

Steps for parsing given information for logic games

LSAT logic games are conventionally used as part of an entrance exam for law school. However, when time limits are generously relaxed, these exercises can also provide practice for developing critical reasoning in elementary, middle, and high school students. When each set of questions is allotted 30 minutes, rather than the standard 8 minutes 45 seconds, students have the opportunity to cut out and play with colorful icons from construction paper and/or sticky notes that they can have fun moving around on whiteboards. This algorithm is not optimized for speed. It is meant for use under these less stressful training situations.

1. Carefully **read** the initial prompt and list of rules.
2. Make a **list of objects**. Repeated objects can be made distinct by adding subscripts that indicate sequence. For example, the first copy of A could be denoted A_1 , to distinguish it from a later copy, denoted A_2 .
3. Draw **labeled slots**. Labels can include the ordinals (1, 2, 3, etc.), days of the week, calendar dates, hours of the day, etc.
4. **Symbolically abbreviate each rule**. Here are some examples of ways to represent rules.
 - a. If a rule, by itself, uniquely **specifies** a slot, fill in that slot.
 - b. If a rule directly **excludes** an object from a slot, write and cross out the excluded symbol under the slot.
 - c. Combine simple rankings into **compound rankings**. For each object in a compound ranking, count up the number of **preceding objects**. This is the number of slots in the beginning of the sequence from which that object is excluded. Likewise, count up the number of **subsequent objects**. This is the number of slots at the end of the sequence from which the object is excluded.
 - d. If rules specify **fixed distances** between objects, abbreviate the rule by writing the appropriate number (possibly zero) of spaces between the relevant objects. For example, if A is followed by two objects and then immediately by object B, abbreviate the rule as A __ B. On a piece of paper, cut out a copy of this symbol, A __ B, which can be moved around the diagram.
5. Cut out **icons** of the objects that can be placed on different slots. **Play with the icons by moving them among the slots** to represent various possible sequences discussed in questions.