

How Reddit Helped Me Excel on the LSAT and Get Into Law School



By **Nayram S. Gasu**

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In today's world, it's not hard to find examples of how the internet and related technologies have proven to be formidable forces to drive us apart and spread hatred and misinformation. But the internet also offers extraordinary promise and the power to bring people together in ways that were unimaginable even a few years ago. I can attest to this myself: I used Reddit - a social media site where millions of people join online communities, known as subreddits, organized around common interests - to identify the valuable resources and peer support that helped me excel on the LSAT and get into law school.

I am a first-generation immigrant and the first in my family to pursue a graduate degree. The first time I took the LSAT, I had no idea what I was doing. I signed up for the free Kaplan video prep a couple of times, borrowed a Kaplan book from my university Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) office, and attempted to read it page by page, front to back. That was my game plan.

I would read a chapter, and then answer the corresponding questions. Just when I thought I was really getting it, I would get answers wrong and could not really understand why. And I couldn't ask a book follow-up questions. I was learning a whole new set of specific skills without anyone with those skills showing me how to use them. My college academic advisors recommended that I take a prep course.

LSAT courses cost around \$1,000. While that \$1,000 course could get me a 170+ score and thus possibly a full ride to law school and maybe even a living stipend, I first needed to have that \$1,000 to spend. As the intelligent and cynical protagonist Earn, of the Emmy-winning television series *Atlanta*, explains, "I'm poor . . . and poor people don't have time for investments because poor people are too busy trying not to be poor. I need to eat today. Not in September." I simply did not have the money, so I could not make that investment.

As an undergrad, I was lucky enough to be a Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) Discover Law scholar at Rutgers Law-Camden. The LSAC program and the efforts of Dean Jill Friedman and Dean Angela Baker were instrumental in my understanding of what going to law school and being a lawyer entailed, but not necessarily how to get there. The program also allowed me to take the LSAT twice, at no cost.

When I first took the LSAT, my score was under 150. By the time I took the second, I had become more attuned with how social media was being used to connect people with opportunities and resources. I had known through friends in high school that Reddit was a resource people used to ask any and every question. It occurred to me that maybe someone there knew a thing or two about the LSAT.

Dubbed "the front page of the internet," Reddit is home to thousands of passionate communities dedicated to a spectrum of interests stretching as far as the imagination can reach - from the basics [/r/movies](#), [/r/news](#), [/r/books](#), to the very political [/r/The_Donald](#), the very specific [/r/childrenfallingover](#), and the help-driven [/r/buildapc](#), and [/r/skincareaddiction](#). There is something for everyone, and that's Reddit's strength and its weakness. It is a place to live your truth, a place where random strangers online will dedicate time and energy to help others just to make their knowledge available to those who may need it, but also a dangerous echo chamber to brew toxic culture.

For me, finding [/r/LSAT](#), a Reddit community dedicated to helping LSAT test takers prepare and ace the test, was one of the best things that could have happened to me during this process.

Some of the advice was harsh and often reeked of privilege, like users discouraging others from pursuing law at all unless they were going to a Top 14 school. Anyone with less than a 165 on the LSAT was often told to retake the test. Some called it tough love, others were just plain rude, and some genuinely thought people should think things through before making a massive financial debt commitment that had the potential to be financially crippling, even with the prestigious degree.

I felt a shift in my own ambition, as I was now part of this digital community of people shooting for the 170s and above, whereas in my actual life every other pre-law student I knew was content with just getting enough to get into a law school. I was now aiming for higher-ranked schools. I was aiming not only to get into law school but get a minimum of a 50 percent scholarship.

Before [/r/LSAT](#), a lot of the advice I got was to settle for good enough because I was already beating some odds by being the first in my family to pursue anything higher than a bachelor's degree. Students like me aren't often encouraged to go the extra mile because there is no one in our lives to show us what that extra mile looks like. In well-intentioned attempts to make sure we continue to succeed, those who are supposed to help us sometimes sell us short.

On the sidebar of the subreddit, a section generally used to display community rules and guidelines, there was also a list of LSAT resources curated by past and present users. Many I had never come across before,

including LSATMax, which provides a free course to anyone who was granted an LSAC waiver. Just like that I had a free full online course. I was also introduced to 7sage and its extremely helpful videos on YouTube. Those videos showed how to work just about every single Logic Games question that has ever been written. I would do it my way, then see how they did it and correct myself. Soon I learned the patterns, and I went from getting only a handful right to getting the whole section correct. I was dumbfounded and elated.

I studied for several months with a new vigor and intensity I never had for this test before, and in the end I went from a sub 150 score to scoring high enough to earn a full ride offer, acceptances at elite top tier schools, and I was even waitlisted at a couple of T-14s, which to some is nothing to boast about, but to me is symbolic of the long way I have come and how I can really make things happen when I find the right tools.

As I reflect, I am aware that though I did not have the privilege of wealth or legacy, I had the privilege of good fortune. I was fortunate enough to have been accepted to the LSAC program as a freshman, fortunate to have time and space to study, even fortunate to have good internet access that a lot of rural students still lack.

I was also fortunate to have a work supervisor, Lauren Popper-Ellis, who was immensely kind and supportive of my endeavor, lent advice when she could and helped me balance my busy full-time job as a researcher with studying.

Once past the LSAT, many on /r/LSAT migrated to /r/lawschooladmissions, a subreddit for general law school admissions questions, sharing tactics, essay exchanges, and opinions about whether they were being too ambitious or not ambitious enough with where they were applying. This was also the first place I had ever heard of negotiating a scholarship. Once everyone sent out their applications, the subreddit largely became a place we expressed our grievances about the process. The long waits. The exorbitant price of paying for rejection. How much power the *U.S. News* ranking has. Choosing between Harvard, Yale or Columbia at sticker price or a full ride at a tier one but lower-ranked school.

There was a post one day asking how much each person had spent on the admission process. I was fortunate that being a part of the LSAC Discover Law program not only afforded me two free LSATs, but also four processing waivers and a free CAS report. The process cost me just under \$400, a tiny amount compared to others who admitted to spending more than \$3,000 on the application process, prep course included. In a more recent similar post, a user contemplated, "It seems like just applying to law school is expensive. Do you think the cost of applying is a barrier for applicants?" to which another replied "Absolutely. [. . .] It's a shame to think of how many talented potential attorneys will never enter the field simply because of the financial cost."

Being part of the communities of /r/LSAT and /r/lawschooladmissions gave me the resources I had spent four years of college looking for. I know I am not alone in this because a quick look at the subreddits after every cycle shows many joyous students proud of the school they chose and how Reddit helped them reach beyond their obstacles and previous ambitions. I was lucky I found all this out when I had the space to give it a second

try. Many can only afford to give the LSAT one shot. This is why I am particularly elated by the introduction of free LSAT prep by Khan Academy.

I believe the internet can be used to truly be the great equalizer in the face of inequality, and hopefully change the face of not just top law firms but also our judicial system. When the profession is overflowing with people of the same copy-and-paste background, it is difficult to see things through different lenses.

When you have not been poor, it can be difficult to think about how the poor interact with the law. When your days are mostly surrounded by people with prestigious degrees, it can be easy to forget the law is not written in easy common language. When different people look at the same problem, there is potential for different answers, and where there are different answers, there is an increased probability in finding the right answer.