This may have been from exhaustion and the time restriction. At the end of the test we were allowed to take home a carbon copy of our writing sample. I still have it but have not looked it over.

Now it is time to wait for my score. I will be able to call LSAC (Law School Admission Council), and find out my score on March 3, 2000, through the touch tone process. This is a long time to wait!

March 3, 2000

I called for my score. I received a 144. This was devastating to me. I knew the underlying meaning of that score. Immediately, I called the dean of SIU School of Law to inquire about the minimum LSAT score they will accept. Before he asked about my score, he explained that they do not accept scores under 145. He also said that if your score ranges between a 145 – 150, it is still possible to be accepted if you have a good G.P.A. His advice to me was to retake the test.

March 10, 2000

I received my score in the mail today. The LSAT is given four times a year and a detailed sheet is sent out letting individuals know what questions they answered incorrectly in each section. However, the Law School Admission Council who sends out the information chooses to exclude this from the February test results, therefore, I am unable to analyze exactly which questions I missed. I can only guess which sections I need to explore in greater detail.

April 4, 2000

I received the denial letters in the mail from the law schools. This news was not surprising since I had already spoken to the dean. What now? Plan B is to retake the test and apply again next year. If possible, I will take the LSAT Test Preparation Course that is offered on campus at SIU for a fee of \$295. Along with taking more timed practice tests, I know I will need to work on the logic games section, practice the writing sample, and brush up on the reading comprehension section. This has been a learning experience, to say the least.

WORKS CITED

Kaplan Staff. Kaplan LSAT 1999-2000 Edition. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.